



# TITLE

## CREDITS

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Based on *Mythic Iceland* by Pedro Ziviani for *Basic Roleplaying*

## BOILERPLATE

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“When you play, play *hard*.” - Theodore Roosevelt

# THE SCORE

## THE LAND OF ICE AND FIRE

This playset is based on the Icelandic Sagas, written in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries from stories passed down the generations about brave men, mostly living in the years between 850 and 1050, who went abroad in search of fortune as Vikings and who, at the same time, built in Iceland a unique system of democratic self-government based on assemblies of free men.

The players will take the roles of proud farmers, ambitious chieftains, desperate slaves, powerful priests, great poets, dangerous warlocks, and murderous Vikings, embroiled in the many inter-family feuds.

## MOVIE NIGHT

*When the Raven Flies, Shadow of the Raven, Outlaw: The Saga of Gisli, The 13th Warrior, Beowulf & Grendel*

## BOOK CLUB

*Egil's Saga, The Saga of Burnt Njal, The Saga of Grettir the Strong, The Saga of the People of Laxárdalr, The Vinland Sagas*

*"Bad things come from bad plans, and now I see how it has gone."*

- Saga of Burnt Njal

# RELATIONSHIPS...

## 1 FAMILY

- Parent and child
- ◻ Blood or foster siblings
- ◻ Cousins
- ◻ We don't know we are related, but we are
- ◻ Kinsfolk, related but not close
- ◻ Father and bastard

## 2 ROMANCE

- Current spouses
- ◻ Former spouses
- ◻ Secret lovers
- ◻ A love that just can't be
- ◻ Love triangle
- ◻ Broken trust

## 3 THE PAST

- Feuding families
- ◻ A debt never paid
- ◻ Old friends, but now bitter enemies
- ◻ Fought over the same woman / man
- ◻ One responsible for the other's downfall
- ◻ Keepers of a dark secret

## 4 SOCIETY

- ◻ Chieftain and follower
- ◻ Temple priest and faithful
- ◻ Worshipers of the same god
- ◻ Householder and tenant
- ◻ A slave and his/her owner
- ◻ Owner of a war ship, and aspiring Viking raider

## 5 CRIME

- ◻ Murderer and the man he thought he killed
- ◻ Grave robbers
- ◻ Outlaws on the run
- ◻ Secret murderers
- ◻ Bounty hunter and outlaw
- ◻ Witchcraft practitioners

## 6 FRIENDSHIP

- ◻ Went on a Viking raid together
- ◻ Saved my life
- ◻ Childhood friends
- ◻ Served a foreign king together
- ◻ Friendly rivals in all things
- ◻ Built on a lie

**...IN VIKING-AGE ICELAND**

# NEEDS...

## 1 TO GET REVENGE

- ... against those who ruined your life
- ◻◻ ... for the dishonor of someone in the family
- ◻◻◻ ... against a rich and powerful chieftain
- ◻◻◻◻ ... by hunting down an outlaw
- ◻◻◻◻◻ ... for the killing of a relative
- ◻◻◻◻◻◻ ... for the insults that have been said against your family

## 2 TO GAIN HONOR

- ... by winning your case at the National Assembly
- ◻◻ ... by burning the warlock
- ◻◻◻ ... by getting your own farm
- ◻◻◻◻ ... by winning a formal duel
- ◻◻◻◻◻ ... by becoming a chieftain
- ◻◻◻◻◻◻ ... by slaying the toughest warrior in the country

## 3 TO GET RICH

- ... by going on a Viking raid
- ◻◻ ... by taking over a rival's farm, by any means necessary
- ◻◻◻ ... by raiding a dead rich man's grave
- ◻◻◻◻ ... by serving a foreign king
- ◻◻◻◻◻ ... by becoming a great poet
- ◻◻◻◻◻◻ ... by finding the buried silver

## 4 TO GET AWAY

- ☐ ... with murder
- ☐◦ ... from the people trying to kill you
- ☐◦◦ ... from an abusive relationship
- ☐◦◦◦ ... from Iceland
- ☐◦◦◦◦ ... with all the silver
- ☐◦◦◦◦◦ ... from paying the debt you owe

## 5 TO WIN RESPECT

- ☐ ... from your venerable father
- ☐◦ ... from the woman / man you want to marry
- ☐◦◦ ... from your jealous and vengeful neighbors
- ☐◦◦◦ ... from your chieftain
- ☐◦◦◦◦ ... from your family
- ☐◦◦◦◦◦ ... from the crew of the ship

## 6 TO FIND OUT

- ☐ ... who killed your father / relative
- ☐◦ ... how to use rune magic
- ☐◦◦ ... the meaning of a dream
- ☐◦◦◦ ... who the mysterious slave really is
- ☐◦◦◦◦ ... if the dream-prophecy is really going to come true
- ☐◦◦◦◦◦ ... who stole your silver

**...IN VIKING-AGE ICELAND**

# LOCATIONS...

## 1 ALTHING, THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

- The courts of law
- ◻ The law rock
- ◻ The chieftain's tent
- ◻ Drinking hall
- ◻ The brewery
- ◻ An enemy's tent

## 2 THE COUNTRYSIDE

- At the great Water Glacier
- ◻ The sand deserts of the South
- ◻ The Death Cliffs
- ◻ Westman Islands, where the escaped Irish slaves fled to
- ◻ An active volcano
- ◻ A hot spring, where people gather to bathe

## 3 THE HIGHLAND PASS

- The dwellings of an outlaw
- ◻ An ambush, in the middle of nowhere
- ◻ A frozen lake
- ◻ A dangerous climb
- ◻ Deep down a crevice
- ◻ The site of a battle from long ago



## 4 MYTHIC

- ◻ Holy Hill, gateway to Ásgardr, guarded by the Land Spirits
- ◻◦ Hooded Cloak Mountain, gateway to Hel's realm of the dead
- ◻◦ Kola's Canyon, home of the feared troll-wife Kola
- ◻◻ Elf Stronghold Hill, a settlement of the hidden-folk
- ◻◻ Cold Valley, where trolls play gather to play games
- ◻◻◻ The Black School of magic, where Saemundur the Wise teaches

## 5 LANDS TO THE WEST

- ◻ The farm of Erik the Red, Greenland East settlement
- ◻◦ The Arctic Circle, Greenland West settlement
- ◻◦ The unexplored frozen wastes of Greenland
- ◻◻ Vinland camp
- ◻◻ Skraelingar camp in Vinland
- ◻◻◻ Land of the savage One-Legged people in Vinland

## 6 THE VIKING WORLD

- ◻ Raid of a monastery
- ◻◦ Raid of a Saxon village
- ◻◦ The halls of the King of Norway
- ◻◻ Heidabyr, Denmark, the largest town in Scandinavia
- ◻◻ Miklagardr (Constantinople)
- ◻◻◻ The Viking city of Dublin

**...IN VIKING-AGE ICELAND**

# OBJECTS...

## 1 VALUABLE

- A big pile of driftwood
- Egill Skallagrímsson's buried silver
- A beached whale
- Carved bedposts
- A gold bracelet
- A cow

## 2 WEAPON

- The sword named Leg Biter
- A bow with your wife's hair for a string
- A blacksmith's hammer
- A harpoon brought over from Vinland
- A decorated axe, a present from the king of Norway
- Atgeir, a hewing spear

## 3 THE FARM

- A surly redheaded Irish slave
- A contested piece of land with valuable resources
- A wooden chest containing all the belongings of the farm owner
- The farm owner's prized drinking horn
- A barrel of skyr, a type of thick yogurt
- The high seat of the house

## 4 UNTOWARD

- ◻ A severed head
- ◻◦ Clothes stained with another person's blood
- ◻◦ A curse-pole, with the severed head of a horse at the top
- ◻◦◦ Corpse breeches, made from the skin of a dead man's legs
- ◻◦◦ Ingredients for witchcraft
- ◻◦◦ A fresh corpse

## 5 TRANSPORTATION

- ◻ Fast horse
- ◻◦ Fishing boat
- ◻◦ War ship
- ◻◦ Trading ship
- ◻◦◦ Skiis
- ◻◦◦ A block of ice, floating in the open ocean

## 6 MYTHIC

- ◻ A magical gift from the elves
- ◻◦ Piece of bone, carved with magical runes
- ◻◦◦ Healing stone, capable of healing any wound
- ◻◦◦ A berserker warrior
- ◻◦◦ Draugur, the walking dead
- ◻◦◦ A ghost or helper-spirit

**...IN VIKING-AGE ICELAND**

# A VIKING SAGA INSTA-SETUP

## RELATIONSHIPS IN SAGA AGE ICELAND

For three players...

- \* Family: Cousins
- \* Society: A slave and his/her owner
- \* The Past: A debt never paid

For four players, add...

- \* Romance: Secret lovers

For five players, add...

- \* Crime: Outlaws on the run

## NEEDS IN SAGA AGE ICELAND

For three players...

- \* To get revenge... against a rich and powerful chieftain

For four or five players, add...

- \* To find out... who stole your silver

## LOCATIONS IN SAGA AGE ICELAND

For three or four players...

- \* Althing, The National Assembly: The courts of law

For five players, add...

- \* The Highland Pass: An ambush, in the middle of nowhere

## OBJECTS IN SAGA AGE ICELAND

For three, four or five players...

- \* Untoward: A curse-pole, with the severed head of a horse at the top

# NOTES

## ALTHING, THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

In Viking Age Iceland there is no king, but only law. Althing is the annual National Assembly of all chieftains in Iceland, each accompanied by a number of his supporters. It takes place in the summer, when there is uninterrupted daylight. Three legal functions are performed at the Althing: the laws are recited by the Lawspeaker; new laws are created by the Law Council; and the laws are judged by the Quarter Courts.

## RELIGION

The belief in the Norse gods is strong in Iceland. Even after the conversion to Christianity in the year 1000, the old pagan religion remained still a strong faith among the Icelanders.

## SETTLEMENTS

There are no towns in Viking Age Iceland, not even small villages. Society is entirely rural. The population is spread across the country, living in isolated farms. Medium-sized farms have around 15 heads of cattle. The population of Iceland at this time is around 46,000.

## OUTLAWS

Men sentenced by an assembly court to be banished from society because of crimes they have committed. Most often, they flee to the uninhabited highlands in the central region of the country. Life is extremely hard for an outlaw.

## LANDS TO THE WEST

Greenland was settled by Erik the Red and his followers in 985, after he had been outlawed in Iceland. There are two settlements in Greenland, with hundreds of farms each.

Eiríkur's son, Leifur Eiríksson, explored North America in the year 1000, calling it Vinland. There are a few settlements along the coast of Vinland, the southernmost being Hóp, at the location of present day New York harbor. The Norse settlers suffered constant attacks from the natives, who they called skraelingar (men dressed in skins).

The *Vinland Sagas* tell us of the One-Legged, savage humanoid creatures from Vinland, who can hop at great speed even though they only possess one leg. They are fast and vicious, usually attack in small groups, and try to capture live humans to take back to their caves.

# SAGA NAME

The Icelandic Sagas often have evocative names that hint at the fate of the main character in the story. You can use the tables below to name your own saga even before you start playing. Just like the Norns weave the threads of fate, your Saga name will give you a fate to drive toward.

Roll two dice, one white and one black. Assign one die to each of the tables below. If the die you chose is white, pick the first option under the number you rolled. If the the die is black, pick the second.

Each name is accompanied by its meaning in parenthesis.

## THE SAGA OF...

- Male: Bjorn (*Bear*) / Gaukur (*Cuckoo*)
- Male: Hrappur (*Clever*) / Sturla (*Crazy*)
- Male: Egill (*Intimidating*) / Voggur (*Little Man*)
- Female: Astridur (*Passionate*) / Isgerdur (*Frozen Cliff*)
- Female: Dufa (*Dove*) / Ulfhildur (*Wolf Battle*)
- Female: Bergdis (*Salvation Goddess*) / Vigdis (*Killing Goddess*)

## ... THE ...

- Kind / Vicious
- Brave / Coward
- Wise / Foolish
- Blessed / Cursed
- Lucky / Unlucky
- Deep-Minded / Ale-Lover

Examples: The Saga of... Bjorn the Unlucky  
Voggur the Wise  
Ulfhildur the Deep-Minded  
Bergdis the Cursed