

NLS1



the northlands series:
the long night of winter

NLSI: Winter's Teeth

by Kenneth Spencer



**FROG GOD
GAMES**



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NLS1: Winter's Teeth

Author: Kenneth Spencer
Developer: Greg A. Vaughan
Producer: Bill Webb
Editors: Jeff Harkness and Greg A. Vaughan
Swords & Wizardry Conversion: Jeff Harkness

Layout and Graphic Design: Charles A. Wright
Front Cover Art: Artem Shukaev
Interior Art: Colin Chan, Felipe Gaona, Chris McFann, Terry Pavlet, Richard Thomas
Cartography: Robert Altbauer



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CEO — Bill Webb
Creative Director: Swords & Wizardry — Matthew J. Finch
Creative Director: Pathfinder Roleplaying Game — Greg A. Vaughan
Art Director — Charles A. Wright
Lead Developer — John Ling
Marketing Manager — Chris Haskins
Customer Service Manager — Krista Webb
Our Man Friday — Skeeter Green
Shadow Frog — James Redmon

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The Long Night of Winter

NLS1: Winter's Teeth

By Kenneth Spencer



Winter's Teeth is a *Swords & Wizardry* adventure for the Northlands Saga setting and is the first adventure in *The Long Night of Winter* adventure anthology. Like the other adventures in the anthology, *Winter's Teeth* is intended to be dropped into a Northlands Saga campaign by the Referee at any time or place that is convenient. It is not, therefore, tied to any particular location in the Northlands or to any specific time beyond occurring in the depths of winter. It is designed for a party of characters of levels 4-5.

The Northlands Series: The Long Night of Winter



“Gather round, lads and lasses, and draw close to the hearth fire. Let the glowing coals warm your hands and a horn of mead warm your heart while the old men tell tales and sing songs of days long gone. Each winter the storms howl down from the Far North and bury our fields and halls in a thick blanket of white. They bring nights cold enough to shatter a man’s bones or freeze an aurochs’ blood in its veins, and all men huddle close to their fires in the darkness and wonder if this is finally the Fimbulwinter that will bring about the great battle of Ragnarök. Some say these harsh winters are the work of demons of the Ginnungagap sent to break the will of men in preparation for the coming End Days. Others say they are the gift of the Æsir to mold men and hone their strength as the fire tempers good steel in anticipation of those dark times.

“Me? This old skald thinks it is a time to gather close to comrades and loved ones and tell stories and lies, to swap boasts and jests, and to celebrate that the All-Father has given us one more night for the heartsblood to run hot. The morrow’s dawn is never promised us, and there are things other than the cold that stalk the long night of winter and can kill a strong man just as surely. So tilt the flagon to fill an old man’s drinking horn once again, for talk can be dry work, and lean in close to listen. I have a tale to tell you ...”

The *Northlands Series (NLS)* are standalone adventures set in the Northlands that allow the Referee to drop a one-shot game into that setting or a short interlude into *The Northlands Saga Adventure Path* with minimal effort. They are not tied to a particular locale within the Northlands, though they may require a certain general type of terrain (e.g. mountains, forest, etc.), and they are not tied to a specific chronology. They can be played in any order and all or none of them can be used as the Referee sees fit. They are presented from the standpoint of a fireside tale being told by an old skald to pass the long hours of a winter night, allowing the Referee to use them as short breaks from normal campaign play with different characters and without any long-term consequences, or they can be inserted into a normal campaign. The idea is to provide the Referee with the maximum flexibility for their use with a minimum of fuss.

So take them. Use them. Make them your own. The winter night is cold, and there are many hours to pass before the dawn ...

Winter's Teeth

Winter's Teeth is a short *Swords & Wizardry* adventure for character levels 4–5. It can be set in any of the nations of the Northlands. As autumn proceeds toward winter, it is common for adventurers and heroes in the Northlands to seek out the hall of a jarl to await the spring in warmth and with a ready supply of food and drink. This is not considered to be begging or an imposition, for any jarl worth the name welcomes traveling heroes to his hall. Hosting such notable folk for the season brings status and acclaim to the jarl, not to mention fulfilling the ancient laws of hospitality. But this arrangement is a double-bitted axe, for guests must abide by these same laws if they hope to remain in the good graces of their hosts and of Northlander society as a whole.

Adventure Background

The characters are invited by Jarl Anbjorn Olefson to winter at his hall during a night of drinking and carousing at some other location while the jarl was traveling abroad. The characters accepted his invitation, promising him at least 3 days, giving both sides time to gauge the other and see if an overwintering at the jarl's hall would be agreeable. Since the characters were drinking from the jarl's own stores at the time, there are some who would interpret them as having invoked the laws of hospitality and now owing a debt to Jarl Anbjorn.

When the characters finally get around to traveling to Anbjorn's holdings, they find that the small community has been ravaged. The jarl's Bearsarker, a famed warrior by the name of Ofieg the Axe-Bitten, has fallen. In his madness 5 days earlier he transformed into a slåtten, a bestial creature bent on destruction, and went on a blood-mad rampage. Nearly the entire community has been slain, their bodies broken and feasted upon by the monster. If left unchecked, the creature will finish off the survivors and possibly wander off to new haunts, threatening other villages and halls.

Adventure Summary

The characters arrive at Jarl Anbjorn's hold to find it destroyed and its inhabitants slaughtered by some marauding beast. By careful investigation and discovering some survivors, the characters are able to learn that it is a type of beast formed from a Bearsarker fallen from Wotan's good graces. Through their searches, they discover the means to defeat the beast and then must seek it out to destroy it before its rampage can continue, and to fulfill their own obligations in the laws of hospitality that have been invoked.

Beginning the Adventure

The adventure begins as the party travels in the late autumn seeking a place to "winter" until the next spring. In the 4th–5th level range, they have received several invitations but must first stop by the hall of Jarl Anbjorn to fulfill their obligation to him and, in the process, see if his hall might not be as good a place as any at which to winter. Regardless of whether they think they'll truly stay there or not, travel is dangerous and wearying, and thus even if they have other appointments to keep, a stop here for a few days provides a welcome respite. Such a rest would allow for a party to heal wounds and refresh their stores, and would be highly welcome after a major adventure or encounter has depleted their resources.

The adventure takes place at a jarl's hall that stands on the edge of a bay. The hall can be anywhere with a bit of forested mountains or hills, but should not be closer than a day or two from any other population centers so that no help other than the characters can be readily summoned. The

adventure assumes that the characters arrive by means of a longship, but the Referee can modify this if necessary.

This adventure offers only one monster (a new type hitherto unseen called a slåtten) and very little treasure. The bulk of the adventure is interaction between the characters and the various NPCs who have survived the slåtten's attacks. There are many opportunities for roleplaying here, as the survivors are not at all easy to work with. There will be survivors the party will want to save, and then there will be those they have to save. Some survivors readily assist the characters, others prove to be cowardly or foolish.

The main goal of the party should be to find a way to destroy the slåtten, a monster much more powerful than any they can hope to face singlehandedly. There are clues as to how to use Wotan's Eye, a rare moss, to help bring down the beast, but in the end, a cunning plan and hearts filled with courage will be needed.

Part One: The Holding of Jarl Anbjorn Olefson

You sail into the bay, your ship's dragon head carefully stowed and your shields arrayed along the gunwales to show peaceful intentions. In the distance, you can see a jarl's mead hall, a bit on the small side perhaps, but a mead hall nonetheless. From this distance, you can make out few details, a hall, a few outbuildings, something large and black on the beach, a few farms beyond. Behind, the mountains rise up in steep, wooded slopes, and a large waterfall, no doubt the single claim to fame for the small community, can be seen plummeting from the heights into the trees below.

Your night of revelry with Jarl Anbjorn some weeks ago led to his invitation for your group to winter over at his hall, and in your drunken boisterousness, you readily agreed and promised him at least three days to stay as his honored guests. When you awoke with splitting head the next morning, you learned that the feast and drink from the night before had been provided from the jarl's own stores so that now — whether you like it or not — hospitality has been invoked, and if you be folk of mind's-worth, you must stay as guest at his hall for at least that long.

As you sail closer, you see that the village is deserted; no smoke curls into the sky from the houses and hall, no person is seen on the shore, and the jarl's longship lies in its shed just above the high water line. A single boat, the kind used by fishermen, bobs half swamped in the waves.

Landing on the beach below the village (**Area 6**), the characters quickly realize that the village is deserted and shows signs of damage and battle from some rampaging beast. By investigating the ruined village and using their own investigative skills, the characters can learn a lot about who or what caused this destruction and how to deal with it.

For every hour spent exploring the village and surrounding area, there is a chance of a random encounter — including the possibility of encountering the slåtten. See **Part 2** for details of these encounters.

To Kill a Slåtten

The slåtten is not a normal monster; it is a powerful Bearsarker that has fallen into the clutches of a divine madness. It is a ravager of halls, a beast that knows no rest, and the doom that came to Jarl Anbjorn and his holding. Stopping it is not a simple matter of mind's-worth and spear din, it requires some knowledge, a cunning plan, and more than a little luck. The following tables provide information about the place and give clues on what might work against the beast. Roll 1d20 once on the tables (as they discover information by searching or uncovering clues from previous tables). Give the characters all the information with a target number equal to or lower than the number rolled.

Jarl Anbjorn's Holding

1d20	Information
10	Anbjorn Olefson is a minor jarl who lives on a bay in an out-of-the-way region.
12	Anbjorn used to go a-viking and employ several household warriors, but he has turned more toward fishing and whaling these days.
15	The jarl used to count a mighty Bearsarker famed throughout the region among his huscarls, but folk say that the mad warrior has retired to the mountains to contemplate the wisdom of Wotan.

Investigating the Murder Scenes and Bodies

(roll on this table once characters begin searching the village and examining the bodies)

1d20	Information
10	It looks as if a wild animal or some sort of giant did this.
12	The bodies are not entirely eaten, and there are few scavenger animals about. Even the birds themselves seem to have deserted this place.
15	No natural beast could have done this. There is evil here, or at least madness.
20	These are the marks of a slåtten on a rampage. The shredded halls, the mad randomness, and the terrible rage-filled hunger.

The Slåtten

(once the characters know what they are dealing with either from the table above, encountering the beast, or Area II)

1d20	Information
10	A slåtten is a rare beast, a Bearsarker driven mad by exposure to too great a load of the wisdom of Wotan.
12	Only the greatest of heroes can dare face a slåtten and hope to live. The beast is a hall smasher and a shieldwall breaker. Any who would face it had best be careful.
15	A slåtten is most vulnerable to its own origins. Those who wield Wotan's power or adorn their blades with the moss called Wotan's Eye can strike true against the beast.

1d20	Information
20	The most powerful of gods, Wotan, Donar, Baldr, and Tiwaz, have some power over the fallen Bearsarkers. Their godi and symbols can hurt or drive the beast away.

Wotan's Eye Moss

(once characters discover information about this moss or the plant itself)

1d20	Information
10	This is a rare moss that grows in the mountains. It is poisonous and of little use. It forms small green balls or tufts with a brown center like a pupil.
12	Wotan's Eye grows only on south-facing slopes of steep cliffs.
15	The moss dies rapidly if cut unless the harvester uses a sickle made of beech wood.

Jarl Anbjorn's Holdings

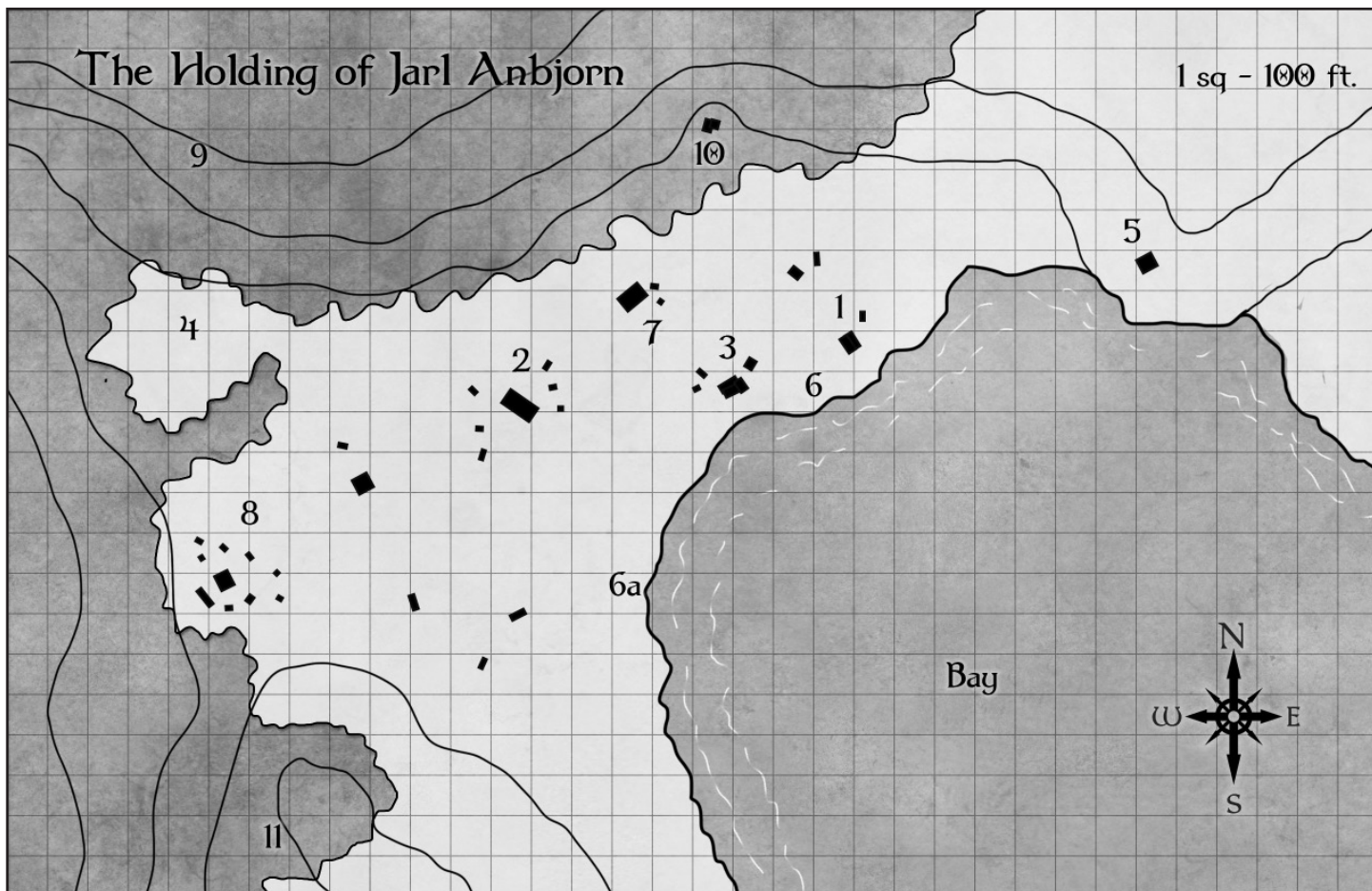
The jarl's lands are not expansive. While wealthy in the sense that he is a jarl, his wealth is not as great as others. Furthermore, the mountains and the sea hem in Anbjorn's lands, though this can be said about much of the coastal jarls in the Northlands. Each described location below gives the current state of affairs, as well as how they would look in more peaceful times. The Referee should modify these based on the actions of the characters as they investigate and combat the slåtten.

I. Bjarki Leifson's Farm

There is little left of this farm other than an overgrown pasturage devoid of stock, an outhouse, the burned remains of some large outbuilding under construction, and the charred timbers of a large house. The fire that took the house and outbuilding appears to have spread to some of the surrounding pasturage and farmland, leaving most of the farm as nothing but ashes and scorched earth. The stench of death is strong, and some massive black form lies on the nearby beach.

Shortly before the rampage began, a whale washed up on the beach right at the boundary stones between Bjarki Leifson's farm and Jorund the Bald's Farm. This caused all manner of distress for the jarl, as the two men have been feuding since they were young. They argued over the rights to the whale's valuable meat, blubber, oil, and ambergris, and Anbjorn decided that the only right and proper thing was to personally take an axe and cut the whale in half. What followed was a series of threats and arguments over the halves.

One night, the decomposing carcass caught fire, and both men blamed each other. The next night the slåtten made its first attack. In the resulting confusion, Jorund the Bald decided to take advantage of the situation. With most of the men of the community off hunting the beast, guarding the jarl's hall, or cowering in their homes, Jorund took his three sons and attacked Bjarki's farm. In the fierce battle, Arnor Jorundson was killed, but so was the entire household of Bjarki, right down to the two Seagestrelander thralls. The house was then set on fire as Jorund and his remaining sons escaped into the night. The gist of this battle can be determined from the tracks on the ground (90% chance for rangers, 45% all others). All of the bodies were later taken by the slåtten, whose own bearlike tracks can be located (95% chance for rangers, 60% all others).



2. Jarl Anbjorn's Hall

The great hall, really just a large long house with a thatched roof and several outbuildings, stands empty. The stout oaken doors have been torn from their hinges and tossed into the grass nearby. The sound of buzzing flies can clearly be heard from within.

Once the terror that was visiting the jarl's lands became apparent, Anbjorn ordered all who could come to gather in his hall. Most of the community sought shelter there, and the jarl handed out arms and equipment to whomever could be trusted to use them. The hirth was called out and runners sent across the mountains to neighboring villages. With his huscarls at his side, the jarl planned to bring the beast to battle and end the slaughter.

On the fifth night of the slåtten's rampage the beast broke into the hall. The huscarls fought bravely, their jarl battling in their midst side by side with his warriors. Their shieldwall shattered under the beast's massive claws, and soon the hall was turned from a place of sanctuary to an abattoir. The inside is filled with the half-eaten remains of the jarl, his wife, their children, and many of the peaceful villagers and farmers of the community. Rent mail, broken swords, and shattered shields lie about as testament to the carnage. Large bear-like tracks can be found in the dried blood.

Clustered around the hall are the jarl's outbuildings, as well as the homes of the less-prosperous farmers and tradesmen of the community. The outbuildings include a smokehouse, a shed for the jarl's longboat, and a small stable for the three horses (now the three gnawed horse corpses) that the jarl owned. Nearby are the homes of Alvi the Smith, Eystein the Wood Carver, Geri Hognison, Kabbi Ivarson, the widow Dalla, and Gro Bjarnisdottir. All these notables and their families lie dead in the great hall.

Treasure: There is a small fortune in hacksilver if one were to be so low as to loot these bodies, and such foul action gains 3000hs in jewelry, cups, arm-rings, and other personal items.

3. Jorund the Bald's Farm

Here stands a simple farm cottage, its door burst inward by some great force. The thatch of the roof has fallen in at several places as if some wild melee occurred within. Four stakes have been driven into the ground and spread out 200 feet apart in a line extending to the west-by-southwest. Each has a strand of broken rope tied to it amid a drying pool of blood.

Inside the ruined house are the chewed up remains of Jorund's family. The scene is one that becomes all too familiar to the party, an entire family savagely killed and eaten. Unwilling to throw his lot in with the jarl, Jorund the Bald barricaded his farmhouse and hoped the horror would simply pass him by. He set out several baits to draw the beast away; three goats were tied to stakes and left in a line that led toward the Haddsons' farm (Area 8). To sweeten the deal, Jorund tied the thrall he had brought with him to help to a fourth stake.

It seemed that this treachery did not go unnoticed by the Norns. On its way to attack the Haddsons' farm, the slåtten saw the thrall and devoured him. The scent of blood set the nearest goat to bleating, and the slåtten followed the sound of that goat, and the next one, and the next, eventually finding Jorund the Bald's home instead. The beast burst through the barricaded door and went to its bloody business, killing nearly all of the people in the house. Jorund, his daughter Tofa, and his thrall Sigvat the Drowned were all that escaped. The three later met up in the north fields (Area 4). The characters can readily identify the usual bear-like tracks in the blood on the floor of the cottage and around the blood-covered stakes. Characters have a 35% chance (85% for rangers) inside the house to discover that three people (two men and a woman) escaped through the back room of the house by cutting out the thatch of the roof and climbing to safety. Their tracks in the earth outside extend toward Area 4 before the trail is lost.

4. North Fields

This is a broad meadowland tucked into a mountain valley. There is wood nearby providing shelter and water, making this an ideal place for the herd of sheep that currently grazes here unattended.

The fields are not owned by anyone, though the jarl does have jurisdiction over activities here. Usually, the community uses the north fields as a shared grazing area, but disputes do come up from time to time. Most of the stray livestock from the area have congregated here as the slåtten hunts other areas.

The relative peacefulness of the North Fields, as well as their access to wood and water, has lured **4 survivors** to make their camp here. They are jittery, paranoid, and expecting the monster to come for them at any moment. Any large or fearsome-looking character, especially if one is a Bearsarker, who startles them will be attacked or see the survivors running in a panic. The hiding survivors can be spotted (2-in-6 chance) and coaxed out, provided the characters make no threatening moves. Likewise, if the characters remain in the area for any length of time, the survivors eventually gather the courage to approach them on their own in 1d4–1 hours.

Anyone searching around the edges of the field discovers an old, overgrown trail leading north up into the wooded lower slopes. This is the trail to **Area 9**. Anyone finding the trail can identify several large, bear-like tracks coming and going, as the slåtten has made several trips to its lair. It is sheer blind luck that has prevented it from finding the survivors here yet.

The Survivors

Jorund the Bald: When his farm was attacked, Jorund cowardly fled into the night, leaving his wife, children, and thralls to their fate. The confusion of the night attack by a roaring slåtten not only allowed him to escape, but it also disguised his cowardice. The only other people who survived that night, his daughter Tofa and thrall Sigvat, believe Jorund's story that he fought the beast and was thrown aside by its mighty claws and forgotten in the melee, which allowed him to engineer an escape through the roof after the others were all dead.

Jorund is a middle-aged man of stocky build. He fled the hall dressed in nothing more than his nightclothes and armed with a longsword, but has managed to scavenge better — if blood-stained — clothing from the dead, as well as leather armor, a wooden shield, and a shortbow and quiver of 8 arrows. He sees himself as the leader of these survivors and argues with any character who tries to take charge. In the end, Jorund is a neighbor-killing coward devoid of mind's-worth, a man given to petty feuds, imagined slights, uncontrolled lusts, and greed. If given the opportunity to betray the characters and his fellow survivors in hopes of profiting by it, Jorund will leg it off and head for safety at the first chance that arises.

Jorund the Bald (Ftr4): HP 28; AC 5[14]; Atk longsword (1d8+1) or shortbow x2 (1d6); Move 12; Save 11; AL C; CL/XP 4/120; Special: multiple attacks (4) vs. creatures with 1 or fewer HD, -1[+1] dexterity AC bonus, +1 to hit and damage strength bonus, +1 to hit missile bonus.

Equipment: leather armor, wooden shield, longsword, shortbow with 8 arrows.

Tofa Jorundsdottir: The daughter of Jorund's second wife, approaching 23 winters Tofa is a woman nearly past reasonable marrying age. Already upset by the dowries he paid for her 3 older sisters, Jorund has denied all suitors for his youngest daughter. While this caused a great deal of disharmony in his household, not to mention the gossipy clucking of the community, Jorund remained stubbornly determined on the issue, and Tofa remained unmarried. This situation has become particularly distressing for the young woman, for she has chosen a suitor and begun an illicit dalliance. For the past summer, she has been sneaking off into the woods with her beau, Olvir Haddson. She does not know that her lover was slain by the slåtten, but hopes against hope that he will win through and meet

her here in the north fields. She was not in the house when the slåtten attacked, and only found her father in the north fields a day later.

Tofa Jorundsdottir: HP 5; AC 9[10]; Atk fist (1hp); Move 12; Save 18; AL L; CL/XP B/10; Special: none.

Sigvat the Drowned: Ten years ago, the Northlander sailor Sigvat washed up from the sea and had the grim misfortune of landing on the stretch claimed by Jorund the Bald. Nearly naked and half-dead, Sigvat was at the mercy of the man who found him, and while Jorund saw the man nursed back to health, fed, and clothed, he also brought suit to the jarl to have Sigvat declared a thrall. Whatever disaster had cast the man into the sea robbed him of the ability to speak, and thus rendered Sigvat unable to give any defense of his own. Jarl Anbjorn dithered in making a decision, and, in the end, put it before the local Thing. By that time, Sigvat had been working for Jorund for nearly a year. The Thing, bought off by the wealthy farmer and unwilling to rule in favor of a mute stranger, declared Sigvat a thrall, and that was that.

Despite his thralldom, Sigvat is a competent warrior and a hard worker. He is the leading thrall, or at least was until all the others at the Jorund farm were killed. If given the opportunity to gain his freedom, Sigvat will not abandon Tofa, for he has known the woman since she was only a small girl who fed soup to a drowned man. He had accompanied Tofa into the woods to gather truffles when the attack on Jorund's house occurred, and eventually located the fleeing farmer's trail leading here to the north field.

Sigvat the Drowned: HP 11; AC 9[10]; Atk club (1d4); Move 12; Save 16; AL L; CL/XP 2/30; Special: none.

Equipment: club

Egil Anbjornson: When the slåtten broke into the jarl's hall, Anbjorn's clan rallied to battle. As a man rich in mind's-worth, though of little material wealth, the jarl led his small band of huscarls and householders in a desperate fight against the beast. They were all killed, and the battle fell upon the women of the household, who also fought valiantly before all were likewise slain. In the last moments of that desperate bloody night, the jarl's wife Melkorka, dashed into the fray to retrieve her husband's sword and bring it to her last living son, Egil. Pressing the ancient blade into his hands, she bade him to flee and rally what was left of the hirth, or if that was impossible, to carry word to the Thing and bring the wrath of the great jarls down on the monster. She then hefted an axe and turned to face the slåtten, striking many mighty blows before being torn asunder.

Egil fled into the night, his love and courage battling with his fear and obedience. As a young man of barely 15 winters, he stood no chance against a monster that had ripped older and more experienced men into so much gore. Still, what young man in his first taste of the spear-din wishes to be known as one who ran while others shed the battle-dew in great gouts upon the floor? The next day he came across Tofa and Sigvat, and followed them to the north fields where they found her father. The four have entered into an uneasy partnership, for Egil worries that he should be taking charge as the jarl's son, but Jorund is such an older man and can no doubt be trusted to lead. Sigvat is a thrall, and a mute to boot, but he does show courage and strength. Then there is Tofa, and even a terrified and confused lad of 15 can't help but notice how pretty she is.

Egil Anbjornson: HP 6; AC 9[10]; Atk club (1d4); Move 12; Save 18; AL L; CL/XP B/10; Special: none.

Equipment: club

5. Old Osk's Farm

A farm sits here between the mountains and the sea on the edge of the north headland that juts out into the bay. There is pasturage running toward the mountains, fields along the south, and the house sitting back from the cliff. Two small outbuildings, an outhouse and a smokehouse, cluster between the house and the pasturage. A trail leads down

toward the beach, and another heads in the direction of the mountains.

The scene would be idyllic were it not for the presence of some disturbing elements. One side of the smokehouse has been ripped apart as if by huge claws. The house proper appears to have been barricaded shut, but the thatch roof has collapsed where something tore its way in from above. Closer to hand, a dog's head lies in the trail leading up from the beach, obviously and recently torn from its body. The pasturage is empty of animals, though the carcasses of three cattle lie half eaten in the field. The weather has been cool, but the bodies still provide enough shelter for hordes of flies to swarm around them.

Old Osk lived here with his daughter and her husband, but everyone knows the place as Old Osk's farm, not Abo's, or Grima Osksdottir's. The farm has stood here for years on this prime piece of real estate with a small trail leading up from the beach (**Area 6**), and another leading into the mountains toward **Area 12**.

As mentioned, the house proper has been barricaded shut; even the two small windows have had the shutters nailed from the inside. This did not save Osk or his family, for the attacker simply came in through the roof, and the interior is a shambles of broken furnishings, blood, and gore. A shattered shield lies amidst the ruin, as does a broken spear and a bloody sword. Three bodies, their flesh torn off and eaten to the point where it is hard to tell who is who, lie scattered within. Characters can locate the gore-crusted bear-like tracks within the house and the marks of massive claws made on the roof beams and walls.

6. The Beach

A few small boats line the beach. On the far southern end of the beach is the large, blackened carcass of a whale that has been beached and then burnt. Scattered along the sand and floating in the shallows of the surf are nearly a dozen bodies; men and women brutally torn asunder by some foul beast.

Jarl Anbjorn's ancestors settled this spot because of two things, the rich farmland and the broad beach. The beach is mostly shale, but it sits in a protected harbor that keeps the worst of the winter storms away. The few sandy points allow easy drawing of ships and boats up onto the shore, and the water deepens quickly, thus saving the hulls wear and tear. There is usually good fishing in the bay and surrounding waters, another reason to settle such an out-of-the-way locale.

Floating in the water are the half-eaten remains of some of the locals, people who attempted to flee the slåtten but were caught at the water's edge. A few of the boats show signs of something with great claws that smashed in their hulls, and one overturned boat has its entire underside caved in. A search of the boats reveals that their fishing tackle is still on board and oars shipped.

The body of a young man lies within one, his face and intestines eaten away.

One of the sandy spits contains a small sea cave (**Area 6a**). The sand does not hold any identifiable tracks to reveal what sort of creature caused this carnage.

6a. The Sea Cave

The cave opening was too small for the slåtten to get an arm in, and the stone of the cave too hard for it to break. The beast became frustrated and vented its fury on the boats before roaming in search of easier prey. Inside the cave is **Sigrid Alvisdottir** (L female human commoner; 9hp [currently 3hp]). She has been living in the cave for several days and is dehydrated, cold, and hungry. When the hall was broken into, she managed to escape through the thatch, slide down the roof, and run to the beach. With the slåtten close behind, Sigrid ran to this cave that she used to hide in as a child and slithered through the sandy opening.

Sigrid is not a combatant in any sense of the word, but she has more courage than many people her age. If rescued, cleaned up, and fed, she is revealed as a beautiful young woman possessed of an extremely sharp mind. She unsteadily recalls the recent events, beginning with word of a terrible beast attacking the outlying farms and culminating with Jarl Anbjorn rallying his householders and the hirth, only to be confronted by the creature before they could even leave the hall. Her tale includes a rough description of the beast (see the **Appendix** below), though she is ignorant of what the beast is or where it came from. She will not leave the cave except to get on a boat that is headed away from the area.

7. The Godshouse

On a small hill just to the south of the jarl's hall is the community's godshouse. Approximately a third the size of the hall, it is made of stout timbers and has a thatched roof, one end of which rises in pointed tower-like structure. Next to the godshouse is a small cottage, as well as a scattering of outbuildings, including an outhouse and half-constructed shed. Strangely, despite the destruction clearly visible on the outbuildings, it does not appear that the godshouse itself has suffered any damage.

While not as richly appointed as that of more prosperous jarls, Anbjorn did routinely gift a decent amount to his godi. Perhaps aping the churches he has seen in the Southlands as a young viking, the godi built on a taller steeple-like extension at one end of the hall and placed several wooden statues of the gods in it. The cottage to the side where the godi lived has been ripped open and the interior thoroughly demolished. Hidden amongst the debris are the slaughtered remains of the godi and his wife.

Of all the buildings in the community, the godshouse is the only one that has not been savaged by either man or beast. The slåtten stays away from it, perhaps some remaining bit of humanity or possibly out of fear of the gods. Three survivors of the rampage have taken shelter here, though they fear to leave. As a result, they are all dehydrated and half-starved. Their desperation for sanctuary has forced them to spend 5 days in the godshouse, and sadly, that meant they were forced to desecrate the house with their own waste. Though they remain quiet while the characters explore, this distinctive smell can be noticed from several yards away.

Survivors

Halli Buisdottir: The only living child of Bui the Godi and his wife, Astrid, Halla is a young woman who has not yet seen her nineteenth summer. She is an attractive woman much given to manly pursuits, and hoped to go a-viking with her cousin and lover, Gnupa, next spring. She is pious, determined, and headstrong, and has taken charge of this little group of survivors after Gnupa lost his mind. She is armed with a longsword, dagger, and shield, and has a bow, but no arrows.

Halli Buisdottir (Fr2): HP 10; AC 8[11]; Atk longsword (1d8), dagger (1d4) or shortbow x2 (1d6); Move 12; Save 13; AL L; CL/XP 2/30; **Special:** multiple attacks (2) vs. creatures with 1 or fewer HD.

Equipment: wooden shield, longsword, dagger, shortbow (no arrows).

Gnupa Unnson: The second child of the Unn, Gnupa is in his early twenties and physically strong and hearty. He has been on two sea voyages, once to go whaling with his father and his uncle Bui, and a second time with the Jarl Anbjorn to raid Seagestreland. Both times he acquitted himself well, which makes the breaking of his mind when faced with the terror of the slåtten both a disappointment and a shock. He sits in the corner of the godshouse and rocks back and forth, mumbling to himself, oblivious to his lover's pleas as well as his own bodily functions. A long period of rest and care are necessary to bring him back, and even then there is a good chance he never regains his full mind. Powerful magical healing could bring about a full recovery.

Gnupa Unnson: HD 1; AC 4[15]; Atk longsword (1d8) or dagger (1d4); Move 12; Save 17; AL L; CL/XP 1/15; Special: none.

Equipment: chainmail, wooden shield, longsword, dagger.

Little Bolla: One of the horde of Haddson children, Bolla is a girl of only 9 winters, clad in a muddy and torn dress (N female young human commoner; hp 4, currently 1). The side of her head and one eye is heavily bandaged, the result of a cruel swipe by the slåtten as it rampaged through her family's home. She managed to escape the slaughter at the Haddsons' farm by crawling through a briar patch and running barefoot to the godshouse. She is barely responsive to the outside world, but is capable of feeding and taking care of herself when told. Mostly, she sits clutching the fragments of a ragdoll and staring into an unseen distance with her one good eye.

Despite seemingly near comatose, there remains a flicker of rage deep within Little Bolla, a flicker that can be stoked into true fury. Fortunately, this ember has been stoking in the godshouse, and if she survives the adventure, her wyrd is to grow into a woman of great strength and ferocity. One day she will hang herself on a tree and make oaths to Wotan, becoming one of the most famed Bearsarkers the Northlands has seen in many generations. Right now, she is a little girl looking for a chance, any chance to vent that simmering wrath on an appropriate target. She can't do much in a fight, but that won't stop her, and may make things interesting for the characters as she charges undaunted into battle. She attempts to follow the characters when they go off to face the monster, and does so secretly even if told not to.

Treasure: Hidden in the base of one of the wooden statues is a small collection of the god's potions. These include a *potion of healing*, a *potion of heroism*, and a *potion of invulnerability*.

8. The Haddsons' Farm

This sprawling compound consists of fifteen cottages, nine outbuildings, and the largest communal outhouse in the region. Three of these farmhouses are charred rubble, the others show signs of having been smashed open. Stone and wooden fencing has been broken in multiple places as if a large object or creature crashed through them.

This is the now-extinct farm of the Haddson clan. Inside, all is a shambles as flies buzz around dozens of half-devoured corpses, furniture lies torn apart or tossed against the walls, and the dead rot in a state of thoughtless carnage. Myriad bear-like tracks roam through the blood and ruin. They are all the tracks of one beast made over several days.

It was often joked by the people who clustered around Jarl Anbjorn's hall that Hadd Bergvidson dreamed of starting a jarldom of his own. While he never planned for such an event, he was a very fertile man, and one who could woo nearly any woman he met. In his younger days, he inherited a knarr from a wealthy uncle and took to running trading journeys up and down the coast. These netted a fine profit, but also tended to result in an illegitimate child or two, all of whom Hadd dutifully brought into his home. With his wife he had 5 sons, his thralls gave him 3 more, and his wanderings brought back 4 sons and 2 daughters.

As the children grew up and had families of their own, Hadd built homes for them, eventually making what amounted to his own small village. Cutting into the forest expanded the farm, and by the time he went to his grave, his 14 children and their families occupied a sprawling farm that ran from the southern headlands up into the mountains. There are two dozen farmhouses and outbuildings, and lots of pasturage for the family's not-insignificant herd of cattle and goats (now eaten or scattered to the mountains). The slåtten spent 3 days here after attacking the jarl's hall, moving from one house full of frightened Haddsons to the next.

9. The Lair of Ofieg the Axe-Bitten

A trail of drying blood and fresh carrion clearly marks a path through the mountains leading to this spot. Here there lies a cave in a small grotto where a stream of melt water comes off the high mountain glaciers in an ice-cold waterfall to form a deep pool.

This lair is high in the mountains. Once there was no trail that led here, but now the frequent, careless passing of the slåtten has trampled the grass and torn apart the earth, tumbled rocks from their place, and gouged chunks out of the trunks of ancient trees. Blood, hair, and dropped human and animal entrails litter the path, making it easy to locate by anyone who comes within 100ft of the trail. During the day, Ofieg, or what was once Ofieg, can be found in this lair in his new form as a **slåtten**. At night, he is out hunting to feed his never-ending hunger.

Slåtten: HD 12; HP 89; AC 3[16]; Atk 2 claws (1d8+3), bite (1d6+3); Move 15 (climb 9); Save 3; AL C; CL/XP 15/2900; **Special:** divine fear (can be turned as undead), ravenous hunger (save or consume dead victim), regenerate (3hp/round; clerics attacks and Wotan's Eye moss can stop healing). (See **Appendix**)

This is where it all began. Ofieg the Axe-Bitten served Jarl Anbjorn and his father before him, and his father's father before that as the household Bearsarker. While such a minor jarl would not be expected to maintain a Bearsarker, the small population of the holding demanded that something be done to protect it, not to mention bolster its ability to conduct raids and go a-viking. Ofieg was a local lad who took the oath to Wotan, and grew into a man of mind's-worth and glory ... and then became the monster that destroyed the people he had served so long.

It wasn't anything dramatic that sent Ofieg over the edge. He wasn't tempted by greed or lust, nor did he feel slighted by his jarl. There was no feud between him and the community he protected. Ofieg the Axe-Bitten simply lost his mind, falling deeper and deeper into himself and staying away from human contact for too long. By the time he realized what he was doing, it was too late, and the first hints of the hunger that would transform him into a slåtten had begun.

10. Unn's Cottage

This isolated cottage is a small building made of well-fitted timber with a thatch roof and is set back into the edge of the forest. A small vegetable garden stands overgrown by the trail, and a large herb garden is just visible around back. There are no signs of damage, but no smoke coming from the chimney either. Three goats wander the area, browsing amid the gardens and trying to stay out of sight.

It is not unusual for the local godi and the local cunning woman to be less than friendly; they both perform a vital role in the community, but their duties often overlap. Such was not the case in Anbjorn's land, for the godi and the cunning woman were siblings. Bui and Unn readily divided up duties and did their best to tend to their flock, and as a result, the people were happy, healthy, and pious. There were no recriminations when Unn took a lover from amongst a band of adventurers, bore him a son, and buried him the next winter after a deadly bear hunting expedition.

Inside, all is well ordered and well kept, with two sleeping pallets at one end of the cottage and a large worktable at the other. The stove is cold, as are the three whale-oil lamps. There are hooks along the wall, but no cloaks, weapons, or bags.

Unn managed to escape the first series of rampages and sent her son to his uncle's for safety. She then gathered up what she needed and left for

the woods, hoping to find something that could either calm or slay the beast. She can be found at **Area 12** in the mountains. Being the daughter and sister of a godi, Unn is literate, and left a message scrawled in Runic on the workbench in charcoal for anyone who comes looking for her. Those who are literate in runic can read the following (runic is often notably bereft of punctuation):

I have gone into the mountains in search of wotans eye it might help go to the godshouse it should be safe if my brother has anything to do with it

Wotan's Eye is a rare moss that grows on oak trees on south-facing mountain slopes. It is a deadly toxin that some claim grant's visions of the gods. Some daring cunning women use it to steady a patient during the removal of arrows or other painful procedures. Legend says that it can be found only on trees upon which a Bearsarker or Ulfhander has hung himself. A search of the house reveals a book of brews and extracts that describes the means of boiling and rendering Wotan's Eye to create a paste that can be applied to the blade of a weapon. The process is simple. It does mention that the moss should be harvested only with a tool made from beech wood.

A search of the forest's edge outside the cottage can find a little-used trail that leads higher into the mountains. A single set of footprints the size of a petit woman — made within the last few days — follows the trail. Unn left this trail as she departed to find the moss.

II. Rock Fall

Following the trail left by Unn at **Area 10** leads to the top of a sheer 50ft cliff here on the south face of the mountain.

A natural outcrop of the mountain like a tall pillar of stone rises 50 feet from the steep slope below separated from the mountain face by some 20 feet. A deep and jagged saddle of rock is visible in the gap between, and the bright colors of freshly broken stone shows where a recent collapse occurred, sending whatever rock once spanned the gap tumbling into the valley below. A look over the edge sees a scattering of broken rock spreading for hundreds of feet down the steep slope below. Just visible amid this jumble is a broken human form lying unmoving.

The cunning woman Unn was successful in finding Wotan's Eye, but the rare moss was growing on a perilous rock outcropping that was accessible only by climbing along a precarious rock face. She tried to make her way out onto it, but the rock face crumbled beneath her grasp and she fell to her death. Her broken body can be found lying amid a pile of recently tumbled boulders more than 200ft down the steep slope, her walking stick in two pieces nearby, and her gathering basket burst and spilled across hundreds of feet. A search of

Wotan's Eye Extract

Created from a distillation of the rare moss called Wotan's Eye, this thick paste can be applied to any piercing or slashing weapon like a poison but with no chance of accidentally poisoning the user. A single dose can cover a weapon for one successful attack but must be reapplied after 24 hours if not used before then. A weapon so treated has no affect against any creature other than a slåtten, but against a slåtten it allows the weapon to curtail the creature's regenerative abilities.

Note: If the Wotan's Eye is harvested with any instrument other than a sickle with a blade made from beech wood, the resulting paste has a 20% of being ruined during its creation (although it appears as if the mixture was prepared properly).



the body reveals a sickle made entirely from beech wood still tucked into her rope belt.

Wotan's Eye moss that Unn sought is still present growing on the southern face of the outcropping, but now it is accessible only by reaching the standing pillar of rock separated by 20ft of open air from the neighboring cliff. Climbing down and back up the saddle to reach the pillar is difficult, as much of the rock has been smoothed by rain marred by many tiny fractures from past freezes. A non-thief has a 20% chance of slipping per 20ft of climbing. The climber must cross a total of 60ft going down the saddle and back up again with a 20% chance each round of another portion of the rock giving way. If this occurs, the climber must roll below his dexterity on 4d6 to maintain a hold or fall 50ft for 5d6 points of damage plus tumble another 2d6x10ft down the slope below for 1d3 points of damage per each 10ft of tumbling.

A safer alternative would actually be to climb down from the mountain-side to the slope 50ft below (10% chance of slipping for non-thieves) and then climb directly up the pillar (15% chance of slipping with no chance of collapse).

Upon reaching the outcropping, the characters find a patch of Wotan's Eye moss sufficient to make 23 doses of Wotan's Eye extract.

Part Two: Random Encounters in the Hunting Grounds

Normally, the presence of a slåtten keeps wise creatures away. While herbivores and other prey animals have fled the area, the coming winter has driven carrion eaters and other predators down out of the mountains to scavenge on the slåtten's leavings. Every hour spent exploring the remains of Anbjorn's holdings trigger a random encounter from the table below. Roll 1d20 each hour with +1 to the die roll for each previous encounter

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roll. Encounters marked with an asterisk can occur only once. If one of these is rolled a second time, change the result to a roll of 10–13.

1d20	Encounter
1–10	No Encounter
11	Bodies, or Parts Thereof
12	Livestock
13	Slaughtered Livestock
14	Wolves
15	Grizzly Bear*
16	Outlaws*
17	Blood-Maddened Wolverine*
18	Two-Headed Troll*
19	Yetis*
20+	The Slåtten

Bodies or Parts Thereof: Several brutally savaged bodies are found. Alternately, a few arms, legs, or even a head, are found. This encounter should be used to raise the tension of the adventure, and the Referee is encouraged to be as gruesome as possible. Other finds when this encounter is rolled can be broken weapons, shattered shields, dropped tools, or children's toys, and other debris. For a particularly shocking surprise, at the Referee's discretion, perhaps some of the creature's malice has seeped into some of the dismembered limbs, creating 1d8 old crawlers. Such an event should not occur more than once, however.

Old Crawler: HD 2; AC 4[15]; Atk rotting grip (1d8); Move 6 (scramble 12); Save 11; AL N; CL/XP 3/60; **Special:** good saving throws, continuous damage (automatic 1d8 after hit, break hold with 1 on 1d4). (*Monstrosities* 361)

Livestock: Frightened livestock rumble past, a small wealth of cattle, goats, or sheep. These animals are skittish and attempt to flee if approached, making them difficult to catch.

Slaughtered Livestock: A small herd of livestock met their end here, torn asunder by the slåtten. This encounter should highlight the strength of the beast by showing what it can do to large animals. A bull is torn in half, a cow's head might be found in a tree, pieces of goat are everywhere, etc.

Wolves: A pack of wolves, desperate to put fat in their bellies before the winter, have descended from the mountains. They are feasting of the remains of a small band of survivors who had fled the attacks but were cut down by the slåtten. The wolves are hungry and not easily driven from their feast, but if more than half are killed, the pack flees.

Wolves (3d4): HD 2+2; AC 7[12]; Atk bite (1d4+1); Move 18; Save 16; AL N; CL/XP 2/30; **Special:** none.

Grizzly Bear: This bear wandered down from the mountains despite the scent of fear and death. It is old and cantankerous and unwilling to concede its domain to some other predator, no matter how powerful and dangerous it is. Finding the homes of men empty and ripe for the plunder, the bear has been gorging itself on the community's winter stores.

Bear, Grizzly: HD 6; HP 42; AC 6[13]; Atk 2 claws (1d6), bite (1d10); Move 9; Save 11; AL N; CL/XP 6/400; **Special:** hug (if both claws hit, 2d6 additional damage). (*Monstrosities* 37)

Outlaws: Those suffering the sentence of outlawry often die in the first week of their punishment. The rare few that can escape then have to live with being ostracized from society. Unable to even venture into the smallest holding, outlaws live miserable lives scraping by however they can in the wilds. Sven the Treacherous was a renowned dwarven hunter who turned on his jarl in a dispute over the disposition of a Seagestrelander



woman captured in a raid. Sven was outlawed, but the superior woodsman escaped into the mountains. There he managed to find others either suffering the same fate or willing to throw in with a known betrayer. The outlaws will most likely be encountered looting bodies and the wreckage of houses. They are looking for anything of value, as well as food and tools. Wary, they flee rather than fight unless they think they can win.

Sven the Treacherous (Ftr5): HP 36; AC 4[15]; Atk longsword (1d8+2) or dagger (1d4+2); Move 12; Save 10; AL C; CL/XP 5/240; **Special:** multiple attacks (5) vs. creatures with 1 or fewer HD, +2 to hit and damage strength bonus.

Equipment: chainmail, wooden shield, longsword, dagger.

Outlaws (8): HD 1; AC 6[13]; Atk short sword (1d6) or shortbow x2 (1d6); Move 12; Save 17; AL C; CL/XP 1/15; **Special:** none.

Equipment: leather armor, short sword, shortbow, 20 arrows, 2d6hs.

Blood-Maddened Wolverine: While wandering in its normal grumpy manner, this giant wolverine came across a trail of blood. Stopping to lap it up, the poor beast did not know it was a thin stream of blood that had dripped off the slåtten where at least one of the defenders of the jarl's hall managed to wound the beast. Driven mad by the strange curse in the slåtten's blood, the wolverine is now on its own rampage, attacking any living creatures it sees, and even a few trees and rocks for good measure. It fights to the death no matter how many opponents it faces.

Giant Wolverine: HD 6; HP 41; AC 5[14]; Atk 2 claws (1d4), bite (1d6); Move 12; Save 11; CL/XP 7/600; **Special:** musk, +4 to hit. (*Monstrosities* 517)

Two-Headed Troll: This fell thing has wandered down from the mountains, drawn by the scent of carnage and slaughter. It feasts on the slåtten's leftovers, but mostly it is here to tear apart the works of man. The troll can be found pushing over buildings, knocking down fences, and tearing up

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stones. Like all of its kind, it doesn't think so much as reacts and immediately attacks the party if it spots them.

Troll, Two-Headed: HD 10; HP 41; AC 3[16]; Atk +2 heavy mace (1d6+2), club (1d4); **Move** 12; **Save** 5; **CL/XP** 11/1700; **Special:** rend (after 2 claws hit, additional 2d6 damage), regenerate (1hp/round), surprised only on 1 on 1d8. (*The Tome of Horrors Complete* 573)
Equipment: +2 heavy mace, club

Yetis: Humans have not been the only target of the slåtten's rampage; it has attacked wild animals of all kinds. After destroying the jarl's hall, the beast wandered up into the mountains and attacked a small tribe of yeti, killing all but three. These 3 survivors have decided to avenge what the slåtten has started and have descended from their mountain lair to bring the beast down. While not unintelligent, they are savage and warier of humans than the slåtten. If approached carefully, they might be willing to cooperate in an attack on the beast, but any threatening action sends them scurrying away or provokes them into combat (50% chance of either).

Yetis (3): HD 5; HP 35, 32, 30; AC 6[13]; Atk 2 fists (1d6); **Move** 14; **Save** 12; **AL** C; **CL/XP** 7/600; **Special:** hug (if both fists hit, automatic 2d6), paralysis of fear (if hugged, 1d3 rounds, automatic hit, save avoids), immune to cold.

The Slåtten: This encounter should be played two ways depending on where the party is in the adventure. If they have not figured out that a slåtten is involved or how to kill it, instead of encountering the beast they see signs of its passage — a vague form silhouetted by the setting sun on a distant ridge, the monster tearing apart a herd of cattle across a field, or some other hint. Likewise, if they have started to learn about the beast but are not yet fully prepared, you can have the beast attack them but then turn and disappear into the forest after a few rounds due to its own chaotic, disorganized nature. Save the actual final encounter with the slåtten as the climax of the adventure when the party is ready.

Slåtten: HD 12; HP 89; AC 3[16]; Atk 2 claws (1d8+3), bite (1d6+3); **Move** 15 (climb 9); **Save** 3; **AL** C; **CL/XP** 15/2900; **Special:** divine fear (can be turned as undead), ravenous hunger (save or consume dead victim), regenerate (3hp/round; clerics attacks and Wotan's Eye moss can stop healing). (See **Appendix**)

Appendix: New Monster

Slåtten

Hit Dice: 12
Armor Class: 3 [16]
Attacks: 2 claws (1d8+3), bite (1d6+3)
Saving Throw: 3
Special: divine fear, ravenous hunger, regenerate (3hp/round), rend
Move: 15 (climb 9)
Alignment: Chaos
Number Encountered: solitary
Challenge Level/XP: 15/2900

The madness of the Bearsarker is a divine one, an inspired insanity that derives from the one good eye of Wotan the All-Father. His will is not that of the Beast Cults or other evil monsters, but one of purity and wisdom through the controlled release of one's mind and soul and the careful harnessing of the bestial nature inherent in all men. While this makes the Bearsarkers fearsome warriors and divinely touched shamans, it also makes them somewhat uncomfortable in civilized communities. While respected for their sacrifices and power, they are also feared for their mighty rages and blade's-edge of control. Their unkempt and savage appearance — not to mention their odd ways — frequently keeps them from guesting at grand feasting halls and humble farms alike.

While rare, another reason to fear the Bearsarkers and politely hope they choose to live elsewhere, is that they can fall. Such a beast, known as a slåtten, loses its narrowly maintained balance and becomes more beast than man. Such a thing is not spoken of among the Bearsarkers, nor within their hearing by wise folk, but it does happen.

The slåtten are not the result of a Bearsarker turning from the gods and toward the worship of Shibauroth, Demon Lord of Beast and Blood. Instead, it is a failure to balance the gifts of Wotan in their proper manner. Rage must be tempered with wisdom, earthly might with divine compassion, and madness with civilization. Driven by the boiling bloody madness within, the slåtten neglects to seek divine council, forgets to spend at least some days among civilized folk, and instead turns in upon itself.

The transformation from human Bearsarker into monstrous slåtten is a short one. The human becomes ravenously hungry and begins to consume massive amounts of meat, often gulped down in great raw hunks. Once this hunger is satiated, the human finds some isolated cave or burrow and goes to sleep for the last time, awakening after a season's hibernation as a slåtten.

The newly arisen slåtten is larger than a bear and much like one in form. Its shaggy coat barely covers muscles that bulge to unnatural size. Sharp spines sprout out from the beast's back and shoulders, ripping through flesh and hide from the underlying bone. The creature moves in a shuffling stoop, its overly long arms reaching to its ankles. Those arms end in claws like iron that can rend shields and tear through armor with ease. The head

of the monster returns some of the man's features, just enough so that he can be recognized as the human he once was. The jaw stretches and distends during the transformation, giving the beast a wide razor toothed mouth reminiscent of a shark.

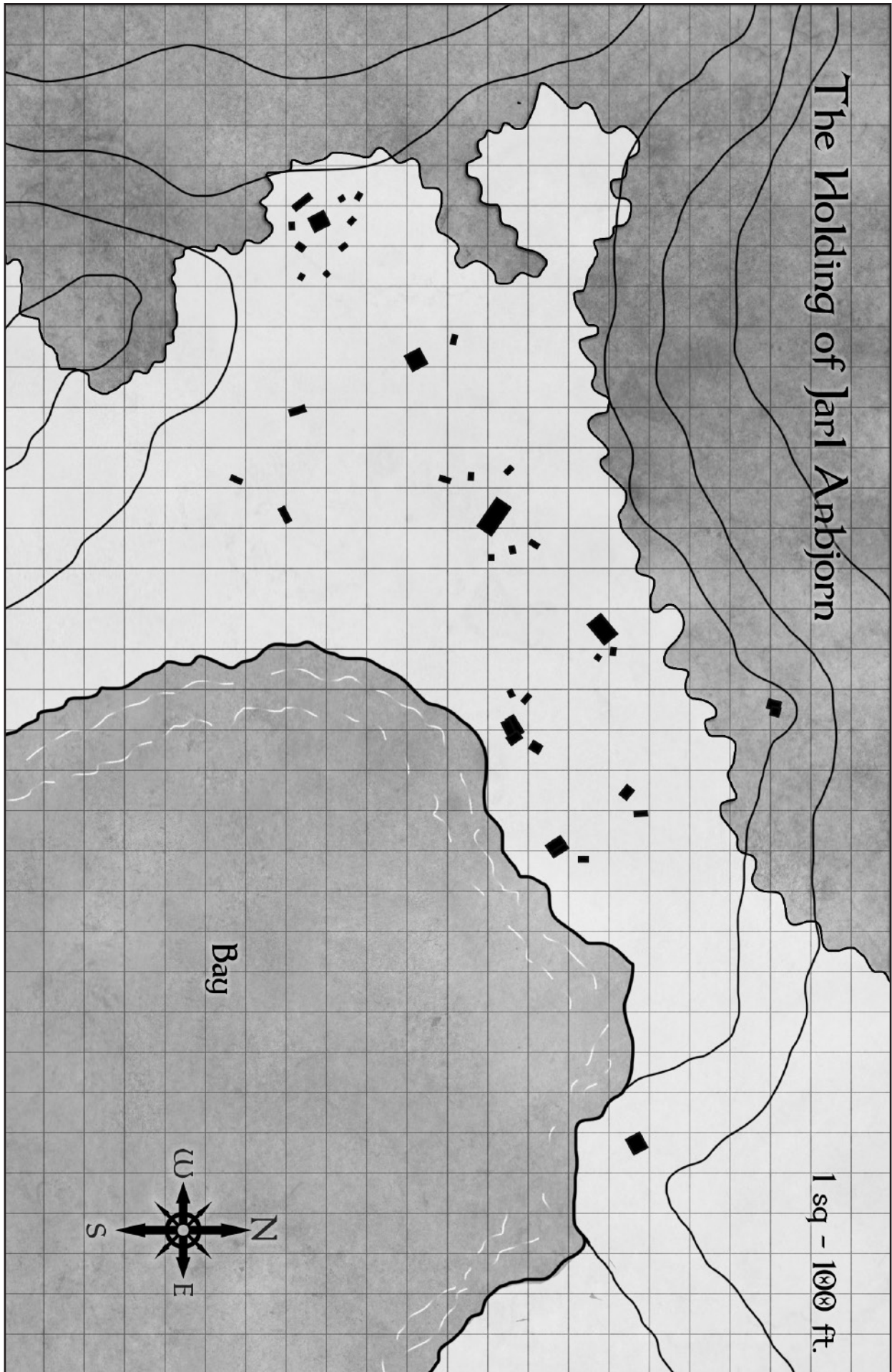
The man's mind is completely gone, lost to the madness that has consumed its body, and slåtten are not known to speak and are incapable of casting spells. They live in constant pain from the spines that tear their flesh and the constant gnawing of hunger and rage within their bellies. Most slåtten rampage through the wilderness until accident or violence brings them down. The rarest of these rare beasts are those who undergo the transformation near a settled community. These can sometimes wipe out an entire community before stout-hearted heroes are able to discover it and bring it to bay.

If a slåtten hits a victim with both claws, it rends the creature's flesh, dealing an additional 1d8+3 points of damage.

Slåtten: HD 12; AC 3[16]; Atk 2 claws (1d8+3), bite (1d6+3); **Move** 15 (climb 9); **Save** 3; **AL** C; **CL/XP** 15/2900; **Special:** divine fear (can be turned as undead), ravenous hunger (save or consume dead victim), regenerate (3hp/round; clerics attacks and Wotan's Eye moss can stop healing).



THE HOLDING OF JARL ANBJORN - PLAYER'S MAP



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