



# BLOOD-CLANS OF JORIKK



THE SAGA OF  
VIGURDR DUNRJORKK

# Recent History of VIGURDR DUNRJORKK

from 379 F.C. till present-day

Date	Event
362	Born to Vigurdr the Just and Sidhi Olriflidhr
371	Said to have slain a Warg with a dagger, thus fulfilling the prophecy of a Haettir
375	Goes alone to the Jogr Valley in the western Jorakk Mountains and slays the Orm Ystaelkk, earning the epithet Dunrjorkk, or Mountain-Man
379	Becomes first-lord of the Vigurdr clan at age 17
381	Travels the middle Wild Lands and goes to Skarna with his household, feasting through the summer and fall with the battle-lords of Ardarr-Norr
382	Declares the ruins of Dunvdal open to foreigners, as long as they abide by Dunvig rule and pay tributes to the Men of Jorikk. Narr-Rytarr is thus established as a trading post.
383	During the Feast of Jul, WyrSIG fails in his attempt to poison Vigurdr and disappears, likely into exile.
384	Narr'Rytar sacked by the Nulgee Orc tribe in the winter month of Eosttrmandr
384	Vigurdr is victorious in the Battle of Njurdrmel
385	Goes again to the southern lands, journeying as far as Dakyno and ending the summer in Skarna.
386	The Skarnic battle-lords of Skohd and Fulsig summer in Rayl.
387	Vigurdr offers a rich bounty on Orc and Goblin scalps taken from the lands of Lake Jorakk.
388	Bounty-hunters and merchants come in number to Narr'Rytar. Pact of Tharokken signed.

Date	Event
394	Southern immigrants flock to Narr'Rytar, population reaches almost 20,000.
395	Over 7000 folk die in Narr'Rytar during the winter. First governor elected in Narr'Rytar.
396	Vigurdr journeys to Gothmerr, Trarr, Vhott and Ardarr-Norr. Taag of the Ardarr returns to Rayl with 101 warriors and his daughter Saelidhi.
397	Vigurdr Dunrjorkk's son marries Saelidhi, and Vigurdr gives the hand of his daughter Ysael in marriage to Sulng Sulngsohnr of the Skarnnic Ardarr clan.
397	Vigurdr and Krym go to Trarr in the summer and swear oaths of friendship with the Traar clan.
398	Gothr challenges Vigurdr's right to deny direct access to the northern Jorakk iron-trade, also citing allowance of foreigners into the bay, and giving of Ysael to the Ardarrs, as evidence of clan betrayal. Vigurdr responds by denying the Gothr access to the lake and commerce with the Jorakk Dwarven clans. Gothr goes in warships to Rayl, but is turned back by Vigurdr at Narr'Rytar without bloodshed.
399	Varrgut agrees to terms with Vigurdr and swears new oaths by them.
401	Gothr capitulates, agreeing to buy iron through Rayl and quit his grievance against Narr'Rytar.
404	Vigurdr invites Gothr and Varrgut to Rayl, where is sworn the Yuldna'Brodnaedhrvig, or New Blood-Oath of Brothers.
410	Placer gold found in the Maylurr River Basin
412	Oaths of fealty to the Dunvig Council of Lords required of those who would build in Narr'Rytar or around the lake.
413	Tanarr Lorr elected as governor of Narr'Rytar
417	Vigurdr orders construction of a new Gotshalkkr, or God-Hall, in Narr-Rytarr within the boundaries of old Dunvdal.
419	Present Year

## A Commentary on the Legends

Though Vigurdr Dunrjorkk is by all accounts an exceptional man, it may be difficult to take all the tales told of his life at face value. And if one is to question these tales, which are told of a man that yet lives, how should one then regard the older tales of heroes from the distant past, such as those of Ralstaalr, and of the first Aegisjalmr? It seems that the Dunnvigr are not exempt from the inclination of most to make the mundane exceptional.

So, what is true, and what is not? Vigurdr does indeed wear a coat of mail seemingly forged from the scales of a dragon, but did he really kill an Orrm before becoming a man? As with most things it is difficult to tell, and judgment is left to the listener to sort out what he would believe. But the skeptic would do well to choose carefully the company he shares his doubts with, especially regarding the veracity of dearly beloved Dunvig folk tales.

While it is common for the Dunnvigr to sing songs and tell tales of the boldest ventures of a man, especially a lord, while he yet lives, the fabrication of near-mythical legends is another thing entirely. It's commonly held that death alone makes one worthy of such treatment, and to have mythical lays which blur the line between real and fantasy composed in a man's honor while breath still fills his lungs is almost unheard of.

Thus, whether the tales or true or not, that Vigurdr Dunrjorkk is deemed worthy of such widespread near-mythical fame during his lifetime highlights the tremendous significance which he holds in the minds of the Dunnvigr.

Perhaps his strength of character and forceful personality has grown the seeds of fact into oaks of legend. Perhaps his supporters have intentionally concocted untrue rumors to serve political ends. Or, perhaps, all that is said of him really did happen. Either way, Vigurdr Dunrjorkk is to his people a living legend. Indeed, many have suggested that he is the true heir of Jorikk Unslld himself, a parallel which the epithet "Dunrjorkk" blatantly suggests.

As the Dunnvigr have always admired their heroes, and looked to them as guides along the path of destiny, to merely say that Vigurdr has derived a considerable wealth of influence from his heroic role would be an understatement. And while some readers might not believe all the tales told of his life, they should at least recognize the weight of political capital he has gained from them. Indeed, were it not for what Vigurdr Dunrjorkk represents in the minds of his people, in terms of many long-held, but never fulfilled, prophetic hopes for the future, he may very well have been violently deposed and exiled, or even killed, long ago because of the dangerously disruptive actions of his rule.

Whether or not Vigurdr has himself had a direct hand in the creation and propagation of any of the tales told about him is uncertain. Those close to him assert he never speaks of his own deeds, as is decent of a proud and noble man of true power. But one must wonder, when Vigurdr has benefited so greatly from the rumors told about him. Few would argue that he is a shrewd, cunning and adept political strategist. Nor would many deny that Vigurdr knows well how to use the power and credibility such tales lend, for he has enacted many changes in his life-time that would have been impossible for men of even slightly less renown. Indeed, it would seem that Vigurdr knows just how much he may do with the political clout granted him by the people at any given time. But such is the way of true rulers.

## The Living Legend of Vigurdr Dunrjorkk

Vigurdr Dunrjorkk was born on the Jorikkfroustr (Feast of Jorikk), which is the feast-day of the first-lord of all the Men of Blood, Jorikk Unslld. It's said that at the moment of his birth, a hawk flew in through the open doors of Vigurdrhalkkr (Vigurdr-Hall) and proceeded its entire length to enter his mother's bedchambers, where it settled upon that clan-shield borne by Vigurdr Mjutohn when he slew Hanuk at the end of the Sundvulkkr. A feather of that hawk is still born by Vigurdr Dunrjorkk, being woven into a lock of his hair, and the Vigurdr-Shield remains always by his side.

At the age of nine, it is said that Vigurdr went alone into the forests of the Valrskegg at night, to find a Haettir which had been rumored to dwell past Lake Schohlmaagr. When he found her it is said she wept, and prostrated herself before him. For three days he stayed with that wise-woman, and received knowledge and prophecies from her. In vision she is said to have told Vigurdr that if he did not slay a mighty Great-Wolf during his tenth year that he would not see the eleventh, but that if he did kill one and wear always its pelt upon his shoulders, that death would never find him.

In Vigurdr's tenth year he is thus said to have gone into the deep wild of the eastern Angitish, to wander alone for three weeks and live off the land. At the end of the third week he found the tracks of a powerful Great-Wolf and followed them to a cave, where he confronted a mighty Warg guarding the mouth of her lair. That Warg saw Vigurdr as but a boy, and so scorned him. But when she came toward Vigurdr to break his neck with her jaws, Vigurdr lunged under her to find the vein of her throat with his dagger, which he cut so that she toppled to the ground spraying lifeblood upon him.



Having thus slain the Great-Wolf with one stroke, Vigurdr proceeded into her cave and put also her young to the knife, lest they grow to want their mother's vengeance.

Upon reaching his thirteenth year, being yet in the time of Edlyff and so not yet a man, Vigurdr put himself in a small raft to depart from the bay of his people, and for eight days oared across the great expanse of the Sea of Jorakk. Though his vessel was small, Ravarr and Rykkr watched him, and the seas were calm. Thus did Vigurdr land his craft at the mouth of the Jogrvolvn, and proceed on foot into the Heights of Jorakk. For an entire year Vigurdr dwelt there alone, and explored all the reaches of the Jogr Valley, which is said to have been also the place where Jorikk Unslld went to receive visions from the gods.

In the twelfth month of his sojourn Vigurdr was found by the Orrm Ystaelkk, who came upon Vigurdr in the night to devour him as he fasted upon a rock. But Vigurdr was not caught unawares, for the gods warned him of the dragon and told him how to slay it. So Vigurdr remembered how he had destroyed the Sturmwulf, and let Ystaelkk come to him full of confidence. But before the Orrm could take him into its mouth, Vigurdr plunged the sword of his fathers, Guntrhaem, deep into its breast so that it quivered and shook, and covered Vigurdr in the heat of its blood.

But before it died Vigurdr demanded of Ystaelkk the gift of its visions, making the Orrm to speak its slayer's want. So did Ystaelkk tell Vigurdr of many things of the ages long forgotten by men, and gave him prophecies of the future so that Vigurdr was made wise. When Ystaelkk died, Vigurdr removed its coat of scales and took from it a great tusk. These he placed upon a Gwottrjutn, which bore happily the load.

Because of these things, Vigurdr was called the Dunjorkk, which means Mountain-Man, and greatly honors him in the memory of Jorikk Unslld, for Vigurdr followed well in the footsteps of his first-lord.

From the scales of Ystaelkk Vigurdr fashioned a coat of mail, which he called the Ystaelkkherdn after the Orrm. It is said that that armor cannot be cut by the sharpest steel, and that it will heal any wounds if worn through the night. But it's also said that only a true Man of Jorikk may wear it, and that lesser men will sicken under its weight and, being transfixed by greed at the beauty of scales, never think to remove it, even at the hour of their death.



Also Vigurdr took Ystaelkk's tusk, and fashioned from it a horn of war which he called Jorkrmel. It is said that the blast of that trumpet can be heard from across the breadth of Lake Jorakk, and that it will stir the hearts of true warriors to heed its call. Being forged in the blood of sacrifice, and touched by the blessing of Augurn-Fire, it is also said to shatter the will of spirits and demons, causing them to flee.

By the hand of Gaurtiid the Brown were those things made, who is of the Dwarven line of Gotturburn of the Garonakk, and that Dwergr swears upon his honor in oaths of mead and blood that the tale of the Ystaelkkherdn and the Jorkrmel are true.

## The Rule of Vigurdr Dunrjorkk

Only two years after young Dunrjorkk took the oaths of a man, his father Vigurdr the Just, died from fever in the month of Jraafwhuuntr, 379 F.C. Thus did Vigurdr Dunrjorkk become the ninth of his line to succeed as head of the Dunvig Council of Lords. By the time he took power his name had become synonymous with epic deeds and the fulfillment of prophetic hopes and dreams, and the Dunvig folk of Rayl bore him up as a bringer of change, one who would undue the wrongs of the past and usher in a new Golden Age for their people. Though only seventeen years of age, he was called the Dunrjorkk, or Mountain-Man, and considered by some to be the true heir of Jorikk Unslld.

But Vigurdr's methods have proved far removed from the expectations of his people, so much so that his maneuvering nearly resulted in another kinwar in the year 398 F.C. While his people had perhaps hoped that Vigurdr would be the hero long hoped-for, who would reclaim the Veglorr-Blade, enrich the Men of Blood beyond their wildest dreams with the Veglhorrd, and ultimately lead them in military conquest of all the southern lands to reclaim the patrimony of Jorikk, he has proved instead a much different agent of change.

But one could argue that the intent behind his deeds, and indeed the outcomes which he might even now realize, are in practical terms little different than what the Dunnvigr have wanted from him all along.



Vigurdr Dunrjorkk quickly proved himself as active and bold a ruler as he was a warrior-youth. In 381 F.C., only two years after taking power in Dunvdal, and being still in his nineteenth year of age, Vigurdr travelled up the Jorakk River to visit the southern lands and meet their rulers. His father had shown little interest beyond life in the Dunvaggr, and is said to have left the waters of his home only once, when he led a season of Vorsdeng with seventy of his warriors to the Bay of Reanaaria. Though that voyage was highly successful, he did not himself repeat it.

Vigurdr Dunrjorkk's decision to take such a journey in only the second year of his primacy represented the initiative he would later display as a ruler, and also served as a symbolic turning point in the history of Dunvig rule, foreshadowing changes which would define the coming years.

In the late spring, Vigurdr took five longships up the Jorakk River, bringing over one-hundred and eighty members of his household, amongst which were included fifty warriors, his wife Sjedl Ovinlidhr, their two young daughters, and his brother Vili. For three weeks they feasted with the Gothr in Gothmerr, and the Traars in Trarr, and then continued overland to the south and east to ultimately end their journey in the Land of the Skarrns. There Vigurdr remained for the rest of the summer, feasting with the battle-lords of Ardarr-Norr and exploring their lands as a guest.

After returning with the fall to his own halls in Rayl, Vigurdr is said to have reported of Skarrna that, "there may be found a bloodline of men more alike to our own than any other, and also that land is rich and full of bounty, its mountains beautiful, and its sea shining and full of fish. I could even call it home were my heart not born here."

Some of Vigurdr's folk were uncomfortable with these words, and wondered what they might mean, for no one had ever spoken so highly of a foreign people.

In response to Vigurdr's tale of the Skarrns, his uncle WyrSIG cautioned him saying, "My lord, beware foreigners. Though they may have some pride, they know nothing of the gods, and would purchase honor with coin. Our heart is here, and we are destined to rule the south, not be its friend."

To WyrSIG, Vigurdr replied, "Uncle, yours is what our people's wisdom has been back to the days of the First Council of Lords. But how have the days between then and now proved except with our own suffering? The wise may benefit from new friends, but not be ruled." WyrSIG was angered by these words, and murmured to many that their lord saw the world as does a child.

With the following spring of 382 F.C., Vigurdr made arguably the most profound declaration of his rule, to that point or since. He said that the ruins of Dunvdal should be remade, and that good folk of the southern lands should be allowed to come there to build a new home, but that they should also pay tributes to the Dunnvigr from their profits. Vigurdr made this decree during the Feast of Jorikk, which was also his twentieth birthday, and is said to have consulted none of his advisors, nor the Augurn, beforehand.

When he made the pronouncement in his feast-hall, a great hush fell over the gathered folk, among whom were counted all of his own household, as well as all the folk of Krym. For, were his words to become law, it would mean that eight hundred years of tradition, which had always held that no foreigner should be allowed footing in the First-Home of Jorikk, which is the Dunvaggr, or Bay of Man, should be undone. Furthermore, that such a decree should be made on Jorikk Unslld's feast-day seemed to many a gross insult.





But few had courage to voice their grievance, for Vigurdr Dunrjorkk sat proudly in his seat of honor, and was in his prime, being well-known as a warrior without equal.

Finally, Vigurdr's uncle WyrSIG stood before all those gathered and said, "Vigurdr, whom I have known since you were birthed to your mother, my brother's wife, what is this thing you would do that would make a mockery of our honor?"

In answer to WyrSIG, Vigurdr stood and said, "Uncle, if you or any others have grievance because of what I have said, then by the law of equal return I accept your challenge, if you wish to offer it."

But to this WyrSIG was mute, for he did not wish to fight Vigurdr, and neither did anyone else gathered at the feast. Thus was it left by implication that the folk were not grieved by Vigurdr's pronouncement, and the matter let stand as it had been spoken.

It is still told of how the following winter, during the Feast of Jul. Vigurdr received from his uncle WyrSIG a cup of mead in a traditional display of respect offered by a vassal to his lord. But Vigurdr re-poured the mead into a horn and returned it to his uncle, which rare act, when reciprocated from a lord to his vassal, is a gesture of true admiration, saying essentially, "We are equals, rather than lord and vassal, so I re-gift this mead to you as such." But WyrSIG refused to drink from the horn, and refused also to answer those who demanded angrily why he would so insult his lord's generosity, and so greatly shame himself.

Vigurdr answered their questions for them by taking the horn from his uncle's hand and pouring its contents down the throat of WyrSIG's most favored war-hound, which was a powerful Vohstagoltr called Toskroh. The hound thereafter died in throes of agony, proving the mead to be laced with poison.

WyrSIG was then challenged to mortal combat by Vigurdr's greatest warriors, as tradition mandated. However, the following day when the challenge was to be met, which was also the Jul-

Feast and the first day of the New Year, WyrSIG was nowhere to be found. By refusing to face his challenge, he was forever shamed in the eyes of his folk, and likely fled the Lands of Jorakk to permanent exile.

It's still said that by that event Vigurdr was proved specially blessed by the gods, who must have given him a dream warning of WyrSIG's treachery. Many say also that Vigurdr's power of divination stands as proof that he did in fact receive the wisdom of the Orrm Ystaelkk.

Whatever the case, though WyrSIG had meant to kill his nephew and thus become Lord of the Vigurdr, he instead destroyed himself and, more profoundly, cemented the Dunrjorkk in the eyes of his people as a knowing and ruthless ruler favored by the gods. Perhaps most importantly of all, these events lent tangible credence to the legends which were even then spoken of the Dunrjorkk. This could not have come at a better time, as the murmurings against the Dunrjorkk were many, because of what he had decreed about Dunvdal, and because he was so young.

Thus were the ruins of Dunvdal opened to foreign trade, and through the summer of 382 F.C. many slaves of the Vigurdr and Krym clans cleared away the stone of old foundations, and stacked them away from the lake, where they remained for over three decades before being ordered back into the ground as the foundation of a new Gotshalkkr. Construction on that great-hall continues to this day in the bustling immigrant boom-town of Narr'Rytar, whose population now dwarfs that of almost every other settlement east of the Byth Mountains, and rivals even the great cities in the west.

## On the Establishment of Narr'Rytar

As to why Vigurdr Dunrjorkk decided to open up the lands of the Dunvaggr to foreign immigration has several possible explanations, though all are conjecture as Vigurdr remains notoriously close with his counsel.

It's possible that Vigurdr was greatly impressed with what he had seen during his visit to Ardarr-Norr during the year 381 F.C., and wished to replicate it as a model in his own homelands. Ardarr-Norr is nearly seven times the size of Rayl, and would have been far bigger than anything Vigurdr had ever seen when he first visited there in his nineteenth year. Furthermore, Ardarr-Norr was, and still is, a robust center of trade which prominently displays the great wealth of decades of profitable commerce with the southern Reanaarian city-states and beyond. Where his father chose to ignore the Skarnic example, it would seem that Vigurdr decided to emulate it by opening up the bay of his fore-fathers to immigration, turning the Dunvaggr into a new center of trade from which his people might enrich themselves and partake in the burgeoning renaissance of the southeastern Wild Lands.

Another likely possibility is that Vigurdr found in the opening of Narr'Rytar a permanent solution to the issue of Gothmerr, which had long plagued the Vigurdr. For many generations, Gothmerr had disproportionately benefited from trade with the Dwarves of the Jorakk Mountains because of its position on the Jorakk River and close proximity to the markets of Drhokker and beyond. Foreigners had never before been allowed access to the Dunvaggr or the greater Jorakk Lake, thus those that would trade in the exceptional iron-goods of the northern Dwarves needed do business with the Gothr. By that trade were was Gothmerr greatly enriched, and Rayl made a shadow of that southern settlement when it should have been the greater partner.

While the Vigurdr may have wished to simply deny the Gothr access to the northern Dwarf-Trade, that access has for centuries been considered an exclusive Dunvig right passed down from Jorikk Unslid himself, and thus something that cannot be withheld from any Dunvig lord. Had the Vigurdr ever attempted to bar the Gothr from Dwarf-Trade, Gothmerr would have had just cause for war.

Indeed, the brother-war of 300 F.C., in which the Gothr sailed on Rayl in war to be ultimately defeated before the gates of Dunvdal hinged on this very issue. The ruling Lord of Vigurdr at that time insisted that tributes should be paid back to Rayl on all profits made abroad from the iron trade, but the Gothr and Varrgut took issue, with the Gothr violently contesting it, albeit unsuccessfully.

Considering these complex politics, by opening up the Dunvaggr to direct trade with the southern lands Vigurdr Dunrjorkk offered a means by which foreign merchants might bypass Gothmerr and gain more direct access to highly coveted northern iron. If making the Dunvaggr a center of power at Gothmerr's expense was Vigurdr's intent, it surely worked, for within ten years Gothmerr was reduced in size from some eight thousand folk to about three thousand, at which size it remains to this day. The effect of this was to be the near advent of another kinwar in the year 398 F.C.

A final possible explanation for Vigurdr's decision to open up the Dunvaggr to foreign immigration is that he realized his people might never again realize their previous potential of power on their own or, even worse, be destroyed entirely by the inexorable growth of the northern Orc tribes. Only fifty years before Vigurdr's rise to rule, an entire generation of Dunvig men had been lost to the Slen Feuds, and Dunvdal itself was sacked only six years later by the Orcs of Rull because too few remained to defend it. Vigurdr Dunrjorkk's father had often voiced his fear that the growth of Orc tribes in the Suutlokknskegg and Angitish might prove too much for the coming generation.

Young Vigurdr thus likely grew up wondering if his halls would, even in his own lifetime, be overrun like Dunvdal and all his people perish. By the laws of birth and death the Dunnvigr were fading, for time and the persistent hostility of their environment made it more and more difficult to replace the precious losses of unavoidable battles. The ever present threat of this impending doom likely hung heavy upon young Dunrjorkk's heart. As a ruler it must have compelled him to action.

To this last problem especially, opening up the Dunvaggr to settlement offered an answer. Doing so would infuse the region with new men who could guard it against Orcish threats and fill Dunvig coffers with much needed wealth in the form of tributes and taxes. If this was also Vigurdr's intent, then in it he has also succeeded. Forty years after its initial establishment, Narr'Rytar has become a great city, the Orc tribes of the Dunvaggr have all but disappeared, and the Dunnvigr once again find their ring-hoards full.

## The Nulçee Orc Tribe and the Battle of ORRmtahl

Vigurdr Dunrjorkk spent the three years following 382 F.C. in Rayl, consolidating his rule and drawing his clansmen close through the giving of gifts and swearing of oaths. Despite the boon that was Wyrsg's betrayal, many questions still needed answering, and Vigurdr used much of his political capital to ensure that a coup would not occur should he choose again to depart for southern lands. Vigurdr also spent a good deal of time during those years balancing the interests of immigrants and merchants newly come to Narr'Rytar with the needs of his own people.

During that time there also abounded rumor of increased movement of Orkin tribes out of the Suutlokknskegg, the greatest of which were the Nulgee. That tribe had, over the previous decade, succeeded in consolidating its grip of power on the Southern Lakes, and with each year drew closer to the settlements along the bay.

Chief among the concerns of prospective settlers and merchants looking to immigrate into the region had been whether the Dunvig clans would protect them from such hostile Orcs. The warriors of Vigurdr and Krym had skirmished much with the Nulgee over the years, and remained largely successful at keeping them out of the greater bay area, but few southerners were willing to risk settling in the Dunvagr when the Nulgee roamed so close by.

Then, in the second month of 384 F.C., when the winter freeze still lay heavy upon the land, a large band of Nulgee warriors fell upon Narr'Rytar, killing the few settlers that had become established there, taking their goods, and burning their homes to the ground. This disaster was a direct blow to perceptions of Vigurdr's ability to rule as lord of his lands. Not only had settlers under Vigurdr's protection been killed, but another attack had come against the site of Old Dunvdal. The Vigurdr and Krym clans were incensed over a second spilling of blood on the first-home of their fathers, and many murmured openly that the sacking of Narr'Rytar was a clear sign from the gods that foreign blood should never have been allowed into the Dunvagr. Vigurdr's bold venture seemed sure to fail before it could really begin.

So Vigurdr called his clansmen together at the culmination of that year's Feast of Jorikk, and delivered a speech which was uncharacteristic of his otherwise stoic rein. In that oratory he reminded his people of their oaths, and of their hatred of the Orkin-Kind, who had always been their dire enemy. Vigurdr demanded of them that they take up axe and shield, so that every man of age enjoy vengeance against the Nulgee, and he welcomed any woman having want of blood to come as well. Though the folk of Vigurdr and Krym held in their hearts many doubts as to the justness of Vigurdr's immigrant ambitions, they could not deny their duty to exact vengeance against the Nulgee for coming against the ruins of Old Dunvdal.

Two weeks later, at the end of the Vorsdeng-Feast, Vigurdr departed Rayl at the head of thirty ships. Over six-hundred warriors of the Vigurdr and Krym clans went with him, amongst which were counted also many warriors of Vhith, Thajy and Ormyn, and it's said that over one hundred proud and able women went also. The tale of the battle which followed, called the Battle of Orrmtahl, can be found below.

*"Mine arm doth tire of swinging ... lend me thus your spear that I may thrust a while." Vigurdr Dunrjorkk to Adgul Madlsohn after felling his eighteenth Orc during the battle of Orrmtahl.*



## The Battle of Orrmtahl

Following the Dunrjorkk's muster-call to the folk of Vigurdr and Krym, that they should make war of vengeance upon the tribes of Nulgee, the best warriors of Vigurdr's house did scout the shores of the Orrmfurd, to see where the Orkin foe had settled and what were their movements.

Thus did Vigurdr's warriors come to find a great Orkin camp built up at the southern tip of the Orrmfurd, where had once stood the Orrmtahl'Stregghalkkr. Those scouts said of the Orcs who dwelt there that they were unwary, being poor in their watch and given to drinking liquor through the night. And they found also that Dunvdal's ruins were left open, and had not been visited since the Sack of Eostr.

So Vigurdr camped his warriors along the shores of Old Dunvdal, and made sacrifices for those that had fallen there. He included in his offerings many prayers for those of foreign blood, and though this caused some disquiet others thought it good.

In the morning, Vigurdr led his longships into the Orrmfurd and proceeded up its length so that they arrived at the Orrmtahl by midday, for his scouts had said the Nulgee rested from the sun, and were least active at noon. When their ships did land upon the shore it was found that the Orcs of Nulgee slept in their lodges, so Vigurdr said no horns should be blown or cries raised, and thus his Gults chanted their battle-song silently as they went amongst the Orkin-Kind.

Many Orcs were slain before they even raised themselves, and little contest was had in retaking the ruins of the Orrmtahl. All that camp was burned, and what gear could be salvaged was loaded into Vigurdr's ships. Few Orcs were thought to escape, but of these Vigurdr said it was good, for he wished them to bring their brethren.

Vigurdr then commanded his warriors to build a palisade of timbers forming an arc from one shore of the southern tip of the Orrmfud to the other, thus protecting about an acre of land. There he said they should make camp, and make it seem that all their number housed within.

But he said that no more than one hundred warriors need remain there with him, and that the rest should remove themselves in twenty-five longships to the western shore of the Orrmfurd. Vigurdr said that these, who numbered about five hundred, should be led by Krym the Bear, and camp at a close distance where they might remain hidden, but also come quickly at the sound of his horn, Jorkrmel. Those which he kept by his side were the greatest of his warriors, and these he told to hold the Nulgee for only a quarter movement of the sun before Krym should come.

Vigurdr's final order was that the front of the palisade be left open, that it offer an invitation of quick victory to the Orkin host, and that great piles of wood be stacked all about the perimeter to be lit at will in case of night-battle where the moons be covered by cloud.

For two days the warriors of Vigurdr camped thus, and on the third day it was reported by his scouts that many Orcs of the Nulgee filled the yonder forests, and that they were led by a great chieftain bearing a spear of solid iron and dressed in black mail to the knees. Throughout the third day, the hosts of Nulgee gathered before the palisade without thought of hiding themselves. It was reckoned that they numbered over two thousand, and that some three hundred were of the greater breeds, being house-guards of their chieftain. It was thought that with the coming of midnight they would attack, but the warriors of Vigurdr and Krym took heart, for the moons promised to be full in the sky and no clouds could be seen.

With the setting of the sun, Vigurdr's warriors readied themselves, and some went forth to taunt the Nulgee, calling them maggots and castrated mouse-pups in their own tongue. In answer to these insults, many younger Orcs broke rank to charge the palisade, being full of liquor and want of slaughter, but these were felled by arrows or axes. Because of those that fell, more of the Nulgee became enraged and also charged forward, despite that the great house-guards of their chieftain lay about themselves with whip and club, and even slew many of their own number to order them.

Thus, before the sun had even set fully in the west, did many Orcs come to rush upon the palisade, and the warriors of Vigurdr made a shield-wall to stop them. The Chieftain of the Nulgee, seeing the battle joined as it was, let loose his best warriors to the attack, and these waded through their own kin, being in want of the first honors of victory and heedless of the lives of their brethren. Then did Vigurdr let blow from his lips the mighty ring of Jorkrmel, and it is said that even in Rayl it was heard, so that the folk there stopped in their feasting to listen.

At the fore of the wall of shields was Vigurdr, and from there he swung the sword of his fathers, Guntrhaem, so that it split through iron of plate and mail to find bone. Around him were gathered the best of his warriors, being Adgul Madlsohn his first-wolf, and Sugid Rolfsohn, said to have felled two Ogres of the Angitish by his own hand. And about them were gathered the best Gults of the land formed strong in their shield-wall so that it would not break. Through the openings in their line was thrust blade and spear, and their axes swung to crack skull and knee of their foe. From behind were raised up many bowmen, and these shot over the Gult-Wall so that the Orcs of Nulgee fell steadily. Soon was a new wall formed before Vigurdr's host, made of bodies of the fallen, and over these did their Orcish kin climb so that the killing of them became easier.

But Vigurdr called to his men that they should fall steadily back, and thus encourage the Orkin host within the palisade, to become trapped. So did Vigurdr's Gults move into an arching ring of shields, and the Nulgee filled it and were beset from three sides. Heartily Vigurdr's warriors fought, and because they held the shield-wall the number against them was always equal. But also they knew that time was the foe's ally, for they would tire from so much slaying while the



next Orc was always fresh. So Vigurdr called to them to take heart, saying that Krym could not be far away.

Even as the Orcs of Nulgee did press the full weight of their number against the palisade, and the Great-Orcs gain it to add their terrible strength against Vigurdr's shields, the horn of Krym rung out close at hand from the north. From there did come twenty-five longships full of five hundred warriors fresh to the shore, and these rushed fully formed in their shield-wall against the Orkin left. Before the fury of that charge were many of the Nulgee slain, and many others confused so that they turned to flee but, being blocked by the press of their brethren, also fell. So did Krym the Bear call upon his warriors to become the hammer, forming their wall along the whole of the Orkin left, so that their own flank join to the palisade and proceed around to trap their foe, and they took great joy in doing so, for the slaughter was well lit by Veshemo.

Hearing the fight of Krym thus joined, Vigurdr did blow again upon his horn and cry that the hammer had come and must meet its anvil, so he called to his warriors to press forward against their foe.

For an hour and more did the warriors of Vigurdr and Krym settle in to that long-time of close-killing, and the Orcs of Nulgee turned to face them grimly, being still determined of victory but no longer blind in their lust for slaughter, so that on both sides many fell. A Great-Orc of the Nulgee broke open the head of Sugid Rolfsohn with its mace of iron, and Adgul Madlsohn was made lame by a grievous blow to his leg. But Vigurdr claimed the life of three of those terrible Orcs, who wear their hair in many knotted locks and bear upon their face the scars of killing. Thus did the lord avenge his best warriors.

Krym the Bear did himself end that battle, for he met in the middle of his wall the Nulgee Chieftain, called Strukk, and killed him. Though Krym's shield was broken with one swing of that Great-Orc's spear, which shivered the shield-wood into splinters, Krym swung true the blade of his axe so that it cleaved into the Orc-face where it shown beneath the helm.

Their chieftain fallen, the Nulgee did lose heart and, as is the way with their kind who find courage only in easy victory and fear, began to flee. But their number was tangled in itself, and hundreds were slain in easy slaughter by Krym's warriors who followed the routed foe. Still, many other hundreds of the Nulgee made good their retreat into the darkened forest of the Suutlokknskegg.

Of the clansfolk of Vigurdr and Krym, over two-hundred were lost in that battle. All of those were grieved, and in the morning burned upon the pyre with prayers and sacrifices to speed their spirits to Dhourrin. But many more would have also been lost if not for the Augurn, Skryaugrn and Dhourrinlidhr, who have been granted by the gods many powers of healing.

Of the Nulgee there were counted among the fallen over fifteen-hundred, and half of those lay within the palisade, killed by the hand of Vigurdr and his warriors. All were left to lie, and little was stripped from them. It is said that the piles of their bones may still be found upon the Orrmfurd's southernmost shore, where was fought the Battle of Orrmtahl.

Though many irreplaceable warriors were lost at the Orrmtahl'Skryr, that battle was called a great victory, and Vigurdr's name was cheered by all the folk of Vigurdr and Krym when he returned to Rayl with ships laden by the spoils of war. Much wealth of ivory, fur, leather, iron, smoked meats, tools, silver and gold and precious stones had been taken, for the Dunnvigr had spent several days after the battle scouring the surrounding wilderness to plunder what Orkin camps could be found. Though not annihilated, the Orc tribes of the Suutlokknskegg were crippled so that scouts estimated two Orc-generations or more would be needed to return them to their former strength. Furthermore, the scouts said that with the fall of the Strukk, the Nulgee Chieftain, wars of succession had begun in earnest, and that the Nulgee were torn asunder. The victory at Orrmtahl had thus secured the southern half of the bay for another generation or more, Dunvig honor was reclaimed, and the folk of Rayl filled with the elation and spoils of victory.

For Vigurdr himself, perhaps the greatest boon of that battle was that it re-solidified his position as ruler in the eyes of his own people. On the day of the Battle of Orrmtahl, the Augurn had said that its outcome would prove the will of the gods, and for the folk of Vigurdr and Krym, the victory satisfied their concerns and ended the murmuring of grievances. Though bought at a steep price, the Orrmtahl'Skryr lent Vigurdr a license of power even more lasting than the Cup of Wyrsg, without which he may very well have ended early in his rule, and failed to enact the drastic changes of the following thirty years.

Though Vigurdr had largely consolidated his rule within the clans of Vigurdr and Krym by the end of 384 F.C., those moves were but first steps along a steep and ambitious march. The clans of Varrgut and Gothr remained much estranged from Rayl, and the latter clan of Gothmerr still rankled to the point of war over the establishment of Narr'Rytar. Also, though Rayl had been enriched from the plunder of the Orrmtahl'Skryr, it was not enough to extend Vigurdr's hand much beyond his clan-halls in the Dunvaggr.

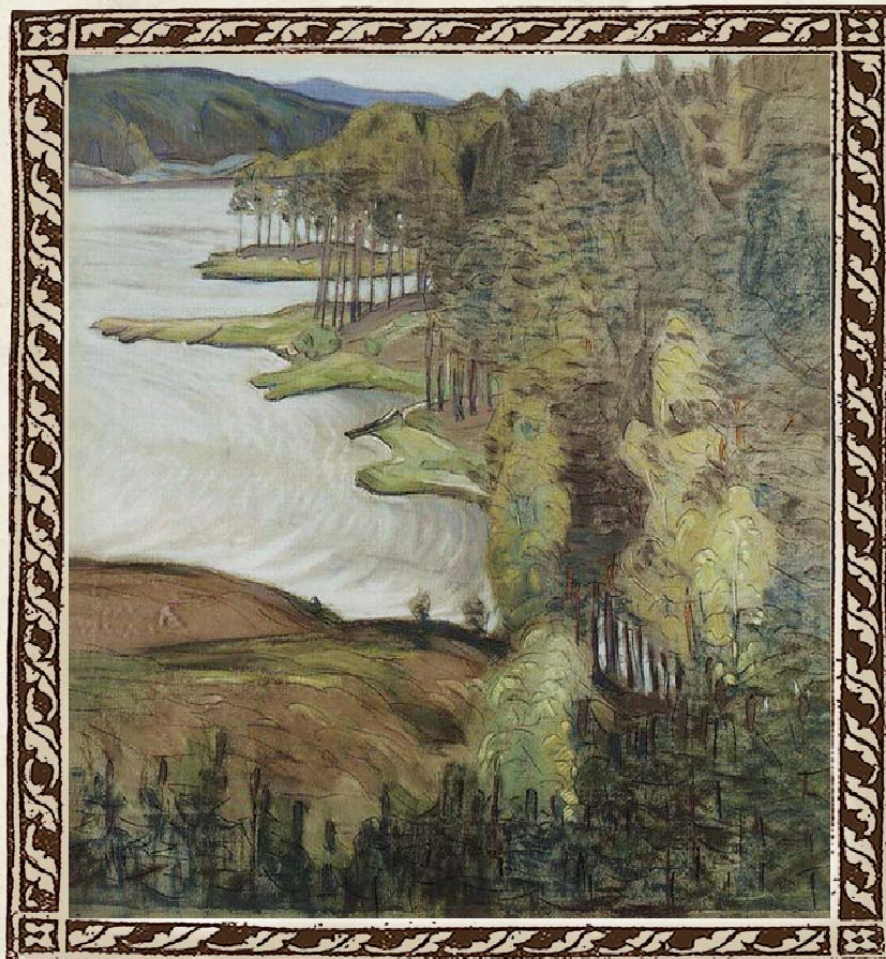


## VIGURDR VISITS THE SOUTHERN CLAN-LORDS

In the year following the Battle of Orrmtahl, which was 385 F.C., Vigurdr went again into the southern lands, taking some of his household and also his chief slave-steward Angband Mjulfsohn, who acted as Vigurdr's representative to the merchant families and guilds of Drhokker, Skarrna and Thybaj. During this trip, Angband tried in vain to secure new promises for investment in Narr'Rytar, for though favorable terms were offered none wished to settle in lands which only a year prior had been overrun by Orkin-kind, regardless of the victory at Orrmtahl. The Dunrjorkk himself travelled widely through the lands of Drhokker, spending several weeks with the Gothr, Traar and Votigutt, and sailing southwest up the Jendasha River as far as Dakyno to see those markets and hunt upon the surrounding steppe. He finished his journey in Skarrna, spending another two months there, and returned with the middle of autumn to his halls in Rayl.

By all accounts, this trip was a frustrating one for Vigurdr and his household. Though his visit to Skarrna was again successful, and resulted in promises by two of the battle-lords of the Skohd and Fulsig clans to visit Rayl the following spring, the rest of Vigurdr's journey was marked mostly by disappointment. None of the great southern merchant families had agreed to invest in Narr'Rytar, and Vigurdr's reception in Gothmerr was a cold one. Furthermore, the Traars in Trarr showed Vigurdr little more than nominal courtesy, and, though the Votigutts in Vhott had been friendly to the point of offering an alliance, it seemed of little immediate benefit. Those clans of Drhokker were largely embroiled in their own disputes over rights of trade and waterway usage, which might in part explain their general reticence in forming agreements with a new potential northern competitor. For Vigurdr it must have seemed that his home in Rayl was but a small backwater compared to the greater happenings of the south, and that fate conspired to keep it always so.

In the early summer of 386 F.C., the Skarrnic lords of the Skohd and Fulsig clans came to Rayl, and spent an entire season hunting the Valrskegg, or White Forest, with Vigurdr and Krym, and voyaging by ship upon the lake and even to the shores of the Jorakk Mountains. This was said to have been a happy time, with the Skarrnic battle-lords falling in love with the northern wilderness and



promising to return whenever they could. For his part, Vigurdr gave each of the lords a fine cloak of wolf's fur lined with sable, a large ring of gold, a horn etched with silver, and a shield bearing the crest of his house. These gifts were given in token of promise of friendship, succor in times of need, and aid in times of war. But with the autumn of 386 F.C., the Skarnic battle-lords departed, and Vigurdr was left to brood upon what should be done in the coming year.

With the spring of 387 F.C., Vigurdr sent his steward Angband Mjulfsohn back to the southern lands to try again to broker deals with the merchant families of Drhokker, particularly Gothmerr, Trarr, Vhott and Dakyno. But those houses were still embroiled in many squabbles, and Vigurdr's steward was met again with a lack of hospitality, so much so that some of the clansmen of Vigurdr and Krym took personal offence, and counseled war. But the Dunrjorkk himself responded saying, "Haste unto violence is unwise where friends might otherwise be had."

During the Feast of Mid-Summer, Vigurdr made a new declaration which was to change forever the political landscape of the Dunvaggr, even more-so than the initial opening of Narr'Rytar. Vigurdr declared that Orc scalps taken from any of the forests of the Rytarr Wilderness should return a bounty equal to six pieces of silver, and that none were exempted from this reward, be they of the Folk of Jorikk or a Southerner. Though on the face of it this declaration may not have seemed like much, it represented a great risk. With this declaration, Vigurdr opened the gates of his homeland to all manner of mean and self-interested folk, which are generally that breed called bounty-hunters. And if they came, and were successful in their trade, then the coffers in Rayl might quickly be drained with the honoring of steep bounties. But the greatest risk was, again, with Vigurdr's own people, who foresaw many problems and were concerned by them. While allowing merchants and settler-families into the Dunvaggr was one thing, calling forth throngs of scalp-hunters seemed another entirely.

It would seem that Vigurdr relied upon the wave of approval that still carried him following the victory at Orrmtahl to move this new declaration forward, and in the end it did. Though debate in the Council of Lords was intense, angry and nearly violent, with Krym and his household being chief amongst the detractors, Vigurdr finally had his way. Krym agreed to a compromise, allowing the bounty to stand for five years, after which time the Council would revisit the question, and resend it if it had proven unwise. For his part, Vigurdr swore an oath that if after five years a majority were opposed to the bounty, he would agree to undo what had been made. His folk being thus agreed, Vigurdr then commanded one of his closest warriors, named Olrif Olrifsohn, to take thirty warriors and go by longship into the southern lands, meeting there in the mead halls and river ports of Drhokker with warriors and armsmen unbound by oaths, to tell of the northern lands and the rich bounties which might be gotten there.

By mid-summer of the next year, which was 388 F.C., as many as two thousand folk were found to dwell in Narr'Rytar. Counted among them were many ruthless men of the Drhokker clans and Dejoy plains tribes, hardened by battle and wont to make coin by blood. But also there were many hundreds of settler families and lesser merchants who came with those hunters, being either their families, or else shrewd folk looking to make business off the coin which dangerous men are known to spend so freely. And on this business, Vigurdr's steward set a heavy tribute, equaling as much as fifty percent of profits on some goods, such as beer and meat. Though most of all the first settler-folk camped in tents or under the sky, and thus endured mud and heat and rain, they also felled many trees from the surrounding Orrmskegg and built lodges and halls for themselves as able. But on this construction did Rayl also receive its tribute, as Angband enforced payment of coin or like-valued goods on all trees felled and new foundations laid.



From the years 388 F.C. to 393 F.C., few events of significance followed to rival those of the previous decade. Vigurdr Dunjorkk spent much of his time in the halls of his northern home, warring in skirmishes with some of the lesser Orc tribes of the western Angitish, overseeing the construction of new dwellings within Rayl, and tending to the day-to-day needs of his people. In the year 390 F.C., Vigurdr returned to Skarrna and feasted with that people for another summer season, but beyond that made little contact with folk outside of the Dunvaggr.

However, Vigurdr did send his steward Angband once again into the southern lands, for word came in the year 388 F.C. that the clans and merchant families along the Jorakk River had come to an agreement, as laid about by the horse-lord Tharokken, which settled the greatest of their trade disputes and set standard practices for the taxing of river traffic. On this trip, Angband enjoyed a much different reception. Word had spread of the scalp bounty, and lack of significant Orc violence since the victory at Orrmtahl lent confidence enough that many enterprising merchants came forward looking to secure for themselves favorable terms of investment in what looked to become a burgeoning frontier full of new possibility.

Many rumors circulated during that time, and through much of the coming decade, of wild riches to be had along the shores of Lake Jorakk, of gold and silver hidden in the deep hills, timber stands that reach to the sky, and beaver as big as dogs with rich pelts and little fear of man. Narr'Rytar enjoyed growth rates upwards of fifty percent per year, as settlers, prospectors, trappers, hunters and merchants flocked to the shore of the Dunvaggr to make themselves rich in a land that had for centuries remained inaccessible and shrouded in mystery. Rayl was made wealthy by high taxes and tributes, and Orcish encroachment was all but ceased in the forests surrounding the bay.

Though Narr'Rytar boomed, it also gained for itself a quick reputation for gross lawlessness, violence, squalor, and poverty.

In 392 F.C., the Council of Lords met again in Rayl to debate the wisdom of continuing the scalp bounty, as had been agreed upon five years earlier. However, the issue was by that time largely uncontested, for the intervening years had been good to the folk of Krym and Vigurdr. The profits from tributes had far outweighed expenses in terms of bounties paid, and of those it was well recognized that they aided the Men of Blood by hurting the Orkin-Kind. In the four years preceding the council, Vigurdr's steward estimated that as many as two thousand Orc scalps had been taken from the surrounding wilderness. And Vigurdr had been shrewdly generous in distributing the riches gained from Narr'Rytar so that all his clansmen benefited. Few thus suggested that the bounty be annulled and, even regarding Narr'Rytar's lawlessness, few serious objections were voiced. The council agreed that the Dunnvigr should not be responsible for answering foreign grievances, and that Narr'Rytar should order itself. It was also said that Vigurdr should maintain a strong external grip on the immigrant settlement, lest it become a power to uproot their people.

### The Hordes of KHAVNTARCG and NARR RYTAR'S FIRST GOVERNOR

By the beginning of 393 F.C., Narr'Rytar had reached a population of around 10,000 souls. Through the summer months more folk arrived every day hoping to make a new life in a land of fabled riches, where a man might shape his own destiny and, as long as he pay his tributes, be beholden to none but himself.

Though already one of the biggest cities east o the Byth Mountains, the following year would see Narr'Rytar's population nearly double, for a scourge of war was about to sweep into Drhokker from out of the Great Eastern Steppe.

In the early months of 393 F.C., the barbarian hordes of Khavntargg, said to be worshippers of Thydorr, the God of Strife, came from out of the Great Eastern Steppe to ravage the land with blood and fire. In the



first winter-months of that plague, hundreds of eastern plains tribes were displaced or annihilated, and by the spring the Khavntargg had reached the banks of the Jorakk River. They were stopped there, however, by a massive river still in the throes of break-up.

Though masters of the horse, they were awed by the size of the Jorakk River, having never seen its like before and, some say, convinced by its vast ferocity that it was a terrible finger of the gods, or the end of the world and the pathway to the Wilds of the Dead. Whatever the reason for their refusal, or inability to cross the Jorakk River, even after the thaw had ended, the barbarian hordes contented themselves with besieging and pillaging those settlements east of its banks, amongst which was included Gothmerr.

Gothmerr was thus heavily beset by a terrible siege, such that Gothr Gold-Shoulder sent to his estranged kin in Rayl a plea for aid, lest his clan be utterly destroyed. In response to that call Vigurdr Dunrjorkk was true, and sent four hundred of his clansmen to Gothmerr following the spring break-up.

That muster was nearly as great as what had been raised against the Nulgee in the Battle of Orrmtahl, and many warrior-women also were included, for the folk of Vigurdr and Krym were angered that such a war should come against their brother-clan. Vigurdr also mustered a great force of armsmen out of Narr'Rytar, paying an additional twelve-hundred free-warriors and hunters to board longships and go to Gothmerr, promising also whatever loot they might take from the Khavntargg. Those numbers increased Gothr's strength four-fold, and surely spared his halls from total destruction, as the Khavntarg were said to number over three thousand in their siege-camp around Gothmerr.

The siege at Gothmerr continued into the following year of 394 F.C. It was a hard and despairing time for folk of Gothmerr, who suffered much losses and likely would have perished of hunger in the winter were it not for teams of sledders who brought food across the plains through the frozen months.

The summer of 394 F.C. saw the Khavntarg defeated in several large battles against the Skarnnic clans in the south, and by fall the horde began withdrawing from the plains east of the



Jorakk River. With the next winter the Khavntargg were gone, almost as quickly as they'd come, but in their wake was left naught but death and desolation. To this day the plains east of Gothmerr bear the mark of that scourge, and few wish to resettle those lands for fear that the barbarian hordes might one day return. The easternmost lands beyond the small borderland settlement of Vhut are little known, but what was once thought a desolate waste of endless short-grass ruled by demons and giant beasts is now known also to be home to a savagely violent and powerful race of men.

In the autumn of 394 F.C., thousands of folk displaced from the eastern steppe searched with growing desperation for a place to rebuild and put stores in for the coming of winter. But the clans of Drhokker refused new settlement on their lands, and few of the refugees wished to return to the fire-blackened eastern steppes, even with the Khavntarrg departing.

So, many turned northwards, and journeyed by the hundreds and thousands to make a new home along the shores of the Dunvaggr. By the end of 394 F.C., Narr'Rytar had swelled in population to over 20,000 souls.

In only the most basic sense of many humans living in close proximity could Narr'Rytar have been called a city at that time, for most of its folk were established in tents, lean-tos and open-faced lodges. Food was scarce and starvation rampant; the town ruled by merchant lords who enriched themselves through extortion, and protected their interests with ruthless violence.

It's said that during the winter of 394 F.C., as many as seven thousand men, women and children perished in Narr'Rytar from hunger, cold and violence. Cannibalism is said to have become routine, and many of the fattened merchants who had profited during previous years at the expense of their neighbors were robbed and killed by mobs of starving plainmen.

Folk who experienced that terrible winter do not now much speak of it, other than to curse the Dunvig clans who, they say, remained entirely aloof to suffering which could have been stopped.

It's unlikely, however, that the Dunvig clans could have done much during that time, if even they had wanted to. Their own stores were greatly thinned by the previous two years of war, and the fact that they allowed southern refugees to come into their lands at all was more than the Drhokker had offered. It was an unfortunate time indeed, with those at fault being chiefly the Khavntargg themselves.

In 395 F.C., Vigurdr Dunrjorkk agreed to demands by the merchant classes in Narr'Rytar for a governor and set of laws by which they might rule themselves. Since its establishment, Narr'Rytar had had no governing voice or body with which to order itself. Beyond the collection of tributes, payment of bounties, and general protection against Orc raids, the Dunnvigr had remained aloof to Narr'Rytar's internal affairs. But the rapid growth of the settlement, coupled with the disaster of the previous winter, compelled Narr'Rytar's settlers, and particularly its established merchant interests, to demand governance and some rule of law.

Vigurdr thus allowed that a council be formed of the most powerful men of the city, and a ruler elected from amongst them to sit at their head. Vigurdr said that, though the council should advise him, this ruler should be solely responsible for making all new city-laws and appointing stewards and officers, and that the Council of Dunvig Lords could depose him at any time without cause and back by the force of arms. Vigurdr decreed also that Narr'Rytar's governor should sit for life, but that his position would not bear hereditary privilege, or even enjoy compensation from tributes. Finally, it was said that Narr'Rytar could hire and maintain for its defense no more than three-hundred and fifty armmen.

While this decision may have seemed quite a departure from previous years, when the Dunnvigr stood vehemently opposed to immigrants coming into their forests, much less ruling with their own governor in a settlement built upon the bones of Old Dunvdal, Vigurdr balked little in giving nominal leadership of Narr'Rytar's day-to-day governance to its settlers.

Indeed, it seems more likely in hindsight that the Dunrjorkk wanted that outcome from the start. As he maintained ultimate authority to overthrow whomever Narr'Rytar chose to rule itself, he risked little in agreeing to their demands. But he gained much at the same time by displacing the quickly growing logistical and political quagmire of the boom town and, by satisfying the wants of its people, ending, or at least delaying, the event of a general uprising.

Some of the Dunvig lords did voice concerns over allowing men of foreign blood to ensconce themselves in a position of permanent power, but those grievances were mostly answered by the fact that Narr'Rytar's governor could be thrown down by the Dunvig Council of Lords, and that the position carried no hereditary powers or special privileges outside of the immigrant city itself.

The first governor of Narr'Rytar was elected shortly after the Feast of Krakkn, in the month of Krakknmandr. His name was Dolfid Hagidsohn, a rich and powerful man hailing from a line of horse traders and cowherds around Trarr. Dolfid's family had been one of the first into Narr'Rytar, when he built a mead-hall to sell beer, food and women to hungry settlers, hunters and trappers. He'd since expanded to own two mead-halls, a timber shipping business having three barges, and a fur trading enterprise that financed ambitious expeditions into the Maylurr River Basin. He was said to be a highly enterprising man with few scruples and a keen nose for power. Few denied either that he was firmly a "Dunvig Man," in that he held little allegiance beyond his own fortune and was glad to bow to whatever powers seemed most likely to help him hold onto it. Though no formal oaths were said in public, many have since rumored that Dolfid made promises to Vigurdr's steward that his rule would be at the Dunrjorkk's pleasure.

The emergence of governance in Narr'Rytar set it on the path to sustainability, and further enriched its ruling class. A number of taxes were levied in addition to those already paid to Rayl, from which were built roads and palisades, and armsmen were hired to keep some order. These armsmen, loyal to Dolfid, rounded up all folk unable to afford the construction of halls and forced them to camp outside the palisade, in the southern perimeter along the Orrmfurd. This camp, still known as the Bug-Flats, sits in a low-lying field outside Narr'Rytar's palisades. The ground is considered too soft for building, and in the spring it regularly floods from heavy rains and snowmelt. It's named for its plague of mosquitoes and flies throughout the summer, bred in low-lying pools and fattened on refuse, defecate and death.

The poor thus removed to the margins of the settlement, Dolfid started selling rights to build, or hold, structures in various areas of the town, as well as the rights to own ships, build docks or do trade. By such corruption did Dolfid become extravagantly wealthy in just the first season of his rule as governor.

### **VIGURDR AGREES TO INTERMARRIAGE WITH THE SKARRNS**

The following year, Vigurdr left his northern home again, taking a large household retinue, including his eldest daughter Ysael and his eldest son Malvrid.

He spent five weeks in Gothmerr, feasting with Gothr Gold-Shoulder and debating many issues, greatest of which centered around Narr'Rytar and Vigurdr's right to allow foreigners into

the Lands of Jorakk, and also touched heavily upon old disputes over Vigurdr's right to any the wealth of the Gothr, which Vigurdr still claimed by old tradition that all brother-clans should pay to Rayl.

The boom of Narr'Rytar and the wars against the Khavntarg had reduced Gothmerr's population by almost two-thirds in ten years. Though the Gothr recognized a debt of gratitude to their northern brother-clan for their assistance against the barbarians, they also bridled with resentment over a rapid loss of regional economic influence, especially in terms of the iron trade. Where Gothmerr had once been the central market for southern access to iron goods out of the Jorakk Mountains, that significant revenue stream had almost entirely shifted north to Narr'Rytar.

The friction between those clans was old, and the topics of their discussion well-worn with time. Still, according to the telling of the Sjalds, both clan-lords were committed to maintaining a productive dialogue free of insults or misunderstandings.

By the third week, however, it became apparent that Vigurdr had permanent intentions for Narr'Rytar, and that he even planned to change the terms of the iron-trade making the Dunvaggr a singular controlling market. In the third week, Vigurdr declared to Gothr that henceforth all the Dunvig clans would need to purchase northern iron from Rayl itself, that prices would be set at double those paid originally to the Dwarves, and that prices for re-sale to non-Dunvig peoples would be set by Rayl as well, according to the demands of the market.

*For centuries, all the clans had enjoyed equal access to the northern ranges, so that they competed in the summer markets at Norr-Bharr for best prices on pig-iron and fashioned goods. Vigurdr's new declaration represented a major departure from that tradition, and articulated his vision of centralizing the economic life-blood of the iron-trade in the Dunvaggr. Though some might wonder that so much could hinge upon trade in a single commodity, the importance of Dwarf-iron to the Dunvig almost cannot be overemphasized. Profit margins on that trade still reach upwards of one thousand percent, and culturally represent a connection between Man and Dwarf going all the way back to Jorikk Unslld himself. That Vigurdr sought to control it represented for Gothr an inexcusable break from tradition and thus clear and just grounds for war.*

By way of justification, Vigurdr declared that the brother-clans had been separated for too long, not only by leagues of river and forest, but also by disparate economic interests. He said that since the Sundvulkk kinwar the clans had remained apart, each tending its own affairs without regard for the others. Thus had the first-home of Jorikk Unslld been forgotten, and weakened steadily over time. In conclusion, Vigurdr said, "That life-blood which is northern iron should be



made to flow through the first-home of our fathers, so that the Dunvaggr become our heart once again." Vigurdr promised that his clan would also pay the premium on Dwarven iron, and that the premium would ultimately go back to the clans anyway by spending decided upon by the Council of Lords.

Despite Vigurdr's arguments, Gothr was exceedingly angered, and replied that since the Vigurdrs lorded over the Council, and had for nine generations, that they also stood conveniently situated to become the primary beneficiary of any money added to Rayl's coffers. Thus Gothr asked if Vigurdr was prepared to step down from his seat as permanent ruler of the council, to which Vigurdr said he would do so after ten years had passed of good-faith by the present agreement.

These things continued to be debated over the five weeks of Vigurdr's stay. When he left, however, an agreement still had not been reached, and a great bitterness of distrust and resentment lingered between Vigurdr and Gothr, much of which represented the latent putrefaction of old and unhealed wounds.

Vigurdr is said to have declared with his departure from Gothmerr, "Long has enmity festered between our folk and Gothr. Let us then bring forth our lance, to see that pus does not stay under the skin."

After his time in Gothmerr, Vigurdr proceeded to Trarr and Vhott, and spent a week feasting with the clans of those settlements. Thereafter, he left his longships under the care of the Traars, and went by horse to Skarrna, where he stayed with the Sulng of the Ardarr till the end of summer. Vigurdr gifted to Sulng a beautiful coat of mail crafted by the northern Dwarves in the first century F.C. In return, Sulng said that his brother, Taag Sulngsonr, should return with Vigurdr to Rayl with one hundred and one excellent warriors, and that those should serve Vigurdr, but be supported by the Ardarr.

So was it, after summer's end, that Taag returned with Vigurdr, and with him went also his wife and children, as well as his eldest daughter Salidhi, a fair maiden whose beauty was known through the land, and whose heart burned with curiosity so that she wished to see the northern wilderness.



Taag and his warriors were shown honor in Rayl, and a hall was built for them and their families within the boundaries of the Valrskegg, or White Forest. Through the fall months, the Men of Vigurdr and Krym hunted with them, and a great bond of friendship was formed. During that time there also grew in the heart of Malvrid, the eldest son of Vigurdr, a strong and passionate love for Salidhi, the Daughter of Taag, for she was exceedingly fair and full of nobility.

But Vigurdr's folk were saddened by this love, for they saw that Salidhi embodied all those things which they prized, being courage, beauty, strength, ambition and wisdom, but saw also that she was not of Dunvig lineage, and so could not marry into the house of Vigurdr. However, Malvrid and Salidhi continued their courtship through the winter months, and went often together into the White Forest.

With the coming of spring and the Feast of Eostr, Malvrid asked his father Vigurdr for permission to build Salidhi a love-hall, that he might go there with her on the night of Eostr to consummate their love. To the surprise of all, Vigurdr agreed. But he did so on the condition that Sulng also take the hand of Ysael, Vigurdr's eldest daughter, in marriage. Thus was Taag consulted, who said that his brother was likely to cherish such a union. Sulng was himself in the mid of his life, but his wife had died in childbirth and he had not remarried. Also, in the days when Vigurdr had feasted in Sulng's halls as a guest, a strong friendship had grown between him and Ysael. So Taag said that he would depart with all haste before the thaw to bring word to his brother in Ardarr-Norr, and see what he would say. Vigurdr Dunrjorkk thus told his son that he should wait to consummate his love for Salidhi, as it would be unfitting to build a love-hall outside of formal agreements.



Taag returned in one month's time, before the Feast of Oaths, and reported that his brother Sulng had agreed to the union between the clans of Ardarr and Vigurdr. Taag also brought a fortune as a dowry to be paid for the betrothal of Salidhi, which is said to have amounted to 4000 gold pieces. She was thus married to Malvrid during the Aedhrfroustr, or Oath-Feast, and Taag departed thereafter with Ysael to Ardarr-Norr that she should be married to Sulng.

*Malvrid was, and is, the heir apparent to the rule of the Vigurdr clan. His wedding ring thus carried with it powerful strength, and the decision of who he should marry was undeniably political. In the marriage of Malvrid to Salidhi and Ysael to Sulng, Vigurdr bound his house forever to the Skarrnic Ardarr clan, giving that southern people some claim over the rule of Vigurdr, and giving his own clan some claim over the Ardarrs. Perhaps even more profoundly, those two marriages mixed the Skarrnic and Dunvig bloodlines, the latter of which had otherwise remained remarkably pure for over eight centuries.*

*In doing this, Vigurdr proclaimed that he regarded the Skarrns as blood-equals, a bold statement indeed when eight centuries of tradition had said that no other people could possess such worth. Regarding the marriage Vigurdr is said to have declared, "In this passing of rings I am made glad, for in their joining so are old brothers brought again together." If true, that statement clearly indicated his belief that the Skarrns shared much more with the Dunvig than cultural commonality.*

Though none opposed this marriage directly, many of the folk of Krym and Vigurdr were deeply angered by it. Though few openly distrusted the Skarrns, few also shared Vigurdr's love of them, or believed them worthy of inclusion in Jorikk's patrimony. The marriages of Malvrid to Salidhi and Sulng to Ysael broke deeply-seated Dunvig traditions, just as much as had the allowance of foreigners into the bay. Indeed, this marriage provided the justification and impetus for Gothr to declare war against the Vigurdr the following year.

## **Gothr Sails in War to Rayl**

With the following summer of 397 F.C., Vigurdr and Krym received invitation from the Lords of Trarr to visit them in their halls and join in the feast of Mid-Summer. The Vigurdr and Krym answered that invitation kindly, and thus spent much of that summer in the southern lands. New oaths of friendship were sworn between Rayl and Trarr, but Gothr Gold-Shoulder was embittered, because he perceived that Vigurdr maneuvered against him. After the Feast of Mid-Summer, Vigurdr was warned by his spies that Gothr counseled war, and so returned to Rayl to make preparations.

During the Feast of Jorikk in the following year 398 F.C., Vigurdr Dunrjorkk received audience with Gothr's chief steward, who was called Adhm Gjordsohn. Adhm said that Gothr was deeply grieved that Vigurdr should attempt to deny a clan-brother rightful access to the ore of the Jorakk Mountains. Also, Gothr demanded Vigurdr annul the marriage vows of his son and daughter to the people of Skarna, and that he make those foreigners which dwelt upon old Dunvdal in Narr'Rytar depart immediately. Of those grievances, Adhm said that Varrgut, the Bear-Lord of Varmorr, was also agreed and had pledged his warriors to defend them. Adhm thus delivered passionately, and with upraised hand as though to strike Vigurdr, Gothr's final words spoken from Gothmerr, "Answer carefully these grievances all, lest the horn of war call me in vengeance to the north."

Vigurdr replied, however, to none of Gothr's grievances, saying only, "My brother has heard me when last we met, and if he still grieves tell him to grieve also the lost fruits of his first-home. If he would answer then let him do so by his horn, horse and oar, for I am tired of empty noise." Gothr's steward then left in anger, and Vigurdr and Krym mustered their folk for war.

*Vigurdr was saying here that as long as Gothr refused Vigurdr's terms that he would cease to enjoy trade with the northlands, meaning his trade in iron would be ended. Vigurdr welcomed Gothr to come in war if he should feel the need to contest that decision, rather than just use words and threats.*

In the last week of the Month of Vorsdeng, Gothr sailed down the Jorakk River with seven hundred and fifty warriors in twenty-eight longships. Counted in their number were the vassal warriors of many surrounding families and clans, as well as some three hundred free-warriors from the Dejj tribes of the central plains, paid silver to fight for the Horse-Lords of Gothr.

Varrgut the Bear-Lord of Varmorr, however, refused his warriors leave to depart in their ships in the final hour, saying, "Rayl is far, yet the price of kinwar close. Let Gold-Shoulder sully himself if the horse is so restless."

When Gothr arrived at the mouth of the Jorakk River, he found it kept by a fleet of thirty-eight longships, upon which were loaded over twenty-three hundred warriors. Though the clans of Vigurdr and Krym were themselves unable to muster more than a quarter of that number, the Dunrjorkk had hired the allegiance of nearly two-thousand free-warriors out of Narr'Rytar, killers all and eager to divide amongst themselves the spoils of war.

But before battle could be joined in the channel, Vigurdr went out before his fleet to hail Gothr and bring him to council, to which Gothr Gold-Shoulder agreed.

Having lashed their ships together, Vigurdr offered his blood-brother Gothr a horn of mead, a ring of solid gold, a fine sword of steel fashioned by the old Garonakk while they still dwelt in Garondol, and a deep chest full of iron ingots mixed with pieces of gold. Of these gifts Vigurdr said, "My brother, I do not wish war upon us, but if you want it then you can see I am ready. Still, accept these gifts, and leave the Sjalds to remake old songs of brrodffjulkk, which means brother-feud, for I think they need no new epics to tell."



As are most gifts, the items offered to Gothr were intentional and symbolic. The horn is a symbol of friendship and aid in times of war, and mead is a sweet and noble drink shared in times of feasting and celebration. The offering of a mead-horn is thus a traditional sign of desired companionship with a respected lord, and not taken lightly. A gold ring symbolizes oath-bonds, and giving it to Gothr in this occasion served the dual purpose of reminding him of old oaths, as well as insinuating Vigurdr's intention to form new ones.

Giftng a sword symbolizes respect for another's battle-prowess, and serves as a blessing for future success in war. Giftng a sword of Dwarven-made steel was especially significant as the conflict between Vigurdr and Gothr revolved around access to that trade. Finally, the gift of iron ingots mixed with gold said essentially, "take what you want from me freely, and know that I wish you to profit bountifully." The pieces of gold further served as a practical way for Gothr to save face, for he could say that he had received just monetary due from Vigurdr, and so did not need to fight him.

In the end, Gothr accepted Vigurdr's gifts as his due, saying that he would return to his halls for the rest of the year, but would also look to the future to see that his grievances be answered. He could hardly do but otherwise, seeing himself outnumbered by fourths.

In the following year of 399 F.C., Vigurdr sent his steward Angband back to Gothmerr to reiterate his terms, but this time saying that if Gothr's ships returned down the Jorakk River with unfriendly intentions that Vigurdr would be forced to meet him in kind. Furthermore, Gothr was told that such an event would not only result in the destruction of his fleet, but also the sacking of his home, for Vigurdr would take the revenge of blood-war to its ultimate conclusion so that the Gothr ceased to dwell in the land.

Because of these threats, Gothr had Angband decapitated, and his head sent back to Rayl without eyes or tongue, while the headless body was left upon the flats of the southern Muskkegnythr.

The rest of 399 F.C. passed without further action from Gothmerr, and Vigurdr remained in his own halls at Rayl, though his folk urged immediate war against Gothr for the insult against Angband.

In the summer, Varrgut, Bear-Lord of Varmorr, came to Rayl and swore new oaths with the Vigurdr, affirming that henceforth all iron-trade should be conducted through Rayl, and that the price of goods received by the Dunvig clans would be at a one hundred percent premium over prices received by the Dwarves. Vigurdr swore by blood and fire that his clan also would abide by these terms, and that the premiums should be spent at the Council of Lords' discretion.

All of the next year passed without event, though the Gothmerrans were denied trade north of Ormyrn. By 401 F.C., Gothmerr was so reduced in population by stagnation of trade that fewer than two-thousand souls remained there. Gothr's coffers dried up and his footing with the Traar deteriorated so that his southern neighbors became bold in their antagonism, and nearly declared war on the basis of past insults and misunderstandings.

Finally, in the late summer months of 401 F.C., Gothr sent his steward Adhm back down the Jorakk River to discuss terms and come to an agreement by which trade in northern iron could resume. In those discussions, Vigurdr is said to have remained entirely resolute and unbending, saying that he would compromise on none of the central issues. Despite long and intense negotiations, in the end Adhm capitulated entirely on behalf of his lord.

When Adhm finally agreed to the terms as they stood, and thus guaranteed that



brother-war would not descend again upon the Men of Blood, Vigurdr is said to have descended from his chair to embrace Gothr's steward so tightly that he was lifted from the floor, where Vigurdr kissed him on the mouth and declared that a heavy collar of gold should be put around his neck, "to protect it, lest any lord see fit to remove a head full of such wisdom."

*If true, then this moment, perhaps more than any other, offers a window into the true desires of Vigurdr Durnjorkk. Where he could have sailed in just-war against Gothr in Gothmerr and conquered that settlement, ruling it for himself and increasing the power of his own name, he preferred even to swallow personal insults that he might keep the brother-clans from further war. Vigurdr was so overjoyed that the trial had ended bloodlessly that he departed from his famed stoicism to kiss a slave-steward on the mouth, and in the same moment forgave the slaying of his own steward just two years prior.*

## The New Blood-Oath of Brothers

With the capitulation of Gothr Gold-Shoulder, Vigurdr proved himself victorious in the grandest schemes of his early rule. He had caused to grow in just ten years the greatest city in all the lands east of the Byth Mountains, and by that city filled the coffers in Rayl, destroyed great Orkin tribes which had threatened to overrun the Dunnvigr in his father's time, and consolidated his own rule within the Dunvaggr by generous gifts and the building of military might. He had made peace from issues which had plagued the Vigurdr and Gothr clans for over a century, and averted brother-war where previous generations had been destroyed by it. Finally, he had expanded his clan's influence abroad and made lasting friendships with many southern clans and tribes, greatest being the Skarnns.

In the years following Gothr's capitulation, however, the Durnjorkk became increasingly grim and ill at-ease, so that at times he did not even take food or drink and spent many restless nights seeking the wisdom of the Augurn and making sacrifices to the gods. Though Vigurdr had forced his brother-clans into submission by the denial of the life-blood of the iron trade, and protected that trade by the hiring of free-warriors and armsmen out of Narr'Rytar, still he knew that a peace forged of fear and necessity, rather than genuine desire and mutual benefit, would remain brittle. Of this he said, "Though we have peace, still I fear our future will be like our past, for how can a man be made not to hate his brother?"

Then, on the Feast of Jul, which day marked the first of the year 404 F.C., Vigurdr declared that four teams of dogsleds should go to Varmorr and Gothmerr, carrying gifts of invitation to the brother-lords of the Varrgut and Gothr clans to come to Rayl for the Oath-Feast to make new oaths for the future and settle old differences once and for-all. Vigurdr said that, though this charge bore great risk, especially the western journey to Varmorr, that it was also a task of honor which would be remembered always. That he would not charge any man to undertake it, but would count those who did go as his closest friends. Many strong men thus beseeched their

oath-lord Vigurdr to allow them the honor of such a venture.

From amongst them Vigurdr chose Sevi Old-Foot, Unkl Morvinsonr, Judl Bright-Beard, and Solgi Solgisonr to go to Gothmerr. But only the hardest of his warriors were picked for the long passage across the lake to Varmorr, which would try them dearly because of the freezing winds, deep snows, and many dangerous foes along the way. For that journey he chose Adric Battle-Seer, Volsun Iron-Helm, Thaggid Great-Hand and Magnid the Blood-Born.

These Vigurdr sent away in the second week of the month of Jraffhuuntr. They took with them as much food and gear as might be carried on four sleds, but brought also many gifts to give to Gothr and Varrgut. The gifts which they took included eleven rings of gold in a gilded chest of cedar lined with ermine, hides of the Dire-Wolf, Horse, Bear and Boar, axes of steel smithed by the Dwarves and etched with silver, shields bearing the symbol of the Aegisjalnr, and buds of the Eysprus Lily wrapped in rabbit fur to keep them from the cold.

The first team, led by Sevi Old-Foot, arrived in Gothmerr on the first day of the Month of Eostr without serious delay, and delivered their gifts to Gothr Gold-Shoulder. Gothr accepted Vigurdr's warriors with honor into his household, and kept them well through the Eostr-Feast. With the break-up of the ice on the river he returned with them to Rayl, and brought also many of his own household. To much celebration, Gothr Gold-Shoulder reached Rayl with three days remaining before the Feast of Oaths.

Of the second team led by Adric Battle-Seer, their journey was long and full of pain. On three occasions were they attacked by wild Orc tribes, and great wolves roamed out onto the lake, hunting them for weeks on end. Thaggid Great-Hand was slain by an Orc arrow, and Volsun Iron-Helm lost his arm to a Sturmwulf. Though braver and stronger than any of Vigurdr's warriors, they would surely have perished if not for their kinsmen in Thajy and Vrykk, who took them in and fortified them with good food, strong drink and warm fires till their strength was renewed and stores replenished.

Despite all manner of hardship and suffering, Adric, Volsun and Magnid finally reached Varmorr three days before the Feast of Ragarokk. The journey had taken two months and two weeks, and not one of the men who began it found himself whole at the end, for all had lost fingers and toes to blackening freeze. Magnid lost even his nose, and is said to say still that he could journey now even to the Veglas in the mid of winter without worry, since nothing remains on him to fall off that cannot easily be covered by fur.

When Vigurdr's warriors arrived in Varmorr they were at first treated as vagabonds, so haggard and wearied was their countenance. But once Varrgut had heard of the gifts they bore and the invitation of Vigurdr Dunrjorkk, he invited them into his hall and seated them by the fire at his right hand, covered them in deep robes of bear fur and made them drink the best of his mead until it was gone. Vigurdr's warriors thus remained in Varmorr for three weeks, celebrating the feasts of Ragarokk and Jorikk with the Men of Varrgut. They mourned the loss of Thaggid, and said prayers to the gods on his behalf, for his body had been pyre-burned upon the lakeshore between Thajy and Vrykk.

With the end of the Jorikk-Feast, Varrgut loaded one longship with a small retinue of his best warriors and many gifts, and departed for Rayl. Though he bade Vigurdr's three to remain in Varmorr to recover further from their trial, they refused, saying they would rather die than miss the honor of returning home alongside the Varrgut.

Though the ice still lay heavy on the lake, so that the way needed be picked through cautiously by oarsmen and the sail rarely set, Varrgut brought his ship into dock at Rayl two days before the



beginning of the Oath-Feast. The folk of Vigurdr and Krym greeted him in great celebration, for they had thought the team of Adric lost.

Of Adric Battle-Seer, Volsun Iron-Helm, and Magnid the Blood-Born, those warriors were given great arm-rings of gold, heavy Sturmwulf furs, and many other precious treasures in their honor, and were given leave to ask any boon of Vigurdr, who swore he would grant it if it be within his power.

Thus did the clans of Gothr and Varrgut feast with the Krym and Vigurdr in Rayl. It being the first occasion of their coming together in many years, it was a glad time, and many gifts were passed between them. But the clan-brothers were also grim, for many issues of great import needed discussing, and neither the Gothr nor the Varrgut relished the presence of Vigurdr Dunrjorkk because of the decisions of his earlier rein.

But Vigurdr set a new and startling tone on the first day of their debates when he announced he did not believe it should remain any longer for his house to rule unopposed, as had gone forward since the Sundvulkkr. Krym, Gothr and Varrgut were all amazed at this pronouncement, and asked Vigurdr Dunrjorkk what he meant, to which Vigurdr said that on his death there should be an election by the brothers and their chief vassals as to the next ruler of the Council of Lords. But, he said that whomever should stand for the seat should also agree to live in the Dunvaggr for the time of his majority, so that the Dunvig first-home not be ruled by foreign interests. Furthermore, Vigurdr said that the Council of Lords should be given real power, so that men vote on their grievances, rather than merely voice them. In this way he said that a system of voting would be established, by which his own decision could be overturned. Finally, Vigurdr said that a tenth part of all those tributes earned by Narr'Rytar should be divided between the four clans, so that they all share in the wealth of their homeland.

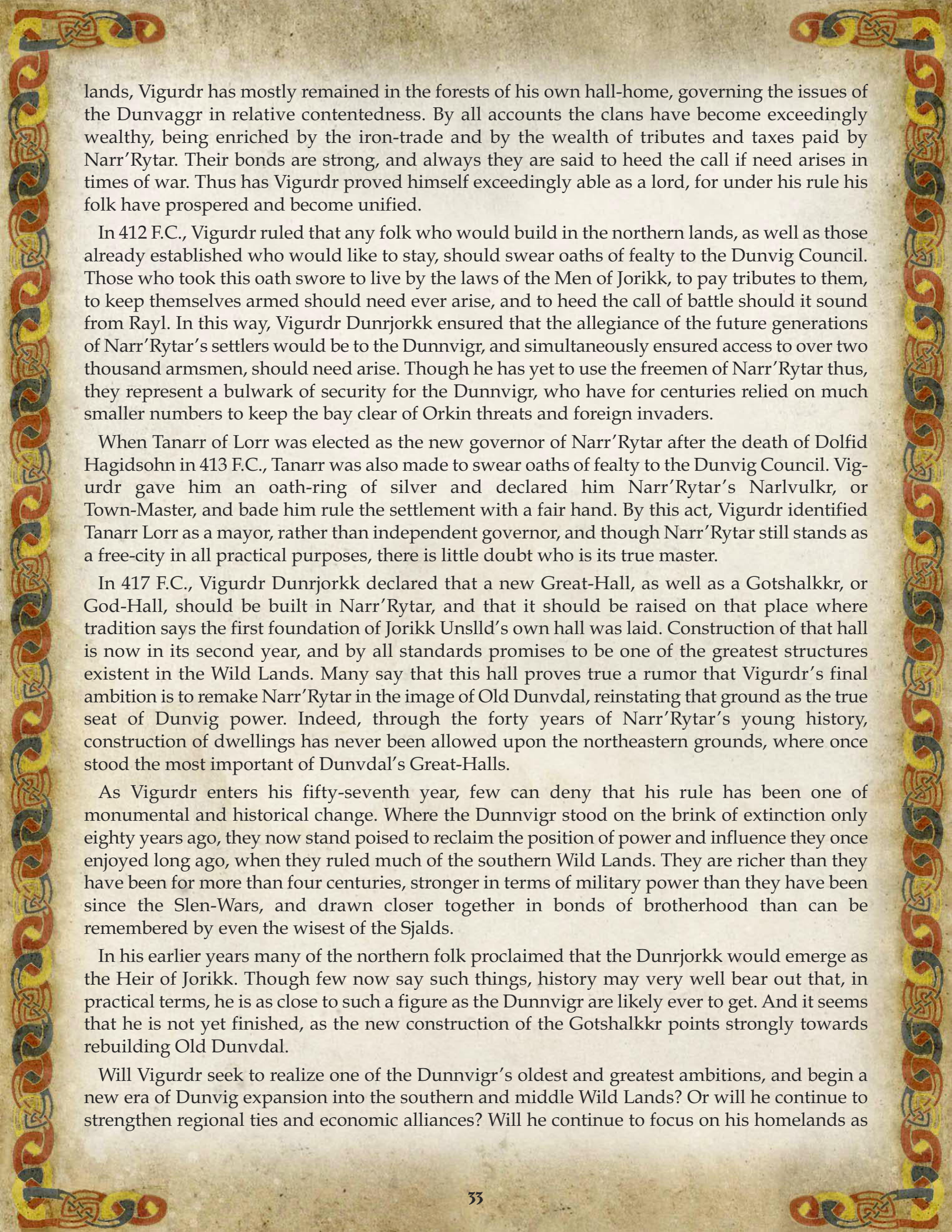
After Vigurdr's declaration, the folk of Gothr and Varrgut were transformed, so that they opened up and became as close friends with the folk of Vigurdr and Krym. During the Feast of Oaths, the four brothers went together down to the lake and re-swore old oaths of brotherhood by cutting open their arms and swearing solemnly before the gods that they would always love each other as brothers, never warring one against the other, and always coming to answer the war-horn when it called in need.

This oath was called the Yuldna'Brodnaedhrvig, or the New Blood-Oath of Brothers. Of it Vigurdr Dunrjorkk said, "By this oath we put away many generations of strife between our folk, who should have shared naught but love. In none of my days have I known such happiness as I do now."

### The Waning Rule of Vigurdr Dunrjorkk

In many ways, the Yuldna'Brodnaedhrvig could be considered the Dunrjorkk's crowning achievement. By it he undid the festering resentment of centuries of inter-clan conflict, and laid the ground for a future of renewed collaboration. Since the swearing of that oath, the clans of Vigurdr, Krym, Gothr and Varrgut have gotten on with each other as kinsmen. Though great physical distances separate them, many say that the hearts of Jorikk's heirs have not been closer since the days following the Scourge of the Niflym and the first-destruction of Dunvdal by the Great-Orrm Moltimon.

In the years following the Yuldna'Brodnaedhrvig, the tenor of Vigurdr's rule has changed dramatically. While continuing to travel a-times to the south and engage in the doings of those



lands, Vigurdr has mostly remained in the forests of his own hall-home, governing the issues of the Dunvaggr in relative contentedness. By all accounts the clans have become exceedingly wealthy, being enriched by the iron-trade and by the wealth of tributes and taxes paid by Narr'Rytar. Their bonds are strong, and always they are said to heed the call if need arises in times of war. Thus has Vigurdr proved himself exceedingly able as a lord, for under his rule his folk have prospered and become unified.

In 412 F.C., Vigurdr ruled that any folk who would build in the northern lands, as well as those already established who would like to stay, should swear oaths of fealty to the Dunvig Council. Those who took this oath swore to live by the laws of the Men of Jorikk, to pay tributes to them, to keep themselves armed should need ever arise, and to heed the call of battle should it sound from Rayl. In this way, Vigurdr Dunrjorkk ensured that the allegiance of the future generations of Narr'Rytar's settlers would be to the Dunnvigr, and simultaneously ensured access to over two thousand armsmen, should need arise. Though he has yet to use the freemen of Narr'Rytar thus, they represent a bulwark of security for the Dunnvigr, who have for centuries relied on much smaller numbers to keep the bay clear of Orkin threats and foreign invaders.

When Tanarr of Lorr was elected as the new governor of Narr'Rytar after the death of Dolfid Hagidsohn in 413 F.C., Tanarr was also made to swear oaths of fealty to the Dunvig Council. Vigurdr gave him an oath-ring of silver and declared him Narr'Rytar's Narlvulkr, or Town-Master, and bade him rule the settlement with a fair hand. By this act, Vigurdr identified Tanarr Lorr as a mayor, rather than independent governor, and though Narr'Rytar still stands as a free-city in all practical purposes, there is little doubt who is its true master.

In 417 F.C., Vigurdr Dunrjorkk declared that a new Great-Hall, as well as a Gotshalkkr, or God-Hall, should be built in Narr'Rytar, and that it should be raised on that place where tradition says the first foundation of Jorikk Unslld's own hall was laid. Construction of that hall is now in its second year, and by all standards promises to be one of the greatest structures existent in the Wild Lands. Many say that this hall proves true a rumor that Vigurdr's final ambition is to remake Narr'Rytar in the image of Old Dunvdal, reinstating that ground as the true seat of Dunvig power. Indeed, through the forty years of Narr'Rytar's young history, construction of dwellings has never been allowed upon the northeastern grounds, where once stood the most important of Dunvdal's Great-Halls.

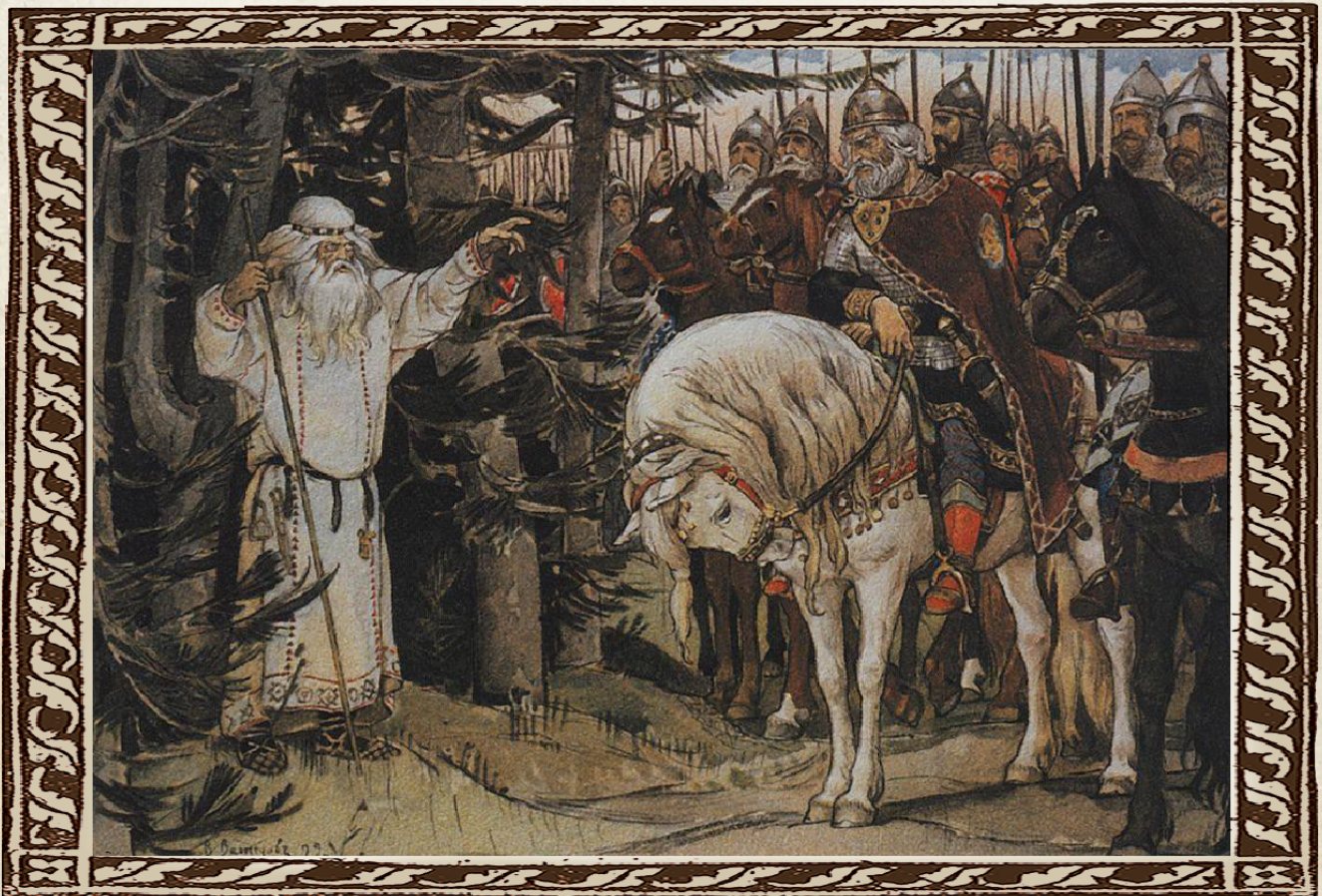
As Vigurdr enters his fifty-seventh year, few can deny that his rule has been one of monumental and historical change. Where the Dunnvigr stood on the brink of extinction only eighty years ago, they now stand poised to reclaim the position of power and influence they once enjoyed long ago, when they ruled much of the southern Wild Lands. They are richer than they have been for more than four centuries, stronger in terms of military power than they have been since the Slen-Wars, and drawn closer together in bonds of brotherhood than can be remembered by even the wisest of the Sjalds.

In his earlier years many of the northern folk proclaimed that the Dunrjorkk would emerge as the Heir of Jorikk. Though few now say such things, history may very well bear out that, in practical terms, he is as close to such a figure as the Dunnvigr are likely ever to get. And it seems that he is not yet finished, as the new construction of the Gotshalkkr points strongly towards rebuilding Old Dunvdal.

Will Vigurdr seek to realize one of the Dunnvigr's oldest and greatest ambitions, and begin a new era of Dunvig expansion into the southern and middle Wild Lands? Or will he continue to strengthen regional ties and economic alliances? Will he continue to focus on his homelands as

he has in the last ten years, or return to the outward focused and highly ambitious tone of the first ten? Will he content himself with consolidation of power in the Dunvagr and the amassing of wealth from tributes out of Narr'Rytar, or will he push to increase Dunvig power and prestige abroad by starting new wars and conquering foreign peoples?

Some say that even now realization of the dream of total control of the Jorakk, Jenshyta and Jendasha Rivers is within his grasp. Such a feat would surely guarantee that the name of Dunrjorkk resounds centuries into the future. But does Vigurdr recognize that such temptations of fate have, in the past, been more often than not meant the undoing, rather than success, of his people? Few, if any, can say for sure, since Vigurdr is said to favor his own inner guidance over even that of the Augurn.



And, though Vigurdr remains hale and healthy, he is aging, and many folk wonder what will follow his death. Though most of the Dunnvigr have come to abide Narr'Rytar and the presence of non-Dunvig folk in their lands, there are those who still murmur against it. Also, while the four brother-clans have displayed a remarkable degree of cooperation and brotherly love over the last several years, if Dunvig history has shown one truth to repeat itself consistently, it is that lust for power weakens even the strongest of bonds. While Vigurdr's strength of will and shrewdness of leadership has brought, and kept, together many great things in his lifetime, what will remain after his death cannot yet be told.

## The New Electoral Succession of Rule

It's widely thought that first in line to succeed Vigurdr Dunrjorkk as the next ruler of the Dunvig Council of Lords is his own son, Malvid. Being in his forty-first year, Malvid has proven himself a man of wisdom, and a warrior of strength. But many say that Malvid is too close to the Skarrns, whose line he married into when he took Salidhi Taaglidhr as his wife. It's said that he goes often to Skarrna to hunt in the hills of Vrykarr, and few doubt that Malvid's primacy would result in a much closer relationship between Rayl and Ardarr-Norr. Some have even suggested that Malvid holds ambitions of joining with the Skarrns to conquer all the lands which separate them, and thus unite the two folk as brother-rulers of the middle plains of Drhokker.

While some might welcome that eventuality, others may very well not. The prospect of ruling the southern lands has always sparked excitement in the Dunvig psyche, and the Gothr in particular would stand to benefit from such direct rule of eastern Drhokker. However, many still believe that such ambition has been through history the cause of their undoing. Chief among those are the folk of Krym, who remain devoted to ruling the lake itself before making bold ventures elsewhere.

But Malvid's younger brother Ulsig Yellow-Eye is said also to have ambitions on the High Seat. More than his older brother, Ulsig is renowned for prowess in battle, and deeds of heroism and courage in distant lands, some of which are reminiscent even of his father's. Where Malvid is said to be highly political, and wise in the ways of kingdoms and power, Ulsig is known as a warrior, and a hero among men. His days are spent hunting, raiding against the Orkin kind of the wilderness, or else on Vorsdeng in distant lands. He may prove able to better capture the hearts and minds of the northmen because of his strength, courage and will better than his brother, who is said to appear aloof to his own people because of his love of the Skarrns. However, many have rumored also that Ulsig has no love for his father's decision to return power to the Council of Lords, and that if he becomes the new ruler that he would swiftly do away with elections so that the Vigurdr again reign supreme from Rayl. Fear of this possibility may make it difficult for Ulsig to gain support from any clan other than his own.

Whether Malvid or Ulsig take primacy as candidates for rule of the Council will ultimately depend almost entirely on who Vigurdr chooses to succeed him as Valkkr of the Vigurdr. Though that honor should go to Malvid by right of succession, some say Ulsig may yet be chosen by the Dunrjorkk because of his greater nobility of deeds. Many have called upon Vigurdr Dunrjorkk to publicly proclaim an heir once and for-all, and so remove the possibility of a succession blood-feud were Vigurdr to die suddenly and prematurely. But he has yet to do so.

The Krym, also, have a potential contender of their own in Krym Young-Heart, the twenty-year old battle-lord and Valkkr of their clan. The Krym have long yearned to return to the northern Jorakk Mountains, to reclaim the lost holds of the Dvergdungolfr, and thus satisfy old oaths and remove old shame. Living legend has it that Krym Young-Heart swore on the deathbed of his father, Krym the Bear, that he would see the riches of Narr'Rytar return his clan to the north in his own lifetime. Though still quite young, that lord is said to be full of fiery ambition and hatred for the Orcish tribes, but is also said to be able and resourceful. To see his house returned to the Duzgolttvaggr, many claim Krym Young-Heart would do anything, and may very well put himself forward in the elections following Vigurdr Dunrjorkk's death. Some might like this choice, as it would show neutrality if a succession-feud arose between Vigurdr's two sons, would break the dynasty of Vigurdrian rule, and would almost certainly guarantee the continuation of elections in Rayl into the future. However, many clansmen may find Krym's

ambitions on the northern ranges too distant, and too irrelevant, from their immediate concerns to vote for him.

While the Varrgut and Gothr are both likely to field a candidate for the new seat of power in Rayl, those clans are well-known to have primary interests in their distant homelands of Varmorr and Gothmerr, and it's thus unlikely for either to get much support outside of their own circle.

Whatever the favorites, Vigurdr Dunrjorkk may well continue to rule in health for another two or three decades. But even if Vigurdr were to die with the close of this year 419 F.C., few could predict just how, or even if, a Dunvig electoral succession might proceed. Many fear the hopes of such an event will remain just that, and that the future bodes darkness of new and terrible brother-war, with clan fighting against clan for control

of Narr'Rytar and the heart of Dunvig power. If that were to happen, the result would be bloodily catastrophic to say the least, for in four hundred years the Dunvig clans have not been as rich as they are now, nor so enmeshed with significant foreign powers as to create potential for external forces being drawn into a Dunvig war of succession.

One might say that the stakes have never been higher. Time alone shall tell what fate means to do with the Blood-Clans of Jorikk.





## CREDITS

**Author:** Nickolas Gildersleeve

**Layout and Print Design:** Steve Johansson

**Art Director:** Nickolas Gildersleeve

**Web Design and Layout:** Nickolas Gildersleeve

**Graphic Design, Maps and GIMP-Mastering:** Nickolas Gildersleeve

**Artistry:** Nicholas Roerich, Arthur Rackham, August Malmström, Chris Skillicorn, De Neuville, Froelich Lundbye, Ivan Shishkin, Julius Klever, Nikolai Sverchkov, Peter Nicolai Arbo, Viktor Vasnetsov, and Wilk Alfred Wierusz Kowalski

**Special Contributions, Feedback and Support:** Sarah Tennyson, William Apple and Kathy Gildersleeve

© Copyright 2015 Kenzer and Company. All rights reserved. HackMaster is a registered trademark of Kenzer and Company.

