

RUNE-BENNIES

OPTIONAL RULES

These optional rules were designed based on a discussion between Philippe Depriester and Wiggy. Thanks to Chuck Nichols and his gang for testing them.

As they stand, bennies are a perfect game mechanic representation of the Norns' manipulation of fate, especially since they are primarily used by heroes and villains, those folk with important destinies—they allow characters to turn failure into success, and to avoid injuries which would kill lesser men.

In *Hellfrost*, you could substitute actual engraved rune stones for stones and poker chips. Even if you don't use these optional rules, they're more atmospheric than a plain poker chip or colored stone.

These rules allow rune-stone bennies to be used in alternate ways, further representing the Norns' weaving of fate. Exactly which alternate version you use, if indeed you bother at all, depends on how you want to run your game. Pick one style and stick with it.

Readers with knowledge of the runes and their meaning in divinations will note that the Futhark runes don't always exactly match the nature of the associated *Hellfrost* god. There's a simple reason for this—the gods were not designed with the Futhark in mind. That the pantheon has 24 greater gods and the Futhark 24 runes is due to the Norns, not the author's consciousness.

Please remember, though, that to some people rune stones are a way of divination and can have spiritual beliefs attached to them. We're talking about using them in a fictional world as a gaming piece, which might upset some people. As always, just make sure no one is going to find using them offensive.

BASIC RULES

You need one complete set of 24 rune stones to use these rules. If you don't want to purchase a set, you can cut out the rune stones from the last page of this document and stick them to bits of card.

Let each player randomly draw his character's regular number of bennies—fate is an unseen force, so heroes get what the gods decide. The GM draws his afterward. Only Wild Card villains may use the bennies in this alternate way—Extras always treat them as regular bennies.

Each rune benny is marked with a unique glyph, and each unique rune is associated with two abilities. One is always a modifier to a Trait roll. If the benny is spent with regard the Trait roll, a benefit applies. Exactly how this works depends on the GM—three variant systems are

provided below. The second ability is unconnected to a Trait roll. The description tells you how it functions.

When a benny is spent it goes into the pot with the unused bennies. When a player earns a benny, let him draw one at random. Naturally, transparent pots aren't a good choice.

Option 1 (The Gritty Option): With this option, the player spends the benny *before* making a roll and gains the appropriate bonus. Because the benny must be spent in advance of the roll, it's really for those "must succeed" rolls. Of course, there is still no guarantee of success, but such is the way of fate.

The rune bennies only ever provide a Trait option. The non-Trait benefit is ignored.

Option 2 (Semi-Heroic Option): The player spends a benny *after* making a Trait roll as normal. However, his reroll gains the appropriate bonus. This allows him a greater chance of success. This option is better than the regular benny rule, but a rune stone can only be used this way in one specific manner.

This option allows for the non-Trait benefits, but the benny can only be spent on the character's turn. Thus, he has to second-guess whether or not it might be needed.

Option 3 (Heroic): The player rolls as normal. If he wishes to spend an appropriate rune benny, he gains the appropriate bonus to his rolled total. This is the most powerful option, as a hero can turn a failure into a success or a success into a raise without risking another die roll.

The non-Trait benefit can be invoked *at any time*. Just be careful of the duration!

THE RUNES

† DARGAR

God Aspect: Violence and intimidation.

Rune Aspects: Hardship and adversity.

Trait Benefit: +2 to Intimidation rolls.

Non-Trait Benefit: The character goes Berserk as per the Edge until the start of his next turn, at which time the rage automatically ends. If the hero has the Berserk Edge, his rage until it ends normally.

▷ EIRA

God Aspect: Healing and mercy.

HELLFROST EXPANSION

Rune Aspects: Healing, regenerative, peace, renewal, and recovery.

Trait Benefit: +2 to Healing rolls.

Non-Trait Benefit: Until the start of his next turn, any attackers wishing to harm the user must make a Spirit roll first. With failure, they are unable to attack the character, but may switch targets. Note that this applies even if the benny user Withdraws from Combat.

↪ EOSTRE

God Aspect: Nature, the cycle of life.

Rune Aspects: Harvest, and the natural cycle of the seasons.

Trait Benefit: +2 to Riding *or* Survival (above ground only) (player chooses when benny is spent).

Non-Trait Benefit: The character may invoke an effect similar to the *puppet* power. The power only affects plants or creatures with an (A) intelligence. He always uses Spirit as his arcane skill die. The victim is automatically free of the effect at the end of its next turn.

Alternately, the victim may ignore modifiers for difficult ground, but only in areas of vegetation. If the difficult ground also prohibits running, that restriction still applies.

X ERTHA

God Aspect: The earth.

Rune Aspects: The unknown and gifts, for she is the goddess of metals, from which rings (common gifts) are forged, and of gems.

Trait Benefit: +2 to Climbing rolls (only when climbing rocks) *or* Survival (only when underground) (player chooses when benny is spent).

Non-Trait Benefit: Until the start of the character's next turn he has +2 Armor. This stacks with any magical or mundane armor bonuses.

ᚱ FREO

God Aspect: Travel.

Rune Aspects: Movement and direction, both literally and figuratively.

Trait Benefit: Freo's Trait benefit is slightly different. The hero may use his benny to reroll his running die. Regardless of which option the GM is using, the player always decides whether or not he wishes to spend the benny after the running die roll is made.

Non-Trait Benefit: Until the end of his current turn, the character may either run as a free action *or* ignore penalties for difficult ground. If the difficult ground also prohibits running, the latter still applies in both cases.

√ HELA

God Aspect: Undead.

Rune Aspects: Continuity and endurance, death and rebirth.

Trait Benefit: The character may take +2 to Guts rolls *or* +2 when casting the *zombie* power (player decides when the benny is spent).

Non-Trait Benefit: Undead the character attacks are susceptible to Called Shots and lose their +2 Toughness bonus. Furthermore, undead are susceptible to Intimidation by this character only. Bonuses last until the start of the character's next turn.

ᚱ HOENIR

God Aspect: Knowledge.

Rune Aspects: The difference between man and animals—speech, the arts, lore, and forward planning.

Trait Benefit: +2 to Common Knowledge or Knowledge rolls (player decides which specific skill when benny is used).

Non-Trait Benefit: The hero uses his wide-ranging knowledge to foresee likely eventualities in the very near future. The round after the benny is used in this manner, the character draws an extra action card. He may keep the card for himself or give it to a colleague.

↑ HOTHAR

God Aspect: Law and justice.

Rune Aspects: Fair law, justice, and regulation.

Trait Benefit: +2 to resist Intimidation rolls *or* +2 to Persuasion rolls (player decides when benny is spent).

Non-Trait Benefit: The character may invoke an effect similar to the *puppet* power using his voice of authority. He always uses Spirit as his arcane skill die. The victim is automatically free of the effect at the end of its next turn. This has no effect on creature's with (A) intelligence.

< KENAZ

God Aspect: Fire.

Rune Aspects: Natural warmth, the dispelling of darkness, and robust health.

Trait Benefit: +2 to Vigor rolls to resist the effects of cold. While this might seem limited, because of the way Vigor rolls work, it can very easily make the difference between death and finding shelter.

Non-Trait Benefit: Until the start of his next turn, the character gains the benefit of Improved Arcane Resistance, but only with regard attacks or spells with a fire or heat trapping. If the hero has Arcane Resistance or is under the effects of a power that grants a similar bonus (such as *armor*, *energy immunity*, or *arcane resistance*), the bonuses stack. This ability would provide armor against a fire elemental's fiery touch and a sun dragon's breath, as examples.

ᚱ MAERA

God Aspect: Magic and divination.

Rune Aspects: Prophecy and revelation., controlled and divine power

Trait Benefit: +2 to any magical arcane skill roll.

Non-Trait Benefit: The character gains the benefits of the Arcane Resistance Edge until the start of his next turn. This stacks with the Edge and any spells producing similar effect.

NAUTHIZ

God Aspect: Luck, gambling, and thieves.

Rune Aspects: Chance and skill, making the best of your fate.

Trait Benefit: +2 to Gambling or Lockpicking rolls (player decides when benny is used).

Non-Trait Benefit: The player may get rid of this benny and any number of his other bennies, and redraw an equal number. The fates may be kind, or they may be cruel.

NEORTHE

God Aspect: Water.

Rune Aspects: Water, unconscious intuition, mutability, fluidity of thought and deed.

Trait Benefit: +2 to Boating *or* Swimming rolls (player decides when benny is used).

Non-Trait Benefit: The benny may be used to Soak wounds taken by a ship on which the character is traveling. He makes a Boating roll rather than a Vigor roll to absorb the damage.

NIHT

God Aspect: Darkness and secrets.

Rune Aspects: Distrust, treachery, stagnation, isolation, and secrecy.

Trait Benefit: +2 to Stealth rolls.

Non-Trait Benefit: By spending the benny, the character gains the Drop on a foe. The attack roll must be made in the same round the benny is spent.

THE NORNS

God Aspect: The triple goddesses of fate.

Rune Aspects: Ancestry, inherited traits, and worldly inheritance.

Trait Benefit: The character may add +2 to any one Trait roll of his choice. If he spends the benny to Soak, the bonus also applies to the Soak roll.

Non-Trait Benefit: The Norns' rune is the most powerful. If the player spends this benny as a regular benny (i.e. takes no special bonuses), he may roll a d6. On a 5-6, the benny is returned. There is no limit to how many times the benny can be spent and returned.

RIGR

God Aspect: Vigilance.

Rune Aspects: Protection through vigilance, foresight, successful endeavors.

Trait Benefit: +2 to Notice rolls.

Non-Trait Benefit: Using his keen sense, the character can foretell what an enemy is going to do next. If on Hold, he may spend the benny and interrupt automatically. This applies even if the enemy has a Joker.

SCAETHA

God Aspect: Death.

Rune Aspects: Health and protection, a beacon of light shining in the darkness.

Trait Benefit: +2 to Guts rolls.

Non-Trait Benefit: The character gains the Champion Edge until the start of his next turn. If he already has the Edge *or* is a Disciple of Scaetha, the modifiers increase by +1. If he has the Edge *and* is a Disciple of Scaetha, the bonuses are a further +2.

SIGEL

God Aspect: The sun.

Rune Aspects: The natural power of the sun, a positive force, and vanquisher of darkness.

Trait Benefit: +2 to Notice rolls.

Non-Trait Benefit: Until the start of his next turn, the hero ignores all penalties for poor lighting. Cover modifiers still apply as normal.

THRYM

God Aspect: Winter.

Rune Aspects: Winter, distrust, confrontation, stagnation through preservation, danger, and obstacles.

Trait Benefit: If the hero casts a damaging spell with a cold, coldfire, or ice trapping (this includes *smite*), he may use the benny to reroll the damage. This applies equally to monsters' special abilities and attacks.

Non-Trait Benefit: Until the start of his next turn, the character gains the benefit of Improved Arcane Resistance, but only with regard attacks or spells with a cold, coldfire, or ice trapping. If the hero has Arcane Resistance or is under the effects of a power that grants a similar bonus (such as *armor*, *energy immunity*, or *arcane resistance*), the bonuses stack. This ability protects against frost giant's cold aura and Hellfrost dragon's breath, as examples.

THUNOR

God Aspect: Weather.

Rune Aspects: Physical strength, courage, and the raw power of freedom.

Trait Benefit: +2 to escape grapples or any form of entanglement. This includes spells such as *entangle* or *puppet* (which snares the mind).

Non-Trait Benefit: Until the start of his next turn, the character gains the benefit of Improved Arcane Resistance, but only with regard attacks or spells with an air or electricity trapping. If the hero has Arcane Resistance or

HELLFROST EXPANSION

is under the effects of a power that grants a similar bonus (such as *armor*, *energy immunity*, or *arcane resistance*), the bonuses stack. This ability would grant the bonus to resist an air elemental's whirlwind ability and provide armor against a storm dragon's breath, as examples.

N TIW

God Aspect: Battle.

Rune Aspects: Suffering, hardship, and injury—the life of a warrior.

Trait Benefit: +2 to Fighting or Knowledge (Battle) (player decides when benny is used).

Non-Trait Benefit: The character may pick any one Combat Edge for which he meets the Rank and which does not list another Edge as a requirement. If the hero has the lesser Edge and meets the Rank requirement, he may select the "Improved" version. This lasts until the end of his current turn.

✕ ULLR

God Aspect: Archery and hunting.

Rune Aspects: The day, the time for hunting, as well as the summer months.

Trait Benefit: +2 to Shooting *or* Tracking rolls (player decides when benny is used).

Non-Trait Benefit: Attackers using ranged weapons against the character suffer a -2 penalty to attack rolls until the start of the user's next turn. This affects Shooting, Throwing, and arcane skill rolls involving spells directly aimed at the hero (so not area-affect spells, like *blast* and *burst*).

▷ THE UNKNOWABLE ONE

God Aspect: Teaching through trickery.

Rune Aspects: Satisfaction, peaceful winning, and achievement.

Trait Benefit: +2 to perform Tricks *or* +2 to Taunt rolls (player decides when benny is used).

Non-Trait Benefit: The character may either make a Trick or Taunt roll as a free action *or* be immune to Tricks and Taunts until the start of his next turn (player decides when benny is used).

▷ VALI

God Aspect: Vermin, sickness, and corruption.

Rune Aspects: Lust, depravity, corruption, sin, evil, all that is wrong with the world.

Trait Benefit: +2 to Vigor rolls to resist poison and disease.

Non-Trait Benefit: The character may invoke an effect similar to the *puppet* power by corrupting an individual with promises of power or wealth. He always uses Spirit as his arcane skill die. The victim is automatically free of the effect at the end of its *next* turn. This has no effect on creature's with (A) intelligence except for rats.

¥ VAR

God Aspect: Trade.

Rune Aspects: Wealth.

Trait Benefit: +2 to Streetwise rolls.

Non-Trait Benefit: If the hero spends a benny before buying an item, he can purchase it at 50% its standard cost (after allowing for mark ups owing to Availability)

If he buys multiple purchases of the exact same item at the same time, the discount applies to the final cost.

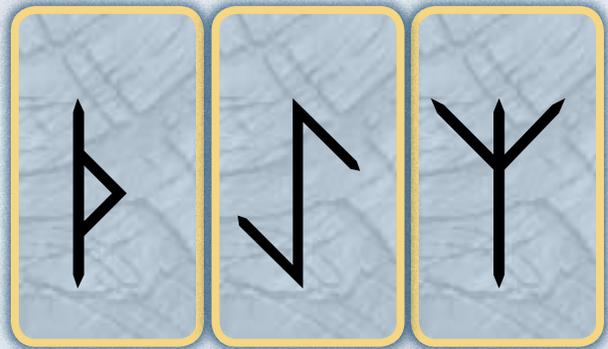
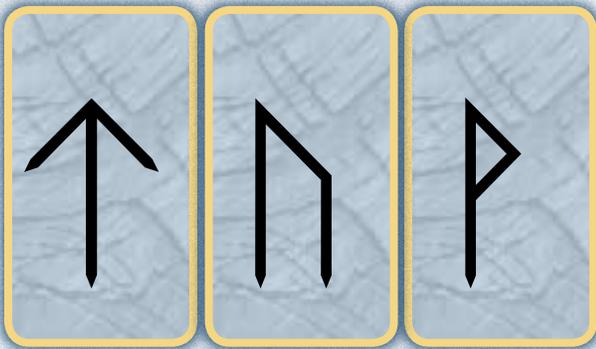
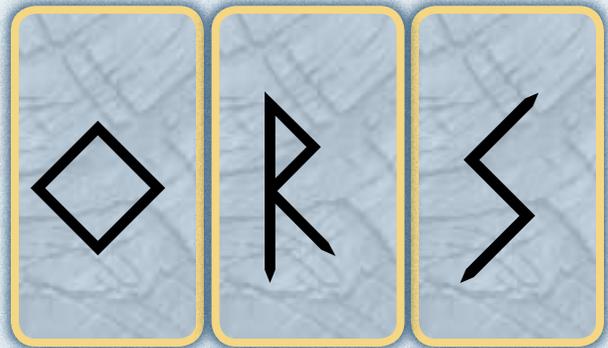
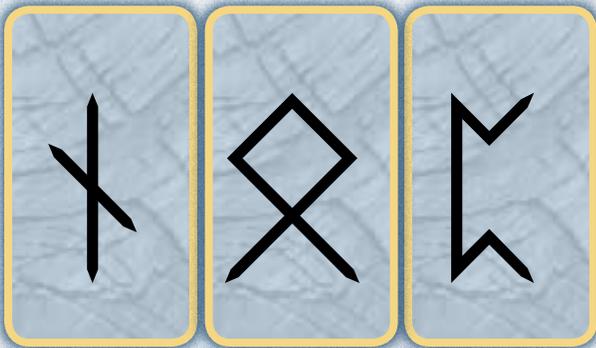
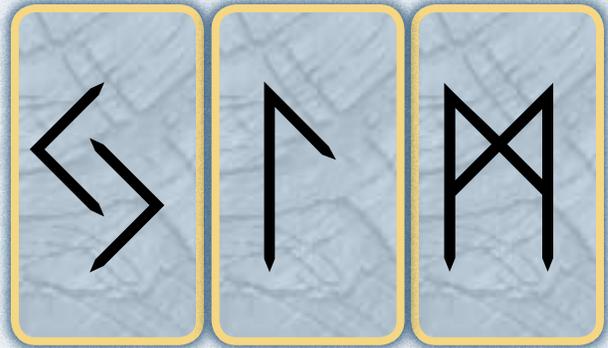
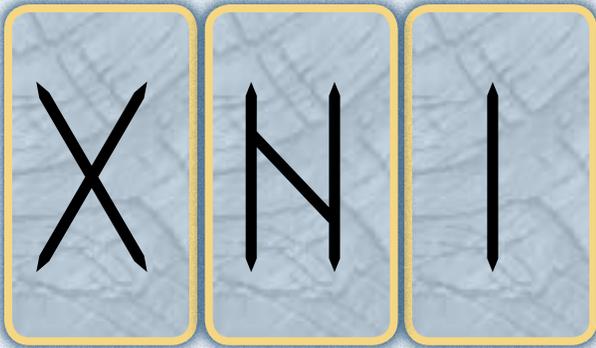
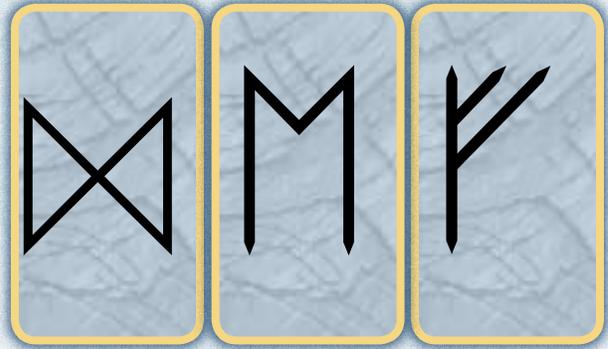
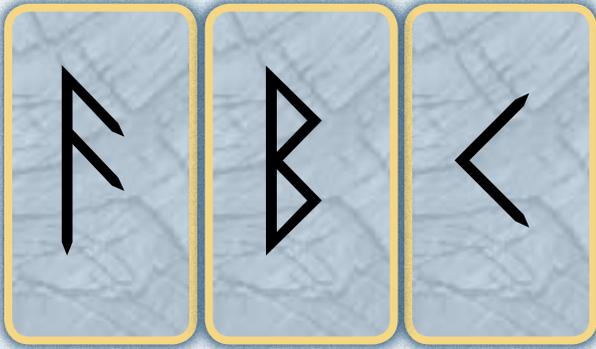
So, if he purchased three *potions of healing*, for example, he'd buy all three at 50% off. If he purchased three different potions, the discount would apply to one potion of his choice only.

DWARVES & THE RUNES

The dwarven art of rune magic ties into the same runes associated with the gods. Over time, however, some knowledge has been forgotten or lost. Hence, the dwarves now know only 21 runes.

The table below shows the god rune and it's associated magical rune. It is these runes dwarven spellcasters cut to empower their spells.

Dwarf Rune	God's Rune
Armor-Rune	Hothar
Arrow-Rune	Ullr
Battle-Rune	Tiw
Beast-Rune	Eostre
Blessing-Rune	Nauthiz
Calming-Rune	Neorthe
Change-Rune	The Unknowable One
Charm-Rune	Var
Coldfire-Rune	Thrym
Curse-Rune	Vali
Cut-Rune	Dargar
Dispel-Rune	The Norns
Earth-Rune	Ertha
Elemental-Rune	Maera
Glow-Rune	Sigel
Healing-Rune	Eira
Secret-Rune	Niht
Shield-Rune	Scaetha
Tongue-Rune	Hoerir
Travel-Rune	Freo
Weather-Rune	Thunor



HELLFROST EXPANSION

QUICK REFERENCE SHEET

Rune	Trait Benefit	Non-Trait Benefit
†	+2 Intimidation	Berserk until start of next turn.
β	+2 Healing	Until start of next turn, attackers must make a Spirit roll
↷	+2 to Riding <i>or</i> Survival	May invoke effect similar to <i>puppet</i>
X	+2 to Climbing rolls <i>or</i> Survival	Until start of next turn he has +2 Armor
ᚦ	May reroll running die	May run as a free action <i>or</i> ignore penalties for difficult ground.
∩	+2 to Guts <i>or</i> +2 when casting <i>zombie</i>	Undead character attacks are susceptible to Called Shots and lose +2 Toughness bonus
ᚱ	+2 Common Knowledge <i>or</i> Knowledge	Draw extra action card next round
↑	+2 to resist Intimidation <i>or</i> +2 Persuasion	May invoke effect similar to <i>puppet</i>
<	+2 to Vigor rolls to resist cold	Until the start of next turn, gains Improved Arcane Resistance with regard attacks or spells with a fire or heat trapping
ᚦ	+2 to any magical arcane skill roll	Gains Arcane Resistance Edge until start of next turn
ᚫ	+2 to Gambling <i>or</i> Lockpicking	May dump this benny and any number of other bennies, and redraw an equal number.
ᚢ	+2 to Boating <i>or</i> Swimming	Used to Soak wounds taken by a ship
ᚱ	+2 to Stealth rolls	Gain the Drop on a foe
⊗	+2 to any one Trait roll of his choice	If spent as regular benny, roll d6. On a 5-6, the benny is returned
Υ	+2 to Notice	If on Hold may interrupt automatically
◇	+2 to Guts	Gains Champion until start of next turn
↶	+2 to Notice rolls	Ignores all penalties for poor lighting until start of next turn
	May reroll damage for cold-based spells	Until start of next turn, gains benefit of Improved Arcane Resistance, but only against cold, coldfire, or ice trapping
ᚱ	+2 to escape grapples or entanglement	Until the start of his next turn, gains benefit of Improved Arcane Resistance, but only against air or electricity trapping
N	+2 to Fighting <i>or</i> Knowledge (Battle)	Pick any one Combat Edge for which Rank is met and which does not list another Edge as a requirement
⊗	+2 to Shooting <i>or</i> Tracking	Ranged weapon attacks have -2 penalty until the start of next turn
ᚢ	+2 to perform Tricks <i>or</i> +2 to Taunt	May make a Trick or Taunt as free action <i>or</i> immune to Tricks and Taunts until the start of next turn
ᚢ	+2 to resist poison and disease	May invoke effect similar to <i>puppet</i>
Ʒ	+2 to Streetwise	If the hero spends benny before buying an item, he can purchase it at 50% its standard cost (after mark ups for to Availability)