



# RUNECAIRN

## Beneath the Broken Sword

By Colin Le Sueur










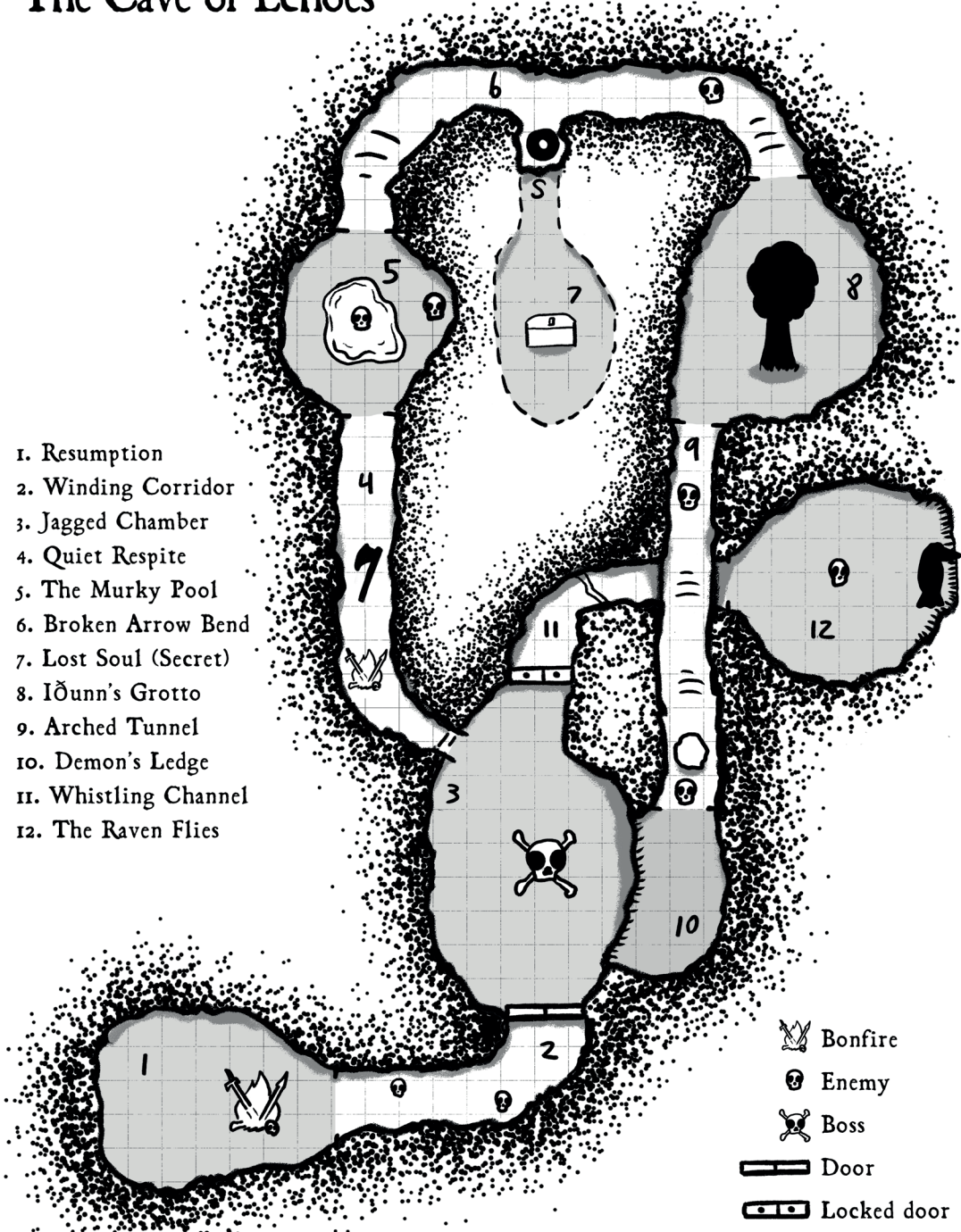
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# The Cave of Echoes

1. Resumption
2. Winding Corridor
3. Jagged Chamber
4. Quiet Respite
5. The Murky Pool
6. Broken Arrow Bend
7. Lost Soul (Secret)
8. Iðunn's Grotto
9. Arched Tunnel
10. Demon's Ledge
11. Whistling Channel
12. The Raven Flies

1 square = 5 feet

-  Bonfire
-  Enemy
-  Boss
-  Door
-  Locked door
-  Secret
-  Ledge





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**Inspired by:** Dark Souls, Icelandic Sagas,  
Old School Essentials, Valheim

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Runecairn is based on Cairn by Yochai Gal.



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# INTRODUCTION

## About This Adventure

*Beneath the Broken Sword* is a starting adventure intended to introduce new wardens and players to the world and setting of **Runecairn**.

This adventure is recommended as the **start** of a one-shot or longer campaign and can be finished in **2-3 hours**.

### Runecairn

To run this adventure, the warden requires a copy of **Runecairn: Core Rules**. Runecairn is best played with a warden and 1 player.

### Characters

This adventure is suitable for **fresh** characters of any **starting class**, though characters with **1 Vigour** are lost quickly.

Four pre-made characters are included on the **rear inside cover**.

### Death is not the end

Slain characters wake at the last bonfire rested at, but lose **1 Vigour**. They keep all items and all physical changes in the cave are **not** reset.

Enemies previously killed respawn in their original location with no memory of their deaths. Stronger enemies (such as the **stone demon**) do not return once slain.

### Bonfires

Resting at a bonfire heals an adventurer's **Resilience**, re-fills their **mead flask**, and restores any **temporary ability damage**.

Resting at a bonfire also revives any defeated enemies, who retain no memory of their deaths. Stronger monsters (such as the stone demon) are **not** revived.

## Overview

### Background

In a long forgotten age, a raging war shattered and devastated the worlds of gods and men.

Now green life blooms amidst the ruins of the lost worlds. Wondrous and terrible beings roam the Nine Realms. Civilisation stumbles forward, fresh and reaching.

Fate weaves the skein anew but there are loose threads, lost long ago in the wars, with no place in the tapestry. These threads must seek the fire within and weave their own path.

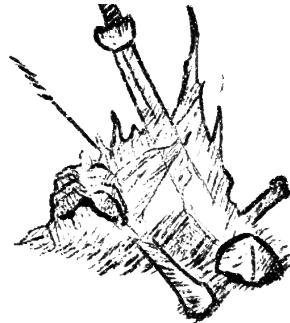
### The Adventurer

You wake in an echoing cave lit by a waning bonfire, with little memory of who you are or how you arrived here. You wear your armour but carry no weapons or items.

As you venture further into the cave and find your scattered equipment, you start to regain fragments of lost memory.

### Goal

The adventurer must **navigate** the **Cave of Echoes**, **retrieve** their **weapons and items**, **acquire** their **mead flask**, and **overcome** the **stone demon** to **escape** further into the **Nine Realms**.



# LOCATIONS

## The Cave of Echoes

One of the crossroads of the Nine Realms, the cave is a knot in the skein of fate. Time flows differently and magic bleeds from the other planes.

Because of this, **omens** are triggered in a new way in the cave, in addition to when an adventurer's **Resilience** is reduced to exactly 0.

Roll **d6** when the adventurer enters a new room - a **6** triggers an **Omen**. Consult the new **Omens table** found on the **rear inside cover**.

### 1. Resumption

Embers from a waning bonfire crackle and drift around the echoing cave, flickering on the jagged walls damp with condensation. You slowly wake, with no memory of who you are or how you got here.

- Warmth of the **waning bonfire** fills the area
- Light from the fire dances on a **broken sword** leaning against the cave wall
- Smoke trails towards the **opening to the East**, masking the damp scent of the cave
- **Moss and lichen** line the rough walls, growing with abandon

**Waning bonfire.** Flickers and crackles but flames never go out. Charred and blackened spear driven into the stone floor at the centre of the flames.

Rather than wood, **bones** burn in the fire - bleached skulls and femurs.

**Broken sword.** Rusted and dented, iron blade snapped near the hilt, nearly dull but better than nothing (**d3 damage**, no **skills**).



### Exits

→ **North to the Winding Corridor (2):**

**Opening to the East.** Gradual incline. Intermittent sound of metal scraping on stone.

### 2. Winding Corridor

Two ragged, emaciated forms stagger languidly from one side of the cave to the other, occasionally raising a withered arm to strike the jagged wall with a ruined sword hilt. They see you but their eyes are empty voids.

- **Ragged forms** look like men but their movement is empty and listless, skin dried and worn like faded leather; sharp sound of their hilts as they strike the stone walls
- Corridor narrows and winds to the North, leading to a set of **stone double doors** reaching from floor to ceiling

### Exits

→ **North to the Jagged Chamber (3)**

**Stone double doors.** Hewn from the cave walls, two enormous handles. Doors open easily, revealing an enormous chamber filled with stalactites and stalagmites.

### Encounters

The ragged forms are **shades** but do not react if provoked or attacked. They die silently with no fight.

### 3. The Jagged Chamber

Sharp wind shrieks through the vast chamber as you enter. Craggy stalactites reach from the sunken ceiling and gnarled stalagmites collect green water in shallow pools.

- At the opposite end of the chamber, set of towering **carved doors**
- **Smashed crater** in the centre, strewn with broken chunks of stone
- **Obscured ledge** visible behind jagged stone outcropping
- **Cramped tunnel** behind a cluster of stalagmites
- Heavy, **piercing stalactites** hang from the ceiling, precarious and barbed

**Smashed crater.** Radiating cracks within deep indentation filled with broken stalagmites and shattered yellowed bones.

**Obscured ledge.** Far above the floor, wind howls from an unseen alcove. Hulking shadow occasionally visible moving.

#### Exits

→ **North to Whistling Channel (11)**  
**[locked]**

**Carved doors.** Set of double doors, intricate raven reliefs on both faded by time and wind. Two round keyholes the size of a fist at the centre of each door. Cold wind whistles through the keyholes.

Two keys are required: the **stone demon** holds one key and the other is found on **Demon's Ledge (10)**. Both keys unlock the door with a resounding chunk. The heavy doors swing open easily and piercing, whistling wind whips into the room.

→ **South to Winding Corridor (2)**

→ **West to Quiet Respite (4)**

**Cramped tunnel.** Just large enough to fit through. Dim, flickering light reveals a path.

#### Encounters

Above the room, the **stone demon** emerges from Demon's Ledge and jumps down into the smashed crater.

You hear the thundering sound of an avalanche. A massive grey blur crashes down into the chamber in front of you, revealing a hulking humanoid shape, rocky and pitted flesh misshapen and deformed. A large bronze key hangs from its neck.

The demon raises an enormous stone club and advances.

**1st encounter.** Unless they run the demon will very likely kill the adventurer, as they have no **key item**, **mead flask**, or available **skills**.

If they run, the demon smashes the stone above the tunnel, collapsing it and blocking entry to the **Jagged Chamber**.

If they die, they'll respawn at the bonfire in **Cave of Echoes (1)**.

**2nd encounter.** When coming from **Demon's Ledge**, the adventurer should be better prepared.

The demon can be overcome through combat, stealth, guile, or magic and all methods reward a **Soul**.

#### Stone demon

9 **RES**, 2 **DEF**, 13 **STR**, 6 **DEX**, 6 **WIT**, 6 **SPI**, 20ft, club (d6), ground slam (d8), grab

- **Grab: DEX** save to avoid losing next turn and d6 damage from stone grip
- **Dire strike (ground slam): STR** save to avoid broken bones and **d4 DEX** damage
- The demon crumbles into dust when defeated, granting **1 Soul** and dropping the **Wanderer's Key** (unlocks the first lock in the **carved doors**)



## 4. Quiet Respite

The soft, flickering light of a bonfire dances on the smooth stone walls of the hushed corridor.

- Warm and **comforting bonfire** burns, charred bones fuelling the flame
- **Wolfskin wrap** rests on a rectangular flat stone at the centre of the corridor
- Corridor continues to the **North**

**Comforting bonfire.** Resting here for a few moments heals any injuries and rejuvenates the spirit.

**Wolfskin wrap.** Wrapped in the wolfskin is a **sacrificial bundle** and the **main weapons** of the adventurer.

Starting class	Weapon retrieved
Warrior	Bearded axe
Skald	Steel sword
Scout	Hunting knives
Seer	Yew staff

Upon seeing them, memories of a previous life flood back, including who they were and what fate befell them.

The adventurer regains the ability to use **weapon** and **item skills**.

### Exits

→ **North to the Murky Pool (5)**

**Northern corridor.** Dim, echoing sounds of water. Corridor opens to a circular hollow.



## 5. The Murky Pool

The narrow corridor opens to a broad cavern with a high curved dome ceiling covered in mushrooms and lichen. At the centre of the cavern lies a murky pool. A dusty skeleton sits against the Eastern wall.

- **Pungent smell** of wet rot and decay, heavy moisture in the air
- **Dripping sound** as condensation trickles into the **murky pool**
- **Crumbling skeleton** slouches against the rough wall, skull lolling with one leg outstretched
- Jagged stone corridor to the **North**

**Murky pool.** Depth impossible to gauge, sides slick with green algae. A **skeleton** hides inside the pool, its bony fingers barely visible clinging onto the sides.

### Exits

→ **North to Broken Arrow Bend (6)**

→ **South to Quiet Respite (4)**

### Encounters

The lounging **skeleton** stands up and attacks the adventurer when they get close.

The second **skeleton** inside the pool climbs out and attacks the adventurer from behind if not spotted or heard.

### Skeleton

8 **RES**, 10 **STR**, 8 **DEX**, 4 **WIT**, 4 **SPI**, 30ft, spear (d6)

- Pale bones picked clean, maniacal grin underneath empty sockets
- A hollow clatter warns when they're near
- Roll d12 when defeated; on a 1, reforms at **4 RES**

### Treasure

There's a glowing **soul remnant** at the bottom of the murky pool.

## 6. Broken Arrow Bend

The irregular rocky ground slants upward and the corridor curves, revealing a long flat tunnel.

- Handful of **broken arrows** litter the ground at a bend in the cave
- **Ragged bowman** waits at the end, holding a bow with a nocked arrow
- **Cramped alcove** halfway down the corridor
- **Southeast path** at the end of the corridor rises

**Ragged bowman.** Dressed in tattered clothing, dim aggression in its eyes. Spots the adventurer unless hidden; similar to the previous shades but more aggressive.

**Cramped alcove.** Offers protection from the archer's arrows. Resting against the rear wall is another **wolfskin wrap**. Cracks criss-cross the stone wall behind the wrap.

Removing the wolfskin causes a loose stone to fall and clatter to the ground. Pushing the stone aside reveals a **secret room**.

**Wolfskin wrap.** Wrapped inside are the adventurer's **secondary items** (everything else they were missing).

Retrieving the items results in another flood of memories, including what the adventurer seeks in the lush new world.

### Exits

- **South to Lost Cell (7) (Secret)**
- **Southeast to Iðunn's Grotto (8)**

**Southeast path.** Fresh breeze blows, bringing with it the soft scent of blossoms.

- **Southwest to the Murky Pool (5)**

### Encounters

The **shade** bowman fires at the adventurer if not hidden (20 poor arrows, d3). Switches to unarmed if confronted in melee.



### Shade

3 **RES**, 10 **STR**, 8 **DEX**, 9 **WIT**, 4 **SPI**, 20ft, claw (d4)

- Hollow dead devoid of humanity; a shadow of the person that was
- Drawn to the living, gather in hordes

## 7. Lost Cell (Secret)

The broken stones clatter as you enter the chamber. The ceiling is low and the air old and stale. Sitting on the stone floor in front of you is a battered wooden chest.

- Oak **weathered chest**, covered in two large gouges and banded in rusted iron

**Weathered chest.** Damage looks to be from an axe. Unlocked, opens easily and reveals a relic, the **Armband of the Fylgja**.

### Treasure

**Armband of the Fylgja**, 3 charges. Hammered bronze armband etched with animal likenesses. Summons an animal spirit that leads you to fate or fortune. Recharge: Bury a spiced parcel of meat with a coin under a fallen tree.

## 8. Iðunn's Grotto

The cramped path opens to reveal a lush grotto exposed to the sky. Radiant beams of sunlight bathe the cavern in golden glow. A sprawling tree flourishes at the centre, brilliant red apples dotted amongst the green. A hooded woman tends to the tree, holding a wooden basket.

- **Fresh breeze** caresses exposed skin, the **smell of apple and honey** fills the senses
- Vast **apple tree** reaches up to the clear blue sky
- **Hooded woman** harvests apples from the tree, placing them in her basket
- Daylight returns to shadow in the **southern passage**

**Apple tree.** Ancient and gnarled, covered in countless red apples. Grows far above the cave's stone walls.

**Hooded woman.** Stooped, small and frail. Simple white cloak, hood drawn around her head. She turns and greets the adventurer.



Iðis

Iðis:

- *Soft spoken, dialect antiquated, piercing eyes*
- Simple orchard tender, has been tending trees like this for as long as she can remember
- The apples heal and rejuvenate; she brews them into apple mead that refreshes the spirit
- To leave the cave, the demon of stone must be overcome

She gives the adventurer a leather belt and **mead flask**, a horn filled with apple mead.

Once she presents the flask, the tree and the hooded woman disappear from the grotto, leaving only beams of sunlight and the faint scent of apples.



**Mead flask:**

- Starts with **2 sips**, replenishes when resting at a bonfire
- Each sip restores **10 RES** and clears **2 points of Fatigue**

**Exits**

- **North to Broken Arrow Bend (6)**
- **South to Arched Tunnel (9)**

**Southern passage.** Heavily shadowed, path leading up over jagged stone.

## 9. Arched Tunnel

The rocky terrain forms a crude natural staircase, obscured in heavy shadow. The path climbs further up, leading to a shallow arch.

- Soft **whistling sound** coming from somewhere far under the stone
- **Crumpled form** in a heap at the peak of the arch
- **Smooth incline** at the end of the tunnel
- **Broken and shattered bones** at the base of the incline

**Crumpled form.** Wearing tattered clothing, lifeless and curled up around a spear. A **shade**, feigning death.

**Broken and shattered bones.** Crushed to powder from some massive object, scattered and strewn down the path.

### Exits

- **North to Iðunn's Grotto (8)**
- **South to Demon's Ledge (10)**

**Smooth incline.** Further ahead the jagged ground smooths out and becomes a gradual ascent.

### Encounters

The **shade** attacks if disturbed or if the adventurer moves away.

Another **shade** at the top of the incline rolls down a **massive boulder** once the adventurer approaches.

- **DEX save** to avoid the boulder and d8 damage

### Shade

3 **RES**, 10 **STR**, 8 **DEX**, 9 **WIT**, 4 **SPI**, 20ft, claw (d4)

- Hollow dead devoid of humanity; a shadow of the person that was
- Drawn to the living, gather in hordes

## 10. Demon's Ledge

Flat, broad room littered with piles of broken and smashed bones, shattered weaponry, and crushed armour. Massive cracks litter the stone ground and jagged walls, as if smashed by something immense.

- **Crashing echoes** of something huge moving around nearby
- Compacted stone ground, covered in a dense layer of **fine dust**
- On the western side, the ground leads to a **rocky ledge** overlooking a wide open area
- **Heavy iron key** hangs from a hook on the southern wall

**Fine dust.** Stalactites hang overhead but the only remaining stalagmites are on the edges. All others have been crushed to powder.

**Rocky ledge.** Overlooks the **Jagged Chamber** and the **stone demon** below. The crashing sound is the demon pacing the cavern.

**Heavy iron key.** Explorer's Key. Unlocks the second lock in the **carved doors** in the **Jagged Chamber**.

### Exits

- **Down to the Jagged Chamber (3)**

**Plunging attack.** If they choose to be so bold, the adventurer gains *damage advantage* in a plunging attack on the demon (with axe, sword, or knives).

### Encounters

The demon ignores the adventurer unless provoked, allowing for a surprise attack.

If attacked at range the **stone demon** leaps from the **Jagged Chamber** to **Demon's Ledge**.

- **DEX save** to avoid being crushed for d8 damage

## 11. Whistling Channel

Violent, piercing wind shrieks through the narrow stone channel, cold tearing at your skin and chilling your breath. Ice gathers on the stone walls and the path is perilous.

- The wind carries a **foul stench** and drowns out most sound
- **Frozen stream** crosses the ground, water running from deeper inside the cave
- **Mist and fog** gathers near the end, obscuring the path

### Exits

#### → East to the Raven Flies (12)

*Mist and fog.* Stationary even through the violent wind. Daylight just visible in the distance.

## 12. The Raven Flies

Pushing through the fog, you find a plateau exposed to the sky. An enormous raven is perched on a broad ash stump, black eyes staring. Between you and the raven is a dead thing, clad in broken and rusted armour, wielding a bearded axe, eyes glowing with red malevolence.

- **Stinging wind** even stronger, lashing exposed skin and carrying a **putrid stench**
- Death-blue **dead warrior** waits, red eyes scanning
- The **enormous raven** shuffles on its perch, watching

*Enormous raven.* 10 feet tall, pitch black feathers, enormous grasping talons. Cocks its head at the adventurer.

*Exposed plateau.* The cave is revealed to be flying hundreds of feet above the ground, forests and mountains visible through cold mist.



### Encounters

*Draugr.* The dead warrior is a **draugr**. Its lips peel back in a smile when it sees the adventurer.

- Speaks with a cold guttural voice full of hatred and bile
- Fought against the living in the war that was
- Demands the adventurer forfeit the **Soul** they earned from overcoming the demon or forfeit 1 point of **Vigour**; attacks if refused
- The freezing wind stops once the draugr is defeated or placated, replaced by brilliant sunshine

### Draugr

8 **RES**, 1 **DEF**, 11 **STR**, 8 **DEX**, 9 **WIT**, 6 **SPI**, 20ft, spear/axe (d6)

- Death-blue corpse driven by hatred for the living, eyes burn with red malice
- Emit a reeking stench that marks their presence
- At close range, **STR** save to avoid losing a turn to vomit

**Raven.** Bows head when the adventurer approaches.

Beckons to the air with its wing, in essence asking if they are ready to journey to the land beyond.

The raven crouches and springs up off the tree stump, taking to the air with a gust from its wings. Circling around, it hovers for a moment before grasping you firmly in wicked talons. You fly off into the unknown sky, onward into the new world below.

- The adventurer successfully escaped the **Cave of Echoes**

## Further Into the Nine Realms

Now suitably prepared, the journey continues for the adventurer.

Potential future adventure hooks:

- **Unearth** the source of the **rekindling bonfires**
- **Traverse** the planes to locate your remaining **kin**
- **Hunt** the wandering **titans**
- **Slay** the furtive Aesir and **achieve godhood**

The gods have fallen  
Fresh life blooms from the ruin  
Fate is yours to weave

## Death Is Not The End



# MONSTERS

## Draugr

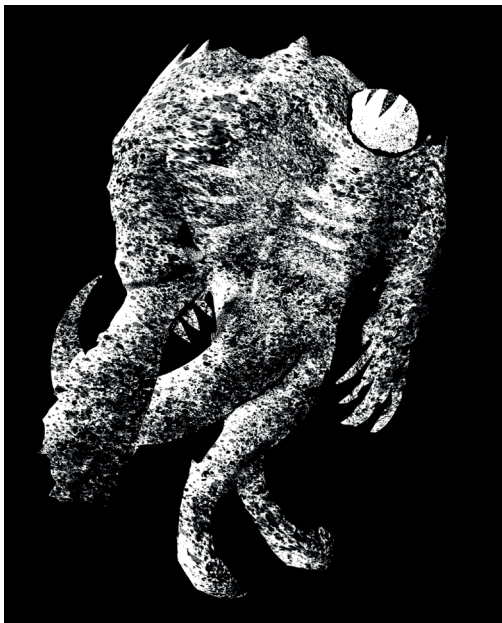
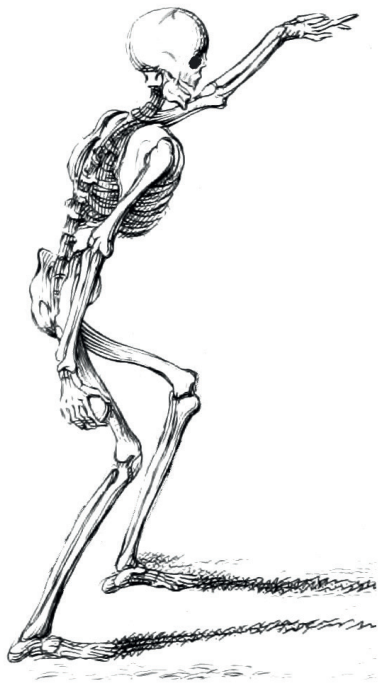
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## Shade

3 **RES**, 10 **STR**, 8 **DEX**, 9 **WIT**, 4 **SPI**, 20ft, claw (d4)

- Hollow dead devoid of humanity; a shadow of the person that was
- Drawn to the living, gather in hordes



## Skeleton

8 **RES**, 10 **STR**, 8 **DEX**, 4 **WIT**, 4 **SPI**, 30ft, spear (d6)

- Pale bones picked clean, maniacal grin underneath empty sockets
- A hollow clatter warns when they're near
- Roll d12 when defeated; on a 1, reforms at **4 RES**

## Stone demon

9 **RES**, 2 **DEF**, 13 **STR**, 6 **DEX**, 6 **WIT**, 6 **SPI**, 20ft, club (d6), ground slam (d8), grab

- Hulking humanoid shape, rocky and pitted flesh bloated and deformed
- Keepers of lost and forgotten places
- **Grab: DEX** save to avoid losing next turn and d6 damage from stone grip
- **Dire strike (ground slam): STR** save to avoid broken bones and **d4 DEX** damage

## Omens in The Cave of Echoes

- 1 A piece of the cave ceiling crumbles away, revealing a shaft of sunlight that bathes you in brilliance; your **mead flask** gains **1 temporary sip**
- 2 A spectral apparition appears before you, an echo of another life and death; it runs past but you soon see the phantom die horribly [*to the dangers of the cave*] before vanishing
- 3 A pair of luminescent spectral ravens appear, circle your head, and fly toward [*the nearest secret or hidden danger*]
- 4 Flickering ghostly writing appears on the walls of the cave: "Don't give up, skeleton!" or "Praise the sun!" - gain **advantage** on your next **save**
- 5 The entire cave rocks back and forth, as if a ship on the sea, and you struggle to keep balance; **STR save** to avoid being thrown to the ground
- 6 You suddenly hear the voices of the dead echoing around the cave, screaming in terror, and you struggle to maintain courage; **SPI save** to avoid **disadvantage** on your next **save**
- 7 A fiery floating spectral skull appears, screams, and explodes; **DEX save** to avoid **d6 blast damage** (affects all targets)
- 8 Invasion by a dark spirit: A red spectral form materialises next to you, hatred etched on its features; roll **d4** on the **NPCs** table below for invader



### 1. Bodil (Warrior)

3 DEF, 4 RES (2 Vigour and 2 Vitality), 12 STR, 10 DEX, 6 WIT, 11 SPI

Bearded axe (d8), ash wood spear (d6, 20'), 5 slots free



### 2. Ingólfur (Skald)

2 DEF, 3 RES (2 Vigour and 1 Vitality), 8 STR, 12 DEX, 6 WIT, 12 SPI

Steel sword (d6), lightning spear d8), 5 slots free



### 3. Arne (Seer)

0 DEF, 4 RES (2 Vigour and 2 Vitality), 8 STR, 9 DEX, 12 WIT, 9 SPI

Yew staff (d6), seiðr spear (d10), 7 free slots



### 4. Gunhild (Scout)

1 DEF, 5 RES (2 Vigour and 3 Vitality), 8 STR, 12 DEX, 8 WIT, 11 SPI

Hunting knives (d6), elm shortbow (d6, 60'), 5 slots free



# Beneath the Broken Sword

The world as you knew it is gone, destroyed in the war that was. You awake in crumbling ruins, lost and trapped in a cycle of death. You must seek the fire within and escape to weave your own fate.

*An introductory Norse fantasy adventure  
for new characters.*

Designed to be played with one player and one warden.

**Requires *Runecairn: Core Rules***



BY ODIN'S BEARD RPG