



THE ROCK OF STORMS

for

The Forest of Doors



The Rock of Storms

The Rock of Storms is a chain of rocky islands lashed continuously by violent seas, howling winds, destructive lightning, and terrible cold. The islands that make up the land are essentially mountains that jut out of the frothy brine, often with twisting tilts to their ascension. Few plants cling to the sides of these mountains, but piney forest and open moors lie in the valleys between peaks. Flocks of ravens fly when the skies are clearest, darkening the days that are brightest. There are few beaches or flat lands in the Rock of Storms, and the upper levels of the mountains are capped in snow. In winter, the entire land is blanketed in snow and salty rime. Sea travel is possible, but the danger of the stormy seas makes it so that only the most able and skilled sailors take to the sea. An endless storm, personified by locals as the angry World Serpent, encircles the known seas.

Amid these terrible conditions, a hardy and honorable people eke out an existence. Ferocious beasts, emboldened and empowered by the endless storm, hunt the sick and the weak. Trolls well up from below the earth, and the warriors of the Rock of Storms must do battle with them to protect their homes. The Little Ones, terrible creatures from the bones of the world, seek to steal away human children to increase their numbers. Despite such an inhospitable land, the people have no recourse but to fight against the terrible conditions and survive another day. The alternative would be oblivion, and although seductive, it would be a dishonor to one's family and legacy.

The History of the Rock of Storms

The Triumph of the Gods

In the times before the Gods, the world was naught but a twisted jumble of rocks blasted by fires and torn asunder by icy glaciers. From this chaos of rock, fire, and ice were born the first trolls. Trolls were giants of incredible aspect, each different from one another. Some wore skins of ice, but many were composed of fire or the stone from which they were birthed. The Trolls made war on one another for an age, pausing only to copulate, give birth to more Trolls, or to forge terrible weapons. The heat of their battles melted the glaciers and created the seas, and the maggots that infested their dead flesh became the Little Ones (also known by Skalds as Little Folk).

In time, the children of the Trolls joined the fray. Each as unique as their parents, some perished terribly while others distinguished themselves in battle. The World Serpent, a massive sea beast whose coils were large enough to encircle the modern Rock of Storms, did terrible battle against the inhabitants of the worlds. Its rolls created waves that pulled scores into the freezing ocean. The Winter Wolf, a great white and blue wolf whose paws could crush cities, devoured opponents whole. The Gnawing Wurm, an oily black serpent whose only desire is to eat, swallowed his opponents to find nourishment from the bodies and spirits of his captives. In the midst of this chaos, the Gods, themselves children of the terrible Trolls, became preeminent amongst the combatants.

The Sky Father and his siblings, the All Maker and All Mother, strode across the plains of ice and defeated whoever stood before them. The Sky Father cleaved the bodies of Trolls with Debt of Limbs, the great axe that he was birthed with, and felled the other Troll-born with javelins of pure lightning.

The All Maker wielded a great stone hammer, Wolf's Fate, a weapon so heavy that only the All Maker could hope to strike with it. The All Mother, although she did not herself go to battle, grew apples that restored the flesh of her kinsmen when they were harmed. So powerful were these apples, that even when the Sky Father had been rendered to pulp or turned to ash, a single drop of its juice would return him to life.

In time, the Gods won a great portion of existence, and the Trolls understood that they would lose their battle against the Gods. Instead of dying in war, they retreated below the earth and made a kingdom that is now known as Troll Hall. The Little Folk burrowed into the earth, returning only to steal unattended children. The Gods had no desire to live in the land they had just won, for it was a dark and cold place. Fashioning a palace at the top of a rainbow, they ascended beyond the world to enjoy the spoils of conquest in the Rainbow Hall. The World Serpent coiled itself around the world in an attempt to choke it. The Winter Wolf hid away in mountain caves, but it returned to the world every fourth season to kill off the weak. The terrible Gnawing Wurm sided with its parents, and made its way into Troll Hall. However, it did not forget the injustices that were done to it by the Gods and chewed the bottom of the world. Although the Gnawing Wurm does not move quickly, it will one day break into the Rock of Storms once again, and on this day, the sea will boil and the Gods will be defeated.

The Fall of Man

The Sky Father created the Runes, and in using them, perceived all knowledge in existence. He became aware that the Gods were fated to die, and that on the Final Day, they would perish in battle. The All Maker would meet the Winter Wolf in combat, and both would perish in the conflict. The Storm Father would meet the World Serpent in battle, and he would be victorious. However, the terrible venoms inflicted upon him would leave him weak, and he would be devoured by the Gnawing Wurm. The All Mother would die fighting the remaining Trolls and although her mythical fruit tree would be burned, a single seed from her healing apples would survive the encounter. Even though the Gods would come to an end, their works and conquest over the Trolls would not necessarily be undone. The Storm Father knew that he needed warriors of virtue to stand at his side at the end of things, to ensure that the world would remain in the God's vision. If somehow the Gnawing Wurm could be defeated, the forces of chaos would be thrown down for a time and the world would live on.

To recruit his army, he created humanity from the alder trees that lived in the valleys of the land. During this time, the land was warm and hospitable. Although winters were as terrible as they had ever been, the land was welcoming and yielded great bounty. The first men created honorable kingdoms that made war on the Trolls. Their kings swore soul-oaths to the Gods, taking up their battle against the Trolls in exchange for a place at the God's side after death. Descending beneath the mountains, these warriors perished in scores. The ghosts of those who died in battle ascended to the Rainbow Hall, where they would drink mead and train for the final battle in the company of the Sky Father. Humanity was given, the task, of ensuring that the Trolls were slain where they were found. Although they were considerably more powerful than men, death in battle was not to be feared, for it allowed a man to achieve communion with the Gods. In time, the honored warriors would meet the dreaded Gnawing Wurm in battle, and should they succeed, they would inherit the world.

So it went that the great Kings would descend to the Troll Hall to make war. Yearly campaigns were mounted, and in time, these war bands became unquestionable tradition, enforced by potent oaths

written in the stars. Trolls were constantly harried by the Gods and their creations. Although the Winter Wolf would make a yearly migration into the world to kill the young, the sick, and the elderly, the world was a good place. The World Serpent may have writhed in an attempt to drown the world, but it failed every time. One by one, the great Kings died and made their way to the honored halls of the warrior dead.

One King, however, did not wish to make war. His name is no longer known, for it is cursed so heavily that to mention his name would blacken and split the tongue of whoever spoke it. Instead of making war on the Trolls, he chose to side with them. He pledged his undying loyalty to their ranks, and invited them into his long hall. He gave them drink, knew their horrible Troll women, and fed his subjects to their kings. He in turn ate many subjects in an attempt to show how close his kinship with his terrible masters was. They promised him immortality, and he chose cowardly peace over righteous war.

The Sky Father was so incensed by this alliance that his very nature changed. He was no longer the Sky Father. All that was left was a great rage, and the runes of his very name shifted. From that day forward, he would be only known as the Storm Father, for the land was covered in a storm so powerful, that it destroyed the kingdoms of men. His rage threw back the Trolls that had settled in the land, and their blood ran once again across the face of the world. The seas rose as powerful Trolls were laid low by bolts of red lightning, and humanity was forced into whatever high ground they could find.

Thus began the terrible storm that has not yet abated. The land, in time, came to be known as the Rock of Storms, for that was all that was left to the world: massive stony peaks, roiling salty seas, and a sky full of fire and cutting gusts. Those who live now have never known what it was like before man forsook the favor of the Gods. Although man turned their back on their creators, the Gods did not abandon their acceptance of mankind. The Storm Father gave the power of the runes to mankind to better protect their kin from the terrible conditions of the world. Even now, great warriors who fight fiercely for honor still have a place at the great tables of the Rainbow Hall. Through great actions in war against the filthy ice-spawns of past ages, a mortal may yet meet the Gnawing Wurm in battle. However, without enough soldiers at the end times, the world may perish completely.

Age of the Blood Sea

Many died in this cataclysm born of their King's betrayal. Those who survived managed to cling to life on the islands remaining after the destruction of their Kingdom. Life was difficult and many more died in that first year as the darkened skies and the infertile earth prevented many of the field from growing. Great wars were fought over the few scraps left, and it is said that the sea stained red for a generation with the blood of all those slain in the fight against their fellow survivors, this horrific time is known as the Age of the Blood Sea.

During these days the survivors warred on each other and ignited feuds that lasted for generations. What ever was left from the great days of the first Kingdom were washed away in waves of bloodshed, jealousy, and revenge. These wars would likely have continued till the survivors had managed to slay each other to the last man, woman and child if it Trolls had not returned. It was believed that most Trolls were killed in the same cataclysm caused by the broken oath that they had enticed from the

King. But it was discovered that the Trolls who survived were the strongest and most ferocious of their kind, and they had been gifted with an even more frightening power, the power of immortality. No matter how many times these Trolls were killed fell magics would still raise them from the dead on the longest night of the year.

Each of the clans has stories of their first hero who defeated the Trolls when they returned. The story of the Hamdir clan tells of the warrior that the clan was named after Hamdir the Berzerk. Hamdir was a fearsome warrior during the “Age of the Blood Sea” who was said to have slain entire boats full of men single handedly. His band of warriors had finished driving the last of those who would not bend to their will from their island and were in the midst of a great celebration when the Troll that haunted their island made itself known.

This Troll was a giant beast able to regenerate limbs and flesh hewn from its body, whose blood and fallen flesh became poisonous biting vermin upon striking the ground. The Troll entered the celebration and began attacking the warriors it seemed at first like the monster would be quickly overcome. But as the Troll kept regenerating flesh hacked from its body and venomous vermin began laying warriors low the warriors quickly found themselves overwhelmed and they knew for the first time the fear of impending mortality.

Hamdir was laying drunken with a number of women some distance from the celebrations and did not immediately see or hear the battle brought by the Troll. It was not till he heard the unfamiliar cries of fear from his fellow warriors that he rushed to the celebration to investigate. There Hamdir found the great Troll beating and torturing the men and women that he had fought beside for many years. He could not believe the indignity of what he witnessed and a rage grew in him, burning away the drunkenness and filling his arms with an unnatural strength. Hamdir grabbed two hatchets that were handy and blindly charged into the fray chopping and hacking at anything that was not familiar to him.

The Troll ripped off one of his own arms and used its flesh and blood to create a swarm of envenomed vermin, sending them against the raging warrior. It is described that the overwhelming swarms of creatures created by the troll moved like an angry sea bent on Hamdir’s destruction. Wave after wave of malevolent vermin crashed and broke against the uncontrolled warrior for hours. When Hamdir got to the Troll and began hacking at it, his small hatchets were not able to hew through the Troll’s tough skin, but the enraged strength behind his blows eventually broke all the bones in the Trolls body so as he could not knit them whole. In the end there was left an injured and bloody Hamdir standing over a mortally wounded Troll begging for mercy which was not to come.

The Age of Storm Woes

The World Now

Society is now fractured among dozens of clans rallied around the memory of a single great ancestor. All of these clans are dominated by five great clans which bind the smaller clans to them in loose promises of fealty and alliance. In the absence of a unifying King, the land has splintered into these great extended families which unite disparate tribes under a single leadership. Although the clans each pursue their own agendas which sometimes come to cross purposes, conflicts between the clans is

almost unheard of. Instead, a system of ritualized combat has replaced outright war. This is because no clan can afford to make war on one another in fear of igniting another series of wars and feuds like those during The Age of the Blood Sea. The Great Clans are Einr, Othala, Thurvaldr, Hamdir, and Vigdis. There are also Minor Clans attached to the Major Clans through fealty ties. Also there are strange degenerate people who haunt the caves and small rocky islet around the larger islands that the clans call home. These people who practice fell magic and worship the Trolls as Gods are known simply as the Others.

Clan Einr

Mount of Ice, the smallest of the great islands of the Rock of Storms, is home to Clan Einr, a fierce people who place their survival in the hands of their shamans. The land is mostly barren and although it is the smallest of the islands, it is among the tallest. Its peak is almost entirely obscured by great clouds and its summit is often lit violet by the storm. Great sheets of ice regularly flow off of the mountain into the land below. When it melts, the water is said to be so pure that enough of it can cure illnesses. The mountain is also home to uncounted Little Folk, who make high demands of the local people.

The Einr rely on the skill of their shamans, specialized Skeirns who negotiate with the Little Ones, to mollify and pacify the desires of the Little Ones. The Little Folk want nothing more than to carry off the clan's children, where they will be transformed into more Little Ones. Skeirns make offerings to the Little Folk to appease them, but should it fail, they often must find ways to drive them off. Frequently, this involves magic, such as the Rune of Hearth's Warden. The necessity of these runic spells requires that a larger percentage of the Einr, compared to other clans, learn the Runes of the Storm Father.

Among the Einr, the Storm Father is the ideal to which all clan members aspire. They seek not only to be great warriors and gain many trophies of battle, but also to know the wisdom of ages and the ancient runes. Like the stern and manly father that every Einr grow up with, to be a powerful leader is the greatest consideration. To give protection to the weak, to slay the unrighteous, and to lead the great to even higher acts of greatness; this is what the Einr live for.

Clan Othala

Isle of Hearth Springs, a mountainous island in the north of the Rock of Storms, is rendered hospitable by volcanic springs that well up from the earth. Although sulfurous, they allow its inhabitants to bathe within to warm themselves on even the coldest night. The land is thick with wildlife as well, and owls, reindeer, weasels, wolves, and saber-toothed cats abound. The land also offers a very valuable bounty to those who dwell there: iron. Mines, although often inhabited by the Little Ones, are common and yield a vast amount of iron.

As a result, Clan Othala has become supreme amongst the people of the Rock of Storms in the area of metalwork. Although trade is very difficult, Othala makes extensive use of it when they can, supplying the other clans with exceptional arms in exchange for provisions, ship building materials, and livestock. The inhabitants of the Isle of Hearth Springs are also accomplished sailors, and ship building

occupies a substantial portion of the clan's overall effort.

Othala could be ostensibly described as the most "civilized" of the clans, for they prefer wearing a kilt and heavy wrought leathers to the furs and skins of their counterparts on other islands. They rely on farmed foods and net fishing for their provisions. However, the people of Othala are not weaklings, and each is expected to hold their own in battle as well as at the forge. Othala, out of all the clans, respects the bowman most, for ship-borne archers commonly defend Othala trade vessels from the predations of the Others.

Clan Thurvaldr

The Land of Green, as the home isle of Clan Thurvaldr is known, is lush compared to the other islands of the Rock of Storms. It is blanketed in piney forest, and a great river runs down the side of the mountain that makes up most of the isle. Great herds of reindeer roam through these forests, and bears, wolves, and great cats of immense stature cull these herds. The most feared of these giants are those who possess a white pelt and are of a greater size than even the other predators of the isle. Marked by the Winter Wolf, such beasts are given names to match their ferocious demeanor. Such creatures hunger for human flesh and many assume that this is because they are the children of the Winter Wolf.

Clan Thurvaldr are herders and hunters. Although they make settlements, they do not do so for longer than a season. They move with the herds as they travel, taking their hide-tents and families with them. Members of Clan Thurvaldr are at home in the wilderness. They shun sea travel and avoid the stone ruins of the old order, for they know that such things still hold corruption. They avoid these places, for some of the ancient evil that wrecked the land might still linger there.

Thurvaldr respects self reliance among all other virtues. It is odious for a man to dwell in the camp of another, unless he brings gifts of goods or labor to honor his host. Thurvaldr hold personal honor highest among all virtues, and many believe that a person who has been shamed, whether or not they deserve the shame, will not be allowed to sup at the tables of the Gods. Those who have acted without honor or have been perceived as being without honor must make dire acts of contrition. They might be asked to dwell alone in the wilderness for an entire winter or to slay one of the great named white-pelt beasts.

Clan Hamdir

The Isle of Sky Fire is largest island in the Rock of Storms. Multiple peaks reach to the sky, and a swirling storm continuously lashes each mountain. Lightning plays continuously across the surface of the island, and thunder rings out across the land. Lightning often strikes the top of each mountain, in many cases multiple times an hour. A warrior who can climb to the peak of one of these mountains and return unharmed from the lightning is considered to be favored by the Storm Father. The valleys of the isle are inhabited by aurochs, giant mountain bison, which make up a substantial part of the Hamdir diet.

The inhabitants of the isle, Clan Hamdir, carry on the warrior tradition of the old times to a greater extent than the other clans. Although all of the people of the Rock of Storms still make war on Trolls

when they can afford to, Clan Hamdir makes it a priority. The leaders of the clan universally die in combat, a fact that makes the inhabitants of the Isle of Sky Fire proud. Members of the many families that make up Hamdir wish to die on the battlefield, and the tribal elders often make their way to Troll Hall, like an elder wolf leaving the pack, to meet their destiny.

Among the various deities of the Rock of Storms, Clan Hamdir most favors the All Maker, whose great hammer, Wolf Fate, has felled a greater number of Trolls than the hairs on a boar's back. Many in Clan Hamdir believe that they will serve under the All Maker on the Final Day. When he meets the Winter Wolf in mortal combat, clan Hamdir will aid him in his fight. Although the All Maker is fated to be destroyed, he will also succeed in slaying the Winter Wolf, and clan Hamdir will be free to fight the Gnawing Wurm with the rest of the virtuous dead.

Clan Vigdis

Land of Peaks, as the isle peopled by Clan Vigdis is known, is a craggy, wind-worn land of cliffs and plateaus. Great canyons take the place of what would be valleys in other lands, and lakes actually pool on the side of the mountains. Great white cliffs, steep fjords, and salt water gorges make up most of the land. Terrible reefs make travel to the Land of Peaks difficult, but sailors memorize these places to navigate safely. Those that live here find a beauty in the hostile landscape, and songs are sung of those hardy enough to make a life in such an inhospitable place.

The people of Clan Vigdis hold their homeland in high esteem, for it is the home of their father and mother and their parents' father and mother. Many believe that their ancestors visit the land often, for even though they may live in the Rainbow Hall, they become homesick. To ensure that such ancestor spirits will look upon the living favorably when they visit, Clan Vigdis records their deeds by oral tradition and sings the songs of the departed. A higher degree of Vigdis become Skalds as a result, and their ballads to the departed are considered to be among the finest in the world. Frequently, members of Clan Vigdis will travel the world, collecting stories of the honored dead, to finally return home in their old age and teach the tales to a new generation.

In fact, Clan Vigdis holds a special place of honor within each of the other clans. Frequently, Vigdis will organize world-wide tournaments or other event involving unity amongst the clans. They promote the spread of news, the recording of ancient lore, and increase the quality of life. In this manner, members of Clan Vigdis are considered to most resemble the All Mother, whose knowledge and compassion restored the Gods to life when they were slain.

The Minor Clans

As the Age of the Blood Sea wound down, the Major clans began to force the Minor clans into fealty arrangements. In these arrangements the smaller clan would provide the larger clan with goods and services in exchange for being protected from predation from other Major clans. These agreements of fealty spread till each of the small clans had been adopted as a satellite of one of the Major clans.

Each Minor Clan is semi-autonomous from the Major Clan that it swears fealty to as long as it provides the agreed upon tribute. During lean times though, a lack of resources may force a tribute to be short

which can cause tension and often leads to the Major Clan challenging the Minor clan to a ritualized form of combat to settle the dispute over the missing tribute.

For the most part this system of fealty and tribute is done out of tradition, fellowship, and social interaction rather than to fulfill actual needs. The times when the boats arrive to accept tribute from a Minor Clan is seen as a time to impress the Major Clan and it is met with a sense of celebration rather than forced responsibility.

The Others

In the caves of the mountains and on small atolls near the great islands, some degenerate families reject the honor that the Clans follow. Many of these incestuous families worship or even bear the children of the Trolls deep under the ground or gladly give up their children as sacrifices to the Little Folk. Members of the clans call these people The Others, for they find their ways disgusting and unclean.

The Others are avoided by the clans when possible, destroyed when necessary. Their foul ways make their presence greatly unwelcome. Those among them that worship the Trolls are granted horrifying powers to curse others and are known as Fell Witches. Instead of living lives of virtue and one day supping at the tables of the Gods, they know their fate lies in the belly of the Gnawing Wurm. They hope that they can achieve a level of favor in life so that the Gnawing Wurm will spare them the horrors that await after it devours the world. Some believe that being consumed by the great Worm is a blessing, for all that will be left after it has had its fill will be suffering and cold.

Fell Witches use their powers to strike at those who stand against the Trolls and the rapturous destruction of the world that they bring. Ailments such as a woman being struck barren, a warrior being afflicted with uncontrollable shakes, a leader becoming senile, or a child who is not able to stop bleeding can all be attributed to the depraved curses of the Fell Witches among the Others.

Since the Gates Opened

Recently some of the minor clans have been taking steps to break away from the major clans that they own fealty to, inspired by the break away of the Ogmundr from the Hamdir. This disruption of the political order has caused significant strife between the clans and within them. Traditional warriors see these attempts to break away as insults to a system that has benefited the warriors of Storm Father for generations. Younger warriors see this as a natural change of the seasons, as access to the gates to the Forest of Doors makes some minor clans more autonomous, and better able to stand on their own.

The difference of opinions has coalesced into a traditionalist movement led by a new charismatic clanhead from the Hamdir clan who calls himself The Jarl (the old title held by the Kings long ago). The Jarl promises to bring all the warriors under a single banner against the trolls, by attracting the other clans through promises of shared defense or promises of freely flowing blood. At this point only the Thurvaldr have backed The Jarl fully, however the Vigdis are quietly supportive of his idea. The Othala and Einr are dismissive of The Jarl, but whisperings in their long halls are that they wait to see him do something that can prove he is worthy of the title he claims.

Many of the Minor Clans are arming themselves and building defenses to protect their islands from The Jarl's forces, if they should appear on the horizon. Skalds are singing warning tales from the Age of the Blood Sea, and everybody is waiting to see what will happen next. Whispers tell a story that The Jarl's best warriors are spread through out the Rock of Storms looking for something specific, that supposedly will prove him to be the chosen of the Storm Father, what that is though is unknown.

Society

It is said that the Storm Father gave mankind three inspirations that allow mortals to achieve acts of greatness. The first inspiration is the rage of the berserker. It is a state of being that allows a warrior to slay his enemies and feel no pain. The second inspiration is the creative passion of the poet. In this state of being, an artist transcends the physical world and sees only the divine. The third inspiration is the trance of the rune caster. In this state, a magician is a conduit for the powers of the Gods. Each of these frenzies has given rise to a class of person, each drawing on the power of the Storm Father.

Berzerkers are inspired warriors and wielders of the first of the Storm Father's inspirations. They also hunt, craft, or sing songs with their fellows, but the inspiration of the Storm Father drives them to achieve martial perfection. Most Berzerkers practice the Wurm-Slayer style which uses two short axes in fast brutal strikes to maim opponents, though Berzerkers are not limited to it. Although all people in the Rock of Storms are considered warriors, a Berzerker is one who has heard the calling of the Storm Father in peals of thunder and the howls of the wolves and are driven to become masters of combat. Berzerkers are not so much made as they are inspired by a spiritual closeness to the Storm Father. Berzerkers are usually identified when they are young and first learning to use a weapon. Such children are marked by being especially ferocious and tenacious, and sometimes losing coherence when they fight causing them to foam at the mouth, speak in tongues, or sweat blood. These young warriors are always taken aside and taught by others Berzerks how to hold their frenzy and focus it to use only when it is needed. Berzerks are expected to exemplify the role of the warrior in their clan, and if a Berzerk's company feels they are not worthy of the title, they will likely be challenged to ritual combat. Failing to meet a challenge is a shameful thing, but failing in such a challenge proves humility and strength of character. The possibility of being challenged is always present, for any meeting of Berzerks is followed by the Game of Boasting. Often, Berkerks call their comrades on their boasts and they must prove the worthiness of their deeds.

Skalds are traveling bards who employ the second of the Storm Father's frenzies. Skalds recite, from memory, the old stories of the Gods and their exploits. Skalds serve the function of performer, news carrier, historian, and preacher. Skalds are well respected by all people, for their presence improves understanding and spreads information. Berzerks in particular hold Skalds in very high esteem, for they pass along word of great deeds of war, virtue, or endurance. In many ways, Skalds have the power to bestow or revoke honor and reputation. Because the Gods care so very highly about the reputations of their warriors, a Berzerk who has been dishonored in the eyes of the Skalds will be denied a place at the Rainbow Hall's long table. Skalds also frequently serve as diplomats or arbitrators between Clans if disputes arise, as Skalds can quickly discern by reputation or precedent which side must yield. Skalds are by nature performers, although not all Skalds are musicians. Many simply excel in recitation, and can often be found telling the stories of their ancestor's many glories. Becoming a Skald requires that one travel far and wide, learning as many stories as possible. Since no history is

ever recorded in the Rock of Storms, a Skald must personally travel to far off places to learn of their past. A Skald must also be able to recite the tribulations and fates of the Gods by heart, so one must be initiated into the craft by an elder Skald.

Skeirns (pronounced “Skay-Irns”) are rune-masters who enter the third of the Storm Father’s frenzies. They study and internalize the lessons and fates of the runes to wield their powers against declared enemies. Like Skalds, they are often extremely well learned, but often in ways that apply to mystical understanding instead of mundane stories. Of the inhabitants of the Rock of Storms, Skeirns are the most literate for they must know the Lesser Runes as a matter of course. In order to internalize the power of the runes, many Skeirns draw or tattoo them to their flesh. Skeirns are often called to be arbitrators between humans and inhuman forces in the Rock of Storms. If Little Folk are known to be in the area, Skeirns are best equipped to negotiate, supplicate, or drive them away. When a Troll is spotted causing trouble on a mountainside, Skeirns are called in to determine its nature and bestow the Storm Father’s blessings upon the warriors who will slay it. A person becomes a Skeirn only by studying the runes at the side of an accomplished Skeirn. Only the cleverest would be considered, and the slow, the odious, and the dull would be turned back by any Skeirn worthy of the title.

Political Order

The only order found in the land is found within the clans. Each clan is led by a council of the elders chosen from the eldest members of each family within a clan. This council chooses the clanhead from the greatest of the warriors in the clan, to represent that clan’s honor and strength. The clanhead is part figurehead and part living hero for the clan and serves for as long as they are able to. Clanheads who grow old or infirm invariably become members of the Council of Elders of their clan and help choose the next clanhead. On rare occasions, the Council of Elders will select a new clanhead to challenge the existing clanhead in a ritual combat if the current clanhead is cruel, incompetent, or similarly unworthy to remain.

The clans engage in trade for products that make survival easier. Furs, travel food, lumber, medicine, tools, and weapons are valuable commodities that are traded between clans. No island has everything necessary for comfortable survival, so trade is a necessity. However, clans will occasionally challenge one another for things they may need. In times of famine or particularly cruel winters coastal settlements are often subject to raiding. The needy clan will send their warriors to another clan and challenge them to ritual combat called a Trial of Honor for a share of their food, medicine, or what ever the needed commodity is.

When Clans come into conflict they do not go to war. Their histories and stories recount vividly the folly of war and the costs of bringing war against another clan is just as likely to destroy both clans as it is to show any profit for the initiator of the hostilities. Instead, when Clans wish to settle a dispute, they call a Trial of Honor. The disputing Clans gather their most respected warriors, Skalds, and Skeirns at a neutral location (usually on a small island). Then, Clans enter into the Game of Boasting, where a Skald from each side speaks of the deeds of the assembled fellows. This goes on for a time, sometimes hours, sometimes days. However, at some point, one of the warriors will be called to prove a boast that has been made. Often the warrior that is boasted about will be called out to prove his prowess on the island in some way that matches the deed that was boasted about. Sometimes warriors must face off against multiple opponents at a time, and injuries are not uncommon. The Trial of Honor

ends when the Skald on one side is unable to answer the boast of the Skald on the other side with one about his own clan, or one of the clanheads ends the contest thereby officially submitting for his clan.

The Gates

The Rock of Storms is an unforgiving place, but it shows mercy to those that prove their worthiness. Likewise, the gates to the Forest of Doors from the Rock of Storms are placed in hostile places inhospitable to human life. A peak struck by lightning every few minutes, freezing ice caverns, the lair of giant albino bears, or places ruled over by hellish Fell Witches are candidates for finding a door. This means that travel out of the Rock of Storms is incredibly difficult. The easiest gate to get to, and the first one discovered, is one on the island which is home to the Minor Clan known as the Ogmundr.

Four years ago, the clanhead of the Hamdir clan heard that gates had opened to a land beyond the Rock of Storms. Assuming it was an entry into the Troll Hall, he sent a large contingent of warriors to go through the gate and slay the trolls inside. When they arrived, they found that the gates did not in fact lead to the Troll Hall. Instead, it led to an unknown place. In response, the Hamdir's warriors challenged the Clan Ogmundr to ritual duels for ownership of the gate. To their shame, the warriors of Clan Hamdir were defeated handily by a failure of their Skald and were sent back without access to the gates. The Ogmundr now hold this gate close to their chest and trade access to it with the other Major Clans. Even when someone does pay their ransoms, the gate is erratic and opens at random intervals. None can claim to understand the logic of its openings and closings, and so few ever gain entry.

However, there are means of finding a gate that do not involve interaction with, or paying the fare charged by the Ogmundr. It seems that if one is resolute and willing to endure considerable hardship, one can find a gate. Performing great deeds in the most hostile locations in the Rock of Storms seems to yield success when looking for a gate. As mentioned previously, the gates tend to be in the most inhospitable areas. Although the clans have yet to realize the full significance of the Forest of Doors, many individuals see the potential of having access to a new world. Since very little is known of what lies beyond, there is a very cautious optimism. Perhaps the new world could herald a means of destroying the Gnawing Wurm or redeeming humanity in the eyes of the Storm Father. Perhaps it could bring a new doom to the world, further sinking the land into the icy brine.

Creatures of the Storm Woes

The current age is known as the Age of Storm Woes, for it is a terrible age in which to live. The Rock of Storms has always been a place of conflict and dire necessity, but because of hideous betrayals of the past, the world is now even worse. The world is filled with what local people refer to as Storm Woes, the trials inhabitants of the Rock of Storms must undergo.

The Trolls that live beneath the earth are a constant concern to the clans. Each Troll is as different as the flakes that make up a glacier. Some are made of animal flesh or plants, more powerful ones are made of living stone, fire, or ice. All of the Trolls live underneath the ground for even the diffuse light of the sun through the storms burns their skin and blinds them. Some times warriors looking to prove themselves will descend into the Earth to seek out the trolls where they live. In the long nights of the cold season, the Trolls will be bold, traveling to the surface to cause havoc and destruction. Each clan

though, has one Troll living beneath them which harkens back to the primal days and is reborn new on the one night every year when the sun lights the sky for only a short period, a day marked by the Clans as The Longest Night.

Little Folk, although certainly terrible, are not often dealt with by force of arms. Their ways are clever, and it much easier to offer them a bowl of milk or other scrap of food than it is to hunt them down. Formed in the flesh of ancient slain Trolls, the Little Folk are small creatures no higher than a man's knee. They are gnarled and terrible, twisted by their birth in the flesh of elemental forces. Instead of reproducing like men and Trolls, they must instead convert a human child into one of them. How this happens, no one knows, but Little Folk are often driven to steal away infants. Once a child is strong enough to heft a weapon, the Little Ones have no designs upon them.

Horrid white and blue-furred beasts plague the various islands, particularly the Land of Green. These beasts are said to be the result of a coupling between the Winter Wolf and a mortal animal. These massive predatory creatures stand three to four times the normal size of their mortal counterparts and all of them are attracted to the smell of human blood. Hunting and skinning one of these creatures is considered a truly worthy deed, and Berzerks of great respect wear their pelts to remind others of their victory. The Winter Wolf itself is not often seen by mortals, for it is a deadly creature that turns the hearts of men into ice with a single glance. Its presence in the world brings winter in the Rock of Storms. The rest of the time, it hibernates. Many people die during winter from starvation, exposure, or cold, and it is said that these deaths feed the Winter Wolf. It is written that the Winter Wolf will die at the hands of the All Maker who wields a great stone hammer known as Wolf's Fate. Although the Winter Wolf will be defeated, it will also slay the All Maker.

Although no mortal can claim to have seen the World Serpent proper, the storms it sends against the world are quite visible. Around the archipelago that makes up the Rock of Storms, there is an endless storm that encircles the world, darkening its skies. Although the Storm Father is responsible for the great storms that plague the islands, the ocean storms are the result of the World Serpent's terrible rage. In ancient times, the Serpent was banished from the world by the Gods. Although he was powerful in battle, the Storm Father tricked him into swallowing his own tail, a task he has not given up. In his attempt, he tightens himself around the world in order to choke it. The storms are simply the manifestation of his anger and impotence. If one could travel beyond the storms (this is an absurd thing) they would encounter scales the size of a war band's camp. It is said that if a mortal could look into its eyes, they would turn to ashes and the World Serpent would grin a venomous grin. When people refer to the World Serpent however, they often simply refer to the storms that encircle all things. Navigating these storms (which frequently spin beyond the ocean and into the land) is next to impossible. Their intensity is such that boats are crushed beneath their pressure. What lies beyond the World Serpent is unknown, but whatever lies there would be inherited by the honorable survivors of the Final Day.

Culture in the Rock of Storms

Natives of the Rock of Storms

Children look forward to two great rites of passage. The first, when a child is quite young, happens when he is deemed strong enough to carry a weapon. The child's parents are given gifts by their community for successfully raising a child and protecting it from the predations of the Little Folk. If a

child is strong enough to carry a weapon, it is of no use to the terrible Little Ones. When a child reaches this age they are considered an adult among the clan and spend the next year living in the Clan's long house learning to use weapons and fight. After this year the young adult must apprentice to one of the masters of the Clan and learn a skill important to the survival of the clan (blacksmithing, fishing, whaling, shipwright, farming, lumberjack, etc.). Most young adults follow the profession of their parents though it is not expected for them to do so. It is also at this age that Berzerks, Skeirns, and Skalds may begin their apprenticeship with a master to follow that path.

The second moment of passage comes when a warrior selects a mate and settles down to create his or her own house and family. These occasions are moments of celebration as well because they represent opportunity for the clan to grow. Parents are not expected to cease their questing after a child has been born, but one of the parents must be home to raise the children (usually this is decided among the man and woman well before children are born). It is shameful, both for the parents and their help, if a person raises the child of another. Orphaned children though are adopted by the Council of Elders and given to a pair of parents who are able to take care of them.

Children who never are strong enough to wield a weapon are destined to have a hard life, after the sixteenth year if the child has still not grown to be able to fight, the parents turn them out as a failure and the child is branded as Nameless. Such children are turned out into the wilderness to fend for themselves; there are few stories of such children surviving to show themselves to be worthy warriors of their clan.

When a clan member dies, their friends and relatives hold a feast in their honor. If the body is present, it is burned. The nature of the funeral pyre is different for each Clan. Seafaring Clans frequently make a small funeral barge for the honorable dead and set it to sea once the flame is lit. Other more terrestrial Clans prefer to create large conflagrations or rune-covered funeral huts. In all Clans, everyone is expected to speak of the dead in glowing terms, reciting tales of their great deeds. If the dead is lucky enough to count Skalds among his friends, he will be well remembered. It is believed that after someone has died, the Gods use this as a measure of the worthiness of the departed to live amongst them. It is also believed that if the deceased is not spoken of at all, the Gods do not always make a decision on the fate of the soul. Instead, the soul is restrained in the clouds that support the Rainbow Hall until the Gods feel they have enough information to make a decision. The fate of the dishonorable dead is the mouth of the Gnawing Wurm that chews the bottom of the world in order to destroy the Rock of Storms. The Gnawing Wurm can only eat a certain amount in a day, and feeding it souls slows its ascent into the Rock of Storms. In this way, the dishonorable dead also serve the interests of the Gods (albeit, in a terrible way).

Occasionally, a person will travel the wilderness and simply disappear. Often, they are assumed to be dead when they don't arrive or return as expected. If a person is missing for two years without word, a funeral is held in their honor as a matter of course. Although it is a strange thing, there are occasions when a Berzerk will return home after being waylaid in the wild by weather or animals to his own funeral. For this reason, attendees of such rituals often speak highly the person being honored in case he arrives in the middle of a tale. Although it has not been long enough for such a thing to happen, it is likely that many travelers to the Forest of Doors would be lamented in such a manner should they not

be able to send word home.

Names

There are three levels of naming practiced by the people of the Rock of Storms: informal naming, family naming, and deeds. Informally, people refer to each other by their first names, such as Ulfrik or Astrid. Fathers name their sons, and mothers name their daughters. If one of them is dead, then the remaining parent is given the honor of naming. Family naming is used in more formal situations or when two people have similar names. This adds in the name of the person's father (if male) or mother (if female). For instance, Ulfrik would be known as Ulfrik-Son of Hralthan and Astrid would be known as Astrid-Daughter of Freygerd. It is considered polite to use this means of address in formal situations, such the Game of Boasting or similar gathering. Skalds universally refer to people's names in this manner in their tales.

The most formal means of address incorporates the person's deeds and the deeds of their lineage for as many as five generations. Since people are known by the actions they have taken and their accomplishments, in extremely formal situations, such as a Trial of Honor, their deeds become their very identity. This means of address is exceptionally formal, and would be rude and convoluted to use in everyday speech. For instance, if Ulfrik had slain a bear single-handedly, he would be known as Ulfrik the Bear Foe-Son of Hralthan the Broad- Son of Runolf the Troll hewer- Son of Moldof the Rock Chewer. Much to the shame of many fools and weaklings, a great failure can also become the deed one is known for. Lor-Son of Loth, Rot-Hearted Adulter, could easily be the name of someone exiled for adultery. Those with an ancestor who was branded Nameless will never speak the name or continue their lineage past it. Speaking the name of a dishonored ancestor or skipping a dishonored ancestors and continuing ones lineage is seen a dishonest way to hide the failings of one's lineage.

Male names include Agnar, Bjorn, Eirik, Glum, Harald, Kol, Leif, Magnus, Osvald, Sven, and similar names. Female names include Arnora, Dalla, Gunnhild, Helga, Ingrid, Matilda, Runa, Sigrid, Thora, Yrsa, and similar names.

Food

The Clans survive on what foot they can. Common fares are fish, potatoes, onions, beets, berries, nuts, and grains. Bread is the most common staple, made from oat or wheat coaxed from the barren soil of the land. Salt is used in whatever it can be, for it is plentiful and preserves food for journeys or the winter. Pickles are common, and vegetables are often soaked in brine to ensure a long shelf life. Lutefisk and haggis are eaten when it is available.

Hunters bring back most meat eaten by the clans. Deer, auroch, mountain goat, and reindeer are the most common meats eaten, but some clans (especially Othala) raise pigs when and where they can. Every part of food animals are used, either as food or leather. Whatever parts cannot be eaten are put into the soil, for the blood of living things makes plants grow strong in the Rock of Storms. It is said that the land hungers for blood, and when it is sated, it grants miracles. Meat is either roasted or ground up into sausages, and universally prepared with salt.

Clothing

Warriors commonly wear wool or linen long sleeve tunics, with long pants. Simple clothes tend to be dyed a single color. Fancier dress often has elaborate embroidery along the neck, belt line, and sleeve ends. During warmer months men and women will sometimes wear kilts and skirts instead of pants, especially amongst Clan Othala, who wear the kilt as a matter of cultural pride. Berzerkers, Skalds, and Skeirns tend to wear greens, blues, browns, reds, and whites. During The Age of the Blood Sea, specific clans would all wear the same color to make it easier to distinguish friend from foe in the middle of a wild melee. This ancient custom has fallen out of favor since large scale battles no longer occur between clans.

Warriors wear as much armor as they can get their hands on, for armor is never a bad thing to have. A warrior who is not a fool will choose whatever means they have to protect themselves, no matter the weight or coverage. However, metal armor is a fairly rare thing in the Rock of Storms. Although everyone is considered to be a warrior, few own metal armor. Leather or padded armor is most common, but warriors from Clan Othala tend to have access to new suits of plate and chain armor, where most other warriors wear armors that they have inherited. Many warriors go into battle without armor as a matter of pride. It is a sacrifice to the Storm Father that their blood is offered up to honor the Gods.

Craftsmen and Art

In the Rock of Storms, each craftsman attempts to turn everything that they make into a work of art. Goods which a crafter has decorated with pictures and patterns are seen as being higher quality than those without, because one can see that the craftsman has taken extra care in building the item. Craftsmen often employ specific images, like a maker's mark or signature. This marks the item, and well known craftsmen can attain great renown for their work. Well made weapons are handed down through generations, and particularly excellent workmanship is rewarded by being remembered through the ages. For instance, Sigur-Son of Kolhun is renowned around the world for the creation of Wolf of Wounds, a terrible axe decorated with images of wolves on the hunt. This weapon has been in the possession of Clan Thurvaldr for generations, its maker still known and honored. However, the weapon has gone missing from the tents of Thurvaldr, and hunts have been called for its return. So important is this weapon to the Clan that many war bands have already been convened to locate and retrieve the blade.

Music

Although Skalds are considered the true masters of musical expression in the Rock of Storms, many people throughout the land raise their voices in song to honor of the virtuous dead. Because it requires no instrument, song is the most common form of music in the land. Everyone is theoretically capable of this form of song. Often, songs accompany leisure time, such as resting at a hearth, drinking mead, and other moments when warriors gather in peace. These light hearted songs often play on the themes of fatalistic victory, broken hearts, and honor through bloodshed.

However, music serves a very important function to the people of the world. Skalds transmit the history of the land through song and poem. This is the single historical tradition of the people, carried

on by word of mouth. Within each profession, there are also mnemonic songs that help in the application of labor. Sailors sing shanties to remind them of specific knots and stars for navigation. Carvers sing songs to the rhythm of their knife on wood.

Holidays

The Song for the Lost

Once a year the skalds of a clan will gather at some point where on their island that over looks the sea and they will begin a dirge. The dirge is for those warriors who have vanished at sea, or disappeared in some other wilderness. The surviving family of the lost warrior brings that warrior's name to the skalds while they perform the dirge. The dirge lasts for as long as families bring the names of the lost warriors. It is common for a lost warrior's story to be performed at dozens of dirges, the reason for this being that the family wants to make sure that if their family member did not drown and is simply marooned somewhere that their story is sung after they do eventually die. The dirge is a solemn occasion, but it is finished by a great celebration when drinks and food are consumed in commemoration of any and all of the lost that are now celebrating in the Hall of Heroes.

The Longest Night

On the longest night of the year, in the middle of the cold season, fell magic will bring raise the greatest of the Trolls from the primal times. The clouds only lighten with the glow of day for a short period, and during this time the clanhead will prepare to do battle with the Trolls. Each clan has different rituals that they go through to prepare their champion.

This is the most important of the celebrations for the clans, because it is this night that determines the tone of the year to follow. If the clanhead fails to defeat the Troll when it comes then it will lay a curse over the clan that will cause their crops to fail and the children born to be weak and sickly, if the clanhead succeeds then the clan will remain strong for one more year.

The First Dawn

When the cold season ends and the clouds break enough to see the dawn, there is a celebration for those who survived and to remember those who died. By tradition gifts are exchanged between family members, and if the clanhead survived his encounter with the Troll on The Longest Night he will present a trophy of its defeat to the celebrating clan, which is burned in a great bon fire. Each member of the clan then gets to keep a handful of the ashes from that bon fire, which is believed to be able to enchant and protect what ever the ashes are sprinkled over. Warriors will some times rub their weapons down with the ashes, farmers will spread the ashes over their fields, and fisherman will add it to the tar they use to seal their boats.

Prejudices and Superstitions

The clans pay special attention to the skies and have many different superstitions concerning it. The most notable is the dreaded red morning, when the morning clouds glow the color of blood. On these days, it is said that the World Serpent has grown angry and tightens its coils. During these times old and infirm warriors get into boats and sail out to the World Serpent to try and fight it back. Sometimes

those who have been branded Nameless will join these expeditions as a means of contrition. In ancient times, the rosy sky was a sign of impending bloodshed, and war bands would make their way to Troll Hall to die.

There are also numerous superstitions regarding specific people. A man with a single streak of grey hair, known as a witch lock, is said to be unstable. A warrior who is left handed is considered deceitful, and constantly in danger of dishonoring himself and others. The presence of crows over a house portends death in that household.

Families, Gender Roles, and Marriage

Families within the clans are very close to their close relatives, but any relatives past that tend to be viewed as simply parts of the clan. Children will usually live in their parent's house until they are considered a warrior by the clan, at which point most children leave their parent's house to live in the clan house and learn to be a warrior. Each family lineage selects one of its surviving elders to represent the family on the Council of Elders. The largest families have traditions and means of resolving conflict within the family.

Women and men are given equal rights within a Clan, no difference is seen between the gender.

Marriage is an informal arrangement in all things. Couples who marry are not expected to share property if they do not wish to. If the marriage dissolves, which they frequently do, property is easily reconciled. However, in matters of adultery, things get complicated. Often, the wronged party challenges the newcomer to a Trial of Honor. Occasionally, a wife will challenge a husband or vice versa.

Law and Crime

In the Rock of Storms, there are seven crimes: lying, murder, theft, betrayal, unreliability, and debt (owing someone a debt and not repaying it for an excessive period). There is one set punishment for each crime, criminals are branded as Nameless and their songs are not sung when they die. This punishment gives the criminal a chance to mend their ways and redeem their name. More serious crimes such as murder, theft, and betrayal also carry the penalty of summary executed in addition to being branded Nameless, thus dooming them to forever be barred from the Rainbow Halls. Guilt and innocence is decided solely by the clanhead, who will occasionally ask the Council of Elders for advice and listen to the testimony of those advocating for and against the accused.

Among the most legalistic of social interactions, the Trial of Honor is handled with great care. Since the Trial of Honor often involves combat, the rules must be explicit and carried out in a fair manner. Nothing starts blood feuds faster than an improperly performed Trial of Honor, for it is an insult for the rules to be bent. A warrior must make a formal challenge to his opponent, and it must be witnessed to be considered official. The defender has three months to accept, and if he fails to do so, he is branded Nameless. If the challenger feels his wrong has been attended to in a fair and honorable manner, he can withdraw his challenge. The actual challenge takes place once it is accepted, whether it is during the

most temperate spring or the dead of winter. If the challenge is not a matter of personal honor, the defender may choose a champion to act in his stead. However, in matters of personal honor this is considered cowardly. After all, the argument is over who is the best warrior. How can one prove their valor if they do not stand up? If either party fails to attend the Trial of Honor, they are considered a coward and branded Nameless.

When the combatants finally face each other at the Trial of Honor, they step into a square area five paces on each side. Before either warrior begins swinging, they may speak of their worthy deeds. If either side can convince a Skald to speak on their behalf, the Skald speaks their deeds instead. At no time during this process may weapons be raised, as long as the duelists are boasting of their deeds one of the combatants may concede to the other with no loss of honor. The duel begins, with each side attacking the other. The match ends if someone leaves the square, or if one side cannot continue the fight. The last combatant standing is considered the victor, and is given accolades for this success in battle. The loser suffer the loss of what ever the challenge was initiated over. If a warrior dies, then the person who slew them must pay reparations to their family. For instance, Clan Vigdis demands that the slain warrior's family receive two barrels of salted fish and the offending warrior's choice of a sheep or goat. Other Clans demand similar payment.

Amusement

The most common form of leisure is the Game of Boasting. In it, warriors attempt to tell stories about the worthiness of their deeds. Each person is expected to top the previous, either through excellent storytelling or through legitimately greater deeds. The attendees take turns telling stories in a circle until one of the stories is considered too exaggerated or not as exciting as the previous. Between turns, everyone is expected to fill their cups to the brim with either ale or mead, usually provided by whoever is hosting the gathering.

Skalds serve as the entertainers of society and are well thought of for the levity they bring into the lives of the land-worn people. Most Skalds sing songs or tell tales about the various heroes they have heard of. Such tales make men larger than life and honor their memory (even if they have no yet died). Skalds travel far and wide and collect a massive repertoire of stories. Young Skalds who have yet to collect tales often fall back on the stories of the Gods and their victory over the Trolls and their horrid spawn.

Magic

It is said that the Storm Father, before his anger shattered the world, developed the Runes in order to master all wisdom in the world. Halfway through creating the Runes, he had a premonition of terrible doom. He could tell that by learning the Runes, he would reveal unpleasant truths of the worst variety. He then had to make a choice: cease his search for knowledge and live happily in ignorance, or break the seals of destiny and learn all wisdom, no matter how terrible. He chose to learn his own fate, and in finding this, he was granted a vision of how and when the Gods would perish. Although this knowledge was terrible, it allowed him to create the Runes of the Storm Father. The Storm Father the secrets he had discovered with the other Gods.

The Runes of the Storm Father had not always been in the hands of men. In ancient times, the Greater Runes were kept from man for it was deemed unnecessary. However, after the Last King betrayed the Gods, the Storm Father's wrath destroyed much of the world. Humanity was in a pitiful state, and popular wisdom among Skeirns is that the All Mother, after the Storm Father's transformation, gave the Runes to mankind so that they would better be able to survive. Some say that the Storm Father still rages about this, and thus the lightning strikes still continue..

The magic itself is well respected. The presence of a Skeirn makes warriors victorious, protects the home, and saps the wicked of their power. Skeirns themselves universally accompany warriors into battle, for their runes can protect the flesh of men as easily as the family's prize axe. There are few who would knowingly anger a Skeirn, for their ways are powerful and mysterious.

Common Aphorisms and Colloquialisms

“Seize hold of life and shake it” (A motto on how to live life to its fullest so that you will have great stories to tell when you reside in the Rainbow Hall.)

“A warrior who offers his left hand, has a dagger in his right” (A saying reminding warriors to be distrustful of left handed individuals. Also, it is incredibly impolite for a person to offer the left hand to shake.)

“My children's children shall sing your deeds” (The greatest tribute that can be paid to any warrior of the clans, as it is a vow that your family shall honor their name long after their death.)

“May you be forgotten” (This is the gravest of curses among the clans as you are hoping that the person's stories are not sung after their death, barring their entrance to the Rainbow Hall. Such insults are usually followed shortly after by bloodshed.)

The Rock of Storms in Game

Five Things Every Citizen of the Rock of Storms Knows

To act without honor is a form of death.

Only the honorable are allowed to stand with the Gods at the end of time. To act dishonorably is to forsake your place and cast your spirit into oblivion. Torture in the Hall of Trolls is the fate of those who act against the will of the Gods. Betrayal, murder, greed, and laziness can ultimately be the undoing of a dishonorable man. The Gods have a use for all souls, either as soldiers at the end of things or distracting playthings for the Trolls in the center of the world.

Know where you come from so you know the deeds you must surpass.

In the Rock of Storms history is extremely important, especially the history of a person's ancestors. And while each warrior creates their own story through their deeds, every warrior also wants to find ways to exceed the glories of the past.

The forces of the Trolls must be fought lest they destroy the world.

In the Rock of Storms terrible Trolls and their inhuman children seek to wrest control of the world from the Gods and obliterate humanity, their chosen servants. In order to survive, the forces of chaos must be defeated. Although the fate of these forces is mostly written, it is not known if humanity will survive the Final Day. Thus, all people must be prepared to fight to live.

Great deeds of personal might exalt one in the eyes of the Gods.

The Gods created humanity to serve as their soldiers on the Final Day. The Gods' chosen warriors are those who perform great deeds, whether it be feats of survival, travel, war, composition, magic, compassion, or endurance. Living a life of valor and action makes one more likely to have a seat in the Rainbow Hall. Living quiet lives without any great deeds or conflict does not make a person appealing in the eyes of the Storm Father.

Speaking a Name Confers it power

Speaking your enemy's name gives them power to spread fear among your clan. A name is the chain that binds a warrior's soul to their deeds when they try to gain entrance to the Rainbow Hall. A weapon with a name's spirit travels with the warrior to his final rest.

Inspirational Material

The Eddas and Sagas (Literature)

These are ancient Christian recordings of the old religions of the Norse region. Although we do not know how accurate these recordings are, it is the most comprehensive collection of Norse mythology and folkways ever recorded.

Die Götterdämmerung (Music)

The original ring epic. The classic work of Viking romanticism. What more need be said?

The Thirteenth Warrior (Movie)

A great tale of Vikings going to war.

