



**GAMETEK**

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# KING'S TABLE

THE LEGEND OF RAGNAROK

A GUIDE TO USERS

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## INTRODUCTION

### *HISTORY OF THE GAME*

King's Table, the ancient European board game upon which the computer game "Ragnarok" is based, can be traced back to having its origins amongst the Viking peoples of northern Europe and Scandinavia. The earliest evidence of the existence of a King's Table style board game has been the discovery of fragments of such a board in an Iron Age grave in Denmark, which has been dated as belonging to a period which ended around 400 A.D. These game boards referred to as "taff" were known to have been carried by the Scandinavians on their travels to Iceland and Britain. Latin manuscripts from around 900 A.D. refer to a Saxon version of taff, "Hnefatafi," this game having a religious motif. A typical "Hnefatafi" board seems to have been made up of a grid of squares 18 x 18 onto which various pieces carved in bone or wood were placed to represent the various characters in the game. The largest and most ornate was the Hnefi, the king, with smaller pieces representing lesser characters. The object of the game seemed to be to take rival characters, thus weakening the opposing side and enabling the king to reach the distant edge of the board. The game of King's Table, which you may also play within this software package in addition to Ragnarok, uses a board with squares measuring 11 x 11. As in

Draughts or Chess, there are two sets of pieces, black and white, which are pitted against one another for one to achieve supremacy and win the game. It is the arrangement of the pieces on the board and the differing objectives of the two sides which sets King's Table apart from Chess or Draughts. The white pieces, numbering 13 in total, are arranged in the middle of the board with one single large piece, the king, in the center. Ranged in four separate groups, six on each of the four sides of the board, are the black pieces. These are all uniform in size and have no king. The object of the game is for the white player to move the king to the haven of one of the corners of the board and thus win the game. The black pieces, of course, have to prevent this from happening. This is done by surrounding the king on four sides and immobilizing him; this is then victory for the black player.

The name "Ragnarok" is old Norse and refers to a point in time in the mythology of the Nordic peoples when the gods and their battalions gather together to take part in a huge apocalyptic battle. This battle represents a watershed in the history of the earth and heaven, and is the means by which the world is purged of wrong and iniquity, to clear the way for a new and better world to be created thereafter.

#### ODIN'S TALE

Odin became troubled by dreams of terrible destruction and slaughter. Looking out over the world from his throne, Hlidskjalf, he saw what was becoming of Midgard, and sensed something of what was to befall those who dwelt in Asgard.

All across the earth, the terrible winter had taken hold and was tightening its grip. The ground was turned to iron by the frost, and nothing would grow. The freezing winds sharpened the air into blades and spear points that cut down young and old alike. Everywhere hungry wolves roamed, waiting without fear around the mead halls of even the greatest warriors to carry off those who ventured out.

Isolated, starving and demoralized, people began to murmur against the gods. Losing their faith, questioning their beliefs and values, communities turned on themselves and vented their fear and frustration in savage and unnatural acts.

Seeing all this and meditating on his dreams, Odin guessed the fates of Asgard and Midgard to be intertwined. Traveling in secret to the foot of Yggdrasil, he consulted the head of Mimir, drinking deep at his uncle's spring, once more to learn of the future.

At length, Mimir's head spoke but its voice was unclear, uttering only whispers, like the wind rustling through the branches of the World Ash. The speech of Mimir could not be fully heard but the waters from the sacred spring gave Odin wisdom to understand, forming pictures in the mind of the god.

In a trance, he remembered hanging from high on Yggdrasil pierced by a spear for nine days to win knowledge of the sacred runes. It came into his mind's eye that he, as a shaman, was able to read all things and all events as though they were runes, seeing the magic symbols written in places where others did not.

From this he could know the future.

He saw again all that he had seen from Hlidskjalf, high above the world. Looking for signs, he stared down at the cracks in the frozen earth, at the red marks of blood on ice, at the dancing of fire and smoke, at the prints left by wolves running through the snow.

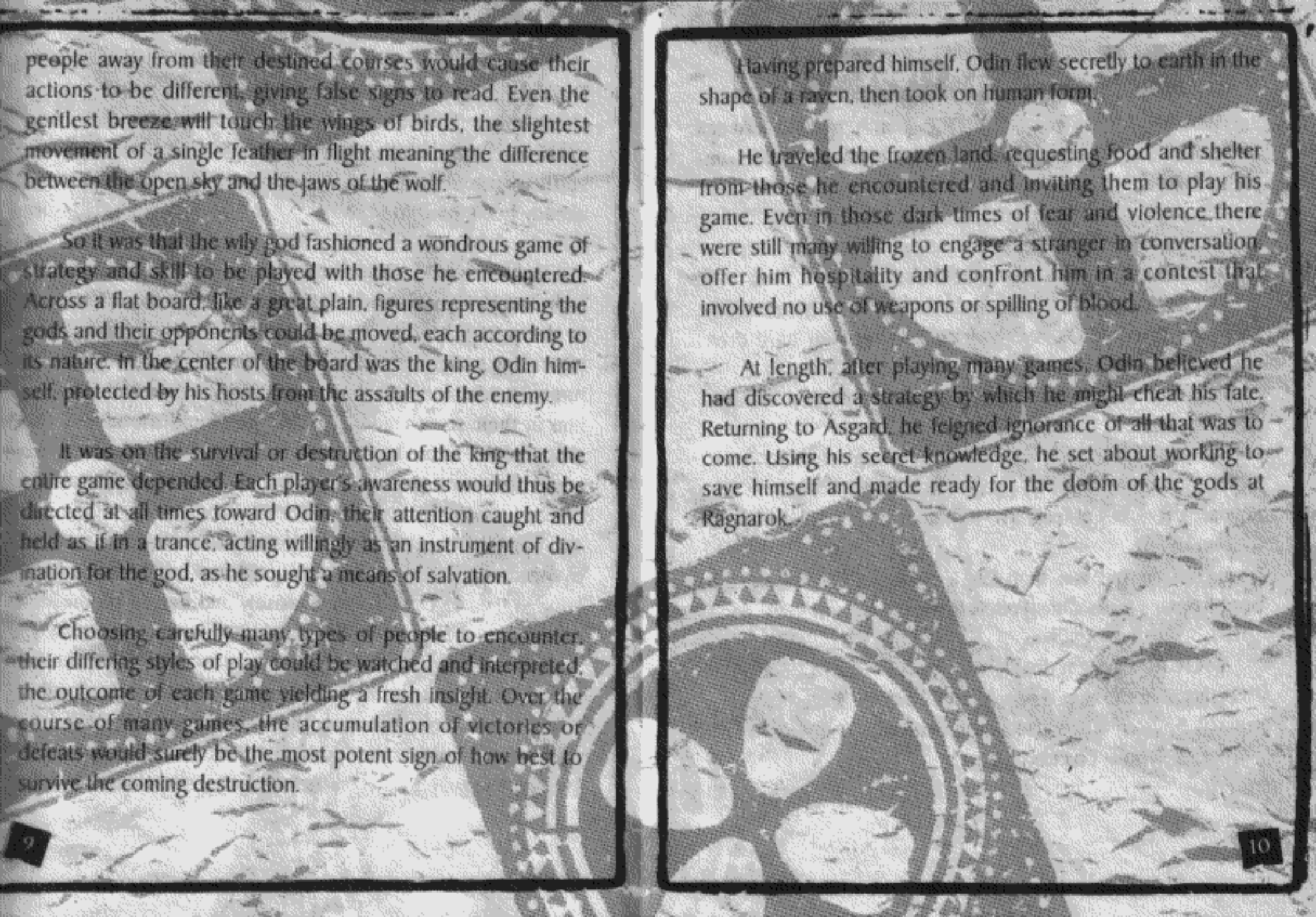
It seemed that all things spoke with one voice of the doom of the gods, the end of all things in heaven and on earth. All roads led to Ragnarok, then ended in the void.

This troubled Odin greatly and he was filled with fear. Desiring a way to survive the great destruction, and even to cheat his destiny if a means could be discovered, he looked again across the earth, then journeyed invisibly through the spirit worlds, but in vain. No sign contradicted what had already been foretold.

In his cunning, Odin then decided to take on a human form and journey abroad in Midgard as he had so often done in the past. There he would study closely those he met, attempting to read them and their actions as though they were runes. Patterns of behavior would surely emerge and speak to him in their secret language, and he would then know the shape of the future in this and all the other worlds. Thus, he could discover a means of avoiding his doom at Ragnarok.

To achieve all this, he knew he must devise some method by which he could attract and hold any mortal for a long enough time to observe them closely and decide on the significance of their actions.

He could not use his own magic to hold people, for this intervention would disturb the very forces he wished to observe, the complex and turbulent flow that moved people's lives as birds are borne on the wind. Any slight movement of



people away from their destined courses would cause their actions to be different, giving false signs to read. Even the gentlest breeze will touch the wings of birds, the slightest movement of a single feather in flight meaning the difference between the open sky and the jaws of the wolf.

So it was that the wily god fashioned a wondrous game of strategy and skill to be played with those he encountered. Across a flat board, like a great plain, figures representing the gods and their opponents could be moved, each according to its nature. In the center of the board was the king, Odin himself, protected by his hosts from the assaults of the enemy.

It was on the survival or destruction of the king that the entire game depended. Each player's awareness would thus be directed at all times toward Odin, their attention caught and held as if in a trance, acting willingly as an instrument of divination for the god, as he sought a means of salvation.

Choosing carefully many types of people to encounter, their differing styles of play could be watched and interpreted, the outcome of each game yielding a fresh insight. Over the course of many games, the accumulation of victories or defeats would surely be the most potent sign of how best to survive the coming destruction.

Having prepared himself, Odin flew secretly to earth in the shape of a raven, then took on human form.

He traveled the frozen land, requesting food and shelter from those he encountered and inviting them to play his game. Even in those dark times of fear and violence there were still many willing to engage a stranger in conversation, offer him hospitality and confront him in a contest that involved no use of weapons or spilling of blood.

At length, after playing many games, Odin believed he had discovered a strategy by which he might cheat his fate. Returning to Asgard, he feigned ignorance of all that was to come. Using his secret knowledge, he set about working to save himself and made ready for the doom of the gods at Ragnarok.

## INSTALLATION

Whether you are going to play Ragnarok on a PC, Amiga or Atari ST, the loading instructions for each format are simple to follow.

### IBM PC VERSION

**Hard Drive installation:** Insert Disk A and type

**A:\INSTALL**

From the RAGNAROK directory created on your hard drive, type **RAGNAROK**.

If you wish to play the game and bypass the intro,

type **GAME**

### NOTE:

Ragnarok requires at least 590 K of your base 640K to be free to run properly.

If your system has less than 590 K available, you will need to boot from a system disk. Follow these steps:

1. Create a system disk:

a. At the c:\> type **cd\dos**

b. Insert a new disk in the a drive

c. Type **format a:/s**

2. Copy the line from the autoexec.bat file on your c drive that loads your mouse driver into an autoexec.bat file on your new system disk. Consult your DOS manual on creating an autoexec file and editing.

3. With the system disk inserted in the a drive, reboot the machine.

4. Switch to the c drive by typing **c:**

5. Go into the RAGNAROK directory by typing **cd \ragnarok**

6. Load the game by typing **ragnarok** or skip the introduction by typing **game**

### AMIGA VERSION

Insert Disk A, press <F1> for introduction; <F2> for Hard Drive installation. To play the game, insert Disk B.


### ATARI/ST VERSION

Insert Disk A, run through introduction, then insert Disk B. Once the game is completed, insert Disk A for end sequence.


## THE OPTION STONES

Once the game has been installed and loaded, the player will see on the screen a computer controlled demonstration of the menu system. Press any key when you are ready to play. To the left of the board, on the tavern table, there are six rune stones, four of which are used as switches for the games menu screens. By moving the cursor (using the mouse or cursor keys on the keyboard) over a rune stone, a menu will appear by clicking the left mouse button or hitting the delete key. If you would like to escape from a menu, click the right mouse button.

## THE INFO STONE

Clicking on the rune stone marked with an "i"  will bring up the Information menu. This menu consists of two windows: clicking on one will give information about the publisher Gametek, Inc., and the other lists information about the game designers, Imagitec.

## THE OPTIONS STONE

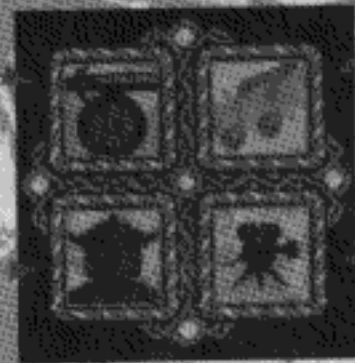
Clicking on the rune stone marked with an "O"  will bring up the Options menu. As the game suggests, this menu allows the player to make selections of which elements he/she would like to include in the game. Moving the cursor over the icon and clicking the left mouse button will make the selection.

Conflict Animations  
*Toggles animation scenes*

Opponent Cameos  
*Toggles appearances and quotes of opponents*

Music  
*Toggles music option*

Replay Last Game



## THE FILE STONE

Clicking on the rune stone marked with a floppy disk symbol will bring up the File menu. This menu consists of two icons: Save As, and Load Game. Below these icons is one small window containing the text: "Quit" (exit to DOS). The save and load game icons and their dedicated windows are explained below.

### SAVE GAME

To save a game in progress you will first have to exit your game by hitting the Escape key. Once the game has been terminated, select the file stone, then choose the save game picture (the disk with the arrow pointing in). Enter the name you wish to call the saved game, and click on OK. You can have up to 12 games saved at any time.

### LOAD GAME

To restore a saved game, choose the file stone, and then choose the load game picture (The disk with the arrow pointing out). A list of saved games should appear. Click on the game you wish to restore and then click on OK.

## THE GAME STONE

Clicking on the rune stone marked with a pawn symbol will bring up the Game menu. This menu consists of two large icons marked "King's Table" and "Ragnarok," respectively. Under these two icons is a smaller window marked "Practice." Clicking on these icons takes the player into his or her choice of game or allows the player to practice playing against one of the computer's built-in competitors, locals from the tavern.

### THE KING'S TABLE GAME MENU

The King's Table Game Menu offers three choices to the player. Using the cursor, the player can elect to play white or black against the computer or opt for the two-player game. The choice is confirmed by clicking on the "OK" icon; this action will then lead the player directly into the game.

### THE PRACTICE MENU

The Practice Menu allows the player to elect to play as white or black and, as the selection is made, the list on the menu changes, listing all the special pieces available to the player. The player has to select from the list of special pieces, the four characters to complete his "team." A list of these characters and their special powers is given later in this manual.



### THE RAGNAROK TOURNAMENT

This allows you to begin a new tournament or resume the tournament from the point of facing the next opponent. Continue will not resume a game in progress. If you would like to save/resume games in progress, see the section on THE FILE STONE.

### THE DEMO STONE

This selects the menu demonstration.



## GAMEPLAY

### RAGNAROK OVERVIEW

In the game Ragnarok, the player takes the role of Odin as he enters an ale house with his special board and meets the locals against whom he is to play.

Odin will find these players to be exactly the dubious and talented competitors that he had sought to test and inspire his plans. He will have to play each of the characters twice, once as white, once as black, in order to progress and meet the next opponent of increasing skill.

The Ragnarok board measures 11 x 11 squares. Some have special markings, to indicate where only Odin may land. These are the four corners and the center square. Other marked squares indicate where special pieces start the game.

The white pieces are comprised of eight pawns, the "Einherjar," which are the reincarnated warriors who fight for the gods at Ragnarok. There is also Odin himself and four special pieces which the player has to select from a menu of six of Odin's allies, each of these pieces has certain powers to be exploited in the game. The white pieces are arranged with Odin in their midst, in the middle of the board. The white side has 13 members in total.

The black pieces are comprised of 20 pawns, the Giants, and four special pieces which, again, the player has to select from a menu of powerful beings who oppose the gods at Ragnarok. The black side has 24 members in total. In the game of Ragnarok, it is the black which makes the first move.

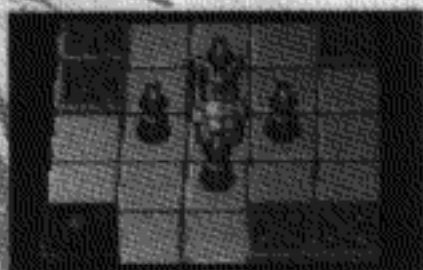
### KING'S TABLE OVERVIEW

In King's Table, the object and rules are the same as in Ragnarok. The difference in the two games is that in King's Table there are no special pieces for white or black. White's pieces are comprised of Odin and 12 (Einherjar) pawns. Black's pieces are comprised of 24 (Giant) pawns.

## THE OBJECT OF THE GAME

Each side has a different goal in order to win the game. White's objective is to maneuver Odin from his starting square in the center of the board, to the haven of one of the corner squares and thus, win the game. Logically, Black's aim is to prevent the White side from achieving their goal. To do this, the Black side needs to capture the Odin piece, which they can only do by using one of the following methods:

1. Surrounding Odin on four sides with black pieces. The black pieces must occupy the squares which directly connect with Odin's square, i.e. in the sense of North, South, East, and West.



2. Surrounding Odin on the remaining three directly adjacent squares, when the Odin piece is on a square on the edge of the board.



3. Surrounding Odin on three sides with black pieces, when the remaining fourth side is the board's center square.



## MOVING PIECES IN THE GAME

The control method for moving pieces on the board is straight forward: the player has the choice of using either mouse or the keyboard to carry out a move.

### MOVING THE PIECES

Move the cursor using the mouse or keyboard's cursor keys to the square of the piece you want to move; press the left mouse button or delete key. Move the cursor to the square to which you wish to move the piece and click again, using either the delete key or the left mouse button. Your selected piece will now move to its new location. As you play Ragnarok or King's Table, you will receive on-screen prompts; these messages are self-explanatory, and are there to inform the player when it is his or her move, or for example, will inform the player if he/she attempts an illegal move.

## ADDITIONAL FUNCTIONS

**"T" KEY or RIGHT MOUSE BUTTON:** Pressing this key or mouse button will give information about the particular piece under the cursor.

**"M" KEY:** Shows the player all legal moves that the piece can make.

**"H" KEY:** Gives help, suggesting a possible move to make using the piece under the cursor.

## TAKING OTHER PIECES

Just as the Black player has to capture Odin by surrounding him on four sides, the method of taking rival pieces and removing them from the game requires that the victim is sandwiched between two pieces from the opposing side. The "sandwich" has to be actively created by the aggressor, who must move a piece to constrain the victim.

## BLACK TAKING WHITE

In the following picture, black moves one of its giants to kill Vidar with the help of Surt on the other side. Vidar would then be removed from the board.



## WHITE TAKING BLACK

In the following picture, white moves Tyr to kill Surt with the help of Valkyries on the other side. Surt would then be removed from the board.




## NOTE:

There are two exceptions to this rule. These are Tyr, a white piece and Garm, a black piece. These two characters have to be surrounded on three sides before they are taken.


Each time that a piece is taken during the game, there is a conflict animation which is superimposed over the main game board; this depicts the pieces in actual combat.

## WHITE CHARACTERS


### THE FORCES OF VALHALLA




**ODIN:** He is the supreme god of the Norsemen, the creator of all things, wise yet cunning and unpredictable. He is the terrible god of storms and battles, Leader of Hosts, and Giver of Victory. Those who fall in battle belong to him, as do prisoners of war and those who die by hanging. Odin is the only piece that can occupy the center or corner spaces. He can move one or two spaces, either horizontally or vertically. In King's Table he is not restricted to moving two spaces.




**THOR:** The God of Thunder and wielder of the mighty hammer, Mjolnir. Thor represents the interests of peasants and ordinary folk as well as warriors. His characteristics are his immense strength and his huge appetite for food and drink, the strongest of all the gods. Thor is fated to die in the great battle, and thus at any time can move an unlimited number of unoccupied spaces horizontally or vertically onto a square occupied by an opponent and exchange lives. He can also be used to surround an opposing piece by moving to an adjacent square.




**VALKYRIES:** Odin's handmaidens, Valkyries, fly through the air at great speed. They must move two spaces, but they leap over any pieces in the first square.



**VIDAR:** The son of Odin and the giantess Grid. Vidar moves one or two squares horizontally or vertically. If he is taken, he is reincarnated and replaced to a starting square after missing two turns.



**HEIMDALL:** Heimdall is a god of light. He is the Watcher, who needs no sleep and dwells beside the Rainbow Bridge, guarding the frontiers of heaven against the frost giants. His wisdom and knowledge allow him to move in any direction (including diagonal), but his lack of combat prowess only enables him to move one square at a time.



**FREYR:** Freyr is the God of Fertility and also a mighty warrior. Sacrifices to Freyr ensure peace, plenty, and continuity. He presides over the burial mound rather than the gallows, signifying a link with death made through contact with the ancestors rather than the slaughter of battle. This dexterous Lord of the Elves can move diagonally in any direction, but he cannot move horizontally or vertically. He can move diagonally across the entire board, if it is clear. Freyr is great for making sneak attacks on unsuspecting opponents.

**TYR:** Tyr is a god of war and of justice, presiding over matters of law and order both within and between communities on earth. The punishment of criminals and the duels between champions are the responsibility of his priests. Tyr is one of the bravest gods. He lost his right hand to the wolf Fenrir. His movements are the same as Einherjar. However, Tyr must be surrounded on three sides to be taken by an enemy piece.

**EINHERJAR:** Each day Odin's chosen warriors, the "Einherjar," would ride forth to do battle on Odin's field. The Einherjar had pledged themselves to Odin in life; joining him in death, they existed in a permanent state of intoxication from battle frenzy by day and bouts of drinking by night. They can move an unlimited number of spaces horizontally or vertically, until they meet a piece or come to the end of the board.

## BLACK CHARACTERS

### THE FORCES OF DARKNESS


**LOKI:** Of Loki, the Wizard of Lies, here are many tales told. He is the Trickster, the Thief, the Shape-Changer. He is handsome to look at but cannot be trusted, being sometimes friend and sometimes enemy of the other gods. Loki's warped cunningness allows him to move diagonally any number of spaces. He cannot move horizontally or vertically.

**FENRIR:** Fenrir was a wolf that was, at first, reared in Asgard but grew so huge and became so fierce that none dared approach him except for a god named Tyr, who fed him each day. Fenrir must move two spaces, but he can leap over any piece in the first square.


**JORMUNGAND:** Jormungand, the Midgard Serpent, lies in the deep sea that encircles Midgard, wrapped around the world, biting its own tail. It was flung there by Odin. Jormungand, like Thor, can sacrifice himself by moving horizontally or vertically onto an occupied space, exchanging his life for that of his foe. He can also be used to surround an opposing piece by moving to an adjacent square. Jormungand cannot exchange his life for Odin's.

**SURT:** Surt, the lumbering King of the Fire Giants of Muspellheim, rides forth at the head of his fire demons with their shining swords. He can move in any direction, but only one space at a time.

**GARM:** Garm is the hound that guards the Gates of Hell. Garm moves like the Giants but must be surrounded by three pieces to be taken.



**HYRM:** Captain of the ship Naglfar. Hym can travel one or two spaces either horizontally or vertically. When Hym is killed, he is reincarnated on one of the dark force's special piece starting squares after missing two turns.



**GIANTS:** The pawns of the forces of Darkness. They can move an unlimited number of spaces horizontally or vertically until they meet a piece or come to the end of the board.

*If you have any trouble with the game please call*

**GAMETEK CUSTOMER RELATIONS**

305-935-8058

Fax: 305-932-8651

• 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Eastern time

Game Hint and Information Line

1-900-903-GAME (4263)

80¢ per minute charge

Touch tone phone required

Minors must have parental permission before calling

Available 24 hours