

Warhammer Quest

DUNGEON ADVENTURES IN THE WARHAMMER WORLD

OUT OF THE DARKNESS

By Mark Brendan

This article introduces us to the idea of adventuring beyond the confines of those draughty, dark old labyrinths, and gives your adventurers a change of scene. If the notion of taking your party on a jaunt around, say, a castle, or a Wizard's tower, or maybe even outdoors in the woods appeals to you, then read on and discover how to escape that dungeon...

IN THE BEGINNING...

At the start of their careers, most adventurers are enthusiastic and wet behind the ears, young fellows who are very keen to earn a bit of loot with nothing more going for them than the

strength of their sword arm or the power of their spells. Their ambitions are to make their fortunes by liberating fantastic treasure hordes from the undeserving clutches of all manner of vile, subterranean nasties. What could be simpler? Make a stack of cash, and rid the world of evil into the bargain. Being

The interior of the galleys on board the Black Ark were humid and stank. Fully two thousand Human, Dwarf and Elf souls laboured over foul, menial tasks, stripped to the waist and perspiring freely in the cramped and unhygienic confines. They were arranged on three levels, cooking, cleaning bilges and other jobs vital to the running of the sinister stone vessel, kept afloat by the will of a powerful dark mage. There was not a single slave on board, who toiled in those halls, who did not realise the import of what they were doing. They were part of a Dark Elf war fleet, led by the immeasurably wicked Prince Mordrin Kain, coursing towards Erengard with every intention of sacking that great city port. From there, the Dark Elves would have unchallenged access to the north of the Old World, and could sweep southwards towards the Empire itself. Though they wept for the fate of their countrymen and abhorred the tasks they performed, they still bent their backs to it. Drachnas, the overseer, saw to that. Plying the lash with casual brutality, any back not straining at the oar soon became a patchwork of bloodied weals. Better to bide one's time working and waiting for an escape, than die in ignominy as a galley slave.

Uff, a hulking Norseman, eyed Drachnas with cold fury as once again he belaboured the shoulders of Ernst, a wizard and erstwhile travelling companion of Uff. Ernst looked grey and sickly, and Uff knew the mage couldn't last much longer in these ghastly conditions. The ultimate cruelty was that Ernst had within him the power to heal himself, but was prevented from doing so by the black gem literally burned into his chest by their Dark Elf captors. Fearing his magic, which had reduced several of their ambush

party to ashes before they were captured, the corsairs had burned the shard of obsidian into him to shackle his powers just as they had shackled his limbs. Uff knew that if they were ever all going to get out of this hellhole alive, then he had better act soon. He knew that behind them somewhere, equally miserable, were Corwen his Wood Elf friend, and Dwinril Silverlode the indomitable Dwarf. In the week, "Had it really only been a week?", he wondered, since their capture, he had chafed the ends of his strong fingers raw working at the shackles, and he reckoned they were just about loose enough now for one great burst of strength to tear them free. Feigning exhaustion, he slumped to the floor.

"You there, slave, work!", bellowed Drachnas at him, his words thick and malicious with the sibilant accent of the Dark Tongue.

Drachnas stormed down the hall and unleashed a vicious crack across Uff's back with the whip. It was just the jolt the Norseman needed. With a howl of fury, he yanked the chains from the deck, twisted them around his tormentor's throat and pulled. The single flex of the barbarian's massive muscles was sufficient to snap the overseer's neck like a dry twig and Drachnas fell to the squalid floor in a limp bundle.

In the ensuing pandemonium Uff freed more of the slaves, including his companions. Under the cover of the resulting pitched battle between slaves and captors, the team of four made their way to the upper decks. There, they knew, they had to chance to liberate their equipment and take control of the ship during the confusion...



On a precipitous walkway high in the forest canopy above Athel Loren, fiercely territorial Elves seek to drive off explorers.

new to the game, as they are, they inevitably opt for the tried and tested method of raiding ancient dungeons and ruins which have long since been overrun by the many foul denizens of darkness.

As a novice, this was brilliant. It had everything: excitement, danger, truly brain-melting sums of filthy lucre. Upon becoming a champion of your art the wealth was flowing nicely, thank you very much. Your abilities, combined with the amazing powers of ancient weapons and artefacts claimed from the coffers of vanquished foes, ensured your continued survival in the face of increasingly more hideous and terrifying enemies. So you sought out yet greater challenges and still more wealth to add to your coffers. Now they are calling you a hero, and you're starting to wonder, "What's it all about, eh?". You've got all this cash and you can get more any time you want it by taking a pot-holing expedition to slap a few Orcs about. But the jewels are losing their lustre and the acts of random violence on hapless monsters just don't cut the mustard anymore. Well, what you need is a theme, very possibly a different approach to doing what you do best, ie mugging baddies. Permit me to explain...

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

You can represent wilderness areas simply by making up a map of the area which is to be covered in the adventure, giving



the players a virtually limitless scope for directions in which to travel. However, you must ensure that their route takes them into the areas they must visit in order to complete their task. These places will have yet more maps showing their layout, and will have specific encounters taking place at them. Floorplans can easily be knocked up for them using gridded paper with the correct terrain marked on in place. You can even make this three dimensional by using Warhammer terrain or, if you are artistically inclined, making up your own, special Warhammer Quest terrain. A good thing to invest in for this sort of game is an A1 sheet of paper which has had an appropriate sized grid marked on it and then been laminated. This is quite an expensive thing to do, but well worth it in the end since you can mark the positions of objects onto it using a dry marker, then wipe it clean, ready for the next encounter.

ALTERNATIVE INDOORS

Of course you may, quite rightly, decide that you aren't prepared to give up entirely on the usage of all those rather snazzy floorplans contained within the Warhammer Quest box. But neither are you ready to give up your new found freedom from the random dungeon bash. What you therefore need is a properly themed adventure, which need not necessarily take place in a dungeon.



A vicious melee breaks out on board a Dark Elf Black Ark as a party of adventurous captives attempt to mutiny.

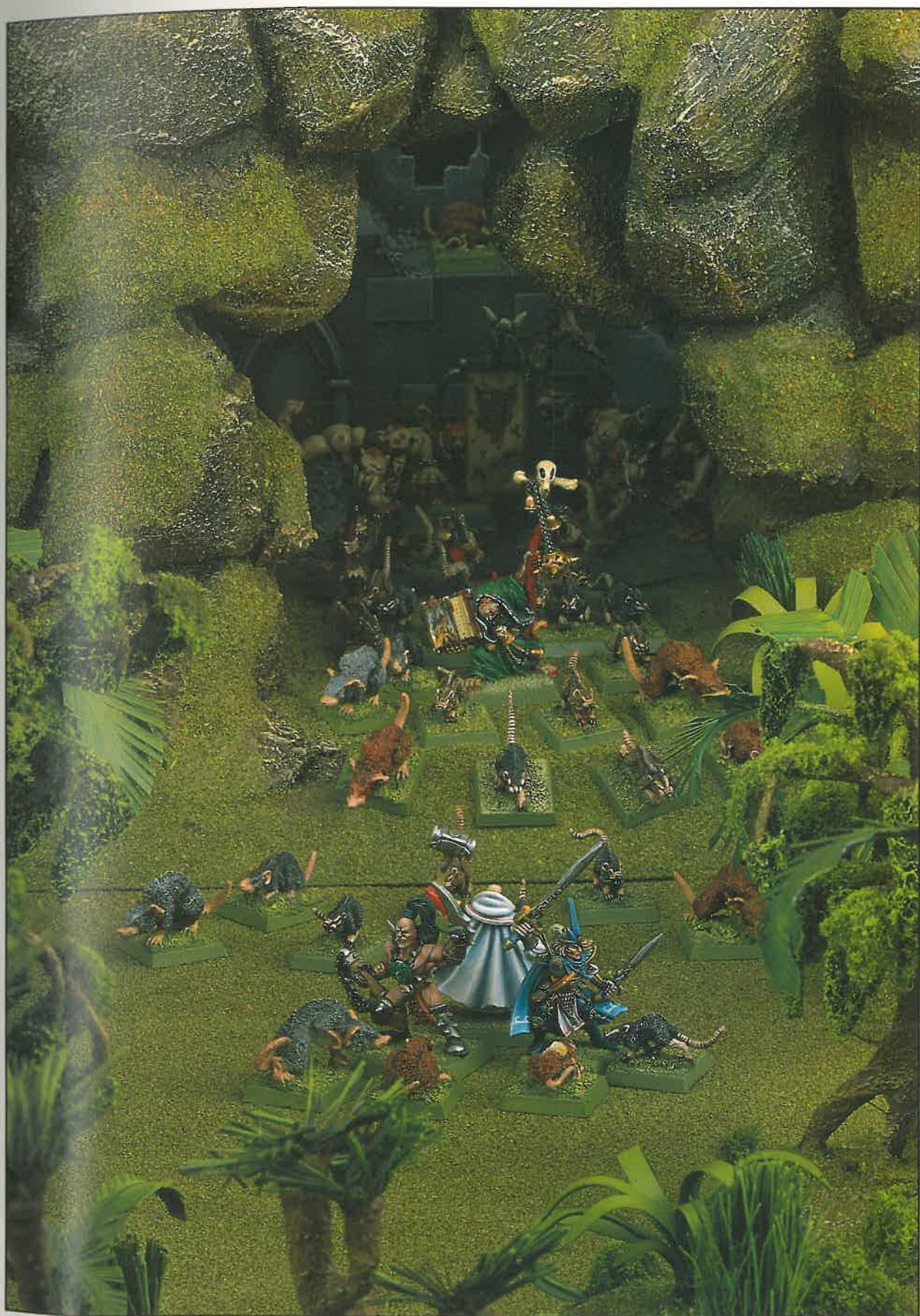
Those of you who own Warhammer armies are at a distinct advantage when it comes to turning out well-rounded, linked scenarios. Having a Warhammer army means that you should have a wealth of models at your disposal and be able to run games based around the particular race you field. From a background viewpoint, this is a considerably more desirable way to play games than the random dungeons, which contain the full gamut of nasties all crammed into the same small space, and also makes for good plot development. Consider, if you dare, the machinations of a Dark Elf prince bent on world domination. If that happens to be your army, then you have the

means to realise the adventures that ensue as the Warriors seek to foil his dastardly plot. It could be played out as several different games in correspondingly different locations, beginning, perhaps, with the adventurers being captured and enslaved upon one of the infamous Black Arks of the Dark Elf fleet and escaping to gain control of the ship. For the next scenario we could move the action to a town further down the coast invaded by the Dark Elves, where the adventurers must free the people. Next we infiltrate a castle which the wicked prince has taken, and is dug-in preparing for siege due to the brave actions of the party scuppering his war efforts in previous scenarios. We could run a final scenario dealing with the inevitable, climactic confrontation between the party and their nemesis as he attempts to escape through a warren of tunnels beneath the castle (back to basics I know, but think how much more exciting it will be after this build up).

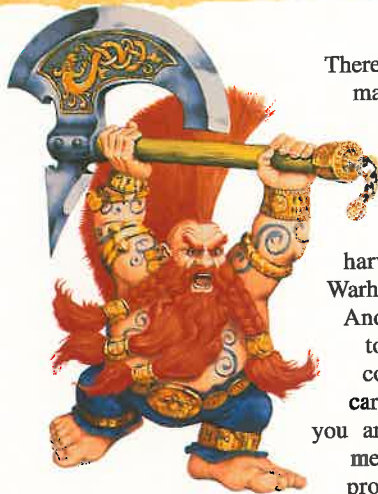
RETURN TO THE LOST KINGDOMS

Take another case. Using the previously published rules for Lost Kingdoms adventures, you could reason that your adventuring party decide to join an expedition to far away Lustria. You have heard rumours of ancient temples containing fabulous wealth in the steamy interior of this mysterious continent. However, instead of finding your *El Dorado*, you stumble instead across the territory of Clan Pestilens. On your first adventure against the foul disciples of decay you uncover a sinister plot to brew a disease so potent that if it ever reached the shores of the Old World, the epidemic would all but wipe humanity from the face of the planet. Fortunately, the texts you uncover show the location where this vile project is being researched. This calls for another journey, deeper into to the jungle in order to destroy the nest where this hideous threat is being formulated. For the final confrontation with the Skaven, have the adventurers discover the seat of Skaven power in the area and eradicate this dangerous branch of Clan Pestilens once and for all.





Treasure hunters in Lustria find an unpleasant surprise outside the Clan Pestilens Temple at Yersema.



There is a wealth of source material and background information to be found in the Warhammer Army books, all just waiting to be harvested for your Warhammer Quest games. And to add the final touch, you should of course tailor your Event cards to suit the scenario you are playing. Obviously meeting a "Dying Dwarf prospector riddled with Orc arrows..." as you raid

the Temple of Clan Pestilens in Lustria is a totally undesirable result. Instead, you should have something like, "Huddled in the corner you see the limp form of a human slave. He is overcome with the vile infections the Plague Monks have exposed him to. His last action before being overcome by the fever is to thrust a key wrapped in grubby cloth into the Elf's hand, and gasp, "Portcullis..." With this in mind you should be able to produce events and encounters backed up with the sort of attention to detail that makes the game what it should be. Atmospheric and totally convincing. Also very important, you should consider tailoring the treasure decks to fit in with your game. More often than not, Warhammer Quest games result in a race to collect as much spectacular plunder as possible. While this is always a good motivator for the

Warriors, it should not become the be all and end all. Too often do we see Level 2 Dwarves stumping around dungeons, smiting Goblins and Bats with the *Hammer of Sigmar*. This is undesirable in a properly themed game the referee, if you have one, should avoid it by coming up with treasures to suit the level and background of the scenario. Those of you who possess "good" armies for Warhammer need not feel left out at all. With a bit of extra work, adventurers may find themselves as emissaries of the Emperor in the courts of allied powers. A position which could, with the correct plot, turn out to be every bit as dangerous as being stuck in a leaky tunnel upwind of a Troll's nest. For instance, how many Human envoys have you heard of seeing the centre of Athel Loren and living to tell the tale. Or even beyond that, it isn't exactly unheard of for the occasional internecine squabble to break out amongst the forces of light. For example, a highly trained group of mercenaries could hire themselves out to the highest bidder to steal state secrets, carry out assassinations, sabotage war efforts, you name it, it's possible. In the complex, intrigue-ridden courts of the Warhammer world, politics can be every bit as bloodthirsty as war.

Remember, the only limit to what you can do is your own imagination. Dungeon floorplans can become the halls and passages of border keeps, a Necromancer's mountain tower, a Skaven infested sewer beneath a village, the network of hollowed out roots beneath the domain of the Wood Elves, or indeed anything else you care to conceive of in the dark and many splendoured Warhammer world. Now you have the means at your disposal, so get out there and give your chosen enemy a taste of good old cold steel.

The journey had, all in all, been a strange and perilous one. They had been living it up at a small seaport in the Wasteland, feasting on the spoils of a raid on an ancient system of catacombs in the hills near Marienburg. It was there they had been captured, and since then they had endured many hardships at the hands of their evil foes, and many triumphs over them too.

Ernst had recovered both his magic and his health, but it had been touch and go whether he would ever enjoy either again. They had paid a physician in Erengard to remove the stone, and in his debilitated condition the operation had almost finished Ernst off.

They were being hailed as heroes, and their title in this part of the world had become the "Liberators of Erengard". Uff was frankly embarrassed by such adulation, but Ernst didn't seem to mind too much, Dwimril was too stoic to even notice though, predictably, the Wood Elf Corwen positively revelled in it. Since their break out on board the Black Ark, a tale now being sung of amongst the local bards, they had succeeded in all but completely ruining the plans of Mordrin Kain. Quickly gaining the helm of the ship and recovering their gear, the adventurers had valiantly pitched into the defending corsairs. All aboard the ship there was mayhem with slaves running amok, thus preventing the Dark Elves bringing their full might to bear against the party. During the battle Dwimril vanquished the Dark Elf captain single-handedly. An unwholesome creature with an eye patch called Captain Shendec, he had lashed out in fury at Dwimril with his powerful sword. But in his rage he had overextended his reach, and his diminutive opponent had easily stepped

under his guard to bring his great axe up to bury itself in the unfortunate Dark Elf's rib cage. Whilst Uff protected the weakened Ernst, Corwen had turned the natural hatred of the Dark Elves for his kind to good use. With a mixture of taunts and derogatory gestures, he goaded a large number of corsairs into chasing him. Quickly clambering up the rigging, he had let loose the mainsail on his pursuers. Confused and pinned under the suffocating weight of the cloth, Corwen was left at his leisure to shoot burning arrows, one after the other, into his trapped foes. The seagulls feasted royally.

Eventually, the day was won, and the adventurers assumed control of the ship. Catching up to the rest of the fleet, they arrived at Erengard in time to witness a ferocious sea battle already underway against a small and badly outmatched Kislev fleet.

But that soon changed. Moving to the Kislevite's aid, the new arrivals unleashed a crippling broadside at the nearest of the three Black Arks, then rammed it, smashing it aside. As it wallowed drunkenly in the water, the Kislev fleet struck too, sinking the stricken vessel. Sensing the tide had turned, the Dark Elf flagship prudently fled.

Shortly afterwards rumours began to tell of Dark Elf survivors who had put in at a small village down the coast some miles, and were terrorising the locals. Soon the party were heading down there to bring the villains to justice, but after a running battle through the streets and houses, the Prince escaped once more.

But there was more news. This time he was cornered, in an old keep in the hills...