

"GOBLIN GOODIES GALORE"

RUNE

A SAMPLE ENCOUNTER

BY MICHELLE A. BROWN NEPHEW

The heroes trudge along through the dark corridors of the Underground. They are young and untried Viking warriors in search of the silver that will make the skalds sing their praises so loudly that even those brave warriors in Valhalla might hear of their valorous deeds. The tales remembered by the village elders tell of strange creatures and glorious treasure in these twisting subterranean tunnels, and so the heroes continue on their way through the gloom ...

The following is a sample encounter for the new Rune RPG from Atlas Games, which is based on the computer game by Human Head Studios. In Rune, players each construct an encounter using Rune's point system of encounter creation. The designer spends points for features like traps that might injure the heroes, but earns points for beneficial elements such as treasure and healing opportunities. It's a lot like character generation, in that designers get the chance



THE GAME OF VIKING MAYHEM
BY ROBIN D. LAWS

Hardcover • 256 Pages • \$27.95
AG3600 • ISBN 1-887801-91-X
WWW.ATLAS-GAMES.COM



to min/max their creations, but others actually appreciate it when a designer shares a well constructed encounter with them.

The players then each take a turn as the “runner” who GMs his own encounter; the encounters each lead from one to the next smoothly because they’re usually set in a subterranean network of caverns called the Underground, which provides a shortcut between the human realm of Midgaard and the mythical lands of the gods and other races. In advanced sessions, one person is designated the “plotter” and is responsible for creating “plot encounters” to give the more general “cushion encounters” that the other players bring a more solid storyline.

The encounter below may look a bit odd at first; since it’s not part a set of plot encounters, it cuts straight to the combat scenes instead of asking the players to flesh out their motivations or otherwise waste valuable game time that could be better spent killing things and taking their stuff. It also has notations about specific kinds of rolls – like Standard, Weak Link, Freestanding, and Singular – that the designer of the encounter chooses to fit the situation. This all needs to be written down because the heroes gain victory points every time they succeed at a roll that’s a part of the encounter notes, but the runner earns victory points every time a hero fails a roll. After the encounter, players are entitled to see the runner’s notes to confirm they follow the rules. Once the session is over, everyone adds up their victory points to see who wins, making **Rune** a competitive roleplaying game.

Encounter Title: Goblin Goodies Galore
Type: Cushion Encounter
Hook: The Underground

EVENT 1: DEATH FROM ABOVE

TRAP – FISSURE



Narration:

The passage the heroes are moving through slowly narrows to about four paces across. As they make their way forward, they come to a fissure cutting across the floor of the corridor. The fissure is five paces wide, and a faint greenish glow seems to be coming from its depths; the only way across is to jump over it.

Standard, conditionally avoidable (don’t cross or get pushed into fissure). To cross, roll **Jump vs. Difficulty 9**; heroes who fail the roll or otherwise fall into the fissure suffer **falling damage, Dam rating 20/30 (21 – 25 feet)**, after determining whether they’ve had a good or bad landing (Jump Difficulty 6, see **Rune** p. 151).

Points Spent: 30 (Difficulty 9); **42** (21 – 25 feet fall)

Points Earned: -10 (conditionally avoidable)

Commentary: This is first roll the heroes need to make in this adventure. It specifies a standard roll, which means that each hero rolls once; successful heroes gain a benefit or avoid a negative consequence, while unsuccessful heroes lose a benefit or suffer a negative consequence. In this case, the “negative consequence” is a 20+ foot drop into the fissure.

So, each player needs to roll 1d10 and add his Jump Ability score to see if he can beat a Difficulty of 9 and avoid the fall. Say Ragnar’s player rolls a 6, which he adds to his Jump of 1 to get a total of 7. The runner gets two points right away for the difference between Ragnar’s total and the Difficulty of the roll. Ragnar falls into the fissure and has to make another Jump roll of Difficulty 6 to see if he’s going to have a good or bad landing. If he makes the roll, he has to deal with a Damage rating of 20, if he fails the Damage rating goes up to 30.

COMBAT OPPONENTS – AMBUSH GOBLINS

Name	Type	Mix	Move	Threat Category	Adjust	Predictable/ Self-willed
Flurb	Goblin Warrior	0	15	Inferior	none	Predictable (+0)
Dack	Goblin Warrior	0	15	Inferior	none	Predictable (+0)
Bizzle	Goblin Warrior	0	15	Inferior	none	Predictable (+0)
Gurda	Goblin Warrior	0	15	Inferior	none	Predictable (+0)

Points Spent: 0

Commentary: In **Rune**, just before the game starts the runner tailors each set of combat opponents to the strength of the Horde of Viking heroes playing the game. The runner compares the current statistics of all the heroes on the Roll of Valor provided in the photocopy section of the **Rune** rulebook, and figures out the second-worst score for each statistic. For instance, he might come up with:

INIT	ATK	DFN	DAM	Soak	HP	Res
8	10	7	9	10	52	3

The Adjust Table in the **Rune** rulebook on page 99 says that Inferior foes should be adjusted as follows:

INIT	ATK	DFN	DAM	Soak	HP	Res
-2	-2	-2	-1	-1	-10	-1

The encounter designer didn’t add any extra adjusts to these goblins, so we just add the two together, getting melee stats that look like this:

INIT	ATK	DFN	DAM	Soak	HP	Res
6	8	5	8	9	42	2

These guys also use bows, so we apply the modifiers from the **Rune** book on p. 100 for missile attacks, ending up with the following missile stats:

INIT	ATK	DFN	DAM
5	4	5	2

The rulebook also specifies that most opponents have Wound Thresholds of 15, and gives the formula for calculating a foe’s Might rating, which in this case gives us a result of 20. The hero who kills one of these goblins gets half its Might rating – 10 points – as a victory point bonus. Now the runner fills out a foe sheet from the photocopy section of the **Rune** rulebook for each of these goblins, getting something that looks like this:

NRIDG: Flurb		Score: -9	COGDBIT SCORES			
Type: Goblin Warrior	Threat: Inferior	Net Points: 42	INIT Score	ATK Score	DFN Score	DRGD Score
Health: None	Move: 15	Damage Threshold: 15	6	8	5	8
Attack: 0	Defence: 20	GROUND	5	4	5	2
See (Unit) (V) Com: 0			Score:			

Now the heroes have a set of foes worthy of the attention of their battleaxes! In **Rune**, foes always fight to the death, so it’s time for some blood ... standard attacks follow the following formula, and heroes get a victory point for every point of damage they do to their foes, while the runner gets points for hit points the heroes lose in the bloodshed:

$$\{[(\text{Attacker's Roll} + \text{ATK Score}) - (\text{Defender's Roll} + \text{DFN Score})] + \text{DAM Score}\} - \text{Soak} = \text{Hit Points Lost}$$

If Ragnar makes this second Jump roll, he then adds the 2 points by which he failed the original Jump roll to the falling Damage of 20, giving him 22 points of Damage from which he can subtract his Soak of 6. This means he loses 16 of his 77 hit points, which is fortunately under his Wound Threshold of 18. If the Damage had been over 18, he would have had to worry about taking a Wound that would have given him an Impairment of -1 to any other rolls he might need to make in this encounter.

If Ragnar had rolled a 9 on his first Jump, for a total of 10, he would have made it over the fissure safely and earned one victory point for beating the Difficulty of 9, as well.

TERRAIN — LOOSE FISSURE EDGE

The far edge of the fissure is made of crumbling rock. Each time a hero takes 10 or more points of raw damage (before Soak) or moves 2 paces or more, he has to roll to avoid falling down, which would send him over the unstable edge into the fissure. (Fissure edge acts as slippery ground, see **Rune** p. 126.)

Points Earned: -5 (1/3 area is slippery ground)

TRAP — AMBUSH: GOBLINS



Narration: When the heroes reach the far side of the fissure, they pause for a second to get their bearings. Was that a noise up ahead?

Weak Link roll vs. Awareness, Difficulty 8. If even one hero fails the roll, all those others suffer a -6 penalty to ATK, DFN and Engagement rolls for the first round following the roll. For the second round, they suffer a -3 penalty to ATK and DFN. The third has a -1 decrease. (See **Rune** p. 147 - 148.) If they all make the roll:



Closer Inspection: The heroes look up just in time to see the four goblins on the ledge above them, and the look of evil mischief on their faces, before a landslide of rubble comes crashing down.

Points Spent: 50 (ambush); 20 (Difficulty 8)

TERRAIN — ADDITIONAL LEVEL: GOBLIN LEDGE

There is a ledge approximately 15 feet up just past the far edge of the fissure. This is where the goblins have set up their ambush and now lie in wait. From this elevation, the goblins get a +3 bonus to attack rolls against those on ground level, and the heroes get a -3 penalty to attack rolls against the goblins (see **Rune** p. 122).

Points Earned: -5 (extra level)

TRAP — FALLING ROCKS

When the heroes reach the spot just under the goblins' ledge, the creatures let loose a cascade of large, sharp

rocks upon their enemies. The goal of this trap is to push the heroes back over the edge of the fissure. If it doesn't work, they will attack the heroes with their crude bows from the relative safety of the ledge.

Standard; Dodge vs. Difficulty 8; failed Dodge suffers **Dam rating 15.** (Remember that anything over 10 points of raw damage requires a roll to avoid slipping over the side of the loose fissure edge.)

Points Spent: 20 (Difficulty 8); 15 (Dam rating 15)

EVENT 2: INTO THE WATERY DEPTHS



Narration: The heroes fall through the fissure and into a large cavern. The walls and vaulted ceiling of the chamber are covered with a glowing lichen that casts an eerie greenish light over the placid waters of the large underground lake that fills most of the space. The heroes land near the edge of the water.

GAIN — HEALING OPPORTUNITY



Narration: This cavern is well protected from the elements and harbors no foes or wild creatures. It is a safe place to rest and recover from that fall through the fissure.

Points Earned: -30 (unlimited time)

GAIN — FREESTANDING AWARENESS ROLL

Freestanding roll, Singular: No-Fault; roll **Awareness vs. Difficulty 6** to notice the following:



Closer Inspection: From beneath the clear water of the lake the heroes notice the tempting glint of silver! On the lake bottom near the shore rests what looks like a large treasure; the only way to get it is to swim down and scoop it up.

Points Spent: -10 (Freestanding Difficulty 6)

TERRAIN — SLIPPERY SHORE ROCKS

The shoreline of the lake is littered with lichen-strewn rocks. This makes them extremely dangerous for treasure-hungry Vikings who might be peering down into the water.

Standard roll; Balance vs. Difficulty 6; conditionally avoidable (don't walk along or stand on the edge of the shoreline); a failed roll means the hero slips into the water.

Points Spent: 0 (Difficulty 6)

Points Earned: -5 (1/3 of area is slippery ground); -10 (conditionally avoidable)

GAINS — CATEGORY F TREASURE

Besides the normal Swim roll required each round spent in

the water to keep from drowning (see Difficulty modifiers and drowning rules in **Rune** p. 148 - 149), a hero must make a separate successful Swim roll to scoop up the treasure. If a hero misses the first time, he must make another normal Swim roll before trying to grab the treasure again.

Singular: No-Fault; 2 Extra rolls allowed; rollers must specify they're trying to pick up the treasure while swimming; roll **Swim vs. Difficulty 6**, a success retrieves **1 Category F treasure** from the bottom of the underground lake. The hero who grabs the treasure first gets a bonus of **30 victory points**.

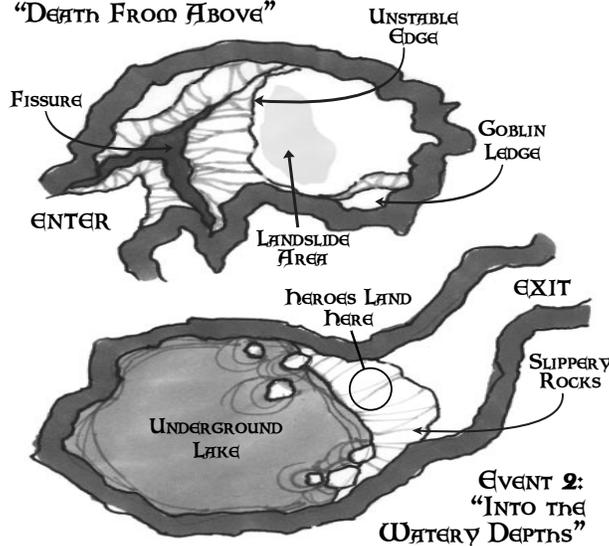
Points Spent: 0 (Difficulty 6)

Points Earned: -10 (2 Extra rolls allowed); -75 (category F treasure); -30 (victory point bonus)

TRAP — INVISIBLE BARRIER

Once a hero has successfully grabbed the treasure, an invisible barrier leaps into existence across the surface of the lake. This keeps the hero with the treasure and any other swimmers from being able to leave the water, and they will inevitably fail a Swim roll and drown if they or their fellows on shore aren't able to break the barrier. The heroes on shore see the following:

EVENT 1: "DEATH FROM ABOVE"



Closer Inspection:

The bravest of the Horde grabs the treasure, but as he and the others in the water rise to the surface, those on shore see a look of horror seize their faces. They are trapped under the skin of the lake! They press their hands up against impassable surface of the water, unable to push up into the life-giving air.

The heroes in the water experience the following:



Closer Inspection:

When the bravest of the Horde grabs the treasure, every Viking treading water feels an inexorable pressure pushing him down into the water. Those under the surface of the lake now push up against an impenetrable barrier between themselves and the breathable air, as their fellows on shore look on in horror.

Breaking through the barrier requires a STR roll on the part

of either the watchers on shore or the swimmers. Once a section of the barrier has been punctured, others can exit the water through the same break.

Singular, no set limit on extra attempts; STR vs. Difficulty 8. Conditionally avoidable (don't grab the treasure from the bottom of the lake)

Points Spent: 20 (Difficulty 8); 20 (Characteristic only)

Points Earned: -3 (per barrier); -20 (no set limit on extra attempts); -10 (conditionally avoidable)



Narration:

After pummeling to itty bits what was most likely one of the evil god Loki's devious tricks, the brave Viking warriors exit the lake cavern, in search of glorious combat and more treasure!

Commentary: At this point, the designer adds up all the encounter points he's earned and compares that total to the number of points he's spent. He needs to make sure that the Points Earned column has a higher number than the total Points Spent. Once he's sure this is a fair adventure, he can think about uploading it onto the encounter exchange that will soon be available at www.atlas-games.com, so that other Hordes can run his encounter, as well!

ENCOUNTER COST TABLE

Item	Points Spent	Item	Points Earned
Fissure Difficulty 9	30	Fissure conditionally avoidable	10
Fissure 21 - 25 feet fall	42	Loose fissure edge, 1/3 area is slippery ground	5
Combat Opponents	0	Goblin ledge as extra level	5
Ambush	50	Healing opportunity for unlimited time	30
Ambush Difficulty 8	20	Freestanding Difficulty 6 to see treasure	10
Falling rocks Difficulty 8	20	Slippery shore, 1/3 of area is slippery ground	5
Falling rocks Dam rating 15	15	Slippery shore is conditionally avoidable	10
Slippery shore Difficulty 6	0	2 Extra rolls allowed to grab treasure	10
Grab treasure Difficulty 6	0	Category F treasure	75
Invisible barrier Difficulty 8	20	Victory point bonus	30
Invisible barrier Characteristic only	20	Invisible barrier per barrier	3
		No limit on attempts to break invisible barrier	20
		Invisible barrier is conditionally avoidable	10
Total Spent:	217	Total Earned:	223
		Balance:	-6