

CODEX OF THE INFINITE PLANES

VOLUME XXVI:

HEROIC DOMAINS OF YSGARD

THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO THE PLANES OF EXISTENCE



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HEROIC DOMAINS OF YSGARD

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VOLUME XXVI: HEROIC DOMAINS OF YSGARD

“Shouts, songs, and the ringing of steel resound across the rugged realms of Ysgard, a plane of thrilling victory, agonizing defeat, and little in between. This is the home of warriors and heroes who continually test their personal mettle against a vast array of elements, including nature itself, all watched over by very petty powers known as the Aesir. Everything on Ysgard in grand in scope, including the egos of the inhabitants, but there is a wild electric thrill in the air that gets the heart pumping. Nothing stands still here, even the dead, and only in the throes of frenetic action does anyone find serenity.”

Emirikol the Chaotic

Valor and bravery are the ideological pillars that support everything in the Heroic Domains of Ysgard. And how does one prove valor and bravery? Through combat, of course, or so believes the dominant powers of Ysgard, and the battlefields of the plane are thick with armies trying to prove their worth in the eyes of their godly peers.

Ysgard could be easily mistaken for a Material Plane, especially the top layer, but everything is on an epic scale. Mountains soar into the veil of clouds, hiding dangerous secrets in their roots, and bitter winds blow across mighty fjords, ice plains, titanic rivers, and ancient forests. The seasons are as sharp as any blade, changing seemingly at random between scorching summers, crisp autumns, bleak winters, and flourishing springs.

The top layer shares the name as the plane, and it is comprised of countless continents floating in an infinite sky. These break up the realms into grand islands, and smaller pieces known as earthbergs float and crash into one another constantly. It's not as inherently violent as the clanging cubes of Acheron, but the movement still underscores an air of conflict that permeates the very fabric of Ysgard.

The underside of each floating island and earthberg rages with crimson fire, providing a flaming ceiling for the layer of Muspelheim. Here, refugees from the Plane of Fire mingle with the glory-obsessed natives among rivers of earth between an infinite inferno sea. Sharp volcanic rocks jut from the land at irregular intervals, occasionally moving among the lava flows, and everywhere is baked by an excessive heat not unlike the Plane of Fire. Below Muspelheim, the layer of Nidavellir sits in an infinite underground expanse with broad caves and tunnels crisscrossing the length.

Ysgard is the home of heroes and villains on a grand scale, and the native celestial creatures meet that scale on every level. The celestials are known as jotuns, and they resemble giants – slightly smaller in stature, though with the capability of growing larger, they embody the virtues and vices of Ysgard. Many are good-natured warriors, but some are black-hearted creatures who delight in destruction, mischief, and mayhem.

The floating earthbergs of the first layer are home to a wide variety of warriors, many of whom died glorious or valorous deaths across the planes and have come to

Ysgard as their final reward. The most numerous residents are the vanir, who have built a strong warrior culture in grand feasthalls, honoring a legion of powers known as the Aesir. The Aesir are immensely powerful but supremely petty gods that include Odin, Frigg, Thor, and Balder. They mettle constantly in the affairs of the vanir and wage wars with one another to prove their strength over all others.

Elves can also be found in Ysgard, living in a wild enchanted forest known as Alfheim, and dwarves and gnomes dwell in the depths of Nidavellir. The cavernous lowest layer of the plane also holds duergar and drow, beings normally associated with evil purposes, but in Nidavellir they mostly want to be left alone. Rarely they organize raids on neighboring kingdoms but for the most part the peace of solitude and isolation reigns in the lowest layer.

Most residents of Ysgard skew towards good alignments, but they have a ritualistic fascination with battle, war, and conflict. They must prove themselves, whether to the Aesir or other powers, and to be found worthy on the field of battle is the greatest honor. Wars rage between large clans regularly, and they also have the formidable monsters that dwell in the wilderness to deal with. A rampaging hildisvini, or battle swine, can decimate a clan hall if left unchecked, but to kill one is not an evil act – it is a triumph of personal glory over the dangers of the wilderness.

Ysgard is a dangerous place for the unprepared, but for those willing to stand up in combat, whether it be against a foe in a practice ring or against a horde of gibbering trolls, glory can be found along with the rich rewards of personal honor and bravery before incalculable odds. Death is rarely the end of a person's journey in Ysgard, thus creating a never-ending cycle of birth, valor, death, and rebirth that fuels the plane and keeps the residents moving.

LAY OF THE LAND

Ysgard is a plane larger than life itself, and the landscape reflects that. Everything is bigger and on a grander scale across the layers, from the majestic mountains and chilly glaciers atop floating continents to the raging sea of fire topped with obsidian shards to the isolated underground tunnels and caverns filled with mystery and danger. Visitors are often caught off-guard by the sheer scope of Ysgard, and it can be incredibly daunting for the unprepared.

YSGARD

The top layer shares its name with the plane itself, and contains the vast majority of the heroic domains Ysgard is known for. The domains here are titanic earthbergs floating amidst clouds and brilliant skies, each topped with grand scenery that is both breathtakingly beautiful and starkly dangerous. Forests, mountains, swamps, and more can be found here, but there always seems to be something of grand importance about each one. A range of mountains may have been carved from the sword of an Aesir-born hero, while a forest holds a tree that has stood untouched for thousands of years.

Navigating around the earthbergs of Ysgard can be tricky. One clan of warriors are known as the Sky Vikings, and they build great longships capable of soaring on the winds. Other clans simply wait for an earthberg to collide and then join in battle against whomever is on the other side. The spirits of the honored dead, einherjar, are capable of carrying a large number of warriors across the sky as well.

MUSPELHEIM

The bottom side of each Ysgardian earthberg is a crimson field of spouting flames. This provides the ceiling to Muspelheim, the realm below the earthbergs, and it shares many traits with the Plane of Fire. Rivers of earth run through an infinite sea of moving, shifting lava, and titanic shards of obsidian rise up regularly to pierce the reddened sky. Fire giants, smolder jotun, and numerous creatures of fire and brimstone occupy Muspelheim, and while it is largely inhospitable it isn't necessarily evil.

Many jotuns maintain enormous forges in Muspelheim using ore mined from the floating earthbergs or dug up from Nidavellir below. The largest of these is the massive complex called the Brimstone Forge, where jotuns of all kind come to craft mighty weapons and armor.

NIDAVELLIR

Nidavellir is a dark, cavernous realm below the burning landscape of Muspelheim. It is a vast ocean of stone, and like an ocean waves rise up and down, shifting the landscape in ways both small and dramatic. Countless tunnels cut through the earthen sea of Nidavellir, serving as roads between the isolated homes of dwarves, gnomes, drow, duergar, and other underground creatures. Exiled forlorn jotun wander the tunnels as well, angry and alone.

One of the great themes of Nidavellir is self-sufficiency. The residents pride themselves on never asking for help from outsiders, though that doesn't mean they don't need it from time to time. Possessing stubborn pride is a point of honor for the natives, and even if they do accept help they offer little in terms of rewards or congratulations.

CYCLE OF TIME

Ysgard is a plane of wild, chaotic cycles. Without intervention, on the first layer, day and night shift in roughly 12 hour intervals, with a sun rising up from Muspelheim before descending and being replaced by a massive moon rising up from Nidavellir. However, the Aesir and other powerful beings are capable of altering this cycle, which happens on a regular basis.

Seasons come and go with the same alarming frequency, though usually lasting a few days at least before shifting per the whim of a powerful deity somewhere on Ysgard. It becomes a game of push-and-pull for the gods of Ysgard, with each deity expressing their personal seasonal preference in a jockeying battle for dominance.

Muspelheim and Nidavellir are much more stable. A reddish glow fills the skies of Muspelheim at all times, becoming more intense with the rising and falling of the sun, and the shifting stone sea of Nidavellir sees neither day nor night in its underground state.

SURVIVING

Though bigger and more violent than most Material Planes, the top layer of Ysgard is not especially hostile to life. Falling off an earthberg can be a problem, however – the descent plunges the victim into the lava sea of Muspelheim after falling for several miles, a journey resulting in instant death except through powerful intervention.

Muspelheim's fiery landscape is sweltering but doesn't inflict damage by itself. The exception is the rising and falling of the sun from the lava lake, a process that takes roughly an hour and inflicts 35 (10d6) fire damage per minute to exposed creatures across the layer. The local giants and jotun consider this the peak of the day and do everything they can to be outside during the fiery window.

GETTING THERE

Spontaneous gates frequently appear across the multiverse leading to Ysgard in places of great military conflicts. The crescendo clashing of mighty armies on a sunbaked field can suddenly throw warriors from all sides tumbling to a similar field on Ysgard, and these temporary gates usually only last a brief moment. Particularly impactful battlefields, the ones that saw the death of a great hero or the triumph of lesser forces over a mighty foe, can sometimes create permanent portals as well, and these are frequently accessed by personal items of soldiers that participated in those momentous battles.

Ysgard is also the home of Yggdrasil the World Tree, an enormous ash tree whose roots spread out from a hidden earthberg across the multiverse itself. The roots form tunnels that pass through the planar borders, finding exit points in many Upper Planes and Material Planes. Usually these appear in a cavernous opening below a particularly ancient ash tree, accessible only by speaking the name Yggdrasil in the Celestial language.

Yggdrasil's main root complexes spread between the three layers of Ysgard and also connects to Pandemonium, where many of jotuns spend a great deal of time (especially the laughing jotuns who keep their secrets far from the prying eyes of the Aesir).

TRAVELING AROUND

The difficulties in traveling around Ysgard are entirely dependent upon which layer is being traversed and how familiar the traveler is with the secret functions of the plane. On the top layer, movement on an individual earthberg is unimpeded, but to travel between them requires flight of some kind (or passage on one of the sky viking longships and other vessels that ply the skies).

Far below the earthbergs of Ysgard sits the fiery landscape of Muspelheim, a simple enough (if dangerous) journey of simply going down for several miles. The lava floes between the earth rivers that wind through the molten realms can sometimes buck and heave, tossing travelers into the burning sea and inflicting 35 (10d6) fire damage per round of exposure. Otherwise most of

the earthen rivers are safe enough, winding between the titanic shards of obsidian pushed up like great ice floes.

The tunnels of Nidavellir seem the safest, but these have a tendency to expand and contract like the veins of a great living organism. The earth in this layer acts more like a sea of stone, usually still but occasionally rocked by a wave that pushes, pulls, collapses, and expands tunnels in its wake. The dwarves, drow, and other residents magically protect their individual realms from the worst of the shifts, but creatures and travelers out in the wilds of Nidavellir had best be cautious.

Yggdrasil the World Tree is the worst kept secret for navigating around Ysgard. The roots of the World Tree spread out across the multiverse, but its branches reach to all layers of Ysgard. They are normally invisible, ascending into a strange light-filled void before descending back to the plane, and they can be a confusing maze to navigate. The jotuns have a sixth sense regarding the branches and seem able to use it to quickly move around anywhere on Ysgard, and the Aesir know the paths that lead to the earthbergs important to them. The information is jealously guarded, however, and they rarely share the paths between themselves.

THE POWERFUL AND MIGHTY

There are many powerful beings on Ysgard who stand larger than life. They are usually arrogant and difficult to deal with, but they wield tremendous influence over their personal realms – and some, like the Aesir, can even control the weather and day/night cycles of the plane.

THE AESIR

The Aesir are a collection of squabbling gods and goddesses that claim to rule over much of Ysgard. They speak in grand terms, but in truth their powers outside their personal realms are as limited as any other deity. They are led by Odin, a one-eyed warrior-poet god, who sired enough of the other Aesir that he is referred to as the Allfather. Each Aesir holds sway over an aspect of life on Ysgard, and they are worshipped as a pantheon by the local people known as the vanir.

The Aesir are far more involved in the lives and machinations of the vanir than they probably ought to be, and this personal involvement and their own demonstration of relatable hubris puts them on a lower level than most other gods across the multiverse. Their realm of Asgard is an idyllic, majestic place that sees frequent visitors from many people, and likewise the powers of Asgard travel regularly to the other earthbergs on quests, journeys, and pilgrimages. They clash, argue, fight, bicker, love, and laugh in larger than life terms, perfectly exemplifying the grand scale of Ysgard itself.

The relationship between the Aesir and the Jotundrott (rules of the jotun celestials) remains strained, however. The jotuns, who believe themselves to be the original inhabitants of Ysgard, resent the prideful way the Aesir move about the land. For their part, the Aesir see the jotun as nothing more than relics of a past age that should be swept aside to make room for the new powers. One

member of the Jotundrott, Loki, was meant to be a bridge between the two, but the trickster son of Odin and Queen Fastvi of the laughing jotun has proven to be a headache for all involved. The forces of the Aesir and the Jotundrott frequently clash across all three layers of Ysgard.

JOTUNDROTT

The jotuns are the native celestials of Ysgard, just as the guardinals are natives of Elysium and the archons are natives of Mount Celestial. In their natural form, the jotuns are larger than humans but smaller than giants, but they possess the magical ability to increase or decrease their size at will. They are ruled over by the Jotundrott, powerful kings and queens who embody the best and worst traits of each type. The Jotundrott try to keep up good relations with the gods of the giants across the multiverse, such as Thrym of the frost giants and Surtur of the fire giants, but most of their focus is on maintaining their positions of power in Ysgard.

The jotuns are less interested in the balance of good and evil than they are in their personal stakes on Ysgard, so their outlooks cover the alignment spectrum more than archons and guardinals. The Jotundrott reflect this as well. Descriptions of the most prominent Jotundrott can be found below, but there are more than this, and they each have their own personal agendas and motivations that make them tricky to deal with from an outsider perspective.

Asulf. It is said that the melodic voice of Asulf, greatest among the splendid jotuns, can bring even the Aesir to tears with his heartfelt songs. He is a melancholic jotun, wandering lonely through the earthbergs of Ysgard, forever pining for a lost love that he has never been able to find.

Dagfinn. Among the bitter jotuns who relish in the ice and cold, Dagfinn is the largest and most boisterous. Despite the cruel reputation of the bitter jotuns, Dagfinn is jovial and outgoing, though his icy heart is often warmed by his insatiable lust for battle. He encourages frost giants to mingle with the bitter jotuns to create a more powerful warrior race but his efforts have largely fallen on deaf ears, and he is renown for a lust for treasure that nearly overshadows his battle fever.

Fastvi. The most powerful of the Jotundrott from the ranks of the laughing jotun is Queen Fastvi, a particularly nasty celestial with a mean streak and a hateful attitude. She is the mother of Loki, a half-breed trickster godling whose father is Odin the Allfather, but she has disavowed everything done by her treacherous child.

Hrefna. There is no louder or crazier smolder jotun in all of Muspelheim than Hrefna. She is a vicious celestial who wields an enormous axe forged from a single shard of obsidian slag, and she delights in wading into battle swinging it to and fro, felling all before her. Hrefna's unprovoked attacks on the Aesir, as well as fire giants and other jotuns, has earned her no friends, but she does lead a wild band of berserker smolder jotuns who share in her zeal for battle.

Sigvor. Charming, likeable, and beautiful, Sigvor is the pinnacle of everything a jotun strives to be – just ask her. She is a shining representative of the glorious jotuns and she shares mead and food with them at every possible

opportunity. Her skill in battle is without equal, and her charm is legendary, but Sigvor refuses to be tied down to any one man, woman, jotun, or god. She lives a carefree life of valor, glory, and legendary deeds, and she inspires everyone around her to the same lofty ideals.

Uglubathr. Uglubathr is the oldest and wisest of the forlorn jotuns, and many believe he is the first to have fallen from the ranks of the other celestials to dwell in isolation in the caves of Nidavellir. Others have followed in his wake, but Uglubathr cares not for them or the troubles of the “surface worlds” as he calls them. His cavernous lair is sealed off from other passages and he has befriended many earth elementals to serve as guardians.

THE NORNS

The Aesir may be arrogant and brutish and self-centered, but they all bow to one rigid fact – fate is dictated by the Norns. The Norns is a group of powerful beings, hags mostly, who both interpret and control the whims of fate itself. They are an enigmatic collection of supremely resourceful and knowledgeable beings, handing out visions of past and future to whomever comes to visit in the mysterious Cave of Prophecy.

The influence of the Norns stretches across Ysgard, and their words are heeded by the gods of the Aesir, the jotuns, and everyone in between. Warriors and skalds seek out the Cave of Prophecy to learn what fate has in store for them, while the mighty jotuns seek an edge in their never-ending war with the Aesir. The Norns stand above all of the petty squabbles of Ysgard, doling out words for any worthy enough to find their secret lair. The secret is that the Norns do not actually dwell in the Cave of Prophecy – the waters in the still lake inside the cave provide a conduit to the Norns’ true location, which remains a mystery.

Sometimes, a member of the Norns goes rogue and favors one side or another in a grand conflict. These situations rarely stay secret for long, and numerous members have been cast out of the Norns by their sisters for meddling too much in the affairs of the multiverse. Some say that the coven of hags that created the yugoloths on Hades so long ago were cast off members of the Norns.

RAINBOW VALKYRIES OF BIFROST

Valkyries across Ysgard are held in high regard for their supreme battle prowess, great wisdom, and courage under the most extreme circumstances. They are skilled warriors, with many individual races of both male and female making up their numbers. The most renown group of them are the Rainbow Valkyries of Bifrost, a legendary band of female knights and paladins sworn to defend the Rainbow Bridge of Bifrost with their lives.

The Aesir of Asgard use the Rainbow Valkyries on numerous missions across the multiverse, and the force is often regarded as the Aesir ambassadors in distant lands. They ride pegasus mounts born and bred in a special field below the Bifrost, and train to uphold the tenets of justice, truth, mercy, and honor. Currently, Sanma of the Golden Horn leads the Rainbow Valkyries. She is a breathtakingly beautiful human woman who has attained immortal status in recognition of her valiant deeds in service to the Aesir

and the Bifrost. Sanma personally leads many missions, especially ones into the Lower Planes to deal swift and brutal judgment on fiends who have overstepped their limits in the eyes of the Aesir.

A Rainbow Valkyries that falls outside of Ysgard is forbidden from being resurrected. Their body is returned to Asgard and interred in the entrance chambers within the mighty Hall of Valhalla, where it becomes a stone statue, forever watching over the resting dead that have been laid there.

SKALDS OF THE HIGH HALLS

An individual’s skill in battle is held in highest regard on Ysgard, but there are few witnesses around to see even the most glorious sights in the middle of a combat. It’s the warrior’s job to perform the deeds, but it falls to the skalds to spread the word and raise up the deed to legendary status. Skalds are fearsome barbarians with a talent for spreading stories and singing songs, and they function as gossipers and newsmongers for all of Ysgard. The most famous band of skalds are those of the High Halls of the Valiant, who have loosely organized themselves in order to see the greatest events as they unfold.

The skalds of the High Halls are not just relegated to seeing and singing about great deeds, however. They are capable warriors in their own right, and by ancient decree of the Aesir they cannot tell a falsehood, so the people of Ysgard know the words of the High Hall skalds are true and to be believed. They sing of mighty feats of strength, courage, honor, and bravery on and off the field of battle, and often the subject of their stories are themselves. Legendary acts follow these skalds like a hungry dog, and they are happy to feed it scraps to keep it hungry and begging for more.

Perhaps the greatest skald in the history of the High Halls is Thorkell Skallaggrim, a massive bearded man with an enormous sword and a beautiful voice. Thorkell has sung many ballads for kings, queens, gods, and mortals, and he has lived well over 500 years, traveling across the length and breadth of Ysgard. As long as he continues to perform and sing of great deeds, age does not catch up with him, and Thorkell is happy to teach the younger generations of skalds the secret to his power.

SKY VIKINGS OF NOATUN

Vanir clans across Ysgard pillage and plunder their neighbors on daring raids that result in fearsome battles across the picturesque landscapes of clashing earthbergs. Warriors that specialize in these raids are known as vikings among the vanir, but traveling the gaps between the floating islands can prove tricky. Some vikings rely on the transportation capabilities of their undead ancestors, but most simply wait for the earthbergs to collide before they can seize the opportunity and raid greater and greater settlements.

The Sky Vikings of Noatun do not wait, however. In the massive shipyard of Noatun, these industrious raiders and master shipbuilders craft longships that are specially enchanted to sail on the air between the earthbergs. The exact nature of the enchantment isn’t known – certainly

non-enchanted ships and other vehicles simply plummet the great length to Muspelheim far below if they go off the edge of an earthberg. The Sky Vikings guard this secret well and they are each piloted by a barbarian viking who harnesses the power of storms and lightning, which most believe to be the ultimate source of the flying longships.

The Sky Vikings are renown across Ysgard are warriors without fear or mercy, and they have raided jotun citadels, vanir settlements, Aesir temples, and a host of other nearly untouchable sites. They swoop in, anchor down, rush out in a furious charge, and then steal as much stuff as they can haul away back to their longships. They then return to Noatun and deposit their stolen goods in a communal treasure cache. The Sky Vikings are led by the violent and temperamental Jarl Hallmund Byrnjolf, an steel-bearded barbarian with a good eye for precious goods.

TROLL CLANS OF YSGARD

Trolls are very common across all the layers of Ysgard. They are only loosely organized, gathering in small clans, and most skew towards neutral rather than evil alignments. Their natural regeneration abilities coupled with the enhanced healing of the plane makes them practically immortal, and even their traditional weaknesses of fire and acid are reduced across Ysgard.

The troll clans are largely ignored by the Aesir and the jotuns, and they are just as often on friendly terms with neighboring vanir holds as they are bitter enemies. Some of the more prominent groups include Clan Cliffblood, Clan Dreamrage, Clan Dawnchewer, and Clan Foresthell, all imposing names translated roughly from the guttural troll language. Many clans include trollkin members as well – offspring of a troll and a human, with greenish skin, pronounced features, and a natural regeneration ability. Most trollkin are considered abominations by their human parents and find refuge only in the troll clans. Clan Greenwatch is troll clan completely comprised of trollkin members.

Visitors to Ysgard should treat cautiously with trolls in any encounter. They are more civilized than their savage brethren in swamps and the like, but they are still formidable fights capable of horrific violence if provoked. Most want to be left alone, though a few are aggressive and seek to claim vanir territory. But is this any different than the vanir who raid one another for the same? The trolls don't think so, but to most vanir, ancient prejudices mark the trolls as horrible monsters to be feared and killed rather than empathized with.

CREATURES & DENIZENS

Monsters of all kinds populate the scattered lands of Ysgard. Many are advanced versions of mortal creatures, though a few – such as the boar-like hildisvini – have taken on such monstrous proportions that they have become deadly monsters in their own right. The celestial natives of Ysgard, the jotuns, mingle regularly with giants and fight the Aesir for supremacy over the entire plane.

DRAUGR

The relationship between celestials and undead isn't well understood by planar scholars. By most accounts, it seems celestials cannot become undead, willingly or unwillingly, but there are examples that prove the opposite. The draugr is one such example. The celestials of Ysgard, the jotuns, have strong connections to ideals of honor and glory, whether they exhibit them selfishly or for the good of the world around them. When they fail these ideals and die outside the plane of Ysgard, a jotun can rise as a draugr – an undead monster, more animalistic in their instincts.

A draugr appears as a broad-shouldered, long-limbed giant, similar to a living jotun, except they are completely hairless and their skin is a deep death-blue color. A rotting stench accompanies them wherever they go, and their fingernails have extended to filthy claws capable of rending flesh from bone. They retain their jotun ability to change sizes, a trait they use only to increase their advantage, and they are notoriously difficult to put down permanently.

Dishonorable in Life and Death. A draugr has dishonored the ideals of Ysgard and died while doing it outside the plane. The bitter jotuns produce the largest number of draugr considering their foul attitude, but all types can fall to temptation in the wilds of the multiverse. This dishonor follows the draugr as strongly as the decaying stench that hangs around them, and some skalds in Ysgard claim the rotting smell is a physical manifestation of their dishonor. Draugr can only growl like an animal, having lost their tongue in the transformation process, and they use every dirty tactic to demolish their opponents.

Black Sails of Jarl Krakoth. Draugr live in caves, forgotten tombs, and other remote places, lying in wait for years at a time for victims to come wandering by. They hunt in darkness, lurking around the edges of halls and towns, stealing away lone wanderers in the night, always afraid to take on a foe that they can't defeat with their claws. These things do not bother Jarl Krakoth, a draugr who somehow maintained his intelligence and perseverance into undeath. Jarl Krakoth led a band of draugr and stole a sky viking longship, converting it into a black-sailed pirate ship, and uses it to raid and pillage the earthbergs of Ysgard with reckless abandon. His deeds are legendary, as his is bloodlust, but his carnage is so complete that few are left alive to tell the story of the draugr pirate captain. It seems Jarl Krakoth seeks nothing more than to destroy everything on Ysgard singlehandedly, tearing down the works of jotuns, mortals, and the Aesir alike.

Undead Nature. A draugr doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

DRAUGR

Large undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 102 (12d10+36)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)	6 (-2)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Con +6

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities cold, fire, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages understands Common and Jotun but can't speak

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Decaying Stench. Living creatures that start their turn within 30 feet of the draugr must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute.

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the draugr to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the draugr drops to 1 hit point instead.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The draugr makes two claw attacks.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d8+6) slashing damage., or 19 (3d8+6) slashing damage while enlarged.

Enlarge (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). For 1 minute, the draugr magically increases in size, along with anything it is wearing or carrying. While enlarged, the draugr is Huge, deals increased damage with Strength-based weapon attacks (included in the attacks), and makes Strength checks and Strength saving throws with advantage. If the draugr lacks the room to become Huge, it attains the maximum size possible in the space available.

EINHERJAR

For the residents of Ysgard, death in combat is simply a temporary state of being. Most slain on the battlefield on the plane rise the next day in full health, ready to pick up the fight where they left off. For the rare few, their deeds and deaths are recognized by Ysgard itself and they rise not as flesh and blood but as the ghostly einherjar. These spectral warriors are the sworn guardians of Ysgard itself, and appear as bluish phantasms of their former physical forms.

Legions of the Honorable Dead. Einherjar are highly regarded by the vanir people of Ysgard, and they view elevation to the ghostly ranks as one of the greatest honors that can be bestowed upon a warrior. These spectral warriors are bound by stronger oaths than the typical Ysgardian to fight honorably, and they are well equipped to face nearly any foe in combat. They can be called upon to aid in times of need, summoning herds of spectral steeds to carry warriors from one earthberg to the next in search of glorious combat. The einherjar rarely participate in these skirmishes – they are concerned more with keeping Ysgard safe.

Defenders of Ysgard. The einherjar serve no master but Ysgard itself, but in that capacity they have great freedom. Many work with the Aesir to protect places of great value, such as the Hall of Valhalla and the Bifrost, yet the einherjar do not bow to even the whims of the mighty Odin and his godly fellows. No one really knows exactly how many there are as well, certainly enough to stop most outside forces, as exemplified in the Siege of Trollsgarden. In that wooden realm, demonic servants of Vaprak, the god of trolls who dwells in the Abyss, launched an attack that besieged the forest of Trollsgarden. The people and trolls fought bravely but when the fiendish horde broke the line it all looked bleak – until the einherjar suddenly appeared. Their spectral blades cut through the demonic trolls and sent the attackers reeling.

Undead Nature. An einherjar doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

EINHERJAR

Medium undead, any alignment

Armor Class 15 (spirit force)

Hit Points 33 (6d8+6)

Speed 0 ft., fly 100 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire

Damage Immunities force, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages any languages it knew in life

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Honor Bound. The einherjar cannot take opportunity attacks or attack paralyzed, prone, or restrained targets.

Incorporeal Movement. The einherjar can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Spirit Force. The einherjar adds their Charisma modifier to AC. Any weapon wielded by the einherjar inflicts force damage.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The einherjar makes two spectral sword attacks.

Spectral Sword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6+3) force damage.

Summon Spectral Steeds (1/Day). The einherjar summons up to 10 Large spectral horse-like beings, each equipped with saddle, bit, and bridle. The spectral steeds can be ridden by creatures chosen by the einherjar. The creatures use the statistics for a riding horse, except it has a flying speed of 100 feet and can travel 10 miles in an hour, or 13 miles at a fast pace. The spectral steeds last for 1 hour or until the einherjar takes an action to dismiss them.

HILDISVINI

Beasts of all kinds wander the earthbergs of Ysgard, from mighty cave bears to fierce mountain lions. These creatures are deadly, larger than their mortal counterparts, and incredibly territorial, but their territories are usually limited to the earthberg where they were born. The hildisvini, or battle swine, is a gray-furred warthog of immense proportions and stands as one of the most feared beasts in Ysgard, not only for its goring tusks, stomping feet, and relentless endurance, but also for its ability to simply jump between most earthbergs, giving it a greater range than most other predators. A hildisvini considers an incredibly large area of the floating space in Ysgard its territory, and its ability to sniff out invaders and hunt them down is legendary.

Legacy of Ottar. The first hildisvini was Ottar, the personal pet and companion of Freya, one of the Aesir. Ottar was a brave and loyal friend, intelligent and fierce, who served Freya as both advisor and mount for many years. Ottar grew to be enormous, even by hildisvini standards, and eventually age caught up with the mighty creature. When it was Ottar's time to die, Freya honored the memory of her fallen friend by casting the boar's blood out across Ysgard. Where the blood fell a new hildisvini was born, and it is believed every battle swine on the plane originated from this sacred blood. Hildisvini only reproduce when they die and their blood mixes with the ground of Ysgard, creating a new battle swine somewhere on the earthberg.

Fosstrand and the Golden Hammer. In the vanir settlement of Fosstrand, the people have a time-honored tradition of facing off against a great hildisvini that dwells in a nearby earthberg. This hildisvini, known as the Golden Hammer, is an ancient beast that is believed to be from the original blood of Ottar. When a youth comes of age in Fosstrand they must go out and face the Golden Hammer in combat, but not to kill the creature. The test is to draw its blood and return with it on their weapon in Fosstrand. The Golden Hammer is an ornery creature but it seems to enjoy the sport and the chance to test the youths, and it has been known to pull away from a killing blow, leaving a wounded person to regain themselves and try to gather the blood another day.

HILDISVINI

Huge beast, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 149 (13d12+65)

Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	11 (+0)	21 (+5)	5 (-3)	11 (+0)	6 (-2)

Damage Resistances cold, fire

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages understands Common and Jotun but can't speak

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Charge. If the hildisvini moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a tusk attack on the same turn, that target takes an extra 11 (2d10) slashing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 18 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Incredible Leap (Recharges after a Long Rest). If the hildisvini moves at least 50 feet immediately before jumping it can cover a distance up to 24 miles in length.

Relentless (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). If the hildisvini takes 27 damage or less that would reduce it to 0 hit points, it is reduced to 1 hit point instead.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The hildisvini makes two attacks: one with its tusk and one with its stomp.

Tusk. Melee Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. **Hit:** 29 (4d10+7) slashing damage.

Stomp. Melee Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 29 (4d10+7) bludgeoning damage.

Ground Pound (Recharge 5-6). Creatures on the ground within 10 feet of the hildisvini must make DC 18 Strength saving throws, suffering 18 (2d10+7) bludgeoning damage on a failure, or half as much on a success. Targets that fail the saving throw also fall prone.

JOTUN

The original inhabitants of Ysgard are the jotuns, celestial giants who are as old as the plane itself. They are powerful warriors filled with a great lust for war and combat, eager to prove themselves on the field of battle whenever and wherever possible. This natural aggressive attitude puts them at odds with the other celestials of the Upper Planes, such as the archons of Mount Celestia and the guardinals of Elysium, who view the jotuns as savage barbarians. For their part, the jotuns don't bother with the planes outside of Ysgard, and they have enough on their own plane to satisfy their bloody needs without having to worry about the concerns of lofty-idealed celestials in other planes.

In their natural form, jotuns resemble oversized humans roughly 10 to 15 feet tall. They are usually well-muscled with thick hair all over their bodies, though the forlorn jotuns in their caves lose all their hair as part of their transformation. There is little distinction between male and female jotuns. They also all have the ability to increase or decrease their size according to their whim, from as small as a humanoid to as large as a giant.

Unlike other celestials, jotuns have no strong tendency towards good and evil, and even among their own types there is no direct correlation between their attitudes and their heritage. Good bitter jotuns are just as common as neutral or evil bitter jotuns.

Strong Feelings. Jotuns feel emotions stronger than mortals and they are often overcome by their senses of grief, rage, or joy. These emotions divide them by type as well, which is how they transform between the various ranks, gaining or losing powers as they become attuned with the higher ideals of Ysgard. A single jotun can transform between a forlorn jotun (the weakest type) and a splendid jotun (the strongest) over the course of its life, or even in a single week if their emotions are strong enough. They also tend to change size in time with their emotions, growing larger as they become boastful, proud, or angry, and shrinking when they become afraid, morose, or humbled. Everything a jotun does is driven by passionate emotions, and they do nothing without their full efforts.

The Aesir War. As lovers of conflict and battle, the jotuns naturally have poor relations with the other residents of Ysgard. The most prominent feud they have is with the Aesir, who arrived long after the jotuns had already made a playground of Ysgard. The Aesir came in and pushed the jotuns out of regions, meeting them time and again on the field of battle in endless wars that drove a bitter wedge between them. Their feud has long simmered, and now no jotun trusts the words or deeds of an Aesir, and for their part the Aesir see the jotuns as nothing more than pests to be exterminated.

Kings and Queens of the Jotundrott. Jotuns are nominally ruled by the most powerful among them, known collectively as the Jotundrott. Their wild, chaotic nature doesn't lend itself to being ruled over, and the jotun kings recognize this as much as any, so they do little more than direct the fierce storm of jotuns to desired places and outcomes. There are dozens of jotun kings (and queens) across Ysgard, living in ancient palaces on the earthbergs, in fortified lava fortresses on Muspelheim, and even hidden cavernous realms of Nidavellir.

Ranked by Emotional Strength. There are six known types of jotuns ranked on how in tune they are with the ideals of Ysgard. They are in order: forlorn, smolder, bitter, laughing, splendid, and glorious. An individual jotun can move up or down through the ranks, increasing or decreasing in power as they go, but always retaining their memories and personalities. The jotun kings and queens are usually exceptional jotuns that have gone through the ranks multiple times, experiencing the range of emotions, before finally settling upon their more powerful form.

Celestial Nature. A jotun doesn't require food, drink, or sleep.

BITTER JOTUN

Large celestial, any chaotic alignment

Armor Class 17 (leather armor)

Hit Points 114 (12d10+48)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	19 (+4)	19 (+4)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)

Skills Athletics +9, Perception +6, Survival +6

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities cold, fire, lightning, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Common, Giant, Jotun

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Harness Fire. If a spell or effect would inflict fire damage to the jotun, it can use its reaction to gain the benefit of the *haste* spell until the end of its next turn.

Innate Spellcasting. The jotun's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 14). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *detect magic*, *gust of wind*
3/day each: *dispel magic*, *wind wall*
1/day: *wall of ice*

Magic Resistance. The jotun has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Summon Weapons. The jotun can use a bonus action to create an icicle sword or icicle spear. The weapons dissipate after 1 round if they leave the jotun's hand.

Sure Step. The jotun ignores difficult terrain from ice and snow.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The jotun makes two attacks with its icicle sword.

Icicle Sword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d10+6) slashing damage plus 14 (4d6) cold damage. If the jotun is enlarged the slashing damage increases to 22 (3d10+6), and if the jotun is reduced the slashing damage decreases to 11 (1d10+6).

Icicle Spear. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 60/180 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8+4) piercing damage plus 28 (8d6) cold damage. If the jotun is enlarged the piercing damage increases to 17 (3d8+4), and if the jotun is reduced the piercing damage decreases to 8 (1d8+4).

Enlarge/Reduce. The jotun magically increases or decreases in size, along with anything it is wearing or carrying. While enlarged, the jotun is Huge, deals increased damage with Strength-based weapon attacks (included in the attacks), and makes Strength checks and Strength saving throws with advantage. If the jotun lacks the room to become Huge, it attains the maximum size possible in the space available. While reduced, the jotun is Medium and deals decreased damage with Strength-based weapon attacks (included in the attacks).

FORLORN JOTUN

Large celestial, any chaotic alignment

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 76 (8d10+32)

Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	17 (+3)	19 (+4)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	8 (-1)

Skills Athletics +7, Perception +5, Survival +5

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities cold, fire, lightning, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Giant, Jotun

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The jotun's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *detect magic*, *meld into stone*
3/day each: *dispel magic*, *stone shape*
1/day: *wall of stone*

Magic Resistance. The jotun has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Roots of the Earth. If the jotun stands on a stone surface it cannot be moved or become prone against its will.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The jotun makes two attacks with its stone axe.

Stone Axe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8+4) slashing damage plus 14 (4d6) force damage. If the jotun is enlarged, the slashing damage increases to (3d8+4), and if the jotun is reduced the slashing damage decreases to 8 (1d8+4).

Boulder. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10+4) bludgeoning damage plus 28 (8d6) force damage. If the jotun is enlarged, the bludgeoning damage increases to 20 (3d10+4), and if the jotun is reduced the bludgeoning damage decreases to 9 (1d10+4).

Enlarge/Reduce. The jotun magically increases or decreases in size, along with anything it is wearing or carrying. While enlarged, the jotun is Huge, deals increased damage with Strength-based weapon attacks (included in the attacks), and makes Strength checks and Strength saving throws with advantage. If the jotun lacks the room to become Huge, it attains the maximum size possible in the space available. While reduced, the jotun is Medium and deals decreased damage with Strength-based weapon attacks (included in the attacks).

GLORIOUS JOTUN

Large celestial, any chaotic alignment

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 170 (20d10+60)

Speed 50 ft., fly 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
27 (+8)	20 (+5)	17 (+3)	17 (+3)	19 (+4)	13 (+1)

Skills Athletics +12, Perception +8, Survival +8

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities cold, fire, lightning, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 18

Languages Common, Giant, Jotun

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Glorious Charge. If the jotun moves at least 20 feet before making a melee attack with its lightning blade and hits with its first attack in the round, the target is struck as if from the *prismatic spray* spell (spell save DC 17).

Innate Spellcasting. The jotun's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 17). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *detect magic*, *jump*

3/day each: *dispel magic*, *freedom of movement*

1/day: *prismatic wall*

Magic Resistance. The jotun has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Summon Weapons. The jotun can use a bonus action to create a lightning blade or thunderbolt javelin. The weapons dissipate after 1 round if they leave the jotun's hand.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The jotun makes two attacks with its lightning blade.

Lightning Blade. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (2d12+8) slashing damage plus 22 (4d10) lightning damage, or 27 (3d12+8) slashing damage plus 22 (4d10) lightning damage if enlarged, or 14 (1d12+8) slashing damage plus 22 (4d10) lightning damage if reduced.

Thunderbolt Javelin. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, range 60/180 ft., one target. *Hit:* 26 (4d8+8) piercing damage plus 22 (4d10) lightning damage and 22 (4d10) thunder damage. If the jotun is enlarged, the piercing damage increases to 30 (5d8+8), and if the jotun is reduced the piercing damage decreases to 21 (3d8+8).

Enlarge/Reduce. The jotun magically increases or decreases in size, along with anything it is wearing or carrying. While enlarged, the jotun is Huge, deals increased damage with Strength-based weapon attacks (included in the attacks), and makes Strength checks and Strength saving throws with advantage. If the jotun lacks the room to become Huge, it attains the maximum size possible in the space available. While reduced, the jotun is Medium and deals decreased damage with Strength-based weapon attacks (included in the attacks).

LAUGHING JOTUN

Large celestial, any chaotic alignment

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 119 (14d10+42)

Speed 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
25 (+7)	22 (+6)	17 (+3)	19 (+4)	19 (+4)	14 (+2)

Skills Deception +10, Persuasion +10, Perception +6

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities cold, fire, lightning, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Common, Giant, Jotun

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Create Duplicate. The jotun can use the *project image* spell without requiring components or concentration. It can only have one illusory copy of itself at any given time, and the spell ends after 24 hours; the jotun can dismiss it with a bonus action.

Innate Spellcasting. The jotun's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 16). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *detect magic*, *major image*, *Tasha's hideous laughter*

3/day each: *dispel magic*, *greater invisibility*

1/day: *mirage arcane*

Magic Resistance. The jotun has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Summon Weapons. The jotun can use a bonus action to create a poisoned blade or dark dart. The weapons dissipate after 1 round if they leave the jotun's hand.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The jotun makes two attacks with its poisoned blade.

Poisoned Blade. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d8+7) piercing damage plus 18 (4d8) poison damage. If the jotun is enlarged the piercing damage increases to 20 (3d8+7), and if the jotun is reduced the piercing damage decreases to 11 (1d8+7).

Dark Dart. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, range 60/180 ft., one target. *Hit:* 25 (4d8+7) piercing damage plus 27 (6d8) poison damage. If the jotun is enlarged the piercing damage increases to 29 (5d8+7), and if the jotun is reduced the piercing damage decreases to 20 (3d8+7).

Enlarge/Reduce. The jotun magically increases or decreases in size, along with anything it is wearing or carrying. While enlarged, the jotun is Huge, deals increased damage with Strength-based weapon attacks (included in the attacks), and makes Strength checks and Strength saving throws with advantage. If the jotun lacks the room to become Huge, it attains the maximum size possible in the space available. While reduced, the jotun is Medium and deals decreased damage with Strength-based weapon attacks (included in the attacks).

SMOLDER JOTUN

Large celestial, any chaotic alignment

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 85 (10d10+30)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	19 (+4)	12 (+1)

Skills Athletics +8, Perception +7, Survival +7

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities cold, fire, lightning, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 17

Languages Common, Giant, Jotun

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Harness Frost. If a spell or effect would inflict cold damage to the jotun, it can use its reaction to gain the benefit of the *haste* spell until the end of its next turn.

Innate Spellcasting. The jotun's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 15). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *detect magic*, *heat metal*

3/day each: *dispel magic*, *glyph of warding*

1/day: *wall of fire*

Magic Resistance. The jotun has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Summon Weapons. The jotun can use a bonus action to create a flaming maul or magma boulder. The weapons dissipate after 1 round if they leave the jotun's hand.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The jotun makes two attacks with its flaming maul.

Flaming Maul. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d10+5) bludgeoning damage plus 14 (4d6) fire damage. If the jotun is enlarged the bludgeoning damage increases to 21 (3d10+5), and if the jotun is reduced the bludgeoning damage decrease to 10 (1d10+5).

Magma Boulder. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, range 60/180 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (3d10+5) bludgeoning damage plus 28 (8d6) fire damage. If the jotun is enlarged the bludgeoning damage increases to 27 (4d10+5), and if the jotun is reduced the bludgeoning damage decreases to 16 (2d10+5).

Enlarge/Reduce. The jotun magically increases or decreases in size, along with anything it is wearing or carrying. While enlarged, the jotun is Huge, deals increased damage with Strength-based weapon attacks (included in the attacks), and makes Strength checks and Strength saving throws with advantage. If the jotun lacks the room to become Huge, it attains the maximum size possible in the space available. While reduced, the jotun is Medium and deals decreased damage with Strength-based weapon attacks (included in the attacks).

SPLENDID JOTUN

Large celestial, any chaotic alignment

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 136 (16d10+48)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
25 (+7)	19 (+4)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	19 (+4)

Skills Intimidation +8, Persuasion +8, Perception +7

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities cold, fire, lightning, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 17

Languages Common, Giant, Jotun

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The jotun's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 15). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *bless*, *command*, *detect magic*

3/day each: *dispel magic*, *fear*

1/day: *synaptic static*

Magic Resistance. The jotun has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Summon Weapons. The jotun can use a bonus action to create a silvered blade or silvered javelin. The weapons dissipate after 1 round if they leave the jotun's hand.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The jotun makes two attacks with its silvered blade.

Silvered Blade. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (2d10+7) slashing damage plus 11 (2d10) psychic damage. If the jotun is enlarged the slashing damage increases to 23 (3d10+7), and if the jotun is reduced the slashing damage decreases to 12 (1d10+7).

Silvered Javelin. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, range 60/180 ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (2d12+7) piercing damage plus 33 (6d10) psychic damage. If the jotun is enlarged the piercing damage increases to 26 (3d12+7), and if the jotun is reduced the piercing damage decreases to 13 (1d12+7).

Enlarge/Reduce. The jotun magically increases or decreases in size, along with anything it is wearing or carrying. While enlarged, the jotun is Huge, deals increased damage with Strength-based weapon attacks (included in the attacks), and makes Strength checks and Strength saving throws with advantage. If the jotun lacks the room to become Huge, it attains the maximum size possible in the space available. While reduced, the jotun is Medium and deals decreased damage with Strength-based weapon attacks (included in the attacks).

REACTIONS

Bolster. the jotun chooses a target within 60 feet that it can see after the target has made an attack roll, saving throw, or ability check. The target rolls 1d6 and adds the result to the triggering roll. This reaction must be used before the DM has declared whether the attempt was a success or failure.

BITTER JOTUN

These jotuns have let bitterness and jealousy build up in their hearts, creating an icy armor that manifests as cold-based powers. They are most closely associated with frost giants, and many bitter jotuns end up leading tribes of frost giants in the wilds of Ysgard. Rarely they travel outside the Heroic Domains, but when they do they prefer the colder, more desolate lands. Their skin is blue and their thick hair is silver, white, or gray.

FORLORN JOTUN

The least powerful rank of jotun are the forlorn, who have let despair fill their souls to the point of physical and emotional transformation. Forlorn jotuns have no hair, and their skin is shades of ashen gray. They tend to isolate themselves away from the rest of Ysgard, hiding away in caves or in the deep recesses of Nidavellir, and their stone-based powers allow them to manipulate their natural surroundings to great effect. Stone giant clans have been known to take in a forlorn jotun from time to time, offering the isolated celestial a safe haven, which can sometimes end the tortuous lonely existence and allow the jotun to elevate to a higher rank.

GLORIOUS JOTUN

The pinnacle of the jotun ranks are the glorious jotuns, who have fully embraced a love of joyful combat and glorious life in every aspect of their existence. They are proud, arrogantly so in many cases, but incredibly capable combatants, able to create a powerful prismatic effect as the physical manifestation of their own glorious capabilities. They laugh, they love, they drink and eat heartily, and they do everything with the exuberance of a being truly in sync with the wonders of Ysgard. They appear as golden-skinned giants with flowing blonde hair and thick corded muscles.

LAUGHING JOTUN

The laughing jotuns are physically smaller than most other types of jotuns, and they embrace a less conventional approach to the celebration of life that pervades Ysgard. They are among the cruelest of the jotuns, and they delight in playing pranks and tricks on everyone around them, but especially in battle to confuse their enemies. They have pale skin with black hair, and most laughing jotuns follow the teachings of Loki – the offspring of an Aesir and a jotun queen who was supposed to bridge the gap between the two powerful species, but instead ended up tricking them all.

SMOLDER JOTUN

Anger burns red-hot in the veins of the smolder jotun, and it manifests as physical flames in their hands. These jotun have blackened skin and flaming red hair, and they lead clans of fire giants in the wilds of Muspelheim. They are quick to anger, throwing themselves into a furious rage at the slightest provocation, and they possess a mastery over fire magic that makes them dangerous foes. Smolder jotuns are on good terms with Surtur, god of the fire giants who dwells on the Plane of Fire, and they keep the Spire of Surtur in honor of their distant cousin.

SPLENDID JOTUN

The glorious jotuns may be the pinnacle of all the Ysgardian celestials, but the splendid jotuns are the ones that heard and seen the most often. Their bellowing voices can be heard across fjord and earthberg, and it is usually accompanied by the rumble of thunder and the thrum of a signal horn. Splendid jotuns are the paragons of skalds, bards, and entertainers, though they are second only to the glorious jotuns in terms of battle prowess. Their silver-white hair and bronzed skins are usually left open to the wind and storms of Ysgard.

LILLEND

Lillend are enthralling celestials that have made Ysgard their home. They are lovers of song, with a deep magical heritage that extends back generations across the planes themselves, and they have adopted Ysgard as the perfect place to practice their artistic crafts. A lillend appears as a physically perfect humanoid, male or female, from the torso up, with lithe features that bely a hidden strength and flowing golden or auburn hair. A pair of feathered wings sprout from their back, and from the torso down their forms end in a serpentine body with shimmering scales of hypnotic pattern.

Lillends are peaceful beings who abhor violence, but they recognize they live in a plane filled with it. Most carry longspears to protect themselves, and their tails can be used to whip and grapple opponents. Their spell repertoire focuses on immobilization and distraction so that if they do get caught in a combat, they can use magic to help bring the situation back under control. Failing that, most lillends retreat using their wings.

Patrons of the Arts. Lillends love art in all its form, and they encourage everyone around them to reach for greater heights of artistic expression. Most lillend specialize in one form or another – writing, singing, and playing an instrument are all common specializations. They have hundreds of years to perfect their craft, and they work to perfect every aspect of their chosen artform. Often times, they look about the multiverse, traveling between the cities of the planes in search of other artists like themselves to share in the joy of their craft.

Patterns and Patterns. Each lillend has a unique pattern of multicolored scales along their serpentine forms. They are immensely proud of their own patterns, believing each to be the pinnacle of beauty, and they have an unusual knack for detecting patterns in the scenes and activities around them. Lillends love puzzles, and many specialize in puzzle solving as an artistic expression.

LILLEND

Large celestial, chaotic good

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 76 (9d10+27)

Speed 20 ft., fly 60 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	21 (+5)

Skills Performance +11

Damage Resistances fire; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison, radiant

Condition Immunities charmed, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Celestial, Common

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Enthralling Aura. Creatures have disadvantage on attack rolls against a lillend in the first round of combat. Creatures immune to being charmed do not suffer disadvantage.

Innate Spellcasting. The lillend is a 9th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). The lillend knows the following bard spells:

Cantrips (at will): *mage hand*, *minor illusion*, *vicious mockery*

1st level (4 slots): *charm person*, *dissonant whispers*, *heroism*

2nd level (3 slots): *detect thoughts*, *invisibility*, *suggestion*

3rd level (3 slots): *dispel magic*, *fear*, *hypnotic pattern*

4th level (3 slots): *confusion*, *hallucinatory terrain*

5th level (1 slot): *hold monster*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The lillend makes three attacks: two with its longspear and one with its tail.

Longspear. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d10+5) piercing damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8+5) bludgeoning damage and the target is grappled (escape DC 16). The lillend can't make tail attacks against any other target until the grapple ends.

HAZARDS & PHENOMENA

There is a vibrancy infused into the very fabric of Ysgard that helps to heighten the splendor and grandeur of the plane's natural wonders. Rugged mountains, ancient forests, soaring earthbergs, and more are all filled with latent underlying energy, like a thunderstorm about to break. Some planar scholars have theorized Ysgard shares a border with the Positive Energy Plane, and many of the plane's features would suggest this to be true.

BERSERKER FURY

The Aesir have been known to grant warriors a boon in the midst of combat when they call out for aid under the right circumstances. The exact details of these circumstances are not well understood, and the fickle gods of the Aesir are consistent only in their inconsistency. Those chosen, however, receive a powerful boon known as the Berserker Fury.

For the length of the combat, a warrior gifted with Berserker Fury gains resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage. They also gain a bonus to damage rolls with melee weapon attacks equal to their level or Hit Dice. Creatures under the effect of the Berserker Fury are so possessed with a furious blood rage that they cannot make ability checks, though they gain advantage on all saving throws as well. When the combat is over and there are no more foes to fight, the recipient of the Berserker Fury gains 5 levels of exhaustion as it leaves their body. Those under the effects of the Berserker Fury do not gain the benefits of the Heroic Rebirth trait outlined below.

It is thought that new einherjar are formed when a warrior imbued with the Berserker Fury dies in combat, since they are not rebirthed like regular warriors upon death.

HEROIC REBIRTH AND RECOVERY

Battle is a way of life in the Heroic Domains of Ysgard, but death in battle is a mere inconvenience for most. Any creature, other than a construct or undead, that is killed by a weapon attack while engaging in combat on Ysgard is restored to life at dawn the next day. The creature has all hit points restored, and all conditions and afflictions it suffered before its death are removed.

In addition, any creature making death saving throws gains advantage on the death saving throw. If the result of the roll is 15 or higher, the creature awakens with 1 hit point exactly as if they had rolled a natural 20 on their death saving throw.

There are circumstances where the Heroic Rebirth does not occur. Creatures slain by assassination are not restored to life, and the residents of Ysgard consider assassination the tool of the cowardly and dishonorable. Dying by natural causes, or by hazards, also does not qualify, and most spells cause permanent death as well.

MYSTERIOUS SITES & TREASURES

From the earthbergs of Ysgard to the molten landscape of Muspelheim and the deep caverns of Nidavellir, the Heroic Domains have much to offer adventurers and heroes looking to prove their mettle in a realm of epic proportions. Ancient tombs, enormous drinking halls, foreboding forests, and more await the brave and adventurous on Ysgard.

ALFHEIM

The earthberg of Alfheim is the home of a large population of elves that dwell in ancient forests, serene meadows, and even below the ground. Alfheim includes both mortal elves, such as wood elves and high elves, along with the near-immortal eladrin. It is a place of great beauty, joy, and happiness, where the very air is suffused with the simple pleasures of a life untamed. Great houses are built into, through, and above the ancient trees, and it is said there are no locked doors in Alfheim. Visitors are greeted with open arms and there's always a celebration going on somewhere.

Alfheim is ruled by King Aetharess and Queen Loraless, both eladrin elves of breathtaking beauty and wisdom. They have ruled the realm for countless centuries, and truly their reign seems to have no sign of ending anytime soon. They were the ones that led the charges against the jotuns to clear Alfheim originally and they signed the peace accords with the Aesir, recognizing Alfheim as a true and independent place, free from the influence of Odin and his troupe of gods. Unusually, the pair have no children, and there is no set precedent in place for what would happen if one or both of them were to step down from Alfheim's rulership.

There are a few smaller settlements on the edges of Alfheim's earthberg that see raiding activity from sky vikings and longships from neighboring vanir villages, but these rarely result in bloodshed. King Aetharess and Queen Loraless see these incidents as the natural form of trade in Ysgard and treat them with a light touch and a kind heart, at least for those raiders that come and do not slaughter mercilessly. In such a rare occurrence of needless bloodshed, the full power of Alfheim has been unleashed, with elven skyriders born on war griffons launching out from the interior forests with deadly aim and powerful spells.

ASGARD

Asgard stands as one of the most important individual realms on Ysgard, as it serves as the home for the Aesir. The earthberg that holds Asgard is surrounded by a wall of brilliant light that blinds any who come close without special invitation. Beyond the light wall sits the godly realm of Odin the All-Father, a magnificent golden palace overlooking a sweeping majestic vista of almost incomprehensible beauty. Each of the gods of the Aesir keeps their personal homes as a shining beacon of utter perfection, at least from their own perspective, but beneath it all beats a dark and violent heart.

Led by Odin, the Aesir have constructed a gilded façade over a brutal history of blood war and betrayal. They came to Ysgard long ago and fought the jotuns for control over the earthbergs, eventually pushing the celestial natives out of many places and declaring themselves the rightful rulers. The Aesir then worked to erase the culture of the jotuns everywhere they could, from their temples to their ancestral burial chambers, and establish themselves as the original and true powers of Ysgard. Thousands and thousands of mortals were brought in to populate Ysgard, and these vanir saw the Aesir as benefactors and the jotuns as savages.

Asgard stands as the physical manifestation of these cultural genocide. It was once the seat of the greatest lords of the Jotundrott, the rulers of the jotuns, but it was usurped by Odin and his kin in a brutal battle that nearly wiped out the earthberg entirely. It is said that Odin's golden palace was constructed over the treasure chambers of the jotun high king, but that the secrets of the celestial's greatest treasures remains locked away from Odin to this very day.

The gods of the Aesir often travel across the layers of Ysgard on various journeys and missions. They tend to be a very petty group, interested in maintaining their own lofty positions, and they uses mortals across the plane as pawns in their great games. Sometimes, mortals are invited to the home of one of the gods to talk, drink, eat, and mingle with the powerful Aesir, but whatever niceties they offer hides a deeper and more secret motive.

BIFROST THE RAINBOW BRIDGE

Some believe there is a higher layer of Ysgard, far above the earthbergs and sky vikings, wherein dwells the truth of existence itself. Or something along those lines, as the stories of the ultimate reward vary as much as the tellers that spread them. If there is any truth to the rumors of this mythical higher layer, it may lie at the end of the Rainbow Bridge, known as the Bifrost, which sits in the center of Asgard, the realm of the Aesir.

The Rainbow Bridge itself predates the arrival of the Aesir and is believed by some planar scholars to have been a bridge between many of the Upper Planes utilized by the celestial jotuns. Or, it may hide the final resting place of celestials themselves, a kind of resting place where souls of powerful outsider beings can go to rest away from the day-to-day struggles of everyday existence across the multiverse. The Aesir took Asgard partly to understand the power behind the Bifrost, and their control over the Rainbow Bridge has been absolute since the jotuns retreated. One of their own, Heimdall, was put in charge of the Bifrost, and he commands an elite unit of powerful warriors known as the Rainbow Valkyries to defend it and champion its ultimate purpose.

The Bifrost is a nearly translucent, prismatic span of solid rainbow that extends into the lofty skies above Asgard. An impenetrable barrier surrounds the Rainbow Bridge completely except for its entrance, which is guarded by Heimdall himself. What lies at the end of the Bifrost? The truth isn't exactly known, even by the Aesir, though it is known that Heimdall has been there and returned. The highest ranks of the Rainbow Valkyries have been there as

well, suggesting it's a place that can be visited and returned from. Is it an idyllic paradise in the Positive Energy Plane? A secret layer of Ysgard? Or something else entirely?

CATHEDRAL OF BRIMSTONE

The fiery layer of Muspelheim is filled with great heaving seas of lava cut through with "rivers" of solid earth that form the most common routes of transportation. Common stops along these earthen rivers are the forges of the fire giants and smolder jotuns, who harness the power of the surrounding magma to power titanic factories designed to heat metal in the course of weapon and armor creation. The largest and most impressive of these sites is the Cathedral of Brimstone, a titanic structure that towers a mile high and holds the greatest number of smolder jotuns in all of Ysgard.

Most of the Cathedral of Brimstone is dedicated to forging, and the lowest layers are where the greatest work is done in this regard. Hundreds of fire-resistant creatures from across the multiverse come to the site to study under the great forge masters at the cathedral, most of which are smolder jotuns of great age and experience. Fire giants, azers, salamanders, genasi, and many other types come to the Cathedral to study and perfect the craft of forging, working with rare metals found in abundance in the underground realm of Nidavellir. Gorgeous weapons and armor are produced in the Cathedral of Brimstone, that are eventually sold or given to the warriors in the realms above or sold in the great planar marketplaces of the multiverse.

The undisputed lord of the Cathedral of Brimstone is Audbjorg, a smolder jotun queen responsible for creating many of Ysgard's greatest tools of war. She rarely leaves her personal chambers in the cathedral's top-most level, living an isolated life of quiet rage, attended only by massive iron golems of her own making. Audbjorg had been known to come down to the lowest levels of the forge in surprise inspections, viewing the works of her lessers and providing words of encouragement, but those visits ceased over 1,000 years ago when some calamity befell her family.

CAVE OF PROPHECY

The heaving, twisting tunnels of Nidavellir are renown for hiding secrets, but one of the worst kept secrets is a mythical place called the Cave of Prophecy. This large water-filled cavern constantly shifts in location, moving like a bubble in the massive earthen sea that fills Nidavellir. Many have sought it, however, as it is the only known place to reach the enigmatic Norns – ancient beings who deal in prophecy and fate like a charlatan deals in cards.

The Norns have a troublesome habit of appearing in the courts of kings, queens, lords, ladies, and commoners alike, dispensing their prophecy and disappearing without any explanation, but in the Cave of Prophecy a supplicant can actually converse with them and learn more about their mysterious proclamations. Finding the cave is only the first trial, for any who wish to converse with the Norns must submerge into the life-draining waters in the deathly still lake and then survive long enough to reach the fate

witches. In the middle ground between life and death the Norns appear, but a strong will and body is necessary to surface after spending time in that void between existence.

DEN OF THE LAUGHING ROGUE

Ysgard is well-known for its warriors and great feats of strength and bravery, but there is a sneaky underside to it that some do not realize exists. Thieves and rogues with a strong sense of courage, men and women who face death itself with a smile on their face and a laugh on their lips, who toast to the daring deeds of the bold and stupid with cups of wine and sing songs of their own end. These are the sounds that can be heard in the Den of the Laughing Rogue, a grand and sprawling mansion of mishmash architectural styles standing atop the largest subterranean system in the earthbergs of Ysgard.

The master of the Den of the Laughing Rogue is a mystery, but most believe them to be an ancient god of thieves and luck. Though the occupants of the den are rakish and clever, acts of malice and outright assassination are strictly forbidden. Here is a place to share stories, to hear rumors, spend wealth on wine and entertainment, and sleep it off till the next morning with a headache, an empty coinpurse, and a headful of bleary memories. Servants of the Laughing Rogue's master wear twisted masks of black and white, and are capable of reducing difficult guests to paralyzing fits of laughter with just a glance.

Below the den is a vast system of caves and tunnels where the best thieves store their greatest treasures. Hidden vaults, devious traps, magical contraptions, powerful guardians, and more all lurk in those fearsome tunnels, whose only guard is the voice of reason telling would-be thieves to stay back lest they fall victim to a fate worse than death.

GLACIER OF DAGFINN

Dagfinn is one of the most renowned of the bitter jotuns. His deeds in combat are legendary, but stories of his great lust for plunder and treasure eclipse them all. Any treasure Dagfinn claims is transported to a secret earthberg in Ysgard that holds a single, titanic glacier, and in that depths the bitter jotun hides his most valuable possessions.

Dagfinn himself is a bitter jotun with a boisterous nature and a good-hearted laugh. He thrills at the prospect of combat, but it's the glittering prize at the end that seems to hold his attention more than anything else. Gold, jewelry, magic, all are treasures to be claimed and then secreted away at his hidden glacier. There, he spends days looking fondly over his hard-won gains, which include rare and powerful artifacts from across Ysgard. Dagfinn has been known to raid outside of Ysgard as well, so there are at least a few items from across the multiverse in his personal treasure sanctum as well.

When he isn't there, the powerful bitter jotun leaves a retinue of dangerous beasts to guard his treasures. Fierce remorhazes, enslaved abominable yetis, and even a few bound draugr are all rumored to protect the secrets contained within the Glacier of Dagfinn. Prospective treasure hunters are warned to be on their guard.

GOL KALDUHR

Nidavellir is a vast, subterranean realm of unusually moving stone, creating shifting tunnels between the various sites. There are only a few permanent stable locations in all of the underground layer, and the dwarven city of Gol Kalduhr is one of the best known and most impressive. The entire city is built out of one enormous stalagmite, nearly a mile high, with dozens and dozens of levels filled with dwarves and a fair number of gnomes all contained within an elongated narrow cavern. The most prominent dwarven clans and the most numerous are the duergar dwarves, but unlike many other gray dwarf settlements, cruelty and malice have little place in Gol Kalduhr. A large of svirfneblin gnomes are among the population as well, and the entire structure has a feeling of isolation that suits the inhabitants just fine.

Gol Kalduhr is ruled currently by Queen Tishma Hammerbreaker, the duergar matron of Clan Hammerbreaker, the most influential family in the entire city. She is an aged dwarf who has seen much hardship and suffering in her days, and that experience has hardened her heart against the wonders of the outside world. Tough dwarven soldiers ride giant bats on patrol outside of Gol Kalduhr, and the main gates on the cavern's floor level are well-guarded against intruders.

Inside the stalagmite, Gol Kalduhr is a cold, depressing place. By some trick of the cave, all fires are transformed into blue flames, creating an eerie azure luminescence throughout the halls and chambers of Gol Kalduhr. There is little joy found inside, however, and the pale blue lights reflect a kind of malaise that has settled into the souls of all the inhabitants. They defend their home with vigorous zeal but there is little for the dwarves and gnomes to live for beyond simply existing for another day.

HALL OF VALHALLA

Asgard is the shining, splendid home of the Aesir on Ysgard, and it stands as a symbol of their might and glory. In the caves beneath the glittering palaces and beautiful homes of the gods sits the realm of the honored dead, a place held sacred by Aesir and vanir alike – the Hall of Valhalla. Here is where the physical bodies of fallen warriors, kings, and legends are interred in a series of complex tombs and catacombs, all watched over by faithful einherjar.

There are only two known entrances into the Hall of Valhalla. The first is directly from Asgard above it, but this way, known as the Path of the Dead, is guarded by Hel, a singularly powerful deity of death who actually dwells on the plane of Hades. She keeps an avatar on the Path of the Dead, and the only ones that are supposed to travel that way are the members of the Aesir, and even they must be accompanied by Hel herself.

The other way is through an immense set of golden doors known as the Gates of Valhalla. This entrance is located on the underside of Asgard, in a field of burning embers and spouting flames that fill the underside of all of Ysgard's earthbergs. Valkyries astride pegasus carry the bodies of dead warriors and kings to the Gates of Valhalla where they are given over to the einherjar charged with

watching over the interred bodies. Few living creatures have seen inside the Hall of Valhalla, but there are stories that say some great heroes have managed to pass through the Gates of Valhalla to the interior on quests to ask questions of their fallen ancestors.

HIMINBORG

The hub of travel in all of Ysgard is Himinborg, a sprawling city of transients, travelers, and strangers. There are only a few permanent residents in all of the city, and these are members of a single vanir family that have taken an oath to maintain Himinborg as a neutral space for all who come seeking aid or information. The muddy streets see a lot of traffic, and the inns and taverns take in a lot of strangers, but no one stays here for long. It is a waypoint to every other destination in Ysgard, or so it is said, and it also holds a large number of well-documented gates to other places across the multiverse.

Himinborg is ruled by vassals of Heimdall, one of the Aesir, and the one charged with protecting the Bifrost from all intruders. Heimdall rarely travels to Himinborg but he has a number of trusted appointees that run the place in his stead. The soldiers of the city are all volunteers from across the plane, many of whom who chose to serve in Himinborg rather than face banishment, imprisonment, or a dishonorable death. The earthberg Himinborg rests upon is a fair distance from Asgard, but the agents of the Aesir are always active in the city, and the Aesir themselves have been known to come to Himinborg as a stopover point along their way to greater destinations.

Goods and services can be found in Himinborg at regular rates, since a large number of merchant caravans come and go from the city regularly, but the most renown crafters are those that work with horns. Drinking or hunting, horns crafted by the masters of Himinborg are carved from oxen, bull, and other exotic creatures, and are often decorated with runic symbols honoring members of the Aesir. More than a few are magical in nature as well.

LAKE OF LEAD

Muspelheim is a roiling realm of magma and fire, with rivers of earth cutting through the molten landscape like a vast unending snake. The only known liquid on the layer is the Lake of Lead, a sea of melted metal many miles wide, with a bad reputation. Cruel and vicious smolder jotuns have made a habit of drowning victims in the Lake of Lead, creating grotesque statues that adorn many of their homes along the unusual lakeshore.

The source of the Lake of Lead is believed to be a never-ending vein of iron ore constantly being pushed up from Nidavellir by the powerful forces that shape and reshape the underground layer. Most of the lake itself is sludge-like in consistency, but a few places, especially nearer towards the center, are more liquid, and a person could actually swim through it if they didn't need to breathe and could withstand the punishing temperature. There are ancient smolder jotun legends that say a great city of the jotuns once stood in the center of the Lake of Lead, but that some great calamity laid it low. Perhaps its ruins can still be found by someone brave or foolish enough to risk the hot, bubbling metal.

PLAIN OF IDA

When a warrior wishes to prove their worth outside of direct combat, they head towards the Plain of Ida. This vast, open field is where countless vanir clans gather regularly to drink, share stories, and most importantly, hold contests to determine who is the best among them in a wide variety of activities. Hunting, shooting, running, jumping, swimming, climbing, and more are all tested on the Plain of Ida, but there is no bloodshed allowed on the plain by ancient decree.

Wine and mead flow freely at all times, and most days hold some smaller contests between feuding clans and families that have gathered to settle their differences outside of combat. There are a few massive events that can attract crowds of thousands from across Ysgard. These are the Festival Days, and there are four that rotate with the seasons. Each is hosted by the Aesir who try to put aside their petty squabbles and come together to watch a week's worth of games and contests. All are welcome to participate but anyone less than the best is quickly weeded out by the grueling schedule.

RINGS OF THE NORNS

The Norns are powerful fate witches known for interfering in the lives of mortals and gods on Ysgard. Their influence is great, and even the Aesir fear their prophecies, but there is something even the influential witches fear – the Rings of the Norns. These seemingly innocuous magical trinkets appear as normal copper rings, but they are intertwined with the fate of the Norns themselves. Possessing one allows the wear to manipulate fate and luck in powerful ways, but doing so marks the wearer and ties them forever to the machinations of the Norns.

No one is really sure how many Rings of the Norns exist. Some believe there are only nine, while others say there could be an infinite number. They appear suddenly in the strangest of places, and heroes and villains alike have sought them out in order to control the fate-warping powers they bestow. The curse that binds the wearer to the Norns is more subtle, but the fate witches have vast resources at their disposal to deal with those that abuse the power of their items.

Did the Norns craft the rings? No one knows for sure, and the fate witches themselves don't seem to be possessed of any skill that would suggest they created the powerful items. There are stories that say the dwarves of Gol Kalduhr actually created the rings as a way to punish the Norns, and it is said the only way to be rid of the curse for wearing it is to die or defeat one of the Norns. Perhaps the dwarves of Gol Kalduhr know of other methods of ridding the bearer of the item.

SHIPYARD OF NOATUN

Noatun is an unusual earthberg in a plane of unusual wonders. The trees that grow in the interior forest of this earthberg are known as soarwood, which are rare but found in other places in the multiverse. Vessels crafted from soarwood actually float on the air by some latent magical properties, and the forests of Noatun are filled with the unusual trees. Some enterprising vanir discovered this generations ago, and they built a vast shipyard and surrounding city in order to support the largest and most mobile force in Ysgard – the Sky Vikings of Noatun.

The shipyard where the soarwood longships are built is a large facility with hundreds of diligent crafters working countless hours in joyful spirit to build a single longship. The sky vikings that use them to raid across Ysgard treat the crafters with respect, but they are prisoners – most of them don't care, however. Their "captors" allow them a lot of flexibility and leeway in how they spend their time outside the shipyard, and several generations have lived and died without ever feeling threatened by their sky viking masters.

The leadership of Noatun keep the best longships for themselves, but they actually sell their flying ships through a trading company called the Sky Merchants of Noatun. The Sky Merchants are strictly forbidden from selling ships on Ysgard, but their wares are known in such faraway markets as Calypso on the Plane of Air and many Material Plane cities. The cost is high for their ships, but they are all handcrafted by the finest shipbuilders of Ysgard.

SPIRE OF SURTUR

Smolder jotuns see Surtur, the god of fire giants, as a kindred spirit, and most see him as a distant cousin of their own distant ancestry. Fire giants and smolder jotuns work closely together on many projects, but the most striking symbol of their eternal alliance is the Spire of Surtur on Muspelheim. A thin needle of black stone rising from a heaving lava flow, the Spire of Surtur is hollow inside and occupied by a large number of fire giant maidens who are devoted priests of the fire giant god.

There is an ancient ritual honored by both smolder jotuns and fire giants where a young male jotun or giant can impress one of the maidens and earn their favor for marriage in the spire by braving the dangers outside. It is known as the Wedding Spire for just this reason by the local fire giants, and many of them have sought outside help in their endeavors. However, outsiders that aid in these raids on the Spire of Surtur usually end up, for the fire giant god is cruel and merciless, and the maidens that worship inside are just as vicious.

SVARTALFHEIM

Drow are widely recognized across the multiverse for their cruelty, though many planar scholars point to the direct influence of Lolth the Spider Queen as the source for this malevolence. The best example that has been offered for this theory is Svartalfheim, a subterranean realm in Nidavellir populated by drow elves that shun the evil

practices of their kin in favor of isolationism and solitude.

No one would accuse the drow of Svartalfheim as being kind, but they take no pleasure in inflicting pain or suffering on others, and they have been known to take in lost strangers that fall near their borders in Nidavellir. The drow still organize by familial houses under the guidance and rulership of matron mothers, but without the influence of the demon queen Lolth, they enact policies meant to hide their realm from the outside world and develop their self-reliance practices. They rarely trade, though there is an oblique channel of communication between the drow of Svartalfheim and the dwarves of Gol Kalduhr (messenger slugs travel through small narrow tunnels between the two cities, a slow if dependable means of communication).

The fortunes of the drow houses in Svartalfheim rise and fall like the families in any city, but rarely do they prey on each other or act out of sheer malevolence. They still have to deal with aggressive monsters in Nidavellir, and degenerate tribes of savage ogres are a constant threat, along with small bands of vicious forlorn jotuns. Monsters lurk in the darkness of Nidavellir, so the drow must be on their guard, and they've found the best defense is to make sure no one can find their homeland. So far, their strategy has worked out well.

YGGDRASIL THE WORLD TREE

On a remote earthberg floating in the sky of Ysgard sits a singularly unique feature in all of the multiverse. Yggdrasil, known as the World Tree, is a monstrosity huge oak tree whose branches reach up into a thickly clouded ceiling beyond which the vast distances of Ysgard shrink and rearrange to suit the twisting branches' paths. Each branch ends up on a different earthberg, usually in a forest with a thick cloud constantly hanging overhead, allowing for quick travel throughout Ysgard.

The branches are only part of the strange wonder of Yggdrasil. Below ground, the roots are wide and unusually hollow, and through these natural tunnels a traveler can travel to other earthbergs, Muspelheim, Nidavellir, and even beyond the planar boundaries of Ysgard. Some of the roots extend into Hades and Pandemonium, and some go even further than that, creating a confusing maze of interplanar pathways hidden from most eyes.

Unfortunately, both the branches and roots of Yggdrasil are confounding to navigate. Travelers wishing to traverse them safely are suggested to look for the dryads of the World Tree, who can offer aid and guidance in exchange for small trinkets or favors. Dark things dwell in Yggdrasil as well, such as evil blights twisted by a nearness to a negative energy well, along with darker and more foul beasts. But for those in a hurry and without other means of planar transportation, Yggdrasil offers an option that is better than none.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The perils and adventures found across Ysgard are bigger, bolder, and more epic than other planes, or at least that's how it feels. Facing dangerous foes on the field of battle against insurmountable odds, dealing with the gods of the Aesir face-to-face, and traveling through realms of majestic mountains, flaming rivers, and floating earthbergs – these are the moments of heroes.

Strike of the Sky Vikings. The characters meet up with a family of farmers fleeing devastation. Overnight, a wild band of warriors came in from nowhere, attacking and slaughtering everything, before carrying off the goods the farm had produced into the night. They ask the party to help, and in tracking the raiders down the party discovers they were a rogue group of sky vikings from Ysgard. Are the characters able to sneak aboard the soarwood longship before it slips into a portal back to Ysgard?

Roots of Revenge. A wounded, dying dryad stumbles to the ground before the party and asks them to avenge her death. Monstrous blights took over her lair and forced her to flee, and now she is too far gone to save. She imparts the location of her tree which turns out to be a root of Yggdrasil. The party can help clear the blight, and in doing so they unlock a passage that leads back to the World Tree itself. Do they follow? Were the blights unleashed deliberately?

Disturbed Rest. High in the nearby mountains, thieves broke into a lost jotun tomb and stole a relic. In doing so, they unleashed a draugr, which now stalks the countryside. Finding the relic is the first part, and then the party must return it to the mountain tomb – which is revealed to hold a portal to Ysgard. More draugr follow unless the party can seal the portal from the other side.

Help in Himinborg. A warrior from the distant realm of Ysgard comes to the party seeking their aid. He must meet up with a blacksmith in the town of Himinborg on Ysgard, but he fears for his life from dangerous assassins. The blacksmith was crafting a weapon for the warrior, and a rival clan seeks to stop the weapon from being delivered. Is the warrior telling the truth? In Himinborg, the assassins strike, but who is their real intended target?

Vault of the Last Thief. The characters learn that a fabled treasure of a master thief is hidden away in a secret vault below the Den of the Laughing Rogue. They learn a secret phrase that allows them to access the vault, but they must first enter the den and deal with its wide variety of vagabonds, rogues, thieves, and wily warriors. The twisting tunnels below the den are open to all, and the party must face trap and guardians before finally finding their intended target. Is the information reliable? What secrets are held inside the vault?

RANDOM ENCOUNTER TABLES

The below tables can be used by the Dungeon Master as a source of inspiration when a party of characters are traveling through Ysgard. Three tables are provided, one for each layer of the plane. Look at each one as a springboard for new adventure ideas, or as a means of highlighting the nature of the plane for the players.

YSGARD

1D100	YSGARD ENCOUNTER
01-05	A warband of berserkers on their way to a fight
06-10	A lone einherjar looking for a lost traveler
11-15	Three bitter jotuns discussing gossip on a stone
16-20	A swarm of ravens flying overhead
21-25	A valkyrie (knight) astride a pegasus
26-30	A hildisvini rampaging through a village
31-35	The melodious sound of a lillend singing nearby
36-40	Priests of Odin performing a weather ritual
41-45	A glorious jotun regaling a band of youths with adventure stories
46-50	Tracks of a vicious three-legged cave bear
51-55	A dryad tending to a root of Yggdrasil
56-60	Several wary trolls hunting for food
61-65	A blind seer claiming to speak for the Norns
66-70	A dwarf artificer selling wares out of a wagon
71-75	A longship of berserkers flying overhead
76-80	Two smolder jotuns angrily bullying a hill giant
81-85	A draugr stumbling out of a cave looking for fresh meat
86-90	A splendid jotun with a troupe of skalds
91-95	Three treants watching over a blood-soaked battlefield
96-00	A wicked laughing jotun planning a trick on the party

MUSPELHEIM

1D100	MUSPELHEIM ENCOUNTER
01-10	A band of fire giant youths heading to the Spire of Surtur
11-20	Two smolder jotuns arguing about a recent incident
21-30	A fire giant dreadnought preparing for battle
31-40	Azer merchants hauling a trunk full of gold
41-50	A forlorn jotun on its way to a dark lonely cave
51-60	A swarm of fire snakes writhing on the ground
61-70	A salamander noble accompanied by fire giant bodyguards
71-80	An elder fire elemental scorching the ground
81-90	A troupe of bitter jotuns looking to get even with their rivals
91-00	A sudden geyser of lava!

NIDAVELLIR

1D100	NIDAVELLIR ENCOUNTER
01-10	Three xorn hunting for rare gems
11-20	A mining crew of svirfneblin following a rich vein of ore
21-30	Drow spies from Svartalfheim
31-40	A forlorn jotun looking to be left alone
41-50	A vanir mage studying crystals
51-60	The unearthed tomb of a jotun lord
61-70	An ooze elemental slipping between the cracks
71-80	Degenerate trolls hunting for meat
81-90	Dwarven scouts from Gol Kalduhr
91-00	The tunnel up ahead heaves and now goes a different direction