

Valherjar: The Chosen Slain

New Player Primer



What are the “Valherjar”?

The end of the world is coming.

Not the happy “the good go to heaven and the bad go to hell” end so often predicted by the kinder, gentler religions of humanity, but a bleak, dire, catastrophic end in which almost every man, woman, beast, and god is wiped from existence -- leaving only a handful of mortal survivors to carry on the legacy of eons. An end in which mankind will be divided, brother against brother, and will fight side-by-side with gods older than time against nightmarish creatures that gave birth to humanity’s myths and legends. An end in which the universe will be consumed by a war in which there can be no winning, only various degrees of losing. This is Ragnarok, the end of almost all existence, and prophecy says it is almost upon us.

But gods, like men, are not inclined to go quietly into that good night. For almost 3 thousand years armies in a conflict as old as the world have been assembling on Earth to try and stop it. Fighting in clandestine conflicts among the mortals of Earth, the *Aesir*, the gods of Asgard, and their eternal enemy the *Jotnar* have both sought to gain some kind of an advantage in the battle to come.

Neither side daring to risk open confrontation, they have operated surreptitiously. For the Jotnar this has taken the form of gathering forces through professional corruption. From the highest reaches of government to the lowliest of street gangs, the Jotnar have sought to gain influence, operating under the simple principle that they who control the wealth control the power, and will emerge victorious. From corporate society they acquire finances and authority, from social deviants they recruit an army, and as they combine both aspects into a piecemealed militia they hope that numbers, and the riches needed to arm them, will be enough to win when Ragnarok finally comes.

Contrastingly, the Aesir seek to end the battle before it ever begins. Recruiting a force of humanity’s elite they gather information, thwart Jotnar efforts, and take opportunities to strike at the foundations of Jotnar power and their leadership. Their hope is to cut off the proverbial head, crippling the Jotnar machine before it ever gets the chance to reach the battlefield, and so prevent Ragnarok from occurring.

Their weapons of choice are the *Valherjar*, an elite cast of warriors chosen from the ranks of the mortal dead for their skill and spirit. Gathering in the great halls of Valhalla, the Valherjar are imbued

Valherjar: The Chosen Slain

New Player Primer

with magical Rune Stones that not only allow them to return to the land of the living, but also give them exceptional abilities and control over the magic of the gods. Though small in number, the Valherjar are the most elite force the world has ever seen, and through covert operations and precision raids they work to keep the Jotnar in check and search for keys that may bring down the enemy's empire.

The World of *Valherjar: The Chosen Slain*

Setting Overview

Set in a nefarious mirror of our modern world, the heart of the *Valherjar* setting strongly resembles our own. In environment, technology, economics, weapons and culture, it is almost indistinguishable from the real modern world. The average person still gets up in the morning and goes to work and the average city is still a bustling metropolis filled with a mix of urban and suburban culture, allowing socialites, blue-collar families and vagrants to all live and interact together. The function of the typical daily life — to live, love and prosper — is almost entirely unchanged. As such, it is possible for players to apply almost any aspect of our current existence to the adventures they embark on within the setting.

Unfortunately for its inhabitants, however, beneath that sublime and steadfast surface is a world that is quickly slipping into chaos. The signs of the apocalypse are building, and across the globe a pressure is mounting that will eventually burst and envelope us all. This is evident nowhere more than in the increasingly destabilizing international political climate. Wars, both civil and international, have been erupting with increased frequency, and numerous governments find their countries or continents plunged into violent and bloody conflicts. The Middle East, South America, Korea, France, and Indonesia have all been rocked by conflict or unrest. The United Nations has disbanded, and NATO has developed itself primarily into an international counter-terrorist organization.

It is within this turmoil that the struggle towards Ragnarok is being fought. Ragnarok, the battle that will bring the end of the world, is fast approaching and the outlook is grim for all of existence. Prophesized to scour the worlds of all but a handful of individuals, Ragnarok will bring the death of virtually every man, beast, god and monster and will plunge all of the Nine Worlds into chaos and fire.

Thus, the feel of a typical *Valherjar* game should be a cross between an entirely plausible and easily acceptable modern existence and a grim and dark view of a surreptitiously covert and hostile underbelly. It is on the streets of *Valherjar's* cities that special operatives wage furtive wars and fight, bleed and die among people who don't even know they exist. It is simultaneously a violently dire existence and a delicate game of chess; where the players gamble with their very lives but desperately work to ensure that the game does not spill in to the realm of mundane reality.

Mortal Death and The Valkyrie

Throughout history the encounter has always been the same. A warrior, defined in spirit more than in action or profession, awakes from their own death to a meeting with the Chooser of the Slain. Though the Asgardians call "her" The Valkyrie, in fact the apparition is independent of both the Aesir and the Jotnar, and appears as an idealization of each fallen's own philosophy or theology, in a scene designed to make the dead as comfortable and peaceful as possible.

Though the environment may differ and the script may change, at some point in that meeting is always the same basic question. The conversation, typically warm but platonic, turns to the course of the person's life — the good they've done, regardless of its nature, and their dedication to their convictions. During those moments The Valkyrie leans in, looks the fallen straight in the eye, and asks, "Was it enough?"

More often than not the dead don't even understand what they are being asked. It's a simple question, without context, that carries ramifications they cannot even imagine. If the answer is yes, they're content with the role they've played, no one is quite sure what happens to them; they move on to whatever untold else may lie among the heavens.

If the hapless bastard happens to say no, say that they wish they could do more or stay involved, then the next thing they know they'll find themselves in what has affectionately been termed "Purgatory," a room within Valhalla in which the newly dead arrive. While still in Purgatory the new Einherjar are met by a fellow fallen mortal who attempts to explain their new afterlife. Unfortunately for the chosen, more often than not Valhalla and the gods will clash not only with their anticipation of death but also likely with their personal beliefs and theology. Most people,

Valherjar: The Chosen Slain New Player Primer

especially in modern times, not only don't expect to meet the gods but absolutely don't believe they exist. This can lead to some pretty significant emotional confusion or trauma and a reasonable effort is made to accommodate those who go into psychological shock.

Once the initial jolt passes, however, the average Einherjar manages to integrate themselves nicely into their new world. Though some remain resentful or confused, the majority of the fallen were warriors in life and freely embrace the zeal of their newly found death, quickly developing camaraderie and affection for their brethren.

Life in Asgard

As long as mankind has walked the Earth there have been the Einherjar. Symbolically named "They Who Fight Alone," the Einherjar are chosen from the ranks of the mortal dead for their acute sense of purpose and willingness to persevere by an entity known only as "The Valkyrie." Arriving unaware and confused, they are taken to the ranks of former mortals who live among the Aesir, the gods, in their realm named Asgard.

In Asgard the Einherjar spend their days among two of the great halls. The first is Valhalla, the hall of Odin the Allfather, foremost among the gods, where the Einherjar learn and refine the arts of war. An amazing accomplishment of both architecture and magic, originally the field of Valhalla bore only an open plain lightly grassed and sparsely populated by trees.

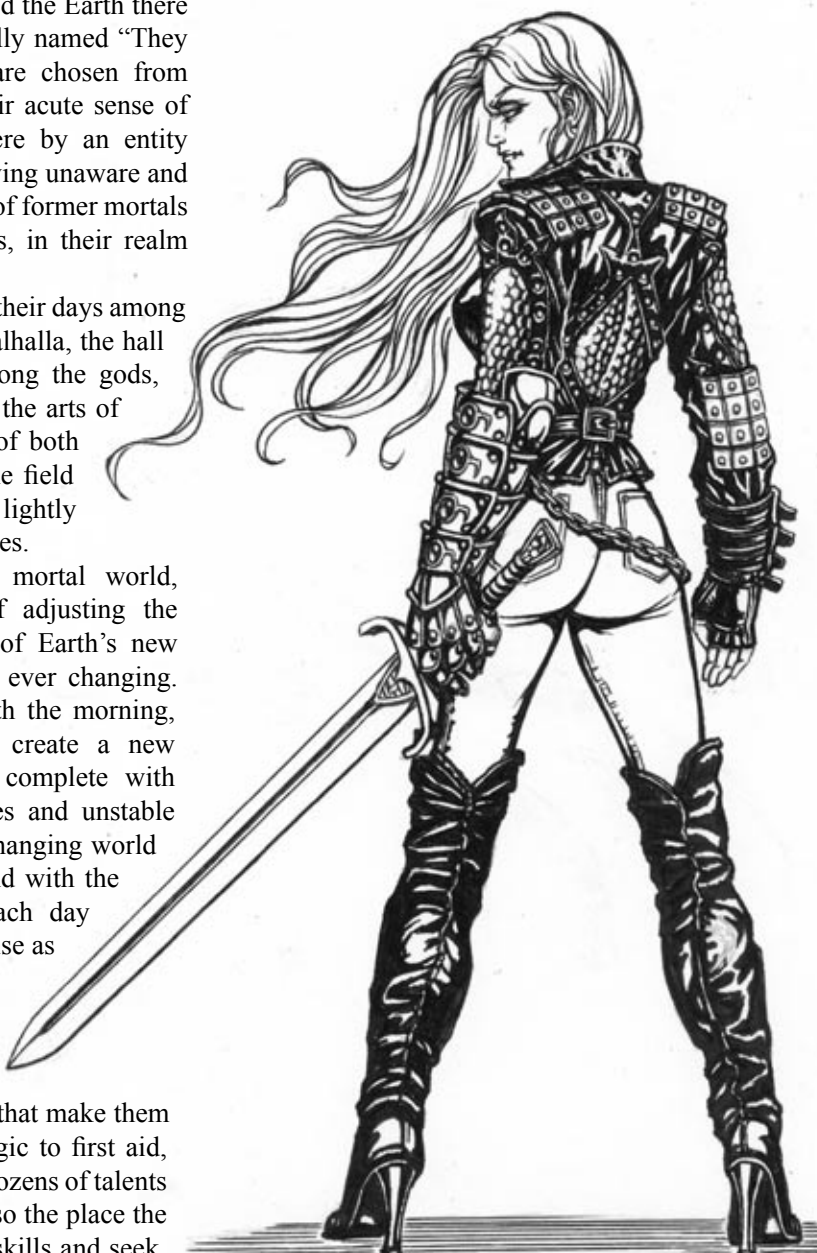
As time progressed in the mortal world, however, Odin saw the benefit of adjusting the training to meet the environments of Earth's new battlefields, and so the field is now ever changing. As the sun within the hall rises with the morning, the field morphs and changes to create a new environment each and every day, complete with buildings, mountains, variable slopes and unstable weather systems. It is in this ever-changing world that the Einherjar train in the art, and with the weapons, of war, waging battle each day against themselves or others in disguise as the Jotnar and their minions.

The other place in which the Einherjar pass their days is Fensalir, Frigga's great hall. In Fensalir they learn the essential non-combat skills that make them an effective army. From Runic Magic to first aid, weapon smithing to military theory, dozens of talents are taught and refined. Fensalir is also the place the Einherjar can go to enhance artistic skills and seek personal development.

It is from the Einherjar that the Valherjar, literally "The Chosen Slain," are selected. Patroned by one of the gods and imbued with magical Rune Stones, the Valherjar are given the ability return to the mortal realm and act as the hands of the gods on Earth.

The Role of the Valherjar The Mission

The Valherjar act as the hand, and will, of the gods on Earth. Their charge is broad and can include a number of operation types and activities, though their primary objective is always to prevent the Jotnar from acquiring assets that could give them an advantage in



Valherjar: The Chosen Slain

New Player Primer

the conflicts to come. This most often involves the destruction of Jotnar organizations, the disruption of essential operations, the assassination of Jotnar personnel and the gathering of information on Jotnar plots and future actions.

Each Valherjar's individual role can be as varied as the Valherjar themselves, and the gods have tried to avoid establishing strict doctrine as to how their champions should be used. If the Valherjar in question is little more than a combat machine, they may find themselves stuck in Asgard the majority of the time, being delivered back to Midgard (the word the Aesir use for Earth) only when their particular skills are required. If the Valherjar shows a proclivity for subtlety, they can be returned to Earth to live the life of a mortal, integrating themselves as information gatherers, observers or even spies in key positions in Jotnar organizations. Typically, however, the Valherjar occupy a role somewhere in between the two extremes, becoming a covert force that spends the majority of their time in Asgard but that can be returned for days, months or even years to pursue specific objectives.

The Rules

Man is not privy to the mind of the gods, however much we may want, or even need, to be. The thoughts of the Aesir are forever out of the reach of former mortals. Even the most vaunted and esteemed Jarls, the highest ranked mortal generals of the Aesir army, only get scarce glimpses at the workings of the grand plan, and they are strictly forbidden from passing their knowledge on to their brethren.

So it is that much of the whys and what-fors of the gods' activities and intentions are hidden from the Valherjar. Officially, and ostensibly, this is to protect the greater strategy involved in the ancient war. Since nearly the beginning Valherjar have been captured and corrupted by the Jotnar, and, as the old saying goes, what you do not know you cannot reveal. But it is not just the lack of information that complicates the Valherjar's mission; a number of explicit rules are also drilled repeatedly into the Valherjar during training and briefings.

Firstly, and easily the most emphasized, is that their very existence must remain a secret. When on Midgard the Valherjar are expected to maintain



Valherjar: The Chosen Slain

New Player Primer

low profiles, blend with mortal society and erase any evidence they may create while on assignments. Thus great care must be taken to ensure weapons and equipment are recovered, that Magics are not used in view of the public, and that the bodies of both fallen brethren and of inhuman looking Jotnar are disposed of appropriately. Though the Valherjar's mortal frame may burn to ash with the morning sunrise, it would cause great alarm among mortal authorities if either the same bodies kept turning up over and over again or if corpses in morgues kept erupting in flames. So too with the Jotnar corpses, as leaving what appears to be the carcass of a medieval dragon or science fiction monster lying on a city street would be, to say the very least, cause for great concern. Thus it is the responsibility of each Flyn to "clean up their messes" and minimize the evidence left by their raids and other activities.

So, too, is there a strict prohibition on any contact with possible remnants of a Valherjar's mortal life. Originally allowed in limited circumstances in which the Valherjar's status as immortal was not revealed (such as exercising contacts who may not know the individual had died or when they could claim status as their own descendant), such contact has now been outlawed. Valherjar are to have no interaction with their former existences whatsoever.

Finally, and most confusingly of all, is the ban on open conflict. Even in regions and countries where such events would go relatively unnoticed, the Valherjar, as of a few hundred years ago, were forbidden to openly engage Jotnar armies. Instead, all conflicts must take place on the "skirmish" level, rarely involving more than three Flyn, and should be resolved within a few short hours. Situations in which this rule would be violated, and would require either a considerable force or a prolonged battle to succeed, are sent up the chain of command and are either ignored or handled by some force other than the Valherjar.

Even more interestingly, and equally surprising, is that the Jotnar, too, seem to adhere in essence to the same rules. With the single, and often notable, exception of the psychotically insane Nidhogg, the Jotnar do take considerable pains to ensure their existence stays secret, only revealing themselves to devout followers and trusted allies. Even the Nidhogg, whose penchant for sadism and general dementia often blind them to the greater effects of their actions, do not violate the tacit secrecy of their existence intentionally and are often kept hidden by the governing of other Jotnar.

While in some cases this makes obvious sense, why the overall fanatical adherence to these rules exists is still a mystery. To many of the Valherjar the protocols seem counterproductive. After all, the Jotnar know the Aesir and Valherjar exist, and the Aesir and Valherjar know that the Jotnar exist, so why the secrecy and covertness must be observed even beyond the eyes of mortal society has been the cause of considerable frustration and conjecture.

Officially it is to prevent the final conflict from occurring prematurely. Many speculate that there was an event or series of events in the last millennium that may have led the powers-that-be to believe their open strife was speeding Ragnarok towards erupting. Though what exactly those events would have been and why they would lead to that result is unknown. Others assert that some tumultuous peace was struck between the leaders of each side, as rarely, if ever, do the elite elder Jotnar or the gods seem to actively interact with Midgard and the struggles there. Finally, dissenters within the Einherjar and Valherjar population suggest that fear may play a significant role. Gods, like humans and Jotnar, are not truly immortal, but simply incredibly difficult to kill. Legends say, and evidence in Asgard confirms, that at least two of the gods, Baldur and Loki, have in fact perished or disappeared in millenniums past. Some feel that the ploy of limited engagements, and the existence of the Valherjar themselves, is little more than a coward's shield to protect the gods at all costs.

Regardless of the truth, however, the rules exist and are adhered to religiously. Valherjar who openly expose themselves, fail to keep their activities covert or renew contact with their former lives are punished harshly. They may lose the prestige associated with their much vaunted titles, fall into disfavor and receive increasingly less desirable assignments or endure creatively extreme punishments (one Flyn who failed to successfully dispose of a Ymir corpse in a Brazilian jungle was returned to Midgard in Antarctica and forced to walk back to get it). They may even lose their Valherjar status and have their Runes removed, a process even more painful and prolonged than having the Runes ensconced.

Their Structure and Methods

Though strongly militaristic and often quite disciplined, the Valherjar have rejected both modern and historical sophistries of rigid organization in exchange for a more simplistic and less rigid structure. Essentially divided into three main conceptual facets, the Valherjar structure tends to only be concerned

Valherjar: The Chosen Slain

New Player Primer

with the absolute basics of a given Valherjar's role. It includes the Aett, or the clan-like followers of a given patron god; the Fylka, which indicates a Valherjar's given job and responsibility; and the Geledd, which is the Valherjar's title, representing their overall prestige.

The Aettir

The first, and unquestionably most important, defining factor of a Valherjar is their Aett. Similar to a clan or family group, each Aett (plural Aettir) indicates which patron god or goddess has adopted the Valherjar and, thus, which Rune is inserted within their forehead. Though technically only governing the sixth Rune given to each Valherjar and the accessibility to various Magics and Boons, as often as not the individuals chosen for each Aett also subscribe in varying degrees to the stereotypical values of their patron god.

But while the Valherjar may vary from the stereotypical views of their Aett, often quite strongly, when the time comes to assemble a force to return to Midgard, it seems as often as not that it is the Aett more than the individual who is chosen for the assignment. If warriors are needed in excess, the more martial Aettir will be looked at. If the mission is stealth and guile, diplomacy, or information gathering, then those Aettir will be weighed more heavily than the others.

Frigga's Hlin

Generally cheerful and optimistic, the Hlin maintain themselves with a constant air of vibrancy and love. Often thought of, or referred to as, "matronly" by their fellow Valherjar, the Hlin endure the jibes and barbs of their brethren with good humor and typically find lighthearted jabs to return in kind. Their attitude often bordering on lofty, the Hlin seem to think of their siblings more as children who have yet to find their way, not as equals. As such, they often treat their brethren as you would an ignorant child: with patience, gentle chiding and understanding. Rarely showing temper or losing control, the Hlin strive to be at one with everything in the Nine Worlds and demonstrate their universal compassion regularly.

Heimdall's Gjall

Generally balanced and worldly, the Gjall pride themselves on being aware but not overly judgmental. Over the centuries the Gjall have come to believe that circumventing the war is primarily their responsibility, and so they often conduct themselves as though their decisions carry exceptional weight. Often quick to take charge and firm in conviction, they seldom brook debate once a course of action has been decided and will rarely default to another's conclusion.

Odin's Grimmir

Solitary and enigmatic, some say the Grimmir are groomed from their mortal birth to carry the weight of being Hersir. Typically operating for long periods of time isolated from their brethren and submerged in enemy ranks, most Grimmir remain distant even when in the company of other Valherjar and usually appear withdrawn and remote. Though their individual personalities vary from the brash to the subdued, there is commonly an air of distance in a Grimmir.

Sif's Gyllen

For many, too much of the war has been spent jockeying for position and playing to political agendas, and the Gyllen feel the time has come to change the rules. Generally passionate and sincere, as a whole they view the right way as the way that best accomplishes a given goal, and there need not be too much discussion beyond that. This is not an "at all costs" mentality by any stretch, but rather one reflecting their belief that the Jotnar are a plague, and to decry something that works even as a temporary vaccine would require some significantly negative side effects. They also carry a legendary temper, and sagas have been written about a Gyllen's wrath. Easy to insight and consuming once inflamed, to question the judgment of a Gyllen can often be more exhausting than war, and using trickery to unleash their wrath on an unsuspecting or undeserving sibling is a favorite prank of the Valherjar.

Thor's Mjolnir

If bravado were land, each Mjolnir would have a kingdom to themselves. The epitome of self-confidence and machismo, if the Mjolnir know they can be defeated, they haven't let on yet. Most often loud, brash, tactless and obnoxious, they have the "right" opinion about everything and the world is entitled to hear about it. Rarely concerned about the trivialities of life (or death), most Mjolnir spend their time engrossed in both the aggressive and hedonistic pleasures of the flesh: drinking, fighting, feasting and fornicating.

Tyr's Gleipnir

Like a romantic vision of some gallant medieval knight, the Gleipnir pride themselves on nobility and chivalry above all else. Believing they can transcend the horrors of war through civil and genteel behavior, the Gleipnir view violence as a last (but still highly accessible) resort. Given to solving disputes through words and compromise, they are often erroneously viewed as weak among the Valherjar. However, it is this very compulsion towards serenity that warns of

Valherjar: The Chosen Slain

New Player Primer

the Gleipnir's true potential. As the old adage goes, they believe firmly in "walking softly and carrying a big stick" — and what each of them possesses rivals the might of all but the most accomplished Valherjar.

The Fylka and Flyns

The second aspect of the Valherjar organizational structure has to do with the specific role a Valherjar plays. This role, known as their *Fylka*, primarily defines what types of tasks they are assigned to, and generally falls within one of two categories: *Hersir*, who are the spies and information gatherers, and *Huscarls*, the foot soldiers and shock troops of the gods. And while within each of these categories there are a number of specializations and sub-jobs, it is most prevalently the *Hersir*/*Huscarl* distinction that determines a Valherjar's role as well as how and when they are grouped with other Valherjar into units called Flyns and sent on assignments.

Hersir

The information gatherers and spies of the Valherjar cadre, *Hersir* is a term given to warriors who excel at espionage and spend the majority of their time returned to Earth. Most often acting as forward observers for shock forces to come, the *Hersir* fill two primary roles: They work alone or in small teams to gather intelligence and relay it so that greater assaults may be planned, or they act as "guides" and are attached to larger groups of Valherjar to provide familiarity with the area the operation will occur in and the world in general. Typically placed back into a mortal life, a *Hersir* develops a deep cover and background so that they may operate free from suspicion, and may go months or years without acknowledging or contacting of their own kind.

Huscarls

The shock troops of the Valherjar, *Huscarls* are individuals who have shown the necessary skills, abilities and aptitudes for action on Earth, but who are used on an assignment-specific basis. Often possessing individual specializations, *Huscarls* can be proficient in a number of areas that may prove invaluable during operations. Whether they are elite combatants; especially adept with their powerful Magics; particularly knowledgeable in the politics of the world; or are jacks-of-all-trades with universal applications, *Huscarls* are chosen for specific operations based on their particular assets and may be combined with any manner of other *Huscarls* and *Hersir* to make an effective team.

Flyns

Once all Valherjar involved in a mission have gathered on Midgard they are united into a *Flyn*. Named for the flying spears of the Viking battlefield, Flyns perform the direct actions demanded by the gods. More than just a squad in name, members of a *Flyn* are linked through their Rune Stones for the duration of their mission. This link grants the *Flyn* additional abilities so that they may more effectively work as a team.

The gifts of the *Flyn* primarily involve organization and communication, and *Flyn* members immediately gain an awareness of the approximate location of their brethren. Each Valherjar in a *Flyn*, through concentration, can identify the direction to a fellow *Flyn*-mate, and can pinpoint their location if they are within 100 yards of each other. Additionally, the *Flyn* allows a Valherjar to be aware of the general mortal-status of other members of the *Flyn*, be they essentially healthy, seriously injured or dead. There are also instances in which Valherjar who have been in a *Flyn* with the same people for decades or more have developed limited telepathy and the ability to share magical assets, but these situations are not the norm.

Once a *Flyn* is formed, the most prestigious of the group is typically assigned as their commander, or *Agnar*, and they are briefed on their assignment. The function of the *Flyn* *Agnar* involves reporting to the Jarl Commander as well as directing the group's activities, and it is expected among all Valherjar that the more prestigious a warrior the more respect and authority they will be given.

The Runes of Rebirth

Though in Asgard they have material form, the *Einherjar* are the spirits of the dead and would be little more than incorporeal ghosts even if they could return to Earth. What separates the Valherjar from their sky-bound brethren are the six Rune Stones that allow them to travel through the *Burhs* and return to the land of the living.

Legend says Odin learned the magic of the Runes as he hung by a noose from the branches of the world tree, but why it can only be applied to the former mortals of humanity and how the magic actually works only the gods know. Regardless, it is this magic that reforms their mortal body when the Valherjar pass through the gateways to Earth and that whisks them back to the halls of Valhalla should their mortal frame expire again. It also gives them a number of abilities beyond those they possessed in life.

Valherjar: The Chosen Slain

New Player Primer

Rune Magic

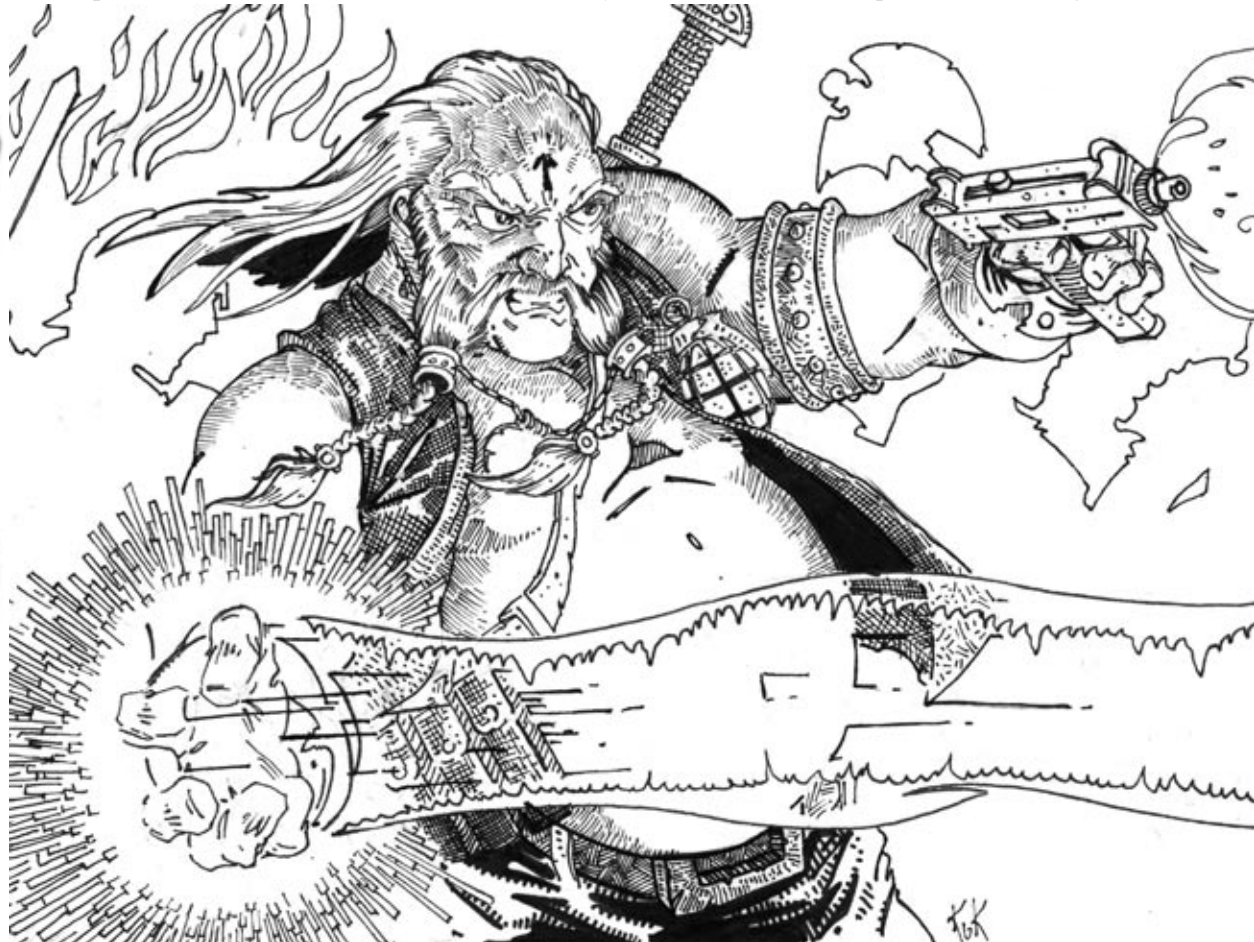
Through intense physical and mental concentration, the Valherjar are able to draw from and direct the Magic of their Rune Stones to create remarkable effects. Though in truth barely understood by even the oldest of the dead, Runic Magic has become a staple of Valherjar effectiveness and is among the most prized and diversely applicable tools in their arsenal. Capable of being intensely focused into powerful attacks, altering the perception of both the Valherjar and others around them, and in extreme cases even causing physical shifts in the wielder's body, Runic Magic has been developed into a formidable force constantly at the warrior's disposal.

Though functionally universal (meaning that all Magics are drawn from both the Runes and life energy within the Valherjar's body), the effects of Runic Magic can be quite diverse and are still being explored. Originally thought to be of little value beyond conventional direct-force attacks and altering the thought process of select targets, over the last few centuries the Valherjar have become aware of fantastic new capabilities hidden within them. Occasionally

discovered by accident, or often learned from the most unlikely of sources (including from Elves, Dwarves, Dragons and occasionally even the Jotnar), new and even more exotic abilities have been developed. Select Valherjar have dedicated their time in Fensalir to not only refining the basic skills the gods have taught them but also exploring the seemingly infinite possibilities contained within them.

The process for using Runic Magic is deceptively simple, though physically draining, and through training can be honed to second nature. The basis for the thaumaturgy lies in the combination of a gesture and a word, and every form of Rune Magic the Valherjar employs incorporates these two concepts. The gesture consists of *Carving*, or drawing with the hand, a series of Runic symbols similar to those found in the Norse alphabet. Basic Magics require only a single Rune to be Carved, but more elaborate or derivative uses may require up to three or more.

Similarly, the phrase to be uttered, called a *Dikt*, varies in length based on the complexity of the Magic being used. Unlike a Carving, however, the specific Dikt uttered are unique to each Valherjar. A reflection



Valherjar: The Chosen Slain

New Player Primer

of their personal philosophy and training, the given Dikts are developed when each Magic is first learned. Though individuals will always repeat the same words when casting any given Magic, those words may vary dramatically from another Valherjar performing the same thaumaturgy.

When these actions are combined with an intense focus the Runes glow brightly and shift their energy from the body of the Valherjar towards the target. During this shift both the Runes and the energy lashing out from them becomes visible to the naked eye to varying degrees depending on the strength of the Magic.

Gifts of the Valherjar

In addition to returning them to the mortal coil and imbuing them with the ability to conjure magic, a Valherjar's Runes also give them some unexpected, but extremely advantageous, physiological abilities.

Exalted Immortality: The primary purpose of a Valherjar's Runes has always been twofold: First to allow them to return to Earth, and second to bind them to Valhalla, allowing them to return to Asgard should they die again. This gives the Valherjar a limited, but highly prized, form of immortality. Though on Earth they are as mortal as any man, once killed they simply awake in Valhalla on the next sunrise, and are then free to return to Midgard and their Flynn.

Mimir's Tongue: The Valherjar may speak and understand any language of mortal man. This knowledge, gleaned from the universal life force that all Valherjar share in Valhalla, is inherent to all the dead of Asgard but is not gained equally. Directly tied to the individual's intellect, the higher the Valherjar's Intelligence rating the better the command of the language they will have, including the knowledge of cultural dialects, slang, obscure references and irregular verb usage.

Boundless Physiology: With death comes the end of many mortal necessities and so freedom for the Valherjar from many of the trappings of life. Valherjar do not need to eat, drink or in any other way digest nutrients in order to survive (protein does aid in their supernatural healing, however), though they are still vulnerable to poisons if administered directly into the bloodstream. They also do not need to breathe (thus inhaled toxins have no effect) and are immune to cold.

Accelerated Healing: A Valherjar heals at several times the normal mortal rate and, given sufficient time and protein, can recover from almost any wound. The protein is absorbed immediately,

being used as a form of raw material to knit and patch the injuries, and is crucial to ensuring that the healing occurs. Without it the Valherjar still heals faster than normal, but not at near their maximum potential.

A Death Beyond Dying

Death carries an interesting, and often confusing, weight among the Valherjar. Returned to mortal bodies that almost identically mirror those they possessed in life, they experience the many aspects of mortality as rich and fully as any person ever has. Though they don't have to eat, they still take pleasure from it and are free to do so. Though they don't need to breathe, they can still smell the flowers on the wind or the dampness after a rain. And though they may never get sick or grow any older they still progress emotionally and experience the changing of the seasons just as any mortal does.

So it can be something of a shock when a Valherjar dies again. Even if it is expected, they never seem to get used to the idea or results. First there is the loss of time. For the Valherjar time seems to just stop before their rebirth, and even though up to a full day can pass they have no accounting for that time. Odder still are the "dreams" some seem to experience. Though likely only figments of some idle subconscious vision, recollections of cold wastelands and grim pale figures glaring at them mournfully are the proverbial ghost story of the Valherjar, occasionally being reported and often spoken of in hushed and scared whispers. Finally, for many simply ceasing to exist for a period of time can be quite disheartening and is certainly an experience to be avoided.

The Valherjar's corpse also poses something of a problem for both their Flynn-mates and for the secrecy of Valherjar operations in general. Not including the considerable threat involved should the Jotnar acquire the carcass, as many of them have discovered horrific ways of desecrating and perverting the bodies and souls of the Valherjar, there are a number of other concerns that must be dealt with. The husk of the fallen remains like any other body, at least until the next sunrise, and creates an interesting "trail" for mortals to follow which can jeopardize operational security. Further, the body is only truly "disposed of" once the next sunrise occurs when it spontaneously bursts into flames, reaching an incredible burning temperature that scorches surroundings and leaves six distinct, and permanent, impressions in literally any material the body lays on.