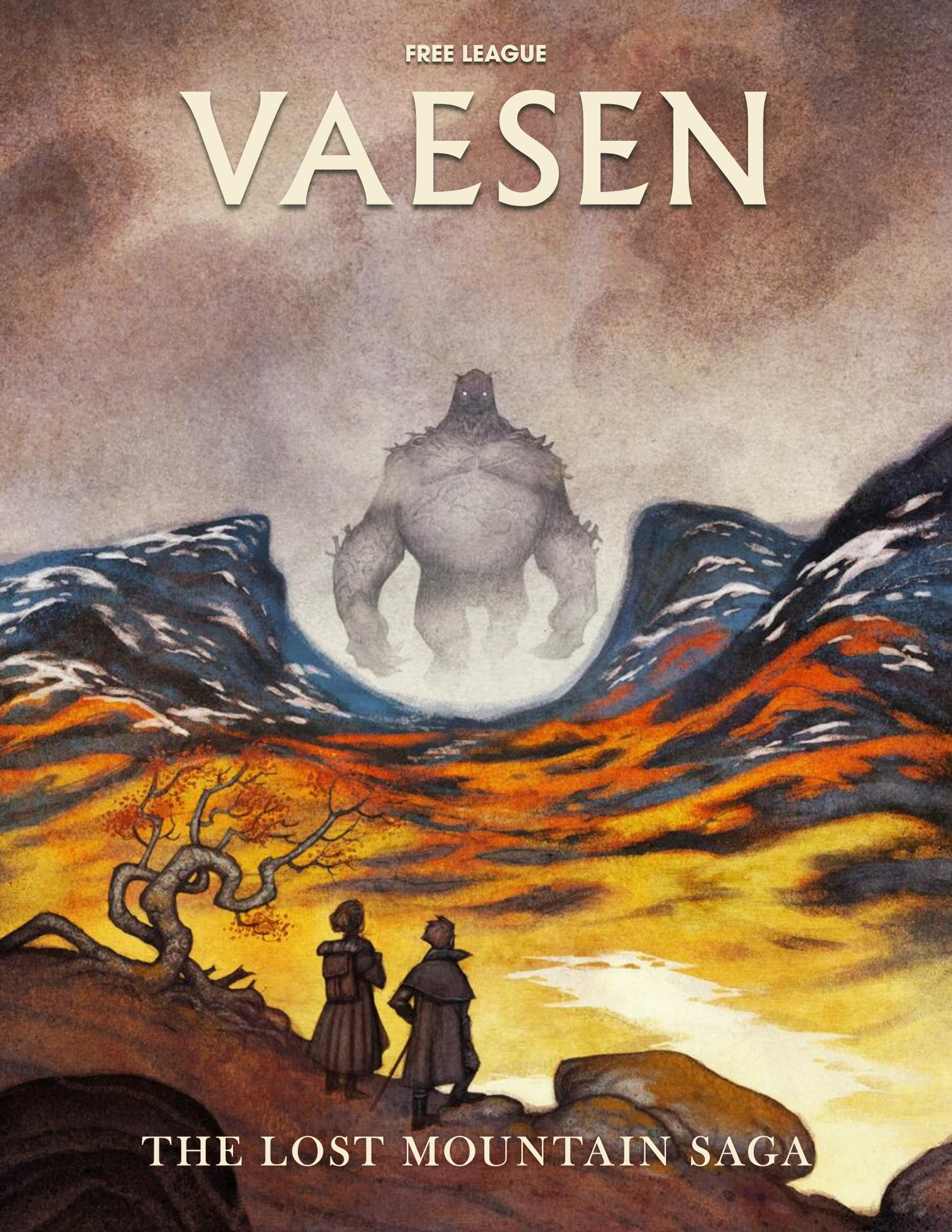
FREE LEAGUE

VAESEN



THE LOST MOUNTAIN SAGA

Odin spake:
"First answer me well, if thy wisdom avails,
And thou knowest it, Vafthruthnir, now:
In earliest time, whence came the earth,
Or the sky, thou giant sage?"

Vafthruthnir spake:
"Out of Ymir's flesh, was fashioned the earth,
And the mountains were made of his bones;
The sky from the frost-cold giant's skull,
And the ocean out of his blood."

The Ballad of Vafthruthnir, The Poetic Edda

Based on the book *Vaesen* by

JOHAN EGERKRANS

THE LOST MOUNTAIN SAGA

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PREFACE

Welcome to the *The Lost Mountain Saga*, a roleplaying campaign set in the Mythic North. Based on the original podcast with the same name, this campaign has been completely rewritten and modified for *Vaesen – Nordic Horror Roleplaying* so other tables can play it and make it their own.

I would first of all like to acknowledge the immensely talented folks over at Free League Publishing for believing in this project when I pitched it in 2020 and for also helping me take the rambling mess that was the first draft of this story and turn it into a cohesive, cool and actually sensible roleplaying adventure. Tomas, Kiku and Nils – legends!

As a Swede living in the United States who mostly plays with Americans, *The Lost Mountain Saga* was a way for me to bring everything that excites me about my own culture and customs to the table. From the sacred ritual of fika, to the often romanticized Viking heritage, to some of our questionable political movements and of course, the terrifying creatures that used to haunt my dreams when I was a kid.

I wanted to experiment with the idea that Sweden, in this mythical setting, was a central hub for various mysterious events and that the North harbored unexplored riches that could change the entire world order. It is by no means a historical document. The *Rule of Fun* (and sometimes, the *Rule of What Is the Most Terrifying Thing I Can Think Of*) guided this book from start to finish.

At the end of the day, *The Lost Mountain Saga* is a love letter to my home country, celebrating both the good and the bad, and a way for me to express my homesickness by sharing it with others. It's suitable for anyone who likes their horror with an occasional laugh, non-Swedes and Swedes alike.

Ellinor DiLorenzo

INTRODUCTION

THE LOST MOUNTAIN SAGA takes place over the course of a year of in-game time and is divided into five chapters. To truly make it your own, as Gamemaster you are encouraged to link the key NPCs to the player characters' backstories. If you want to prolong the campaign, you can add other mysteries and challenges from the other official (or inofficial) adventure books as long as they fit within the timeline of *The Lost Mountain Saga*. As the locations, events and story of *The Lost Mountain Saga* are either loosely based on real events or completely made up, the possibilities are endless. Let the rule of fun (and horror!) always guide your gameplay.

What follows is a summary of the background for the whole story. However, you are encouraged to read the five chapters in their entirety before beginning the campaign.

THE ABISKO MINE

In the far north of Sweden lies the site of an abandoned iron mine, in the mountains above the remote village of Abisko. The once-prosperous mine ceased operations ten years earlier after many workers were killed during a devastating accident.

The only evidence of the mine or its fate is a large crater left behind by the explosion. With officials keeping the details of the event shrouded in secrecy and no reported survivors, the public were left to draw their own conclusions. Rumors of incompetence, corruption and unchecked greed are included in any story told by locals of the tragedy at the Abisko Mine.

The mine and the catastrophe that led to its demise soon fell into obscurity and the area surrounding

it was completely abandoned, until one day when a private company, Svea Mining Corp, owned by Karl Magnusson and his wife Sigrid, bought the entire area. Together, they've been able to create a very enticing narrative surrounding the mine and its reopening, promising riches for the rich, power for the military and knowledge for the scientists. They've become one of the most influential and wealthy couples in Sweden.

The reason behind their success is a rare and peculiar stone that is said to have been discovered in the area. While Svea Mining Corp has been able to keep a tight lid on any details, the stone is rumored to have extremely powerful capabilities that are of interest both militarily and scientifically to whoever can control it. This new development could potentially help Sweden become a key player in the inevitable industrialization that's sweeping the continent.

Only a few critical voices have expressed concern over the reopening, one of them being Franzibald Hansen. A friend of the Society and Linnea, Franzibald encountered the stones himself several years earlier but came to the opposite conclusion of Svea Mining Corp, that these stones should be studied rather than exploited for industrial use. But his skepticism is rare, even frowned upon, and he finds himself alone in a city that's becoming more and more hostile towards anyone who dares to disagree.

THE LOST MOUNTAIN

The Lost Mountain in this adventure refers to the very real Lapponian Gate (*Lapporten* in Swedish, *Čuonjávággi* in Northern Sámi) that can be found in the Abisko National Park in northern Sweden. It's a U-shaped valley that resembles a gate or a portal, thus its name.

In our saga, this formation was once an ancient gate to the world of the vaesen and was carefully protected by them for thousands of years until it fell into obscurity. In the modern world, no one, not even the giants, remembers its origin. The whole area still trembles from its former contact with the long lost realm of ancient beings, anyone with the Sight can feel its pull.

When humans started settling the north, they encountered the remnants of the old giants but to the human eye, they looked like nothing more than hills and mountains. As the land was rich in iron and ore, more and more mines were built and the origin of the mountains was truly long forgotten.

THE GREEN STONES

The stones were once part of a giant. This is not known to anyone, not even other vaesen, and is one of the big reveals of the entire saga. With a similar green color to that of an emerald, the stone in its uncut form has a peculiar shape that differentiates it from other gemstones. Its shape is smooth and round-ish while uneven, similar to a cell that's just about to split into a new cell. The surface is bubbly, as if it was once a boiling liquid that then froze in an instant.

The magical properties of the stones are erratic. Other vaesen are drawn to it and can be tempted or forced to imbue their own powers into it. A human who carries the stone, and knows how to wield it, can then temporarily gain those powers. When imbued with the energy or powers from other vaesen, the stone is "charged" and emits a strong, emerald green light. When it's not charged, it has a dull, greenish color.

When several charged stones are close together, they seem to draw energy from each other instead, creating an unstable chain reaction that emits a powerful destructive force. That's what happened when the original Abisko Mine collapsed and killed everyone inside.

THE VANADISIR

The green stones in Abisko were not the first to be found by humans. In fact, such rare stones have been found all over the Mythic North for thousands of years, often worshiped for their connection to the foundations of the earth. In the Viking age, the *Vanadisir*, a secret order that claimed to be the direct descendants of the Norse goddess Freja, tried to tap into the great power of the vaesen stones.

THE MYTHIC NORTH

The growing powers and ambitions of the Vanadisir triggered fear and anger. A Viking chieftain near Upsala sent his warriors to crush their order and protect the sanctity of the holy stones, only to see them slain to the last man – and woman. A shieldmaiden was the final victim of the Vanadisir before they disappeared into the night with the stones. But she did not find peace in death. Her quest unfulfilled, fueled by vengeance, she turned into a revenant (page 150 in the core rulebook), forever cursed to protect the holy stones, as they are not meant for human hands.

The Vanadisir went into hiding to protect their ancient knowledge. The secret order remains to this day, its current incarnation based in Upsala and recruiting new members among the many young students in town. Its leader, Eira, still carries a green gemstone as part of a necklace. She claims it to be the *Brisingamen*, an invaluable ancient artifact the Norse goddess Freja was said to have worn.

Sigrid Magnusson

Growing up poor in a northern village of Sweden, Sigrid Magnusson always had the Sight. A very curious girl and a fast learner, she poured over every book she came across and always hungered for more. The small-minded villagers thought her odd and whispered about her. Eventually, those whispers turned sinister and the girl was accused of being a changeling. Sigrid's mother, having always felt that something was wrong about her youngest daughter, took Sigrid into the deep dark woods and left her there, hoping the creatures of the forest would reclaim her and give her back her true daughter.

Sigrid starved for days until a troll found her and took her in. For an entire winter and spring, Sigrid learned the ways of the vaesen and a new previously unseen world opened up to her. However, the betrayal by her mother would forever stain Sigrid's heart and, fueled by revenge, she returned to her old village one day and burned it all to the ground, including the people.

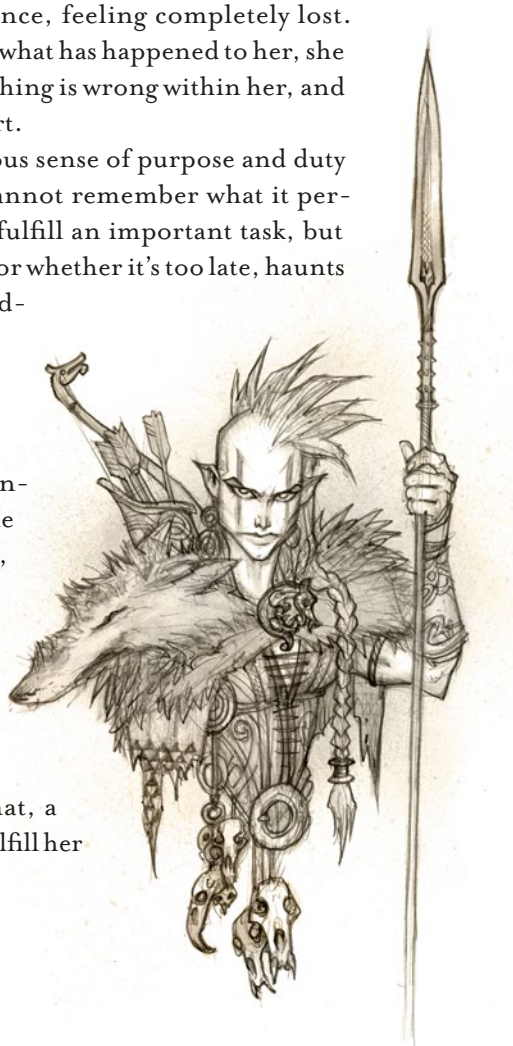
Years later, Sigrid visited Upsala, where she happened to meet Eira, the leader of the Vanadisir. Eira quickly saw the great potential in Sigrid and recruited her into the order. Sigrid became Eira's second in command, but the two soon clashed. Sigrid wanted to expand the Vanadisir's power and influence in society, something Eira believed to be foolhardy.

The Revenant

Later, a decade before the start of this Mystery, Eira, Sigrid and the Vanadisir visited the Royal Mounds of Old Upsala. The revenant of the shieldmaiden (see above), still haunting the ancient burial site, attacked the visitors. She possessed a young woman called Lisa Johansson and attacked Eira and her followers, who just barely managed to escape with their lives.

After the incident, Lisa woke up by the old mounds with no memory of what happened, nor of her previous life. She left Upsala and has aimlessly traveled from town to town since, feeling completely lost. Unable to understand what has happened to her, she knows only that something is wrong within her, and this is tearing her apart.

There's an enormous sense of purpose and duty within her, but she cannot remember what it pertains to. The urge to fulfill an important task, but not knowing what it is or whether it's too late, haunts her. For years, the sadness has deepened, its hold over her unshakable and ever-present. It is her only companion and a constant reminder that she is completely alone, abandoned and without anywhere to call home or anyone to ask for guidance. But the memories are slowly starting to return and with that, a resolve to once again fulfill her holy quest.



Sigrid Magnusson

Lisa Johansson

Franzibald Hansen

THE RE-OPENING

After the incident at the Royal Mounds, Eira and Sigrid often clashed. Sigrid wanted to expand the Vanadisir's power and influence in society, while Eira insisted on secrecy and the vow to preserve the arcane knowledge of the order.

The conflict came to a head after the news of the mining accident in Abisko. The reports told of a green gemstone found in the mine prior to the explosion. Sigrid realized that this might very well be the same magical material as the stone in Eira's necklace – a mineral that she believed could be used to bind vaesen, perhaps even extract their powers. Sigrid demanded that they should travel to Abisko to exploit the find. Eira refused, believing the Vanadisir should not get involved in such mundane matters.

In anger, Sigrid left the order. Undeterred, she went to Stockholm to continue her plan, but this time with patience and careful calculation. The rich and influential mining mogul Karl Magnusson became her target and she convinced him to involve his Svea Mining Corp in the reopening of the Abisko Mine.

SIGRID MAGNUSSON

Sigrid is one of the main and most important characters in the entire campaign, and operates as the main opponent for the player characters (if things were that simple, which they aren't). A stunning beauty, with blue eyes and blonde hair, she looks no older than a young adult but is actually well into her fifties. She's extremely ruthless in her ambition and hungers for power and knowledge.

- Physique 4 Precision 4
  Logic 4 Empathy 5
- **RANGED COMBAT** 4 **CLOSE COMBAT** 3
  MANIPULATION 5 **OBSERVATION** 5
- Mental Toughness 3 Physical Toughness 3
- **EQUIPMENT:** Revolver, Knife

LISA JOHANSSON

Lisa is a recurring character in *The Lost Mountain Saga* and can be tied into one of the player characters' backstories. Otherwise, the player with the highest Empathy will gain a special connection with Lisa throughout the campaign and sense her presence in later chapters.

Lisa is in her late twenties and has long dark hair that she wears in a long braid, and big brown eyes that seem to hide so much wisdom well beyond her years. When she's not talking to someone or actively thinking about it, there's a melancholy air about her. The moment she's left with her own thoughts, she disappears somewhere in her mind and is nearly overwhelmed with unexplained grief. Lisa can't control these feelings, she doesn't even remember what it is that she longs for. She just knows that there is something wrong with her and that sadness has carried her for the past decade.

Having been able to contain it for years, Lisa was able to lead a somewhat normal life for a decade. She traveled the land and took up various jobs, searching for some kind of fulfillment that always seemed to be out of her grasp. Now, she lives in the booming mining town of Falun working as a waitress, drawn there by a sense of unknown purpose.

In her revenant form, Lisa has stats as per page 150 of the core rulebook.

FRANZIBALD HANSEN

Franzibald Hansen is a renowned Danish author who has written extensively about Norse mythology and the supernatural creatures that live among us. He is also an old friend of Linnea Elfeklint (page 83 of the core rulebook) and a member of the Society.

As a true bon vivant, Franzibald is a man who knows how to live life to the fullest, always looking for the next good story to write about. Born and raised in Copenhagen, he charms everyone with his Danish bluntness and unapologetic jolliness. He's as round as a cinnamon bun, and shorter than most adult women. His hair is completely white and he spends hours keeping his beard perfectly trimmed and well-conditioned. He's usually dressed in a lavish purple or green outfit with a matching derby hat and an excessive amount of jewelry.

Via Franzibald and his research the player characters can learn about the green stones, but he has a hard time trusting anyone. Having procured a sample during his travels, in the form of a green gemstone that he carries around his neck, he knows that there is something about the stones that is deeply connected to the existence and origins of vaesen.

As a Society member, Franzibald wants to protect the vaesen from the greed and ignorance of humans. He's deeply concerned about the reopening of the Abisko mine and the experiments conducted by the owners of Svea Mining Corp, but finds himself hopelessly alone as other critical voices mysteriously disappear, one after the other.

- Physique 2 Precision 2
  Logic 3 Empathy 4
- **FORCE** 1 **CLOSE COMBAT** 2 **INSPIRATION** 4
- Mental Toughness 3 Physical Toughness 1
- **EQUIPMENT:** Writing utensils, book collection

CONTENT WARNING:
Violence, Gore, Child Death

DUTY AND DESPAIR

A COUPLE OF dark months have plagued the old mining town of Falun. Crops are withering, food is being spoiled, burnt corpses of wild animals are found around the nearby forest, and eerie, unsettling whimpers can be heard from the town's church. A man of deep faith and conviction, Reverend Bruselius, decides to take matters into his own hands to rid the town of this "Satanic" plague, but fears the damnation has already gone too far.

PRELUDE

Our story opens with the players meeting an interesting character, the renowned author Franzibald Hansen, at Castle Gyllencreutz who brings them on a mission to the old mining town of Falun. Franzibald is curious about the player characters and is hopeful that they will have what it takes to help him on future missions as Society members.

BACKGROUND

The Great Copper Mountain mine of Falun has been operational since the 10th century, perhaps even earlier than that, and helped fund many of Sweden's wars during the 17th century. The town is long past its prime, as the demand for copper from Europe has dwindled. A recent discovery of gold has boosted the operations and generated a small gold rush, but not without sacrifice. Carl Linneaus described the mine as *"...one of the great wonders of Sweden but as horrible as*

hell itself," where the workers were surrounded by "*soot and darkness on all sides*," and would climb, "*rickety ladders with sweat pouring from their bodies like water from a bath*."

In the past few years several newcomers have arrived in town and with them came many changes. Initially no one thought too much of it. A town as prosperous as Falun would continually have an influx of new people. Among them was Lisa Johansson, who quickly found work at the local inn. Later, the charismatic but strict Reverend Edward Bruselius arrived together with his family. He brought with him a stricter interpretation of the Lutheran preachings, and most townspeople found themselves going to church more often and living by the "Word of God" to a larger extent than before.

Then unexplained events started to occur. The workers, even the experienced miners who had been at the copper mine for years, would suddenly get lost or take a bad fall. Some would report hearing horrifying sounds coming from the dark caverns. The mines weren't the only place where such unexplained events occurred. Crops would suddenly burst into flames. Cow milk would turn into ash. Burnt carcasses of animals would be found scattered around the surrounding forest. Eventually, people claimed that cries from young children could be heard from the mine late at night.

Reverend Bruselius is convinced that this can only be explained by witchcraft and moral depravity among the miners and townspeople of Falun. He has sworn that he will get to the bottom of it no matter the cost. The superstitious miners, however, believe their misfortune is due to someone angering a mountain spirit – the Bergafru (The Wife of the Mountain), a vaesen they claim protects them and is the cause of their prosperity. A conflict between the followers of pious Reverend Bruselius and the old miners is starting to boil, as the town continues to be plagued by terrible accidents and unexplained events.

Due to the abusive nature of Bruselius and his harsh, strict teachings, his wife, Emilie, has come to resent him. She is confined to their house (unless escorted by Bruselius himself) where she is guarded by his equally strict and pious sister, Berta. The reverend performs painful cleansing rituals on himself and Emilie to remove any improper thoughts, and watches her every move like a hawk.

The behavior has only grown worse since the couple lost their newborn daughter, and Emilie has been unable to conceive again since. As his frustration grows, Bruselius starts getting more and more suspicious of the women in town and is ready to call a full witch hunt, to finally bring the culprit to light and end the alleged curse once and for all.

In reality, Emilie, having sunk into a deep pit of depression due to her situation, could not bring herself to carry and raise a child that was an offspring of Bruselius. Hoping her daughter would grow up in Heaven surrounded by love and happiness instead of the hell Emilie herself has endured, she put a pillow over her newborn daughter's face and smothered her.

Bruselius, seeing a birthmark on the baby's body as a mark of the Devil, decided to burn the corpse instead of giving her a proper burial. A questionable decision for a devout Christian, but the reverend has become increasingly obsessed with the idea of cleansing the town with fire. Emilie found the burnt remains of the baby and buried them in the mine. Instead of finding peace, the child came back as a Myling, haunting the miners and the inhabitants of the town, carrying the pain and hopelessness from her mother and a burning rage towards her father.

Besides the myling, there's another being that has been drawn to The Great Copper Mountain. Every night, Lisa Johansson dreams of walking alone in the mine and its dark, empty caverns while singing of memories she no longer remembers. Every morning she wakes up with dirt and bruises on her feet, suggesting it isn't just dreams. Lisa will not tell anyone about her sleepwalking, especially not with the town on high alert and wild accusations of witchcraft being thrown around. She just hopes they find the cause of the accidents and maybe, when they do, her own problems will be solved.

CONFLICTS

The primary conflict is between the townspeople and the myling, which is causing the various accidents and attacks. The myling won't rest until it's given a proper burial in hallowed ground.

The secondary conflict is between the old beliefs of the miners and the new Christian ways of reverend Bruselius. He is ready to burn the whole town down to the ground if he comes to believe it would cleanse them of their sins. Having pushed his wife to the brink of madness, Bruselius continues to stay firm in his piety and is willing to sacrifice everything and everyone before admitting the truth – that he himself is the cause of the pain and suffering that has befallen Falun.

The third conflict is related to Lisa and is tied to the greater mystery of *The Lost Mountain Saga*. In this chapter, she'll act more as a red herring for the players until her true nature is revealed in the aftermath.

INVITATION

At some point before the journey to Falun begins, either at Castle Gyllencreutz or somewhere else of your choosing, the players will meet Franzibald Hansen, who's an old friend of Linnea and a member of the Society. It's up to you as the Gamemaster to decide how you wish to introduce Franzibald. As he is an important person in the backstory of the campaign, incorporating him into the player characters' backstory might make sense. He could be a lifelong friend and confidant to either one or several of them.

A renowned Danish author who has written extensively about Norse mythology and the supernatural creatures that live among us (which most people assume is just fiction), Franzibald is always on the lookout for the next story. He takes an interest in new Society members, willing to share notes but also puts them to the test in the field.

A successful **VIGILANCE** check will let the players know he's wearing a bright green gemstone around his neck. When asked about it, Franzibald will tell the players that he found it during one of his many travels and that it is one of his most valuable assets. Worry briefly colors his face, before he asks to change the topic. If pushed for more information about it, he will become annoyed with the players, questioning whether they are a good fit for this delicate investigation when they are so blunt and inappropriate.

Franzibald's life partner is Björn, his butler. They are an odd couple, Björn being the stern, humorless and dry servant and Franzibald being an upper class author, constantly buzzing with energy and laughter.

After initial small talk, Franzibald eventually invites the players to join him in the town of Falun, four hours outside Upsala by train, to settle *"...an idiotic dispute between a foolish, pious man and his constituents. We need to make sure the buffoon does not start another witch hunt. Here, read for yourselves..."*

Franzibald takes out a letter and hands it over (*Handout 1A*, also found at the end of this book and available for download at the Free League website):

Mr Hansen,

It is with great concern that I write these lines. Your name was recommended to me by someone I trust, and perhaps against my better judgment, I now place my hope in your particular talents and expertise.

We have reason to believe our town, Falun, has become the target of witchcraft and devil worship and will need your help urgently to find and eliminate the source of this evil. It all started with a series of accidents in the town mine, with horrifying howls coming from the dark caverns. And the venom from the mine has now spread into the town, with crops burning, milk turning to ash, and animals dying without reason.

The miners unfortunately seem to have fallen under the temptation of ungodly and, dare I say, heathen behavior, which I suspect is more due to the lack of guidance by a true Christian such as myself, than any actual fault in their character, but it can explain their resistance to help us solve this problem once and for all.

I have taken it upon myself to cleanse this town of its moral depravity and believe I shall be successful with the guidance of someone with your... knowledge.

We can speak more about this delicate matter in person,
Reverend Bruselius

With a darkened expression, Franzibald shakes his head.

"I have had the displeasure of meeting many men like Bruselius before. But we need to be very careful. We do not want to escalate this conflict. I have a bad feeling the smallest of embers can burn the whole bloody town down at this point!" Suddenly, he lights up again.

"But, we are going to Falun, which means that after we have sorted out this mess..." Franzibald points at the letter, *"...we can have some delicious fika at Dagny's, the town's best cafe and inn!"*

THE SECRET PLAN: Franzibald has an ulterior motive for traveling to Falun. He has a hypothesis that the mine there might also contain the ancient green gemstones and he will try to find a way to leave the group and go explore the mine. He will not say anything about this to the player characters at this stage.

THE RITUAL OF SWEDISH FIKA

Once or twice per day, a typical Swede will sit down with a cup of coffee and a small treat, like a cinnamon bun or a cookie, to recharge, reconnect and refuel. The ritual is called *fika*. It doesn't matter if it's a workday or not, everyone's expected to take the extremely important "fikapaus." To "take a fika" with a co-worker, or bring some "fika" to your friend, or bake "fika" for a celebration – it's all accepted. The most important thing is to not ever, under any circumstance, skip the fika.

PREPARATIONS

The player characters can prepare for the journey at their headquarters and thereby gain an Advantage. Franzibald informs the party that he will personally take care of any travel or lodging expenses, as he believes the work that they are doing is of utmost importance.

If they start looking for clues in Upsala, they will find a relatively recent paper with a note on reverend Edward Bruselius and his marriage announcement with the widow Emilie Ekdahl. If they do any research on Franzibald Hansen, they will learn that he's an internationally renowned author who has written a whole series about Norse mythology and various encounters with the occult.

At this point of the campaign, the players won't find out any more info on the Abisko mine. Franzibald is very protective of his gemstone and if pushed for more information, he will get annoyed with the players and might even decide to stop helping them, and if they are too obnoxious and push too hard, he will fire them (see *Catastrophe*, page 16).

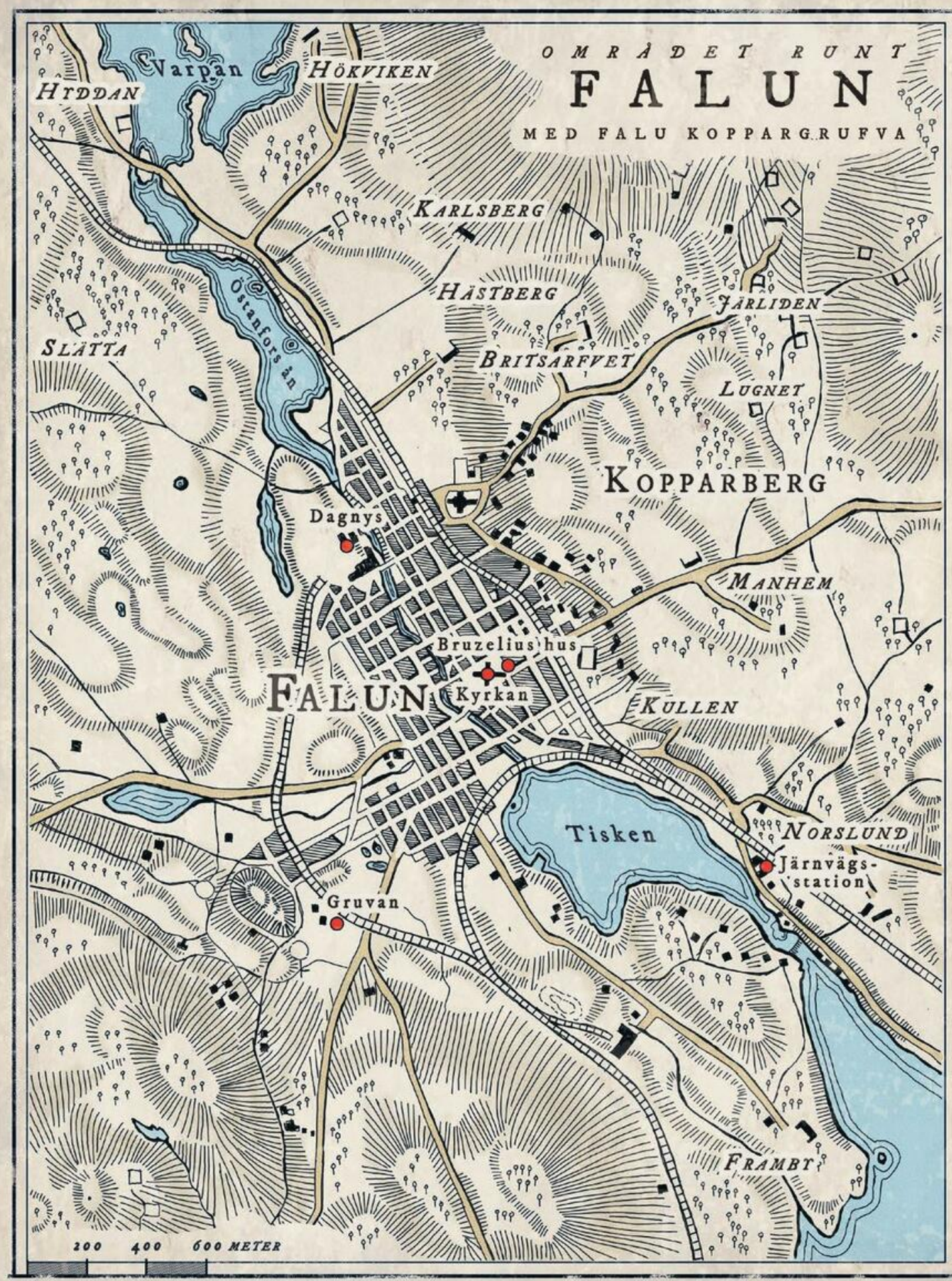
THE JOURNEY

It's a warm September afternoon when the players embark upon the train to Falun. A beautiful golden and auburn landscape passes by them on their journey, and Franzibald will tell the players a peculiar story of a man who went missing back at the turn of the century.

"...The copper mine is not as rich as it once was during its prime, and so the prospectors decided to re-open abandoned, old areas that were considered useless by most. In one of those chambers, they found the corpse of a young man. Strange, for it looked like he hadn't been dead more than two days! But there had been no recent reports of missing persons. So the men then decided to carry the body out of the mine and see if the villagers could identify him. After a while, an older woman steps up. 'That's my Mats... That's my Mats!' she said, horrified. Apparently, the boy in front of her was the man she had once been engaged to... 40 years earlier."

Franzibald pauses, looking at each player with intensity. *"40 years! There the boy was... almost half a century later! Completely preserved, as if time had stood still."* Franzibald is quite taken by his own story and absentmindedly fingers the gemstone around his neck. *"Now, the scientists will have their explanations, but... there are things we do not understand yet, lurking in these mountains."*

Nothing else out of the ordinary happens on the train, and the group eventually arrives at Falun, and the inn, Dagny's, where they will be staying during their investigation.


OMRÅDET RUNT
FALUN
MED FALU KOPPARGRUFVA
Varpan
HÖKVIKEN
HYDDAN
KARLSBERG
HÄSTBERG
JÄRLIDEN
ÖSTANFORS ÅN
SLÄTTA
BRITSARFVET
LUGNET
KOPPARBERG
Dagnys
MANHEM
Bruzelius hus
FALUN
Kyrkan
KULLEN
Tisken
NORSLUND
Järnvägs-station
Gruvan
FRAMBY
200 400 600 METER

ARRIVAL

A cozy and bright inn decorated in the latest French fashion, the players are met with the fresh smell of cinnamon buns. The inn is quite crowded as several people are enjoying their afternoon fika, as is the norm. At the very center of the main room is a whole buffet of Scandinavian pastries and warm coffee.

A voluptuous brunette walks over, accompanied by a small but fierce little Yorkshire terrier, and with a very thick French accent, she introduces herself as Dagny Dubois. When she sees Franzibald, she lets out an excited squeal and covers him in wet kisses. The two of them start reminiscing about old times. A successful **OBSERVATION** check will let the players know that despite the sincere happiness she's currently projecting, Dagny's eyes appear to be quite red and swollen, as if she's cried recently.

At some point, a man dressed in black and accompanied by two women enters the inn and everyone quiets down. Dagny immediately gets up and hurries over to him. He quietly says something to her and she escorts him and the women to a different room. After a while she comes back and nervously tells the player characters that reverend Bruselius is here to see them.

Bruselius is waiting for them, cross legged in an armchair in an otherwise empty room apart from a couple of wooden chairs. The two women are standing behind him by the window, eyes downcast. In a cold, calculated manner he recounts the problems the town has been facing with accidents in the mine, crops dying, milk spoiling, and various attacks late at night. He keeps it short and to the point, and seems to have already made up his mind.

"Witchcraft," he says, in a cold monotone voice. *"I have noticed certain tendencies already..."* He looks towards the other room where one can hear the loud laughter of Dagny and some patrons.

Bruselius will not go into any details while at the Inn, but invites them to visit him at his church, and tells them he can help them since he has already started his own investigation. He assumes the player characters are good Christians and will help him start a witch trial. It's clear the man has a lot of influence in town, and is someone they should not anger.

DAGNY DUBOIS

A beautiful woman in her mid-forties, Dagny was born in Normandy, France, before moving with her husband Hans to Sweden together with their little Yorkshire terrier Claude. The Swedes fell in love with her due to her fantastic baking skills and Dagny fell in love with the reserved but kind people of Sweden. While the marriage didn't last, Dagny decided to stay and open her own bakery and the establishment is known to offer some of the best baked goods in the whole region. Dagny was, like many other townspeople, charmed by reverend Bruselius and has tried to become a better Christian ever since he arrived in town.

- Physique 2 Precision 3
  Logic 1 Empathy 4
- **INSPIRATION** 3 **MEDICINE** 3
- Mental Toughness 1 Physical Toughness 2

A successful **OBSERVATION** will reveal that his wife, Emilie, occasionally will look at her husband with contempt and hatred but otherwise her demeanor is that of a sad, lonely young woman. She will not say a word to the player characters and Reverend Bruselius will shut down any attempt if they try to talk to her.

Finally he stands up and says, *"I am your humble servant in this, should you need any assistance."* The reverend leaves the inn with his family as the sun is about to set. The player characters now have an opportunity to continue to talk with Dagny or other patrons at the inn and ask about people and places in the area.

THE DREAM: Eventually, it's time to go to bed. Pick one of the player characters. In the middle of the night, they will suddenly wake from a nightmare about a young child with dark, gaping black holes instead of eyes, smoke rising from their head as they start to whimper. After a couple of moments, the player character is able to collect themselves, until they look towards the corner of their room. There, hidden in the shadows, the dark silhouette of someone or something is watching them. A strong smell of burning flesh fills the room and for a moment, it's hard to breathe. It's gone before the player character can react, but have them roll Empathy or Logic. If they fail, they will wake up with a mental condition.

COUNTDOWN AND CATASTROPHE

In this Mystery, the player characters must not only figure out what type of vaesen is behind the strange events in Falun. They must also control the increasing paranoia and mob mentality that's being fueled by reverend Bruselius and his pious followers before they start burning people for witchcraft. Adding the extra layer of the mysterious Lisa will create even more tension.

1. The burnt corpse of Dagny's dog is found outside the mine and, considering how everyone in town loved that dog, the disbelief and anger reaches new heights. Dagny is devastated, wailing while holding the little body. Lisa is there too, trying to comfort her while Bruselius seizes the opportunity to preach. *"The Lord have mercy on our souls, for we are lost. There is an Evil amongst us. Yes, right here. Right here! They walk among us. One of you could be a servant sent by the Devil."* Suspicion and anger starts growing amongst the townspeople, several of them nodding in agreement. *"Stay vigilant!"*
2. Bruselius grows impatient by the lack of support from the miners who, unlike the rest of the townspeople, seem to not want to participate in his narrative. So he convinces the authorities to shut down the mine for the time being. A confrontation between the paranoid townspeople and the miners occurs, with several of the miners being arrested. Bruselius will make the argument that they are protecting the Devil and should face trial.
3. The witch trials begin, and several local women are accused, among them Lisa Johansson. Brothers accuse their sisters, husbands accuse their wives, even daughters accuse their mothers. Lisa, having no family to defend her, stands alone in front of an angry mob, protesting her innocence. See *Confrontation*, page 21.

CATASTROPHE

The townspeople fail to put out the fire and it spreads. The entire southern part of Falun burns down. Its ruthless devastation kills many in its way, including Franzibald, Lisa, Dagny, Reverend Bruselius and his family.

LOCATIONS

At the time of this adventure, Falun is a mid-sized town in the heart of Sweden, in the county of Dalarna. The people are generally friendly, but anxious due to the recent events and the infighting is tearing them all apart. Everyone seems to be on high alert and few dare to go out once it gets dark.

THE INN

Dagny's establishment is a highlight of the town and a celebration of the Swedish "fika" culture (page 13), and people from all over the country know of her wonderful buns (pun intended). It's a local hangout for the miners when they are on their much needed break, but also for regular townspeople who just want to enjoy a cup of coffee. The atmosphere is warm and the otherwise shy Swedes find the openness and spontaneity of this Frenchwoman quite exotic and welcoming.

CHALLENGES

The people at the Inn are friendly and warm, but they are on high alert when it comes to anything that would suggest the occult and will easily start suspecting a player character to be involved in witchcraft if pushed

too hard. With **MANIPULATION** or **INSPIRATION** the player characters can gain trust temporarily, but it's fickle.

CLUES

The player characters can learn the following from Dagny or the locals at the Inn:

- Most people welcome the stricter teachings of Reverend Bruselius, but the miners, who are more superstitious, have had a harder time accepting him. The rift between the old and new ways introduced by Bruselius started long before the mysterious accidents began so most villagers believe it's unrelated.
- Wildfires are rare at this time of the year and would make no sense given how much rain the region has had recently. The mine uses fire in its work but for it to spread like this seems odd, unless some sort of sabotage is involved.
- A successful **MANIPULATION** will reveal that Dagny is afraid of the reverend but still respects him tremendously. She continues: *"His wife, despite being young, can't seem to give him a child. Their firstborn died after three days outside the womb, poor thing."* Dagny leans forward, and whispers *"He refused to bury it. Instead, he burnt it, because he believes the devil hides in all of us. That's how devoted he is! He's the only one who can save us."*
- Dagny mentions that one of her waitresses, Lisa, has spent a lot of time with the miners lately. She worries about the girl as she is unmarried, without a family, and Bruselius seems to disapprove of her spending time with a bunch of men.

THE CLERGY HOUSE

The residence of Reverend Edward Bruselius and his wife, Emilie Bruselius. His older sister Berta lives with them too, and they have a butler, two maids and a cook. The house was built in the 18th century and has two floors and a basement. It has the potential to be quite cozy, but it's as if the current residents have sucked out all the joy from the walls. Austere would be an understatement. In the main sitting area, where Bruselius will meet his guests, there are no colors. There is no life. The silence is deafening.

REVEREND BRUSELIUS

Edward Bruselius was very young when he found God. Growing up poor and being orphaned as a young boy, he turned to prayer for comfort and guidance. He studied theology at Upsala University and found meaning in the stricter interpretation of the Bible.

People find his determination and authoritative mannerism frightening while still charismatic and want to follow him. Before he came to Falun, he married the young widow Emilie Ekdahl. Their marriage has been miserable since day one, and the reverend has lost his composure more than once as he can't control Emilie the way he has been able to control everything else in his life, and he punishes her for that.

Bruselius's hair is white and his eyes are blue and cold. He has a constant expression of disapproval and the wrinkles in his forehead go deep. He is very tall and imposing, always wearing black.

- Physique 4 Precision 2
  Logic 4 Empathy 1
- **RANGED COMBAT** 4 **CLOSE COMBAT** 3 **MANIPULATION** 4
- Mental Toughness 3 Physical Toughness 2
- **EQUIPMENT:** Revolver

EMILIE BRUSELIUS

The young and once carefree Emilie grew up in an influential family in Västerås and later married the love of her life Jörgen Ekdahl. She was excited to join the social scene of Upsala as an influential socialite when it all instead fell apart as Jörgen died in a hunting accident. Almost immediately, she was coerced to marry the stern Reverend Bruselius, but it turned out to be a disaster as his abusive nature and overbearing obsession with controlling her clouded their entire marriage. She was stuck.

Eventually, she gave birth to a healthy daughter after several miscarriages but the hopelessness and desperation consumed her and it led her to do the unthinkable: she killed her own child. No older than 19, Emilie is short and lean with green eyes and big beautiful lips. Her curly red hair is usually covered and she wears a modest gray dress.

- Physique 2 Precision 1
  Logic 3 Empathy 3
- Mental Toughness 1 Physical Toughness 1

CHALLENGES

Reverend Bruselius is dead set on his narrative, that witchcraft and moral depravity is the cause for the evil that haunts them, and will not indulge any talk of vaesen or other non-Christian theories. In fact, he might grow suspicious of the player characters if they fail to convince him that they are good Christians and on the same page as him.

It will be very hard for the player characters to have a chance to talk with Emilie without Bruselius in the room. If they address any question towards her, Bruselius will most likely answer for her or she will look at him for permission to speak. A successful **MANIPULATION** and a compelling reason can make him leave the room so the player characters can talk to her directly.

CLUES

- It is clear that Emilie is not happy with her husband and she does not believe that the town is as evil as he thinks. *"People are very kind here. I believe the grief is making my husband more… tense, than usual."*
- With a successful **OBSERVATION** roll, Emilie can let the player characters know that she has lost every child she has carried, saying that they are all with God now where they will be safe and happy.
- A risky play, but the characters could try to sneak into the bedroom, rolling for **STEALTH**. Unless they make a successful **INVESTIGATION** roll, they won't find much except old drafts of a letter, penned by the reverend, where he goes into deeper detail about his own desperation. There is a sadness, remorse even, in the tone of the letter as he describes his temporary descent into madness when he burnt the corpse of his newborn daughter instead of giving her a proper burial.

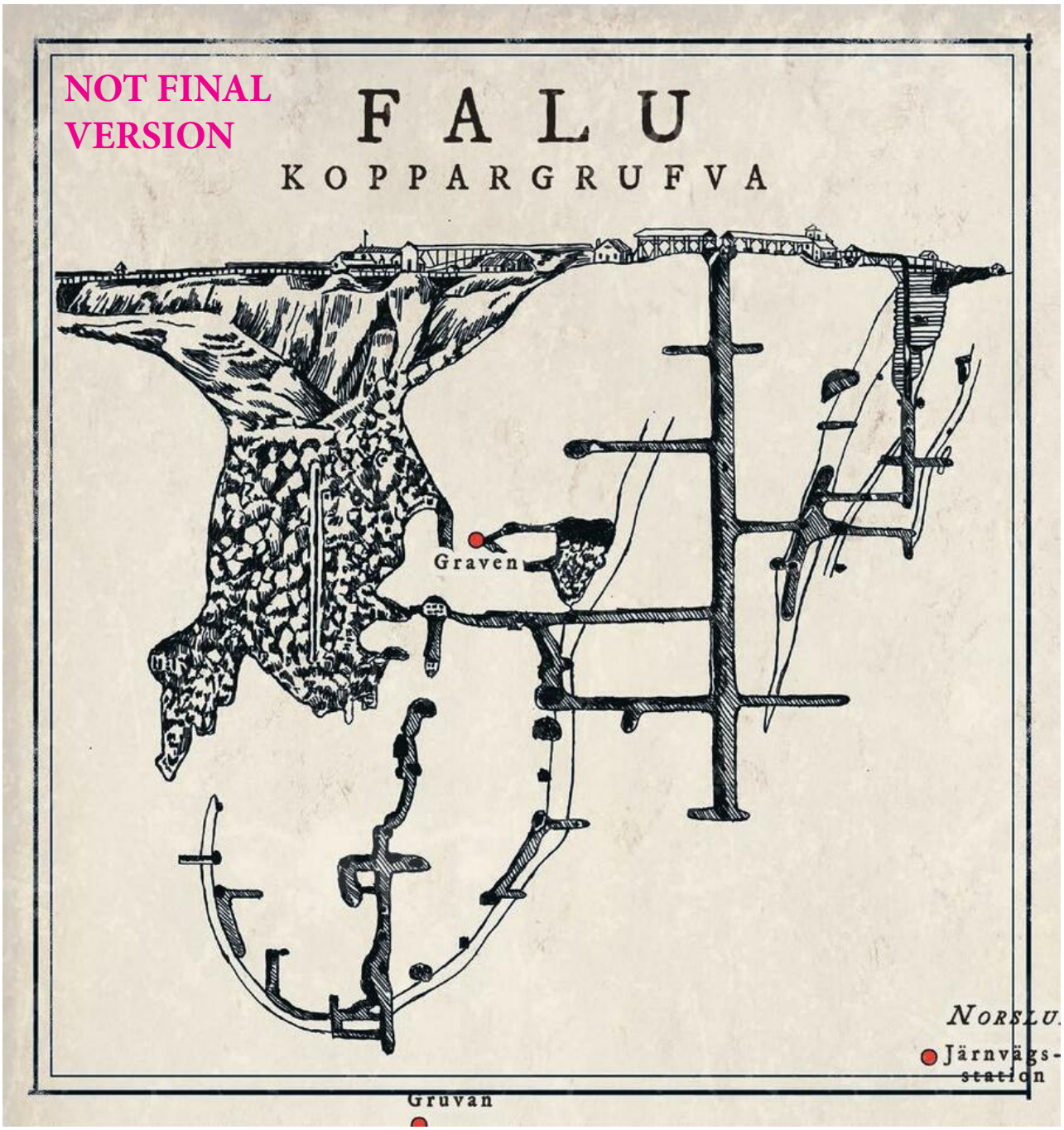
THE MINE

The mine is an enormous pit and bustling with activity. Engineers, miners and workers move up and down the slopes with their massive tools. The mountain has been mined since the Middle Ages. Once

the miners started organizing and gained political clout, the safety protocols improved. However, if one doesn't know their way around the area, it can be quite dangerous.

The player characters will find nothing of interest inside the actual mine tunnels during their initial visit, but feel free to let the players explore it and its dark caverns (see *Challenges* below). Nothing unusual happens (this time), but it can still be quite unsettling to be surrounded by tons and tons of stone, knowing it could collapse at any second and trap them in there forever.

Several small cottages, painted in the famous red color known as "Faluröd" (Falun red), line the street and are where the miners live. Close to the entrance, there's the head engineer's house and several resting areas. On a bench, facing the pit, sits a young woman – it's Lisa Johansson, the waitress from the inn.



CHALLENGES

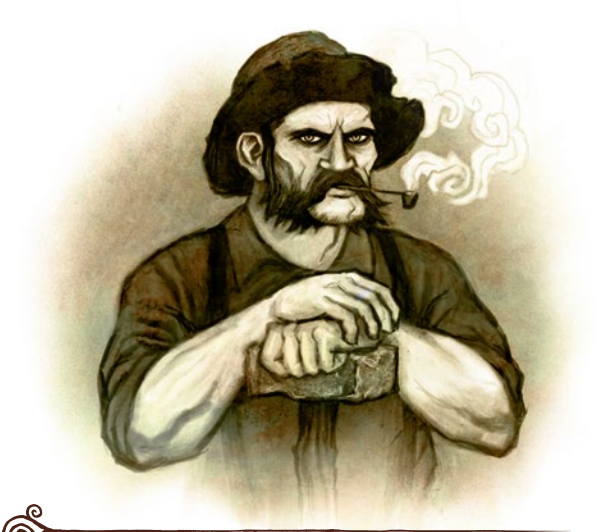
The miners and workers are all very busy, and it will be very hard for the player characters to get any of them to stop and talk to them. The miners who are resting are either drunk or sleepy, and when they find out that Bruselius might be behind the questions, they'll get angry and potentially violent. **MANIPULATION**, **INSPIRATION** and **INVESTIGATION** rolls will be helpful here.

At some point during the visit here, Franzibald goes missing, nowhere to be found. If the characters ask around, some miners saw him walking into the main mine entrance. If the characters follow him, have them roll **INVESTIGATION** and roam the dark tunnels for a while. Then, even if the roll fails, Franzibald suddenly appears. He says he went into the mine out of simple curiosity but got lost. An **OBSERVATION** roll will reveal that Franzibald is not telling the whole truth. He will not be pressured into revealing more at this time.

The player character can also talk to Lisa Johansson here. Make sure that they do – if not here, then at the inn later. Lisa is not responsible for the myling attacks but she is tied to the great mystery that is *The Lost Mountain Saga*.

CLUES

- The miners are all Christian and believe Bruselius has made it seem like they are heathens. While they do give thanks to the Mountain, and refer to it as *She*, most of them would agree it's more out of tradition and good luck, and less about actually believing in any other god outside the Christian one.
- One miner will refer to Bruselius as a "peacock" who's so weak, he can't keep his children alive. *"He sees the Devil in everything. People say he burnt his own child, without giving it a proper burial! And these people in town follow him blindly. Fools."*
- Another drunk miner reveals that the problems seem to have started after Bruselius arrived. He suggests that he might be the Devil himself, but the other miners shush him.
- Lisa will be more forthcoming to the player characters and tell them everything she knows, to convince them of her innocence. *"I have had strange dreams lately, but isn't that to be expected given the circumstances?"* The miners treat her with kindness, while the townspeople give her accusatory looks.



TYPICAL MINER

Muscular, sweaty and usually covered in a layer of grease and soot, the typical miner will be pragmatic and slightly suspicious of the player characters, especially if they think they are part of "Bruselius's gang." Some of them have been there for over 30 years and all of them have stories of strange things that have happened to them in the dark caves, and they don't mind sharing, especially if offered a drink or two. They are Christian but believe one needs to be respectful of Her, referring to the Mountain, as *"she takes care of us but if you anger her, She will trap you inside."*

- Physique 4 Precision 2
  Logic 1 Empathy 2
- **CLOSE COMBAT** 2 **FORCE** 4 **AGILITY** 2
- Mental Toughness 1 Physical Toughness 3

- If the players make a **MANIPULATION** roll, Lisa will eventually reveal that she has occasionally woken up with dirty feet, suggesting that her vivid dreams of walking around the empty mine might not just be dreams. But she is terrified of telling anyone about this, because they will think she's a witch.
- If the players make a successful **VIGILANCE** roll, they can tell that Lisa seems to be particularly fascinated by Franzibald, and additionally, a successful **OBSERVATION** roll will make it clear that she is preoccupied by the gemstone around his neck.
- If the player characters gain her trust, Lisa reveals that she woke up by the Royal Mounds of Old Upsala a decade ago, with no memory of her previous life. She recently relocated to Falun to find work. She feels a strong connection to the mountain and an urge to protect it. She can't explain why or against what.

TYPICAL TOWNSPERSON

While almost everyone who lives in Falun is in one way or another connected to the Mine, there are a lot of engineers, bankers, farmers, store owners and others who live and work outside of it. They are regular, kind and curious people, just wanting to live their lives in peace with their families, but some of them have been swayed by the teachings of Bruselius. The rift between the townspeople and the miners has only deepened as the mysterious events started happening, where the townspeople have grown more suspicious of everyone.

- Physique 2 Precision 2
  Logic 1 Empathy 2
- **AGILITY** 2
- Mental Toughness 1 Physical Toughness 1

CONFRONTATION

The inevitable confrontation with the myling will take place at the church when the witch trial of Lisa begins. An absurd trial where the most ridiculous accusations are being thrown around. There's no decorum or legal representatives present outside the mob and Bruselius.

The tension is suffocating. The anger has nowhere to escape. It is imprisoned in this mighty church where friends, family members and lovers are all turning against each other. Some of them are so consumed by hatred they are frothing at their mouths. Bruselius tries to reign it in, focusing their hatred towards Lisa, who's standing right in front of the altar awaiting her sentence. *"Satan, I repel you!"* he cries, believing he can exorcize the demon she has invited into her body. He wants to help her, that's all he ever wanted.

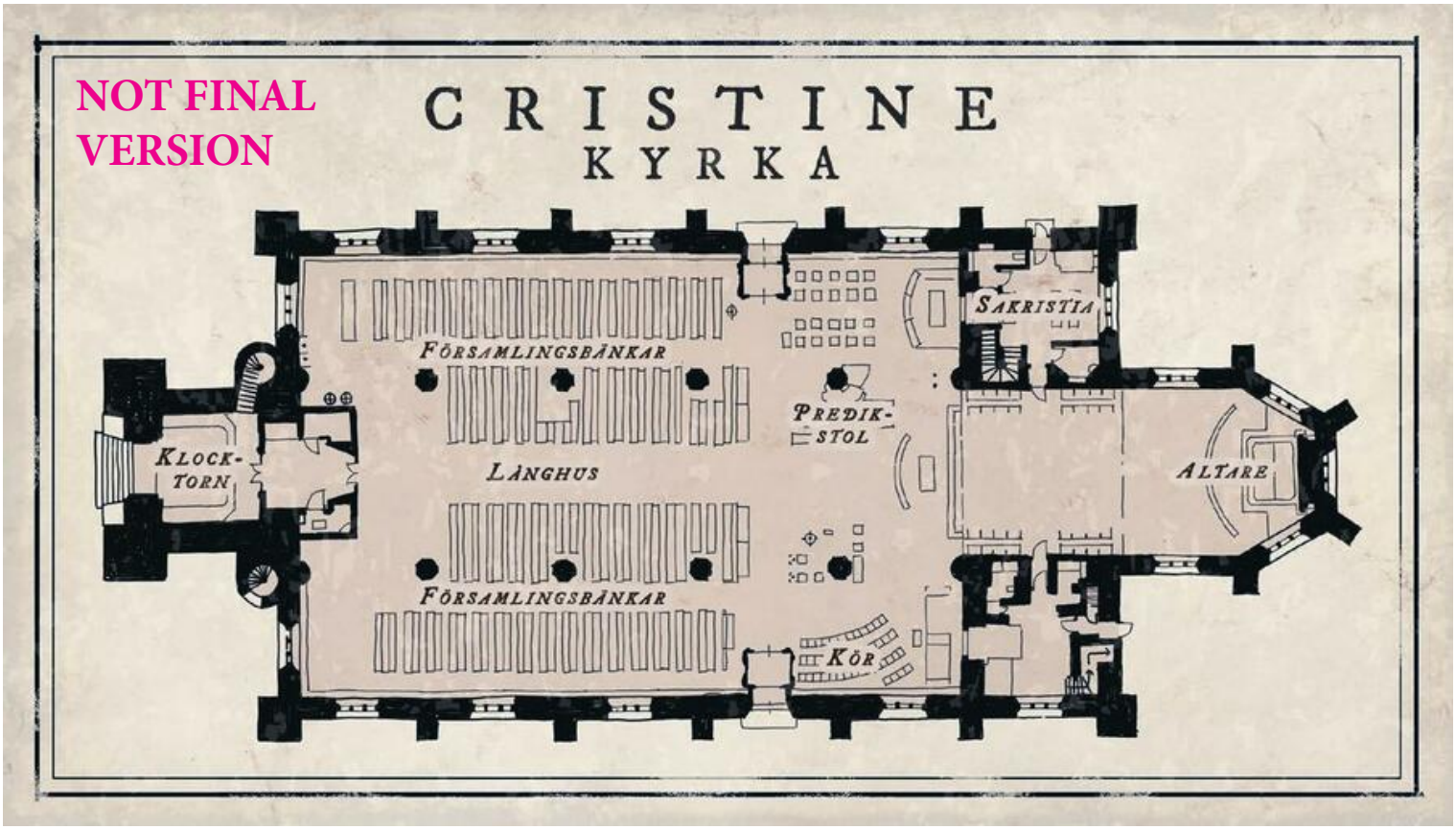
Even Dagny, who always felt protective of the girl who took her in and treated her like her own, is starting to waver. *"...The girl has been acting weird, and now that I think about it... she always seemed to hate my dog."* The devastation in Lisa's eyes as she hears Dagny is almost too much for her to bear, and she falls down on her knees, unable to stand as her heart breaks into a million pieces.

But Emilie knows. She has known for a while. This is her doing. The heartbreaking cries of her lost baby haunt her every night. All mothers can hear it. She sees it in their terrified faces. This is not a demon, this is God... punishing her for her sins.

THE MYLING ATTACKS

The myling wakes, feeling the distress of her mother. A woman's high-pitched scream of terror cuts through the commotion. *"It's a child!"*

There, behind Lisa, floating over the altar, is the small body of an infant. It's covered in soot, parts of its body have been burnt off. Smoke rises from behind it, its eyes completely black. The church goes completely quiet outside the small whimpers of pain from the myling.



The myling suddenly lets out a guttural scream and starts casting the curse Fire (page 119 in the core rulebook). The first target is Bruselius, who lights up like a living torch, waving his arms around in panic and setting fire to the furniture and tapestries in the church as he dies – unless the player characters save him. The myling then attacks everyone else, including the player characters. Panic erupts, people start to flee. Particles of ash and embers flutter and swirl in the air and there's the distinct smell of burning. The fire spreads quickly.

The players can try to put out the fire, requiring three successful **FORCE** rolls (slow action) in as many rounds. If they fail, the church will burn down to the ground. The player characters also need to fight the myling. For stats, see page 142 of the core rulebook. If the player characters are defeated, the myling leaves them and the burning church behind, and continues to haunt the town. If the myling is Broken, it dissolves and leaves behind black feathers, but returns the next day. The only way to permanently defeat the myling is to bury its remains in hallowed ground – more on that below.

AFTERMATH

No matter if he dies or lives on as a broken man, Bruselius's reign of terror is over. The healing process of trying to forgive and move on begins, as families and friendships have been shattered over these past few years.

When the commotion in the church dies down and the shocked townspeople have left, the player character may notice that Lisa and Franzibald are both gone. Don't tell the players this unless they ask about them, however. If they ask the townspeople, no one has seen them leave.

Emilie Bruselius is distraught. Seeing the destruction she's responsible for and fully realizing the unforgivable crime she's committed, she confesses that she buried her daughter's remains in the mine. With a **LEARNING** roll, the characters will understand that they are dealing with a myling, and that its remains must be buried in consecrated ground. Emilie agrees to lead them to the spot in the mines where her daughter rests.

BACK TO THE MINE

It's getting dark. People are making their way back to town, in shock of what they've just witnessed. The player characters enter the cool darkness of the mine. Lantern in hand, Emilie leads them through the tunnels. Finally, she kneels and brushes off a layer of sand and gravel from the floor to reveal a flat stone. Beneath it, she finds the wrapped remains of her child. Sobbing, she embraces the bundle. Her ordeal is finally over, and she can start to heal.

But this story is not over. Suddenly, scraping footsteps are heard in the tunnel ahead. An icy chill sweeps through the dark passage. Then, the player characters see someone standing in the tunnel. It's a woman with long brown hair and a tattered dress, dimly lit by a pale green light from a stone in her necklace. It looks like Lisa Johansson, but something is off.

Lisa comes closer, moving with strange, gangly gait, her face in shadow. She is holding something large in her hand. Blood is dripping from her jaw down on her dress, and even more blood is oozing from whatever she's holding. In her hand, hanging at her side, is the severed head of Franzibald Hansen. His bright green gemstone hangs around her neck.

Then, in a deep, guttural voice, Lisa growls a few words in some ancient tongue, before letting out an otherworldly scream. The player characters must all make a Fear test against Fear value 3 (increased from the normal 2 for a revenant due to the horrifying scene). When they manage to find their bearings again, Lisa is gone. In the unlikely event that any player characters make the Fear test, they can fight Lisa in her revenant form. She will flee at the earliest opportunity, turning into her spectral form if needed.

With a **LEARNING** roll, the player characters will recognize the language that Lisa spoke as Old Norse. If they get two successes or more, they will even understand the words:

"The stones are for the gods, not for men. The Vanadisir must die!"

A further successful **LEARNING** roll will inform the characters that the Vanadisir was rumored to be a secret order during the Viking age, whose members claimed to be the direct descendants of the Norse goddess Freja.

The mine is absolutely still as it mourns the dead.

CONTENT WARNING:
Death, Mental Health, Torture, Abuse

THE BEGINNING OF THE FALL

On a dark, rainy night, a horse-drawn carriage pulls up on a quiet street next to an old mansion. A group of people steps out of the carriage. No one says a word as they solemnly walk towards the entrance. The butler of the mansion, known as Björn Prahl, is waiting for them there. His posture is stiff. Composed. He observes them with cold, calculating eyes.

As the group approaches, one of them takes off their hat. Another person places a hand on the tall man's shoulder. No one says a word. A second carriage pulls in behind the first, rain drumming rhythmically on its roof. Four more men emerge and carefully lift something from the back. A coffin.

When Björn sees this something changes in his demeanor and he lets out a small painful whimper. Until that moment his brain refused to accept what he had been told prior. As reality catches up to him in the form of a wooden crate carrying the love of his life, he trembles and steps towards the coffin. Björn's legs give out and he collapses, emitting deep and guttural shrieks of pain and grief.

The rain continues to fall.

PRELUDE

This adventure takes place immediately after the events that transpired in *Duty and Despair*. It is written a bit differently than a standard *Vaesen* Mystery, focusing on information gathering and using the player characters' social skills as opposed to solving a mystery related to a vaesen. But don't worry, there will still be vaesen encounters…

BACKGROUND

A decade after the accident that killed everyone on the site, it had been assumed that nothing of value existed in the old Abisko Mine except iron. As iron can be extracted elsewhere, the mine and the area was largely forgotten. When Svea Mining Corp reopened the old mine, the initial response was one of mild curiosity. That curiosity only intensified when the new owners of the mine, ex-military officer Karl Magnusson and his new wife Sigrid Magnusson, put the entire region under the highest possible security and shielded the area from any outsiders.

At an already extremely remote part of northern Sweden, it seemed strange that such drastic measures were needed and so, speculation started. When news came that the University of Upsala had purchased a significant share in the mine, the chatter reached new heights. Students, professors and journalists all kept talking about it. With the endorsement of both military experts and scientists, it meant that many potential investors sharpened their ears too.

Presented with this rare promising mineral, both the rich and the poor see an opportunity, creating a hype that borders on mass-hysteria. This could mean new job opportunities. New technology. The reawakening of a suffering economy. Nationalism is already picking up steam in other parts of Europe and some are eager to bring those thoughts to the Swedes. A resource that only Sweden can harvest and sell can be a game changer. Despite all the buzz being founded entirely on speculation and rumor, everyone is clamoring for a piece of this mysterious gemstone.

Now, the University of Upsala is hosting an extravagant ball in their newly built University Hall to announce "exciting news about the collaboration with Svea Mining Corp" and scientists and politicians from all over the world are eager to get an invite to this exclusive event.

The rumors say that a very rare mineral or stone of some kind "with unlimited potential for military, economic and scientific purposes" has been found at the mine – so rare, it does not even have a name. Only a few people in the world have laid eyes on this rare stone, and even fewer know why it's important.

THE FRANZIBALD CONNECTION

One of them was the author Franzibald Hansen. For years he studied the stone because of the way it seemed to impact vaesen. The research was ineffective and frustrating due to his lack of skill in the area and the fact that no one in the public sphere wanted to be associated with occult topics for fear of persecution. He had to work in the dark, not knowing who he could trust.

Gathering his thoughts in several notebooks that he kept in a safe place, Franzibald meant to share his knowledge with his new friends, especially as he had a bad feeling that this mineral could potentially be very dangerous. The reopening of the mine worried him but he was killed before he could voice any of his concerns.

BEDLAM AT THE ASYLUM

Meanwhile, the Upsala Asylum is having problems. A recent and unexplained uptick in patients has exceeded the institution's capacity. These patients have been sent by Svea Mining Corp after having worked at the Abisko Mine. Having been exposed to the green stones, they temporarily got the Sight and suddenly saw vaesen everywhere. Not understanding what was actually happening, they were deemed insane and secretly sent to Upsala Asylum for "treatment."

The journalist Amanda Lorentz at the Upsala Gazette investigated the wave of patients at the asylum, and wrote a story that connected it to Svea Mining Corp.

She questioned the Magnussons' acquisition of the mine and whether it's morally defensible to once again steal land from the Sami people. Soon after, she was fired and disappeared. Rumors suggest that she has herself been sent to the asylum.

In fact, a doctor, bought by Svea Mining Corp, declared Amanda insane. People assumed that the humiliation of losing her job and friends had driven her mad and accepted it. Some suggested that she had always been a "wicked soul." After all, she was writing such nasty, libelous articles about "good, hard-working people that would bring so much wealth to Sweden." What type of person would do that?

Amanda Lorentz, a good friend of Franzibald and one of his last few allies, knew that something terrible was going on, but saw how everyone in her social circles was swayed by the charismatic couple. When the reopening got international attention, she felt it was necessary to say something before the entire world became enchanted by these, in her opinion, con artists. Franzibald tried to warn her, urging her to not do anything rash until he came back from his trip, but it was too late.

Knowing that public perception is key to their success, this is how the Magnussons have been able to deal with their critics. They surround themselves with loyal, devout followers who treat them like gods. The ones they can't sway with charisma, they sway with gold. Additionally, they are experts at separating themselves from any liability. No one at the asylum knows that they are behind the recent intakes, making them legally untouchable.

THE STONES

The stones have been discovered to be able to bind and harvest powers from vaesen, who are drawn to them. They have an active and inactive phase, when "charged" with vaesen powers or not. This is of course, a tightly guarded secret as most humans do not have the Sight and it's quite unacceptable to bring up the occult in public. Sigrid Magnusson is trying to use these stones to give humans the power of vaesen, but their erratic nature and unexpected behavior has proven to make this a much more difficult task than she had hoped.

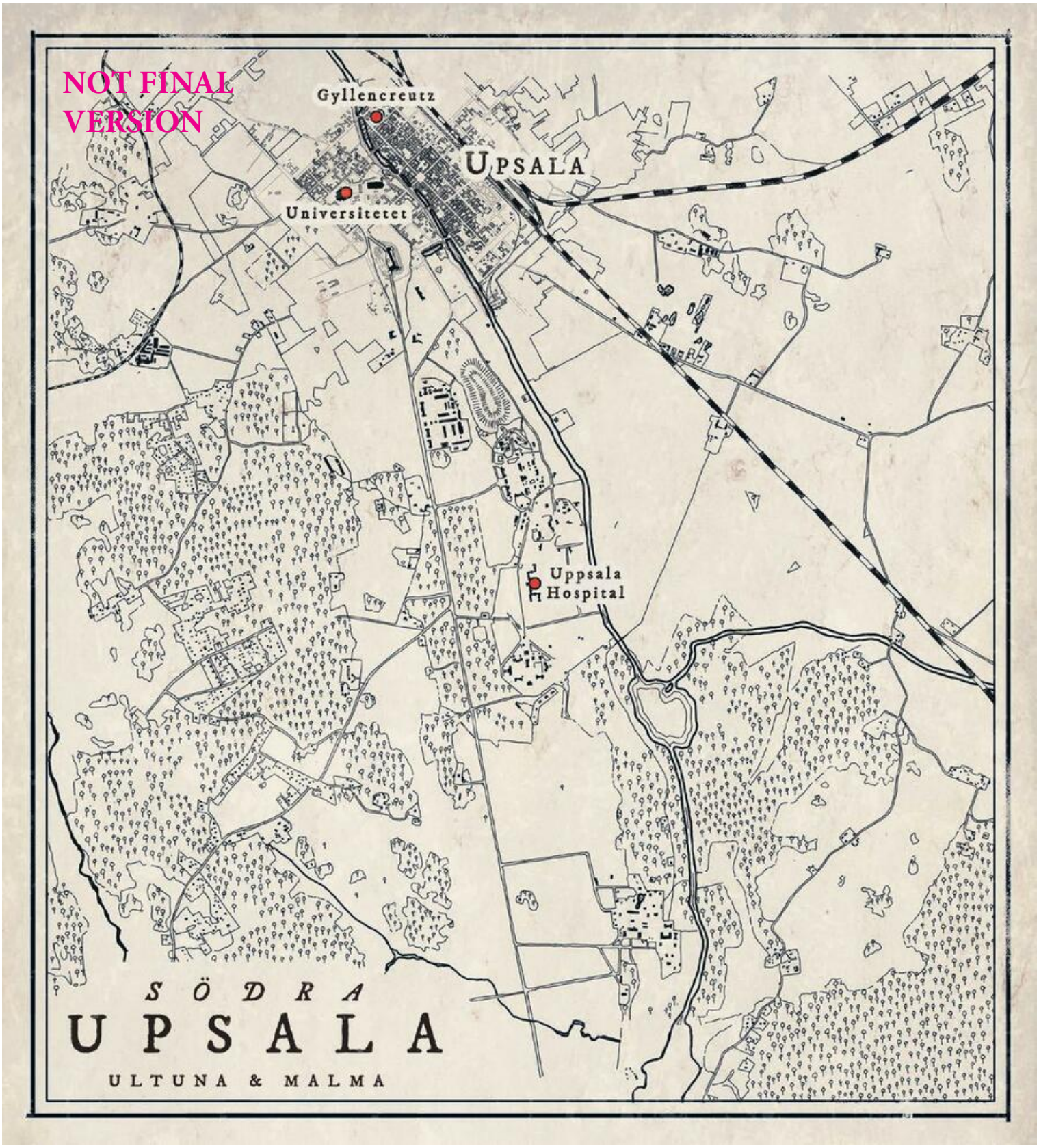
An additional property is that when several charged stones are close to one another and subjected to heat, they seem to create a chain reaction and become volatile, even explosive, which is what happened when the original mine collapsed over a decade earlier. This is why Karl Magnusson has an interest in the stones as he sees the potential uses they could have in military matters.

CONFLICTS

The primary conflict is about the vocal critics of Svea Mining Corp that have suddenly gone missing or wound up dead, the cause dismissed as "natural circumstances." The Magnussons have a successful propaganda machine so the public does not seem to care that the asylum is getting overcrowded or that the journalist Amanda Lorentz has been declared mad and gone missing. What is it that Franzibald knew that he failed to tell the player characters before his demise?

The secondary conflict is about the growing influence of Svea Mining Corp and their founders. While keeping an extremely tight lid on the details behind their project, they've been able to recruit several powerful allies that have an interest in the success of the mine and its operation while protecting Karl and Sigrid. The knowledge-thirsting scientists, the warmongering politicians and the greedy nobles who are only interested in profit are all heavily invested at this point. The forces at play are immensely powerful and ruthless.

At this point in the campaign, the players find themselves in the midst of an increasingly dangerous situation that's shrouded in secrecy. Their focus should be on gathering information and clues that will help them puzzle together the mystery of *The Lost Mountain Saga* – without raising suspicion or getting caught.


NOT FINAL VERSION
Gyllencreutz
UPSALA
Universitetet
Uppsala Hospital
SÖDRA
UPSALA
ULTUNA & MALMA

KARL MAGNUSSON

Practical and stoic, Karl Magnusson is a tall, stocky man who served in the Swedish Military for years before venturing into mining operations and founding Svea Mining Corp. The company made him rich and earned him respect in the industry. When meeting the charming young woman Sigrid at a social gathering in Stockholm, he initially thought she'd be a good match for his son. However, as his son sadly passed away before the wedding, Karl decided that Sigrid's intelligence and drive were so rare and unique that he married her himself instead, to keep her in the family.

The two of them formed a strong partnership where Sigrid eventually explained everything about her big plans, how harvesting the powers of vaesen through these stones could revolutionize everything and Karl, having The Sight himself, was convinced. However, unbeknownst to Sigrid, Karl does not share his wife's ambition to gift humans with vaesen-like abilities. Instead, he's mesmerized by the sheer force of these stones and he knows they can be used for military gain. If they can be built into proper weapons, it would change everything for Sweden.

What started as a small disagreement is slowly building into a larger rift between the two of them, but they both need each other to reach their goals. Karl has the money and clout, Sigrid has the knowledge.

- Physique 5 Precision 5 Logic 3 Empathy 1
- **RANGED COMBAT** 5 **CLOSE COMBAT** 5 **AGILITY** 4
- Mental Toughness 2 Physical Toughness 3
- **EQUIPMENT:** Rifle, longsword, knuckle dusters

INVITATION

Almost two weeks have passed since the terrible events in Falun and the killing of Franzibald Hansen. While life has somewhat returned to normal for the player characters, they all carry a burden of emptiness and unanswered questions that leaves a silent echo within the walls of Castle Gyllencreutz.

It's a crisp October morning. The player characters find themselves in the breakfast room, enjoying the first meal of the day together with the daily newspaper. As always these days, the news-cycle is completely dominated by updates on the Abisko mine but there is also a story about Upsala Asylum that catches their eye (*Handout 2A*, also found at the end of this book and available for download at the Free League website):

HELP COMING FOR OVERCROWDED ASYLUM

Twenty new patients were admitted to the Asylum last month, a significant increase that the upper management blamed on the unusually rainy summer. However, help is on its way. Experts from Stockholm arrived last week and already the situation has stabilized. Early projections estimate the problem with overcrowding will be solved by Christmas.

A successful **LEARNING** check lets the player characters recall what had happened to journalist Amanda Lorentz (page 26).

There's a knock on the door. Björn Prahl, Franzibald's butler and life-partner, enters the room. The stern, quiet man looks pale and his face is hollow, as if he hasn't eaten in days. He takes off his hat as he enters. *"Good morning."* he says quietly. *"I hope I do not come at a bad time."* Björn will eventually bring out an envelope for the player characters. *"It was addressed to Franzibald,"* he says, his voice thick with suppressed emotion. *"They must not know. It's from the University. An invitation for tonight. I cannot attend. But it might be of interest to you."*

The player characters would know that this ball is an extremely exclusive event that very powerful people from all over the world hope to get an invite to. It's rumored that previously top secret details on Svea Mining Corp's work on the Abisko Mine will be revealed at this ball, along with the University's involvement. He hands them the envelope. Inside is a small, elegant card (*Handout 2B*, also downloadable and found at the end of this book):

Mr. Franzibald Hansen & Co. is requested to attend the Ball at the new University Hall on the 5th of October current, at 4 o'clock p.m.

Eskil Andersson
Vice Chancellor
UNIVERSITY OF UPSALA
GRATIÆ VERITAS NATURÆ

Björn shares that Franzibald was very wary of Svea Mining Corp and the reopening of the Abisko mine. *"Franzibald would often say that 'Those fools do not know what forces they are up against!'"* Björn tells them as concern fills his grief-stricken eyes. *"Perhaps he was needlessly paranoid but I frankly doubt it. I know this mattered to Franzibald a great deal and he was planning on bringing your group in to help him with investigating this further after Falun."*

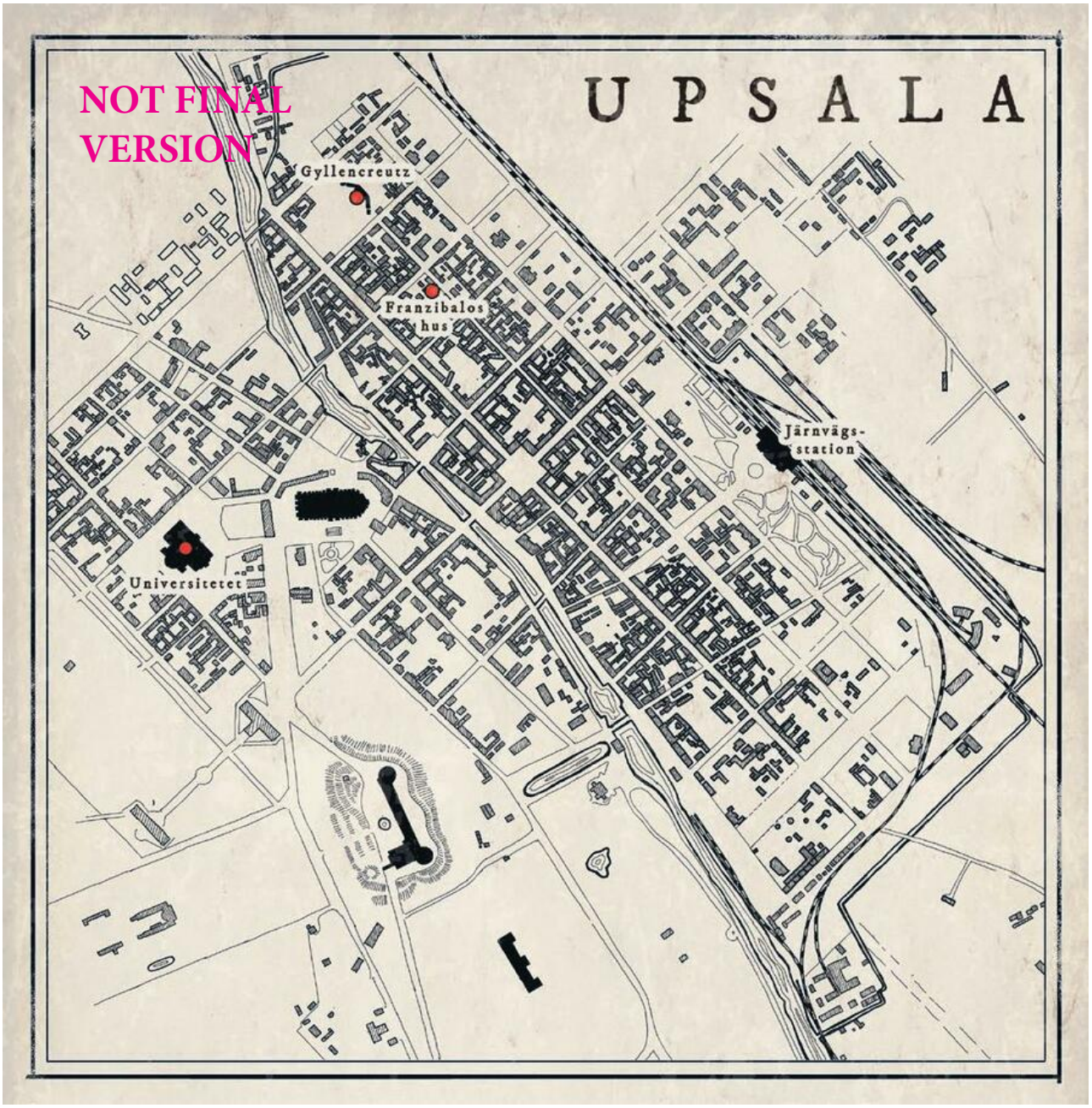
He pauses, collects himself, and continues. *"I know it's a lot for me to ask but you are the only ones I trust after everything that's happened..."* The players can gather the following from Björn:

- Franzibald kept a lot of notes on his research in his office, but Björn will admit that he has not had the emotional strength to enter the office and go through it all. He offers the player characters full access if they would be interested in going through his notes (see *Locations*, page 34).
- He believes Franzibald was invited because he had a good relationship with the geology department of the University and went to several of their seminars throughout the years, even if Franzibald himself was more of an artistic spirit. *"Academia did not really suit him... Too structured. Too sensible! he would say with a snort."* Björn smiles at the memory.
- Franzibald had taken an interest in the first iteration of the mine when it was initially opened all those years ago. But it was after the terrible accident when his interest in geology truly spiked. He studied peculiar stones for years and kept writing down notes. Björn continues, *"Some days, it consumed him. He stopped writing his regular stories. The accident shook him to his core, even though he was miles and miles away from it."*
- Björn does not know more about Svea Mining Corp outside what's been written in the papers but every time it comes up, he speaks in a hushed tone. *"Far too many people who were vocal critics of the Magnussons, the owner of Svea Mining Corp, have disappeared. It seems like no one really dares criticize them at this point."*

PREPARATIONS

The player characters can gain an Advantage when preparing at Castle Gyllencreutz. They would already know of this annual ball and that the University is planning on "presenting new, revolutionary research in collaboration with Svea Mining Corp."

This year an invited list of influential investors, scientists, politicians and the social elite of Northern Europe is expected to attend. A record-long waitlist has been set up as anyone in the scientific community would kill to get an invite. Castle Gyllencreutz is in good standing with the University and the player characters can be quite confident that the invitation, albeit addressed to Franzibald, would be extended to their whole group.



The player characters would also have time to investigate Franzibald's office to gather more information (see *Locations*, page 34) before the ball later that night.

Additionally, the player characters can spend resources on beautiful ball gowns and attire to impress the social elite at the ball. It's up to you as the Gamemaster how you wish to reward the players should they choose to do that, for example you can give them more clues or get them better seats at the ball. If they are looking real fancy, they might even get some extra points with the Magnussons.

JOURNEY

An impressive convoy of carriages drives up the hill of Carolina Rediviva before making a right towards the University Hall. Students dressed in formal attire, hired to work at the ball, line the street leading up to the entrance. They are holding banners of the various student nations and the Swedish coat of arms. Men and women in beautiful dresses gracefully make their way inside.

ARRIVAL

Upon entry through the massive doors to the new, impressive building, the orchestra plays a famous waltz, yet no one is dancing. Instead, clusters of men in penguin suits and women in expensive gowns are scattered all over, engaging in intense discussions about their particular fields. Languages from all across the world can be heard, with German, English, Chinese, and French most prevalent.

The excitement is electrifying, bordering on explosive. Eagerness mixed with anxiety covers the faces of every guest as they eye the stage, still empty. Almost 900 people are in attendance, footmen everywhere serving Swedish hors d'oeuvre (yes, that's right – pickled herring). The player characters can dance, mingle or just stand and observe as everything unfolds.

TYPICAL BALL GUEST

The crowd is a mix of old and young, noble and middle class, and most of them are there for the same reason. They are eager to find out what the University of Upsala might have discovered and how they can be a part of it. The social elite, dressed in the latest expensive French fashions, are keeping mostly to themselves and to other people with money. The scientists and researchers, together with the lucky few students able to get hold of an invitation, are all debating various theories, some more outlandish than others.

Should the player characters choose to engage a NPC at the ball in combat, look at the stat blocks for Student or Professor (or other archetypes) on page 166 in the *Vaesen* core rulebook.

RUMORS AT THE BALL

One thing all the prominent guests at the ball have in common is that no one knows anything for sure, but many are eager to share the following rumors:

- There is talk of a mineral, or gemstone of some sort, that the world has never seen before and that only has been found in some parts of Sweden. This could be huge for economic growth if it's as powerful as the rumors claim.
- Sigrid Magnusson, the new wife of Karl Magnusson, was initially betrothed to Karl's son Richard. The boy died during military training and Karl married Sigrid instead. Karl's previous wife and Richard's mother disappeared a long time ago. How? Why? No one knows.
- Sigrid's background is peculiar. She comes from no prominent family and nobody had heard of her before the acquisition of the old Abisko Mine. However, everyone who meets her says she is a very brilliant geologist despite her young age.
- If asked about Amanda Lorentz, most people will get a bit uncomfortable as they all appreciated her work until she wrote that "strange article." The article not only questioned the credentials of the Magnussons but also brought to light the unlawful mining of Sápmi (indigenous people of Northern Scandinavia) territory in the north. Most people believe she's had a nervous breakdown, like so many recently, but hope she will get better after a few months at the Asylum.

At some point, everyone will be asked to take their seats in the dining hall. The demonstration is about to begin.

THE DEMONSTRATION

The player characters are seated quite far back from the main table and stage, but if they are successful with **MANIPULATION**, they could potentially bribe or convince one of the servers to switch them to a table closer to the action.

After what seems like an anxious eternity, the Magnussons finally arrive, accompanied by the Vice Chancellor of the University, Eskil Andersson and several members of the Swedish nobility. A hush descends on the room as they walk in. The Vice Chancellor walks up on the stage with a big grin before addressing the audience.

"Last summer, the University was approached by Svea Mining Corp with an interesting proposal that at first glance, frankly seemed outlandish and unrealistic. As the Vice Chancellor, it is my duty to protect this fine institution from nonsense, and I was almost offended by the preposterous nature of the proposal itself. However, after several meetings and many visits, I do not regret having the honor of today announcing a new chapter in the history of our University. But before I get ahead of myself, I would like to introduce to you the pioneer behind all of this… Mrs. Sigrid Magnusson!"

Sigrid confidently walks up on stage. A successful **OBSERVATION** (add +1 if the player characters were able to get closer to the stage) and they will notice an oddness to her. She looks no older than 17 and supposedly came from no family or money, but carries herself with the confidence of a middle-aged noble woman.

It's as if she's able to spellbind everyone, perhaps even the player characters. She's extremely convincing and charming. Any **OBSERVATION** roll the player characters might attempt to determine if there's magic involved will suggest it's just her natural charisma.

"Since 1477, this University has been at the forefront of innovation and scientific discovery. Standing strong in the face of destruction and terror, She was always ready and willing to serve those of us who search for knowledge above all else.

Today, I stand before you to honor our sacred institution. Today, I ask you to see what the power of science, what the power of knowledge can bring to our people. Today, we make history. Today will mark a new era for not only science, but for Upsala. The Lion of the North shall roar again, claiming the respect it deserves from our European brethren, and upon a new golden age we shall together ascend!"

A group of assistants joins her on stage, rolling in a wheeled table with a Bunsen burner and a glass chemistry flask with a few small stones inside. *"This is the future,"* she says, and points towards the table. *"These rare minerals can be found in the depths of the Abisko Mine, and we've spent the last three years refining them."* She takes a stone from the lab flask and holds it up. The player characters immediately recognize it as the same type of gemstone that Franzibald carried and studied. *"While there is so much research yet to be undertaken, we have already discovered unprecedented properties and benefits. I shall now demonstrate."*

A young athletic man walks up to Sigrid. He takes off his shirt. A few men and women in the audience gasp as it would be considered quite improper during this time. The young man looks at Sigrid with the same adoration most of the people in this room seem to carry for her. She pats his chin lightly, the same way an owner would caress their pet. *"This brave young man has offered his body to science. For that, we all must be eternally grateful for his selfless act that will help us save so many. The potential is endless. You will see."*

The demonstration begins. Sigrid takes out a scalpel and uses it to cut the man right across the chest, blood streaming down his body. The audience gasps. He grimaces but puts a brave face on. *"Now, please sit down."*

The young man sits down on a chair. One of the other assistants straps him to it, placing his arms straight to the sides. Sigrid places the green gemstone back into the lab flask, and then carefully heats it in the flame of the Bunsen burner. As it starts to emit a green light, she picks up the flask with a pair of pliers, and holds it close to the young man's bleeding chest. As she does so, he starts screaming in pain and horror. The audience grows uncomfortable, some are standing up, horrified as more and more blood pours out from the open wound on the man's chest. Suddenly, a bright green light

fills the entire room and then the lab flask explodes with a sharp crack. Followed by silence.

"My God..." a man next to the player characters mutters, staring at the stage in disbelief. The young man, now unconscious, is still sitting in the chair. The gash that was once across his entire chest is now completely gone, even the blood. Sigrid walks up to him, pulls out some sort of smelling salt and holds it under his nose. He wakes up, pale and disoriented but a small smile eventually returns to his face. Several assistants help him off the stage, leaving a smug Sigrid behind. *"Impossible!"* the Vice Chancellor says, his eyes almost popping out of their sockets. *"Not impossible."* says Sigrid. *"Science."*

There's a stunned silence followed by uproarious applause.

COUNTDOWN AND CATASTROPHE

The first countdown event occurs at the ball, shortly after the demonstration.

1. The young man from the experiment, who's been surrounded by several fawning women from the social elite, suddenly collapses. Several people from Svea Mining Corp carefully escort his limp body out, as discreetly as they can but the ball guests all notice. Eventually, a man announces that the boy is alive and well but *"...as is company protocol, safety comes first and he will be sent to the hospital for additional monitoring."* This is enough to calm the majority of the attendees and the festivities continue. The player characters can sneak out and see the carriage that's being prepared to transport the boy. They can either roll **STEALTH** to overhear that the boy, whose name is John Karlsson, is actually being taken to the asylum, or bribe the coachman with **MANIPULATION** to learn the same thing.
2. During their investigation, the player characters can roll **VIGILANCE** to notice that they are shadowed by stern men in suits. They are sent by the Magnussons who have noticed that the player characters are meddling with their affairs, and want to know more about them. If the characters confront the men, they will try to rough them up and tell them to stay away from other people's business. They will not reveal who sent them unless caught and interrogated using **MANIPULATION**.

THE MAGNUSSONS' HENCHMEN

- Physique 4 Precision 3 Logic 2 Empathy 2
- **CLOSE COMBAT** 3 **RANGED COMBAT** 1 **STEALTH** 2
- Mental Toughness 1 Physical Toughness 2
- **EQUIPMENT:** Club

3. Several patients at the overcrowded asylum break out of their rooms and are able to escape the institution, before making it to the city center of Upsala where they wreak havoc while shouting about terrible beings "*...that surrounds us all!"* The player characters can witness this, and help out if they want.

CATASTROPHE

If the player characters fail to stop the patients of Upsala Asylum, either by convincing Sigrid that she must send aid or by trying to stop the patients themselves with force, the patients trigger riots as the police lose control and start arresting anyone who they deem suspect. Violence takes a temporary hold over Upsala, and several people are killed. Among them is Amanda Lorentz. Eventually, the authorities are able to calm the situation and the current supervisor, Niklas Frejd, is held responsible and faces a long prison sentence.

LOCATIONS

FRANZIBALD'S OFFICE

Franzibald's office is on the second floor of his old mansion and it's as eccentric as its former owner. Every inch of the walls and floor is covered with books and notes, and exotic pieces of furniture are haphazardly placed all over the small room. An enormous globe stands in one corner, a marble bust of a Roman emperor in another. From the ceiling hangs an enormous skeleton of what could either be a crocodile or possibly a dinosaur. A desk cluttered with burnt down candle sticks, ink pens, and papers stands in the middle of the room.

CHALLENGES

- As the player characters look for any useful information, one of them notices something on the floor right in front of a bookcase. It looks like a door has scraped against the floor there several times, creating scratches in the floor from the friction. If the player characters don't figure it out themselves, have them roll **INVESTIGATION** to reveal that the bookcase is probably part of a hidden door.
- A successful **STEALTH** or **FORCE** test, depending on how quiet they want to be, will help the player characters eventually open the secret door and reveal a gaping dark hole in the stone wall that leads down to a hidden dungeon (see below).

CLUES

- On the desk, there is the beginning of an article, entitled "The lack of transparency should concern us all!" Franzibald is calling out Upsala University for not being open about its dealings with Svea Mining Corp and the reopening of the Abisko Mine.
- On the desk, there is also an old newspaper clipping about the accident at the Abisko Mine which occurred 13 years earlier. See the adjacent sidebar (*Handout 2C*, also downloadable and found at the end of this book).
- In one of the desk drawers, there's a small box containing several gemstones of various kinds. A successful **LEARNING** will reveal that these are rubies, sapphires, malachite and quartz. Next to the box is a small notebook that lists all discovered gemstones, with small scribbles next to them saying "Not Working."

THE HIDDEN DUNGEON

Through the hidden door in Franzibald Hansen's office (see above), the player characters can only see the first few steps before it fades into darkness. A cold, musky breeze coming from somewhere deep below sends a chill down their spines. They need a light source to proceed.

The stairs take the group down, further and further down until they reach a dark corridor. It's very cold, and the air is humid and stale. Walking further, they eventually reach a doorway that leads to a larger room. With their light source, they will notice that there are several benches and what looks like an altar further ahead. A large, old chandelier hangs from the curved ceiling, covered in dust. It would appear that no one has been here for several years, perhaps decades. Strange-looking books lie everywhere. (See

OVER THIRTY DEAD IN ABISKO MINE ACCIDENT

At least thirty miners are missing and presumed dead after a powerful explosion in the iron mine at Abisko. The damage to the mine is described as total, and the operators comment that it will likely not be re-opened in the short term. Few details are available, but the accident occurred after a new mine tunnel was opened. An unknown green mineral is reported to have been discovered in the new tunnel. The nature of the mineral, and if it triggered the blast or not, is unknown.

Famous and Infamous Texts in the *Vaesen* core rulebook, page 93, for inspiration on books the player characters might find).

CHALLENGES

At a dramatically appropriate time, the door shuts behind the player characters. Shadows appear on the walls, creeping closer and closer. Suddenly, a dark and booming voice echoes through the entire room: *"WHO ARE YOU?"* Have everyone in the party roll a Fear value 1 test. The voice will continue to try to scare them, asking who they are, who sent them, why they are here, until the name Franzibald is mentioned.

A pause, and then small voices can be heard from one of the corners. *"They say they know Franzibald?"* the first voice says, a stark contrast to the terrifying, demonic voice that shook the entire room just moments ago. *"I told you they were not dangerous..."* answers another voice, this one lighter and female. *"Well, what did you want me to do? They were waking up little Scrooli!"* says the first voice. *"He was already awake! You should go talk to them..."* encourages the other. *"Talk to them? NOW? But... but..."*

A tiny creature steps out from the shadows, no bigger than a large rat, and he's wearing an elegant hat and a coat. He looks like a mix between a frog and a mouse but stands on two legs. *"Good morning! My name is Horn, and this is my wife Toss."*

Another tiny creature steps out, but she looks more like a hedgehog. She's carrying a small child who's currently staring at the player characters with curious eyes. These are vaettir, one of the most common vaesen that has co-existed with humans since the beginning of time. Read more on page 158 of the *Vaesen* core rulebook.

Horn and Toss will be extremely forthcoming when they find out the player characters were good friends with Franzibald. They will bring the characters an old jewelry box containing Franzibald's notebook. The player characters can use **STEALTH** to try to pick the lock. If they fail, they still manage to get the lock open but the notebook is damaged and only small pieces of information are left (up to your discretion).

CLUES

- In the lockbox, there are two small stones that have a slight green tint, but less bright than the one Franzibald carried around his neck. Using **LEARNING** or **INVESTIGATION**, the player characters can study the stones (see the text box on page 26 for a detailed description of them).
- Franzibald's notebook includes scribbles, notes and various theories about the stones that he's been gathering for years. See the text box on page 36 (*Handout 2D*, also downloadable and found at the end of this book).
- The notebook mentions the Vanadisir again – if the player characters didn't already do so, they may roll for **LEARNING** to recall that it is rumored to be a secret order during the Viking age, whose members claimed to be the descendants of the Norse goddess Freja. Franzibald's note suggests that the Vanadisir still exists today, and that Sigrid Magnusson was a member. If the player characters try to investigate the Vanadisir, they will find nothing now (the order will return later in the campaign).

FRANZIBALD'S NOTEBOOK

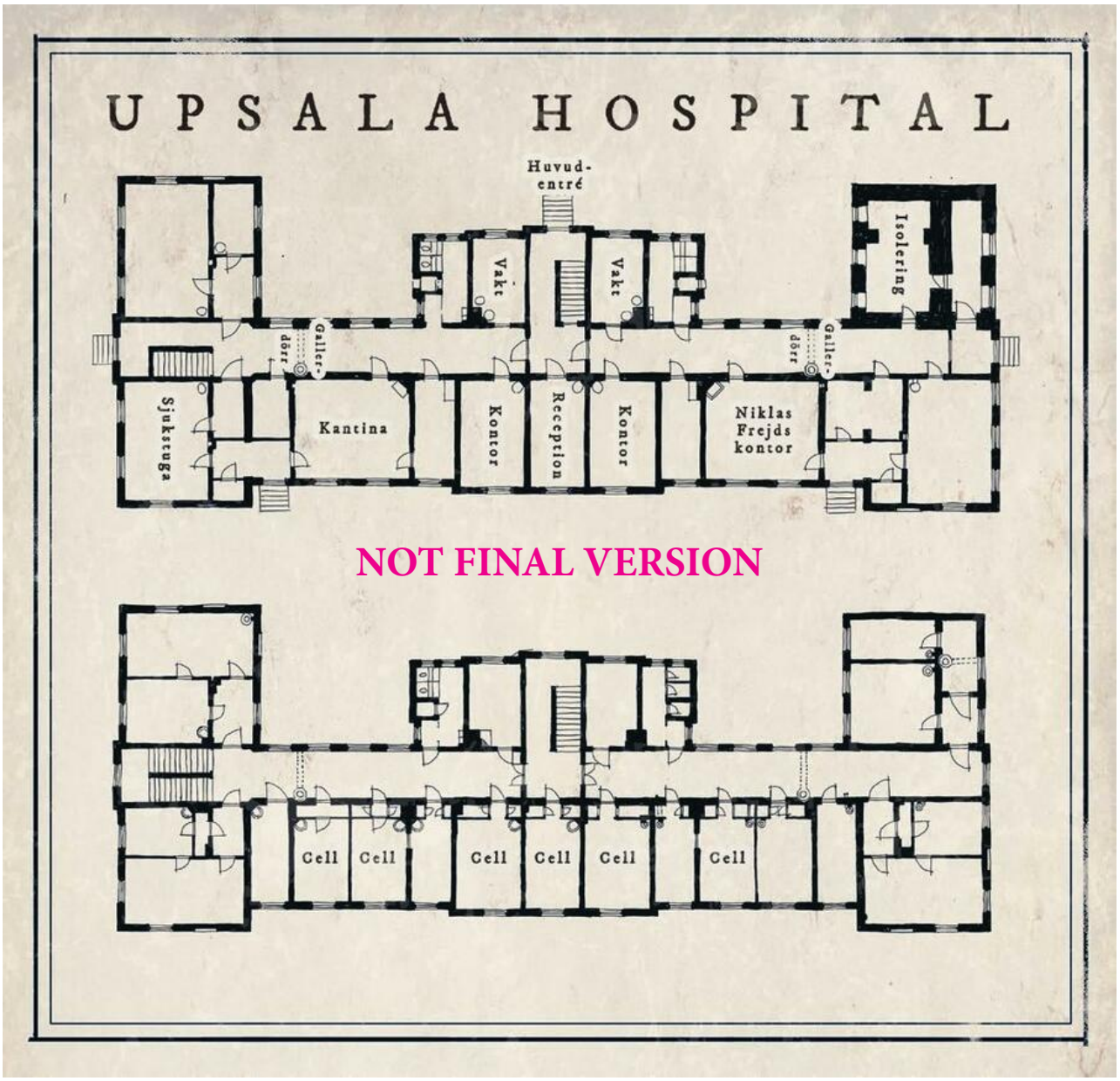
- The vaesen are attracted to the light of the gemstone. The stone activates whenever one is near. It seems like they are feeding off each other's energies.
- The stones seem almost biological, as if they were once part of something alive.
- I found a very interesting reference in *The Ballad of Vafthruthnir* in The Poetic Edda:
  Odin spake:
  "First answer me well, if thy wisdom avails,
  And thou knowest it, Vafthruthnir, now:
  In earliest time, whence came the earth,
  Or the sky, thou giant sage?"
  Vafthruthnir spake:
  "Out of Ymir's flesh, was fashioned the earth,
  And the mountains were made of his bones;
  The sky from the frost-cold giant's skull,
  And the ocean out of his blood."
- I understand now, the old verses hide a titanic truth, the stones hold the powers of creation of both man and vaesen, magic and mundane! I have a hard time sleeping. The stones keep me awake, poisoning my mind. The fools at the University do not understand the dangers.
- Humans were never meant to discover these. The stones are clearly binding the unseen world of vaesen with our world. The consequences can be dire. We must stop the mining operations in the North. I must gather people I can trust to help me.
- Sigrid Magnusson – member of the Vanadisir?
- I am being followed. Hide my research.

UPSALA ASYLUM

A description of this forsaken institution can be found on page 107 in the *Vaesen* core rulebook. All the windows are covered with metal bars to avoid anyone climbing in or out. In the distance, the sound of yelling mixed with hysterical laughter can be heard. As they enter, they find themselves in a big room which can be assumed to be the waiting area. It's dark in there despite a big chandelier hanging from the ceiling.

CHALLENGES

- There are several ways to gain access to the patients in the asylum. The player characters could use **STEALTH** and create some sort of a diversion, or use **MANIPULATION** or **INSPIRATION** to convince the front desk that they have a good reason to be allowed into the ward. The main challenge will be to avoid raising any suspicion or alerting the authorities. They could use their relationship with Linnea Elfeklint (page 83 in the core rulebook), who is a patient at the asylum, as an excuse to visit.



- **John Karlsson**, the young man who was used in the experiment lies unconscious in a bed. A nurse is tending to him. If the player characters want to, they can try to gather information either by talking to the nurse or looking at the young man's medical journal.
- **Amanda Lorentz** is unfortunately incoherent by the time the player characters get to her. Her eyes hollow, her hair in complete disarray, it would seem that she has lost her mind but a successful **OBSERVATION** and the player characters would recognize that she's suffering from being isolated for too long.
- **Niklas Frejd**, the general director of the asylum, is bought by Svea Mining Corp but he does not know that they are the ones bribing him. He stays in his office at the asylum, claiming he's too busy to talk with anyone.

CLUES

- Whether they convince the nurse to explain to them what happened to John Karlsson, or stealthily procure his journal, the player characters will learn that he is an orphan who had been working for Svea Mining Corp at the Abisko Mine and was already admitted to the asylum before he volunteered to be a test subject at the demonstration.
- A successful **MANIPULATION** roll will let the nurse slip that many of the latest patients had been working for Svea Mining Corp. She'll get visibly nervous if asked for more details, just that she's noticed that *"it's odd, many patients who have been working at the mine seem to be hallucinating, seeing strange creatures that don't exist."*
- Amanda Lorentz won't speak with the player characters at first, assuming they are pawns sent by the Magnussons. Unless they bring up Franzibald, she will continue to ignore them. Upon hearing the name Franzibald, Amanda will suddenly snap out of her apathy and aggressively try to grab one of the player characters, whispering hysterically *"He lied to me! He said he would help me! The stones are dangerous and he lied! Where is he! Why didn't he save me?"* Finding out that Franzibald is dead, Amanda will collapse to the floor, tears streaming down her face. *"Then we are truly doomed. They won."*
- If the player characters manage to speak with Niklas Frejd, he'll suggest that the uptick in recent patients is just *"seasonal, due to the autumnal darkness."* The player characters can roll for **OBSERVATION** to find out that he's lying. If **MANIPULATED**, he might break and tell the truth: *"Look, I'm just doing as I'm told. They ask us to admit someone here, and we do it. It's how it works, it's how it always works. It just seems like someone wants a lot of people admitted lately."* He won't tell them a word about Svea Mining Corp, genuinely confused by the question as he has no idea that they are the ones paying him.

NIKLAS FREJD

The person in charge of Upsala Asylum, Niklas Frejd is a lanky man with an absurdly large nose and a weird, unsettling smile. He's been accepting bribes ever since he took over the managing position almost a decade earlier, making sure anyone who's admitted to the asylum (whether they needed it or not) stayed in the asylum.

- Physique 1 Precision 4
  Logic 4 Empathy 1
- **RANGED COMBAT** 3
- Mental Toughness 2 Physical Toughness 1
- **EQUIPMENT:** Revolver

TYPICAL PATIENT

Some of the patients have been holed up in the asylum for several years, but most are newly admitted after working at the Abisko Mine. They all share the same haunted stare, as the building itself is draining them of their life force. Some may ramble about strange creatures coming to kill them. A **LEARNING** roll may make the player characters realize that the patients are actually describing vaesen. Some have scars on their foreheads, suggesting lobotomy has been performed on them. Others have bruises on their shaved skulls and arms, possibly from the various tools that have forced them to stay still during experiments.

- Physique 3 Precision 2
  Logic 2 Empathy 1
  CLOSE COMBAT 2
- Mental Toughness 1 Physical Toughness 2
- **EQUIPMENT:** —

CONFRONTATION

Sigrid Magnusson will pay a visit to Castle Gyllencreutz at some point after the player characters have gathered enough clues. Escorted by four very muscular bodyguards (equal in number to the players and with stats like the henchmen on page 33), she's sipping a cup of tea in the breakfast room when the player characters enter. The servants of Castle Gyllencreutz are all standing to the side, eyeing the bodyguards and their weapons.

Dressed in red with an elaborate hat, Sigrid's very beautiful. Her cold blue eyes will observe each one of the player characters as she slowly continues to sip her tea. Despite that, she will come off as pleasant and curious. She might take an extra interest in one of the player characters, even flirt with them depending on the mood. She knows that they knew Franzibald Hansen and offers her condolences upon hearing that the author passed. *"...He was an inspiration, truly. A colorful imagination and a way with words unparalleled when compared to anyone else I've read."* Have the player characters roll **OBSERVATION** against Sigrid's **MANIPULATION**. Only the player characters who pass will be able to ask questions, the others will be utterly and completely smitten by her. She only has good words to say about Franzibald. *"I know Franzibald did not always agree with me and my methods, but I always felt there was a mutual respect between us."* It will sadden her to hear that he had grown suspicious of Svea Mining Corp and she wished he would have just talked to her.

After initial pleasantries, Sigrid will start to ask them about their interest in the Abisko Mine and Svea Mining Corp, and the conversation will suddenly feel like an interrogation. The player characters get the sense that Sigrid might know what they've been up to. If the player characters aren't careful or too dismissive of her, she will start suspecting that they might be a threat to her. The main mission for this confrontation will be to convince Sigrid to send aid to the overcrowded asylum and avoid the Catastrophe (page 33).

If the player characters are able to charm her with **MANIPULATION**, she can also reveal the following:

THE VANADISIR

- *"Being part of Vanadisir was a fun pastime of mine before Eira, their leader, got consumed by her own self-importance. I am not a huge believer in organized religion, as you might have noticed since I am currently devoting my entire life to science..."* With a wink, she'll add, *"But don't tell the church that I said that!"*
- Sigrid will be vague about her time with the Vanadisir and slightly dismissive. *"I was young and usually quite intoxicated. All the strange things that happened might have been hallucinations. We were quite... careless during our ceremonies."* An **OBSERVATION** will reveal that she's definitely hiding something but that's all she'll say about it.
- If Lisa Johansson is mentioned, she'll act confused. *"Was that the girl who died in the forest? Such a terrible situation indeed. I left shortly thereafter."* If the players tell her that Lisa Johansson is still alive, she'll hide her surprise elegantly by sipping her tea.

THE PATIENTS AT THE ASYLUM

- She will act shocked if the players inform her that several critics of Svea Mining Corp have disappeared and that the asylum is on the brink of a collapse. *"It horrifies me to hear that. Constructive criticism is extremely important for scientific discourse. I want to help people, that's always been my main mission."*
- The player characters can try to convince her to send aid to the asylum in order to prevent more escapes and establish more humane conditions. This will prevent the Catastrophe from happening but also help the player characters build a relationship with Sigrid that will become useful later in the campaign.
- If the player characters manage to annoy Sigrid, she'll grow suspicious and assume that they are nothing but nosy and potentially useful fools or, if things go really bad (if they insult her or attack her), she'll see them as a threat to her operation. Regardless, the Catastrophe will be triggered if they fail to charm her.

Eventually, Sigrid bids farewell, and depending on her feelings towards the player characters, she'll decide to *"look into the matters regarding the asylum."* A couple of days later, the players will be notified that authorities have been able to calm the situation. While several patients were wounded, even the ones who were not aggressive or tried to escape, the public will find out how terrible and inhumane the conditions have been in the asylum. Reports, most likely leaked by the Magnussons, reveal that Niklas Frejd, the manager, locked himself inside his office during the entire confrontation and fled the scene, leaving his workers and patients behind to fend for themselves.

AFTERMATH

Niklas Frejd will be arrested for his mismanagement and the public will solely blame him, not Svea Mining Corp, for the disaster. The patients who were wrongfully admitted will be set free, however, many of them are permanently damaged from their time at the horrid place and will have a hard time continuing their lives. Amanda Lorentz will be one of them, unable to return to journalism after the treatment she received. She'll retire to the countryside, never to be heard from again.

The excitement and buzz about the Abisko Mine tapers down and Upsala slowly returns to being a regular student town, the need to "shut down critics" is less important to the Magnussons. They received the funding they needed, and the operations will continue in the north, far away from the public eye.

As winter arrives and with it, final exams, the town is once again distracted by more immediate matters. The player characters will have gathered important context and information about the key players of *The Lost Mountain* campaign but they now need to build up experience, resources and skills so they can eventually continue the investigation of the strange mine and its green stones.

CONTENT WARNING:
Death, Violence, Gore, Child Death

WHERE THE SUN DIES

AN ISLAND OFF the coast of northern Norway is in distress, and all previous rescue attempts have failed. As winter fast approaches, the authorities decide to hire a team of experts to discover the truth. What follows is one of the most dangerous missions the Society has ever embarked upon.

PRELUDE

BACKGROUND

On the remote island of Værøya in the northern part of Norway lies an old fishing village named Sørland. People have lived here for centuries, mostly minding their own business, trading with the few ships that pass by their little harbor.

Then everything changed. Industrialization brought new interest from the mainland. Værøya is part of the Lofoten archipelago and its location is now seen as the perfect site for a new trading hub. This hub would service all northbound trading vessels, as well as create access for tourists to enjoy the area's unparalleled beauty – its long white beaches and dramatic mountain peaks could even attract international travelers.

Sørland agreed to function as one of the North Atlantic trading ports and to pay appropriate taxes on condition that the village would be left largely alone regarding local matters. For decades, this

agreement was honored by both sides. With the exception of the construction of an inn for visitors, the people of Sørland went about their business. The people kept local affairs to themselves, visitors were tolerated, but no outsiders were allowed to settle in the village or stay for longer than a couple of weeks. Because there was a secret that the people of Sørland held close, a secret that must be shielded at all cost.

Every winter, she returns. The Lady of the Cold. A particularly powerful giant that despises the sun. For over a millennia, the island has been her domain and the humans who live there have been under her protection. She arrives with the winter and leaves when the sun returns. Each year, the islanders hold a Winter Solstice celebration in her honor, bringing her gifts and offerings in hope that she in return will bring good fortune for the year to come.

One of these offerings is in the form of a young man. Every spring, the Elders of Sørland choose a suitable boy and prepare him the entire year to join the Lady of the Cold. He will live in her chambers throughout the Winter, and be treated like a king, then go with her as she returns to sea the following spring. The chosen boys are never seen again, but it is considered to be the highest of honors. The islanders believe the sacrificed boys will be uplifted to a higher plane of existence. This has been the ritual for as long as anyone on the island can remember.

However, at the last celebration something went horribly wrong and the islanders were punished for it in the most horrific way. The chosen boy had fallen in love with another village girl. The Lady sensed this immediately, tore the boy apart and killed everyone at the ceremony by freezing them to death. She carried this wrath with her to the following year, when she returned to the island early, bringing with her unseasonably violent storms and freezing temperatures that have devastated Sørland. In September, Sørland stopped responding to all communication attempts. Concerned, Norwegian authorities sent a team to investigate aboard the naval corvette *Freja*. However, the ship never returned.

In early October, another much larger ship, the *Alexandria,* made an attempt to reach the island but, as it approached, the crew found a thick layer of ice blocking their way. They could not make sense of it, for it was too early in the year and the temperature had yet to fall below freezing. Winter was supposed to be at least two or three more weeks out. Puzzled, they turned the *Alexandria* around and plotted a return course, but after only a few miles, they found a small life boat drifting at sea that one of the crew recognized. The boat belonged to the *Freja*, the initial mission. It carried the corpse of a young man. His skin was so white it was almost translucent, and his face was frozen in a twisted grimace of terror. Whatever had happened to the boy, his last moments on Earth had not been peaceful.

As the *Alexandria* returned to the mainland with the troubling news, the authorities grew even more concerned and asked the police commissioner, Olof Dahl, to assemble a team of experts to get to the bottom of this. Given the dangerous nature of the mission, they have provided any resources necessary to hire the most competent crew and ice-breaker vessel available to forge a path to the island.

Suspecting Sørland might be dealing with something far worse than bad weather, Olof Dahl decides to contact the Society.

CONFLICTS

The main conflict is with the Lady of the Cold. The secondary conflict is with the surviving islanders. They refuse to give up their ways and traditions, and are willing to do anything to make sure the authorities do not find out the truth, including killing the player characters.

INVITATION

It is early November in Upsala. The trees are barren, the ground is covered by brown leaves and there seems to be a perpetual fog over the old student town, made worse by the new factory buildings that perpetually spew smoke from their chimneys.

It's been three weeks since the Ball at the University Hall. With winter approaching, the days grow short, the shadows grow darker. Updates from the Abisko mine and information about the aftermath have been frustratingly limited. The only real news is of continued reports of workers and scientists flocking to the North so they can be a part of this "great opportunity." When Norwegian Police Commissioner Olof Dahl comes calling at Castle Gyllencreutz and begs the assistance of the Society, it is a welcome distraction.

A serious man with dark circles under his eyes from lack of sleep, Olof is tall and skinny. It must have taken him over a week to travel this far but there's desperation in his eyes. *"Due to the delicate nature of this matter, I needed to speak to you in person,"* he begins.

"Despite several attempts, the island of Værøya and its port Sørland are no longer responding to our communication attempts. We've sent several rescue missions. What's worse, a corpse was found of a young man — frozen to death — that belonged to the initial rescue mission. I have been tasked to find the best people to get to the bottom of this. You will be generously rewarded. But I will need your answer soon. Time is not on our side."

After talking more with Olof, the player characters will find that he is not comfortable talking about vaesen or other mysterious beings, but he's pragmatic and that's why he approached them. He also makes it clear that this is highly confidential and the public must not know. The economy is too fragile, no rumors of missing ships or problems outside the coast of Norway can come out. Olof leaves almost immediately after talking with the player characters and will meet them again in the Norwegian coastal town of Bergen.

PREPARATIONS

The player characters can acquire an Advantage before leaving Upsala or in Bergen. In Upsala, the characters can discover that where they are going is extremely cold this time of year and buying weather appropriate clothing is necessary. Clothing can be bought in Norway too, but it would be more expensive. Værøya, the island they are sailing to, is above the Arctic circle and the sun won't rise. This is known as the polar night.

Additionally, they may find a diary by a British author named Andrew Lang in the Occult Library (if they have that Upgrade at Castle Gyllencreutz, see page 92 of the *Vaesen* core rulebook, otherwise the player characters may buy the book) with various articles on fairy tales and sagas from northern Scandinavia. The book would take a while to read but would be helpful to bring with them on their journey, as they won't have access to other libraries later.

THE JOURNEY

BERGEN

It is a cold November morning when a small ship leaves the harbor of Stockholm and sets sail for the coastal town of Bergen, Norway. The journey takes a week and is uneventful. Initially a Viking settlement, the city of Bergen used to be the capital of Norway and is an important trading port for the entire region. During this time, it's the second largest city in Norway. Bergen is known as "the city between the seven mountains" and is one of the most beautiful cities in the world, surrounded by mountains and fjords.

The player characters arrive in the afternoon. Rain is pouring down with gusts of harsh wind blowing in from the Atlantic Ocean. A massive ship, modern for its time, is docked at the harbor next to the player characters' ship, and its crew members are going back and forth carrying large crates. A stagecoach takes the player characters to *Det Hanseatiske Hotell*, a hotel in the middle of Bergen, where they are greeted by Olof Dahl. He spends very little time on pleasantries and leads the group to a private dining room, where they are fed.

"I understand that you must be tired from your journey but we are already behind schedule." Olof says. *"The days are growing shorter and shorter, and I fear you won't have any sunlight left by the time you reach Værøya. But it cannot be helped. These are dark, terrible times. Might as well get used to it."* The commissioner takes a sip from his drink. *"I need you to go up there, find out what happened, and bring any survivors to safety. Most importantly, and I can't stress this enough, make sure that the public does not find out if you witness any… irregularities. I don't need to know what you see, I just need it to be gone."*

Eventually, the door opens and a tall man walks in, built like a barrel, water dripping down from his long dark coat. He wears a captain's hat and a blue turtleneck sweater. A cigarette butt is resting at the corner of his mouth, completely drenched. *"Ah, Captain Harrock. Meet the rest of your crew."* announces Olof.

The captain is a boisterous man, accustomed to commanding others. He wastes no time dealing with the player characters. *"We'll set sail in one hour. The sea's been treacherous lately and I want no surprises if I can avoid it. My men are nearly finished with the load in. Provisions for three months, you said?"* Harrock looks at Olof. *"We'll become best friends or worst enemies by the end of it."* The captain smiles widely and pours himself a drink before heading out.

OLOF DAHL

A tall, lanky man with a prominent nose and dark circles underneath his green eyes. He has a thick mustache and wears a police uniform. While pragmatic and competent, he knows that he's out of his depth when dealing with *vaesen* and other mysterious events.

Olof assures the player characters that the large amount of provisions is just a precaution *in case* they get stuck throughout the entire winter. A successful **OBSERVATION** will reveal that he is quite anxious, and chances are quite likely that you'll get stuck up there. Or worse, you won't return at all.

The player characters have time to buy one item each in Bergen before they need to get on the ship. Olof watches them stoically as they board. *"Good luck. And stay warm."* the Police Commissioner says.

CAPTAIN HARROCK

Nearly two meters tall, Captain Harrock is an impressive sight. He claims to have seen all the seven seas and is not afraid to tell anyone about it who might listen. A fair captain, he cares deeply about his crew while still expecting them all to do their best when under his command. Built like a big brown bear, he wears his black beard trimmed and never leaves without his captain's hat.

- Physique 4 Precision 2 Logic 2 Empathy 4
- **RANGED COMBAT** 3 **CLOSE COMBAT** 5 **INSPIRE** 3
- Mental Toughness 2 Physical Toughness 3
- **EQUIPMENT:** Cutlass, revolver

ON THE SHIP

The ship, named *Miss Paulina*, is an impressive sight with a fortified hull designed to break through ice and withstand the harshest of conditions. Around 15 people are manning the ship plus the player characters and Captain Harrock. The player characters have their own cabins and the journey is quite comfortable, especially as the wind is favorable and the weather remains clear. During the first couple of days, the ship follows the gorgeous coastline of Norway. The further north they travel, the darker it gets and on the fifth day, the sun no longer rises above the horizon.

"Until spring, then..." Captain Harrock says, as he watches the eerie orange sky of the polar night and the last streaks from the fading sun. He takes a swig from his bottle and offers it to the player characters. Should they choose to accept, have them roll Physique. Failure means they'll take one physical condition from whatever terrible Scandinavian concoction the captain is drinking.

The player characters can spend their time reading, talking to the NPCs or otherwise preparing themselves for whatever is waiting for them on Værøya. If they brought a copy of Andrew Lang's diary with them, a successful **LEARNING** roll when reading it will reveal that the northern part of Norway is the home of giants. They will know that giants hate Christianity and other religious symbols, and some can be extremely violent against humans.

Every night, the crew share stories of their adventures from lands far far away. The sailors are superstitious and most believe in the existence of vaesen. Captain Harrock mostly tells everyone extremely inappropriate jokes and stories of women he's encountered, jokingly assuming they are all vaesen considering the state they always leave him in. If the player characters ask specifically about what might have happened at Værøya, the ship's medic, Dorotea Lukkonen, will speak up.

"The previous crew, they froze to death, no?" she says. *"I believe it's one of those mermaids. I once heard of a whole ship, larger than this, being lured into the lair of one of them ladies. Cold and ruthless, she dragged the men down and they all froze to death for daring to look into her eyes."* Her words have a chilling effect on the entire crew. No one says anything until, *"It could also be the Kraken?"* a young man pipes up. And it's as if a spell has been broken. Everyone starts roaring with laughter and the young man turns red.

"A Kraken, he says!" Captain Harrock wheezes. *"The boy's barely got any hair on his balls and he is already full of nonsense."* The mood significantly improves at the expense of the young man and stays that way for the rest of the evening.

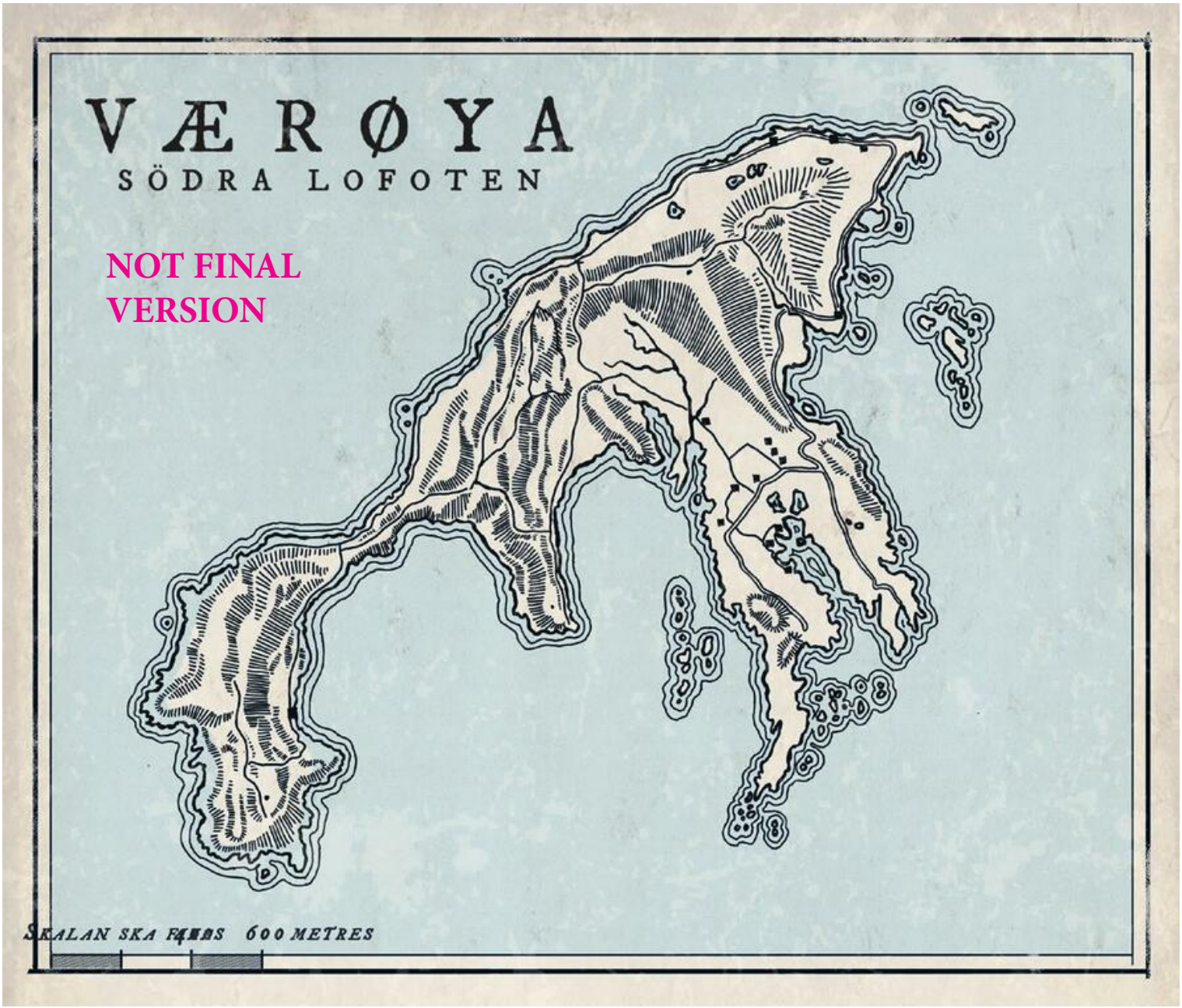
ARRIVAL

The player characters awaken on the seventh day of the trip noticing that something is wrong. The ship is not moving. When they get outside, they notice that they are surrounded by ice. In the orange and blueish darkened morning light from the absent dawn, they can clearly see the mountainous Værøya and the small village of Sørland, not very far away. *Miss Paulina*, though, is stuck. *"I wish I could have taken you further but it came from nowhere, this damned ice."* Captain Harrock mutters. *"We're about one kilometer from shore."*

The player characters can use skis to quickly get to Sørland's harbor, crossing the thick ice. Captain Harrock will stay with his crew on the ship. If the group believes they need reinforcement, they can choose one or two additional NPCs to join them unless the party is already full.

As they approach the village of Sørland, the first thing they notice is the stillness. Nothing is moving. It's as if everything is completely frozen and has been for years, creating a sense that there is a complete absence of life beneath the wintery landscape.

Built as an ordinary fishing village with boat houses and small wooden cottages lining the shoreline, there's a main street that leads towards a huge building further up the hill. The building looks like it's carved from the mountain itself and its structure is similar to a Viking longhouse. A successful **LEARNING** will reveal that this is an ancient temple, dating back as far as the early Bronze Age.



A chilling gust of wind brushes by, whisking some of the snow away from the rooftops and the air is now full of ice particles that drift slowly to the ground. As they leave the docks and enter the main street of Sørland, the group will get the distinct feeling that they are being watched. With a successful **VIGILANCE** check, the player characters can briefly get the sense that someone is looking at them through the window of the nearest boathouse, but when they turn to look, there's nothing there.

DOROTEA LUKKONEN, MEDIC

"Never encountered a patient I couldn't help, outside the ones that died of course."

- Physique 2 Precision 3
  Logic 4 Empathy 1
- **MEDICINE** 4 **VIGILANCE** 3 **OBSERVATION** 3
- Mental Toughness 3 Physical Toughness 2
- **EQUIPMENT:** Medical tools

LIEUTENANT HARALD LIDEN, SOLDIER

"I simply cannot trust a man who does not know how to wield a sword."

- Physique 4 Precision 4
  Logic 1 Empathy 2
- **CLOSE COMBAT** 4 **RANGED COMBAT** 4
- Mental Toughness 2 Physical Toughness 3
- **EQUIPMENT:** Rifle, sword, dagger

MARCUS VON SYDOW, PASTOR

"If there is no God, at least I still have my pottery. My only joy before I start to rot in the endless darkness of nothingness."

- Physique 1 Precision 2
  Logic 4 Empathy 4
- **INSPIRATION** 4 **MANIPULATION** 4
- Mental Toughness 3 Physical Toughness 2
- **EQUIPMENT:** Holy cross, vial of holy water

COUNTDOWN AND CATASTROPHE

This countdown is meant to help you push the story forward and set up the final confrontation with The Lady of the Cold.

1. At some point after gathering some clues, perhaps after they've investigated the cabins near the water, have the player characters roll for **VIGILANCE**. If successful, they will notice fresh footsteps in the snow. The footsteps belong to a group of humans and lead towards the town square. As the player characters continue to investigate, five men emerge from one of the alleys and attack with wooden oars. Combat ensues. The men attacking are part of the original rescue team and are desperate and terrified. They can be calmed by **INSPIRATION** or **MANIPULATION** and give up if one of them is Broken. Upon finding out the player characters are there to help them, they lead them to the abandoned inn where they've been sheltering since they arrived several months ago (page 51).
2. When the player characters are at the inn, there's a sudden knock on the door. After a few tense moments, the familiar voice of Captain Harrock can be heard. *"Let me in! We're in trouble!"* he shouts angrily and starts to swear about the cold. Captain Harrock tells the player characters about a sudden drop in temperature and that something large is moving out there. *"I thought it was a ship but that didn't make any sense… it's all frozen. It's so dark that I can barely see my left hand. Anyway, my men are setting up camp near the docks. You're welcome to stay with us but it's a lot warmer in here… although there seems to be something wrong with the fire?"* That's when everyone notices that the flames in the fireplace have suddenly turned small and blue, barely radiating any heat. Everyone can see the steam of their breath, as the temperature rapidly falls. Suddenly, a loud peal of thunder sounds in the distance, then another…and another… drawing closer each time. *"She's here…"* someone whispers. A successful **VIGILANCE** roll will inform the players that this is not the sound of thunder but of the footsteps of

something massive. Then, they hear an ancient, melancholy song that settles on their heart and sends a chill up their spine. Mesmerized by the ethereal song, everyone's completely still as the Lady of the Cold approaches. Unless the player characters do something to attract her attention, she won't notice them and will disappear up the hill. With a risky **STEALTH** roll, they can peek out the door and see her for themselves. However, should they fail, they will accidentally make a small sound and the Lady stops and attacks.

3. Everyone who was still outside when the Lady came up from the sea is completely frozen, presumably dead. Their bodies are scattered around the docks, some of them looking like they were trying to crawl away, their faces stuck in twisted grimaces of soundless screams. Captain Harrock is furious when seeing the chilling death of his men (they are not actually dead, see Confrontation) and insists on trying to kill the Lady of the Cold. He argues that it falls in line with the original mission, to remove the threat behind this whole situation. With or without the help of the players, the captain will make his way up to the temple and try to slay the Lady.

CATASTROPHE

Should the player characters fail to confront the Lady of the Cold, everyone on the island will die and the island of Værøya will forever be subject to strange weather patterns that will make new settlement impossible. The whole region will be avoided by future sailors as it will be considered to be under a mysterious curse. *"Something evil in those waters would drag us down to the dark depths of the world."*

LOCATIONS

BOATHOUSES AND CABINS

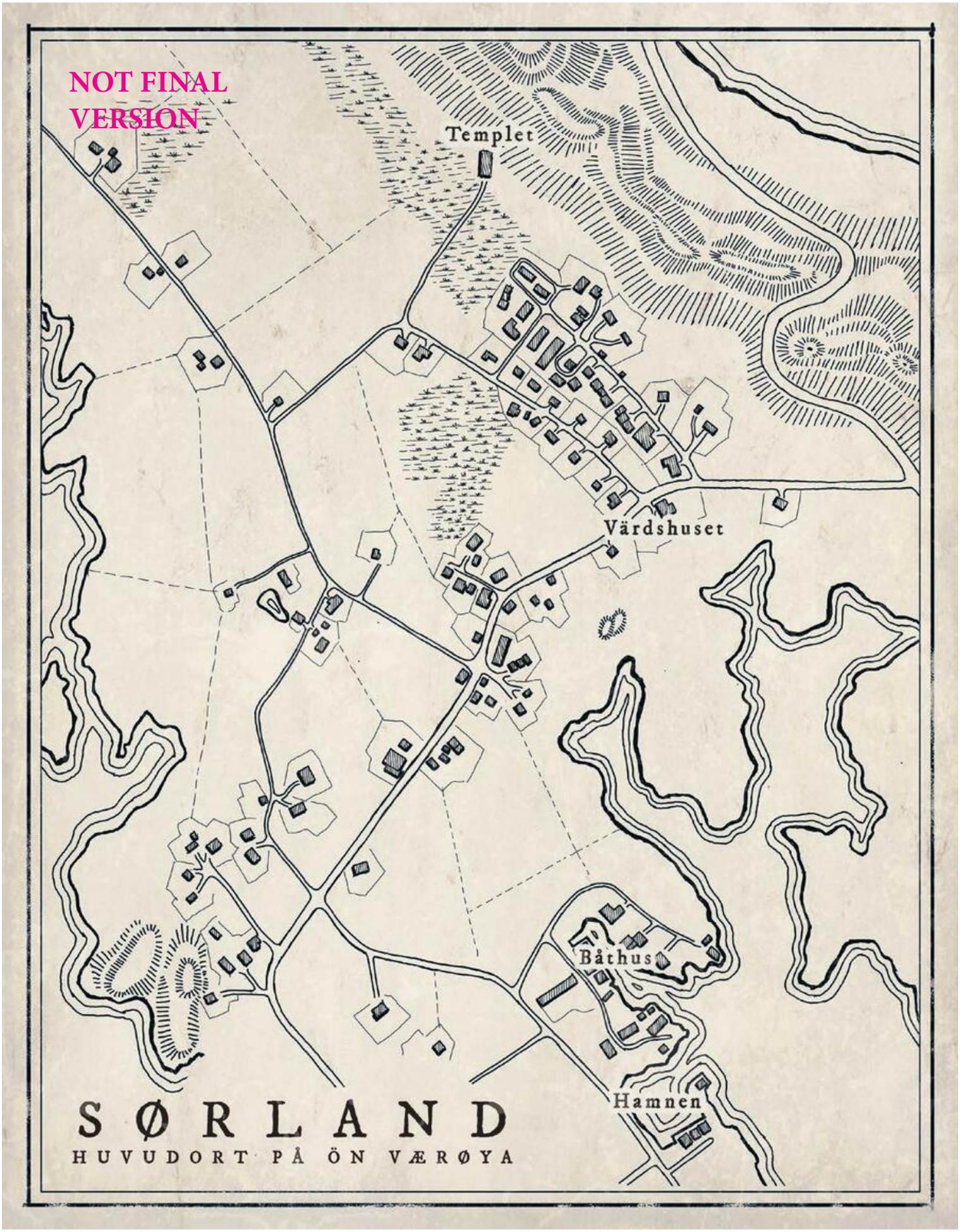
Built to withstand the salty and humid winds of the Atlantic Ocean, the houses are painted brown and made from the wood of fir trees. Several of them have decorative patterns carved into the eaves, resembling snow crystals and flakes. Most of the cabins and boat houses are abandoned and locked up, but can be easily lock-picked or opened with brute force.

CLUES

- All houses have more of the strange, decorative symbols inside. A successful **LEARNING** will inform the player characters that these are religious symbols. There are runes written in Old Norse which translate to "The Cold We Celebrate."
- Food scraps and dishes are left on the tables in many of the houses, as if whoever lived there had left in a hurry.
- Let the player characters roll **VIGILANCE** in one dark cabin. If successful, they will hear whimpers and shushing. Following the sound, they will start to hear a weak female voice singing a lullaby. In the corner, they will find a young mother and her infant. Both of them have hollowed eyes as if they've starved for weeks. *"Please don't tell anyone that we're here."* the mother pleads. *"Please. We did everything we thought was right, everything to please her… but she punished us all. And now they are all gone. Please, I am so hungry."*

  After talking to the woman, the player characters notice that the woman is repeating the same sentence over and over and the way she and her baby moves seems strangely repetitive. On a successful **VIGILANCE** roll, one of the player characters notices that there's a creak in the floorboard and looking down, they'll notice there's a hidden hatch. The woman continues to sing for her child, no longer paying any attention to the player characters.

  Underneath the hatch lies the remains of a woman and a small child. Based on their decay, they must have been there for several months. The ghost of the woman is suddenly standing next to the player characters, looking at her own corpse. *"Rest now, my love,"* she whispers to her child as she slowly starts to fade away. *"We don't have to be hungry any longer."*


NOT FINAL VERSION
Templet
Värdshuset
Båthus
Hamnen
SØRLAND
HUVUDORT PÅ ÖN VÆRØYA

THE INN

What was once a cozy, welcoming inn is now in shambles. All the windows have been boarded up. Broken furniture lines the walls. There's a rotten stench of unwashed bodies. There's a fireplace with embers, radiating some heat.

Five survivors from the naval corvette *Freja* have taken shelter here. They are hungry, desperate, and terrified. The player characters notice a pile of something that looks like human limbs.

"We've been starving." one of the men says, defeat and desperation in his voice. All five of them are looking down. *"We didn't know if anyone would come for us. This was the only way."* He points towards the pile. *"Only the ones who were already dead. Who she had already killed. We were desperate…"* He starts to sob and sits down.

CLUES

- The survivors tell the player characters that there's a monster that's killed most of their crew, and the only reason they've been able to survive is because they've been hiding in here. The monster arrives every night and leaves every morning. *"It's the Devil… it calls for us with that terrible song."* Some of the men break down again, holding their ears as if to block out any more sound.
- After a few weeks of being stranded, they were suddenly attacked by a group of what they presumed to be villagers. *"They were calling us intruders and said that we must die. We managed to capture one of them. He's mostly rambling, we can't make sense of it. He's in there…"* They point to one of the side rooms.
- The villager is an old man with a white beard. Similar to everyone else, he looks like he hasn't had a meal for weeks. A toothless smile plays on his lips and his eyes are glazed over with madness. *"She's a god. The Lady of the Cold. Without her, everything breaks, you see."* His smile broadens. *"The boy was not pure of heart. We did the ritual, as we always do, but the boy was not pure. That is the only explanation. She can see through that, oh yes, she can."* He starts laughing maniacally and an **OBSERVATION** roll will tell the player characters that he has given them everything he knows.
- After the Lady of the Cold has appeared (see *Countdown*), the player characters can roll a **LEARNING**. With the clues they've gathered, they would be able to guess that this is a powerful giant. All giants are sensitive to Christian symbols (crosses, holy water) and can be killed like humans.

SURVIVOR

- Physique 3 Precision 3
  Logic 1 Empathy 2
- **CLOSE COMBAT** 3 **RANGED COMBAT** 3
- Mental Toughness 1 Physical Toughness 1
- **EQUIPMENT:** Oar (club)

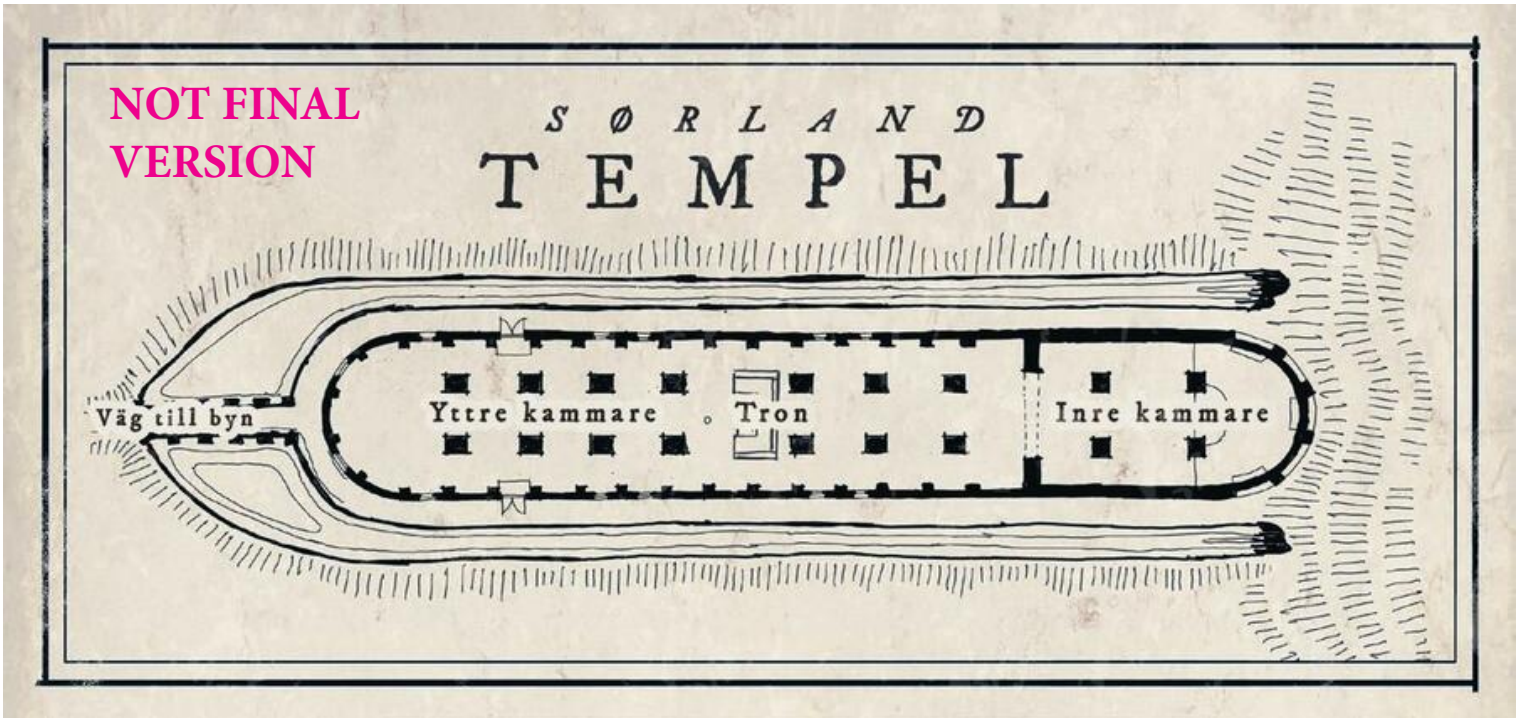
THE TEMPLE

The temple is built like a Viking longhouse and connects to the mountain behind it. Due to the frozen landscape, it's almost impossible to tell where the temple ends and the mountain begins. The temple contains one large main room, the Great Hall. At its center is a huge throne that would fit ten full-grown men. Runes and wood-carvings decorate the walls, depicting various versions of a tall being and her worshipers.

If the player characters investigate the temple after the Lady of the Cold arrives, they will find her sleeping on the throne, causing the earth to tremble with her loud snores. They need to make **STEALTH** rolls to investigate the temple without waking her.

CLUES

- The drawings on the wall all depict the same thing and a successful **LEARNING** will confirm that this being is related to the seasons. One image shows clearly how she brings with her the cold and leaves a warm, lush landscape behind when spring arrives. Based on the drawings, the Lady of the Cold and her worshipers seem to live in a relatively peaceful symbiosis and experts on vaesen know that this is quite common. Vaesen and humans have been able to co-exist since the beginning of time.



- Further into the Great Hall, there are over fifty people scattered all over the room, completely frozen. These are the villagers. Their faces depict their final moments of terror. No one expected the Lady of the Cold to do this to them.
- Right in front of the throne is the frozen shape of a kneeling young woman, covered in a dark liquid and she's holding on to something. Upon further investigation, the player characters will realize she's covered in blood and in her arms is the dismembered torso of a young man. His head and legs can be found a few meters away.

CONFRONTATION

The Lady of the Cold is powerful, cruel and can not easily be reasoned with because she feels betrayed by the islanders. The player characters can try to reason with her or make a deal with her. As always, great ideas should always be rewarded.

There is a significant risk that combat erupts. Let the players roll for **LEARNING** to realize that the Lady of the Cold is sensitive to fire and Christian symbols, if they don't realize this on their own.

If the Lady of the Cold is Broken, she falls backwards, letting out a shriek of pain and anger. As she hits the ground, her body shatters like stone. The impact of her fall creates a shockwave over the entire island. If the player characters search the body, they will find an uncut emerald green gemstone where her heart should have been. Making a successful **LEARNING** roll, they will immediately recognize the stone as the same type that Franzibald Hansen was studying.

If the Lady of the Cold is defeated, her curse is broken and everyone who was frozen comes back to life. At first there's silence outside, followed by a couple of whimpers of shock and disbelief as the villagers get readjusted to the new reality. Eventually, excitement and joy fills the room when it dawns on the villagers that they've been given a second chance at life. Everyone starts celebrating, except for the girl in the front who's cradling the severed body of the boy she loved.

AFTERMATH

After a couple of days with warmer temperatures, the people of Sørland are able to slowly find their footing again and clean up the mess their deity caused. Funerals are being held for the people they've lost. Repairs are made to the dock and the inn. Captain Harrock with his crew brings over the food from his ship and several impromptu celebrations ensue, as everyone's very grateful to the player characters and their help.

After a few days, it's time to leave. They player characters have managed to solve the mystery while saving the island and will be satisfactorily rewarded upon returning to the mainland. Besides, the villagers seem to have completely abandoned the idea of the Lady of the Cold.

As they board the *Miss Paulina* and say their goodbyes, all the villagers have gathered around the dock. Dressed in black, they all watch the departure with a curious expression. The player characters will be able to see the villagers right up until they disappear over the horizon, just standing there. Observing them. Odd, one might say. But probably best not to dwell on it too much.

THE LADY OF THE COLD

An old being who has roamed the northern part of Norway for hundreds of years, the Lady of the Cold is a giant, a particularly strong and powerful giant that the villagers have created their own mythology around.

Standing taller than a building, she is dressed in translucent fabric that seems to flow around her slender body, her white hair cascades like a waterfall from her head to the ground. Her eyes are completely white and her lips are blue. The Lady is possessed of an unearthly beauty and a voice that is at once sweet and terrible. A most ethereal and pleasant sound, her voice, carries for miles and is unlike any voice on land. But with it comes the cold.

While other giants would live together in their own communities, the Lady of the Cold keeps mostly to herself except during the winter months, when the sun no longer rises above the horizon. The solitude has turned her into a cruel, punishing soul and she's easily angered. She feeds on the attention and worship of the humans.

Similar to other giants, she hates Christianity and any other religion that would compete for her attention. Her narcissism can be used against her. Should the player characters be able to offer her something she truly desires, she could potentially be reasoned with. As a powerful sorceress she can cast both enchantments and curses and anyone who meets her gaze for too long will freeze to death.

The Lady of the Cold has stats as per page 134 in the *Vaesen* core rulebook, but can also cast Curses, specifically **DEADLY COLD** (page 119 of the rulebook). Like all giants, Christian symbols weaken her – a player character who displays such a symbol in the same zone and makes an **INSPIRATION** roll will inflict a Condition on the Lady of the Cold. Direct sunlight destroys her immediately.

CONTENT WARNING:
Drugs, Violence, Kidnapping

THE PRINCE AND THE WITCH

THE PLAYER CHARACTERS find themselves in the middle of a celebratory Upsala. Happy, intoxicated students are everywhere, celebrating the return of spring. But they are once again dragged into a new mystery, this time involving a strange prince who is said to live in an enchanted castle.

PRELUDE

Lisa Johansson is briefly brought back into this adventure, to remind the player characters of the main mystery of *The Lost Mountain Saga* campaign. If she is not tied already into one of the player characters' backstories, the person with the highest Empathy will have encounters throughout the mystery where they can see her or feel her presence.

BACKGROUND

Valborg. The return of spring. An ancient celebration that symbolizes reawakening and renewal. In English, the celebration would be translated to Walpurgis and it is celebrated on the last day of April every year. Bonfires are lit and people gather to listen to speeches and songs welcoming spring and a brighter future. In Upsala, the celebration is huge. People from all over the country flock to the student town to experience a night of booze and decadence.

Amongst those who celebrate, there's *Vanadisir,* a secret order that claims to be the descendants of the Norse goddess Freja (page 5). Additionally, they claim that Valborg used to be the blót (sacrifice) for Freja and every year they hold their celebration next to the Royal Mounds of Old Upsala, where the Temple

at Upsala used to be located. The Temple was considered the most important place of worship during the Viking age and the sacred ground still carries memories of the old gods.

The current leader of the Vanadisir, Eira, used to wear a golden necklace with a green gemstone. She told the order that it was the *Brísingamen*, an invaluable ancient artifact the Norse goddess Freja was said to have worn, crafted by dwarfs and imbued with magical powers. However, Eira claimed that it was stolen from her by a man in the beautiful forest close to the Royal Mounds. It is rumored that this man lives in an enchanted castle only the worthy can find, and there he hoards treasures upon treasures he has stolen from lost travelers.

What actually happened was that Eira, consumed by the idea of herself as a true sorceress for Freja, found out that a lindworm and his lair was rumored to be located in that forest. She set out to find it, kill it and eat its flesh so she could consume its magical powers and become a true völva (sorceress in Old Norse). The lindworm saw through her plan, however, and tricked her into giving up all of her possessions before banishing her from his realm.

Eira, with her pride heavily wounded, furiously told her version of the incident to her followers and led several of them to find the lindworm again, to retrieve the Brisingamen and put an end to his reign. Unfortunately, none of them returned because the angered lindworm manipulated them all into staying with him, virtually turning them into his slaves.

Mikaela Haraldsdottir, a devout member of the Vanadisir and very loyal to Eira, is starting to get worried. She turns to the player characters as she knows they will be actual experts that could help both the Vanadisir and also bring back Eira and her missing followers.

THE BRISINGAMEN

Whether the necklace Eira carries is the actual artifact from the Norse goddess Freja (it's not), Brisingamen was a brilliant golden necklace and similar to all the treasures of Norse mythology, it was created by the dwarves, the master craftsmen. Freja was instantly attracted to the necklace when the dwarves presented it to her and she offered both gold and silver to purchase it. However, the dwarves refused her money. Instead, they said that they would only give her the Brisingamen if she spent a night with each of them. Apparently, she agreed.

CONFLICTS

The main conflict is between the missing members of Vanadisir and the lindworm. The secondary conflict is between Eira and Mikaela Haraldsdottir. Mikaela has started to realize that Eira might not always be telling the truth.

INVITATION

The player characters find themselves at the great Valborg bonfire next to the Royal Mounds of Upsala. Intoxicated students are everywhere. It is, after all, the one day of the year where people completely let loose and embrace their inner chaos. The winter that just passed was particularly harsh and dark, not just for the player characters, and for many it felt like it lasted for years. So, when the warmth returned in late April, everyone decided that this year, the Valborg celebration should be extra special. But it ended exactly like it usually ends – drunk students everywhere, people making out with people they shouldn't, and several messy fights.

ROYAL MOUNDS OF OLD UPSALA

Dating back to the 5th and 6th centuries, the Royal Mounds of Old Upsala have been shrouded in mystery for generations. Confirmed to be the burial sites of legendary kings, they are located north of Upsala close to where the old Norse temple used to be – the most sacred and important religious site during the Viking age. The ground oozes of spirituality and memories of a great dynasty long gone.

At a less intense part of the celebration, the player characters and other people have gathered around a dancing performance consisting of ten beautiful women. They move erratically but gracefully, their white flowing dresses creating an ethereal, magical and seductive show, enchanting the viewers. At the end of their performance, each woman walks up to a different audience member and starts whispering in their ear. Some of them are offering drinks of an unknown liquid. Many people play along, figuring that it's just part of the performance. Others, especially single men, let themselves be led away by the beautiful women followed by cheering from their peers.

A short woman with long, dark hair and big beautiful brown eyes walks up to the player characters. *"Come celebrate with us! The Lady is about to be reborn. It is a joyous occasion, indeed. Come!"* The girl is quite charming an you should encourage player characters to just go along with it. They can roll for **OBSERVATION** to learn that she seems harmless.

She leads the party through the forest along a torch-lit path. They walk far, until the player characters suddenly find themselves surrounded by several beautiful men and women who are walking alongside them, humming. It feels good, it feels magical. Not threatening. Eventually, there's a clearing where more men and women are waiting. A fire in the middle is surrounded by beautiful flower arrangements, various luxury items such as chocolates, perfumes, fresh fruits, jewelry. A white horse stands there in the clearing, munching on apples. A half-naked man appears and offers the player characters some wine and a pipe.

A successful **LEARNING** and they would all know that it's just regular tobacco. The players can continue to roll **OBSERVATION**, but nothing will suggest that they is in any danger. However, the longer they stay, the more the player characters will be drawn into the proceedings. There's a force pulling them in, spiritual in nature, that's very hard to resist. Eventually, the short dark-haired woman starts to chant.

"Lady of fire. Lady of love. We welcome your strength. We welcome your courage. Bless us with renewal! Bless us with spring! Let us join you in Sessrúmnir, In the mountains of Folkvangr... When it is our time! Our lady, Our Vanadis. We are the Vanadisir. Accept our sacrifices. Grant us your love!"

It's hypnotizing and everyone loses their sense of time. The chanting continues, creating a vibration in the ground and it's almost as if the forest starts whispering it as well, amplifying it. Everyone should roll **FORCE**. Those who fail fall into a peaceful sleep and wake up the next morning, rested and happy. Those who succeed manage to stay awake. They will witness the sacrifice of the horse. Despite the brutal nature of the killing, it seems relatively peaceful. People fall to their knees, tears streaming down their faces as they enter some sort of trance. *"Thank you! Thank you!"* they shout to the gods.

The player character with the highest Empathy will notice a shadow observing them in the forest but as they turn to look, the shadow is gone. It's completely up to the group how they want to continue to engage with the ritualistic celebration of Freja. Eventually, they will all fall asleep.

The next morning, despite sleeping on the ground, everyone will feel energetic and rested. The young woman who brought them there in the first place is sitting next to them, waiting for them to wake up. *"Good morning! I'm Mikaela,"* she says cheerfully, offering all of them coffee, water and fresh fruit. *"I immediately recognized you, when I saw you in the crowd. You're from Castle Gyllencreutz!"*

Mikaela's eyes are full of admiration and excitement. She tells the player characters that her father had always spoken well of the helpful people of the Society. *"I know of... well, you know,"* she says in a low voice, referring to the Sight. *"I need your help. You see, a few months ago, our leader Eira was attacked by an evil man in this forest. He stole from her. Then, she and several members of our group went out to find him, to get justice. However, they have not returned and I worry something terrible has happened."*

MIKAELA HARALDSDOTTIR

Not someone who most people would pay a lot of attention to, the mousy Mikaela is a curious and studious young woman who has ambition to one day become a nurse. With brown hair and large brown eyes, she was invited to the Vanadisir through her much more outgoing sister Elsa and felt instantly at home surrounded by inspiring women and people who were devoted to the feminine power of Freja.

- Physique 3 Precision 2
  Logic 1 Empathy 2
- **MEDICINE** 4 **CLOSE COMBAT** 2
- Mental Toughness 2 Physical Toughness 1
- **EQUIPMENT:** Medical supplies

Mikaela says that the attack happened a two day's walk north of this location and the man is tall and beautiful but manipulative. *"He calls himself the Prince. Rich, haughty and believes he's better than everybody else, but he's nothing more than a thieving snake. The Brisingamen. The most important artifact of Freja that Eira had been trusted to carry forth to the next generation. He took it. And then he took my sisters."* She starts to tear up. *"I cannot understand why he would do that."*

Mikaela says that Eira told her she had been attacked, unprovoked, during one of her walks in the forest. However, an **OBSERVATION** will reveal that Mikaela believes that there is more to the story. There's something she's not saying.

Mikaela describes Eira. A short, energetic lady in her 70s with short white hair and green eyes. She leads the Vanadisir with determination and a fire many younger people would envy. Mikaela insists that she should come with the party, as she knows her way through the forest and it's her leader that's missing. Whether the player characters agree or not, she will join them on the journey.

LISA JOHANSSON: The players may recognize the name Vanadisir from their horrifying encounter with Lisa Johansson at the end of the first Mystery of The Lost Mountain Saga. If the players have forgotten, you can let them roll **LEARNING** to recall the name. If they ask Mikaela about this, she has no idea what it means, nor does she know anyone by that name. Mikaela has only been a member for a few years however, so it might be someone from before her time.

SIGRID MAGNUSSON: The players may also recognize the Vanadisir from Franzibald Hansen's notebook, where he suggested that Sigrid Magnusson is or was a member. Mikaela can confirm this – Sigrid Magnusson was a member of the order but that was a long time ago. She had some kind of falling out with Eira about ten years ago, and left the order. Mikaela doesn't know what the conflict was about, Eira didn't want to talk about it.

PREPARATIONS

After their meeting with Mikaela, the player characters can return to Castle Gyllencreutz and prepare. As usual, they can gain an Advantage. Clues they can gather at Gyllencreutz are:

- The part of the forest that the incident would have happened at has never been a kingdom, and is definitely not one currently. That the man refers to himself as Prince would mean something else, possibly a vaesen that can enchant its surroundings or that it refers to its lair as a kingdom.
- A **LEARNING** roll can let the player characters deduce that when Mikaela referred to the Prince as a "snake," there might have been a more literal meaning behind that. Several vaesen can resemble or even be snakes, such as the sea serpent, the lindworm, and the dragon.
- Studying the area they are going to, they know that it used to be an ancient spiritual ground during the Viking Age. It would make sense that vaesen activity might be more prevalent there. Several people have gone missing in that forest over the years, and it would be wise to bring a map or even an experienced guide.

JOURNEY AND ARRIVAL

Once again, the party will return to Old Upsala and pass the Royal Mounds as they enter the deep, dark forest to the north.

It's early in the morning, mist is rising from the moss-covered ground and everything's absolutely still. The forest is inviting but haunting at the same time as the mist playfully dances around the player characters.

Mikaela Haraldsdottir meets them by the mounds, insisting that she should come with them. It's up to the player characters to decide whether they want to bring her along, however, they get the distinct feeling that if they don't bring her with them she'll go alone and potentially put herself in danger.

If the player characters proceed without Mikaela, they need to roll **INVESTIGATION** to find each location. On a failed roll, they still get there but get lost along the way and must each roll for **FORCE** or suffer a physical condition as they stumble through the deep woods.

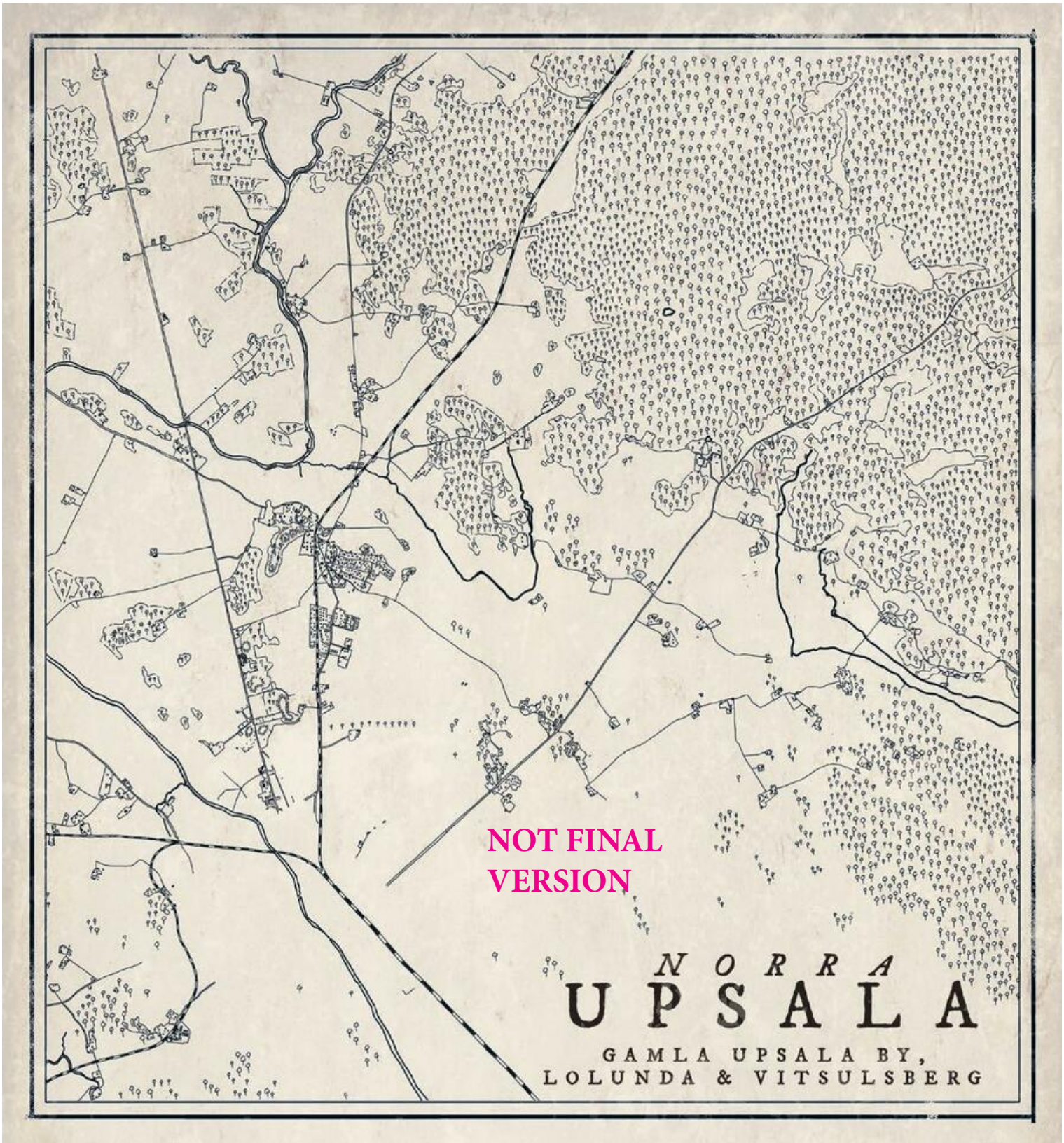
COUNTDOWN AND CATASTROPHE

Use the below Countdown events to increase the tension as the player characters make their way through the old forest toward the castle of the lindworm.

1. The player character with the highest Empathy will once again get the distinct feeling that someone or something is watching them. A shadow moves in the corner of their eye but when they turn to look, it's gone.
2. The same player character will hear a whispering voice, in a strange ancient tongue. The character must make a Fear test against Fear value 1. On a successful **OBSERVATION** roll, the character realizes that the voice is that of Lisa Johansson, saying the same thing as during their encounter in the mine at Falun. If they don't already know what it means, the character can roll **LEARNING** to understand the Old Norse: *"The stones are for the gods, not for men. The Vanadisir must die!"*
3. During the visit to the lindworm's castle, the lindworm speaks directly to this character, whispering in their ear without the others hearing it. This is an **ENTHRALL** Curse (page 119 in the core rulebook). If the character is enthralled, it becomes a servant of the lindworm (page 62).

CATASTROPHE

Each day the characters stay with the lindworm without resolving the situation, they will all be subjected to an **ENTHRALL** Curse. If all of the characters are Enthralled, they become the servants of the lindworm indefinitely. Unless Mikaela or someone from the Vanadisir or the Society saves them, they will be lost in the forest forever.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LOCATIONS

This Mystery is relatively linear and the player characters will visit its three locations in the order below, as they make their way through the mystical forest. You can use Mikaela or later Hedvig to nudge the player characters in the right direction if they get distracted.

VIKING STONE FORMATION

In the forest, the party reaches a small gorge with steep cliffs on both sides, creating a narrow passage they have to squeeze through. On the other side of it, several boulders are lying in a strange formation creating a maze-like path.

CLUES

- There are several rune stones scattered among the boulders. A successful **LEARNING** would let the characters know that this is an old battleground from the Viking age.
- A successful **INVESTIGATION** roll will reveal that several rune stones have the symbol of an ouroboros – a snake-like creature biting its own tail. Archaeologists have assumed that these are depictions of dragons but a successful **LEARNING** roll reveals that it doesn't have the characteristics of a typical dragon. With extra successes, they can recall that in battle a lindworm would bite its own tail in order to gain speed for its attack.
- A successful **VIGILANCE** and the characters will notice a piece of metal lying almost buried underneath one of the boulders. Picking it up, they notice that it's a huge, rusty sword almost as tall as a full-grown man. The sword is hundreds of years old and would have belonged to a fierce warrior.

CHALLENGES

- If the player characters touch the sword, the wind picks up and with it, a distant sound of men yelling and fighting fills the air. It's coming closer and closer. When turning around to investigate, they will suddenly stand face to face with skeletons in Viking gear, equal in number to the player characters. Each player character must make a Fear test against Fear value 1. These are ghosts, but are managed as regular NPCs in this situation. They are coming to life through their old battle axes, and immediately attack in close combat. If Broken, a Viking ghost is driven off long enough for the player characters to proceed.
- When the player characters have defeated their adversaries (or are about to be defeated), an old battle horn sounds through the forest. The fighting immediately stops. A tall, impressive figure appears on a horse, half of the face skeleton, the other half revealing a beautiful woman but with a very sharp, stern face. The player characters immediately recognize her as Lisa Johansson (but now in her revenant form). Her long dark hair is braided

VIKING GHOST WARRIOR

- Physique 4 Precision 4
  Logic 1 Empathy 2
- **CLOSE COMBAT** 4 **RANGED COMBAT** 4
  VIGILANCE 1
- Mental Toughness 1 Physical Toughness 2
- **EQUIPMENT:** Axe

in intricate ways and she's wearing full armor. A shieldmaiden of the North. She screams orders in an ancient tongue. As she rides on, the soldiers follow and they all slowly fade away. She is in spectral form and the player characters cannot interact with her now. If they make a **LEARNING** roll however, they realize that the language was Old Norse – the same that Lisa Johansson spoke in the mine (page 23). The shield maiden's words were: *"Reclaim what is ours. The brave shall feast with the gods in Valhalla and Folkvagnr!"*

HEDVIG'S COTTAGE

It's getting late and time to set camp for the night. Some of the player characters might be injured from the combat. As they're looking for a proper spot, they eventually come upon an old cottage. It looks completely abandoned with the windows boarded up. However, smoke rises from the chimney and when they get closer the front door opens slowly. An invitation.

As they enter, the first thing they notice is the air. It's completely different than from outside, thicker and heavier, almost suffocating. An old lady sits by a small fire, knitting. Her eyes are covered with a white cloth, suggesting she's blind, but she looks right at the player characters as they enter. *"Looking for the Prince, are we?"* she croaks, her voice creating a strange echoing sound. *"You should get some rest, then. You will need it."* An amused smile plays on her lips. *"Many restless creatures out and about tonight. The Prince must be worried about something."*

She introduces herself as Hedvig. Despite her creepy appearance, she seems harmless and an **OBSERVATION** roll will confirm this. She gets up and offers the player characters coffee and food. If they accept, they each recover one physical or mental Condition.

CLUES

- Hedvig looks old. Ancient. But claims she's nothing more than an old witch, trying to live in peace. She'll tell them about the land, how it all changed when the *"cross worshipers arrived and there's no more room for the old ways. The spirits are angry. You were attacked by their memories."*
- If asked who the prince is, Hedvig will confirm what they might have already figured out, that it's a lindworm. *"The protector of this Realm."* She'll smile at the idea of fighting him but with a successful **MANIPULATION** roll, she'll be willing to tell them how to defeat him. See the full description for lindworm in the *Vaesen* core rulebook, page 136.
- If asked about Eira, Hedvig says that she believes the woman to be an fool and a fraud. *"She also came here thinking she could defeat him but for less heroic reasons than you lot. Greedy, that one. She wanted his power. A fool's errand. I would assume he killed her and her followers."*
- If asked about Lisa Johansson, Hedvig says that she doesn't know her, but that the old revenant spirits in this area can take possession of human minds. Such possessed people often lose their memories of their previous life. They can be very dangerous.

CHALLENGES

- Mikaela will insist they stay with Hedvig. If they do so, all player characters heal all physical and mental Conditions. If they insist on sleeping outside instead of in the warm beds that Hedvig offers, they will wake up tired and achy with a physical Condition.

OLD WITCH HEDVIG

It's unclear who or what Hedvig actually is. She was once a human for sure, but after years of living in close proximity to the lindworm's realm and his powerful magic, and having barely participated in human society for an entire lifetime, she no longer can say where she belongs.

Wise and curious, Hedvig loves meeting travelers and helping them as much as she can if she believes they carry a good heart. If not, she might leave them a little harmless but annoying curse to make sure they leave her alone should they ever enter her part of the world again.

If asked about the Abisko Mine and other questions that revolve around *The Lost Mountain Saga's* main arc, she'll look concerned. *"Change is coming. Humans are changing, I'm afraid. We have forgotten the old ways. We tend to do that. Just like the old gods, we are always eager to abandon the old for the new."*

- During the night, the player character with a special bond to Lisa Johansson (highest Empathy) has nightmares about a woman with long black hair and a white dress. They are in a dark forest. The woman starts to slowly walk away and the player character follows. After a while, the woman stops and turns. The player character will recognize her immediately. It's Lisa, dressed in the attire of a Viking shield maiden. Her face suddenly twists and she screams *"Help!"* The player character will then immediately wake up.
- Hedvig will watch over the player characters when they sleep. If asked about the nightmare, she'll shake her head. *"This forest is old. Many lost souls still linger. I would be careful and not let your minds wander..."*
- If the player characters got injured in the previous battle, all of their Conditions will be healed during the night under Hedvig's care.
- The next morning, after enjoying a delicious breakfast, Hedvig will point them in the right direction towards the castle. If they've been nice to her, she'll give each of them a silver coin. *"To free those who are enslaved..."* she says. The silver coin can be used to break the lindworm's control over its victims (page 64).

THE LINDWORM'S CASTLE

After walking through the forest for two days, the vegetation eventually gets thicker, almost impenetrable, as the party continues along the hidden path. Eventually, an iron gate appears and behind it stands a large tower, next to a circular building.

Less like a castle and more like a fortress, there are no windows and only one door right at the center of the tower. If the player characters have access to a map, there's no mention of this. It looks old, very old, but the huge courtyard outside appears very well kept. Someone is clearly living here and taking care of it.

The door opens and several people step out, all dressed in brown and creating a formation line in

front of the tower in perfect synchronicity. Eventually, a handsome man follows and stands in its center. A crown rests on his long, golden hair. His perfectly symmetrical face is clean-shaven and he stands nearly 7 feet tall. He's wearing a dark blue robe embroidered with golden intricate patterns.

"Welcome, travelers, to my castle." His voice is deep and carries over the entire courtyard, so clear as if he was standing right next to them. *"I shall be delighted if you would join me for lunch. Please. Come."* He motions for the player characters to follow him.

The castle does seem enchanted. Alien, even. The unwelcoming outside does not match the polished inside. The floor is made of something that resembles glass and the ceilings are very far up, allowing sounds to echo when the player characters enter. Despite the lack of windows, it's incredibly bright inside with a strange light emitting from thousands of wall crystals and impressive chandeliers. Everything looks incredibly expensive and unlike anything anyone has ever seen before.

The rounded corridor leads the party into a larger room. In the middle of the room is a gigantic pile of gold and treasures. Several servants are working on sweeping the gold coins that have escaped the pile but it seems like a never-ending job. Other servants are polishing pieces of the treasure, carefully and methodically. Their eyes are completely blank and they won't react to the player characters at all.

CLUES

- Snakelike statues line the room and the player characters will recognize the statues as various versions of a lindworm. With a successful **INVESTIGATION** roll, the characters notice that one of those statues is holding a golden necklace with a green gemstone. This is Eira's necklace, the purported Brisingamen.
- During the meal, have the player characters roll **OBSERVATION**. Those who succeed notice something off about the castle. Their clothes get wet as if they were outside in the forest. A chilly wind sweeps through the hall. The food on their plates turns to leaves and twigs for an instant. These are all clues to the fact that the castle is an illusion.
- If the player characters make a **VIGILANCE** roll, they spot a servant who matches the description of Eira. If they fail, Mikaela will eventually spot her if she is there, and she gasps as she calls the player characters' attention to her.

EIRA

Eira has short white hair that was once a deep red color. Her eyes are large and green. She's well into her seventies but carries herself with the stamina of a much younger woman. Having always resented Christianity, she founded the Vanadisir secret order when more and more women came to Upsala to study – women she wanted to influence and teach about the power of the ancient goddess Freja and the other disirs (female goddesses in Old Norse). She loves being their leader, so much so that she has slowly turned the order into a cult. Every year, she's more and more convinced that she is the chosen leader to tell the world about Freja and spread her word, no matter the cost.

- Physique 1 Precision 2
  Logic 4 Empathy 3
- **MANIPULATION** 5 **OBSERVATION** 4
- Mental Toughness 3 Physical Toughness 1
- **EQUIPMENT:** Silver knife

CHALLENGES

- The Prince is charming and politely questions the player characters, asking them about their endeavors but also trying to ascertain their purpose for coming here. Eventually, he will try to bargain with them. If they ask about Eira or the Brisingamen, he will agree to give each of them up if Mikaela or a player character agrees to become his servant. His forked tongue licks his lips as he inspects all of them carefully. The lindworm can also offer the characters magical powers as part of a deal (page 137 in the *Vaesen* core rulebook). Let the players negotiate with the lindworm and roll **MANIPULATION** to have him agree to any reasonable deal.
- If no deal is struck, Mikaela will eventually offer herself to the lindworm in order to free Eira. The player characters will need to stop the lindworm by force to prevent this (see *Confrontation*).
- The lindworm's enchantment over each of his servants can be broken by pressing a piece of silver (like the one Hedvig offered) to their skin, by pleading to them with a successful **MANIPULATION** roll (two successes needed) or by inflicting a sharp pain such as slap or a hard pinch. Doing this will trigger the lindworm's wrath however (see *Confrontation*).

CONFRONTATION

The situation will most likely escalate into a violent confrontation with the lindworm in his true form. This can be triggered in several ways:

- The player characters free one of his enchanted servants using a piece of silver.
- The player characters attempt to steal Eira's necklace (the purported Brisingamen).
- The player characters or Mikaela attack the lindworm's human form physically.
- Eira is somehow released from her enchantment. She then immediately attacks the lindworm with a knife, and urges Mikaela and the player characters to help her.

If none of the above happens, the player characters can leave the lindworm peacefully and the Mystery ends. Mikaela will not accept leaving without Eira, however, even attacking the lindworm to prevent it.

THE ILLUSION FALLS

When the Confrontation is triggered, the lindworm's illusion falls. First, the castle starts to collapse, its walls turning to ash and the floor starting to crack, the treasure is swallowed by the ground, and soon the player characters find themselves in a glade in the woods. The spell over the servants is broken, and all of them flee screaming into the forest (except Eira). Finally, the lindworm morphs into his true shape – a scaly, terrifying snake – and attacks. For statistics, see page 136 in the *Vaesen* core rulebook.

EIRA: Once free of the lindworm's spell, Eira curses the beast and urges Mikaela and the player characters to kill it. *"The beast must die, so that we can eat its flesh and gain its powers, for the Vanadisir!"* She draws a silver knife and attacks the beast.

THREE FIRES

As mentioned in the Vaesen core rulebook, a lindworm can be destroyed by tricking it into slithering through three different fires. If the players ask about ways to kill a lindworm and make a successful **LEARNING** roll, one of them will come to think of this. There are no (real) fires in the castle, but the player characters could set fires in the forest or even perform the ritual by burning the lindworm with three separate torches. This turns the lindworm to ash, not leaving any flesh behind for Eira to consume.

THE FINAL BARGAIN

If the lindworm is Wounded, it will bargain for its life (page 136 in the core rulebook), offering its enemies a taste of its flesh to one person, yielding magical powers, in return for keeping one other person as its servant.

Eira immediately steps forward to receive the gift. *"We must accept this gift of the lindworm. Mikaela, you must make this sacrifice, for the Vanadisir."* Mikaela hesitates as the lindworm hungrily observes her. Let the players react to this. If they don't interfere, Mikaela will accept becoming the lindworm's servant, and Eira is offered a drink of its blood, gaining all of the powers listed on page 137 of the core rulebook.

The player characters can interfere at any point. One of them might even want to claim the lindworm's gift for themselves! If stopped for any reason, Eira will attack them with her knife. If the bargain is interrupted, the lindworm will also attack and fight until it's Broken.

VICTORY

If the lindworm is Broken in combat, it hisses and makes a final attack against Eira, as it blames her for its defeat. It picks her up like a piece of meat and then snaps her neck, throwing the body to the side. Then, the lindworm bites its own tail, forming a wheel that rolls quickly into the forest and disappears. Mikaela breaks down in tears.

DEFEAT

If the player characters lose the fight, the lindworm leaves them Broken on the ground. If Eira did not make a deal with the lindworm, it then kills her as per above. Then the lindworm slithers away into the forest, accompanied by Mikaela if she has agreed to become its servant. If Eira did make a deal with the lindworm and fought the player characters, she warns them not to get in her way again, and leaves this story for good.

AFTERMATH

The player characters return to Castle Gyllencreutz with or without the Brisingamen, accompanied by Mikaela. The Vanadisir is disbanded, as the captured members return to Upsala and reveal the horrors they have experienced. If Eira survived, she will reform the order in a future Mystery.

CONTENT WARNING:
Death, Violence

THE LOST MOUNTAIN SAGA

She couldn't remember the last time she had been this happy.

The young brown-haired woman dances amongst the newly sprung forest flowers, surrounded by the women she loves more than life itself. The ancient spirits join them, connecting them to the powerful voices of the past. It all makes sense to her now. She belongs here.

A soft gentle hand draws her attention. Gray beautiful eyes peer into hers, an unvoiced question plays on the luscious lips. "Yes…" the young brown-haired woman finds herself saying, or perhaps she's just thinking it, as she lets herself be led by gray-eyes into the dark forest.

They worship each other with fervor. The brown-haired woman gives in. A lifetime passes. "More…?" gray-eyes asks as they both try to catch their breaths. They laugh. They kiss. They love.

But then, everything's wrong. Gray-eyes watches in horror as her lover is suddenly whisked into the air, her body starts contorting in impossible ways. The sound of bones cracking and whimpers of painful anguish from the young brown-haired woman break the silence of the forest. She eventually collapses to the ground. Gray-eyes is there, desperately trying to make the limp body of her lover come back to life, come back to the paradise the two of them shared just moments earlier.

Then the sound of battle fills the air. Shadows of men in armor surround the two women, fighting each other with ancient swords and shields. Gray-eyes cradles the brown-haired woman, pleading to the Gods for this nightmare to be over. A glimmer of hope ignites within her as the body in her arms suddenly stirs. "Lisa…" gray-eyes whispers, relief flooding through her entire being. But it's not Lisa.

Gray-eyes only briefly meets the cold, brutal stare of the soul that now possesses her lover before it snaps her neck.

"You will all die," the young brown-haired woman whispers in a foreign voice as a blinding green light fills the entire forest.

PRELUDE

This is the final chapter of *The Lost Mountain Saga*. It is time. Good luck!

BACKGROUND

Sigrid Magnusson always knew that she was special. Being abandoned as a child by her own mother but then rescued by a kind, strange creature that lived in the forest, known as a troll, Sigrid had an unusual upbringing surrounded by vaesen.

Knowing and experiencing the power of these creatures, the ambitious Sigrid hoped that she herself could one day gain similar powers. That hope eventually turned into an obsession. What if the barrier that separated humans and vaesen could be removed? And from it, a new magical world could emerge where humans and vaesen would co-exist in the open?

After meeting the Vanadisir and Eira, Sigrid learned of the green gemstones and their powers. With further research and investigation, she discovered that the stones could temporarily control and potentially even harvest the magical abilities of certain vaesen. How, or why, she did not yet understand.

After leaving the Vanadisir and having learned of the green stones found in the ruined mine at Abisko, she traveled there. Claiming she was a renowned geologist, the manipulative Sigrid convinced the manager to give her full access to the mine, and managed to find a few pieces of the green stone.

For several years, she conducted experiments in secrecy on both humans and vaesen. The stones behaved in the way that Sigrid had hoped, but she was still unable to truly understand their full potential. Their ability to temporarily bind the powers of vaesen seemed to happen purely by chance, until Sigrid realized she could force the vaesen through coercion and eventually torture.

A decade later, Sigrid had climbed the social ladder and was able to convince the rich and influential to open the Abisko Mine once more by showing them the potential of the stones. She didn't shy away from using lies and manipulation to get her way. Sigrid argued that through research and science, the stones could change everything, not only for Sweden, but for humankind.

Karl Magnusson, Sigrid's husband and the founder of Svea Mining Corp, initially shared Sigrid's vision for a better world. As the project went along, however, other interests started to influence the operation

THE LAPPONIAN GATE

In the story of *The Lost Mountain Saga*, there was once a gate in the north of Sweden. Guarded by ancient giants, known as *Guardians*, the gate functioned as something similar to a portal to their old world. The gate has not been opened for thousands of centuries, and virtually no one, including the vaesen, remembers its origin.

When the last Guardian died, thousands of years before the first human settlers arrived in the area, the memories of the once impressive gate were forever forgotten, leaving only a gaping hole behind that was eventually known as the Lapponian Gate.

The Lapponian Gate is a valley in the Abisko National Park. Its unusual, round shape gave it its name as it resembled an enormous gate. Most scientists have explained it as a curious geological variation with its perfectly round shape carved out in the middle of a mountain ridge. It looks like a mountain used to be there. A mountain that was lost. The remnants of the last Guardian are now where the Abisko Mine is located. It's his corpse that is being mined for iron and the mysterious green gemstones.

more and more. Karl and the military pushed for a weapon. The investors pushed for financial gain. The university pushed for more research.

Now, Sigrid stands at the top of the new research center, looking down at the mine and the famous Lapponian Gate and its strange geological shape. It's in the middle of July but there's a harsh, cold wind from the northern mountains. The mine, the stones, the whole idea… What was once something that belonged to her and her alone is now being worked on by over a thousand men and women. She's losing control.

Lisa Johansson, the unfortunate soul who had her autonomy stolen from her, has come here without fully understanding why. Whatever it is within her is drawing her to the mine, and she can no longer resist it.

CONFLICTS

This is the last and final chapter of *The Lost Mountain Saga*, which means it is the final mystery and the outcome will have global repercussions. There are several conflicts that are each important, the main one being between the ambitious Sigrid, the greedy humans she's surrounded herself with and the remaining vaesen who are seeing their world slowly collapse.

The secondary conflict is between Karl and Sigrid Magnusson who have used each other for their personal goals and they're both starting to realize it. Sigrid used Karl's money and influence to reopen the mine and continue her research, hopeful that she would eventually be able to make her ultimate goal come true: A new world, where a selected group of humans can wield the power of vaesen and cure all ills.

Karl, on the other hand, does not believe in Sigrid's grandiose ideas and instead uses her knowledge to develop a powerful weapon of mass destruction that he hopes would change the world order. He has invited the investors and prominent political figures for another demonstration of the weapon. Sigrid is vehemently against this.

A third conflict is between Lisa and Sigrid. The revenant possessing Lisa is sworn to destroy anyone who uses the green stones for personal gain. Sigrid does not even know Lisa exists, but she is about to find out.

INVITATION

A formal invitation from Svea Mining Corp arrives at Castle Gyllencreutz in the beginning of August along with train tickets for the newly constructed railroad that will take the players comfortably to the north of Sweden (*Handout 5A*, also found at the end of this book and available to download from the Free League website).

Esteemed Sir/Madam,

You are cordially invited to the official opening of the research center of the Abisko Mine, hosted by the Svea Mining Corp, in conjunction with Upsala University.

Join us for an evening of erudite discourse and intellectual exchange, as leading experts in the field of mining and geology share their insights and knowledge. The event shall encompass a stimulating demonstration of our latest discoveries, insightful discussions, and ample opportunities for networking among esteemed professionals and academic luminaries.

Your presence at this gathering of intellectual minds shall be greatly cherished.

With utmost anticipation and admiration, we remain,

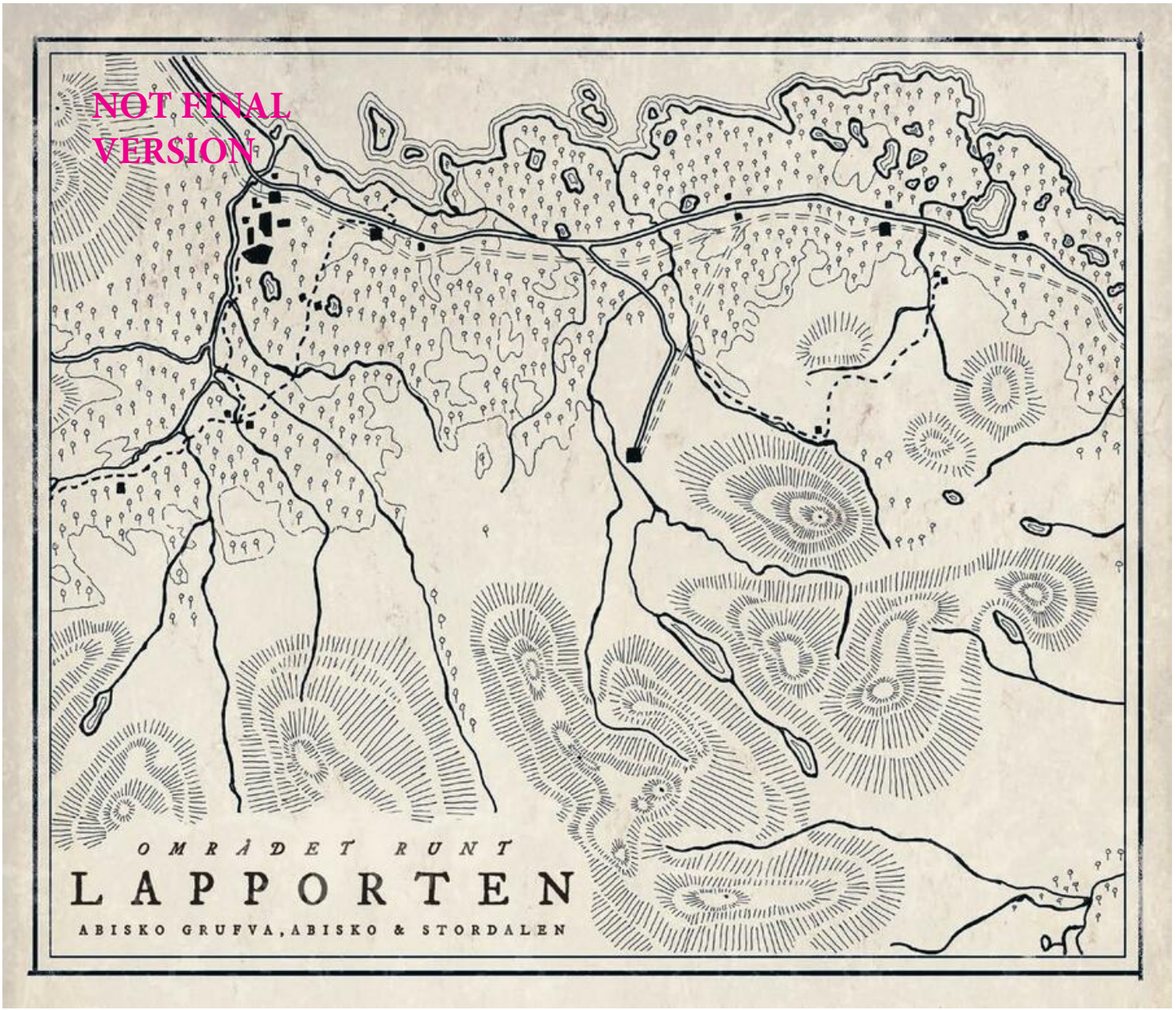
Yours respectfully,
Karl and Sigrid Magnusson
Svea Mining Corp

If the player characters managed to charm Sigrid in the second Mystery, their train tickets are upgraded to first class.

PREPARATIONS

If the player characters have any experience points that they have not used yet, this would be the time to do it. And as always, they can gain an Advantage before leaving Upsala. Clues they can gather before leaving Upsala:

- If they make a successful **LEARNING** while studying the area they will learn that Abisko and the surrounding national park is a desolate area and part of Sápmi, the cultural region that belongs to the Sami people who've lived and used the land there for thousands of years. At this time, the Sami are heavily oppressed by the Swedish government and the Abisko Mine was opened without their consent.
- Close to where the mine is located is the Lapponian Gate, a geological U-shaped valley in the middle of the mountain ridge. It looks like an enormous gate, thus its name.



THE JOURNEY

It's very early on a beautiful summer day when the player characters board the newly built luxurious train that will take them to the north and the newly reopened Abisko mine. Svea Mining Corp, swimming in gold from investors at this point, specifically constructed the line for fast transfer between Upsala and the mine, however, it's northern part is not fully finished yet and the player characters will have to spend a night in the small town of Kiruna before continuing the journey by stage coach the next day.

After almost three days of travel, it's late when the player characters arrive at the train station of Kiruna. Unlike the winter months, when the sun never rises, now the sun never sets. People are still out eating and drinking despite the late hour.

A stage coach waits for the player characters and takes them to an inn a bit outside the city. While the sun is still up, it suddenly feels a lot less festive and bright. As the temperature cools, mist starts rising from the ground and everything is completely still and quiet. Nature knows that it's night, even if the sun doesn't.

Shortly after arriving, the player character with the highest Empathy, the same person who felt a connection to Lisa Johansson in previous Mysteries, gets an eerie sensation that they are being observed by something in the dark forest behind the inn. The creature that once was Lisa Johansson has found them.

Either the player characters seek her out outside or she will enter their room in the middle of the night. She wears a dirty white nightgown and has long black hair, but unlike the young petite woman they once met, she now stands taller, more regal. There's an elegance despite her dirty clothes. Her eyes are completely black and her mouth has changed its shape. It's somehow wider, elongated. *"Help.... me...."* she whispers, her voice raspy and foreign as if the words are physically hard for her to form. Lisa won't attack the player characters, and if they attack her she will try to flee.

If the player characters choose, they can try to communicate with her and eventually she will explain what happened to her. As she does so, her humanity slowly comes back. Her face slowly returns to its normal form and her eyes will return to their natural brown color, though they are still full of grief and pain.

"After... what happened," she begins, her voice cracking up from fatigue and sadness, *"I realized I could not contain it anymore, this monster inside of me. It's longing for something."* For a brief moment, the old, brutal creature is back but Lisa is able to push it down. *"The stone helped, I could control the monster with it. But eventually it weakened. Whatever it is inside of me, it seems to be somehow bound to this."*

Lisa takes out the gemstone that once belonged to Franzibald. Its green color is now dull and faded. *"We both seem to be bound by it. When your friend was carrying it, I... was blinded. I could not stop it."* Now in the voice of the shieldmaiden. *"The Vanadisir must be stopped."* Lisa regains control, but she is very weak.

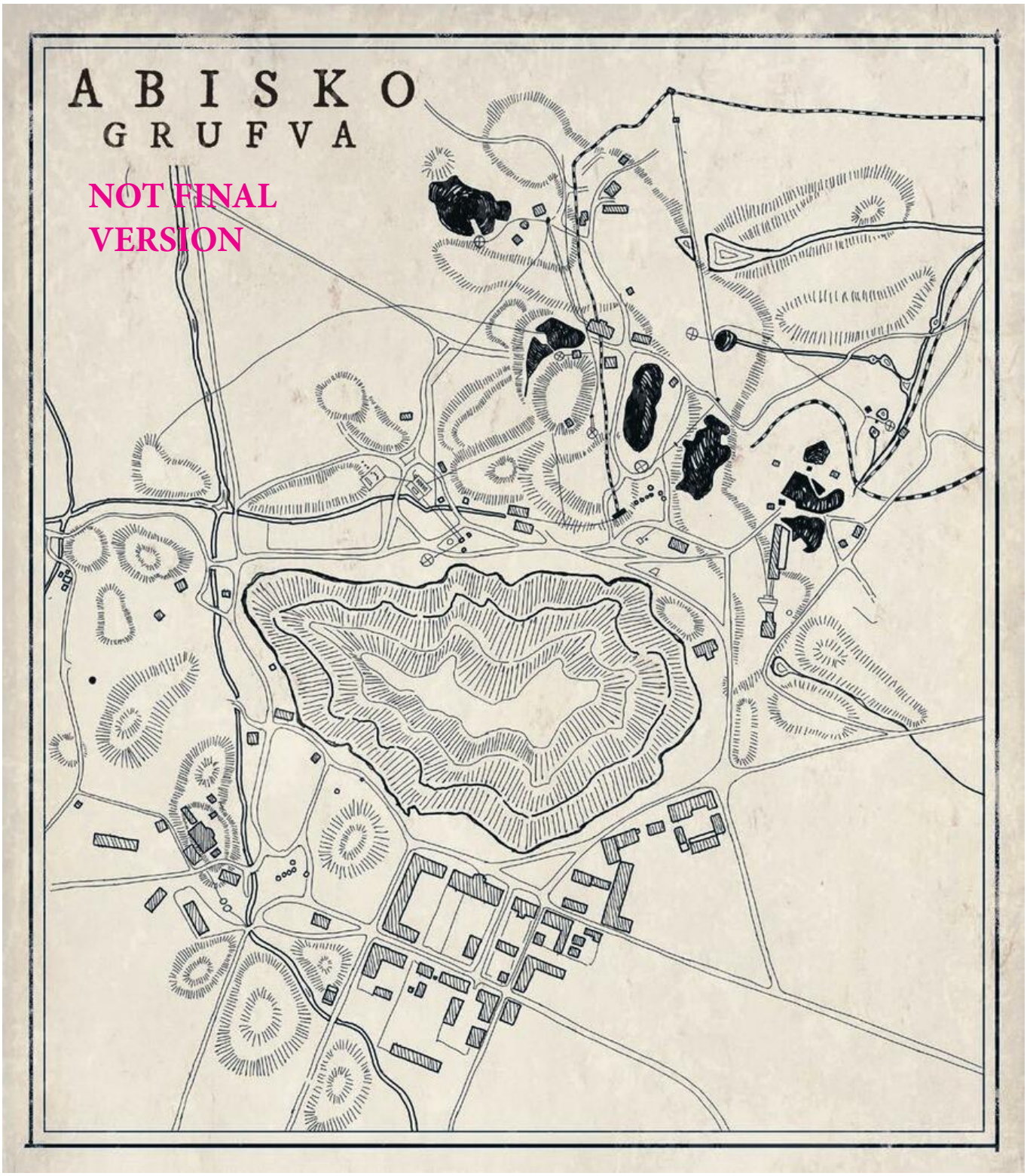
"I need your help. The mine in the north. I must go there to fulfill my task, whatever it is..." It's up to you, the Gamemaster, how much you want to reveal about how and why Lisa was possessed by the revenant but she will tell the player characters that she can't travel with them, it's too dangerous. If they decide to help her, she will meet them at the mine *"when the time is right."*

She won't know how they can help her, she just knows that if there's an answer, it will be at the mine. The player characters can attempt **LEARNING** to see if they recognize what might be possessing Lisa and if successful, they will understand it's a revenant.

ARRIVAL

The next day, the stage arrives at Abisko and the mine. They arrive early in the morning. Until recently, the whole area surrounding Abisko and the village itself was mostly arctic barren grassland. The village was more like a camp for the miners and workers.

Everything changed when Svea Mining Corp took over. The once beautiful national park, framed by mountains and the Lapponian Gate, is now industrialized. Sounds of heavy machinery and smoke from coal plants fill the air, while hundreds of workers carry heavy equipment from place to place. There's a yellowish tint over the entire area as smog covers the sun.


ABISKO
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NOT FINAL
VERSION

A massive brick building that resembles a fort stands in the center of Abisko – the Research Center. Guards in uniform are everywhere, looking suspiciously at every worker that passes them by. The stagecoach takes the player characters all the way to the entrance of the center. It's an unwelcoming site with its dystopian aesthetic, built for pragmatic reasons and to signal strength. The emblem of the University of Upsala and its motto hangs over the entrance.

Gratiae veritas naturae. Truth through the grace of God and through nature.

A stern, old man greets them. *"From Castle Gyllencreutz, eh?"* he says and leads the player characters into the building. He introduces himself as Bengtsson but beyond that, he has very few words to share. It's dark and murky inside. The group has to climb several stairs to reach the rooftop. From there, they can see the entire town, the crater from the explosion a decade ago, the new mine entrance, and behind it, an open area with some sort of large metal cylinder in the middle. Behind it all, the beautiful Lapponian Gate.

"She's nice, isn't she?" Bengtsson says, looking at the mountain formation. *"The new people in town have come to refer to her as the Lost Mountain because of what happened ten years ago. As if a mountain can be lost. They don't know that that formation has been there for millions of years. Lots of idiots around here, if you ask me. But nobody ever does..." he grunts.*

If asked about the metal cylinder, Bengtsson shrugs and says he doesn't know (an **OBSERVATION** roll will reveal this to be a lie). He leads the player characters to the area where their living quarters are. It's nicer there, with windows that let in some daylight and furniture and fabric that hides some of the brickwork, but it resembles a bunker. The player characters are given access to an apartment with individual bedrooms and a common area.

COUNTDOWN AND CATASTROPHE

The countdown in this Mystery is to help you push the player characters in the right direction, which will lead to the Confrontation.

1. Upon arriving at their rooms, Linus the tour guide knocks on their door and tells the player characters they have two options should they want to visit the mine. *"Either 1 pm or 2 pm!"* he says with a laugh, holding his pocket watch. Linus is extremely cheerful but will be firm that the players really *should* try to take him up on his offer before the welcome dinner later that night.
2. Linus will once again show up right on time to escort the group to the welcome dinner that starts at *"7 o'clock! Do not be late."*
3. Later that night, after the welcome dinner and demonstration, Sigrid knocks on the door to the player characters' apartment. She wants them to help her destroy the mine and bury the green stones forever. See *Confrontation* on page 76.

CATASTROPHE

If the player characters refuse to help Sigrid, she will carry out her plan herself. This will eventually trigger a massive explosion as described in the Confrontation, but in the catastrophic scenario, the player characters won't be able to save Lisa who falls into the dark abyss together with all the other ancient secrets of the whole area.

LOCATIONS

THE MINE

There are tour guides available to the player characters all over the research center who will show them the various locations. One of them, an enthusiastic fellow named Linus, is eager to show them around. It's clear that he's very enamored with the Magnussons and won't say or tolerate a bad word about them. He will show them both the mine and the research center if they wish.

The remnants of the explosion of the first mine are still very present and due to the cold climate, it takes time for the vegetation to grow back. Linus

follows the company line that the explosion was due to incompetence or possibly sabotage, and that with Svea Mining Corp in charge, with their diligent security protocol, something like that could never happen.

To the north of the crater, there are several round hills where the new mine is located. At the entrance, there's a walking path and a railroad leading into its dark depths. Several men and women are walking in and out of the mine. The area is buzzing with activity. There's a military presence with several soldiers guarding various entrances. No one is smiling, except Linus who excitedly but nervously takes the group to the mine.

CLUES

- Inside the mine, the player characters will notice patterns on the walls of the mine that remind them of veins, which is atypical for stone. If asked, Linus has no explanation for the veiny characteristics but he says that the type of stone they are mining has so far only been found in northern Scandinavia and is why the Abisko mine is special. A successful **MEDICINE** roll lets the player characters realize that it looks exactly like a blood circulatory system.
- Linus is relatively useless when it comes to information and will mostly just parrot company propaganda. If the player characters go outside of the mine to look at the landscape, a successful **VIGILANCE** will have them notice that the hills outside look like a torso. If they get on top of the rooftop of the research center again, they can indeed confirm that the whole shape of the mine looks like an enormous humanoid body, lying on its side. Linus finds the observation very exciting. *"I can't believe I never thought of that myself!"* he proclaims happily.

CHALLENGES

- The player characters will find it hard to gain access to restricted areas as there are armed guards everywhere. They can get a glimpse of the giant metal cylinder that's behind the mine but won't be able to gather any details from it.

MINE GUARDS

- Physique 3 Precision 4
  Logic 2 Empathy 2
- **CLOSE COMBAT** 2 **RANGED COMBAT** 3 **VIGILANCE** 2
- Mental Toughness 1 Physical Toughness 2
- **EQUIPMENT:** Rifle, sword

GUSTAV, THE BIG BOMB

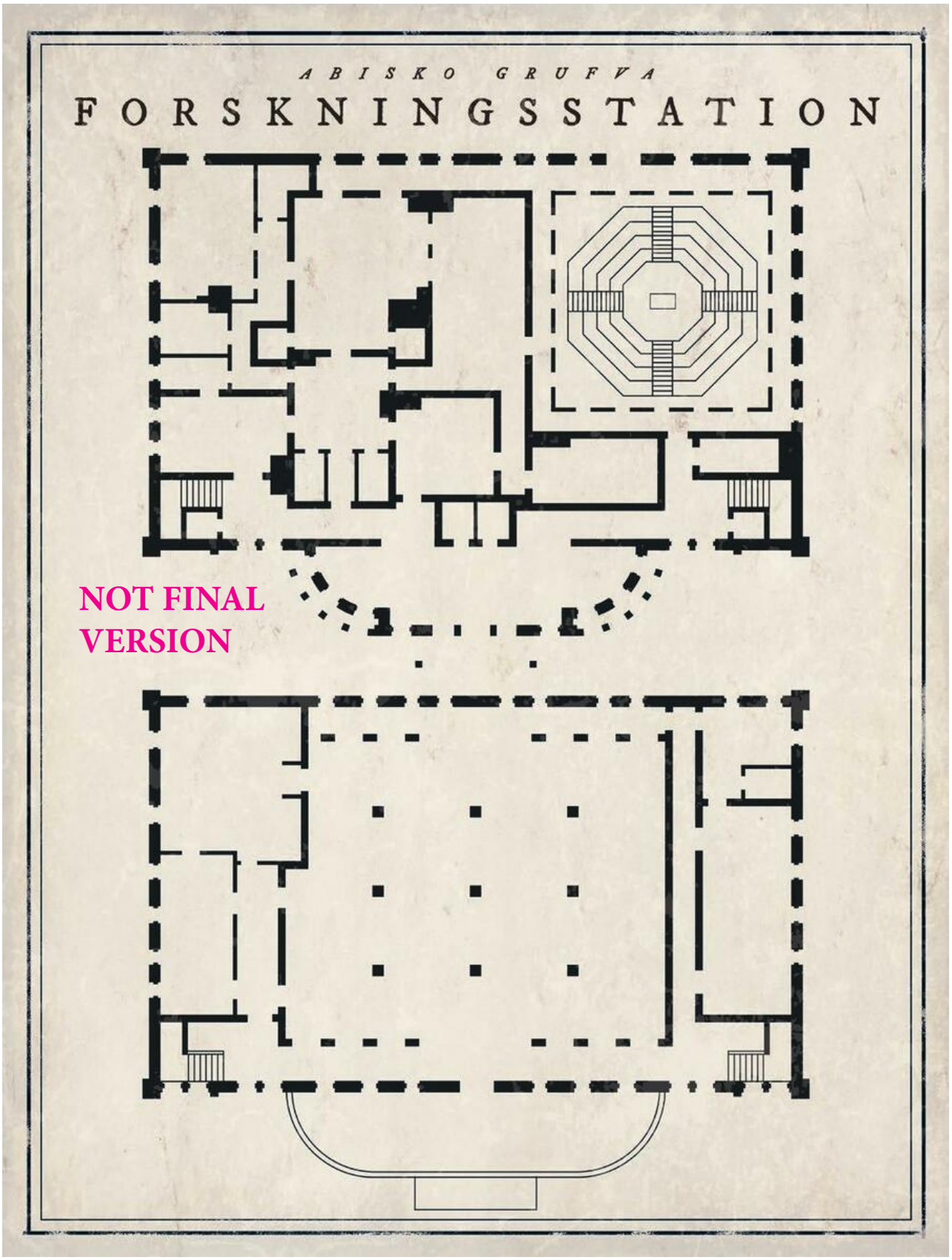
In a fenced off, restricted area next to the new mine there is a large metal cylinder placed vertically on the rocky ground, close to railroad tracks leading into the mine. The cylinder is a bomb powered by the green gemstones from the mine. It's called Gustav or just "Gurra" after the famous and powerful Swedish king Gustavus Adolphus. Made out of cast iron and lead, Gustav seems to weigh several tons. Guards are posted at the entrances, looking grim and menacing.

CLUES

- On a successful **LEARNING** roll, the player characters realize that the cylinder seems to be some kind of explosive device. A closer examination will confirm this.
- With a successful **VIGILANCE** roll, the player characters can overhear two of the younger guards gossiping about a recent fight they overheard between Karl and Sigrid. It seems like Sigrid wanted to stop the "demonstration."

CHALLENGES

- Armed guards are positioned all over the restricted area. If they notice the player characters acting suspiciously, they will escort them back to the research center.


ABISKO GRUFVA
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NOT FINAL VERSION

THE LABORATORY

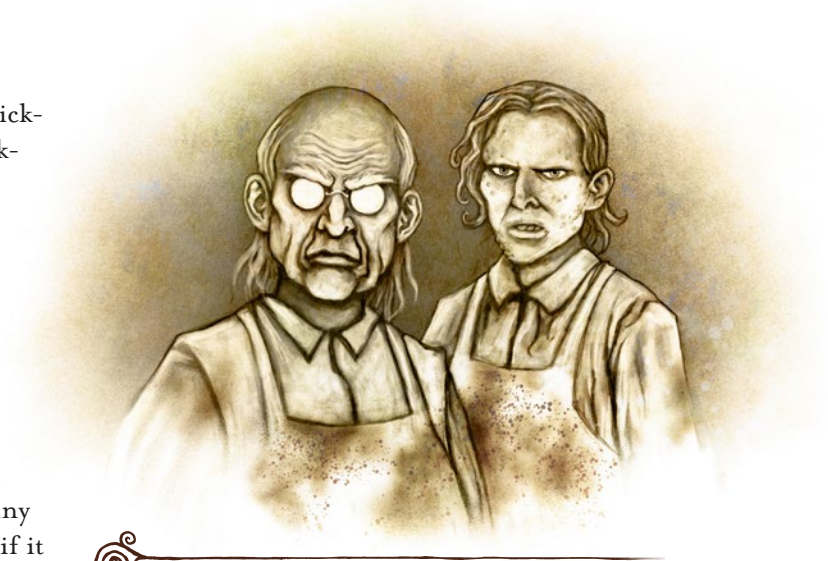
If the player characters explore the research center, which basically just consists of restricted areas and a gift shop, the player characters can approach a door that says "Authorized personnel only." Linus (or any of the staff) can inform them it's a laboratory, but unfortunately strict security is in place and it is not ready yet to be shown to the public.

CHALLENGES

- The player characters can get into the lab by picking the lock (rolling **STEALTH**) or somehow tricking the staff into opening the door for them (**MANIPULATION**).
- After they have explored the lab and found the anatomical theater, approaching footsteps are heard from an adjacent corridor. The player characters can hide (**STEALTH**) or stay and fight.
- If fighting, the player characters will face two scrawny scientists, Doctor Jönsson and Doctor Linder. The scientists won't give up any secrets and try to kill the player characters if it comes to that.

CLUES

- The laboratory is a dark room with several wooden shelves. Glass jars of various sizes are stacked on top of the shelves and after further inspection. It seems like they all contain biological matter in a translucent, brownish liquid. Initially, it's small animals like frogs, toads and insects, but deeper inside the lab, larger jars contain human body parts and fetuses.
- A successful **INVESTIGATION** roll reveals that some jars also contain corpses of small vaesen – vaettir, nissar, fairies. There's even a gigantic claw that seems to belong to a crocodile or some sort of reptile, but underneath it is a plaque that reads "Lingue Draconum." A **LEARNING** roll can reveal this to mean "dragonclaw."
- At the back of the room, a door leads to an anatomical theater. A sharp light hangs over a surgical table. It's completely covered in blood. What looks like human limbs are lying on the table, placed in a strange way. Something that resembles wings is also lying on the table. It looks like someone's trying to build a macabre puzzle using various pieces from different species.



DOCTORS JÖNSSON & LINDER

The two scientists are an odd duo, wearing blood-covered aprons over their white shirts. Doctor Jönsson looks like he's well into his seventies whereas Doctor Linder's face is still covered in acne as if he just left his adolescence.

- Physique 2 Precision 4 Logic 4 Empathy 1
- **CLOSE COMBAT** 2 **RANGED COMBAT** 4 **OBSERVATION** 2
- Mental Toughness 4 Physical Toughness 3
- **EQUIPMENT:** Needle (with poison of Potency 9, see rules for poison in the *Vaesen* core rulebook, page 70), butcher's knife, revolver, club

THE BANQUET HALL

On the second floor of the research center is the large hall that is supposed to host all the international guests who have gathered here for the demonstration. Similar to the rest of the building, it's built like a bunker but has tall windows facing the mine. A large balcony gives a panoramic view of the entire area.

At the welcome dinner, there's around 150 people in attendance. While the ball at Upsala University consisted mostly of scientists, several military officers attend this event. In fact, the few invited scientists are looking increasingly nervous when they realize that they are in a pretty significant minority.

CLUES

- During the dinner, the Magnussons are in attendance, welcoming everyone. However, this time, Karl is mostly doing the talking. An **OBSERVATION** roll reveals that Sigrid is looking furious as her husband speaks.
- If the player characters talk to the other guests, they will quickly discover a rift among the investors, between the military officers and the scientists. One of the latter, a geologist from the United States, will nervously whisper that he has so far not seen any of the science he was promised. *"This is not what I traveled across the Atlantic for! But please, do not tell them I said that. My friend was sent home for questioning the size of this ridiculous research center. They do not like criticism."*
- If they haven't already, the player characters can confirm that the hills the mine is located by look like they are part of a massive humanoid body. A **LEARNING** and the player characters would make an educated guess that it's the remnants of an old giant.

CHALLENGES

- Sigrid will make eye contact with the player character she likes the most (if she has a favorite) but otherwise ignores them the entire dinner. They will note that she looks a lot older than the last time they saw her.
- Before dessert, Karl invites everyone to join him on the balcony, where he starts the demonstration. *"Gather around, you will want to see this with your own eyes."* His voice is as harsh as his demeanor. *"Last time, we showed you the potential of these stones, their use. How they can heal, mend, bring medical science to a new frontier. But it does not end there. Let's see what they can break."* Karl raises his hand, signaling something to his personnel down on the ground, by the large cylinder next to the mine. They seem to place something into the cylinder, and then quickly retreat into cover. Karl gestures again, and the cylinder starts to hum and emit a familiar green glow. The entire balcony starts to shake. Without warning, a very bright green light emits from the machine, momentarily blinding everyone on the balcony, followed by a huge explosion. The ground shakes and a mushroom cloud rises into the sky, as the green glow fades. Once again, there's a shocked silence that later turns into uproarious applause. *"This is what we can do with fifty of these small stones!"* Karl shouts over the cheering. *"Imagine what we can do with a thousand!"* In the background, Sigrid looks at her husband with poorly hidden disgust and anger.

CONFRONTATION

The Confrontation of this final Mystery is extended into several scenes. If you want to add more challenges, you can have the player characters encounter more obstacles on their way to the various scenes such as guards and other NPCs who might question them. Otherwise, it's assumed that the challenges presented in each scene are the main challenges and if they overcome them, they can move on to the next scene.

SIGRID'S MISSION

It's late, and there's a small knock on the door. This time it's not Linus, but Sigrid. She's wearing a dark cloak and asks if she can come in. Her voice sounds

thick, as if she struggles to speak. Once inside, she takes her cloak off and her entire face is covered in bruises. *"My husband is dead,"* she declares after a pause. *"I killed him."* If asked about the bruises, she'll simply say, *"I suppose he didn't like being killed."*

Sigrid sits down on the sofa and takes out a mirror, observing her bruises. She declines any medical help. From her front pocket she takes out a vial with a clear liquid and starts patting her face with the liquid. Right in front of the player characters, the bruises slowly start to fade and her face starts to transform into the younger version again. If asked about it, she'll tell them the truth. *"I bargained with a couple of fairies. They can teach us a lot about aging."* Sigrid grimaces, as if still in pain. *"It does not actually heal anything. It's more like very effective make-up."*

Eventually, she starts to tell the player characters what happened. In the beginning of the reopening of the mine, she and Karl had had an agreement. To further science and humanity, to make the world a better place. As the project continued, however, they realized their definitions of "furthering humanity" were very different. Karl wanted world domination through force. He could not see a world without war. Sigrid's work and knowledge could help him win his wars.

Sigrid thought she could change his mind but soon realized it was pointless. Everyone followed Karl's lead and she lost control. The Upsala University had similar concerns as Sigrid, but the institution was soon manipulated into believing that this was the right course of action. *"I had no other choice. It needs to be stopped before we break the world."*

"Will you help me destroy it? The mine, the research, everything? It'll put an end to this misery and possibly save countless lives. Both human and vaesen. There is another bomb hidden in the mine, ten times as powerful. If I can get to it, undisturbed, I can set it to blow. It will trigger an explosion large enough to take the mine and the stones with it… You need to sound the alarm, evacuate the area. We have protocols in place, everyone will know what to do." She pauses. *"For me, I think I won't be coming back from this. But I have made my peace with it."* The player characters can roll an **OBSERVATION**. Sigrid seems like she's sincere in wanting to kill the project.

However, this will change if they mention Lisa. Sigrid does not know about Lisa, but will act concerned for the girl if they bring her up. *"I believe it's all connected. The girl's suffering is a product of the stones. If we destroy the stones, she'll be saved."* In reality, finding out about Lisa will awaken something in Sigrid once again. Perhaps her original idea wasn't an impossibility after all? An alternative plan will form in her head, unbeknownst to the player characters. The GM can choose to let the player characters roll for **OBSERVATION** again to see if they catch this change – otherwise it will be revealed later.

"I have full access to the entire site but we need to act quickly. In the morning, they will notice the absence of my husband and things will get a lot more complicated. If we're doing this, we need to do it now." The player characters can come up with various strategies on how they want to tackle the problem. Otherwise, Sigrid will suggest that they dress up as her personal bodyguards and let her do the talking.

THE BIGGER BOMB

It's a quiet night, cold despite the season. The sun is still visible behind the mountain ridge, casting long shadows. The bustling activity from earlier is gone. The mine entrance is watched by just two guards, neither very vigilant. Sigrid tells the player characters to "take care" of the guards, leaving it up to them exactly how to do that (**STEALTH**, **MANIPULATION** and violence can all be used – give any reasonable plan a good chance to succeed).

A short distance inside the mine, a bomb just like "Gurra" but even larger rests under a tarpaulin on a flatbed railroad car. Sigrid pulls off the tarpaulin and tells the characters to pull the car out of the mine. It must be detonated outside of the mine for the destruction to be sufficient, she says – the research center must also be destroyed, or the project will just be rebuilt.

REVENGE OF THE SHIELDMAIDEN

Outside of the mine, Sigrid starts tinkering with the bomb and starts preparing it for detonation. A strong green glow is emitted from its core.

That's when Lisa Johansson, or whatever remains of the woman once called that, appears. Now fully transformed into a revenant, she is a gangly humanoid predator with an unnaturally large jaw. Lisa walks in a jittery way initially, as if she's struggling to control her legs, but as she notices the group her posture changes. Like a hunter observing its prey, she stands completely still, ready to attack. Two more guards suddenly appear, alerted by the noise, and attack her immediately with their swords. Lisa rips them apart, and then turns toward the player characters – draw initiative.

Lisa, or the revenant that she now is, will be a very hard foe but the player characters can try to stall her. The more noise they make, the more soldiers will be alerted and come rushing to their aid.

THE GATE OPENS

Sigrid witnesses the carnage. Horrified at first, she looks at the creature once known as Lisa, seeing its power, its determination. Sigrid has a change of heart. Instead of the original, heroic plan of setting the bomb to blow, she is once again consumed by her own desire and ambition to make her initial plan work. Sigrid reaches into the machine and pulls out a handful of green gemstones, illuminating her figure in a strong green glow. *"Come to me, you beast!"* she shouts to Lisa as she holds the stones into the air, getting the revenant's full attention.

Lisa, even if Broken, now rushes toward Sigrid, to slay her. Instead, Sigrid grabs the revenant with her free hand. Lisa collapses on the ground like a broken rag doll, the power of the vaesen sucked out of her body. The light from the green stones in Sigrid's hand intensifies, now permeating her body.

Next, something happens that has not occurred in thousands upon thousands of years. The Lapponian Gate opens. A powerful northern light appears in the U-shaped valley, forming an unnaturally even circle between the mountains. The ground shakes. The player characters feel a powerful presence of vaesen, so strong they must all make a Fear test against Fear value 1. Something wicked is coming. Something big.

Sigrid screams in ecstasy, her entire body now emitting the green light and her features twisting into something feral and haunting.

Let the players react. They can fight Sigrid to force her to close the gate, they can try to reason with her, or they can flee. Having taken the powers of the revenant and been infused with the energies of the green stones, she is a formidable foe. If reasoned with, she will tell the player characters to get out of her way or suffer the consequences – it is time for the ancient vaesen to take back the world from the humans. She won't be talked down.

SIGRID IN VAESEN FORM

- **MIGHT** 12 **BODY CONTROL** 9 **MAGIC** 12 **MANIPULATION** 8 Fear 2/1

In this form, Sigrid has all the powers and attacks of a revenant as per page 150 in the *Vaesen* core rulebook.

THE BIG BANG

While the player characters confront Sigrid, or run for their lives, the big bomb starts to hum and vibrate. The earth starts to tremble. The ground underneath them begins to cave in. The evacuation alarm starts blaring, echoing in the night. Panicked screams echo in the distance as people flee. The bomb is about to blow. The northern light in the Lapponian Gate flickers, then disappears. Sigrid screams in despair. *"No! This was not supposed to happen!"*

The player characters must now run for their lives, or they will die. Make sure the players realize this. Each of them must make an **AGILITY** roll to get as far

away as possible. Unless the player characters helped Lisa earlier, she is still lying on the ground. A successful **FORCE** roll is required to carry her to safety, before the **AGILITY** roll. Only one character can try. On a failed **FORCE** roll, they can still carry Lisa, but the number of successes on the **AGILITY** roll is reduced by one.

Then, the bomb detonates. The massive blast immediately kills Sigrid and anyone else who remained nearby. The player characters are toppled by the shockwave, each suffering three physical conditions, minus one for each success on their **AGILITY** roll.

As they come to, they hear the earth roaring behind them, as the explosion has triggered a chain reaction deep inside the mine. Like an angry beast, the earthquake starts to swallow everything in the area. Powerful explosions can be heard as the factories and power plants get sucked into the depths. Eventually, the entire research center collapses.

Everyone who's evacuating can hear the disaster as they continue their panicked attempt to get as far away as possible. Meanwhile, the sun climbs higher and higher as morning arrives. Then, as the survivors finally stop to catch their breath, the whole sky lights up in a green flash, brighter than the sun. Eventually the sound and the pressure wave from the massive explosion of the old Abisko mine hits them all, knocking some of them down. A last reminder to stay away.

AFTERMATH

In the immediate aftermath of yet another catastrophe at the Abisko Mine, the whole region will be declared a national park and no one will ever be able to exploit the area again. Some will say the area is cursed, others will say that it was nature's way of saying enough is enough. No more green stones are ever found and some suggest that it was all just a hoax to begin with. As both Karl and Sigrid Magnusson perished in the accident, whatever remains of Svea Mining Corp soon collapses under an avalanche of lawsuits. Upsala University makes a statement, claiming it was deceived. Eventually, the details of it all are conveniently forgotten, simply remembered as one of the many mining accidents that are unfortunately common but not very newsworthy.

Mr Hansen,

It is with great concern that I write these lines. Your name was recommended to me by someone I trust, and perhaps against my better judgment, I now place my hope in your particular talents and expertise.

We have reason to believe our town, Falun, has become the target of witchcraft and devil worship and will need your help urgently to find and eliminate the source of this evil. It all started with a series of accidents in the town mine, with horrifying howls coming from the dark caverns. And the venom from the mine has now spread into the town, with crops burning, milk turning to ash, and animals dying without reason.

The miners unfortunately seem to have fallen under the temptation of ungodly and, dare I say, heathen behavior, which I suspect is more due to the lack of guidance by a true Christian such as myself, than any actual fault in their character, but it can explain their resistance to help us solve this problem once and for all.

I have taken it upon myself to cleanse this town of its moral depravity and believe I shall be successful with the guidance of someone with your... knowledge.

We can speak more about this delicate matter in person,

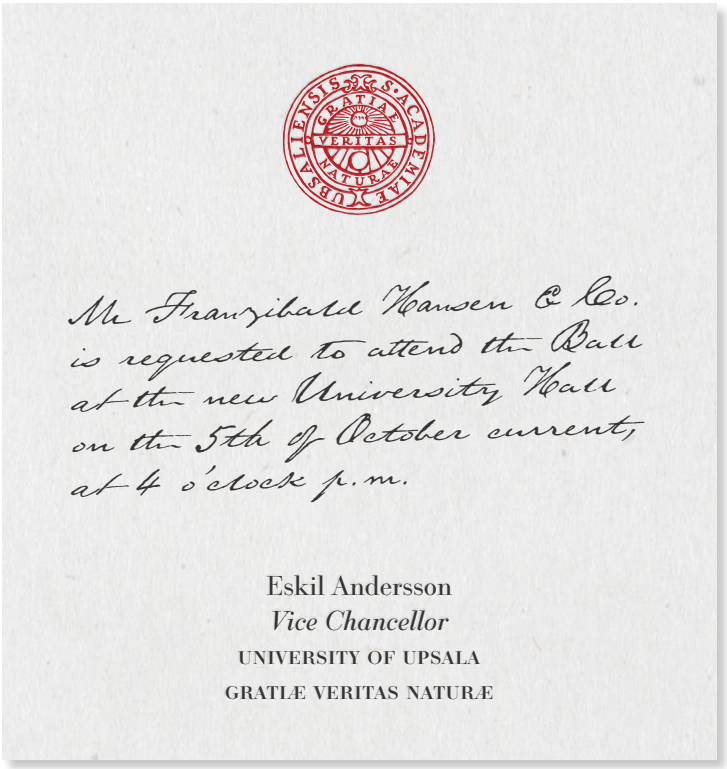
Reverend Bruselius

1A: *Reverend Bruselius' letter*

HELP COMING FOR OVERCROWDED ASYLUM

Twenty new patients were admitted to the Asylum last month, a significant increase that the upper management blamed on the unusually rainy summer. However, help is on its way. Experts from Stockholm arrived last week and already the situation has stabilized. Early projections estimate the problem with overcrowding will be solved by Christmas.

2A: *Newspaper article*



Mr Franzibald Hansen & Co.
is requested to attend the Ball
at the new University Hall
on the 5th of October current,
at 4 o'clock p.m.

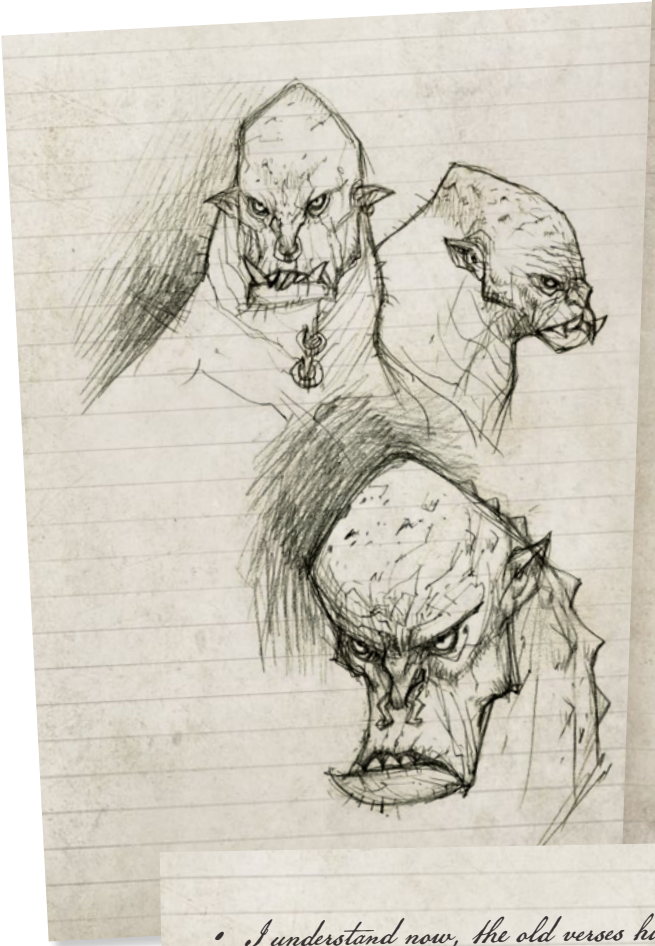
Eskil Andersson
Vice Chancellor
UNIVERSITY OF UPSALA
GRATIÆ VERITAS NATURÆ

2B: *Invitation to the Ball at the University of Upsala*

OVER THIRTY DEAD IN ABISKO MINE ACCIDENT

At least thirty miners are missing and presumed dead after a powerful explosion in the iron mine at Abisko. The damage to the mine is described as total, and the operators comment that it will likely not be re-opened in the short term. Few details are available, but the accident occurred after a new mine tunnel was opened. An unknown green mineral is reported to have been discovered in the new tunnel. The nature of the mineral, and if it triggered the blast or not, is unknown.

2C: *Old newspaper clipping*



- The vaesen are attracted to the light of the gemstone. The stone activates whenever one is near. It seems like they are feeding off each other's energies.

- The stones seem almost biological, as if they were once part of something alive.

- I found a very interesting reference in The Ballad of Vafthruthnir in The Poetic Edda:

Odin spake:
"First answer me well, if thy wisdom avails,
And thou knowest it, Vafthruthnir, now:
In earliest time, whence came the earth,
Or the sky, thou giant sage?"

Vafthruthnir spake:
"Out of Ymir's flesh, was fashioned the earth,
And the mountains were made of his bones;
The sky from the frost-cold giant's skull,
And the ocean out of his blood."

- I understand now, the old verses hide a titanic truth, the stones hold the powers of creation of both man and vaesen, magic and mundane! I have a hard time sleeping. The stones keep me awake, poisoning my mind. The fools at the University do not understand the dangers.

- Humans were never meant to discover these. The stones are clearly binding the unseen world of vaesen with our world. The consequences can be dire. We must stop the mining operations in the North. I must gather people I can trust to help me.

- Sigrid Magnusson — member of the Vanadisir?

- I am being followed. Hide my research.

2D: *Franzibald's Notebook*

SMC

Esteemed Sir/Madam,

You are cordially invited to the official opening of the research center of the Abisko Mine, hosted by the Svea Mining Corp, in conjunction with Upsala University.

Join us for an evening of erudite discourse and intellectual exchange, as leading experts in the field of mining and geology share their insights and knowledge. The event shall encompass a stimulating demonstration of our latest discoveries, insightful discussions, and ample opportunities for networking among esteemed professionals and academic luminaries.

Your presence at this gathering of intellectual minds shall be greatly cherished.

With utmost anticipation and admiration, we remain,

Yours respectfully,

Karl and Sigrid Magnusson
Svea Mining Corp

5A: *Invitation from Svea Mining Corp*

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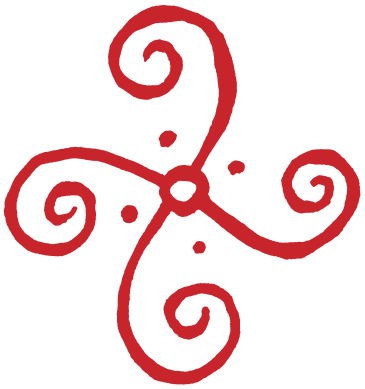

An ancient stone has been discovered in the dark caves of the Mythic North. Protected for thousands of years by creatures no longer walking this earth, these sacred stones were never meant to be found. However, as is the nature of human curiosity and greed, exploitation soon begins with little regard for potential risks or consequences.

The Lost Mountain Saga is an epic campaign of five Mysteries for *Vaesen – Nordic Horror Roleplaying*. Players can expect to encounter ancient mysteries, old Nordic folk tales, social intrigue, and unspeakable horrors lurking in every shadow as they travel across the North and slowly uncover the truth.

The Lost Mountain Saga is written by actor and podcaster Ellinor DiLorenzo and based on her original podcast with the same name but expanded and modified for this official release. The book is beautifully illustrated by Johan Egerkrans and Anton Vitus.

"As a Swede living in the United States who mostly plays with Americans, The Lost Mountain Saga was a way for me to bring everything that excites me about my own culture and customs to the table. From the sacred ritual of fika, to the often-romanticized Viking heritage, to some of our questionable political movements and of course, the terrifying creatures that used to haunt my dreams when I was a kid."

– Ellinor DiLorenzo

FREE LEAGUE

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and Johan Egerkrans

CONTENT WARNING
The old folk tales often expressed dark and mature themes, and thus the *Vaesen RPG* explores such themes as well. This is a horror game and not suitable for children, at least not without the Gamemaster first modifying the content.

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