

Daelian Raiders

Summary

Daelian Raiders are the primary maritime threat to the isolated coastal communities of the Western Isles, such as [Straven](#). To the inhabitants of these islands, raiders represent a recurring cycle of violence and plunder, requiring constant vigilance and the maintenance of armed readiness by the population. This experience is defined not by international politics, but by the sight of strange sails on the horizon and the sounding of the alarm horn to initiate community-wide defence.

Description

Identification and Signalling

Raider vessels are typically identified by their sails and pennants, which lack the blue circle of the King's ships or the familiarity of those from nearby islands. Common identifiers include patched sails, red or green pennants, and striped sails. On [Straven](#), the sighting of such a vessel triggers a "Raider Drill." The community is alerted by the sounding of a horn or bell, which serves to wake the households and signal the immediate transition to a battle footing.

The Raider Drill

Upon the signal, the community divides into two groups based on size and strength rather than age. Non-combatants (including young mothers, pregnant women, children, and the elderly) retreat to the safety of high ground, such as [Lookout Hill](#). The able-bodied members of the community take up their battle gear and assemble at the jetty, which is usually the only viable landing point for raider ships.

The defensive philosophy, taught by [Old Bjorn](#) and [Arne the Slow](#), focuses on caution, deliberation, and the maxim "No rush to die."

- **The Shield Wall:** Defenders form two ranks. The front rank consists of smaller or younger defenders who use their shields to lean into the attackers. The second rank, composed of taller warriors, uses spears to strike over the shoulders of the front line.
- **Teamwork:** The community is trained to fight "two onto one" rather than seeking a fair fight, using their numbers to overwhelm individual raiders as they attempt to disembark.
- **Archery:** Archers are positioned on the flanks to shoot into the enemy's line as they attempt to force the shield wall. High-precision shots targeting raider leaders are used to disrupt the coordination of the attack.

The hope with these preparations and tactics is to make the raiders feel that this community is too hard to be worth what they might loot from it and to seek plunder elsewhere.

The Nature of the Raiders

Raiders are often described as “independent traders” who have turned to piracy. They are frequently recognisable by their luxury goods (fine, loom-woven woollen clothes, twice or thrice dyed, and silver buttons or rings) which represent the proceeds of their raiding activities. While formidable, many raider crews will sail elsewhere if they find a community looking fierce enough and prepared for a protracted struggle.

Under Skyssian law, captured raiders may be brought before a [King's Justice](#). Those who confess can be bound by a [geas](#) into the King's service as atonement for their crimes, often being re-tasked as sailors or messengers for the state.

Relationships

People

- [Old Bjorn](#): The community leader and veteran who oversees the defensive training on Straven.
- [Arne the Slow](#): The primary drill master and archery instructor for the island's youth.
- [Yngvild the Fierce](#): An islander who earned her name at fourteen by refusing to flee and instead driving off a raider captain with her bow.

Places

- [Straven](#): The site of numerous raider encounters and the primary setting for the defensive drills.
- [Portree](#): A wealthy regional port often targeted by raiders seeking high-value plunder.
- [Dael Riata](#): The northern kingdom from which the raiding tradition originates.

Concepts

- [Geas](#): The magical compulsion used by the state to neutralise raider crews.
- [King's Justice](#): The legal authority required to pass sentence on captured pirates.

Skyss - Story Background	Characters	Skyss - Places	Pantheons of the World	Other Background
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