



# BEOWULF

AGE OF HEROES

# HORROR AT HERROGATE

AN ADVENTURE FOR ONE PLAYER AND ONE GM  
FOR THE WORLD'S FAVOURITE ROLEPLAYING GAME





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# HORROR AT HERROGATE

FOR HEROES OF LEVEL 3 OR 4

## INTRODUCTION TO THE ADVENTURE

Our Hero travels to Herrogate, a remote fishing settlement on the Nordic coastline, which is being terrorised by a dréag. In the earliest days of these troubles, the settlement's eorl denied the existence of the Monster. He blamed stories of the creature first on drunkards and then on those vying to supplant him. But each new victim over successive nights forced the eorl into admitting the truth. But even their best warriors are powerless to stop this creature. And the eorl's grip on the settlement is now tenuous.

As our Hero begins to unravel the story of the dréag, the eorl attempts to thwart them. His most ardent supporters, disguised as bandits, attack! But the truth will out. The eorl's deceased son, Arne, and a hero of some renown with a shameful secret, is the dréag.

By visiting the nearby locations of Arne's heroic deeds, the past unspools for our Hero. Arne was no paragon of triumph and bravery. Arne stole the glorious deeds of others and murdered them to keep his vile secret. Now, in death, this guilt plagues him and gives him his power.

When our Hero meets those who knew Arne in life, they uncover the secret to defeating the dréag. Though dishonourable when he was alive, Arne did in fact help people. Making the dréag face this fact weakens the creature. Only then can our Hero hope to kill the Monster using a weapon fashioned from the broken shards of weapons that represent both Arne's goodness and his failings.

## THE CALL TO ADVENTURE

Frightening stories of a dréag menacing a secluded northern settlement reaches our Hero and they choose to take on this challenge. It is up to you as gamemaster to determine how the character learns of Herrogate's fate. Is it through the tale of a scop, repeating news out of the north? Or a merchant who had a disappointing turn at the settlement and is now complaining of their ill fortune to anyone who will listen? Or does a local ruler lament that they do not have enough sturdy warriors to answer the call for aid from distant kin? (This last could be a call for aid from Thorfinn, but also could be anyone the Hero will meet in Herrogate or the surrounding area.)

The Hero gathers their Followers and makes ready to meet this new danger. The Hero's Followers stock their ship with supplies and prepare the craft for the journey across the North Seas. Meanwhile, a portent comes to our Hero. The GM should discuss with the player their preferences for how this omen comes to the Hero. Do they have a strange dream in the middle of a fitful sleep? Do they consult a local soothsayer for guidance about their fate in the adventure ahead? Does an old fisherfolk give them cryptic advice as they make ready to sail?

## PORTENT AND THE WHALE ROAD

To generate the Portent and inspiration pool, see *Preparation and Portent* on page 97 of *BEOWULF: Age of Heroes*. Remember to



write down the numbers in the order the Player rolled them when they created the Portent. To best represent the remote nature of Herrogate in the game world, the voyage should be of at least Medium length. This will provide 2 challenges and take anywhere from two to four days of travel time in the unforgiving North Sea. Determine the challenges by following the rules under *Sail and Swell: The Voyage* beginning on page 100 of *BEOWULF: Age of Heroes*.

When you are ready, begin your narration of the sea voyage. Try to use vivid language to bring the journey to life for the Player and weave the challenges like a braid into the story as they make their way into the cold reaches of the north to the isolated fishing settlement. Once they reach their destination they should have a fine tale to tell!

## THE SHELTERED BAY

Passing through a narrow strait between two craggy islets, our Hero arrives in the sheltered bay of the fishing settlement. In the distance, snow-covered mountain tops jut out of thick fog drifting down to the longhouses in the valley by the shore. Fishing boats tied to the dock sway back and forth in the gentle waves that lap the stony beach. Whether day or night, the settlement is quiet and still, so still that our Hero's longboat knifing through the water seems like the only sound in the world.

The crew bring the ship alongside the dock and secure it in place. A sense of unease falls over them. The settlement appears deserted. Some of the buildings closest to the shore have fallen into disrepair. A breeze whistles around the structures and through the muddy streets, giving the sailors gooseflesh.

Since there is no one to greet them, be sure to ask the player if they are leaving their crew behind with the ship for the time being. Remind them that a crew without at least one Follower to provide leadership cannot defend the boat should it come under attack.

## THE FISHING SETTLEMENT

The longhouses are made of wattle with thatched roofs and timber frames. The homes along the waterfront are all damaged, with collapsed roofs from a recent fire. Investigating further, the Hero finds evidence of deep hack marks in the wood from the blade of an axe.

As the Hero and their band move through the settlement, terrified suspicious eyes track them from windows. Warriors posted in the streets appear haggard and frightened and in short supply. If our Hero attempts to speak with them they will turn away.

Depending on the circumstances of their arrival, there are a few people the Hero may meet:



### HERROGATE

- 1: THORFINN'S HALL
- 2: THE BLACKSMITH'S WORKSHOP
- 3: SKARDE'S HOUSE
- 4: YRSA'S HOUSE







- 1: HERROGATE
- 2: THE GRAVEYARD
- 3: THE ISLE OF HOLM
- 4: HOLMSTAD
- 5: THE TROLL'S CAVE
- 6: THE SILENT SANCTUARY
- 7: STONE STAIRS
- 8: CAMPSITE



If it is night, Bo the Blacksmith appears at the door to his home and warns the Hero that it is not safe to be out after dark. If a storm preceded their arrival, then this is considered a bad omen and the Hero is at disadvantage in this encounter. If they cannot convince Bo to give them a place to sleep, they can knock on other doors – they can even attempt to gain entry to the eorl's longhouse – but they will be turned away. In this case, they will get a poor night's sleep at the dock with their ship. In the morning they will suffer one level of exhaustion.

Otherwise Bo the Blacksmith will allow them to shelter in his workshop for the night. Since the man is devout, if a Follower has the Church-goer Gift, then the blacksmith will show them every courtesy. Either way, Bo the Blacksmith appears cautious but welcoming. He will put off answering questions directly, saying only that a terrible dréag stalks the settlement at night and their weapons are useless against the Monster. The blacksmith promises to bring the Hero to see the eorl first thing in the morning.

Arriving during the day means the Hero won't get far before the eorl, Thorfinn, and two of his warriors greet them. They will approach the Hero from the direction of the eorl's hall, calling out to them in gruff tones. The eorl will demand to know who the Hero is and why they are in his settlement. Once he knows why they have come, the eorl will tell them to leave, claiming that his warriors are more than capable of defending the community. But our Hero can clearly see that this is not the case.

A crowd soon gathers. There is bravery and hope in the presence of the Hero and in the anonymity of the throng. Several people shout for the Hero to stay. The eorl acquiesces and begrudgingly invites the Hero to his hall.

## BLACKSMITH'S WORKSHOP

The blacksmith's workshop is made of wood and stone. Bo's dwelling is attached to the workshop but off-limits to the Hero and their Followers. The first thing the Hero notices upon entering the workshop is the smell of burnt coal and molten iron. Opposite the forge and anvil, which are open to the elements, is an enclosed storeroom containing knives, harness buckles, nails, axe blades, and more. There is plenty of space here for the Hero and their Followers to set down their bedrolls.

Bo the Blacksmith wakes them at dawn. The Monster came in the deep watches of the night and claimed another victim, one of the eorl's warriors. The dréag devoured the poor soul, leaving only the man's axe behind.

If the Hero returns to their ship to speak with their crew, they will learn that the crew saw and heard nothing all night. As promised, Bo takes them to see the eorl at his longhouse.

## THORFINN'S HALL

Thorfinn's hall sits upon a hill in the centre of the settlement. It is the largest of the longhouses in this small fishing community. Since the troubles began, two warriors always stand guard outside its decorative doors. Old shields, weapons, and fishing nets from ages past adorn the walls of the hall. On the wall above the eorl's seat is an empty space where an ancient sword once hung. While here the Hero will enjoy food and drink, but the mood is dour.

This is not a celebratory, raucous feast with arm wrestling matches and tall tales shared over horns of fine ale. It is a sombre affair with a community that feels as if they are under siege and an eorl who appears powerless to save them.

Anyone present in the hall can tell the Hero about the missing sword. It belonged in the eorl's family for generations. It had a crystal-set pommel that was older than the weapon, and witch-made. When the sword disappeared some years before, people wondered if it wasn't somehow the witch's doing.

If the Hero spent the night at the blacksmith's workshop, then the mood is especially funereal as they bring news with them of the monster's latest victim. The Hero will hear the warriors murmuring that no weapon bites upon the creature and death for all of them is certain.

Here is a list of NPCs they might meet in the hall. Some they may have already interacted with prior to entering this hall.

- **Thorfinn** — a middle-aged man whose best days are now behind him. He sees his power as eorl waning and feels helpless to stop it. Since the death of his only son, Arne, Thorfinn has become miserable and withdrawn. If he speaks of his son, calling him a great hero of renown, it is with



regret and sadness at the painful loss. When talking about his son, he is fond of changing the topic by saying, “Well, we have no need of heroes.” Thorfinn will readily admit that he first denied the existence of the dréag. But he is convinced that his warriors will soon defeat the Monster.

- **Bo the Blacksmith** — a burly young man. He knows the Monster cannot be defeated with axe or sword. He has seen the creature shake off a blow that would kill even the hardest of fighters and walk away without so much as a scratch on its hideous hide.
- **Frode the Wise** — an old wizened man who fears for the eorl. In confidence, he may tell the Hero that the people lose faith in their eorl. Already they have begun to question his leadership. Frode might even confide that he believes the eorl may be cursed—and that perhaps the man brought the curse upon himself.
- **Skarde the Shipbuilder** — a lanky young man who builds the finest boats anyone has ever seen. He is a gregarious fellow, the only person in the settlement who has not lost hope. He sees the arrival of the Hero as an omen that reinforces his belief that everything will work out for the best.
- **Hilda the Spear** — one of Thorfinn’s best fighters. As strong as any man, with hair as red as the flames of a fire pit, Hilda’s skill with the spear is unmatched. Her fierceness in battle knows no equal. She has lost all respect for Thorfinn, for she knows the truth that Arne took to his grave: that his heroism was a lie. Despite her simmering anger toward Thorfinn, Hilda’s loyalty to her home compels her to continue serving as one of his warriors. She will protect those she loves—living or dead—no matter the cost.
- **Yrsa the Fisherwoman** — a striking woman who cares little for praise or glory, Yrsa feels most at home on the water. Known for her bluntness, Yrsa believes deeply in truth and honesty. She has little patience for flattery or small talk. But if the Hero gets straight to the point with her, then she might reciprocate with useful insights.

## THE TROUBLES

The common folk speak of the troubles in whispered tones so as not to risk the ire of their eorl. They believe the dréag can change its shape and control the weather, bringing a great mist down from the mountains before skulking into the settlement at night.

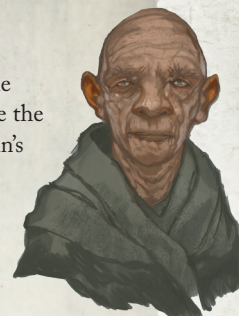
Some say the creature turns into an enormous giant before swallowing its victims whole. But others claim that the Monster doesn’t always eat its prey. These folk believe that the foul beast can drive people to madness and despair. So miserable is their existence that they soon choose to take their own lives.



## FOLKS TO MEET

### FRODE THE WISE

Bent by the weight of his many years—and the weight of the settlement’s misfortunes—Frode the Wise is loyal to Thorfinn, as he was to Thorfinn’s father before him. Dressed in plain sackcloth and leaning heavily upon a walking stick, Frode is an honest man who sees serving the eorl as a sacred duty. He watched Thorfinn grow from a boy to a leader. And now he has watched the man’s decline. Each day, Frode must step in to complete more and more of the eorl’s duties. Yet Frode grows weary and fears what may become of the settlement and the eorl when he is no longer here to care for them both. Frode greets the Hero with dubious hope. He longs for the settlement’s tide of ill fortune to change for the better, yet he doubts a happy ending for the eorl and the settlement. He fears their destinies are entwined.



**Challenge:** To convince Frode that there is still yet hope for the settlement’s fortunes. This is a DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check.

**Advantage criteria:** If the Hero succeeded with Hilda the Spear.

**Disadvantage criteria:** If one of the Hero’s Followers has the Malcontent Burden.

**Follower hook:** If a Follower has the Pure Gift, activate them to raise a success one level.

#### Results:

- **Success by 5 or more:** In addition, Frode the Wise confides that the eorl often mutters to himself about a curse. If Thorfinn is indeed cursed, Frode fears that perhaps the man brought this destruction upon himself.
- **Success:** Frode the Wise tells the Hero that the people lose faith in their eorl. Already they have begun to question his leadership. He fears an uprising if something does not soon change.
- **Failure:** Frode the Wise grows agitated and protests that he is much too busy to bother with the Hero at this time. He shuffles away bemoaning the sad state of affairs in Harrogate.
- **Failure by 5 or more:** Later challenges with Thorfinn are at a disadvantage, as the eorl witnessed the Hero agitate his trusted advisor.

**Further Challenge:** None

**Recruitment:** Not possible



## THORFINN

A middle-aged, barrel-chested man with long blonde hair and a beard shot through with grey, Thorfinn certainly looks the part of a leader. His rich fur cloak hangs about his broad shoulders. His boots are crafted of fine leather. An engraved seax sits in a sheath in the centre of his belt, the hilt so polished it appears never to have seen a day of use. The only suggestions of how far Thorfinn has fallen are the dark circles under his eyes and the defeated way he slumps in his chair.

Thorfinn was once a great and respected leader, loved and admired by everyone in the settlement. He dreamt of a life of boundless prosperity for his people—and of being remembered as Herrogate's greatest leader. He pushed his only son and heir, Arne, to become a warrior and hero of great renown, one whose legendary deeds would one day be sung by the poets. And, for a time, Thorfinn's dreams were realized.

His son Arne travelled the countryside, gaining a great reputation for slaying monsters and saving those in need. Each victory brought wealth, trade, and pride to his settlement. Children in far-flung communities were named after "Arne of Herrogate" in the hopes that they, too, would become such heroes.

But the dream soon turned to a nightmare. Two years past, Arne came to Thorfinn with a shocking confession: he was no hero. Instead, he'd taken the credit for other, braver men and women's deeds. He had not wanted to let his father down. Yet the lies had finally become too heavy to bear. He would visit the last settlement he had "saved" to make amends—and then he would return home to Herrogate and confess his crimes to the people.

Thorfinn should have been surprised, but perhaps some part of him had suspected all along. Even as his heart broke, Thorfinn knew he had only one choice. The truth could not out. It would break his people. It would destroy his legacy. He tried to reason with Arne, but there was no changing his son's mind. And so, when Arne set out to begin to make his amends, Thorfinn followed him. He found Arne at a campsite on the side of the road a half day's journey from Herrogate. Arne was a sorry sight, smelling of ale, crying quietly to himself as he stared into the fire. Looking at his son, so pathetic and so deeply in need, Thorfinn's heart filled with rage. This was his legacy? All it took was a few blows and a well-placed seax, and Thorfinn's shame was erased. The boy didn't even have the courage to fight back.

The next day, traders arrived at the settlement bearing Arne's cold body. All assumed he'd been attacked by common criminals. The settlement plunged into mourning. Then, not

even a year later, Thorfinn's wife was lost at sea on a cloudless day. Most suspected she had died of a broken heart.

Overnight, Thorfinn became a diminished man, growing bitter and sullen. He withdrew from the community, leaving the settlement rudderless, and Frode the Wise carried out the most urgent of the eorl's duties. Perhaps, given time and peace, the battered ship of the settlement might have righted itself. But two seasons ago the dréag began to terrorize the people of Herrogate.

Now, Thorfinn is never found without a draught of ale in hand. Prone to flights of unprovoked anger, few besides Frode the Wise seek his council or attempt to reason with him. For those with the insight to see beyond Thorfinn's ill temper, they would find a man who has lost all hope. A man who secretly wishes for the dréag to come for him and end his earthly suffering. A man who knows that the dréag is his own son—and that he alone is to blame for Arne's fate.

**Challenge:** To impress the eorl and make him see you as a hero deserving of respect. This is a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) or Charisma (Persuasion) check. Note that, to get Thorfinn to confess that he murdered his son, requires confronting him with evidence of his crime. This cannot be accomplished until later in the adventure.

**Advantage criteria:** If the Hero has the Chosen One or Noble's Blood background.

**Disadvantage criteria:** If the Hero has the Exile background.

**Follower hook:** Activate any Follower with a gift related to Charisma to increase a success by one level.

### Results:

- **Success by 5 or more:** In addition, the eorl says that the unresolved nature of Arne's murder is a weight that his wife simply could not bear.
- **Success:** The eorl confesses that the tortured spirit of his dead son is the dréag.
- **Failure:** The eorl admits that he does not believe in heroes anymore.
- **Failure by 5 or more:** In addition, he tells the Hero they can stay if they wish, but he does not expect they can do much to help. The dréag will feast upon them as it has so many others.

**Further Challenge:** See "Confronting Thorfinn."

**Recruitment:** Not possible





## BO THE BLACKSMITH

Bo the Blacksmith apprenticed in his father's workshop since he was a boy, learning to forge iron and steel into tools for fishermen, farmers, and fighters alike. When his father retired five years ago, Bo took over the workshop, which sits near the settlement centre. With a shock of curly black hair, a full beard, and a muscled frame, Bo strikes an imposing figure. Like his father before him, Bo is a devout follower of the Word of the Church. He is known as much for his talents as a smithy as for his stubborn nature, often holding onto the smallest slight. It is no wonder, then, that Bo fixates on the woman whose hand he failed to win: Hilda the Spear. Bo and Arne both competed for Hilda's affections. When Hilda chose another, Bo turned bitter and cultivates the flame of that resentment to this day.



**Challenge:** To win Bo over, such that he will be willing to do work for the Hero when needed.

**Advantage criteria:** If the Hero is aligned with the Church.

**Disadvantage criteria:** If Bo sees the Hero speaking to Hilda the Spear first, he will take offense.

**Follower hook:** A Church-aligned Follower may provide advantage.

### Results:

- **Success by 5 or more:** In addition, he confides that, while working one night, he witnessed the dréag's deadly attack on two of Thorfinn's guards. Their weapons were useless against the creature. Sword and axe both shattered upon impact. He speculates that a special weapon might work but if asked what weapon would be special he shrugs and says 'Perhaps something to do with its past? Tales always say that the sins that make dréag restless are from their life.'
- **Success:** Bo invites the Hero to come to his workshop for their smithy needs at any time. Bo also casts suspicion on Hilda the Spear, the only person to survive an attack by the dréag. Maybe she is working for the creature.
- **Failure:** If Bo feels the Hero has treated him dismissively, he will charge an exorbitant fee for his services and may not complete work in a timely manner.
- **Failure by 5 or more:** In addition to the above, Bo feels slighted by the Hero and, if the Hero seeks his services, will do substandard work.

**Further Challenge:** None

**Recruitment:** Bo the Blacksmith isn't interested in following any hero.

## SKARDE THE SHIPBUILDER

Skarde the Shipbuilder is an outgoing young man. Lanky and handsome, he works hard and loves his ale—perhaps a bit too much on both counts. Skarde seems to be the only in the settlement who has not lost hope. While some claim this is youthful naivete, Skarde has seen nothing yet that would prove them right, especially with the arrival of the Hero.



Renowned for his shipbuilding skills, Skarde never passes up a moment to boast of his work. He is sought after for his talent and his ability to procure the finest materials. Decorated with fine carvings yet sturdy enough to weather the roughest storm, it is said his ships are poetry upon the water. Skarde can certainly help the Hero if their ship has been at all damaged during their voyage.

**Challenge:** To observe that Skarde is already a bit inebriated and, perhaps with a little more ale, he might be forthcoming. This is a DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check.

**Advantage criteria:** Compliment him or tell him a tale of some far-off place over cups of ale.

**Disadvantage criteria:** If the Hero is not impressed with the Shipbuilder, or never offers an ale and a story.

**Follower hook:** If a Follower has the Learned (Old Ways) Gift, they provide advantage.

### Results:

- **Success by 5 or more:** In addition, Skarde cautions that Bo the Blacksmith is a jealous fool who always thinks he knows more than he truly does. And everyone knows that Bo fought Arne for Hilda's affections—and lost on both counts.
- **Success:** He tells the Hero the story of the Silent Sanctuary and how the eorl's family sword went missing around that same time.
- **Failure:** The Shipbuilder thinks the Hero is boorish and their story dull.
- **Failure by 5 or more:** As above, but the Shipbuilder becomes angry and begins to question the Hero's every word.

**Further Challenge:** None

**Recruitment:** If the Hero failed their challenge with the Shipbuilder then recruitment is not possible. Otherwise, the Shipbuilder becomes available if the Hero loses half their Followers.



## HILDA THE SPEAR

Hilda the Spear holds herself with the poise and confidence of a great warrior. She keeps her fiery red hair pulled back in a single thick braid, prefers a well-worn weaponshirt to metal armour, and carries a spear as tall as she is. Dressed simply, her only adornment is a triangular metal pendant on a leather cord about her neck.

It is known by all that Hilda and Arne had a special bond. Inseparable friends since childhood, they learned to fish together, sparred with wooden swords, and spent cold winter nights around the fire in the eorl's hall, listening to tales of heroes of old. Hilda longed for such adventures, but Arne was content to follow in his mother's footsteps and fish the sheltered bay. He never took to a weapon the way Hilda took to her spear, how it felt like a natural extension of her arm. Yet, out on the water alone together, he could catch four fish to each one of hers. Over the years, Hilda watched as Arne bowed to the pressure of his father's expectations. But, like everyone else, she convinced herself it was for the best. Arne was destined to carry on Thorfinn's great legacy, was he not?

When Arne set out adventuring, Hilda watched his departure with envy. An unknown path lay before him, filled with potential, both terrible and wonderful. What dangers awaited him? What heroic deeds would he accomplish? The most exciting thing that lay ahead for her as a member of Thorfinn's guard was expelling a drunken lout from the eorl's hall. As tales of Arne's mighty deeds grew, Hilda's pride in her friend's accomplishments grew apace. Whenever he returned from his latest journey, the common folk all turned out to celebrate and pepper him with questions. In these moments, Arne seemed every bit the hero. Yet, when they were alone, a weariness overtook him. Hilda worried for her dearest friend. More than once, in these moments Arne asked Hilda to marry him. But she answered him the way she answered Bo the Blacksmith's similar declarations of romantic intent: "I am not ready to part with my heart."

One night two years ago, Hilda found Arne alone by the docks, having wandered away from the latest celebratory feast in his honour. He sat watching the fishing boats bob with the incoming tide. When she sat beside him, he said, "I am finally the hero everyone wants me to be, am I not? Will you consider my proposal?" Out of habit, Hilda began to answer with her usual phrase, but this time she stopped herself. For, she realized, she had already parted with her heart. And so, she took Arne's hands and told him of the love that had bloomed these last months between her and Yrsa, the Fisherwoman.

Arne was happy that she had such love in her life. But when Hilda told him that she wished he could find the same happiness, his face crumpled. A confession spilled from him,

revealing the most terrible truths he had hid from everyone all these years. He was no hero, and he never had been. When faced with foes he could not defeat—and fearful of his father's wrath—Arne took the coward's way out, letting others fight his battles, and then ensuring none told their tales. Shaken by Arne's confession, Hilda refused to abandon her friend. They had been there for each other their whole lives. She would not stop now. She encouraged him to tell his father, and then to set down his sword and take up his fishing net again. The next day, Arne was dead.



**Challenge:** Gain Hilda's trust such that she opens up about her relationship with Arne.

**Advantage criteria:** If the Hero succeeded in a challenge with Yrsa the Fisherwoman.

**Disadvantage criteria:** If the Hero failed in a challenge with Yrsa the Fisherwoman, or if the Hero succeeded in a challenge with Bo the Blacksmith.

**Follower hook:** Activate a Follower with a Gift related to physical strength to increase success by one level.

### Results:

- **Success by 5 or more:** In addition, she suggests that there is more to Arne's story than most know. He was lost in his father's shadow. Heroes are not always what the stories make them out to be. With a sigh she says that she had hoped the truth might set Arne free. If pressed for more information, she tells the Hero that some truths are not hers to tell.
- **Success:** Hilda shares that the first night the dréag attacked a fisherwoman walking home from the docks, she held off the Monster as the woman escaped. In the moment the dréag should have had the best of Hilda, the creature pulled away. She knocked off its helm, revealing Arne's decomposing face. As Hilda backed away in horror, the dréag picked up its helm, looked at her forlornly, and walked away into the night. The love he had for her in life was more powerful than the undead hunger to consume flesh.
- **Failure:** Hilda scoffs at the Hero, saying the dréag will make short work of them, and then Herrogate can get back to the business of dying.
- **Failure by 5 or more:** In addition, the Hero will have disadvantage in any further challenge with Hilda.

**Further Challenge:** See "Hilda the Spear Reveals Herself."

**Recruitment:** If the Hero has an opening for a new Follower, Hilda the Spear may be temporarily recruited, but not before the events of the Twilight Attack. She will never leave Yrsa to go adventuring with the Hero on a permanent basis.



## YRSA THE FISHERWOMAN

A short woman with calloused hands and muscled arms, Yrsa the Fisherwoman has little patience for tiptoeing around things. She's fond of saying, "If you want to catch a fish, then go catch a fish but don't waste your time talking about it." Yrsa's practical nature and appreciation for solitude make her a natural on the water. Her nets are always full. She ensures her friends and family—including her love, Hilda the Spear—never go hungry.



**Challenge:** To demonstrate that they are here to deal in the truth—and thus Yrsa will not be wasting her time sharing what she knows. This is a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check.

**Advantage criteria:** A Hero who gets right to the point creates advantage.

**Disadvantage criteria:** Flattery will get the Hero nowhere. Any attempt to flatter or sweet-talk Yrsa will create disadvantage.

**Follower hook:** If a Follower has a Gift related to the Whale Road, activate them to increase a success one level.

### Results:

- **Success by 5 or more:** Yrsa doesn't believe that the death of Thorfinn's wife was an accident. The eorl's wife was one of the settlement's best fisherwomen; if she drowned on a clear day it was because she wanted to end her own life.
- **Success:** The truth has a way of finding its way to the surface like a fish in a net. Yrsa shares the tale of one of Arne's first heroic deeds, the Troll of Holmstad. She encourages the Hero to seek out the boy Scop—now a grown man—as he may have some interesting truths to tell.
- **Failure:** Yrsa suggests the Hero is not interested in rooting out the truth. Her time is better spent fishing than wasting another breath speaking to the Hero.
- **Failure by 5 or more:** In addition to the above, Yrsa speaks ill of the Hero so vehemently to Hilda the Spear that she becomes unavailable for recruitment as a temporary Follower.

**Further Challenge:** None

**Recruitment:** Yrsa the Fisherwoman has no desire to follow heroes on grand adventures.

## THE MOST INFAMOUS TALES OF ARNE

The Hero can learn these tales from any of the people in the eorl's longhouse, excepting Thorfinn.

### *The Troll of Holmstad*

For his first heroic deed nearly eight years ago, Arne travelled by sea to the settlement of Holmstad on the Isle of Holm. A troll had plagued the settlement for months, eating through their sheep, goats, and other livestock. With winter approaching, the common folk feared they would not make it through the lean months—and that the troll might soon eat them too. Being both brave and clever, Arne headed to the caves above the settlement to spy upon the troll for two days and two nights, making note of its haunts and habits. Once he had formulated a plan, he rallied two of the settlement's strongest warriors and led them to victory in a great battle. Though only Arne survived, a young boy who was a budding scop witnessed the fight and sung the tale of Arne and the warriors' daring and bravery to anyone who would listen. Even today, many a traveller has been known to leave Holmstad humming the scop's tune of the troll's defeat and the mighty axe that broke in two when Arne cleaved the monster.

On a calm day, the Isle of Holm is a short trip by boat.



### *The Silent Sanctuary*

Four years ago, a messenger arrived in Herrogate seeking Arne's aid in repelling raiders from the Silent Sanctuary, an isolated monastery down the coast. Perched on a cliff overlooking the wave-tossed sea, the monks at the sanctuary were peaceful, living in silent reflection and study. Only those who wished to join the monks travelled there; all others were unwelcome distractions. They grew their own food and brewed their own ale. They needed nor wanted anything from the outside world.



Arne could not help but answer the monks' call. Outnumbered, he challenged the leader of the raiders to single combat with swords. If Arne bested the warrior, the raiders would leave. If he lost, the raiders could take the monastery's riches. When Arne emerged victorious, the raiders slunk back to their ships, promising never to return.

The Silent Sanctuary is located on the coast south of Herrogate, a short trip by boat or a day's travel by foot along a perilous coastal path.

## OUTCOMES

The Hero will have gained insight into the dréag's strength and invulnerability to normal weapons. Even if the creature's identity is not fully clear, the Hero will have enough information to connect Arne's family to the dréag's presence. With knowledge of at least one of the tales of Arne's deeds—and the questions and doubts surrounding Arne and his friends, family, and legacy—the Hero can decide where to begin their investigation. The locations of the tales of Arne can be investigated in any order.

When the Hero leaves the longhouse, it is not yet midday, providing ample time to depart the settlement for any of the sites before the dréag emerges at nightfall. If the Hero opts to remain in Herrogate and confront the dréag, they will not be able to defeat the Monster. The Hero's Followers will need to rescue them at great risk.



## THE INVESTIGATION BEGINS

- The graveyard of Herrogate
- The Isle of Holm
- Nightfall attack from the eorl's guards in disguise
- Hilda the Spear reveals herself

## THE GRAVEYARD OF HERROGATE

Uneven rows of moss-laden, sunken stones mark this lumpy grassland. The wall that once surrounded the cemetery is now nothing more than a crumbling ruin. In the centre of the graveyard, the Hero may find Thorfinn's family burial mound built into the side of a hill. The mound is open, its door split in two, broken from the inside. If the Hero chooses to linger here until nightfall, the dréag will push aside the lid of the stone sarcophagus and rise from Arne's crypt. However, since the creature cannot be defeated with ordinary weapons, to stay would invite death unless the Hero has already discovered how to defeat the dréag!

## THE ISLE OF HOLM

Also known as the "friendly isle," the Isle of Holm appears greener and lusher than its neighbours in any season. Known for its fine wool and finer meat, most of the small island is dedicated to pastureland. Holmstad, the sole settlement on the island, is nestled along the rocky shoreline.

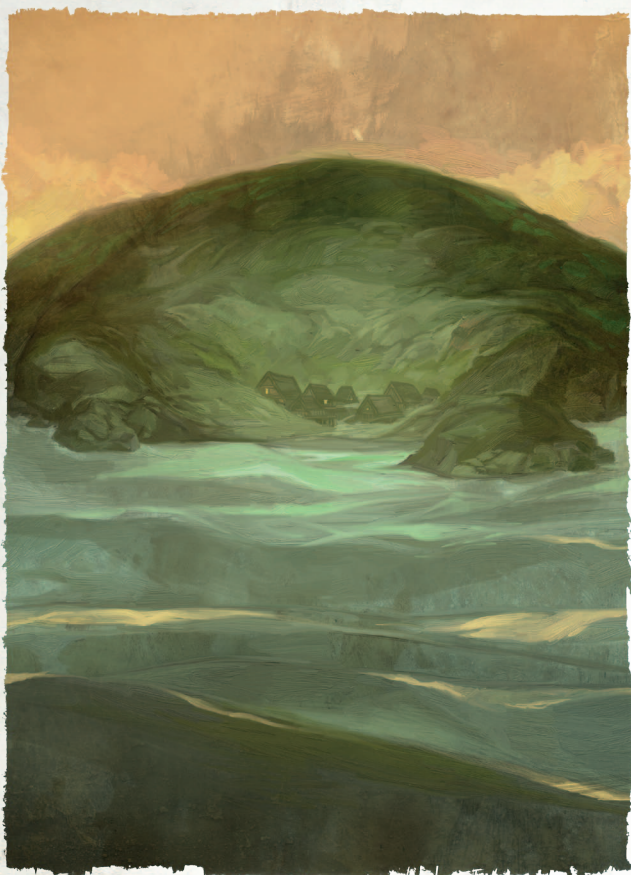
Dozens of stone houses with thatched roofs cluster around a central square, where children play at carding wool, bakers and shepherds barter for goods, and old men and women chat and knit in the warmth of the sun. For in Holmstad, hands are not meant to be idle.

When the Hero arrives, the contrast between the people of Herrogate and the people of Holmstad will be immediate: where the former dwells beneath an uncomfortable blanket of silence and suspicion, the latter is filled with laughter and openness.

As the Hero enters the settlement, a wizened woman approaches. On her arm, she carries a basket full of brightly coloured yarns. As she waves to get the Hero's attention, the basket falls from her grip. Yarn balls—ochre yellow, cobalt blue, madder red—spill across the ground. The woman cries out and quickly kneels to begin collecting the yarn.







## THE FESTIVAL

Each spring the people of Holmstad gather to celebrate the day Arne defeated the troll and freed the people from fear and want. At the centre of the festival is a re-enactment of the battle. A lamb is tied to a stake in the clearing just outside the troll's cave. A person wearing a troll costume emerges and kills the lamb. But, just as the troll is poised to feast, another person dressed as the hero Arne leaps from the bushes. When "Arne" deals the killing blow to the troll with an axe, the axe head splits in two. As the common folk cheer, the Scop emerges from the cave, carrying the remaining broken half of the original axe head that Arne himself wielded, brought out from its place of honour in the assembly hall. After the assembly members deliver their rousing speeches, all in attendance enjoy a great feast of lamb.

This adventure is written as if the festival is not occurring during the Hero's visit. However, you may choose to have the festival or its preparations coincide with the Hero's arrival. If that is the case, feel free to use the festival details to enhance the settings and scenes of the Hero's time in Holmstad.

## FRIDA THE WEAVER

Frida is stocky with long white hair pulled into a thick braid. One of the island's most skilled weavers, Frida is known for the vibrant colours of her yarn and the striking creativity of her designs. Indeed, intricate embroidery covers the yoke of her dress and encircles the hem of her ankle-length skirt. Frida is also a respected member of the assembly, the governing body of Holmstad.



Frida will freely share two pieces of information that are common knowledge in the settlement:

- If asked, she will direct the Hero to the Scop's workshop.
- If Arne is mentioned, she will share that, each year the settlement holds a great festival to re-enact Arne's heroic victory against the troll. See "The Festival."

**Challenge:** To demonstrate that the Hero means neither harm nor ill will toward the people of Holmstad.

**Advantage criteria:** If the Hero helps Frida collect the spilled yarn.

**Disadvantage criteria:** If the Hero does not help Frida collect the spilled yarn.

**Follower hook:** Activate any Follower with a Gift related to craft or any artisanal profession to raise a success by one level.

### Results:

- **Success by 5 or more:** In addition, Frida says that the Scop loved Arne so much that he still goes each evening to the site of the battle outside the troll's cave to thank the gods for bringing Arne to Holmstad. Visiting the cave, one cannot help but sense the true power of Arne's bravery.
- **Success:** Frida reveals that the Scop witnessed the great battle with his own eyes—and ever since the poor boy's bad luck has turned around.
- **Failure:** Frida recommends the Hero spend some time at the troll's cave. Perhaps, if they are lucky, some of Arne's heroic spirit might rub off on them.
- **Failure by 5 or more:** Frida walks the Hero to the Scop's workshop where she prefaces her introduction by disparaging the Hero. The Hero's interaction with the Scop is now at disadvantage.

**Further Challenge:** None

**Recruitment:** Not Possible



## THE SCOP OF HOLMSTAD

A slight young man with a musical voice, the Scop of Holmstad is never seen without his lyre. An artist in every sense, the Scop crafted the fine wooden instrument himself. Dressed in a simple brown tunic, his shaggy hair spills out from beneath his fur-trimmed leather cap.

For eight years, the Scop has sung the praises of Arne in defeating the troll. Yet there are truths between the verses that he has never dared share with another soul, for he and Arne had made an agreement.

When Arne first came to Holmstad, the Scop had been twelve years old, a hungry orphan living on the scraps his poor aunt and uncle could spare after feeding their own six children. He'd greeted Arne at the docks, hoping to become a Follower and find a path to a better life. Arne had indulged the boy, asking him for a tour of the settlement, sharing a loaf of bread and a chunk of hard cheese. But when it had come time to fight the troll, Arne had bidden the young Scop to stay behind.

The boy had disobeyed. Hiding in the bushes near the troll's cave, he'd witnessed Arne running away after taunting the beast. Arne had cowered behind a boulder while the two warriors from the settlement gave their lives defeating the monster.

Only when the battle was done had Arne emerged to claim the victory as his own. As Arne took up the shattered axe that had dealt the killing blow, he'd heard a rustle in the bushes. The hero called for the spy to come forward. And so, the young Scop had.

Trembling with fear, the boy admitted he had seen everything. He'd seen Arne's cowardice. But Arne had argued what the point of telling the truth now would be. Wouldn't it be better for the Isle of Holm to celebrate a hero? And wasn't the young Scop the perfect one to tell the tale? To sweeten the deal, Arne had offered to come back once a season with coin for the boy. And, when the boy became old enough, Arne would take him on as a Follower.

The young Scop did not ponder long, for Arne offered him a path out of hardship. He wrote the song of Arne's heroism and sang it to all who would listen. Over the years, he used

Arne's funds to learn the art of woodworking and, later, to open a workshop. Two years ago, Arne stopped coming to Holmstad, but still the Scop kept his secret. He did not want to rob the people of their hero. He did not want to rob himself of his hero.



**Challenge:** To convince the Scop to share the true story hidden behind the legend.

**Advantage criteria:** If the Hero first asks the Scop to take him to the troll's cave or if the Hero is already in possession of the axe from the Troll's cave.

**Disadvantage criteria:** If the Hero disparages Arne or if Frida the Weaver disparages the Hero in front of the Scop.

**Follower hook:** If a Follower has a Gift related to music or poetry, the Hero may activate that Follower to raise a success by one level.

### Results:

- **Success by 5 or more:** In addition, the Scop confesses the whole truth of what occurred during Arne's battle with the troll. But he presses the Hero to keep the truth close. For while Arne might not have been the great hero he professed to be, he still inspired the settlement warriors and changed the Scop's life for the better. Who is to say that the common folk, left to their own devices, would not have all eventually succumbed to the troll?
- **Success:** The Scop admits that Arne gave him money to write an epic song of his victory over the troll, and that for years after Arne continued to pay him to spread the tale. The Scop adds that: "Kindness done for selfish reasons is still kindness nonetheless."
- **Failure:** The Scop tells the Hero to come back once they've seen the troll's cave for themselves.
- **Failure by 5 or more:** In addition, the Scop tells the Hero to listen to the song if they want to know about Arne. The Scop then pulls out his lyre and starts singing the ballad.

**Further Challenge:** If the Hero discovers the axe in the troll's cave and brings it to the Scop, they may have a second chance at this encounter.

**Recruitment:** If the Hero has an opening for a new Follower after defeating the dréag, the Scop becomes available.



## THE TROLL'S CAVE AND THE BATTLE SITE

The troll's cave is located on a hillside a half hour's walk from the settlement centre. Tall grasses and wildflowers cover this land. As re-enacted at the festival, the battle occurred in a clearing just outside the troll's cave. Today, a standing stone marks the spot where Arne is said to have delivered the killing blow. On the stone is a carving of a lamb tied to a post and a gallant man wielding an axe. A ring of carefully arranged stones demarcates the clearing and the earth within has been trampled by many feet.



Cool damp air wafts from the large cave entrance. Within, the cave is larger than might be expected, with plenty of room for an troll to laze about after a filling meal of livestock and common folk. A trickle of water down the stone in the back of the cave seeds a small pool worn into the surface of a large boulder. Beside the pool, a pile of animal bones from the troll's feasts remains undisturbed—a reminder to all of the suffering the community endured.

Searching the battle site and the troll's cave for clues requires a DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check. If successful, the Hero notices subtle handholds in the cavern wall leading up to a ledge some 40 feet above them.

Climbing to the ledge successfully requires a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check. If the Hero fails this check, they suffer 1d4 bludgeoning damage from bruises and scrapes on the way down. If the Hero fails by 5 or more, they take a significant tumble, suffering 3d6 bludgeoning damage.

Tucked away in the secret ledge, the Hero finds a weapon wrapped in course cloth. Unwrapping the bundle reveals a most strange and beautiful axe. The axe blade is but half a blade, as if the other half has broken away. Upon the axe handle, someone has carved the true story of Arne's defeat of the troll—and the tale is nothing like what the Hero has heard. This story can be found in the description of the Scop.



If the Player activates a Follower with the woodworking Gift, they will recognize the craftsmanship. It belongs to the Scop, as it bears striking similarities to the artistry seen in the Scop's workshop.

If the Hero is with the Scop when they find the axe, or brings the axe to the Scop, the Scop's positive demeanour cracks upon seeing the weapon. He confesses that he longs to put down the weight of Arne's tale. If the Hero succeeded in their encounter with the Scop, the Scop speaks with new hope and thanks the Hero for relieving him of this burden.

If the Hero failed in their encounter with the Scop, he speaks with anger and resignation, and asks the Hero to leave and not return. The Scop's parting words: "The story is now yours to do with as you see fit. Make a better ending than I could."

## TWILIGHT ATTACK

As twilight falls, the Hero may find themselves returning from the troll's cave or settling in for the night in their boat. Regardless, a group of five warriors leaps from the shadows and attacks the Hero and their Followers. Dressed as raiders, the warriors fight fiercely, showing great skill with spear and shield. If the attack occurs near the docks, the Hero may notice that the attackers' boat bears no markings identifying them as members of any known community.



## RAIDERS

*Medium human, old ways*

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

**Armor Class** 14 (iron-ribbed helm, shield)**Hit Points** 11 (2d8 +2)**Speed** 30 ft.**Saving Throws** Wis +2**Senses** passive Perception 10**Languages** English**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

**Defeatable.** At the end of their turn, the current leader of the raiders must make a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw if one or more raiders were killed during that turn, becoming defeated on a failure. If the raiders outnumber their enemies, the leader has advantage on the saving throw. If they become defeated, all of the raiders flee, attempting to return to their ship.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The raider makes a spear attack and a shield bash.

**Spear.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft or range 20/60 ft, one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, or 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage if used in two hands.

**Shield Bash.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft, one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

## REACTIONS

**Parry.** The bandit adds 2 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the bandit must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

**Gifts:** Fierce, Shield Attack

## HILDA THE SPEAR REVEALS HERSELF

Regardless of whether the Hero defeats the attackers or retreats, Hilda the Spear soon emerges from the darkness. She tells the Hero that these were no mere raiders. The attackers were the eorl's warriors in disguise. She knew she was right not to trust Thorfinn.

If the Hero made a poor impression on Hilda in Herrogate, this is their chance to try again. Upon a success, Hilda will reveal

more about her friendship with Arne and, for the first time, share Arne's confession about the truth of his false heroism. Hilda will ask to accompany the Hero on their continuing investigation. For, despite his faults, she loved Arne as a brother, and she remains loyal to her friend. She would see the truth behind his death revealed.

If the Hero has an opening for a Follower, and they did not make a poor impression on her, they may now attempt to recruit Hilda.

## UNRAVELING ARNE'S SECRETS

- The Silent Sanctuary
- Tragedy on the Road to Herrogate

## THE SILENT SANCTUARY

### ACCESSING THE SANCTUARY

Located on the coast south of Herrogate, the Hero can reach the Silent Sanctuary by boat or by foot. If departing from Herrogate, the journey is five hours by sea or one day on foot.

If approaching by sea, the first view of the sanctuary will be the imposing grey cliffs upon which it is built. At 40 feet high, the sheer rock makes the sanctuary virtually impenetrable but for narrow stone stairs carved into the cliff face. However, scaling this



staircase is no easy feat. The lower stairs are slick with seawater and worn smooth by the waves. Higher up, the stairs have crumbled in places, making for a treacherous ascent. In the water below, jagged rocks surround the narrow stone dock, making for an equally treacherous landing.

To climb the stone stairs requires two successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) checks. Each check represents 20 feet of stairs. If the Hero is using rope to secure themselves and their Followers, they may make these checks at advantage. Should the Hero fail, they slip and fall:

- On a failure, the Hero slips but grabs on to a large open crack in the rockface with both hands. If this is the first check and the Hero is using rope, they no longer enjoy advantage on the second attempt.
- On a failure by 5 or more, the Hero tumbles to the bottom. If they were using rope, the rope breaks! The Hero takes 1d6 bludgeoning damage for every 10 feet they fall. Miraculously, they miss the jagged rocks by mere inches and land on a small patch of damp, pebbly sand. As the sea crashes in and rolls out, the Hero notices an ancient, rusted sword wedged in deep between the crags. See **The Blind Monk** for the history of this sword.

If approaching by land, the Hero will need to traverse a perilous foot path that follows the top of the cliffs. In some places the path is overgrown with brush, in others it appears to be washed out by rains. In these cases, the Hero may veer inland, cutting through the thorny brush. Just before reaching the monastery, the Hero must cross a ravine 15 feet wide and 20 feet deep. A felled tree currently spans the gap, though the remains of a bridge are clear to see. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that the damage to the bridge was most likely man-made, rather than natural.

The Hero suffers 1d10 piercing damage while cutting through the thorny brush. They take half that damage with a successful Dexterity saving throw.

Balancing on the felled tree to cross the ravine requires a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check.

- On a failure, the Hero loses their balance but grabs hold of a thick branch in the nick of time and pulls themselves back onto the trunk. They will need to make the check again to complete the crossing.
- On a failure by 5 or more, the Hero takes 2d6 bludgeoning damage. Followers should be able to climb down and retrieve the Hero without too much fuss.

Whether approaching by land or sea, the Hero may begin to sense that something is amiss in the Silent Sanctuary. While the monks

have taken a vow of poverty, why would they allow the access to their monastery to fall into such disrepair, some of it done intentionally? The Hero will soon find out.

## INSIDE THE SANCTUARY

Upon successfully scaling the cliffs or crossing the ravine, the Hero finds the wooden ramparts that once surrounded the sanctuary have been burned to the ground. Within, the monastery appears to have been destroyed by fire. Only one wall of the main building still stands, the stones blackened and crumbling. The many outbuildings are in similar states. It appears as if the monastery was destroyed several seasons ago and that no one has set foot here since.

As the Hero explores the ruins, they may notice a movement out of the corner of their eye. Could it be an animal? Is someone there, watching from the shadows?

While every structure within the burned ramparts has been destroyed, a single stone building just beyond appears to be still intact. As the Hero draws closer, a scrawny boy leaps into their path brandishing a sharpened stick. The boy warns them to stay away, having lost enough already. Hearing the commotion, a bent old man emerges from the small building. The man tells the boy to step aside, saying that, if the end has finally come, he will accept it.





## THE BLIND MONK

The old man wears traditional monk's garb: a long brown tunic made of coarsely woven fabric and tied at the waist with a length of rope. He appears painfully thin, his head bald and his back curved. He carries a walking stick and a milky fog clouds his eyes. The monk speaks slowly and quietly, his words carrying the weight of wisdom.

The monk remembers the night the raiders came to the Silent Sanctuary like it happened days, not years, ago. By the time Arne arrived that night, the monastery was already aflame. Screams filled the night and smoke choked the air. The monk had done his best to protect the boy while the battle raged around them.

While Arne and his Followers fought valiantly, soon all but Arne fell to the raiders' blades and superior numbers. The raiders dragged the monk and the boy from their hiding place, the last survivors of the massacre. Seeing the day was lost, Arne begged for a truce, offering the treasure within the monastery in exchange for his own life and the lives of the blind monk and the boy. The leader of the raiders laughed, declaring that he needed only to kill Arne and the monastery's treasures would be his for the taking. Desperate, Arne offered the raiders his family's sword—an ancient weapon believed by his kin to have been forged by a witch using the powers of the Old Ways.

The leader agreed, allowing Arne to travel back to Herrogate with two guards while the raiders held the boy and the monk hostage. While Arne was away, the raiders looted the monastery and set fire to any remaining buildings. The monk and the boy huddled among the ashes, awaiting their fate surrounded by the crackle of the flames and the cackle of hard men's laughter.

The monk did not expect Arne to return. He had met heroes in his time, and most failed to live up to the legends they cultivated. Heroes were as likely to be liars as to be saviours. Besides, Arne knew neither monk nor boy, why would he care whether they lived or died?

Yet Arne held true to his word, returning at dawn with the ancient sword. When Arne handed it over to the raiders, the leader balked, for it appeared to be nothing more than a dulled and pitted blade, the supposed symbols of power all but worn away. Enraged, the leader knocked Arne over the head with the hilt of the weapon, unknowingly breaking off the crystal from the pommel and knocking Arne unconscious. Then, the raider threw the blade into the sea before leaving with his men.

In response to the Hero's first enquiries, the monk requests that the Hero and their Followers perform a series of three seemingly mundane tasks:

1. Find and pull the wild stinging nettles in the garden, which is hidden behind an overgrown hedgerow.
2. Harvest a pouch of cloudberry leaves from the forest.
3. Find the wild mint growing among the ruins and bring back several sprigs.



If the Hero completes these tasks, the monk will gently mash the stinging nettles, cloudberry leaves, and mint in a pestle—and proceed to brew a warm drink of steeped herbs.

**Challenge:** To convince the monk that the Hero cares not for glory. Words alone will not suffice. Instead, the Hero must undertake three tasks, each requiring a DC 10 Intelligence (Nature) check.

**Advantage criteria:** If the Hero completes the tasks the monk assigns without question or complaint.

**Disadvantage criteria:** If the Hero questions or fails at the tasks the monk has given them.

**Follower hook:** A Church-aligned Follower provides advantage.

### Results:

- **Success by 5 or more:** In addition, the monk offers to let the Hero read the sacred texts he and the boy have been transcribing. Perhaps something within will help them defeat the dréag.
- **Success:** The monk tells the Hero the true story of what happened in the monastery the night Arne came. He concludes with a note of wisdom: "A Hero's greatest triumph may too easily become their greatest weakness."
- **Failure:** The monk tells the Hero that Arne was a good enough fighter, but not good enough to save the monastery.
- **Failure by 5 or more:** As above except further challenges in this scene are now at disadvantage.

**Further Challenge:** None

**Recruitment:** Not Possible.



## THE NAMELESS BOY

At ten years old, the boy appears small for his age—wiry, thin, and nearly feral. His shoulder-length sandy hair is shaggy and uneven, as if it has been cut by a blunt blade and an unsteady hand. His threadbare trousers do not even reach his muddy bare ankles. Mud cakes his feet. He wears a shirt three sizes too large, nipped in at the waist by a length of fraying rope.

The nameless boy has been at the monastery going on six years. He recalls little of his life before, save for the day he lost his home. Raiders attacked his family's farm, killing his parents and lighting the homestead on fire. He ran and hid in the woods for several days, keeping on the move, sleeping in the underbrush. Lost and starving, he stumbled onto the monastery quite by accident.

The monks took him in, and he has served them faithfully ever since. He was at peace in his new life until raiders came and took everything from him yet again. The boy wants only to find peace again for himself and the blind monk. To him, that means keeping outsiders away.

**Challenge:** To convince the Nameless Boy that the Hero means no harm.

**Advantage criteria:** If the Hero offers the child food, clothing, or another gift.

**Disadvantage criteria:** If the Hero behaves in any way that could be perceived as a threat to the blind monk or if the Hero is in possession of the ancient, rusted sword found

wedged in the rocks below the monastery.

**Follower hook:** If a Follower has a Gift related to the Church, activate them to raise the success by one level.

### Results:

- **Success by 5 or more:** In addition, the boy offers the Hero the crystal, for, like Arne, it only reminds him of what he has lost.
- **Success:** The boy shows the Hero a crystal that broke off of the pommel of the sword Arne gave to the raiders. Arne refused to take the crystal back with him and gave it to the boy for safekeeping, for Arne had no use for yet another reminder of how he had betrayed his family and their legacy.
- **Failure:** The boy tells the Hero they should not have come. The path to arrive here is difficult for a reason. Next time, they should learn to read the signs—and take heed when they are not welcome.
- **Failure by 5 or more:** The boy tells the Hero they should talk less and work more. He points to the thatched roof of the shelter he shares with the monk and says, "You can start by fixing that hole."



**Further Challenge:** None

**Recruitment:** Not possible. The Nameless Boy won't leave the Blind Monk.

## THE SACRED TEXTS

The raiders' fire destroyed everything within the monastery, including the monks' sacred and mystical texts, ancient scrolls passed down through centuries. While a great loss, it is the only loss suffered by the monk and the boy that can be righted. For, as the monk's eyesight faded over many years, he had determined to memorize the texts so he would never be without them. In the ruins of the sanctuary, the monk has been reciting the texts aloud for the boy to commit once again to paper. There are several ways the Hero may gain the opportunity to review these texts:

- A success of 5 or more in their encounter with the monk.
- Assisting the boy with a task, such as thatching the roof.
- Inquiring about a scroll left on a table inside the shelter shared by the monk and the boy.
- Offering additional assistance to the monk and boy beyond what is asked.

After much study, the Hero will find some wisdom within the scrolls:

- A dréag may rise to torment a person or people who wronged them. The manner of their death may hold the key to why the person could not rest in death.
- Sometimes, to defeat a dréag, one must understand the person who became the dréag—their strengths, their weaknesses, their loves, their hates. With this understanding, one can craft a weapon capable of defeating the Monster and providing peace to the tormented spirit within.
- A dréag may treasure away a sliver of their human existence. Commonly this is a continuing bond with the one they loved most dearly in life. Brought to the fore at the right moment, this sliver may make them more vulnerable.



- The truth is a powerful weapon against monsters mystical and human alike.

If the Hero needs assistance figuring out what these clues mean, a Follower with the Learned (Old Ways) Gift can be activated to interpret them. The Follower must pass a DC 10 Intelligence check or become spent. If successful, they see that:

- If Hilda is with the Hero in the final confrontation with the dréag, she provides advantage.
- To defeat the dréag the Hero will need to fashion a new weapon that encompasses both Arne's strengths and weaknesses—for example, a weapon crafted from fragments of broken weapons that played pivotal roles in Arne's attempts to be a hero and his shame at his failures.

On a failure, or if such a Follower is not available, the old monk will take further kindness on the Hero and explain that the relics of Arne's past are the keys to the Hero's fortune.

### THE MONK'S PARTING VISION

In parting, the monk will suggest that, before confronting the dréag, the Hero should understand why Arne became a dréag in death. The monk shares that some nights past he had a vision of a campsite on the road to Herrogate. There, Arne lay in the dirt in a pool of blood as a man with a rich fur cloak wept at the bloody broken seax in his own hand before throwing it into a ditch and slipping away into the night.

### CAMPSITE ON THE ROAD TO HERROGATE

Arne spent his last living night in an unassuming patch of dry grass along the road to Herrogate. Surrounded by open fields on

one side and a thickly wooded hill on the other, the spot promised safety if not comfort. Yet here, death found Arne.

As the Hero and their Followers arrive at the campsite, they will notice that it has been recently used. A firepit ringed with blackened stones hides a few warm embers. The surrounding fields appear to be fallow, though stone walls among the tall wild grasses and an abandoned house suggest this was once farmland. The small wooden house is in disrepair, covered in vines, its roof bowed.

If Hilda is with the Hero, she falls to her knees in the centre of the campsite, dropping her spear and pressing her hands into the dirt. A deep sob escapes her lips. This is the spot where the life left her dearest friend. She had avoided coming here all this time because of the guilt she felt. If only she had not confessed her truth to Arne that night — and inspired him to find his own — then perhaps he would still be among the living.

Investigating the campsite and surrounding area for clues is a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Success reveals faint signs of a path among the grasses leading to the house, as if someone regularly travels from the road to the house, changing their route each time to avoid detection. Is it possible that someone has lived here for some time? Perhaps even long enough to have witnessed Arne's attackers?

If the Hero and their Followers approach the house, more signs of life will become evident. A small well-tended garden with cabbage, beans, peas, and white carrots is hidden by tall grass and piles of stone. A well-trod path circles around the far side of the dwelling, invisible from the road, leading to a small stream at the edge of the fields. A full bucket of water sits beside the door to the dwelling.

A young girl leaps out from the tall grass, wielding a rough staff. *"Tell me your business here!"* she demands.





## BRINDA THE ORPHAN

At 12 years old, Brinda has seen more than her fair share of sorrows. Dirty, thin, and deeply mistrustful, Brinda's heart has hardened against the world. She expects only the worst in humanity. She keeps her tangled dark hair pulled back with a leather strap. Bits of leaves, grass, and sticks cling to her locks. The hem of her green dress is ragged and torn, patches of mismatched fabric cover holes in her skirts and sleeves. She clutches a rough-hewn staff whittled by her own hand.

Brinda has lived in this abandoned house for four, perhaps five, years. She has lost count. She forages in the forest and the overgrown fields, tends her own small garden, hunts in the woods, fishes in the stream. But even so, winters are rough. So when travellers camp along the road, she sneaks through the fields once their fires have died down, and takes what she needs.

Though she has no formal combat training, Brinda has survived her fair share of violent encounters. To protect herself, she has crafted staffs and spears, which she has hidden in the fallow fields that she may be always at the ready. She fancies herself a warrior-in-training and may be especially inclined toward Hilda the Spear. She knows she lacks formal fighting skills, though she makes up for it with speed and determination. The chance to train with a warrior such as Hilda will be especially appealing to her.

Brinda carries many secrets, including the truth of Arne's death. She witnessed it all from her hiding place in the grass. Arne arrived on foot, making camp just before sundown, like any other traveller. He started a fire, unrolled his bedroll, and pulled out some hard bread, salted fish, and a flask. After he ate, he spent hours staring into the fire, drinking and muttering to himself. Sometimes he wept, and in those moments, Brinda turned away from his shame.

She had decided to return to the house, and let the sad man on his way, when a rough voice rang out through the night. "So, this is how I find my son," the man bellowed. The man's rich fur cloak swayed with each step. "Leave me to my peace," Arne had replied. But Brinda knew the young man had no peace. She recognized his torment, a feeling she knew all too well for herself.

The two men's argument became heated until Arne told his father that the truth mattered more than any legacy. He would no longer lie for his father's benefit. "And if the truth kills us all, there are worse things than death," Arne declared. Then he turned in his bedroll, putting his back to his father. A strange calmness descended on Arne's father then. The

look of hatred on his craggy face made Brinda shiver. Without warning, his boot slammed into Arne's back. Arne cried out in pain and tried to scramble away. But his father's kicks and punches rained down until Arne was a sobbing, bloody mess begging for mercy.

"Tell me you will not betray our family," Arne's father growled. But even in his weakened and beaten state, Arne could not be swayed. "To continue lying is a greater betrayal," he answered, blood bubbling on his lips. It was then Arne's father grabbed the knife at his waist and plunged it into Arne's chest. Arne's pained, gasping breaths carried through the grasses like the rustle of wind, until his chest fell still. When his father pulled the knife from Arne's body he swore. The tip of the blade had broken off somewhere. Sparing one last look of disgust for his son, Arne's father flung the broken weapon into the grass—where it landed inches from Brinda—and fled into the darkness, toward Herrogate.

**Challenge:** To put Brinda at ease. Brinda will be suspicious of the Hero and their Followers, whether they are kind or aggressive, for she has seen evil too often hide behind a mask of kindness.

**Advantage criteria:** If Hilda the Spear accompanies the Hero, for Brinda has witnessed Hilda's emotion at the campsite, softening her toward the warrior.

**Disadvantage criteria:** If Hilda is not with the Hero.

**Follower hook:** Activate a Follower with the Pure gift to increase a success by one level.

### Results:

- **Success by 5 or more:** In addition, Brinda reveals the broken blade that killed Arne.
- **Success:** Brinda shares the story of what happened the night Arne died.
- **Failure:** Brinda only tells the Hero that yes, Arne was here, he was sad, and there was a scuffle with another man. But beyond that she saw nothing, for it was not her business to see. However, if the Hero were to go into the woods and bring back something for supper, she might remember something more.
- **Failure by 5 or more:** In addition, Brinda warns the Hero they are meddling in family matters they do not understand.

**Further Challenge:** None

**Recruitment:** If the Hero has an opening for a Follower, Brinda can be recruited at any time.





## SUPPER HUNTING

Hunting up a meal requires a DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check. This is a second chance for the Hero if their initial encounter with Brinda did not go so well. Furthermore, if Brinda did not reveal the broken blade that killed Arne to them, she will do so now on a successful hunt.

## HELPING BRINDA

Before departing, the Hero may wish to aid the girl. Gifts of food, weapons, or other supplies will be welcome, but they will not change Brinda's sad circumstances. If Hilda is with the Hero, Brinda may ask if the warrior will train her. If the Hero succeeded in their encounter with Brinda, she may also be open to the suggestion that she travel to the Silent Sanctuary, where she may find companionship and a semblance of greater safety and peace.

## HILDA'S TRUTH

Upon seeing the broken blade—whether at the campsite or, if she did not travel with the Hero, upon the Hero's return to Herrogate—Hilda will immediately recognize the insignia on the hilt of the seax as belonging to Thorfinn. She will also reach for the pendant around her neck—for it is the broken tip of the seax, found in Arne's wounds.

She knew in her heart Thorfinn could not be trusted. But she could not believe him capable of killing his own son. Hilda will grab her spear and declare that Thorfinn must pay for his crimes. Only then might Arne find peace.

## FACING THE DRÉAG

### FORGING THE WEAPON

Before they can defeat the dréag, the Hero must have a special weapon forged from the weapon fragments collected during their investigation. Each weapon fragment represents both a moment of weakness and heroism in Arne's life:

- The broken axe head is from Arne's first great act of cowardice when he fled from the troll that terrorized Holmstad. Yet there, Arne showed kindness to the young Scop, enabling the boy to escape troubling circumstances and become a respected poet and craftsman. Without Arne's intervention, the Scop's life would likely be very different.
- The crystal was set in the pommel of an ancient sword that was an heirloom in his family. In stealing it to save his own life, Arne violated his family's trust. Yet at the same time, he also saved the lives of the blind monk and the boy at the Silent Sanctuary. Yes, Arne covered up his failure with lies about his own bravery, but without Arne's sacrifice the monk and boy would surely have perished at the raiders' hands.

- Thorfinn's seax broke as father murdered son. Yet in this moment, perhaps more than any other, Arne showed true bravery. He was willing to confront his own lies and failures, no matter the cost.

Forging these three items into one weapon will require a skilled blacksmith. The weapon can take whatever form the Hero prefers. In addition, if the Hero is in possession of the heirloom sword that Arne stole and the raiders discarded, this too can be melted in the blacksmith's fire and used in forging the new weapon. Adding the sword to the weapon will create advantage in the fight against the creature, as well as dealing an additional 1d8 damage. The crystal is not forged as such, but built into the hilt or handle of the weapon as a decorative feature.



Upon returning to Herrogate, the Hero will need to seek out Bo the Blacksmith. Depending upon what happened in the eorl's longhouse at the beginning of this quest, Bo may be more or less helpful to the Hero. As a reminder:

- If the Hero failed in their first encounter with Bo, the blacksmith will charge an exorbitant fee for his services and may not complete the work in a timely manner. This may mean that the dréag attacks again, killing another guard (or even a Follower if the Hero has them stand guard at the gravesite).
- If the Hero had a failure greater than 5, in addition to the above, the blacksmith will do substandard work. When the Hero uses the weapon, it has disadvantage on attack rolls.

No matter what, Bo will make a weapon for the Hero. It is only a matter of time and quality.



## CONFRONTING THORFINN

As the Hero has learned, Arne was tortured by the lie his life had become. Arne longed to tell the truth, no matter how hard and shameful that truth was. Thus, defeating the dréag requires more than simply a special weapon. It requires revealing the truth: the truth of Arne's deeds and the truth of his death.

By now, the Hero will most likely be certain that Thorfinn murdered his son to protect his own reputation. Now they must get Thorfinn to confess.

When Thorfinn is accused of killing his own son out of selfishness, he will first deny the truth. He will call the Hero a lying outsider who came under a guise of peace only to attack with specious lies when the people of Herrogate are at their most vulnerable.

If Hilda is present and confirms the veracity of the Hero's claim, Thorfinn will target her too, arguing that she was never truly faithful to him or to Arne. He may cast aspersions on Hilda, noting that she and Arne were long suspected of having a romance, perhaps she flew into a jealous rage. If Brinda has accompanied the Hero to Herrogate, she may be called upon to testify to what she witnessed at the campsite.

Regardless of the evidence presented, it soon becomes clear that nothing the Hero can say will convince Thorfinn to admit his guilt. To clear his name, he demands trial by combat between himself and the Hero. The Hero will not be able to call upon their Followers for assistance, except if they are going to use the Rescue the Hero Gift. If this happens, the Hero will forfeit the combat and must find another way to get the eorl to admit his guilt, perhaps by confronting the dréag.

Word of the combat spreads quickly, and the people of Herrogate gather to watch the combat. Some cheer their leader while others throw their own accusations at him.

If Brinda is present, Thorfinn fights with disadvantage. If Thorfinn loses half his hit points, he becomes defeated. He drops to his knees, cries for mercy and confesses.

If Thorfinn's confession occurs at night or in the late evening, the moment the words leave his lips a strangled, monstrous howl rises from the cemetery.

The people of Herrogate boo and spit upon their leader, demanding that he be banished from these lands forthwith. At the sound of the dréag's hideous cry, they rush to the safety of the eorl's longhouse but refuse to let Thorfinn inside. He created this Monster that terrorized the settlement, they say, let him suffer its wrath.

### THORFINN

*Medium human*

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

**Armor Class** 12 (Weaponshirt)

**Hit Points** 27 (5d8 + 5)

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Saving Throws** Wis +2

**Senses** passive Perception 10

**Languages** English

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

**Aggressive.** As a bonus action, Thorfinn can move up to his speed toward a hostile creature that he can see.

**Defeatable.** If Thorfinn is at half his Hit Points when his turn ends, he becomes defeated.

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack:** Thorfinn makes two sword attacks. If Thorfinn has a long-seax drawn, he can also make an attack with that weapon.

**Sword. Melee Weapon Attack:** +2 to hit, reach 5ft, one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage.

**Long-Seax. Melee Weapon Attack:** +2 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 +2) piercing damage.

**Gifts:** Bellicose

## FINAL BATTLE

The final confrontation with the dréag is most likely to occur in either the settlement or the cemetery. There are advantages to each.

### THE CEMETERY

The Hero may choose to go to the dréag by planning for a confrontation in the cemetery. Since the dréag only comes out at night, this may give the Hero time to plan for an offensive attack.

Places of note within the cemetery and examples of ways the Hero might utilize them include:

- **Burial mound:** The dréag will emerge from the burial mound at nightfall. The Hero could use this knowledge to plan a surprise attack. For example, they could attack it from above, using the hill of the burial mound as high ground to create advantage, or rig the stones around the entrance to collapse on the dréag as it exits the mound, knocking the Monster prone. The Hero could also attempt to delay or frustrate the creature by barricading the door with boulders.



- *Standing stones:* The Hero could plan to strategically weave through the standing stones during the battle. The standing stones provide half cover (+2 bonus to AC and Dexterity saving throws).
- *Crumbling wall:* The Hero could lure the Monster to the crumbling wall, staging the battle there. The debris reduces the monster's movement by half.

## THE SETTLEMENT

The Hero may choose to *let the dréag come to them* by making preparations to fight the Monster in the settlement. In this case, Thorfinn may offer to serve as bait to lure the dréag to a specific location within the settlement that may provide advantage to the Hero in battle.

If the dréag cried out following Thorfinn's confession, meaning it is evening or night, the Monster will immediately head toward the settlement to attack. This may catch the Hero off guard if they have not prepared—particularly if the weapon is not ready because Bo the Blacksmith has intentionally slowed his work.

Places of note within the settlement and examples of ways the Hero might utilize them include:

- *The docks:* If the Hero convinces Hilda to help lure the creature to the docks—to the place where Hilda and Arne had that fateful conversation that changed Arne's path—the Monster will be confronted forcefully by Arne's enduring love and respect for Hilda. The dréag must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. If it fails, the dréag takes 10 (2d4 + 5) psychic damage. Hilda's presence means that the dréag takes the full damage amount from this self-inflicted wound.
- *Creating barricades:* The Hero could barricade entrances to the settlement or streets within. While the Monster is breaking through the barricades, the Hero could attack from a distance.
- *The Square:* The Hero could plan to lure the Monster to the settlement's square, setting up opportunities for a surprise ambush or strategically creating cover that can be used during the battle. This could take the form of carts, boulders, or other objects.

## DRÉAG ATTACKS

Following Thorfinn's confession, the dréag emerges from the burial mound at sunset. Its tattered rotted mail armour hangs from its decaying limbs. It moves stiffly, dragging a bloody sword along the ground. A rusted helm covers its face, revealing cadaverous lips and chin. The Monster bares its blackened teeth with a growl and then lets out a screech that echoes through the night all the way to the settlement.

The dréag's howls strike fear into common folk and warriors alike, for until now the Monster has only attacked in utter silence. Something has changed. Now that Arne's pain has been laid bare for all to see, the monster's hatred and anger is sharper and clearer than before. The dréag has been terrorizing the settlement to chip away at Thorfinn's resolve. With Thorfinn brought low by the truth, the dréag will stop at nothing to kill him.

If the Hero has constructed barricades in either the cemetery or the settlement, the Monster will tear through them with terrifying ferocity—howling all the louder as it demonstrates its brute strength.

Regardless of the location of the battle, if Thorfinn is present, the dréag will focus exclusively on attacking him, changing tactics only when the Hero lands a damaging blow. Once the dréag realizes that the Hero can cause it harm, it will ignore Thorfinn and attack the Hero.



## DRÉAG DEFEATED

When the dréag's hit points are reduced by half or more, it will realize that the Hero is going to defeat it. If Thorfinn is present, the dréag will turn its attention from the Hero and again attack Thorfinn. Even as the Hero lands more blows, the dréag will tear into the eorl and will not stop until man and Monster are both dead.

If Thorfinn is not present and the dréag's hit points are reduced by half or more, it will flee the battle in search of Thorfinn. The dréag will tear through the settlement to find the eorl, wreaking as much damage as it can in the process. As above, the dréag will be bent on its quest, leaving an opening for the Hero to attack and deal a killing blow.

A Follower with the Learned (Old Ways) Gift can tell the Hero that, to prevent the dréag from rising again, they must cut off its head and bury it back in its grave.



## HERO DEFEATED

If the Hero's hit points are reduced to 0, they will be forced to retreat with the help of their Followers. However, note that, if the Hero is forced to retreat, no one will stand in the path of the dréag as it seeks to kill Thorfinn. The people of Herrogate will be even more terrorized, as they witness the dréag ripping the eorl limb from limb and consuming him.

The Hero will spend a day recovering. But the common folk will offer little in the way of comfort. While they may have come to despise their eorl, the common folk did not wish him dead. Thorfinn's gruesome demise traumatized them and they will not look kindly upon the Hero's failure to protect them. Indeed, the people of Herrogate have been let down by far too many who have professed to be heroes.

Emboldened by the Hero's defeat and Thorfinn's death, the dréag returns the next evening to feast. This time, it will not be distracted by Thorfinn. Instead, all its hatred will be focused on the Hero as it seeks to kill the one who wields the only weapon that can cause it harm. It has benefitted from a long rest and healed any damage it took from the previous night.

## DRÉAG IS DEAD

The dréag has been killed, the settlement is safe, and Arne has finally been put to rest. While this might call for celebration — and indeed, some may celebrate — the common folk will mostly see this as a sombre occasion.

Even as the people are grateful for the Hero's help, they have still lost many of their own to the dréag. They have been disillusioned by those they believed to be leaders and heroes. They must rebuild their community and choose a new eorl. None of this will be easy. Some will seek comfort in a mug of ale, while others will seek to choose a new leader immediately. See "The Future of Herrogate."

Should the Hero return to Arne's crypt they will find 15 pounds of treasure stored inside the stone sarcophagus. Within this hoard is a family heirloom in the form of a finely crafted drinking horn with a decorative wolf carved upon it. The rest of the treasure is made up of pendants, brooches, rings, and coins.

Be sure to let the Hero know that if they take this treasure, they are stealing from the eorl's family. Besides, graverobbing isn't very heroic! At the end of the adventure, if the Hero succeeds in revealing the truth about the eorl's family, then the family becomes unworthy. In this case, a new leader will give the Hero a portion of the old eorl's wealth as a reward. See *Rewards for the Hero*.





## DRÉAG

*Medium undead*

**STR** 18 (+4)   **DEX** 12 (+1)   **CON** 20 (+5)   **INT** 3 (-4)   **WIS** 9 (-1)   **CHA** 6 (-2)

**Armor Class** 14 (Rotted Mail, Rusty Iron Helm)

**Hit Points** 95 (10d8 + 50)

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Saving Throws** Str +6, Con +7, Wis +1

**Senses** passive Perception 9

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Enlarge.** The dréag can use its bonus action to increase in size from Medium to Large. This grants the creature advantage on Strength Checks and Strength Saving Throws. Attacks deal an additional 1d4 damage.

**Enduring Love.** If Hilda the Spear is present in the battle, the dréag is at disadvantage on all attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws.

**Undefeatable.** The dréag is immune to normal weapons. The creature only suffers damage from an attack with a weapon forged from the fragments of the weapons that represented both a moment of weakness and heroism in Arne's life. This is only true, however, if Thorfinn has admitted his guilt.

**Great Shame.** Each successful attack with the weapon forged from the fragments the Hero collected forces the dréag to make a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or suffer an additional 1d10 damage from the attack.

### ACTIONS

**Sword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage

### REACTIONS

The dréag can spend inspiration to force the attacking Hero to make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or become afflicted with short-term madness. Roll on the Madness table for the effect.

### Madness Table

D8	
1-2	Consumed with self-doubt, the Hero has disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws.
3-4	The Hero becomes incapacitated and begins weeping inconsolably.
5-6	Overwhelmed by fear, the Hero becomes frightened of the dréag
7-8	The Hero believes one of their Followers (randomly determined) has betrayed them. The Hero sends the Follower away, preventing them from helping the Hero in battle any more.

**Note:** For effects 1-6 the Hero can repeat the saving throw at the end of their turn, ending the effect on a success.

## RESOLUTION

### THE FUTURE OF HERROGATE

#### WHO WILL LEAD HERROGATE NOW?

While the dréag may be defeated, the people of Herrogate have suffered great losses. Their leader has been revealed as a murderer. Their beloved Arne has been revealed as a fraud—and they were too distracted by how his fame made them feel they failed to see his torment. How are they to move forward? There is more than enough blame to go around. The first step will be for the people to select a leader, one both brave and compassionate. They will gather in the eorl's longhouse to nominate potential candidates.

- First to be nominated is Frode the Wise. Several common folk argue that he has already done much to lead the settlement.

- But Yrsa the Fisherwoman and others protest that Frode has done just as much to harm the settlement. For Frode was the eorl's closest advisor — yet he hid their leader's failings for far too long. When Frode argues that he could not know the depth of Thorfinn's failings, Yrsa will argue that it is worse, for he could not see what was right before his eyes.
- Skard the Shipbuilder will interrupt this argument to nominate Hilda the Spear, citing how she was loyal to the settlement as a whole rather than any single leader.
- Bo will raise a protest against Hilda's nomination, arguing that she kept her own secrets about Arne.

The Hero's recommendations here will carry great weight. The Hero may, for example, speak up to share a story of Hilda's bravery. To influence the outcome, the Hero can make a DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check. If successful, the people will select the leader the Hero recommends. Otherwise, roll a d6; on a 1, 2, or 3, Frode the Wise is selected and on a 4, 5, or 6, Hilda is chosen.



## THORFINN'S PUNISHMENT

If Thorfinn is still alive, Herrogate's new leader will need to decide his fate. If the people selected Hilda the Spear, she will banish Thorfinn and give his guards the opportunity to pledge loyalty to her. If Frode is selected, however, he will pardon Thorfinn, angering the people. In this case, Thorfinn will choose to leave on his own, but the damage to Frode's leadership will already be done. In this case, if the Hero has reason to pass through Herrogate again, they may find the settlement emptied. Frode's weak leadership led many to leave. Raiders attacked those few who remained. Now, instead of telling stories of Arne of Herrogate's bravery, people throughout the region speak in whispers about the fall of Herrogate.

## REWARDS FOR THE HERO

The new leader's second act will be to reward the Hero with treasure. If the Hero defeated the dréag on the first attempt and successfully spoke up for the new leader of Herrogate, they will receive treasure valued at four pounds of silver in addition to four pounds from the treasure found in Arne's crypt. If the Hero failed on the first attempt and defeated the dréag on the second attempt, then they will only receive four pounds of silver. If the Hero failed at their attempt to speak for the new leader, and a different leader was chosen, then they receive half the amount of treasure listed.

## RECRUITING FOLLOWERS

If eligible to add new Followers, the Hero may attempt to recruit Brinda, the Scop, or Skarde the Shipbuilder as Followers. To do this, the Hero will need to pay them ten shillings for each of their Gifts and succeed at a DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check.

## AWARDS

If you're using Achievement awards, you can consider completing the following scenes to be worth an award. If you're using XP, a suggested amount of Experience Points has been given for each section.

### THE SHELTERED BAY (200)

Once the Hero has gained some initial insights into the dréag and learned at least one of the tales of Arne's deeds, this is a success as either a meeting or an investigation.

### THE ISLE OF HOLM

#### Frida the Weaver (200)

If the Hero succeeds with Frida the Weaver then they should receive a meeting award.

#### The Scop of Holmstad (200)

If the Hero succeeds with the Scop of Holmstad then they should receive a meeting award.

#### The Troll's Cave and the Battle Site (200)

If the Hero finds the broken axe hidden in the cave, they should receive half of the investigation award listed. If they learn that

the axe once belonged to the Scop, and bring it to him then they receive the entire amount of the award.

#### Twilight Attack (250)

If the Hero defeats the Raiders, award XP.

#### Hilda the Spear (200)

A successful meeting with Hilda the Spear is worth a meeting award.

## THE SILENT SANCTUARY

#### The Blind Monk (200)

If the Hero succeeds with the Blind Monk then they should receive a meeting award.

#### The Nameless Boy (200)

If the Hero succeeds with the Nameless Boy and acquires the crystal from the pommel then they should receive a meeting award.

#### The Sacred Texts (200)

A successful review of the Sacred Texts is worth an investigation award.

#### Brinda the Orphan (200)

If the Hero succeeds with Brinda the Orphan, learning the truth of Arne's death and revealing the broken seax that killed him, then they should receive a meeting or an investigation award.

#### Hilda's Truth (200)

If the Hero learns that the insignia on the hilt of the broken seax from Brinda the Orphan belongs to Thorfinn and that Hilda possesses the tip of that broken seax within her pendant, then they should receive an investigation award.

## FACING THE DRÉAG

#### Forging the Weapon (200)

If the Hero is in possession of the broken axe, the crystal pommel, and Thorfinn's broken seax and Bo the Blacksmith forges these three weapon fragments into one weapon, then they should receive an investigation award.

#### Confronting Thorfinn (250)

If the Hero reduces Thorfinn to half his hit points in a trial by combat, forcing Thorfinn to confess his dreadful crime, then they should receive an investigation award. They will also earn XP or an award for the battle.

#### Final Battle (700)

Successfully defeating the dréag is worth XP or an Achievement award.

#### The Future of Herrogate (400)

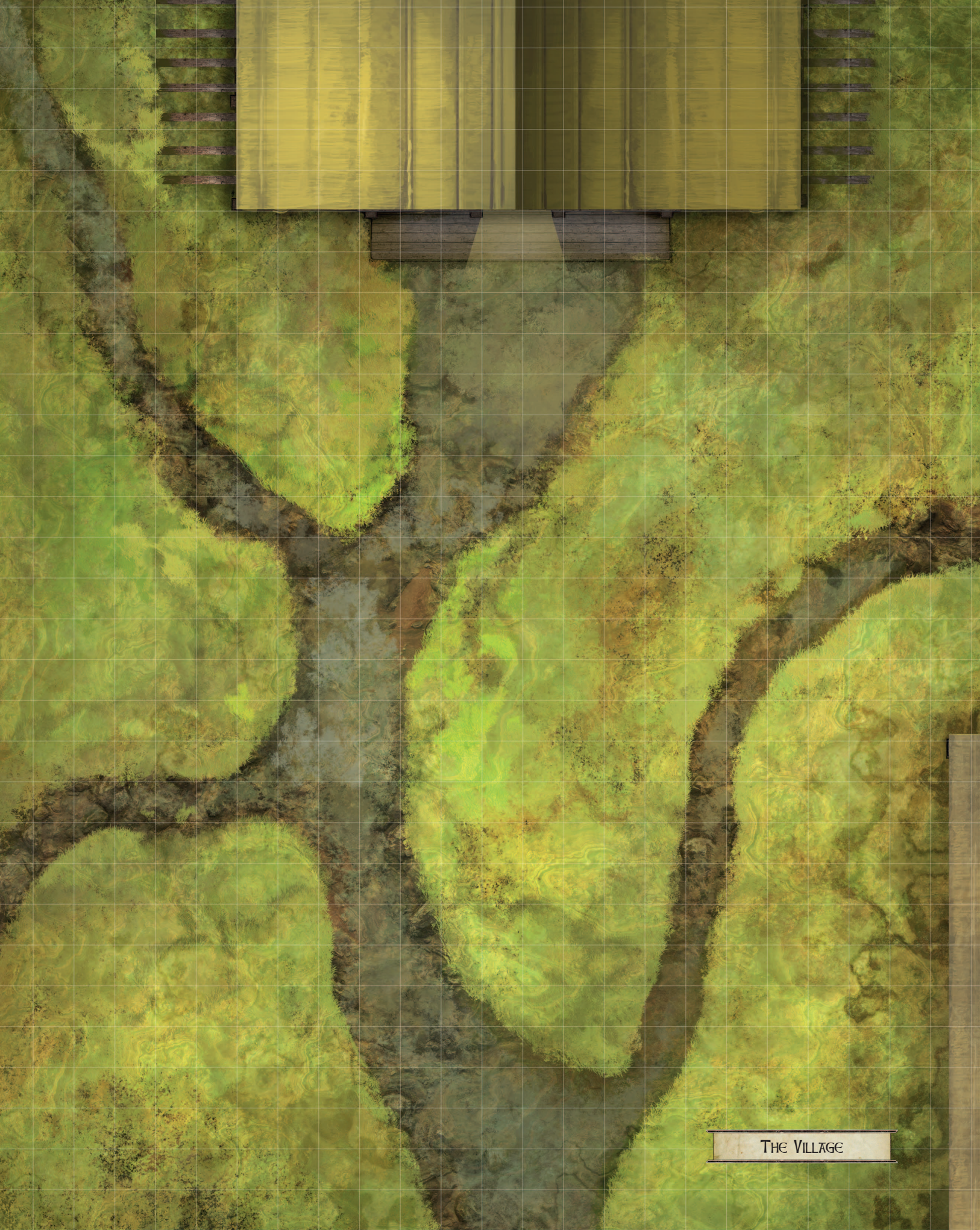
If the Hero helps the people of Herrogate select a new leader who will restore honor and honesty for a better, more prosperous community then they should receive a double Meeting XP reward or two Achievement awards.



THE CEMETERY







THE VILLAGE



THE DOCKS





NAME: Skarde the Shipbuilder  SPENT  SLAIN  KILLED  RELEASED

**BURDENS** **Awkward.** This Follower has disadvantage on Charisma checks.

**GIFTS** **Engage.** When you roll initiative, each Follower with this gift can be assigned up to two opponents in a battle. Engaged opponents spend their turn fighting the Follower unless the Hero is within reach, in which case the opponent can attack the Hero as normal. On the third and subsequent rounds, the Follower must make a death saving throw at the end of the opponent's turn if they were the target of the opponent. At the end of a round, a Follower can disengage from the opponent, becoming spent. Another available Follower can then use this ability to engage an opponent.

**Sailor.** This Follower can serve as a crew member.

**Rescue the Hero.** When this gift is activated, each available Follower with this gift rushes into the fight, trying to save the Hero from certain death. Each activated Follower must make a death saving throw. The hero is rescued and has a chance to take a long rest before the adventure continues.

**Learned (Old Ways).** This Follower can tell the Hero about the ancients and the Old Ways and even a bit about the giants. Activate this Follower to translate Ogham or interpret some other clue. The Follower must make a DC-10 Intelligence saving throw, becoming spent on a failure.

**Weapon-bearer (Axe).** Activate all weapon-bearers to make attack rolls. This Follower does 3 (1d6) slashing damage on a hit.

NAME: Brinda the Orphan  SPENT  SLAIN  KILLED  RELEASED

**BURDENS** **Young.** The Follower is younger than most. When their age or inexperience would likely affect them, they have disadvantage on Intelligence and Wisdom checks.

**GIFTS** **Engage.** When you roll initiative, each Follower with this gift can be assigned up to two opponents in a battle. Engaged opponents spend their turn fighting the Follower unless the Hero is within reach, in which case the opponent can attack the Hero as normal. On the third and subsequent rounds, the Follower must make a death saving throw at the end of the opponent's turn if they were the target of the opponent. At the end of a round, a Follower can disengage from the opponent, becoming spent. Another available Follower can then use this ability to engage an opponent.

**Rescue the Hero.** When this gift is activated, each available Follower with this gift rushes into the fight, trying to save the Hero from certain death. Each activated Follower must make a death saving throw. The hero is rescued and has a chance to take a long rest before the adventure continues.

**Nimble.** This Follower has advantage on Dexterity checks and saving throws.

**Weapon-bearer (Spear).** Activate all weapon-bearers to make attack rolls. This Follower does 3 (1d6) piercing damage on a hit.

NAME: The Scop  SPENT  SLAIN  KILLED  RELEASED

**BURDENS** None.

**GIFTS** **Engage.** When you roll initiative, each Follower with this gift can be assigned up to two opponents in a battle. Engaged opponents spend their turn fighting the Follower unless the Hero is within reach, in which case the opponent can attack the Hero as normal. On the third and subsequent rounds, the Follower must make a death saving throw at the end of the opponent's turn if they were the target of the opponent. At the end of a round, a Follower can disengage from the opponent, becoming spent. Another available Follower can then use this ability to engage an opponent.

**Take a Blow.** When the Hero receives damage from a successful attack, activate this Follower as a reaction. The Follower absorbs the damage and must make a death saving throw.

**Carpenter.** This Follower has advantage on ability checks that involve carpenter's tools.

**Songster.** This Follower has advantage on Charisma (Performance) checks. Spend this Follower to add two tokens to either the Follower or the Hero's Inspiration Pool.

**Merchant.** The Follower knows much about the value of goods and services. Activate this Follower to gain advantage on an ability check for a negotiation. Afterwards, they become spent.

NAME:  SPENT  SLAIN  KILLED  RELEASED

**BURDENS**  SPENT  SLAIN  KILLED  RELEASED

**GIFTS**  SPENT  SLAIN  KILLED  RELEASED



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