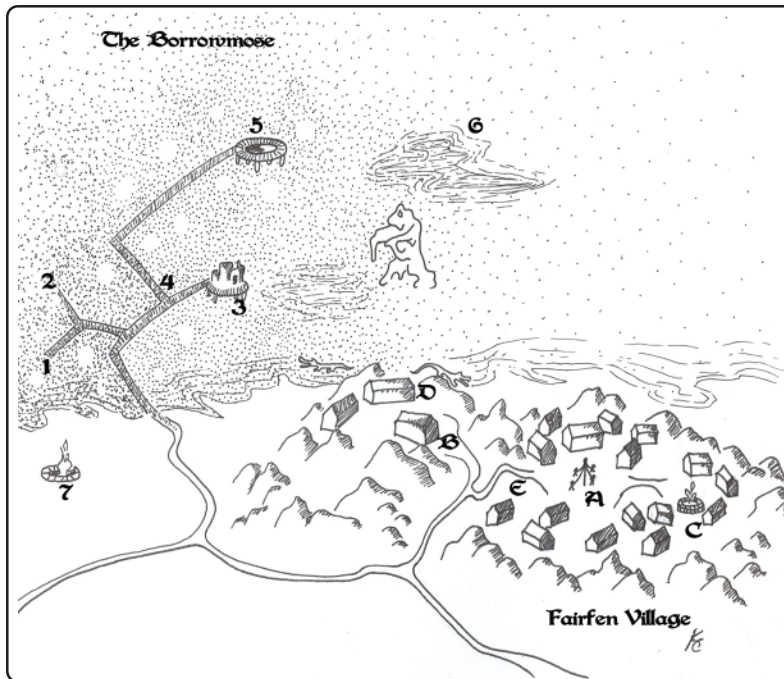


THE VILLAGE OF FAIRFEN

This village of about 130 men, women and children lies on a hillock overlooking a large, dangerous bog called the *Borremose*. These hard-working, friendly people make a living by farming, raising pigs and cattle, and by selling bog iron. While they prefer to be peaceful, the men of Fairfen Village are well trained with sword and spear and can defend themselves from those who might wish them harm.

Interest: The PCs are here because Fairfen is renowned for making the finest steel in the land, perfect for the creation of magical weapons and armor. The characters could be here at the request of some king or enchanter, or for themselves.



The Sacrifice: The items sacrificed by the PCs must meet certain qualifications or else the steel will, instead of being blessed by Volund, will be *cursed*. Any item made with the blessed steel is enchanted in half the time and powered as if cast by a wizard of five levels greater. Any item made with cursed steel is easy to enchant, but whatever enchantment is placed on it works against the user, rather than in his favor.

The sacrifices must meet one of these qualifications:

- Be unique and of exceptional personal attachment to the character.
- Be one of the character's three most valuable magic items.
- Be coin equal to 20% of the character's net worth.

A. The village green. As the PCs arrive, a festival is being held — full of dancing, games, a roast cow and friendly competitions. It is in honor of the King of Summer, a handsome, blonde lad of 17 named *Burri*. The King is treated as royalty for the next four weeks leading up to the village's most holy day, Midsummer, dedicated to their patron God, *Volund*. *Burri* is a strong, proud lad and while friendly, will not tolerate any mocking of himself or his position. If the PCs do not show him respect, he becomes their enemy and does little things to make their lives in Fairfen more difficult. Likewise, if they honor him or give him gifts, he becomes their best friend.

B. This longhouse overlooks the approach to Fairfen and is the home of the headman, *Red Elof*, whose red hair is now mostly gray. He is the one the PCs must negotiate with to get their steel. He loves to barter, but will accept a fair price. The steel must be made for them and he allows the party to stay with him.

C. *Hagen the Smith* is both a smith and the High Priest of Volund. He offers to show the PCs the process of making their steel which involves 2 weeks of collecting it from the bog (area #1 & #2) and a week preparing a smelting pit (area #7).

D. The home of *Stig Elofsson*. A few days into their stay, Stig asks a PC to meet with him privately. He wants to be King of Summer and asks the PCs to kill *Burri* for him. One way he might suggest is to have them go hunting the Shambling Mound rumored to be deep in the swamp, and have *Burri* not survive. He offers to double the amount of iron they are getting in exchange.

E. The home of *Rolf Woodcutter*. The day after the PCs are approached by Stig, a group of four other adventurers arrive in Fairfen — *Belus the Stongarmed*, *Lenus the Holy*, *Taranis the Lightning Thrower*, and *Cessaira of the Shadows* — and are lodged here. They are rude and loutish foreigners, here also for the magic iron. They will take up Stig's offer if the PCs have refused him.

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The Borrowmose: The bog is home to a variety of dangers: quicksand, snakes, poisonous plants and even monsters. To avoid these hazards, the villagers have built a network of wooden roads. Will-o-Wisps are common in the swamp but staying on the roads keeps a person safe from them.

1. The current iron "mining" area. The villagers use poles to probe down into the swamp. When they encounter solid matter they hop in and dig it out. This area is almost mined out and it is abandoned on day 6 in favor of area 2.

2. Once area #1 is mined out, the villagers spend a day pulling up the wooden road and re-laying it to reach this area. PCs willing to help with this dirty job earn respect from the miners.

3. The temple area. Villagers come here twice a week (led by Hagen) and make prayer to Volund. Small sacrifices (usually of handmade items) are made one a week. If the current King dies or goes missing, a new one is appointed after an all night meeting of the village elders. It is Stig, who volunteers for it, and his ceremony takes place here. All of the visitors are invited.

4. The PCs are told that this path has sunk into the swamp a short way out of sight and is no longer used.

5. This temple to Volund is only used for special ceremonies on the equinoxes and solstices. If the characters are respectful and good guests, they are invited to the Midsummer ceremony where the King is dethroned. He is tied and ritually strangled before being thrown into the bog. Exploring the bog here uncovers the remains of many victims, as well as iron, gold and silver items.

6. The lair of a Shambling Mound. Its nest is full of shiny metal objects, mostly mundane, but it does contain a magic hunting horn and a chalice made of ivory laced with gold.

7. The smelting pit. On day 15 (or day 22 if the PCs are getting a double order) the iron is ready to be processed into steel. Hagen supervises the digging of a pit and the gathering of much wood from the nearby hills. The entire village gathers at dusk and prays to Volund. Hagen instructs the PCs to each make a sacrifice of something meaningful to them and place it on the pyre. It is then lit aflame and burns for the next three days. Hagen then spends 4-8 days hammering the steel out.