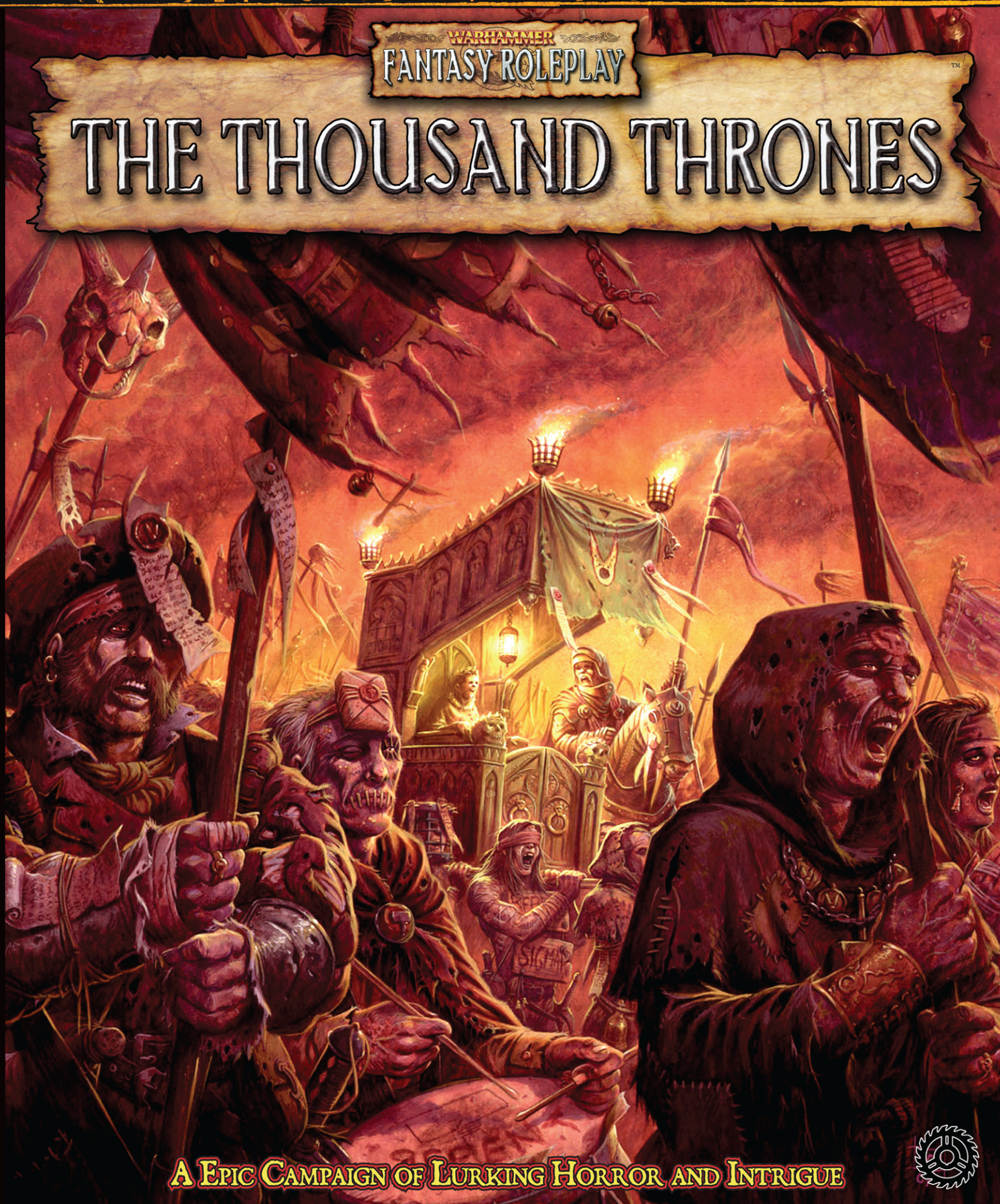
WARHAMMER FANTASY ROLEPLAY

THE THOUSAND THRONES



A EPIC CAMPAIGN OF LURKING HORROR AND INTRIGUE

FANTASY FLIGHT GAMES

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WARHAMMER FANTASY ROLEPLAY™

THE THOUSAND THRONES

A Epic Campaign of Lurking Horror and Intrigue

Original Concept: *Robert J. Schwalb*

Design and Writing: *Simon Crowe, Adam Flynn, Kevin Hamilton, Jude Hornborg, Nathan Long, Chuck Morrison, Robert J. Schwalb, Robert Vaughn, Dan White*

Additional Design: *Kate Flack* Development: *Robert J. Schwalb*

Editing: *Kara Hamilton, Evan Sass, George Stirling*

Proofreading: *Orbis Proszynski, Wayde Zalken*

Graphic Design & Art Direction: *Hal Mangold*

Cover Art: *Ralph Horsley* *WFRP* Logo: *Darius Hinks*

Interior Art: *Alex Boyd, Paul Dainton, Pat Loboyko, Eric Lofgren, Michael Phillippi, Scott Purdy, Pascal Quidault, Adrian Smith, John Wigley*

Cartography: *Andrew Law*

Black Industries Brand Manager: *Mike Mason*

Head of Black Industries: *Marc Gascoigne*

Playtesters: Tom Castelli, Shane Coffey, Michael Elster, Jan-Philipp Gürtler, Glen Kyle, Kristian Hartmann, Scott Neese, Joe Quarles, Clemens Schäfer, Conrad Schäfer, Bobby Turman, Daniel Young

Special Thanks: Owen Barnes and Kate Flack for all of their invaluable assistance.

A Black Industries Publication

First published in 2008 by Black Industries, an imprint of BL Publishing

BL Publishing
Games Workshop. Ltd
Willow Road
Nottingham
NG7 2WS
UK

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Product Code: 60040283029

ISBN 10: 1-84416-434-9

ISBN 13: 978-1-84416-434-9

www.blackindustries.com
www.greenronin.com

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Introduction

It is the middle period of the Emperor Karl-Franz's reign. The Empire teeters on the brink of collapse. The horrors of the recent Chaos Incursion, dubbed the Storm of Chaos, have left the lands of Sigmar reeling. The north is in ruin, cities smoking, corpses left unburied, and Beastmen, Mutants, and the remnants of Archaon's army lurk in the shadows of these once great lands. Refugees inundate the western cities seeking food and protection, and the rippling effect of the great war can be felt at all levels of Empire society. Even the Cult of Sigmar is suffering great upheavals. In the early stages of the Incursion, the Grand Theogonist Volkmar led a force into the Chaos Wastes to defeat Archaon Everchosen before he could mount an offensive. Fearing the worst when he failed to return, the Cult scrambled to place another in Volkmar's post and unite the peoples of the Empire beneath the banner of their faith. But then, in the midst of the fighting, Volkmar returned, apparently resurrected. Once the forces of Chaos were thrown back from the walls of Middenheim, the returned Volkmar laid claim to his title once more. The Cult of Sigmar is thus unstable, and new religious cults are formed almost daily. There's a very palpable sense across the land that if the Empire recovers from this turmoil it will be a very different place.

Welcome to *Thousand Thrones,* a complete campaign for *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay*. This massive sourcebook contains nine connected adventures that take characters from the canals of Marienburg, to the mist-enshrouded horrors of Sylvania, to the frozen wastelands of Kislev. *Thousand Thrones* allows players to see the Old World like never before, travelling its forlorn roads, through old battlefields and past crumbling monuments. Should they have the mettle to survive the countless obstacles and dangers, they will perform a great service, not only for the Empire, but for the whole of the Old World. It is a thankless task, this grand campaign, for none shall know of their brave deeds, but those who stave off the corruptions of Chaos and thwart the plots of the Vampires to finally save the Empire from horrors unimaginable, will know what they have achieved—that because of their efforts, the darkness will not, at least for now, eclipse the Old World.

— History —

Like so many tales that tell of the evils gnawing at the fabric of civilisation, this story begins with Chaos. Centuries ago, a bold warlord named Asavar Kul acquired the *Crown of Domination* and bent the disparate hosts of the Chaos Wastes to his dark will. Vowing to crush the soft lands of Sigmar, to throw down the false Gods of Mankind and destroy those mortals who denied the might of the Ruinous Powers, he led his unruly host south. His hordes swept across the lands in what has been remembered as the Great War against Chaos.

Kul and his armies poured out of the dreaded Shadowlands, spreading like an inky stain across the frozen oblasts of Kislev. The brave Winged Lancers and Kossars stood little chance of slowing the horrors that marched in his ranks on the open field of battle. A series of crippling defeats forced the Kislevites to retreat behind the walls of their fortified cities, to make their final stand against Chaos. As the dark horde spilled around them, making the cities islands in a sea of death, the defenders looked south, searching for any sign of the brilliant knights of the Empire. None came, for the Empire was fractured, riven by treachery and corruption, as Elector Counts fought each other instead of facing the true enemy that threatened all.

History has recorded the results of the Empire's failure to respond, speaking darkly of once-proud Praag's descent into corruption. The Mutants and Chaos Spawn breached the gates and indulged in an orgy of violence. The winds of Chaos blew through the streets. The lucky few died. Many more screamed in horror as grotesque transformations changed their bodies, while others were swallowed by the groaning city, their flesh fusing with the cobbled streets and the wavering walls, until Praag became a writhing hell of madness and corruption.

All succumbed to the power of Chaos, but a few rose above the gibbering herd of victims to claim their place as masters of the ruined city. One such was a wise woman of considerable talent. When exposed to the changing force, her body manifested the telltale gifts of the Dark Gods, but rather than becoming an unthinking Spawn, her mind assumed a sinister character. Her loyalty to Kislev and the spirits of the land fell from her like ashes, and she became one of the new custodians of fallen Praag. Her subjects called her the Black Witch, and she ruled them with cruel and potent sorcery.

Thankfully, her time as a champion of Chaos was brief, for a hero arose in the Empire, Magnus the Pious, who united the fractious factions under a single banner. Gone were the religious schisms, the politicking. The Empire was forged anew, empowered by a true champion of Sigmar. The armies of the Empire raced to reach beleaguered Kislev, crashing into Asavar Kul's wicked host as they celebrated their victory. After a series of brutal engagements before the walls of Kislev, the Chaos Incursion at last collapsed, and the warriors, beasts, and nightmares broke and fled back whence they came.

To Praag marched Magnus and his armies. The combined might of the Humans and the Dwarfs cast down the warped walls and butchered the accursed inhabitants, sparing no man, woman, or child. When the slaughter was complete, they cleansed the land, burning the remains to ashes.

Magnus and his allies were thorough, but so great was the corruption that even their best efforts could not fully cleanse the horror. Mutants, Spawn, and Daemons slipped through the cruel swords and purifying fires, fleeing into the wilds. Among them was the Black Witch, her body broken and her life draining away with each shuffling step. For miles she dragged herself toward the Troll Country, retreating at last to the Crags of Shargun, a low range of mountains in the far west of Kislev. She collapsed, dying, into a pool of brackish water, spitting curses at Magnus, the Empire, and above all Sigmar. When death finally came, Morr refused her soul, and consigned her to dwell as a drifting shade, trapped between life and death until she could finally set aside her hate and will herself out of existence.

The Black Witch has dwelt in the Crags of Shargun for more than 200 years. Every ten years she demands a sacrifice from the village of Zhidovsk, and a new maiden joins her in her watery grotto, to give flesh to her vile spirit. Should the village refuse, the Black Witch dispatches

Black Ice, a horrid beast manifested from her own hate, to worry and harass the villagers. And so the years have passed by, and the Black Witch has plotted, casting her senses out over the Empire, searching for a sign, a clue, a hope that her vengeance against those who slew her can be wrought.

And then a sign came. In distant Marienburg, a child was born - a Mutant blessed with incredible persuasive powers. If the Black Witch could bend him to her will, she could possess his being and lead a new army to crush her hated enemies. Of course, she was still bound by the wreckage of her old flesh and could not leave her cave. But such constraints made no difference, for in the years that she has waited she learned of a profane ritual that would free her from her corpse to walk once more in the light of the sun. To achieve this mighty feat, she must kill and drain the blood from one each of the five Vampire bloodlines. If she can do this whilst possessing the boy, she will become as a God, empowered by the blood of Vampires and the unwholesome power of Chaos.

But how to bring the boy to her? She cannot go to him, and she has no agents to employ. Instead, she visits the youth in his dreams, implanting false memories of her as his mother. Since the Child is an orphan, he has come to believe the dreams, and wants nothing more than to be with her.

To lure the Vampires to her, the Black Witch uses an ancient prophecy to manipulate them into believing the boy is the Champion of Night, the foretold leader who will bring to pass the time of the Thousand Thrones, when the Vampires will rule the world, dividing it amongst themselves into a thousand blood-soaked kingdoms. Unfortunately for her, the Black Witch didn't anticipate that the Vampires she contacted would have their own interpretations of the prophecy.

The Vampire Prophecies

Each Vampire bloodline has a different interpretation of the prophecies, but all are devoted to lifting the curse of the Old Gods (see **Chapter VII**) and bringing about the Age of a Thousand Thrones. The Thousand Thrones were first spoken of by W'soran during the fall of Lahmia, but little more is known of them by mortals. Based upon the Zandri Scrolls and the captured memoirs of Vampires throughout history, it has been surmised that the Age of a Thousand Thrones will be brought about by a tremendously powerful spell, or profane miracle, that will bring great changes to the natural order of the world. Vampires will no longer need to hide from the sun, or even drink blood from mortals for survival. Mortals will worship their undying overlords as Gods. However, only one thousand Vampires will survive to see this empire of darkness, and he who lifts the curse of the Old Gods will rule them all. What follows is a short summary of each bloodline's theory about the prophecy.

Von Carsteins

According to this bloodline, Vashanesh (*i.e.* Vladimir von Carstein) was the Scion of Nagash who escaped the curse of the Old Gods (see **Chapter VII**). When the Sun God Ptra no longer rules the sky, the bearer of Vashanesh's ring will become the overlord of a Thousand Thrones. Lydia von Carstein has discovered an alternate reading of the prophecy involving the Old Gods of northern belief and soul-bonding rituals from ancient Lahmia (see **Chapter VII**).

Lahmians

The Lahmians believe Karl is an avatar of Sigmar harbouring memories and knowledge gleaned from Nagash when Sigmar donned the *Crown of Sorcery* (see **Chapter VII**). By learning Nagash's true Elixir of Life formula and the power words employed by the Necromancer to command the vampires, Lahmians seek to dominate the Age of the Thousand Thrones. Their mistress Neferata has commanded her daughters to recover the boy and bring him to the Silver Pinnacle, her legendary tower high in the Worlds Edge Mountains. The Vampire Queen intends to beguile Karl with a potent ritual, learn his secrets, and gain the power that will allow her to enslave all Vampires, as the true Champion of the Night.

Blood Dragons

Because the first Blood Dragon Abhorash never knew Nagash, most Vampires of this bloodline do not concern themselves with the Thousand Thrones prophecies. Blood Dragons are unlikely to have been implicated in the prophecies, so they dismiss such talk as the foolish dreams of weaklings who desire a return to former glories without paying the requisite price in battle. Many Blood Dragons are so focused on battle-readiness that they have never heard of the prophecies at all. Occasionally however, they do become implicated in the schemes of other bloodlines (see **Chapter II: An Unquiet Peace**).

Necrarchs

The spawn of W'soran are extremely well-educated about the Vampire Prophecies, having access to volumes of research conducted over the ages by Nagash's most loyal disciple. Their partial exemption from the Blood Curse makes Necrarchs rather arrogant, each one believing *he* is destined to be the Master of a Thousand Thrones. Necrarchs look to numerology, astrology, and genealogy for clues about how to lift the Blood Curse. Lord de Trois, who resides in a tower near Wolfenburg, has drawn connections between the three returns of Nagash and his own three stages of transformation (see **Chapter VI: Heralds of a New Dawn**).

Strigoi

The Strigoi Vampires believe Karl is truly Sigmar Reborn, but Sigmar received the Blood Kiss during his great battle against Nagash's army. The kiss purportedly was delivered by a Strigoi vampire who had rallied under Nagash's banner when Strigos fell. This connection to the once glorious Kingdom of Strigos implies Karl must be the Champion of Night and predestined ruler of the new Vampire kingdom. However, the Strigoi also believe the bloodlines have become diluted and only by receiving the Blood Kiss from each of the five major bloodlines can Karl truly awaken his birthright and lift the curse of the Old Gods.

The Boy

The boy, the object of the Black Witch's desire and of the Vampire Prophecies, is nothing more than a Mutant, a child born with the extraordinary ability to manipulate the emotions of those around him, instilling in them a desperate need to please and protect him. The boy does this unconsciously, unaware he's responsible for the changes taking place in those around him.

The boy's origin is something of a puzzle. The decrepit Doodkanaal of Marienburg spawned a cult of Mutants and men who worshipped Stromfels, a dark aspect of Manann, the God of the Seas. Fearing discovery in the city, the cultists withdrew to meet in a hidden temple in the Cursed Swamp outside Marienburg. There they drank the water from a spring sacred to Stromfels. The water of the spring brought visions and caused mutations.

It was the cult's desire to remake Marienburg and the Wastelands into a nation that served this violent God, turning it into the greatest maritime nation in the Old World. Ruling Marienburg would give them control over the Empire's key access to the sea, and the cult would have Altdorf at their mercy. Although there were powerful men among them, from shipping and merchant families, as well as pirates, they had discovered no way to make their dream a reality, until seven years ago.

One day, a boy child was born to the mistress of one of the cult members. It was immediately apparent the Child had great powers and was destined for great things. The cultists realized this was the answer to their prayers. With his inhuman charisma, the boy would bring anyone who met him to their cause. He would be their prince, and some day their king.

They planned a ritual. He would be taken to the temple in the swamp, dunked in the holy spring, and baptised in the name of Stromfels. But a company of witch hunters followed one of the cultists to the temple and raided it before the ceremony was completed, slaughtering most of the cultists and scattering the rest. The witch hunters found the Child and fell under his power. They believed the babe was to have been sacrificed to a Sea Daemon and they thanked the Gods that they arrived in time to save him. The witch hunters returned to the city and gave the Child to a Shallyan orphanage, wiping away tears of regret and sorrow that they must leave him behind.

The child grew at the orphanage, ignorant of his parentage and of his powers. The sisters, however, were not long in discovering them. They doted on him as they had doted on no other in their care. They fought over him.

The abbess, though she could not help but love the boy while in his presence, recognised this as an unholy power, and ordered the sisters to turn him over to the witch hunters. But in this, she was disobeyed. A conspiracy of sisters who loved the boy too much to send him to his death hid him away in a private room where they raised him in isolation.

And so he grew alone for seven years, but sisters will whisper, and so it was that Ruprecht, an outcast sorcerer from the Empire, came to hear of the Child and his amazing power to command mortals. Having heard of the boy and the Stromfels Cult during his time in the city before the recent Chaos incursion, he believed the boy could ascend the throne of the Empire, replacing Karl-Franz and placing the hated land firmly in the hands of Chaos. Ruprecht, however, enjoyed far too many gifts from his master Nurgle, and could no longer walk the lands of men. If he revealed his features, he would surely be hunted down and slain. Thus he hid in the Troll Country, relying on his minions to retrieve the lad. Ruprecht ordered his servants to snatch the boy, brand him with the mark of the twin-tailed comet, and bring him to his tower on the edges of Kislev. The branding was vital, for Ruprecht believed it would give the boy legitimacy when staking his claim for the Empire's throne.

So it was that Ruprecht's soulless servants crossed the breadth of the Empireto Marienburg and infiltrated the orphanage. They plucked the boy from his secret room and under the light of Mórrslieb scorched his flesh with the symbol of the twin-tailed comet. But as they made ready to transport the boy, the lad slipped away and fled through the streets of the city. Ruprecht's servants pursued and cornered him in a smithy. The boy grabbed the thing closest to him—a huge maul—and with hysterical strength, he lashed out at his would-be captors.

The fight spilled out into the street. The people were struck by the sight of an angelic looking young boy bearing the mark of the Twin Tailed Comet on his naked chest, wielding a hammer against obvious evildoers. Under the influence of his charisma, the crowd, desperate to protect the boy, tore Ruprecht's servants to pieces. After the battle the people escorted the Child to Helmut, a priest of Sigmar. He too fell under the Child's spell, and a new cult was born: the Crusade of the Child.

It didn't take long before the boy drew to him a host of people, mostly exiles and expatriates from the Empire, cast out from their homes to live in the slums of Marienburg. To them, the boy represented a chance to reclaim their place in the Empire. The cult swelled, and the authorities began to take notice. Esmer, the exiled former Grand Theogonist, learned of the stories surrounding a boy whom many believed was Sigmar reborn, and saw an opportunity. Esmer's loyal advisor Tobias whispered in his master's ear that, with subtle guidance, this powerful movement could be convinced to enter the Empire and discredit or weaken Volkmar's position as Grand Theogonist. Esmer, who chafed at his own exile, blessed the crowd and sent them forth to Altdorf.

What Esmer didn't know was that Tobias was in fact a loyal agent of Ruprecht. Tobias had contacted his true master and told him of the boy's newfound fame, and his desire to travel to Kislev to be reunited with his mother. Initially intending to order the Child snatched immediately, Ruprecht reconsidered when his divinations revealed that the boy was being drawn toward Kislev by some supernatural agency. The Chaos Sorcerer was content to let the boy come to him on his own, and instructed Tobias to ingratiate himself with the boy and support him in his efforts to reach Kislev. Tobias has agreed to stay close to the boy, and once the mob crosses into Kislev, he intends to spirit him away to his master.

And so *Thousand Thrones* begins.

— Running a Campaign —

Thousand Thrones is no ordinary adventure: It is a campaign, a series of interlocked scenarios that take place over the span of months of game time and as much as a year of actual time. Unlike a typical adventure, the events that take place in one chapter can and often do affect and shape those of the following chapter. Featuring a huge cast of characters, a dizzying array of locations, deadly fights, disturbing mysteries, and thrilling chases, *Thousand Thrones* has all the ingredients you need to create a memorable play experience that will keep your players talking for years to come.

Preparation

To run this campaign, you need a copy of *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay. Thousand Thrones* also references most of the other sourcebooks for *WFRP*, including *Old World Bestiary, Realms of Sorcery, Tome of Corruption, Tome of Salvation, Realm of the Ice Queen,* and *Night's Dark Masters*. Owning these books will certainly enhance your experience, but they are not explicitly necessary for running this campaign.

Unlike other *WFRP* adventures, such as *Paths of the Damned, Terror in Talabheim,* and *Barony of the Damned,* it's not necessary for you to read the entire book before you get started. You should at least skim it, paying attention to the chapter summaries so you have an idea about what is to come, but you only need to prepare one adventure at a time. It's a good idea to keep a notebook or pad of paper handy. Use this to jot down notes about what happens during the game sessions, so you can modify later sections to account for player choices that occur earlier in the campaign.

The Illusion of Choice

No player likes to be led by the nose. Players like to make their own decisions about where they go, what they do, and how they do it. In a campaign as large as this one, each choice the PCs make adds a layer of complexity to future adventures in the book and each complication can be at odds with the presumed choices made in earlier instalments. You may be tempted to nudge the PCs onto certain paths, to propel them onto a certain course of action so you can move along to the next chapter. Don't give in to these temptations. Let the characters draw their own conclusions and decide their own actions in the game. Never force the players to abide by the story. Part of being a good GM is being able to respond to the players' actions in a way that's enjoyable for everyone present. If the PCs derail a chapter, you may have to do a little work to alter the following chapters in such a way that the campaign moves in a logical manner. You may even find you have to whip up extra scenarios to fill gaps that develop in the game. You can insert any of the published adventures to fill these holes, such as *Barony of the Damned* in between **Chapters I** and **II,** or *Terror in Talabheim* between **Chapters VII** and **VIII.** Or you can use other, smaller scenarios such as "A Brutal Finish," "Ill Met in Bogenhoffen," or any of the adventures included in *Plundered Vaults.* In addition, be sure to check out the adventures available for free on the Black Industries website, blackindustries.com. These scenarios add more depth to the campaign, giving the PCs a sense that other things are taking place in the world aside from the Crusade and their march toward Kislev.

Fate Points

To survive from beginning to the end, the PCs will likely need a number of Fate Points. In a few places, we recommend granting Fate Points, but for most of the campaign, whether or not you should bestow them is up to you.

Independent Adventures

Thousand Thrones is designed to provide a series of connected adventures that carry the player character from one side of the Old World to the other, exposing them to terrifying forces of wickedness and taking them to the brink of madness before the campaign is complete. While this is the preferred method, there's no reason why you couldn't chop up the chapters and run them as stand-alone adventures. With some minor adjustments, each adventure can function on its own, allowing you to drop these scenarios in between other adventures or work them into a campaign of your own making.

Campaign Synopsis

The *Thousand Thrones* campaign takes place over a series of nine adventures, beginning in the canals of Marienburg and concluding in the watery caves beneath the Crags of Shargun. The individual adventures are as follows.

Chapter I: The Call of Chaos

In this introductory adventure, the player characters are hired by one of several interested parties to investigate a new mob of fanatics that formed literally overnight and left Marienburg bound for Altdorf. Their inquiries take them through the decaying sections of this grand city, into the shadowy corners of the Templewijk, and to the seedy canals of the Suiddock. Evidence eventually reveals that the boy was first found in a remote temple dedicated to Stromfels, and it's clear that the answers lay in this wretched hideout.

Once the PCs deal with the Mutants lurking there, they learn the truth about where Karl came from and who was behind the kidnapping attempt that prompted the creation of the Crusade in the first place. Back in Marienburg, the PCs have to enter and explore the deadly slums and ghettos of the Doodkanaal, locate the last cultist, and eventually survive the hazards of the sewers to uncover the hidden redoubt of the Nurgle cult. There, after a desperate fight with an abomination of Nurgle, the PCs discover that a cultist has infiltrated the Crusade to further some dark and sinister plan.

Chapter II: An Unquiet Peace

The next chapter picks up a few days after the PCs have left Marienburg, presumably in search of the Crusade. Along the way, they are accosted and captured by a group of Blauesblut, who suspect them of being criminals and seek the reward the PCs are certain to bring. Escorted to the village of Pfeifeldorf, the PCs must wait until their papers or credentials, assuming they have them, are verified. While they wait, they are urged to investigate some of the recent events surrounding a missing chicken, an apparent suicide, and a mysterious blood cult. The adventure proceeds in a manner that depends on the characters' action but ultimately culminates with the revelation that the blood cult has nothing to do with Chaos but, in fact, centres on a recently restored Blood Dragon Vampire!

Chapter III: The Crusade of the Child

Having survived deadly plots in Pfeifeldorf, the player characters continue their pursuit of the Crusade of the Child. As they draw closer, they see more and more of the destruction wreaked by the Crusaders, reflected in the rubbish left in their wake and in the ruined countryside. After meeting a particularly unimpressive priest and surviving an attack by Mutants, the PCs are rescued by a group of Wood Elves. The Elves ask the PCs to help them scout out the Crusaders' encampment. Once there, the PCs witness first hand the power of the Child and may find themselves serving this proclaimed Scion of Sigmar.

By the end of this chapter, the player characters should be finished or nearly finished with their first career.

Chapter IV: Written in Blood

Having saved or helped save (or maybe even just watched others save) the Child, the PCs have earned their place in the Crusade. Abandoned by the Wood Elves, the PCs take up guard duty and have a chance to get to know the members of the inner circle that protect young Karl. While making their way to Altdorf, the PCs are asked to investigate the allegations of a Chaos cult working within the ranks of the Crusade and in doing so find the corruption riddles the ranks of the mob, going all the way to the top.

Before they have the chance to expose the corruption, the Crusade reaches Altdorf. After the Emperor and the Grand Theogonist rebuff Karl, one of the boy's advisors suggests sneaking him into the city. The PCs are asked to go along, but their presence is not enough to stop the trap. The advisor gets away with the boy, leaving the PCs to fight for their lives.

This betrayal sparks an investigation that takes the characters into the slums of Altdorf. Following the leads, they PCs eventually expose the vigilante to be a Mutant traitor, find themselves wanted by witch hunters, and make important allies along the way. In the end, they are not fast enough to find the boy and learn that he's to be subjected to an awful ritual that would transform him into a willing slave of Chaos!

Chapter V: Metamorphosis of Villa Hahn

Hot on the heels of the fleeing Nurgle cultist Tobias, the PCs must brave a long journey through the Drakwald to find the *Necklace of Unfailing Loyalty,* a cursed device presumably left in the traitor's home. The characters arrive too late and discover the item is gone. However, in exploring the ruins of the old cottage, they acquire the name of Ruprecht, learning Tobias has another master, this vile Chaos sorcerer. With some investigation and exploration, the PCs eventually come upon the childhood home of the servant of Chaos and find a macabre infestation of a Chaos cult called the Eternal Malady. Eventually, their persistence pays off and the PCs uncover a hidden temple in which the adventure culminates with an epic three-way battle between Vampires, cultists, and the PCs.

Chapter VI: Heralds of a New Dawn

Having dealt with Ruprecht's minions, the Eternal Malady cultists, and recovered Karl (or having let the boy slip through their fingers once more), the PCs make their way to the Crusader encampment settled in the outskirts of Wolfenburg. Like the ruined city, the encampment is in terrible shape. The boy's absence has led to widespread fractures and new power groups that each have their own designs for the Crusade. Moreover, the shabby condition has enabled more sinister forces to infiltrate the group: in particular a Necrarch Vampire Lord who intends to destroy young Karl to prove that he himself is the legendary Champion of Darkness. The PCs return to the Crusade, navigate the confusing intrigues, and finally thwart the Vampire as he makes his move against the young man in the middle of a grand performance put on in the boy's honour.

By the end of this chapter, the PCs should complete their second career.

Chapter VII: Death Do Us Part

Karl goes missing once more, and the PCs are called upon to find him. Tracking him to the great city of Talabheim, the characters inadvertently pick up the wrong trail and follow the abducted Ahmed south into the haunted lands of Sylvania. Finding themselves caught up in a myriad of side-treks, false leads, and dynamic environments, the adventurers finally catch up with the lad, only to find he's to wed a dread Vampire countess, who believes her ritual will bring forth the terrifying Reign of the Thousand Thrones.

Chapter VIII: The Black Witch

Having run afoul of the Von Carstein Vampires, the PCs discover they have been duped and Karl is nowhere near Sylvania. The PCs must race to catch up with the boy in Kislev before he falls in the clutches of those who would use him for their own nefarious ends. They cross the Empire once more, learning that the Crusade has been shattered by infighting and treachery, and that the tattered remnants head for Kislev. Although a month behind, the PCs make good time and locate what's left of the Crusade in the tiny village of Zhidovsk, discovering no shortage of weirdness and terrible secrets in this place.

Chapter IX: The Womb of the Black Witch

The end approaches. After exploring the village of Zhidovsk, the PCs learn Karl went into the Womb of the Black Witch, somewhere at the bottom of a foul pool. The PCs must descend into the depths, locate the entrance, and explore the endless corridors of the Black Witch's lair. Using the clues presented, the PCs locate the keys to open the doors to the Inner Sanctum. They must be quick, for the Witch will conclude her ritual in a matter of hours. If she succeeds, the doom of the Empire will be at hand.

— Enter the Heroes —

The nature of this campaign requires a little delicate handling when it comes to the player characters. Not only does the campaign require a good mix of adventurers, but it also requires a fair bit of work on your part to provide the motivation and inspiration, hopefully drawn from these pages, to carry the players through to the thrilling conclusion. The biggest challenge you will face, though, lies not in keeping all the non-player characters straight, or remembering all the minutia about the plot. Instead the challenge lies with the player characters. The following tips should help guide you and the players in creating an interesting group of heroes that have a stake in the outcome of this campaign.

Races

The subject of the *Thousand Thrones* campaign appears, on the surface, to be a story about mankind, concerning itself largely with the future and security of the Empire. Karl is believed, by his followers at least, to be Scion of Sigmar, the heir of the Empire, and as he makes his way across the Empire, he disrupts the fabric of society by uprooting villages, separating husbands from wives and parents from children, causing no shortage of trouble along the way. While these factors should be of interest to those who claim the Empire as their land, these should be troubling to anyone of the Old World.

Dwarfs

To Dwarfs, Sigmar is a great hero, the man responsible for the long-lived alliance between Man and Dwarf. If you consider how Dwarfs regard their ancestors, exalting them and struggling to live up to the memories of those who have come before, the appearance of Sigmar in the flesh ought to be enough to make a Dwarf at least a little curious. Alternatively, a Dwarf might deny the boy's claim of divine heritage and work to discredit the boy and his advisors, seeing the Crusade and the madness surrounding it as an abomination. Finally, many Dwarfs live in Human cities and call the Empire their home. Seeing it disrupted by some new insane mob of deluded Humans could be enough to stir the passions of any Dwarf.

Elves

Elves tend not to concern themselves with the affairs of Mankind unless the threat they face extends to all the world, such as in the case of the recent Chaos Incursion, the Great War against Chaos, and other times of looming disaster. At the start of the campaign, the Crusade of the Child poses none of these risks and so it may be a stretch to involve an Elf in yet one more example of how Humans are flawed. However, Elves hailing from Marienburg may share the fears of the mob, sensing some hidden power behind the confusion and upheaval. Such disturbances have a way of spinning out of control and an Elf character might be drawn into the

plot to monitor developments until the truth of Karl's heritage can be revealed. Another option is to use the **Foolish Humans** hook described in **Chapter I**. In this case, the Elf PC or PCs work directly for Avatil Foamstrider, and their bonds of loyalty to the elder Elf should prove to be strong enough to keep these characters involved for the duration.

Halflings

The mercurial Halflings are easily the hardest to incorporate into the *Thousand Thrones* campaign. Sure, they have a stake in the Empire's future, but they are rarely reliable enough or devoted enough to sustain interest in the matter of the Crusade for overlong without using some other lure to draw the character along. A Halfling whose business was destroyed when the Crusade formed or passed through could be enough to drive a slightly mad Halfling to seek revenge, or a Halfling might follow the mob to exploit the deluded followers. Others might involve themselves in the campaign because friends or former comrades were seduced by Karl's aura, and an uncharacteristic concern impels the Halfling adventurer to investigate the Crusade and assess its legitimacy.

Foreigners

Although the action in Thousand Thrones centres on the Empire, the effects of the Crusade can ripple across the Old World, influencing the lives of people from all over. A Bretonnian knight might find himself involved in the storyline after a dire warning given to him by the Lady in a vision. Estalians, Tileans, and others might tag along with other invested characters, working through the campaign out of loyalty to their fellows. Then again, it's possible that a relative, lover, or friend fell under Karl's influence and picked up and joined the mob against all common sense.

Party Composition

More than race and nationality, the biggest challenge you will face when it comes to your players is in the party's composition. The randomised method of character generation can create dynamic groups of disparate adventurers that engender excellent opportunities for characterisation. However, the standard methods for creating characters can result in lopsided parties, with some "roles" being represented by more than one character to the detriment of the group's ability to handle the challenges they are bound to face. The following information should help you make the best decision for your particular group.

Random Method

There's little in *WFRP* more fun than rolling on the great career table to see what wretch or hero you'll wind up playing. With nearly equal chances of playing a noble or a charcoal-burner, a party built from completely random career results makes for an interesting mix of heroes that can create exciting party interrelations. If you choose to use the standard methods of character creation set out in *WFRP,* encourage the players to come up with the reasons why they're working together. Place the burden of their back-story on them; by doing so, the players will have more reason to cooperate and therefore derive greater enjoyment out of the campaign. If they need help, it's recommended that you use the **In the Service of Sigmar** hook in **Chapter I** to provide a solid reason for their unusual mix.

Party Role Method

Any examination of the careers in *WFRP* reveals that there are several "roles" or concepts that underpin the various starting careers. Most careers fit within one of the following broad ideas: Academics, Commoners, Criminals, Rangers, and Warriors. An ideal group for any lengthy campaign has the players each fill a different niche within the group, thus enabling each player to have a clear responsibility and place within the campaign as it develops.

As an optional rule, have the players each pick one of the roles. Avoid duplication unless all the roles are accounted for. Once the players have their roles selected, they gain their starting career by rolling 1d100 on the following tables.

Academics

Academics include any character that has the benefit of formal education or training. Examples include initiates, apprentice wizards, and nobles.

Commoners

The salt of the earth, commoners bear the burden of doing all of the dirty work required to keep society functioning. Such characters include valets, servants, and entertainers.

Criminals

Beholden to no laws, criminals operate outside the bounds of society. These characters include thieves, agitators, and outlaws.

Rangers

Rangers are rustic types that live or work in the wilderness. Common "ranger" careers include charcoal-burners, hunters, and woodsmen.

Warriors

The last role archetype covers all the martial characters—those careers that reflect some formal training with arms or characters whose primary function is killing. Examples include the marine, soldier, and mercenary.

Player Choice Method

Of course, you could just let the players select their race and careers. Doing so could lead to an inordinate number of troll slayers, apprentice wizards, and pit fighters, but then *Thousand Thrones* is a campaign of sweeping proportions, and to survive the players may need every advantage they can get.

Replacement Characters

A reality of the *WFRP* game is that characters die. The Old World is perilous and enemies lay in wait on all sides, from common thugs and cruel cultists to the vicious rampaging Orcs and appalling shuffling dead. *Thousand Thrones* is no different and death awaits the incautious, the reckless, and foolish.

Character death is a tricky problem in RPGs. On the one hand, as GM, it's your responsibility to create a fair environment that's true to the setting, but on the other, you don't want your game table filled with crumpled character sheets and dejected or frustrated players. A character, especially one played for several sessions, is key to retaining the player's interest in the game. Taking away a developed character is not only disappointing, but it forces the player to scramble to come up with a new personality, a new motivation, and way to fit in with the rest of the group. Each time a player's character dies, it becomes harder for that player to scrounge up the interest in portraying an interesting persona.

The adventures in the following pages *are* challenging, but they need not be fatal. To avoid turning this campaign into a graveyard of dead PCs, be aware of the party's strengths and capabilities and tailor combat encounters to them, making adjustments to retain the challenge but not at the expense of the fun.

Should a character die—and some will—you must figure out how to bring in a replacement character that would have the same degree of interest and conviction to hook them without being clichéd or heavy-handed. Luckily, the Crusade is an excellent place to breed replacement PCs, since it attracts a broad spectrum of people from all walks of life. In chapters where the PCs are away from the mob, you should incorporate the threat or effects of Karl's mob into any replacement character's background as a way of ensuring the new character is properly invested in the storyline.

Taking the Edge off Death

Since character death does happen, one way to retain interest for PCs is to grant the player additional benefits when they bring in their new character.

The nature of the reward sh0uld be tailored to the player and the nature in which he lost his previous character. Good options include giving the character a superior piece of equipment or an extra advance. You could give the player story benefits as well in the forms of contacts, allies, minions, and so on.

Many GMs require replacement characters to create new ones with no experience points. While this is fine for early chapters, this strategy can be disastrous for later episodes. Replacement PCs should have experience depending on the chapter you're running. Use the guidelines described on **Table 0–6: Replacement Characters and Experience.**

The Thousand Thrones

Once the players have all generated their characters, the last thing you need to decide is how and why they are in Marienburg when the campaign begins. Suggestions for various adventure hooks are described in **Chapter I**. Choose your hook wisely based on your players' preferences and styles. Use a more heavy-handed hook if the characters are apt not to undertake missions on their own, or a looser hook if the characters are constantly getting themselves into trouble. Whatever you decide, we can promise the *Thousand Thrones* campaign will be unlike any other adventure you will undertake!

Table 0–1: Academic Careers

Career	Dwarf	Elf	Halfling	Human
Apprentice Wizard	—	01–28	—	01–18
Barber-Surgeon	—	—	01–33	19–27
Envoy	—	29–56	—	—
Initiate	—	—	—	28–45
Noble	01–33	—	—	46–64
Scribe	34–66	57–80	—	65–82
Student	67–00	80–00	34–00	83–00

Table 0–2: Commoner Careers

Career	Dwarf	Elf	Halfling	Human
Bailiff	—	—	—	01–04
Burgher	01–15	—	01–07	05–11
Bone Picker	—	—	08–10	12–19
Camp Follower	—	—	11–17	20–27
Entertainer	16–26	01–40	18–28	28–35
Ferryman	—	—	29–31	36–39
Fisherman	—	—	32–34	40–47
Hedge Wizard	—	—	—	48–51
Jailor	27–41	—	—	52–55
Miner	42–62	—	—	56–63
Peasant	—	—	35–55	64–71
Rat Catcher	63–77	—	56–58	72–79
Servant	78–85	—	59–75	80–87
Tradesman	86–00	41–00	76–93	88–94
Valet	—	—	94–00	95–00

Table 0–3: Criminal Careers

Career	Dwarf	Elf	Halfling	Human
Agitator	01–11	—	01–11	01–11
Grave Robber	—	—	12–21	12–22
Outlaw	12–27	01–33	22–31	23–33
Protagonist	28–50	—	—	34–44
Rogue	—	34–66	32–50	45–56
Smuggler	51–67	—	51–60	57–67
Thief	68–84	67–00	61–82	68–78
Thug	—	—	—	79–89
Tomb Robber	85–00	—	83–00	90–00

Table 0–4: Ranger Careers

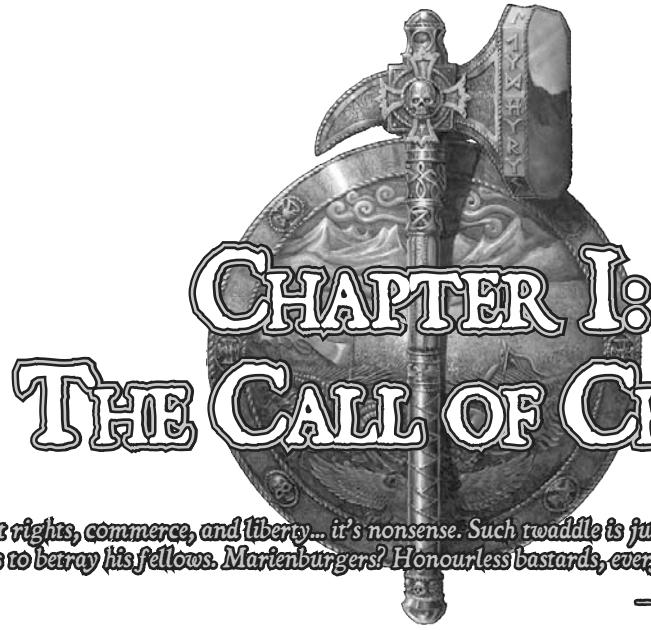
Career	Dwarf	Elf	Halfling	Human
Boatman	—	—	—	01–08
Bounty Hunter	—	—	01–08	09–16
Charcoal-Burner	—	—	09–21	17–24
Coachman	01–24	—	—	25–31
Fieldwarden	—	—	22–34	—
Hunter	25–39	01–20	35–55	32–39
Kithband Warrior	—	21–37	—	—
Messenger	—	38–52	56–77	40–47
Outrider	—	53–67	—	48–54
Roadwarden	—	—	—	55–61
Runebearer	40–71	—	—	—
Seaman	72–80	68–82	—	62–68
Squire	—	—	—	69–75
Toll Keeper	81–00	—	78–85	76–83
Vagabond	—	83–00	86–00	84–91
Woodsman	—	—	—	92–00

Table 0–5: Warrior Careers

Career	Dwarf	Elf	Halfling	Human
Bodyguard	01–13	—	—	01–11
Estalian Diestro	—	—	—	12–14
Kislevite Kossar	—	—	—	15–17
Marine	14–17	—	—	18–28
Mercenary	18–35	01–00	01–25	29–39
Militiaman	36–47	—	26–50	40–53
Norse Berserker	—	—	—	54–56
Pit Fighter	48–63	—	—	57–67
Shieldbreaker	64–75	—	—	—
Soldier	76–83	—	51–75	68–78
Troll Slayer	84–94	—	—	—
Watchman	95–00	—	76–00	79–89
Zealot	—	—	—	90–00

Table 0–6: Replacement Characters & Experience

Chapter	Experience
One	0
Two	300
Three	600
Four	900
Five	1,200
Six	1,500
Seven	1,800
Eight	2,100
Nine	2,400



Chapter I: The Call of Chaos

"All this talk about rights, commerce, and liberty... it's nonsense. Such twaddle is just another mask for Human greed and his willingness to betray his fellows. Marienburgers? Honourless bastards, every one."

—Othrun Karlikson, Dwarf Pit Fighter

By Simon Crowe, Adam Flynn, and Robert J. Schwalb

The *Thousand Thrones* campaign opens in Marienburg, the only city to successfully break from the Empire. Marienburg is unlike any other city in the Old World in that here, a man is judged by his wit and innovation and not the circumstances of his birth. Here, a lowly peasant, through hard work and determination can rise above his wretched state and become something more. Such opportunity does not come without its risks, for just as men can reach great heights of power, so too can they fall into the bowels of squalor. For every commoner that escapes poverty, there are a dozen more crushed under the heels of the rich and powerful. Some are just dirty peasants, whilst others may be disgraced nobles, fallen priests, and a motley assortment of other folks from all castes, origins, and nations. Indeed, this city is one of new beginnings—but also of endings, a fact reflected in **Chapter I** of this grand campaign.

Adventure Background

Seven years ago, a band of witch hunters tracked down a cult of Stromfels—a deity oft-speculated to be a twisted interpretation of Manann—and purged the place of their wickedness, putting them to the sword and torch. It was amidst the violence and death that the hunters found a beautiful baby, the merest glance of whom could stir the heart and instil feelings of loyalty and duty. Those who beheld the Child felt a powerful compulsion to shelter the infant from harm and go to great lengths to safeguard the Child. Burdened by such admiration and fear for the babe, the witch hunters believed the cult had terrible intentions toward the Child and that it fell to them to protect him. And so it was that the witch hunters bundled up the young one and spirited him away to Marienburg's Shallyan orphanage.

The Abbess who governed the institution accepted the Child at first, but being filled with the wisdom of her mistress, she peered through the Child's charm and deemed that something was wrong with the baby—dreadfully wrong. Fearing the effect it would have on her and the other priestesses, whom she believed shared her resolve, she deemed it would be best to return the Child to the witch hunters to attend to as they would any Mutant. The Abbess entrusted this deed to her most loyal and devout follower, but even with her great wisdom, she could not anticipate the extent of the Child's power to influence. The priestess who was to deliver the babe found that she could not, for she knew what it meant if the baby were to be handed over to Sigmar's servants. She could not in good conscience turn over such a sweet child, such an innocent, whose flesh was pure and whose spirit must be clean. She returned, her mission unfulfilled, and hid the Child, with the help of other sisters who shared her zeal, in a secret room beneath the notice of the Abbess.

Over the next few years, the Child, whom the sisters came to call Karl, grew. So too did his power and influence. To those gifted with Witchsight, Karl shone like a beacon, a pillar of holy light filled with some otherworldly presence. So brightly did the boy glow that he began to attract the attention of other, less honourable men, even though the boy was securely hidden within the orphanage. One man in particular, a vile Chaos sorcerer named Ruprecht, saw much promise in the boy. Long had Ruprecht despised the Empire and its people, and he craved the chance to bring it to its knees and discard the tired notions of Sigmar in favour of worshipping the true Gods, specifically Nurgle.

Ruprecht, through his divinations, identified young Karl's powers and saw in them the potential to topple the Empire. Ruprecht knew that the boy's influence would draw weak-minded mortals to him. In time he could foment a rebellion in the Empire that would ultimately see the boy placed on Karl-Franz's throne. Ruprecht would lurk in the shadows, offering guidance to refashion the Empire in the Unclean One's foetid image.

A lucid man might have abandoned the plan in the face of the Empire's sheer power, but not Ruprecht. In light of the recent Chaos incursion and all the mysticism that surrounded the great hero Valten (whom certain fringe groups of fanatics and zealots claimed was Sigmar reborn) Ruprecht believed the Empire's people were ripe for the taking, eager for some divine sign to usher them through the hard times that have followed since the last war and prepare the way for a grand future. The boy, this Karl, would be the living symbol of the Empire's hope and with his "gift," there was no chance Ruprecht could fail.

Ruprecht, then, needed the Child, and quickly. Having once spent time in Marienburg as a member of a secretive Nurgle cult, he called in his favours and used his allies in the city to kidnap the boy. When they had the lad, they were to brand his chest with the sign of the twin-tailed comet and then escort the boy to the sorcerer's tower in the heart of Troll Country.

It was a simple plan, but then, simple plans are often the most likely to go awry.

The cultists located the boy with little trouble, snatched him from his chambers, and led the captured youth to a smithy, where they had a branding iron in the coals, ready to mark the Child. Once they arrived, they held the boy down and scorched his flesh, burning in the image of the twin-tailed comet. But the heat, pain, and fear filled the frightened boy, and through tremendous luck or perhaps divine intervention, he tore free from the cultists. He snatched a hammer that lay nearby and fled into the streets, revealing to all bystanders the glowing burn, the sigil that marked the lad for greatness. The cultists followed into the streets, foolishly exposing themselves, and as they tried to close, the boy lashed out with his tool, sending the lead cultist's hot brains splattering to the street.

This display was enough for the locals, many of whom were refugees from the Empire who fled the violence of the Lord of End Times. They set upon the remaining cultists and tore them limb from limb, egged on by the boy's unnatural gift. When the grisly task was finished, as one they turned and looked upon the young man and saw his unruly mane of golden hair, the fiery comet, the hammer, and nary a tear upon his cheek. He had to be, he must be, he was, in their minds, Sigmar himself, returned to this world to lead humanity out from the darkness of fear and agony and into a new era of prophecy.

They lifted the lad on their shoulders and bore him to the city's priest of Sigmar, an aging man named Helmut. As they wound their way up through the streets, more joined their numbers, more came to see, to witness this miraculous boy. Finally, on the very steps of the temple of Sigmar, Helmut stood before the gathered host and looked upon the lad and was instantly smitten. He confirmed the mob's beliefs and knelt on those very steps, weeping with fear, with respect, and even relief.

The week that followed was especially tumultuous, turning Marienburg on its ear. More and more folk who once lived in the Empire gathered to the Child, to hear him speak or to feel his cool touch upon their brows. Helmut pressed the Theogonist-in-exile, Esmer, to recognise the boy officially. All the while the mobs grew. The former Grand Theogonist, sensing an opportunity to reclaim his position from Volkmar, agreed and named the boy Scion of Sigmar, blessing him before thousands of young Karl's followers.

While Esmer's blessing might have been enough for some, Karl's followers were already splintering into factions, with various groups jockeying for power and influence, and some, seeing Esmer's politicking so clearly, advised that Karl would not receive the legitimacy he needed to lead the Empire into a new age unless the true Grand Theogonist and, indeed, the Emperor, confirmed the boy's divinity. So it was that the Crusade of the Child was born and, in droves, a host of followers left Marienburg, marching toward Altdorf, toward their future, toward a glorious new age of mankind.

Tragically, their devotion and piety are illusory, for they unwittingly fell under Karl's curious power and ironically into the hands of Ruprecht.

Adventure Synopsis

The Call of Chaos finds the player characters in Marienburg following the upheaval of Karl's appearance and subsequent departure. While many folks were happy to see some of the city's more undesirable elements leave, not all are convinced that Karl is in fact the Scion of Sigmar and some suspect that there are darker forces at work in the city. So it falls to the player characters, working on behalf of one or more of the possible employers, to look into this curious development and uncover the truth about Karl, learn where he came from, and discover what sinister agencies are at work behind the scenes.

Much of the early movements in this adventure deal with the characters following up the various leads as they work to uncover anything they can about the boy. Through their investigations, the PCs should discover enough information to lead them to the Cursed Marsh, where the much-depleted cult of Stromfels still gathers in the filthy mire to perform unspeakable rituals to their dark God. Investigating the cult hideout, the PCs learn the name of one of the cultists they believe is responsible for the attack on the boy. They must race back to the city and find him before it's too late.

Frustratingly, it is too late; the man is dead. Further inquiries about this dead cultist finally reveal the location of a hidden temple of Nurgle, buried in the soft silt on which Marienburg stands. The player characters must brave Marienburg's dank sewers and the horrific denizens lurking there to learn what evil really is at work behind this Crusade of the Child.

Adventure Hooks

There are a number of methods for "hooking the players" in this adventure, with several useable options presented here. Most of these devices require the introduction of a sponsor, an interested party who is concerned about the boy and this potentially disastrous crusade. This solution is, by far, the simplest, and you merely have to pick a hook that best matches the group's dynamic. If you have a bit more experience in running *WFRP,* you might consider using several different h0oks, possibly even one for each PC or pair of PCs. Alternatively, you might dispense with any of these methods and devise some new mechanism to start the campaign. If so, be sure the "hook" is sufficient not only to carry the characters through this chapter, but through the rest of the campaign as well.

Foolish Humans

The High Elves, dubbed Sea Elves by the city's Human population, have long lived in Marienburg, using the city as their gateway for dealing with the Empire and much of the rest of the Old World. Living among their kind in the locally known Elftown District, they are a reclusive lot that polices their own kind and have as little to do with the rest of the city as possible. While the Elves are generally aloof and above petty Human squabbling, the intensity and speed of the Child's Crusade has led a small faction of Elves to take note. Leading this inquiry is a minor Elf merchant named Avatil Foamstrider, who suspects, and rightly so, dark forces behind this unusual development. He approaches the characters, looking to exploit their unique talents to get to the bottom of the so-called "Crusade" and learn all they can about the boy. Characters agreeing to these terms receive 10 Gold Crowns for completing the mission successfully.

In the Service of Sigmar

Marienburgers are famously unhelpful when it comes to assisting the templars of Sigmar in their pursuit of divine justice and capturing runaway cultists and Mutants. Thus, most witch hunters don't bother trying to co-opt the local law enforcement—the Black Hats—and instead bring along muscle of their own. The PCs, then, are minions of a fairly well-known and dangerous witch hunter named Roderick. Having come to Marienburg to find a renegade wizard, the witch hunter was more than a little surprised to find the city giving birth to a new and fanatic cult of Sigmar. Since he's committed to tracking down his refugee, he orders the player characters to follow up on this mob and find out anything they can about the Crusade, its origins, and the identity and history of this boy.

Going off the Rails

There are all sorts of opportunities for this investigation to go wrong. The PCs might find themselves on the wrong side of the law, fail to acquire key clues, get killed, and so on. You should consider various other ways for the PCs to get back on track, but if circumstances disintegrate to such an extent that there's simply no way the characters can conclude the adventure as written, that's okay. Simply move to the conclusion and proceed to the next chapter. While the characters may miss some vital clues about Karl's nature and the forces at work to manipulate him, they can catch up later.

Since the PCs are serving the witch hunter, they can expect no additional reward, however, they do receive free lodging in Marienburg and may receive supplies and medical treatment at your discretion.

Missing Daughter!

Crispijn van Haagen has long had an unsavoury reputation, for indulging in decadent excesses and for having a hand in illegal and dark enterprises. Although these claims have never been substantiated, the fact remains that the family's wealth and influence in the city far outstrips what they should be earning from their legitimate business. Regardless of the veracity of the accusations, Crispijn is in trouble. He has an illegitimate daughter that he fathered on an Empire woman who had fled during the Chaos incursion. Ordinarily, Crispijn would have written off the girl and her mother, but something about the pair stirred feelings of loyalty and duty, and so, out of character, he slipped the mother and daughter modest funds to keep them fed, clothed, and housed. A few days ago, when he sent his valet to make another payment, his servant returned claiming the woman and the baby were gone. Crispijn suspects that they might have been swept in the whole Crusade nonsense. To be sure that the mob is legitimate and not some band of cultists, the noble requires the PCs to look into the origins of the group and report their findings to him. Should they succeed in producing useful results, he's certain to send them after his missing daughter. To Morr with the traitorous woman!

Crispijn offers to pay the PCs 5 *gc* apiece for successfully looking into this matter and with a bonus of another 3 *gc* if they do it quickly.

We're All Prisoners Here

One possible hook is for all the characters to be prisoners, lawless men and women forced to spend their days breaking rocks at the Tumble Downs, a bleak quarry north of Marienburg. Spending one's life in such a place would be bad, for the work is thankless, hard, and dangerous, which explains why Marienburg uses prison labour to supply its cut stone. Life is bleak with little hope, at least until a slimy little man named Wilhelm Schmidt recruits the PCs. A diplomat of the Empire's Embassy in Marienburg, he has concerns about the Crusade and its march toward Altdorf. Before he sends an urgent report to his superiors, he needs to assess the authenticity of the claims surrounding the Child. No brave man himself, he is highly unsuited to the demands such an investigation would demand. Furthermore, since he has little sway in Marienburg and no authority over the local constabulary—the Black Hats—he needs discrete assistance. So he calls in some favours and arranges a meeting with the PCs. He offers to get the characters pardons, and freedom, in exchange for looking into the origins of the boy, the Crusade, and uncover anything unusual, and report to him in one week's time. Should they think to double-cross him, their lives would be forfeit as he promises to circulate their likenesses the world over, nailed to the trees in Lustria and posted on the Great Bastion of Cathay. Characters receive their freedom and starting trappings.

A Lovely Lady

Selena Reiva is a Lahmian Vampire and one keenly interested in this boy Karl. Believing the lad is in fact the Champion of Night—the being believed to usher in the Age of the Thousand Thrones—mentioned in the Vampire Prophecies, she wants as much information about the youth she can get before acting. Under the guise of a pious widow, she invites the PCs to her sumptuous home and offers to pay the group 100 Gold Crowns to serve her using the pretence that she's keenly interested in the rumours that the boy is in fact Sigmar reborn. This sum is considerable, but she has money to blow, so hesitant characters are offered more and regular bonuses depending on the quality of their work. Assuming the PCs agree, their first task is to investigate this new "Crusade" and find out all they can about the boy. She asks the PCs to make regular reports but only at night.

You're All Sitting in a Tavern...

…when a dark stranger approaches your table. Stop us if you've heard this one before. Even though this is probably the most hackneyed approach to starting an adventure or campaign, it has served the foundation of countless quests in innumerable games. Such a hook could, albeit grudgingly, work for *Thousand Thrones*. In this scenario, the PCs are hired by some person, a mysterious individual of your design and choosing, to look into the matter of the Crusade. Whatever you decide, the employer needs to be compelling enough and offer enough money to keep the party's interests throughout the adventure and possibly the campaign.

— Marienburg —

The city of Marienburg boasts of being the largest in the Old World and is the greatest of its ports, far more wondrous than even the city-states of Tilea. Straddling the mouth of the River Reik as it drains the mainland into the Sea of Claws, nearly all maritime trade that concerns Bretonnia and the Empire happens here. It is a place of great wealth and great opportunity. It is a place despised by the Empire, despite its reliance on the fabulous port city's good fortunes.

The reason for this hatred stems directly from the great error, the mishap that led to Marienburg's independence. Always on the fringe of Empire politics in the first place, the stirrings of rebellion had begun years before the city declared its independence. The people of this cosmopolitan city never had much use for the Sigmarite movement that had gained traction in the Empire and as that cult grew in power and influence, witch hunters spread through the lands, putting to the sword and torch any they suspected of consorting with the Ruinous Powers. In time, for religious, economic, and political reasons, Marienburgers grew to resent their countrymen. Their low opinion only worsened as corruption and decadence flowered within their ranks until many began to distance themselves from their Empire kin, looking for any way that the city could break from the Empire. This opportunity came during the Time of Three Emperors. Lacking a coherent leader, Marienburg asserted its autonomy, manipulating the tenuous balance of power to gain more independence than ever before, though still, the Empire held its unruly province in its grip.

Years later, after the Great War against Chaos, the Empire seemed to enter a new era of stability and grandeur with Magnus, renewing feelings of patriotism and hope in the people of Marienburg. But as with all things in the Old World, little lasts for long. The Elector Counts rejected Gunther, Magnus's brother, in favour of the Grand Count of Stirland, Leopold Unfähiger, who promised to return power taken by Magnus during the Chaos Incursion back to the Elector Counts. Marienburg began in earnest to search for ways to break from the Empire permanently.

With a weakened throne, the Unfähiger emperors were forced to turn to other sources of revenue to prop up their claims. This process continued through a series of inept monarchs until Marienburg suddenly declared its independence from the Empire. Dieter IV refused to do anything about it, since he had accepted enormous bribes from the burgomeisters to allow the secession to occur unopposed. When the Elector Counts learned of this treachery, they convened a special council in 2429 to depose Dieter IV and elect the Grand Prince of the Reikland, who took the name Wilhelm III, in his place.

Marienburg's independence was a significant blow since it was the largest port city in the Empire. Nearly all goods that came into the Empire by sea went through Marienburg. Losing the port meant losing the lucrative tariffs and control over what goods would reach the interior. The Elector Counts had pinned their hopes on Wilhelm III, believing he would muster the armies of the Empire and lay siege to the Wasteland. Wisely, Wilhelm resisted their pressures for he knew that a siege of the city would be even more disastrous, far too costly in terms of expense and lives, and he rightly feared that such an action would send ripples of unrest throughout the

Empire, perhaps causing other provinces and city-states to break from Sigmar's lands. With amazing diplomatic manoeuvring, he forged an alliance with Marienburg, ensuring the Empire could maintain a presence in the ports in exchange for a formal recognition of the Wasteland's independence.

In the century that has followed, there is still a great deal of resentment in the Empire toward the Wasteland. Nobles accuse them of being traitors, while priests describe the city as a den of iniquity, where the people do not properly respect the Gods. Marienburg has become a scapegoat for many of the problems afflicting the eastern provinces and cities, and people are quick to look for a Marienburger plot, even where there isn't one.

Oddly, despite the hostility reflected in some corners of the Empire, Marienburg is a popular destination for Old Worlders. In their eyes it is a fabulous place but one that is also somewhat familiar since Marienburgers are not that far removed from the rest of the Empire folk in terms of culture and attitudes. And yet, this city sees people from all over the world, boasting travellers from far-flung Cathay, Araby, and even, some say, mysterious Nippon. Thus, Marienburg throws open its doors and welcomes any and all who would walk its streets and sail its canals, for gold is gold, no matter who holds the coins.

Marienburg's willingness to accept foreigners has diminished in recent months. With the cataclysm of the Chaos incursion, many people of the Empire abandoned their homes and fled west, hoping to escape the cruel swords and awful visages of Archaon's rude legions. What began with a trickle soon became a flood, and the city was overwhelmed with the dispossessed and destitute, the unwashed masses of Empire fugitives who sought to find a new life in this city of promise. What these hopefuls found instead was the grinding poverty of the Doodkanaal, Marienburg's poorest slum, for the upper-class and better off districts would never allow these filthy peasants into their homes. It was from these Empire citizens, pining for their former homelands, that the Crusade of the Child drew its strength and almost as quickly as the refugees came, they left, marching en masse back to the lands of their forefathers.

City Overview

Marienburg is vast. Straddling the River Reik where it drains the Empire heartland out to the Sea of Claws, it is a bright spot in an otherwise forlorn and wretched landscape. The city itself rises from the foetid swamp that typifies the Wasteland, that gloomy march between the impenetrable Drakwald Forest and the immense Pale Sisters. With the regular rains, sucking mires, and the strange breed of peasants that make their living trawling the dark waters of the countryside, reaching the grand city can sometimes be a feat in itself.

A visitor to Marienburg can quickly be overwhelmed by the sheer size of this metropolis, with its innumerable islands, canals, and labyrinthine streets. So large is the city that many of its denizens rarely venture beyond their own districts, and can only speculate about what happens on the other side of the city. Since space is so scarce, with each island so crowded with buildings that they almost seem piled on top of one another, one can hardly blame the locals for staying put.

Anyone wishing to get anywhere in the city must cough up a few coins to pay for passage on one of the canals. Certainly, one could get where they want to go on foot, but the streets are so narrow, so twisting, it's easy to get lost, swallowed whole by a city that always hungers for fresh meat. Thus the canals are the main thoroughfares and the murky waters, glistening with the oily sheen of filth, are filled with skiffs, rowboats, sailing ships, and even galleons come to pass through the city and venture onwards to Altdorf or even as far as Nuln.

Crisscrossing the canals at various points are any number of bridges. Some are simple paths no wider than a grown man, whilst others are grand things, towering over the waters to allow the tall masts of trading ships bound for the inland. Nearly all bridges provide additional space for living, selling, and buying and so such structures are normally crowded with merchants, peddlers, and shoppers. There are only two exceptions. The first being the Niederbrug Bridge, which links High Tower, the seat of political power, and the rest of the islands that make up the city. No shops or structures of any kind are permitted here lest they interfere with the lifeblood of commerce or stop the Black Hats from crushing yet another

Typical Black Hat

Marienburger Human Watchman

Black Hats walk the street in pairs, walking a regular "beat," and any trouble in most of the safer districts can result in a pair of Black Hats showing up in 1d5 minutes. When cracking down on larger criminal groups, Black Hats gather into teams of 1d5+5 Black Hats led by a sergeant. Black Hat headquarters are at watch posts placed in key locations throughout the city, with the richer wards having the most and the poorer areas having the least or none at all. Commanding a watch post is a sergeant who oversees four to twelve watchmen. Most Black Hats are native Marienburgers, but in ethnic neighbourhoods they may draw from Empire folk, Bretonnians, Estalians, and so on.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
32	28	30 (3)	32 (3)	30	32	35	30

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Law) (Int), Common Knowledge (the Wasteland) (Int), Dodge Blow (Ag), Follow Trail (Int), Gossip (Fel +10), Intimidate (S), Perception (Int), Search (Int), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int)

Talents: Acute Hearing, Coolheaded, Hardy, Street Fighting, Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Stun

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 12

Armour (Light): Leather Jack (Arms 1, Body 1)

Weapons: Hand Weapon (Bludgeon) (1d10+3), Dagger (1d10), Unarmed (WS 42; 1d10; Special)

Trappings

Black Hats all wear uniforms and the distinctive floppy black hat. The Black Hats typically carry a lantern on a pole, with at least one flask of lamp oil. As well, the lamplighters also carry several punks to light the city lamps and snuffers to extinguish them at dawn. Most carry a few coins—no more than 1d5 Schillings and 1d10 Pennies.

riot in the Doodkanaal. The other bridge is the Draaienbrug Swing Bridge, which demonstrates the city's ingenuity when it comes to engineering, for it swivels on a central pillar to allow ships of any size to pass. Obviously, a mobile bridge is not the safest place for buildings, to which many ruins deposited in the river can testify.

Marienburg is divided into twenty wards, discrete political entities that elect their own committees, pass by-laws, levy taxes, and govern the people living within their bounds. Defining each borough is far beyond the scope of this chapter or even sourcebook, so the particulars of these details are left for you to describe as needed. General district information is provided in this chapter where relevant to the adventure.

Law and Order in Marienburg

Nominally, the Honourable Company of Lamplighters and Watchmen, known locally as the Black Hats, handles law enforcement in Marienburg. The watchmen are easily identified by their floppy black hats, and most Marienburgers take comfort in their presence, seeing in them the only thing that keeps the rabble from rising up against the rich and decadent. Indeed, the Black Hats count the protection of property as the gravest of their tasks, followed by maintaining order and everything that entails. When there's a robbery, a murder, a riot, or anything else that disturbs the peace, it falls to the Black Hats to sort it out.

While responsible for the rule of law in the city, there are limits on the extent of the Black Hats authority. Anything that happens on land falls under their jurisdiction, but crimes occurring on water or within 10 yards of water are the business of the Marienburg Secretariat for Trade Equity, or as the locals call them, the River Watch. There's a longstanding rivalry between the Black Hats and the River Watch, and neither side is above manipulating circumstances to make the other look bad. Primarily, the River Watch enforces the levies placed on commerce on the rivers, and so stopping smuggling is their principal objective. However, it's common knowledge that these men extend their purview to any violation of city law.

The last official group to police the city are the Elves of Elftown. Although part of Marienburg, they are entitled to self-rule, thanks to the Treaty of Amity and Commerce, which means Elftown follows the laws and customs of Ulthuan. Overseeing his people is the Exarch of Sith, Rionnasc'namishathir. Any crime committed within the bounds of Elftown is under his and, by extension, the Mannikins' purview. The Mannikins, a name taken from a corruption of the Eltharin word for Guardians of the Peace, have jurisdiction over any crime involving Elves anywhere in the Wastelands, though the Mannikins rarely leave their ward, since the last time they apprehended a pair of suspects, riots broke out all over the city. As a result, Black Hats and the River Watch, to keep the peace and ensure continued good relations with the Elves, deposit anyone suspected of violating Elftown law on the Elfgate Bridge.

Other Groups

Marienburg is also home to a number of freelance operatives including private sleuths, militias, bounty hunters, and even witch hunters. All of these individuals find that here they can make a decent living hunting scum and protecting those who can afford their services. It's important to note that the witch hunters of Marienburg share little in common with those of the Empire. In fact, all would-be witch hunters must be registered and licensed to practice in the city. This fact doesn't stop the occasional Templar of Sigmar from following his quarry to Marienburg, but it does mean that foreign witch hunters cannot expect assistance from the local authorities and many have found themselves hauled off to Rijker's Isle—Marienburg's infamous prison—for burning a suspected witch without a license or a warrant.

— In the Wake of a Miracle —

The adventure begins shortly after the Crusade of the Child left Marienburg in disarray. Many of the city's devout Sigmarites, as well as Empire refugees from the poorer districts, set aside their lives to follow young Karl on his march to Altdorf. The player characters, then, find Marienburg reeling from the sudden exodus of hundreds of people, drawn from the poorer quarters of the city.

Winkelmarkt

The Winkelmarkt is one of the larger wards in Marienburg and is home to the city's lower middle class. Much of its commerce involves the boat-building trade, but there's also a thriving foodstuff trade—the district is known for its delicious sausages. Caught between the appalling wretchedness of the Doodkanaal to the south and the declining ports of the Suiddock, Winkelmarkt slides inexorably toward poverty as the ward decays and the more successful types flee to the northern reaches of the city. Locals do their best to maintain their homes, but the signs of decay are everywhere—rotting wood, missing shingles, and the growing mounds of rubbish filling the alleys. To make matters worse, the Winkelmarkt shouldered much of the burden of housing the people of the Empire, creating tensions between the entrenched Marienburgers and the frightened, penniless, and devastated refugees.

The Winkelmarkt is normally more crowded than anywhere else in Marienburg. Outside of the main thoroughfares, the streets are typically so cramped that not even wagons can navigate them. Buildings often share sidewalls, and many are built on top of older buildings, such that most structures have an almost ramshackle appearance, sagging into one another and leaning at uncomfortable angles.

During the Chaos Incursion and for months after, the Winkelmarkt had been packed with people. Every flophouse, boarding house, and inn had been filled near to bursting with folk desperate to find a new life here. They were only to find, as their money ran out, the embrace of the Doodkanaal and the misfits and destitute living there. Despair sank in and a pall fell over the ward as landlords tossed out people who couldn't afford the price of lodging. Tensions rose and riots became common. Then Karl came, and the Crusade was formed.

Once the High Priest of Sigmar recognised the boy and with Esmer's blessing, the Crusade gathered the dispossessed and the desperate. As one they marched out of the misery of their adopted home, leaving behind their dashed hopes and returning the crowded streets to the Marienburgers who never wanted them there in the first place.

Enter the Characters

Charged with investigating the origins of the Crusade, the PCs begin their inquiries in the Winkelmarkt, the ward where the movement was born. As the characters set out, they see that the streets are uncommonly empty, almost deserted in some areas, while in other places citizens struggle to repair buildings damaged by the zealous crowds. Even more startling in a city where land is at such a premium are the rows of abandoned houses stripped of furnishings. Already, gangs and unscrupulous locals squat in these buildings, though several stand untouched.

The PCs are free to do as they like, go where they want, and talk to whomever they wish. Aimlessly wandering the streets of Marienburg may be entertaining for a while but bears little fruit. Scholarly characters won't have much luck researching the Crusade of the Child since it just formed up a few days back. As well, the PCs are unlikely to have success getting an audience with important religious or civil leaders—attempts to do so end in a quagmire of paperwork as the characters find themselves lost in the bureaucracy of Marienburg. When it comes right down to it, the best and maybe only option for them is to ask questions of the people on the streets or in the many watering holes found on nearly every corner of the Winkelmarkt. Just about everyone within a few blocks or more has had at least a brush with the Crusade, and some folks have lost loved ones to the mob, who either joined up or were trampled underfoot by eager fanatics desperate to catch a glimpse of their leader. Indeed, such an event as this one keeps locals happy to gossip about what's happened, even if they have no direct experience with the mob.

Event 1: The Rumour Mill

The city is filled with rumours about the Crusade, making it easier for the PCs to acquire information but harder for them to sift through the nonsense for the truth. After an hour spent talking to people on the streets, the PCs may make a single **Gossip Test** for each separate group of characters (one test if all PCs stick together, or multiple tests if they split up). For each extra hour after the first spent asking questions, they may make a new **Gossip Test** with a cumulative +10 bonus, up to a maximum of +30 after four hours.

On any success the PCs pick up a random rumour from **Table 1–1: Rumours in Marienburg.** To determine which rumour is heard, roll 1d10 and add the degrees of success from the **Gossip Test**. If the roll results in a rumour the PCs have already heard, choose the next highest one they have not heard previously.

While **Table 1–1: Rumours in Marienburg** offers an easy method to present information, there's not much character to it. If you prefer to draw out this stage of the adventure, you should come up with a few colourful locals (orphaned child, angry abandoned wife, jilted lover, street thief,

Table 1–1: Rumours in Marienburg

Modified Roll	Rumour
1	The Crusade of the Child is an ancient group of Chaos worshippers who want to weaken the Empire. Helmut, the priest who proclaimed the boy was Sigmar reborn, is its leader and he used a spell to make to crowd love the boy. Now he plans to use the boy to rule the Empire for his dark master. *(False.)*
2	The Emperor has sent word he will offer the boy the throne if he comes to Altdorf. The nobles are fearful they'll lose their lands and titles if the boy is crowned, so they plan to have him assassinated. *(False.)*
3	During the last full moon, a fisherman pulled up a fish with a woman's face. The fish said it was sent by Manann, and prophesied the Heir of Sigmar would return to restore the glory of the Empire. Blessed by the servants of Shallya, the Heir will root out all the greedy nobles and unrighteous priests. *(False.)*
4	The Crusade of the Child is a group of conmen, criminals, and other outcasts of the Empire who plan to use the boy to blackmail the Emperor for noble titles. The birthmark is just paint and the whole business with the hammer was a trick to fool honest folk. *(False. Are you detecting a pattern?)*
5	The boy let a diseased beggar hold his magic hammer, and the fellow was healed of his sickness. The Shallyan priestesses who raised the lad gave him that hammer as a gift from the Daughter of Mercy herself. As long as the boy holds the hammer, no weapon can hurt him. *(While false, this rumour reveals the identity of the folks who raised the boy.)*
6	The boy was an orphan stolen from the priestesses of Shallya at the order of the Grand Theogonist, Volkmar, who fears the boy will take his title. Volkmar knew to expect the appearance of the heir of Sigmar because a twin-tailed comet was seen to pass before the sun in Altdorf, one month ago. It was a lucky thing when the boy escaped from their clutches. *(Nope, not true, but as with 5, this reveals the priestesses of Shallya.)*
7	The Crusade of the Child was formed by the folk who witnessed the boy's miraculous deeds. Now that Helmut and the Shallyan Abbess have revealed the boy is the Heir of Sigmar, the faithful are marching north with him so the Child can lead them in a great battle against the Chaos Hordes. *(Getting warmer.)*
8	Some servants of Chaos, led by a witch in the guise of a Shallyan priestess, tried to denounce the boy in front of the old Temple of Sigmar. But Helmut saw right through their trick. The crowd killed five of the bastards and left the witch to rot in a hanging cage in front of the temple. *(False, sort of.)*
9	Everyone knows the boy is Sigmar Reborn because he appeared at noon, out of a shaft of golden light, with the mark of a twin-tailed comet on his chest. A dozen evil men attacked him, but the boy brained each of them with a single blow of his hammer. *(Embellished but sort of true. Well, except for the shaft of light.)*
10+	The boy was raised in secret in the Shallyan orphanage. The sisters planned to hide him until he reached manhood and could seek his destiny. But servants of Chaos kidnapped him, planning to murder him. That's when the boy escaped because of his miraculous strength and he slew his attackers right before everyone's eyes. *(True!)*

young Black Hat, and so on) to supply the characters with the information provided on **Table 1–1: Rumours in Marienburg**.

In addition to the rumours, the PCs should manage to piece together a description of the boy when they accumulate three degrees of success or more. Prior to this, the descriptions are misleading or just downright false. The actual description is a boy about nine years old with blond hair, good looks, and an angry red mark of the twin-tailed comet burned in his chest.

Any PC or PCs failing their **Gossip Tests** simply waste an hour and discover nothing new. Those that fail by 20 or more actually encounter one of the many victims of the Crusade's exuberance. Examples include a merchant whose wares were damaged by the cult, a drunk whose wife left him to join the cult, or a house full of nasty children whose mother left them to find salvation in the Crusade. In these instances, the character must succeed on a **Hard (–20) Charm Test** or the NPC starts shouting insults, throwing refuse, and inciting other locals against the PCs. Characters simply leaving the area escape the wrath of the victim. Threatening the NPC causes other locals to join in taunting and throwing filth (assume twice as many NPCs as PCs; use the **Proprietor** statistics in *WFRP* page 235). If at any time the PCs attack or brandish weapons, they trigger a brawl and 1d5+2 Black Hats (see page 14 for statistics) show up 1d10 rounds later to break things up.

The Characters may decide to follow up on the people who confronted Karl and the priest of Sigmar (see **Rumour 8**). A second **Hard (–10) Gossip Test** reveals that the people involved included a Shallyan priestess and a local witch hunter. A degree of success or more turns up the name Osric and takes the characters to **Event 5.**

Event 2: The Relic Vendor

At some point after the characters have spent time in the city, Josef Peek finds them. A greasy tinker, he's trying to capitalise on the fervour surrounding Sigmar's Heir. He shoves a variety of common items in the PCs' faces, claiming each is *"a holy relic of the boy 'iself!"* His stock includes all of the items described in **Table 1–2: Karl's Relics**.

Josef pesters the PCs, continuing his spiel and trying to cajole them into buying something. If they buy something to get rid of him, he compliments them on their choice and departs. If the PCs attempt to get information about the Crusade out of him, Josef makes it plain he won't be forthcoming unless they purchase something—**Gossip Tests** are **Hard (–20)** if PCs are unwilling to buy anything but **Routine (+10)** if they buy at least 1 shilling of goods from Josef. On a successful test, Josef provides rumour number 10 from **Table 1–1: Rumours in Marienburg** (or a random rumour or some other made up nonsense if the PCs have already heard rumour 10).

Josef Peek

Josef Peek is a small time swindler who is down on his luck. Having witnessed the miracle of Sigmar's return and the formation of the Crusade of the Child, he is convinced he can become rich by selling pieces of the miracle. Despite his conniving ways, he is also convinced the boy is the real heir to Sigmar.

Table 1–2: Karl's Relics

Object	Price	Sales Pitch
Tin holy symbols of Sigmar	10p each	*"The boy made them for faithful with his own hand."*
Small pieces of his bedding	5p each	*"Right from 'is crib and blessed by 'is holy bum!"*
Blonde hairs	1s for three	*"Fell from his golden mane, it did!"*
Teeth	10s each	*"Lost when 'e was a babe and saved away for a needful soul."*

Josef is gregarious, indefatigable, and immune to insults. Driven by greed to enact his moneymaking schemes, only physical threats prevent him from closing a deal. He is a thin, greasy man with dark hair, dressed in cheap clothes and carrying a bundle of goods on his back. His breath is abominably foul. For Josef Peek's stats, use the **Beggar** statistics from *WFRP* 233.

Something Special

Josef switches tactics if the PCs seem unimpressed with his wares, seem rich, or display a great deal of interest in the Crusade. He nervously compliments the friendliest PC (the one who has treated him best, or the one with the highest Fellowship) on their *"keen eye for value"* and quietly offers them a *"special deal on a true and honest piece of holiness."* The tinker's manner changes from gregarious to edgy, and he glances about him as if expecting to be robbed.

From his pack he gingerly unwraps a small tunic that has been torn in half. The tinker holds it out reverentially, his eyes shining as he whispers,

> *"This shirt was the very one 'e was wearing when he appeared! One of the bastards 'e was fighting tried to grab him, and the shirt tore away in the fellow's hand. That's when we all seen The Mark on the lad's chest, clear enough. And if you look 'ere, there's some blood on the sleeve—that's from when the boy brained 'im with 'is holy hammer! It was a miracle, like none I never seen before."*

Josef's voice resumes some of its glibness as he says, "*Bless Ranald, the rest of them lot went the help the boy, otherwise I never would have got my hands on this. And it's all yours for 10 … er, I mean, 12 Guilders."* (Marienburgers refer to their gold coins as Guilders.)

The tunic is the one actual relic of the boy Josef possesses, and his story is essentially true. Any character examining the tunic notices there is a small symbol of a flying dove, stitched in cheap grey thread, in the collar of the tunic. Asking Josef, or making a successful **Academic Knowledge (Religion)**, **Common Knowledge (the Empire)**, **Common Knowledge (the Wasteland),** or **Easy (+20) Trade (Tailor) Test,** reveals this is how Shallyan orphanages identify the clothes they give to their wards.

If the PCs present the tunic at the Shallyan orphanage and offer to return it, they gain a +20 bonus to any **Fellowship** test with Gerda Lutzen, the new Shallyan Abbess in Marienburg.

Event 3: The Shallyan Orphanage

Be sure the characters hear enough corroborating rumours to identify several of them refer to the Shallyan orphanage where the boy was raised. With a little snooping and questioning, the PCs should get a sense that the priestesses of Shallya are involved and that Karl was somehow associated with them. A **Routine (+10) Gossip Test** reveals the Shallyans maintain a small orphanage near the edge of the Doodkanaal, where they rescue children from the squalor of that wretched district, in the hopes of giving them a better life. Characters that get at least one degree of success also learn that the orphanage has recently undergone a shake-up and that the former Abbess was arrested for witchcraft. Most presume her dead. Two degrees of success or more reveal she is still alive and hanging in a cage out front of the old Temple of Sigmar. If the PCs seem inclined to check out the imprisoned Abbess, go to **Event 4.** Otherwise, the PCs can head on to the Shallyan orphanage to get a sense of where the boy came from. If the PCs latch onto a completely false tale and decide it is absolute truth, you can get them back on track by plying them with additional rumours overheard as they go about their business.

Finding the orphanage is easy, as anyone in Marienburg can point the way to the narrow alley that runs parallel to a stinking canal, and to the run-down sagging building at its end. Although the building has freshly whitewashed walls, it has seen better days. A low fence runs in front and beyond it, the PCs can see a small courtyard where three Shallyan initiates sit surrounded by a circle of children singing with varying amounts of enthusiasm. Other initiates supervise older children behind them as they work to erect a large stone platform.

Unless all of the PCs happen to be wearing the trappings of a Shallyan priestess, the initiates quietly gather up the children, while one scampers off to summon the Abbess Gerda Lutzen. While awaiting the august presence of the Abbess, the PCs are left in the courtyard, abandoned by everyone but for a red-faced initiate who stares at her feet with intense concentration. She moves quickly to block the characters' entrance into the orphanage but otherwise says and does nothing.

After a moment or two, Abbess Lutzen appears. She is reserved and a bit stern, *"What is your business here?"* and leans forward, cocking an eye at the PCs, her cheeks reddening. Any mention of Karl or the Crusade finds her guarded nature vanish and her rather plain features light up. She is eager for any notoriety she can gain by association with the miraculous child. PCs that are sufficiently courteous, offer a donation of a least 1*gc*, return the tunic found by Josef Peek, or succeed on a **Routine (+10) Charm** test, are invited inside to ask their questions.

Gerda Lutzen

Gerda Lutzen was an ambitious prioress of the Shallyan Abbey when Karl was brought to the orphanage. Although initially fearful of a boy brought by a witch hunter, she soon fell under his spell. When Abbess Widmann recognised the danger the boy posed and summarily ordered Lutzen to deliver him back to the witch hunters, she instead hid the boy with the help of other sisters and claimed the witch hunters killed him. In the years since, she has become consumed by her affection for the boy, even going so far as setting aside her vows to Shallya and worshipping him in her heart. When Abbess Widmann tried to denounce Karl to the crowd, Lutzen made sure she was silenced and declared a witch. Now as the Abbess herself, Lutzen believes she is serving the boy by converting the orphanage into a site of worship of him.

Lutzen, even under Karl's spell, is self-serving and self-important. Lutzen is pleased with her association as the boy's protector while growing up, and is eager to use any fame she has to gain power in Marienburg. She sees herself as cultured, always using the royal "we" when talking and trying to affect a noble bearing. However, emotionally damaged by the boy, she now has little equilibrium and switches quickly from cool reserve to giddiness, fear, or anger. This instability, and her loss of devotion to Shallya, reveals itself in surprising verbal and behavioural slips, such as when she delights in the suffering of other initiates or in her bloodthirstiness toward Karl's enemies.

Lutzen face has a regal sharpness about it, with intense blue-grey eyes and well-kept, iron-grey hair. When she chooses to smile, her face appears guileless. She is also unusually hale for a woman of her age, and her limbs have a whipcord thinness to them that belies their strength.

As PCs are likely just to speak with Lutzen, her only relevant stats are WP 46 and Fel 51.

Chatting with the Abbess

Before leading them to her office, Lutzen summons Marietta Kuhn, a sullen Human priestess. Lutzen takes delight in sharply directing Kuhn to gather the PCs' cloaks and weapons (Lutzen is adamant no weapons be brought into a house of Shallya) and bring wine. As the priestess performs these duties in complete silence, Lutzen watches with a smirk and admonishes any character that tries to speak to Kuhn. Once the priestess has left, Lutzen states in pleased voice that, *"Sister Kuhn is being disciplined. We pray her labour and silence teach her the humility proper to her station."* Characters succeeding on a **Routine (+10) Academic Knowledge (Theology)** should find Lutzen a bit cruel and taking a little too much delight in her clever punishment for a priestess of the Mercy Goddess.

Once inside Lutzen's office, there are many questions the PCs might ask, but Lutzen's mind has been warped from years spent attending to Karl. As a result, she has constructed her own unshakeable memories of the events of the boy's life, which are described under **The Testimony of Abbess Gerda Lutzen**. At your discretion, the Abbess' testimony can be read in full to the players (to summarize the results of their interview), or you can use it to help improvise answers to specific questions. Any information the PCs offer that contradicts Lutzen's version of events is dismissed as false

or a baseless lie. PCs that persist in asserting these "lies" quickly make her angry, thus bringing the audience to an abrupt end.

The Testimony of Abbess Lutzen

"We always knew Karl was a blessed child. The very night he was left at the orphanage door, a twin-tailed comet was seen to shine overhead. He was the finest of the children, even as a baby—strong and clever, and yet kind. We would have raised him with the other, less fortunate, children, but the ready jealousy of the other youths caused us to keep him separate to prevent any… difficulties.

"Every day he grew more noble and handsome, yet who could have suspected his true destiny. A few weeks ago, a pair of unseemly men came and asked to see the children, saying their master wished to hire one of our boys as a manservant. We do not know how they noticed Karl, for he was kept to an upstairs room, but the boy could be wilful and sometimes would slip out. However they saw him, their intent was made clear when a week later, they broke in, killed poor Sister Hirtzel, and stole the boy away. Oh the rage that filled us at the thought of him in the hands of those evil men!

"We did not doubt they were servants of some foul power and we instructed all the sisters to leave their duties and search the city for him. But we need not have worried, for Shallya herself was watching over him. That very morning the boy was seen to kill his kidnappers with a hammer, single-handedly. All who saw the miracle recognized the boy as holy and rushed to worship him. The crowd brought him to Helmut, a priest of Sigmar in the city, and before the multitude, Helmut proclaimed the boy was Sigmar Reborn!

"The faithful flocked to him and we hurried to add our blessing as well, for even then there were those filled with jealousy and hate who spread awful lies about him. But those voices have been silenced and now his faithful have carried him out into the world to fulfil his glorious purpose. We only regret we did not witness the miracle of him slaying those terrible men with our own eyes!"

If the PCs ask to speak to other Sisters in the orphanage, Lutzen grows suddenly nervous and reserved. She stiffly states, *"We fear that would be a waste of your time and interfere with their duties. And in truth, not all of those in our charge are as free of the vice of gossip as we are. There are those… prone to spreading foolish rumours. We regret we must deny your request."* No amount of insistence gets her to change her mind and if the PCs press the issue, she demands they leave. Should the PCs create any trouble, the Abbess reports the PCs to the Black Hats, who thereafter keep their eyes out for the player characters, questioning them, or even arresting them if the PCs hurt or killed any of the priestesses. (For rules on **Trials**, see *WFRP Companion* pages 67-70.)

When the PCs are ready to take their leave (or told to leave if they affront Lutzen), Sister Kuhn leads them out to the courtyard. As the PCs walk, have each of them make a **Routine (+10) Perception Test** as they pass the children singing and working. On a success they realise the Shallyan initiates are leading the children in a religious song about Sigmar, not Shallya, and that stanzas have been changed to refer to Sigmar's return. Any PC who succeeds by more than a one degree also notices one of the girls building the stone platform whine, *"Why do we have build a shrine to dumb old Karl?"* before an initiate boxes her painfully on the ear. Sister Kuhn only shakes her head at this and silently leads the PCs to the gate before returning their cloaks and weapons. If the PCs try to speak with her, she gets nervous, biting her lip and looking over her shoulder at some of the watching initiates, before motioning the characters to leave. Once back out on the street, the PC with the highest Fellowship (who has had some item returned by Kuhn) feels something prick him and discovers a note (see **Handout #1**) pinned to the lining of their cloak or other suitable item.

The "True" Abbess to which the note refers, a woman named Maida Widmann, currently sits half-dead in a gibbet hanging in front of the old Temple of Sigmar. Any passer-by or Black Hat can direct them here. If the PCs do ask directions to the Temple, they are asked in turn if they're planning to *"Spit on the witch?"* If the PCs aren't in the know, locals happily relate rumour number 8 from the **Table 1—1: Rumours in Marienburg** before telling them the way.

Event 4: The Templewijk

The old Temple of Sigmar is located in Templewijk (Temple District) of Marienburg. This district stands as the intellectual and spiritual centre of the city, and is home to nearly all of the city's temples and their servants. Templewijk stands in stark contrast to the Winkelmarkt in that it is remarkably cleaner and also far busier than the Winkelmarkt. Reaching the Templewijk requires passing through the Old Money Ward, a place that once housed Marienburg's nobility but has suffered as the blue bloods have drifted away from the squalor in favour of the posh Goudberg Ward. Once the characters make their way through its cluttered streets, past the peeling paint of once-fine estates and beneath the watchful stares of spinsters and drunk lords fallen on hard times, they come upon the breathtaking and wondrous Templewijk.

Three structures dominate the Temple District: the Cathedral of Manann, the Temple of Haendryk, and the College of Navigation and Sea Magicks.

Pardon Me, Officer, Have You Met My Friend "Karl"?

PCs facing the watch may attempt a single **Hard (–20) Charm Test** to bribe the guards by offering a minimum of 1 *gc* per guard present. Larger bribes are more effective and every doubling of that amount cancels –10 of the penalty or adds a +10 bonus—2 *gc* per guard makes it **Challenging (–10)**; 4 *gc* per guard makes it a **Average (+0)**; and 8 *gc* or more per guard makes it **Routine (+10)**. The PCs cannot improve their chances above **Routine (+10)**, but they shouldn't know that. Milk them for all they are worth.

All three buildings tower over the crowded streets, symbolising, in their way, great wealth, success, and influence in the city. The Cathedral of Manann is notable for its great golden spires and is easily the finest structure in the city, and for the Cult of Manann, the world. With its white limestone walls and three bell towers sheathed in gold forming Manann's great trident, it is a testimony to the cult's power in the city. The doors are open almost all the time, closed only during the worst of storms, and those who visit the interior find its cavernous chambers every bit as impressive as its exterior.

The Temple of Haendryk is nearly the equal of Manann's Cathedral, even though Haendryk's cult is quite small in the Old World. However, given Marienburg's place as a commercial centre, the Haendryk cult has managed to carve out a place for itself. Its members have elevated themselves to figures of great importance to the city's merchants and people. Gaudy in its gilt and overly wrought exterior, one can't help but be taken aback by the temple's excess. Part of its funding comes from the fact that the Temple is also Marienburg's pre-eminent banking institution and the wealthiest merchants and nobles all do their business here.

Finally, the College of Navigation and Sea Magicks stands at the end of the Templewijk. As Marienburg's premier university, this college rivals the University of Nuln and the Academies of Altdorf in terms of faculties and curriculum. In fact, there is no better place in the world to learn the principles of navigation. Aside from nautical studies, the College also offers courses in the arts, history, sciences, and other mundane subjects. The College also has an extensive department specialising in training magicians.

Unfortunately for the PCs, their investigation will lead them to none of these sights—though they can visit them if they wish. Instead, their destination lies in the tiny Temple of Sigmar. During the tangled history of the city, when the priests of Sigmar were found to oppose Marienburg's independence, the temple was forcibly closed and worship of Sigmar moved to the Ostmuur (East Wall) District. The old temple has remained locked and unused for years and shows signs of growing deterioration.

In front of the temple pillars is a small stone plaza with a raised, lidded well. The plaza is surrounded on all sides by large residences that can be accessed by any one of four covered lanes. Just to the side of the well, a 12-foot iron post has been bolted to the stone. Chained to the arm of the post is a four-foot-tall, oval, metal cage. The cage hangs six feet above the ground and contains the small, ragged form of Maida Widmann.

As a result of Lutzen's cunning, Maida Widmann has been declared a "witch." Although local leaders were uncomfortable with this injustice (Abbess Widmann was known to them all), the danger presented by the Crusade of the Child forced them to capitulate. While able to prevent the old Abbess from being lynched by the crowd, they could not prevent her imprisonment to die by exposure. In addition, to ensure the "witch" doesn't corrupt others or cast spells, the guards broke her fingers and stuffed a rag bearing an embroidered hammer of Sigmar into her mouth—a tried and true method of thwarting the evils of witchcraft.

If the PCs observe the plaza by day and night, or succeed on a **Routine (+10) Gossip Test** with the guards or locals, they learn of the guards' orders and of the timing of the nightly patrols.

During the Day

Each day, two Black Hats take position on either side of the prisoner, standing guard to prevent her escape. Locals are permitted to harass her in a variety of ways (spitting, cursing, throwing refuse), but the Black Hats sternly warn and prevent anyone from comforting, speaking, overly harming, or freeing the prisoner. Should the Black Hats be threatened by more than one armed person, they flee to summon help, ringing a hand bell as they run.

During the Night

During the night there is no one stationed here, but the Black Hats patrol the streets and pass through the plaza every half hour or so. In addition, especially loud noises from the plaza (trying to break open the cage certainly qualifies) are likely to wake residents in nearby buildings who open windows and shout for the watch if they see anything that looks like criminal activity. After 1d10 rounds, 1d5+2 Black Hats arrive to round up and arrest the PCs.

Maida Widmann

Maida Widmann spent her youth on the road before hearing Shallya's call. She settled in Marienburg to minister to the orphans of the streets and her devotion and wisdom led to her become Abbess over the Shallyan orphanage. Despite her good judgement, she was too trusting of her subordinates and was misled by them when she ordered Karl be given to the witch hunters. This failure causes her more pain than the deprivations she suffers. A few sympathetic locals had until recently been giving her water and food at night, but this was discovered and stopped by the watch days ago. Since then Maida has only been visited by hecklers.

Maida is deeply devoted to Shallya, yet has a jaded view from long experience and recognises the evil she unwittingly protected will bring much suffering. She also believes she is dying and is unwilling to have anyone risk themselves to free her.

Maida is near death from exposure and dehydration. She has been manhandled and then assaulted with rotten vegetables, the occasional brick, and even small dogs, so her clothes are torn and stained. Her face is haggard and her voice only a thin, dry whisper because of her parched throat. With her arms and hands numb from the bonds, she is barely able to move in the cage. She spends most of the time sleeping or praying silently, and from a few feet away could be mistaken for dead. When roused her eyes are fiercely alive—filled with resolute faith in Shallya and self-recrimination.

Speaking with Maida

It is up to the PCs if and how they attempt to speak with Maida. It is quite possible incautious actions may cause the PCs to be attacked or pursued by the guards. Luckily, during the night the temple pillars and the plaza's well provide plenty of concealing shadows to hide in, and there are four ready escape routes from the plaza. If any PCs are captured they are taken to the local watch house, stripped of everything but their clothing, and thrown in a cell. At that point, only diplomatic intervention by their employers or large bribes (4 *gc* apiece) is likely to free a character.

Maida is reluctant to talk but if the PCs demonstrate their good will (remove her gag, cut her bonds, give her water, you get the idea) or ask about Karl, she speaks. She first asks for something to drink, as her voice is too weak to speak more than a few words otherwise.

"The boy was brought to me seven years ago by a witch hunter name Osric Falkenheim. He told me that the boy was found in the hands of an evil cult; worshipping something in a ruin deep in the Cursed Marsh. We did not realise the child had some awful power about him that bent the will—it made those who looked upon him love him. I was slow to see its effects on my charges, but when I did, I ordered Gerda, my prioress, to give the boy back to the witch hunters, for surely it was the work of Chaos. That is the last I knew of him, until a crowd brought him here and Helmut declared him Sigmar's Heir.

"I knew it could be no other than the child I thought long dead. I confronted Gerda and she admitted she had hidden the boy and raised him in secret. Yet I forgave them, for Shallya teaches mercy and I knew the child's power over the heart was not easily put aside. I was a fool. I did not realise they were still his slaves. I brought Gerda and the other guilty Sisters here to confess their crimes and reveal the truth about the child. When I tried to speak, Gerda and the others denounced me. They declared me apostate and claimed I was a witch who sought to kill the child. If not for the Black Hats, the crowd would have torn me apart. Instead, Gerda's mercy was to have me put in this cage to die.

"You must know this. When the boy was brought to me, he had no birthmark of a twin-tailed comet upon him—no mark of any kind, I promise you! He is not the Heir of Sigmar. I have already staked my life on this and I still believe it. But as to who he is, I cannot say. If the witch hunter Osric still lives, he is the only person who can lead you to where the boy was found. Go now, seek him out with the blessing of Shallya, and stop this evil before more suffer for my blindness."

Event 5: Lotus Dreams and the Nightmare Marsh

PCs trying to find Osric the witch hunter may attempt a **Challenging (–10) Gossip Test** after a few hours of asking questions. If the PCs approach and question individuals who interact with witch hunters regularly (*e.g.* other witch hunters, jailers, magistrates, priests of Morr, wood sellers) they receive a +10 bonus to their **Gossip Test.** However, these individuals may require a successful **Charm Test** before they are willing to talk.

A successful test lets the PCs learn Osric was badly beaten by the Crusade of the Child because he claimed the boy was not Sigmar Reborn. He was carried away by friends and now is lying in a drugged stupor in the Golden Lotus Dreaming House in the Suiddock (South Dock) District.

Dead Ends and Failed Tests

If the test fails, the PCs unknowingly draw the ire of Osric's friends who don't wish him disturbed. A local urchin is sent to deliver a verbal message, *"A fellow knows where to find the man you're looking for and wants to meet and discuss a price,"* and to bring the PCs to an out of the way dockside warehouse in the Suiddock District. There they are met by a grim-faced dockworker named Horst Breuer. He tells the PCs that Osric doesn't wish to be found and that anyone who *"doesn't want their legs broken"* would do well to stop asking after him.

If the PCs threaten Breuer, he blows a whistle and several times the party's number in rough looking men come out from behind the stacks of crates and barrels. Breuer isn't looking to get any of the men hurt, so he's eager just to scare the PCs off with threats. Should the PCs get aggressive, the mob is more than willing to give the characters a beating, pummelling them into unconsciousness (use **Wreckers** statistics in *WFRP* page 235*).* There should be three times the number of PCs. The men use fists, not swords. Their intention is not to kill but to give the characters a warning. Fleeing PCs are not pursued.

If the PCs avoid starting a fight, Breuer can be convinced of their good intentions. A successful **Charm** test or good roleplaying is sufficient, and he relates the account given under **Horst Breuer's Tale.** In addition, Breuer gives the PCs a wooden token painted on either side with a gold flower. He tells them that, *"it'll get you in the Golden Lotus without any trouble, dont'cha know."*

Horst Breuer's Tale

"Osric heard damned quick that that fool priest of Sigmar, Helmut, was claiming some boy was Sigmar Himself and had gathered a big crowd. Well, he and some lads I know went up to see for themselves what was going on. What I heard is, the crowd was half mad; but even so there aren't many who'll stand in the way of a witch hunter—mad or not. So old Osric, he pushes his way in until he's right at the foot of the stairs, with Helmut and this boy standing in front of Sigmar's Temple as bold as brass.

"Osric recognized this boy right off, and he started shouting down Helmut as a fool and the boy as an impostor. He didn't get very far before the crowd turned ugly and started grabbing onto him. They must have been crazy to try to do that to one of 'is kind, 'cause old Osric, he's out with his sword and starts laying about to keep the blighters off. Well, one of them bastards comes up with a flagstone right into the back of his head and knocks old Osric out on the ground. The crowd was out for blood and that piece of filth, Helmut, he's shouting Osric is a murdering blasphemer and that he tried to kill the boy.

"The lads managed to drag Osric out of there. But the crowd done beat him near to death. He was taken to a leech, who kept him from dancing with Morr, but it might have been better… Well, he was howling from the pain and ale wasn't strong enough. So we took pity on the poor fellow; brought him where he won't feel nothing no more. He's in the Golden Lotus—at least his body is. And he doesn't look to be leaving until his mind or his pockets are empty for good."

Horst Breuer

Male Marienburger Human Foreman, ex-Stevedore

Horst Breuer is a dock foreman for one of the local guilds of stevedores. He's privy to much that goes on in Suiddock and proved to be a valuable informant to Osric, as well as providing muscle on occasion.

Breuer is a simple, no-nonsense fellow with little patience for elaborate stories. He speaks his piece with grim conviction and peppers it with curses. He's not stupid, and if the PCs have good reasons to seek Osric out, he's willing to help them.

Breuer has a wide, powerful frame with enormous arms. The remaining hair on his balding pate is grey, and grows in a fringe on his lumpy head. His fat nose is crooked to the left, from having been broken many times.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
36	32	45 (4)	42 (4)	41	35	43	39

Skills: Command (Fel), Common Knowledge (the Wasteland) (Int +10), Consume Alcohol (T), Dodge Blow (Ag), Gamble (Int), Gossip (Fel +10), Haggle (Fel), Perception (Int), Performer (Singer) (Fel), Secret Language (Guild Tongue) (Int), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int), Swim (S)
Talents: Coolheaded, Lightning Reflexes, Public Speaking, Streetwise, Strong-minded, Very Strong

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 11
Armour (Light): Leather Jack (Arms 1, Body 1)
Weapons: Hand Weapon (Club) (1d10+4)

Trappings

Horst Breuer wears simple dockworker clothes consisting of a long-sleeved woollen sweater and black breeches. He covers his bald head with a black cap. A whistle hangs from a cord around his neck.

Event 6: Dreams in the Golden Lotus

The Golden Lotus Dreaming House is the most notorious drug den in all of Suiddock. The dilapidated three-storey building clings to the end of the Three Penny Bridge. The stained building looks as if an errant breeze might send it tumbling into the canal. The place is easily identified by the acrid scent of Black Lotus fumes and the peeling signboard hanging over the alley door, painted with the image of a golden lotus.

The alley door is barred from the other side and unremarkable except for a narrow, shuttered panel at eye height. If the PCs knock or announce themselves, the panel is pulled back to reveal dark, suspicious eyes in a ruddy exotic face, owned by the Araby bouncer. The man speaks only a handful of words in Reikspiel; he grunts a challenge and refuses to respond to questions. He opens the door only if the PCs show the token given to them by Horst Breuer, demonstrate they have at least a few Guilders, or succeed in a **Hard (–20) Charm Test** or **Very Hard (–30) Intimidate Test.** If the PCs can't convince the bouncer to let them in, they have few other options. The door panel is too narrow to put most weapons through and the bouncer is not swayed by threats, leaving breaking down the door or climbing through windows on the second floor their only other recourse. If it comes to this, the well armed bouncer fires his crossbow through the panel and violently evicts anyone breaking in.

Faraq

Male Arabyan Human Mercenary

Faraq isn't quite sure how he wound up in Marienburg or even what this city is called. He's good with a sword, so he found work easily. His days and nights are spent sharpening his weapon, while sitting on a stool and watching the door.

The bouncer is exotic, having golden skin, dark eyes, and black hair pulled back in a single braid. He wears clothing of an unusual cut, and he speaks little—very little—Reikspiel.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
41	27	37 (3)	36 (3)	39	35	32	31

Skills: Common Knowledge (Araby, Tilea) (Int), Dodge Blow (Ag), Gamble (Int), Gossip (Fel) +10, Perception (Int), Ride (Ag), Secret Language (Battle Tongue) (Int), Speak Language (Arabyan) (Int), Swim (S)
Talents: Fleet-footed, Quick Draw, Savvy, Sharpshooter, Strike Mighty Blow

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 5; **Wounds:** 13
Armour (Medium): Mail Shirt and Leather Jack (Arms 1, Body 3)
Weapons: Crossbow (1d10+4; Range 30/60; Reload Full) with 10 Bolts, Sword (1d10+4), Dagger (1d10+1), Shield (1d10+2; Defensive, Special)

Trappings

Faraq wears simple clothing of an unusual cut. Overtop of his tunic, he wears a leather jack and mail shirt that hangs over his black breeches. He disdains shoes. Having been in a few scrapes, he keeps a flask that holds a foul concoction passing for a healing draught.

Inside the Dreaming Lotus

Entering the alley door reveals a creaking staircase leading down to a large, dimly lit room. Another narrow staircase at the far end of the room leads up to the second floor. Men with dazed, moronic expressions slump in the three-high bunks filling this area, occasionally bursting into shouts or tittering laughter. A single attendant, with a cloth wrapped over his mouth and nose, takes money and refills pipes the patrons hold. Clouds of thick, acrid smoke waft through the room and stain the rafters overhead a blue-black colour. Any PC entering here must make a **Toughness Test** to avoid choking. On a failure, the PC coughs uncontrollably and his eyes stream, imposing a –5 penalty to all tests for each degree they failed by (maximum of –15). Tying a wet cloth over one's mouth and nose reduces penalties from the smoke by 5. These penalties last until the PC leaves this room.

Osric the witch hunter has a private room on the second floor. The attendant, Kroeller, can be bribed or intimidated into showing the PCs where Osric is with a successful **Charm** or **Intimidate Test.** Alternately the PCs can just open doors and ask names until the witch hunter is found. If the bouncer has not already been dealt with, this latter approach predictably causes him to try to violently evict the PCs. It's up to you whether any of the patrons take exception to the interruption and get involved in a fight (use statistics for **Gamblers** in *WFRP* page 234*;* all patrons take a –10 penalty to all tests), but ultimately, the PCs need to come away from this encounter with information from Osric. Should they fail to do so, you should come up with some other way for the PCs to gain this information.

The PCs find Osric on a narrow cot and clutching a still-smouldering pipe containing the ashy dregs of Black Lotus resin. His pupils are dilated, his unshaven jaw hangs slack, and filthy bandages covered his left arm and both legs. Rousing him from his stupor requires a successful **Routine (+10) Heal** or **Trade (Apothecary) Test**, or a bucket of cold water. Because Osric is taking drugs to escape pain, minor physical abuse won't break the trance he is in. Actual injury however (one that delivers at least a single Wound after his Toughness is subtracted from the damage) brings Osric into groggy wakefulness.

Once roused, Osric is in a foul mood—suffering not only from the pain of his broken limbs but also from the after-effects of the Black Lotus. He has trouble focusing, sounds and lights frequently seem uncomfortably intense, and his throat is caked with the residue of the smoke causing him to hack and spit. What is more, he is used to being obeyed and rasps questions at the PCs, flinging curses and threats on their heads if they are slow to respond. Play this for great effect, forcing the characters to question whether they want to deal with this stinking, foul-mouthed, troublesome witch hunter after all.

Osric Falkenheim, Witch Hunter

Osric Falkenheim was a witch hunter in the Wastelands for over 20 years before the Crusade of the Child beat him senseless. He barely remembers all the dark temples he has razed and the witches or cultists he has burned, but he savours the thoughts of the bloody justice he has meted out over the years.

Osric is bitter and suffering. In pain and shamed by his defeat by the crowd, he also feels he has failed in his mission against Chaos because he mistakenly let the Mutant, Karl, live. He is also filled with revulsion at the low state he has fallen to, seeking refuge from the pain in drugs. When not in a stupor, he vents his foul temper by spewing invective at everyone around him.

In his late 50s after a life of bitter fights, Osric's scarred form is now badly crippled. Both legs have been shattered and crudely set, and his left arm has curled into a useless claw from torn ligaments. His leathery face shows the scars of ancient burns, with one of his ears only a grizzled stub and his white hair and beard growing in odd clumps. His icy blue eyes are uncompromising under a creased brow, and his mouth is tight and grim.

Aged and crippled as he is, even if roused from his stupor Osric is largely incapable of defending himself, aside from clouting someone on the head.

How the Boy was Found

PCs who explain themselves with sufficient patience, or succeed on a **Challenging (–10) Charm Test,** manage to calm Osric down enough that he is willing to share information with them. Osric recounts his tale in full or answers the PCs' questions as best as he can.

"It was mostly the same as all the other times I killed filthy Mutants worshipping their dark gods. A witch hunter's work doesn't change much. Some years back we'd learned from the Swampers—those folk who gather herbs in the Marsh—that they saw lights and heard strange noises from an old ruin deep in the mire.

"Well, me and some fellows paid one of them a bloody ransom to take us out there and it was just as they said. It was night when we got to the ruin and had a peek inside. I'd guess there was some two dozen cultists, two in fancy dress who must have been priests. Most of them had the mark of Chaos upon them, sure enough. But what caught our eye was one of the priests had a babe in his arms and looked about to drown the poor thing in a pool of water they were gathered around.

"We didn't waste time in offering them merciful deaths; just fired and cut into them, trying to save the baby. Now, when most of these scum see a witch hunter, they know to run. But this lot was different. You could see in their faces, like they were all drugged. They went mad trying to keep us from the boy. By the end of it, only a handful escaped into the night. The rest died on our blades rather than surrender the babe. But the boy wasn't hurt a bit, the cheeky thing, just smiling and cooing in his swaddling rags.

"Well, we considered it a good night's work, 'cept the place was too wet to burn so we had to leave it intact. We brought the boy to the Shallyan orphanage and I gave him to the Abbess—but it was a curious thing. Hard like, to give the boy up. Almost as if… I wanted to keep him for myself. Well I didn't pay the thought no mind. Didn't even think of the boy from that day on—until I saw him again!

"We heard about this crowd gathering, making trouble, so we went to have a look. They all had this wild look in their eyes like a lovesick calf. I saw the boy and I knew it was him! 'Cause those devils I killed in the swamp had the same expression when they died.

"I tried to save them from the boy's power but they didn't want no saving. They near to killed me for my trouble. But I'll tell you if I ever see that boy again, crowd or no, I'll cut him down even if I have to kiss Morr to do it!"

The only other information Osric can provide is the general location of the swamp ruin. Although unable to recall exactly where it is, he can give them the name of a contact among the swampers (Jekil Sumpfmund) who can lead them to it. If the PCs have impressed Osric (*e.g.* appear skilled or clever, state boldly they want to stop the boy, or made a successful **Charm Test**) he even offers to finance their expedition with a gift of 10 *gc* from his remaining funds. As he bids the PCs off, he tells them to show no mercy to Chaos, no matter how innocent it may appear.

If the PCs haven't yet encountered the imprisoned Abbess, this event may lead to her (see **Event 4**). Otherwise, the characters may wish to follow up with their employer or press on into the Marsh.

Interlude

At this point in the adventure, the PCs may wish to report back to their respective employers, having learned a fair bit about the boy's origins. In some respects, the PCs may feel as though they've completed their mission, but there is much left to do. In all cases, their respective employers ask the PCs to press on a bit further. The following adventure hook updates correspond to those described at the beginning of this scenario. If you're using a different hook, you can adapt any of the following or come up with something on your own if the PCs lack sufficient motivation to investigate this matter further. Finally, don't overlook Osric Falkenheim. He has a stake in finding the boy and so he could become a useful sponsor for the remainder of this adventure if the characters do not already have one.

Avatil Foamstrider (Foolish Humans)

Avatil Foamstrider takes the information the PCs report without emotion, inclining his head as if to consider it further. After a few moments, he says, *"Very good. Better than I expected, but I fear this only scratches the surface of the troubles we're facing. I'd like you to follow this up further and learn what you can of where this Man-boy was found. I suspect this will lead to several interesting revelations."*

Witch Hunter Roderick (In the Service of Sigmar)

When the PCs go back to the witch hunter, they find he has already left Marienburg but has left them explicit instructions to follow all leads about the boy and learn what they can about his origins and actions in the city. Once they have exhausted all possible leads, they are to rendezvous with him in Altdorf.

Crispijn van Haagen (Missing Daughter!)

Crispijn is not pleased with the PCs' lack of progress, even if they have managed to find out from where they boy came, where he was raised, and the circumstances of his endorsement by the anti-Theogonist. His disappointment is clear and he commands the PCs to go back and leave no stone unturned and only return to him when they have something more than a few useless facts.

Wilhelm Schmidt (We're All Prisoners Here)

Wilhelm Schmidt is pleased with the characters' progress, but he is not satisfied. He muses that there is more to this than it seems and sends the PCs out to the Marsh to find this old temple (assuming the characters have learned of its existence; otherwise, he sends them back out to investigate further until such time that they do). He reminds them of their debt to him, and recommends that they keep in close touch with him so he can keep abreast of their investigation.

Selena Reiva (A Lovely Lady)

Characters returning to the Reiva house during the day find the place locked up tight. At night, masked servants lead the PCs into the labyrinthine corridors of her house to a sumptuous room that surely has seen no expense spared to ensure the place is as comfortable as possible. She listens to the characters report and then without a missing a beat, dispatches them to investigate the temple. If the characters suggest this course of action, she gives them each 2 *gc* for their ingenuity.

— The Dubious Pleasures of the Cursed Marsh —

The Swampers live on the edge of the marsh, just outside the walls of Marienburg. Osric likely mentions his contact Jekil Sumpfmund during the meeting with the PCs, but if the characters didn't get this piece of information they can find a guide amidst the huts by succeeding on a **Routine (+10) Gossip Test.**

Sumpfmund is easily found amongst this small collection of huts, mending his boats. Although most of the Swampers are bitter men who fear the dangers of the mire, Jekil is unique for his maniacal optimism and love of the Cursed Marsh. Most who know him consider him barking mad, but no one can doubt that he's a man who knows his way around the swamp. Jekil readily agrees to take a party to any part of the swamp, asking only for *"2 Schillings a day, each, for use of the boats during the trip*."

If asked, Jekil recognises the description of the swamp temple and informs the PCs it's a three-day journey to the north-west. As soon as the PCs pay, Jekil departs whenever they are ready, day or night, and dismisses any concerns about the lateness of the hour. He enthusiastically states, *"Why, every season, day and night, there are wonders to be seen in the swamp! So if you're fearful of missing something, it would be a treat to take you out again whenever you please."* He also offers to sell the PCs an informational pamphlet on *"the delightful and various plants and beasts that make the marsh their home!"* The cheaply printed pamphlet, which is titled *Delights of the Cursed Marsh,* is 6p and discusses in excruciatingly glowing praise the horrible things that lurk here. Any PC carefully reading this pamphlet receives a +10 bonus to any **Outdoor Survival Tests** while in the swamp.

Jekil Sumpfmund

Male Marienburger Fisherman, ex-Boatman

Born in Marienburg, Jekil plied the river ways as a young man until he received a head wound in a fight. He lay feverish for days until brought round by a vile concoction brewed with herbs from the Grootcher Marsh. Damaged in the brain, and fixating on the herbs as the source of his miraculous recovery, Jekil became a man obsessed. He now suffers from the Delirious Saviour Insanity (see *WFRP* page 203). He is convinced the Grootcher Marsh is filled with a wonderful bounty of natural gifts that must be shared for the betterment of all. He supports himself by harvesting herbs from the Marsh for apothecaries in Marienburg. Any funds he can spare he uses to print up explanatory pamphlets that support his crazed viewpoint. His greatest pleasure is showing others firsthand the wonders of the swamp.

Since the fever, Jekil is a guileless, pathologically cheery man with no trace of temper. His demeanour, even in the face of obvious danger, remains maniacally optimistic. Problems will be dismissed as *"minor setbacks"* and he takes every opportunity to point out positive aspects of the situation, *"The wonderful thing about the rain is that a man doesn't have to worry about going thirsty."* As he is greatly concerned about the medicinal nature of the swamp, he is also keen to point any health benefits he imagines, *"You can tell the swamp water is good for healing wounds cause of all the things living in it!"*

Jekil is a gnarled, balding man with uneven, brilliantly white teeth—*"Eating cat grass every day keeps'em clean."*

Insanity Points: 1; *Insanities:* Delirious Saviour

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
41	32	39 (3)	40 (4)	40	38	39	31

Skills: Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int), Common Knowledge (the Wasteland) (Int +10), Consume Alcohol (T), Gossip (Fel), Navigation (Int +10), Outdoor Survival (Int +10), Perception (Int +10), Row (S +10), Sail (Ag), Secret Language (Ranger) (Int), Speak Language (Norscan, Reikspiel) (Int), Swim (S +10)

Talents: Acute Hearing, Hardy, Orientation, Resistance to Disease, Seasoned Traveller, Street Fighting

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Fate Points:** 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 13
Weapons: Hand Weapon (Axe) (1d10+3), Dagger (1d10+0)

Trappings

Jekil wears worn and threadbare clothing that fits him badly, being sized for someone much larger. He goes without shoes and his big feet are stained black from regular forays into the mire. He hangs several fishhooks from his homespun shirt and keeps a ball of cord to serve as fishing line in one of his pockets. His greatest treasure is his purse, an old black thing fished out of the swamp. Inside are 4s and 7 p.

Entering the Swamp

The swamp is a stinking, gloomy muck hole crossed by a maze of filthy water channels. Travel is circuitous to avoid the choking growths of giant cattails and stands of ancient, mouldering trees. A mist, thick with the miasma of rotting undergrowth, hangs over the water at all times. Once inside, the foetid mire appears to stretch endlessly in all directions without relief. And Jekil loves every inch of it.

Jekil has two rowboats that can hold 6 people each, including the rower. Obviously he is happy to row but, because the rower faces backwards, he will have difficulty keeping the party out of trouble during the trip (the PCs are responsible for making **Outdoor Survival Tests** instead of Jekil).

With the inexhaustible zeal of a madman, Jekil cheerfully points out everything of interest (everything he sees). Even while rowing, his spiel is almost uninterrupted except for grunts of exertion. PCs peering into the fog have no hope of seeing or identifying even a tenth of what he describes and only a successful **Charm** or **Intimidate Test** shuts him up for long.

Jekil knows the route to the swamp temple well enough that he doesn't need to make any **Navigation Tests** (even if rowing). If Jekil is killed or lost to the party, PCs must make a single **Challenging (–10) Navigation Test** each day to avoid wandering in circles and wasting an entire day. Each day the party is in the swamp they also have at least one encounter. Additionally, whoever is choosing the route must make a successful **Challenging (–10) Outdoor Survival Test** or trigger a second encounter for the day. You get to determine when the encounters occur. Select appropriate ones from **Table 1–2: Marsh Encounters.** Alternately, you may roll 1d10 and add any degrees of failure from the **Outdoor Survival Test** to determine which encounter occurs—choose the next highest new encounter if the same one is rolled twice.

Drifting Boat

As the party rows through thick fog they see a low black shape slipping soundlessly toward them. Out of the mist drifts a rowboat being pulled along by a line, tied at the bow, that disappears into the brackish water. Nets, a lantern, and fresh supplies lie undisturbed at the bottom of the boat. Pulling at the line in the water causes something to briefly resist, then the line goes slack. The line comes up and reveals a well-gnawed arm, picked clean at the shoulder joint, knotted in the tangles of the sodden rope. There is no sign of what was chewing on it.

Whispering Fish

As dusk falls the PCs notice a small, softly glowing fish swimming up to the surface of the water. As the fish reaches the surface the PCs clearly see that at the head of the luminescent body are two tiny, childlike faces side by side with imbecilic, unblinking eyes. The faces stare at the PCs, lifting their mouths clear of the water and working their lips soundlessly, like they are trying to whisper something to them. Moments later a pike swims out of the depths and gobbles up the glowing fish whole before swimming away.

Table 1–2: Marsh Encounters

Roll + Degrees of Failure	Encounter
1	Drifting Boat
2	Whispering Fish
3	Bog Flowers
4	Biting Flies
5	Rotting Remains
6	Lashworm Nest
7	Marsh Gas
8	Monstrous Leech
9	Primitive Bloodsedge
10+	Fen Worm

Bog Flowers

The boats pass by a series of small, floating islands which sprout bunches of hideous yellow and pink blossoms. Many of the flowers appear to be the shapes of ears, and seem to turn to follow the party as it passes. A few of the blossoms sit atop bloated sacks, and have the appearance of shiny-lipped mouths. From within each flower droop three thick, petal-like tongues, moist with sweet smelling nectar. Dozens of shrivelled birds and mice corpses lie around the edge of the islands. The nectar, if gathered, is a powerful euphoric sedative. Anyone ingesting at least a thimble full must make an immediate **Challenging (–10) Toughness Test** or fall into a paralysed sleep. If the test succeeds, the victim stays conscious but takes a –10 penalty to all characteristics except Toughness. The effects in either case last for 1d10 × 30 minutes. The nectar is not immediately addictive and stays fresh for 2 weeks before losing potency. A total of three thimble-sized doses can be harvested from the plant.

Biting Flies

An oar breaks open a hollow log and releases a huge swarm of biting flies. The flies immediately set on all exposed flesh, creeping into collars and sleeves and leaving stinging welts. Quick-witted PCs who dive into the stinking water escape unscathed. Anyone who doesn't react immediately receives countless bites and must make a **Toughness Test.** Failure results in the PCs taking a –5 penalty to all Weapon Skill, Ballistic Skill, and Agility Tests for two days, caused by infected bites. A successful **Heal Test** reduces this time to just one day.

Rotting Remains

The PCs spot a body with two arrow shafts protruding from the back, lying facedown at the foot of tree on a small island. A shield, sword, and stained leather bag are just visible, pinned under the chest. Disturbing the body in any way causes the gas-bloated chest cavity to burst, releasing a cloud of hallucinogenic fungal spores. Any character in a 3-yard radius must make a **Toughness Test** or experience violently disturbing visions. Failure causes them to suffer from the Blasphemous Rage Insanity (see *WFRP* page 202) for 1d10 rounds. When the rage ends any affected character must make a **Will Power Test** or gain 1 Insanity Point. The sword and shield are in bad shape and count as poor craftsmanship. The leather bag holds 4GS, 7s, and a Healing Draught amid its rotting contents. The body has a tarnished silver ring worth 10 *gc* on its left hand.

Lashworm Nest

A swift current sweeps the boat between two lines of twisted, dead trees. Any character that succeeds on a **Routine (+10) Perception Test** notices long thin hairs poking out of tiny cavities in the rotting bark and are not surprised in the ensuing attack—the Lashworms do *not* receive +30 bonus to Ballistic Skill

Tests against the PCs. As the boat rushes down the narrow channel, each PC is automatically attacked once by the Lashworms—the speed and narrowness of the passage prevent manoeuvring, defence, or retaliation by the PCs. Once all the PCs have been attacked the boat has cleared the nest's area.

Lashworm

Lashworms are small carnivorous creatures that make their homes in moist, dark crevices and fissures. When the fine hairs that cover their bodies detect any disturbance in the air, the creature ejects a long, thin, saw-like organ to snatch a piece of flesh from its victim, before reeling the organ in and devouring the meal.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
0	33	10 (1)	12 (1)	24	—	—	—

Skills: Concealment (Ag +20)
Traits: Immobile, Mindless, Motion Sensitive, Tiny

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 0; **Wounds:** 7
Weapons: Lash Organ (1d10+1)

Immobile

A Lashworm moves so slowly, it's imperceptible. A Lashworm may not move in combat or take any physical action that involves the movement of its body.

Mindless

Lashworms cannot test Intelligence, Will Power, or Fellowship.

Motion Sensitive

A Lashworm instinctively fires its lash organ at any creature that comes within 6 yards, automatically gaining surprise.

Tiny

To notice a Lashworm, a character must succeed at a **Perception Test.** All hits count as body hits. Use Sudden Death rules for critical hits.

Marsh Gas

The party rows the boat into the midst of a patch of foul-smelling, bubbling water. If the PCs have any open flames the gas immediately ignites with a burst of blue fire. Everyone within 3 yards of the source of flame takes 1d10+2 damage that ignores armour. If there is no flame, all characters must pass a **Routine (+10) Toughness Test** or take a –10 penalty to all Intelligence Tests for the rest of the day from the ringing headaches that result.

Monstrous Leech

The path ahead is blocked by thick growth, forcing the party to drag the boat through the shallows and into a deeper channel nearby. During this manoeuvre a random PC, who is not wearing metal leg armour, has one of their legs attacked by a Monstrous Leech lurking in the thick mud.

Monstrous Leech

This creature is a slime-covered, flattened, slug-like creature with dark flesh and a sucker mouth ringed by teeth. It can grow over 2 feet in length and prefers to attack from ambush, concealing itself in mud or murky water.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
33	—	21 (2)	21 (2)	30	11	14	—

Skills: Concealment (Ag +10), Perception (Int +10), Swim (S +20)
Traits: Ambush, Bloodfeast, Infected, Lockjaw, Natural Weapons (Bite), Small

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 1 (Swim 4); **Wounds:** 5
Armour: None
Weapons: Bite (1d10+2)

Ambush

A Monstrous Leech that attacks after successfully testing Concealment gains a +30 bonus to its next Weapon Skill Test.

Bloodfeast

A Monstrous Leech that's attached (see Lockjaw, below) to its victim ceases to make attacks and instead drinks its victim's blood, dealing 1 Wound each round ignoring Toughness Bonus and armour points. Each round, there's a 10% chance the Monstrous Leech becomes satiated and detaches from its victim.

Infected

Monstrous Leeches often carry a foul disease called Swamp Fever. Characters that lose at least 1 Wound from a Leech's attack must make a **Toughness Test** or contract the illness. The effects of the sickness manifest in 1d5 days. The victim takes a –10 penalty to all tests and loses 1 Wound each day. The character may make a **Toughness Test** to fight off the disease. Two consecutive successful tests are enough for the character to overcome the sickness. While a character is afflicted by the disease, Wounds lost from Swamp Fever do not heal.

Lockjaw

If the Monstrous Leech inflicts at least 1 Wound after Toughness Bonus and armour points, it latches itself to its victim at the location it hit. While so affixed, attacks made against the Leech have a 50% chance of striking the Leech's victim instead. Should the Leech be killed, the teeth lock in place. Removing the teeth deals 1d10+1 Wounds, which can be negated with a successful **Hard (–20) Heal Test.** Alternatively, applying fire or salt directly to the Leech causes it to retract its teeth and flee.

Small

Monstrous Leeches are small creatures. Attacks made to strike these creatures take a –10 penalty.

Primitive Bloodsedge

The boat lodges against a knotty shrub growing half-submerged out of the water. Almost immediately, the wiry braches of a Primitive Bloodsedge curl around the gunwales of the boat, dragging it half out of the water and tipping at a sharp angel. Characters in the boat must succeed on a **Challenging (–10) Agility Test** or topple into the water. Up to three characters in the water are then attacked by the Bloodsedge's other branches the following round. Those who manage to stay in the boat, or who climb back into it, are protected from the branches but take a –20 penalty to Weapon Skill and Ballistic Skill Tests made to attack the Bloodsedge. PCs can try to kill the Bloodsedge or pull the boat free with three successful **Challenging (–10) Strength Tests.**

Primitive Bloodsedge

A marshy precursor of the land Bloodsedge, this predatory plant grows rooted in slow-moving, shallow water. The primitive Bloodsedge is smaller and lacks the digestive acid of its terrestrial cousin. Instead, the plant simply crushes the life out of prey, letting corpses sink to the bottom where modified roots can penetrate the flesh and draw nutrients from it.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
33	—	41 (4)	37 (3)	—	—	—	—

Traits: Constriction, Natural Weapons (Branches), Radial Symmetry, Tough Hide 2

Combat

Attacks: 4; **Movement:** 0; **Wounds:** 10
Armour: None (Arms 2, Body 2)
Weapons: Branches (1d10+4)

Constriction

When grappling, a Primitive Bloodsedge gains a +10 bonus on Strength Tests made to deal damage to its opponent.

Radial Symmetry

The Primitive Bloodsedge can attack or constrict up to 4 targets within 3 yards.

Tough Hide

A Primitive Bloodsedge gains 2 armour points to each location.

Fen Worm

The passage of the party's boat draws the attention of a hunting Fen Worm slithering 10 yards away in the fog. The snake attempts to sneak up on the boat and surprise the party. The Fen Worm tests Silent Move against the PCs' Perception Tests. If undetected, the Fen Worm strikes with surprise hoping to drag off its prey. Once it has its foe, it wraps the coils around its prey and constricts.

Fen Worm

This giant snake—often reaching 20 feet or more in length—burrows in the soft mud of the marshes and bogs. It prefers constricting its prey, crushing or drowning victims into submission. It tends to use its poisonous bite only defensively.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
33	0	64 (6)	41 (4)	32	10	12	4

Skills: Concealment (Ag), Perception (Int +20), Silent Move (Ag), Swim (S +10)
Traits: Burrow, Constriction, Massive, Natural Weapons (Fangs), Poisoned Fangs, Scales (3), Unsettling

Combat

Attacks: 4; **Movement:** 6; **Wounds:** 23
Armour: None (Head 3, Arms 3, Body 3, Legs 3)
Weapons: Fangs (1d10+6)

Burrow

A Fen Worm can burrow through mud and silt as Move Action and at its normal movement.

Constriction

A Fen Worm gains a +20 bonus to Strength Tests made to damage its foe whilst grappling.

Massive

A Fen Worm is an enormous beast. Attacks have a +10 bonus to hit a Fen Worm.

Poisoned Fangs

Characters that take at least 1 Wound from a Fen Worm's fangs must succeed at a **Toughness Test** or take an additional 5 Wounds.

— Revelations in the Swamp Temple —

The Cult of Stromfels worships in the midst of an ancient Skaven stronghold abandoned to the swamp. This crumbling ruin was originally chosen by the cult to provide a safe haven. Now, despite being the site of a witch hunter massacre some seven years ago, the cult refuses to leave because of the "blessed pool" the site contains.

Reaching the Swamp Temple

Rowing the boat is no longer possible when the characters come within a half-mile of the ruins. A thick fog obscures everything but for glimpses of the towers rising above the clinging mists. Jekil Sumpfmund volunteers to lead them on foot since he's still familiar with the area.

The ruin stands on a slight rise, where the dampness of the swamp gives way to sandy black soil. Nothing grows on the mound except grotesquely swollen puffball mushrooms that spew foul, brownish ooze when disturbed. At the highest point of the mound, the sagging remnants of three round towers sit equidistant from each other. Badly damaged stone walls connect the three towers, forming a triangle with the point facing south.

Crude repairs have been made by the cult over several generations. The first two floors of the northwest tower, and the first floor of the northeast tower, are intact. However, only a portion of the southern tower's base still stands, leaving the foundation open to the sky.

Inhabitants

This cult consists of nine members in all. Six are men from Broekwater, a fishing village to the north. Three of these men are now Mutants. Two more cultists are a pair of Mutants, Udo and Wim, known together as the Brothers Manzel (see statistics on page 27). Finally, the cult's leader, Dahlbert, brings the numbers up to nine.

How many cultists are present when the PCs arrive depends on the party's condition. At the very least, the Brothers Manzel and Dahlbert are here. In fact, they never leave since the weight of their corruption prevents them from interacting with other people. Should the player characters be in bad shape or lack many (or any) appreciable warrior-types, these cultists should be a sufficient challenge. For capable or larger parties, some of the other cultists should be present as well.

Stromfels Cultists

Male Human or Mutant Seamen

The unnamed are minor servants of Stromfels, drawn to the cult for the power it offers. Three of the cultists are now Mutants, changed after being immersed in the "Blessed Pool." The mutated cultists, if used, rarely emerge from the swamps given the severity of their mutations.

Insanity Points: 3

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
36	32	34 (3)	37 (3)	38	28	26	27

Skills: Common Knowledge (the Wasteland) (Int +10), Dodge Blow (Ag), Gossip (Fel), Perception (Int), Row (S), Sail (Ag), Scale Sheer Surface (S), Speak Language (Norscan, Reikspiel) (Int), Swim (S)
Talents: Resistance to Disease, Seasoned Traveller, Street Fighting, Strike Mighty Blow, Very Resilient
Traits: Mutations (three cultists only)

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 12
Armour (Light): Leather Jerkin (Body 1)
Weapons: Cudgel (1d10+4)

Trappings

The Stromfels Cultists wear stained shirts and breeches, grey from the mud and their filth. While at the temple, they each wear a shark's tooth on a leather thong hanging around their necks. The cudgels are oaken with the handles wrapped in leather.

Mutations

Three cultists have one mutation each.

- **Bestial Appearance:** The first cultist has the head of a weasel. A thick white stripe runs from the top his head down the back of his skull. His Fellowship Characteristic is 12 and he gains the Natural Weapons Trait, enabling him to bite his foes (1d10+4).
- **Extra Mouth:** The second cultist has a second wide drooling mouth just above his left eyebrow. The sticky strings of spittle drip onto his face and in combat, dark laughter emanates from this extra orifice. This cultist gains the Ventriloquism (Fel) Skill.
- **Wings:** Beneath the third cultist's shirt is a pair of small black wings. They flutter if freed from the prison of clothing but are not large or strong enough to grant flight.

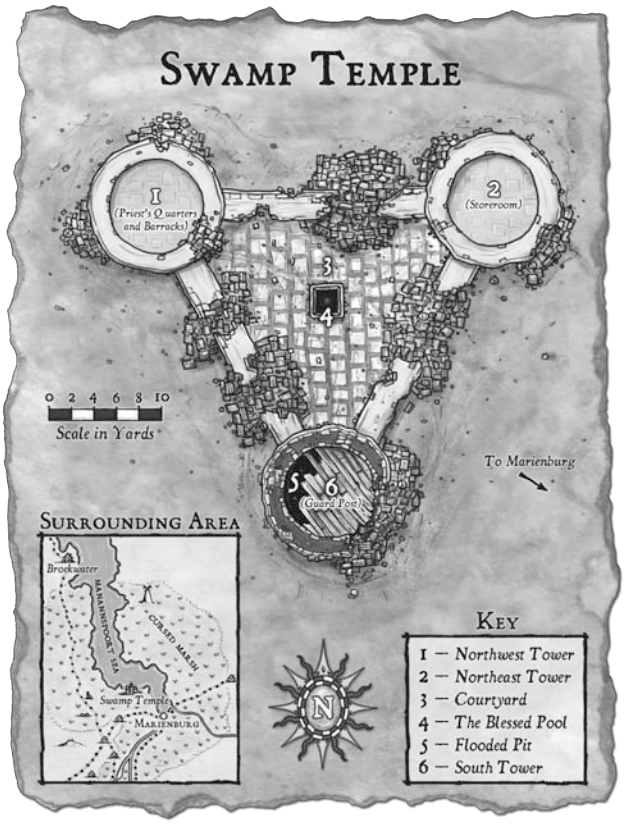
Getting Inside

There are large fallen sections of the curtain wall on all three sides, and the southern tower can be entered without difficulty—in fact, this is how the cultists come and go from the place. Heaps of fallen masonry form uneven

Stromfels, Lord of Predators

Known as the Wrecker, Stromfels represents the darker nature of the sea in its callous and brutal fury. His cult is devoted to predation on the high seas, including wrecking, piracy, and Human sacrifice. The Grey Barbed Shark that frequents the Sea of Claws is venerated as a sacred animal, and is called, "Stromfels' Kitty."

Stromfels is an ancient aspect of Manann, the God of the Seas. Worship of Stromfels was outlawed as a result of Marienburg's treaty with the Sea Elves in 2150. In the years following, the priests of Manann cut their ties to the cult of Stromfels and concealed Stromfels' association with their God. Despite this, Stromfels is still venerated by those who work on the sea and profit by the deaths of others.



ramps along the outside of the towers, providing a means for PCs to climb into the top floors (the windows of the middle floors being too narrow for entry). To reach the ruined second floor of the northeast tower, a character must succeed on a **Challenging (–10) Scale Sheer Surface Test,** while a successful **Hard (–20) Scale Sheer Surface Test** is needed to reach the northwest tower's partial third floor. Using a rope to climb the tower grants a +20 bonus to the test. Failing the test by 20 or more results in a fall that deals 1d10+3 from the second floor or 1d10+5 damage from the third floor.

Just after dusk on most nights, any cultists present gather around the well to worship Stromfels for an hour. At all other times, one of the Brothers Manzel watches the southern approach from just within the southern tower. Characters approaching from this direction are entitled to a **Challenging (–10) Perception Test** to spot the sentry. They can avoid attracting his notice while moving over open ground by succeeding on a **Very Hard (–30) Concealment Test** apposed by the Manzel Brother's **Perception Test.** Should Udo be on watch (during the day) and notice the PCs, he roars loudly in warning and rushes out of the tower to attack approaching characters. If Wim is on watch (during the night) and notices the PCs he remains silent, conceals himself, and ambushes the toughest looking one when he can.

Dahlbert is in the northwest tower whenever he's not at the well, so characters climbing the walls may attract his attention. Climbing characters are safe so long as they succeed on a **Routine (+10) Silent Move Test.** Otherwise, Dahlbert hears them, shouts for the Brothers Manzel (and any other cultists), and then waits to attack until reinforcements arrive (1d5 rounds).

The Priest's Quarters

Dahlbert the Priest spends most of his time the second floor of the northwest tower sleeping, writing, or carving. Tiny bone figurines of hideous shark-like men sit in niches in the wall. The only items of furniture are a backless chair, a crude bed frame piled with badly tanned furs, and a large chest that doubles as a table. A successful **Search Test** reveals a purse hidden under the furs that contains 7 *gc* and 12s—the character searching the furs should also make a **Toughness Test** or become infested with lice (–5 to Agility and Fellowship Tests until he takes a thorough bath). In addition, the large chest holds 3 healing poultices, a half-empty bottle of cheap liquor, a brass mirror, carving tools, pieces of whale tusk, and Dahlbert's journal (see sidebar).

Dahlbert Rohrig, Priest of Stromfels

Male Mutant Priest, ex-Initiate

Stromfels' doctrine of preying upon the weak, and the continued vigilance and opposition of the Cult of Manann define Dahlbert's beliefs. He dreams of restoring the glory of the Lord of Predators, and imagines himself as the great leader of this cause. Despite his ambition, he is a coward in the face of death and, if defeated or gravely wounded, surrenders. In this case, he placates the PCs by volunteering information about why the cult was following Jurgen Baer, as he believes Baer's master sent them.

Dahlbert considers himself blessed by Stromfels because his face resembles that of a shark. His jaw is distended in a horrible grimace and his mouth crammed with enormous, dagger-like teeth. Combined with his grey, hairless flesh, his pupil-less black eyes, and his lack of ears or nose, he presents a truly disturbing figure. His speech is rasping and barely intelligible, as his tongue is mangled from the jaggedness of his own teeth.

Insanity Points: 4

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
39	37	33 (3)	41 (4)	45	38	39	38

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Astronomy, Theology) (Int), Channelling (WP), Charm (Fel), Common Kn0wledge (the Wasteland) (Int), Concealment (Ag), Heal (Int), Magical Sense (WP), Perception (Int), Read/Write (Int), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Language (Classical) (Int), Speak Language (Reikspiel Int +10), Swim (S)
Talents: Flee!, Lightning Reflexes, Petty Magic (Divine), Public Speaking, Strike to Injure, Warrior Born
Traits: Frightening, Mutations (Bestial Appearance), Natural Weapons (Teeth)

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 14
Weapons: Hand Weapon (Sword) (1d10+3; CV +1), Dagger (1d10; CV +1), Teeth (1d10+3; CV +1)

Trappings

Dahlbert wears soiled grey robes ringed with salt stains from his time wallowing in the marsh. A gold shark's tooth (1*gc*) hangs from a dark leather cord around his neck. Hanging from his belt is a thick tome containing foul secrets of Stromfels, describing in lavish details the rites and ceremonies demanded of his servants. He also keeps a small blue belt pouch that holds a smaller sack of sand, an ink pot, a pen, and a vial of water from the Blessed Pool.

Bestial Appearance

Dahlbert has the head of a shark. This mutation grants him the Natural Weapons (Bite) Trait.

The Barracks

This filthy room, on the ground floor of the northwest tower, is where the Brothers Manzel sleep. Two large straw pallets with rank bedding sag against the walls along with a warped wooden table and benches in the middle of the room. The remnants of meals and other detritus underfoot make the footing treacherous. A successful **Challenging (–10) Search Test** turns up 9s, 6p, and a gold earring (3*gc*) tucked into a crack in the wall.

During the day, Wim sleeps in here; during the night, it's Udo. The room is unoccupied the hour just after dawn and the hour just after dusk. PCs entering the room must succeed at a **Challenging (–10) Silent Move Test** or tread loudly on the rubbish, awakening anyone sleeping here.

Captured!

It's possible that some or all of the characters might find themselves captured by the cult. The cultists strip prisoners of their weapons, bind them hand and foot, and then dump them in the flooded foundation of the southern tower (see the **Flooded Pit** on page 28). Dahlbert, the cult priest, believes they are connected to a man named Jurgen Baer and wants them to talk. He offers them a chance at freedom if they tell him why they are interested in the cult. Should the PCs refuse, Dahlbert is not above torture. If they resist his clumsy attentions, he simply gives up and sacrifices them to his God. The offer of freedom is a lie and Dahlbert intends to sacrifice them either way. But he leaves them in the flooded pit without food or water for days to weaken their resolve. Any delay in carrying out the sacrifice is explained as *"waiting for Stromfels to send an auspicious storm to bless the event."*

Journal of Dahlbert the Maw

This loose folio of scribbled notes is written in Reikspiel. They mostly concern elaborate and frequently incoherent discussions of Stromfels' doctrine. Interspersed are self-important records of cult business—sacrifices, celebrations, recruitments, deaths, and other miscellany. A thorough reading takes three hours but a successful **Read/Write Test** enables a character to piece together the origin of the "Blessed Child" after a brief perusal.

The sections on the Blessed Child state he was born to a female cultist seven years ago, when the cult had almost 30 members. The cultists believed their God sent the Child to sway the hearts of the heathens, cast down the hated Church of Manann, and restore the proper worship of Stromfels. There is no mention of a birthmark on the Child's body. During a ceremony where the boy was to be consecrated in the "blessed pool," a group of witch hunters attacked. He was believed killed along with most of the cult. A month ago, the cult learned that a man named Jurgen Baer sought a boy with powers like those possessed by their missing child. The cult has discovered Baer frequents a tavern called The Jolly Boatman, in the Doodkanaal Ward of Marienburg. They plan to capture him, find out what he knows, and learn if their child still lives after all.

Udo Manzel

Male Mutant Thug

Udo is a dangerous but idiotic Mutant with a humped back and paw-like hands, covered in brown and yellow tufts of fur. He has little impulse control, a strong temper, and child-like intelligence. Very protective of both Dahlbert and Wim, he obeys their instructions as best as he understands. He reveres Stromfels only because Wim tells him he should.

Insanity Points: 2

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
40	28	45 (4)	44 (4)	34	12	44	29

Skills: Common Knowledge (the Wasteland) (Int), Concealment (Ag), Consume Alcohol (T), Dodge Blow (Ag), Gamble (Int), Intimidate (S), Secret Language (Thieves' Tongue) (Int), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int)
Talents: Coolheaded, Disarm, Flee!, Quick Draw, Strike to Injure, Strike to Stun
Traits: Mutations (Claws, Hulking Brute, Thick Fur), Natural Weapons (Claws)

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 14
Armour (Medium): Mail Shirt, Leather Jerkin, Thick Fur (Head 1, Arms 1, Body 4, Legs 1)
Weapons: Claws (1d10+4; CV +1)

Trappings

Excrement mats Udo's thick fur and hanging from one knot on his back is a stuffed rag doll. He keeps a pouch of dried meat just under his prodigious gut, held in place by his flab. He wears a bronze collar around his neck, though it is clotted with green filth and worthless.

Claws

Udo has the Natural Weapons (Claws) Trait.

Hulking Brute

Having descended into a primitive form, Udo walks with a stooped gait, dragging his arms behind him. He has a pronounced bone ridge above his eyes and his forehead slopes back.

Thick Fur

A thick yellow fur covers Udo's body, granting 1 AP to all locations.

Wim Manzel

Male Mutant Seaman

Wim is a thin, vicious Mutant who lives a nocturnal existence. His skin is translucently pallid, his ears enormous, and his eyes large and protruding. A pirate and worshipper of Stromfels before his mutation, he has drawn his simpleton brother, Udo, into his evil ways. Wim prefers to ambush his targets, minimizing danger to himself. He remorselessly enjoys the suffering of others.

Insanity Points: 4

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
37	34	40 (4)	31 (3)	40	29	38	32

Skills: Common Knowledge (Norsca, the Wasteland) (Int), Concealment (Ag), Consume Alcohol (T), Dodge Blow (Ag), Row (S), Sail (Ag), Scale Sheer Surface (S), Silent Move (S), Speak Language (Norscan, Reikspiel) (Int), Swim (S)
Talents: Acute Hearing, Flee!, Seasoned Traveller, Street Fighting, Strike Mighty Blow
Traits: Mutations (Large Ears, Light Sensitive Eyes), Night Vision

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 14
Armour (Light): Leather Jerkin (Body 1)
Weapons: Cutlass (1d10+5), Dagger (1d10+2), Unarmed (WS 47, 1d10+2)

Trappings

Wim is never far from drink. When off-duty, he can be found nursing a ceramic jug filled with rotgut. He wears a filthy leather jerkin and an old cutlass hangs from his belt. Weird green tattoos of a Lustrian design cover his arms, neck, and torso.

Large Ears

Wim's uncannily large ears grant him the Acute Hearing Talent.

Light Sensitive Eyes

Wim has large bulging eyes that seem to glow in the dark. He gains the Night Vision Trait but takes a –10 penalty to all vision-based tests in bright light.

The Storeroom

This narrow, dusty space is crammed with sacks of grain and peas, a barrel of weak ale, and cured meat hanging from a rafter. A successful **Perception** or **Heal Test** identifies the meat as being a section of Human leg. The Character who makes this revelation must pass a **Will Power Test** or gain 1 Insanity Point.

The Courtyard

Surrounded by the crumbling walls and towers is a large, flat courtyard with tumbled heaps of stone. The area between these piles has been cleared of debris, revealing cracked flagstones. In the centre of the courtyard sits the Blessed Pool. Beside it a metal post has been driven into the stone. Attached to the post by a chain is a pair of bloodstained manacles.

The Blessed Pool

A square well with a short stone lip sits in the middle of the courtyard. The water is deep and slightly brackish, and is the centre of the cult's worship. The well is revered for its transformative powers, and is the source of the cultists' mutations. The effect is caused by pieces of Warpstone that sit on the bottom of the shaft, along with the bones of countless Skaven. The well glows subtly at night; a **Challenging (–10) Perception Test** allows a character to notice this phenomenon.

Foolish characters that drink from or are immersed in the well must succeed on a **Routine (+10) Toughness Test** or gain a mutation. Roll one from the mutation tables found in *WFRP, Old World Bestiary,* or better still, the *Tome of Corruption*. Particularly kind GMs may just impose a minor mutation that can be concealed easily. Such mild transformations could include a spare finger, a face-full of hair, small sucking mouths appearing on the chest, or the sudden flight of the character's ears, leaving the PC to wonder where his useful appendages are headed as they scamper off into the swamp to found a new colony of ears…

The Flooded Pit

This pit is part of the exposed foundation of the Southern Tower. Moisture from the swamp seeps in, filling it with water to a height of 3 feet. Additionally, the pit is used as a privy and midden by the Manzel Brothers when on watch. Anyone exposed to the polluted water must make a **Toughness Test** or come down with the Bloody Flux (see *WFRP* page 136*)*. Characters with open wounds, or insane enough to drink the water, take a –20 penalty to this test.

Captured PCs have their equipment taken and their hands tied behind their backs, then are thrown into the **Pit** (see page 35). As a precaution, one of the Brothers Manzel remains in the ground level section of the Southern Tower, overhead but out of sight. PCs must make a **Silent Move Test** opposed by the Manzel Brother's **Perception Test** if they are attempting to crawl out of the pit without alerting the guard. It is impossible for a character to climb out of the pit with their hands still tied.

Characters in the pit quickly realize that there are numerous bits of rubbish underfoot, hidden by the foul water. Sharp pieces of broken bottles and shattered crockery are easily, but painfully, located. A successful **Challenging (–10) Agility Test** or **Routine (+10) Sleight of Hand Test** allows the PCs to cut their bonds using the materials at hand. Failure by more than a degree results in 1d10+1 damage and forces the character to pass a **Toughness Test** or have the pleasure of picking up the Bloody Flux. Once free of their bonds, characters can cut other PCs' ropes without a test. The sharp pieces of refuse can also be used as improvised weapons.

Return to Marienburg

Once the PCs discover information about Jurgen Baer, either from Dahlbert's notes or from Dahlbert himself, they are likely to want to return to Marienburg to pick up his trail. You may gloss over the effort of travelling back to the city. However, if the PCs have defeated the cultists unscathed, feel free to have them enjoy the excitement of the journey, as detailed under **The Dubious Pleasures of the Cursed Marsh** on their return trip as well.

It's likely that the PCs may want to report to their masters once more and if so, that's fine. The characters are under no timetable and they may need to rest up, receive medical attention, and so on. In all cases, their employers urge them to continue their investigations, as was true the last time they checked in.

— The Doodkanaal —

The Doodkanaal, or Dead Canal, Ward is the most rundown area of Marienburg though it was once a thriving district where trade flowed freely. Slowly, as the canals and waterways of the rest of the city changed, the currents of the watercourse through the canton became sluggish. The canal became clogged with waste and barges no longer travelled that way. In Marienburg where there is no trade, there is no money. The district fell into disrepair as merchants moved away, closer to the active trade routes. Those who could afford to move did so, leaving behind the poor and desperate. The Dead Canal District turned into a hub of crime and villainy, a haven for those who wished to hide from the more civilised areas of the city. Nowadays the Black Hats fear to enter the district and the ruling guilds ignore it in their bustling city. Though seemingly lawless, some sort of civilisation still exists within shops and taverns, as people attempt to claw their way out of the direst of circumstances.

Manoeuvring through the Dead Canal is both appalling and deadly. The district is little more than a maze of narrow streets and alleys, winding through a jumble of rundown shops and sagging homes. The stench of sewage hangs heavy in the air, and each breath invites its rancid taste. As the characters explore this section of the city, they are bound to spot the grimy faces of desperate and hungry citizens, brushing passed extended hands hopeful for charity. But for every wretched peasant, the PCs also see an equal number of toughs and brutes looking for trouble. The Dead Canal does not tolerate outsiders and the characters should get the impression this is not somewhere to stay for long.

The PCs enter the district with some leads on the group that had an interest in the Child. They know the group located itself somewhere in the tunnels beneath the Dead Canal, and that one of the group was named Jurgen Baer, a man who frequented a tavern known as the Jolly Boatmen. This section assumes the PCs head to the Jolly Boatmen in an attempt to follow up the Baer lead. Should they simply wish to try and find their way to the tunnels without first looking for Baer then simply skip to the next section, **Heading Down.**

The Jolly Boatmen

Locating this pub takes a little work. A few questions and a **Gossip Test** allow the characters to get directions enough to find their way. Should they fail, the PCs can try again, once for each shilling they spend. Each test takes 2d10 minutes and the trip to the pub eats up about an hour or two of walking. Once they come upon the place, they find a dingy two-storey building facing the canal. It has one window, but that has been boarded up. A sign hangs above the door, showing a disreputable fellow making water.

The interior is no more welcoming. It's dark, with a few lanterns making a feeble effort to pierce the gloom. Surprisingly, the place is busy, filled with sinister men nursing tankards of ale and casting wary glances around them. Conversations are whispered. At the bar running along the side of the building is Hans Kleinhopper, who happens to also be the landlord. He's

a suspicious fellow and he examines anyone who approaches with his one good eye. The fare here is terrible, being burnt or raw. Ale costs a standard price, but it has a bouquet of sewage. Five Pennies buys a meal of meat pie, though the contents are anyone's guess.

Chatting with the Locals

The characters face an uphill battle in trying to pry any secrets from these patrons. Everyone here is tight-lipped, distrustful of people asking too many questions. Even the barman Hans claims he didn't know the man, and advises the PCs, saying, *"Yed duh well to stop poken yer noses inta odda pepple's bid'ness."* Flashing money doesn't help much, though it does attract attention and patrons are quick to concoct whatever story they think the PCs want to hear if it nets them a shilling or two.

Lucian Kreso, a down-on-his-luck Estalian with scars crisscrossing his face, claims he saw Jurgen. *"Methinks I seen him hiding out in the abandoned cooper's on Bell Street, round the corner from here."* The cooperage exists, but Jurgen has never been seen there.

Titus Fokkes, a teenager hiding his face behind long, greasy black hair, *claims* he last saw Jurgen *"Talking to the owner of Reinier's Ropes, seemed like the two were arguing. The merchant fellow was pretty angry."* Titus fabricates the whole story. Reinier Fokkes is Titus' father and the boy is just trying to cause trouble.

Alfons van Oosten, a corpulent man with blackened teeth, suggests Jurgen *"lives on Snijder's Way, the 'ouse with the red door."* This remark is just a quick tale by Alfons in an attempt to get the PCs to leave, whilst he absconds with their money.

If the PCs follow up on any of these leads, they find they go nowhere. Upon returning to the Jolly Boatmen, whoever gave them the information is gone. Feel free to inject a bit of combat if the characters act surly. Perhaps one of the leads takes the characters into an ambush—whatever you decide, build your extra encounters using **Footpad** and **Mercenary** statistics in *WFRP* page 234 and page 44.

Oh, One More Thing

After some fruitless questioning, the PCs are probably ready to give up. About a minute after they leave, one of the inn patrons catches up with them. This lithe, weasel-faced man introduces himself as Hugo Buisman.

> *"Hear you're looking for Baer. Yeah, I saw him, and I'll tell you where. But first you gotta do a little somethin' for me. This bastard called Dobbe ratted on me the other day to Erwin's men. Told him I janked some coins from 'em. They showed their tusks and I got quite the beating I did. Now how 'bout you go give Dobbe the same, maybe a bit more. Maybe a lot more. Make sure I don't see him round here no more. See what I'm tellin' ya? Then, I tell you 'bout Baer."*

Hugo Buisman

Male Human Thief

Hugo was born in the Dead Canal and has never left the district. He turned to petty theft as a boy and has never stopped. He has no dreams of leaving or bettering himself; his thoughts are solely occupied with stealing and revenge on those who have wronged him.

Dirty brown hair hangs long over his thin, pale face. Hugo's green eyes constantly flick about, looking for trouble to avoid or pickings to be had.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
33	30	31 (3)	33 (3)	42	28	32	37

Skills: Common Knowledge (the Wasteland) (Int), Concealment (Ag), Evaluate (Int), Gamble (Int), Gossip (Fel), Perception (Int), Scale Sheer Surface (S), Search (Int), Secret Language (Thieves' Tongue) (Int), Silent Move (Ag), Sleight of Hand (Ag), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int)
Talents: Acute Hearing, Fleet Footed, Streetwise, Trapfinder

Bring out the Dead!

If you'd like to expand upon the PCs' time in the Doodkanaal District, there are a variety of encounters that could be used. Unsubtle PCs who flash about money are not likely to hold on to their coins for long. Gangs of thugs wander the streets and they take what they want. Pickpockets are always at work, and confidence tricksters offer their services as guides, or sell the PCs poorly made goods. Any of these can be used to educate naïve or over-confident characters.

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 5; **Wounds:** 11
Weapons: Dagger (1d10)

Trappings

Hugo wears patched and ratty clothing consisting of a holey shirt beneath a green vest. He wears breeches that seem a little too short, revealing his pale flee-bitten legs. Stained brown shoes cover his feet. In a small purse hanging around his neck, he has 12 p.

Hugo hasn't quite thought through this meeting, and if the PCs take this opportunity to threaten him and succeed at an **Intimidate Test,** the thief tells them everything he knows. PCs reluctant to kill Dobbe may also try bribing Hugo. He accepts the bribe if the PCs offer at least 6s, though this can be bought down to 4s if the negotiating PC makes a **Haggle Test.** If so, proceed with **The Payoff.** Otherwise, Hugo insists the PCs kill Dobbe and bring back something to prove they have done it. He tells the PCs where Dobbe lives, and for them to meet him back here in one hour.

Poor Doomed Dobbe

Dobbe Gaff lives in a first-floor room of a nearby boarding house. It takes just 5 minutes for the PCs to locate the place. They can reach his flat by climbing a set of rickety stairs that start in the alley running next to the building. Naturally, the man is home.

Knocking on the door results in a harsh, "Bugger off." Characters can talk their way in with a **Charm Test,** with the difficulty determined by the quality of their story. Otherwise, the only answer is to bust down the door, which requires a **Strength Test.**

Should the PCs attack, Dobbe defends himself, though he surrenders if reduced to 0 Wounds or if it looks like he has no chance of winning. More moral PCs may not wish to actually attack or kill Dobbe, though, and may prefer to come up with a plan to show that they have killed him without actually doing the deed. If this is the case, feel free to let it work or not depending on your own bloodthirstiness.

Dobbe's room contains little. There is a low pallet with a dirty blanket he uses as a bed and an upturned crate he uses as a table. A candle and some empty beer bottles lie on the table. PCs looking underneath the crate can find a pair of worn gloves and two bone dice. A successful **Challenging (–10) Search Test** turns up a small cubbyhole behind a plank in the wall. This place is where Dobbe keeps his meagre funds, which at the moment amount to 8s and 10 p.

Dobbe Gaff

Male Human Thug

A typical man of the Dead Canal, Dobbe grew up here and never had any commitment to a proper job to get him out of the rut. He occasionally does some work for locals as a hired tough guy, though this pays very little coin.

Dobbe is a heavy, thickset man. When angered a bright red vein pulses from his swollen neck and his eyes bulge wildly.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
46	30	36 (3)	42 (4)	27	30	36	31

Skills: Common Knowledge (the Wasteland) (Int), Consume Alcohol (T), Dodge Blow (Ag), Gamble (Int), Gossip (Fel), Intimidate (S), Secret Language (Thieves' Tongue) (Int), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int)
Talents: Coolheaded, Disarm, Quick Draw, Strike to Injure, Strike to Stun, Very Resilient, Warrior Born

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 14
Armour (Light): Leather Jack (Arms 1, Body 1)
Weapons: Hand Weapon (Hammer) (1d10+3; CV +1)

Trappings

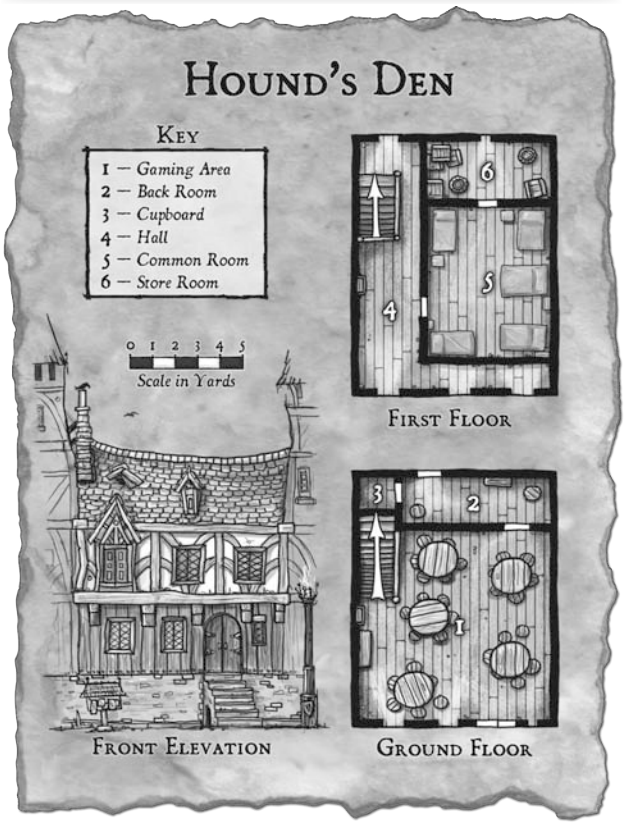
Dobbe wears a canvas shirt and breeches stained rust red. Concerned with his feet, he makes certain he wears the best shoes possible—they are quite nice with a shiny silver buckle. He has a small good luck charm in his left pocket, an odd magnetic stone with a worn spot in the middle from his constant rubbing. He also wears a bone carving of a naked woman that he looks upon on lonely nights.

The Payoff

Hugo accepts any reasonable proof of Dobbe's death. A body part is readily accepted, even if it is not obvious it belonged to his rival. The bone carving of a seductive woman that Dobbe hung round his neck is a definite source of proof to Hugo, even though again this does not actually prove Dobbe was killed. Hugo isn't too bright and accepts the evidence if it comes with a convincing tale.

However the PCs convince Hugo to talk, he tells them what he knows.

"Din't know the fella personally like, but I seen him in the Boatmen few times. Sometimes with some other fellas, dunno who they were. I heard he ran with a crowd of blackguards in the sewers, but I don't know an'thin about that. Recently he's been alone. But you might have a bit o' trouble findin' him. Paid his penny to Morr now, last I saw him he was floatin' face down in the canal. Gang o' thugs called The Hounds beat and robbed him. Must 'ave been two days ago, maybe more."



This information doesn't help the PCs much, but it is all he knows. If they ask, he readily tells them where The Hounds generally hang out: a small gambling den they own on Crab Lane. For a penny (or to avoid a beating), Hugo tells them how to get there.

The Hounds of Crab Lane

Again, with directions, the gambling house is rather easy to find. If the PCs didn't think to extract this information from Hugo, they can locate the building with a successful **Gossip Test.** In any event, the "Den," as it's known, is a squat building crowded by a dyer on one side and a chandler on the other. The neighbouring businesses don't mind the toughs since the Den opens at nine o'clock at night and closes around four in the morning.

The Den is not large and the ground floor is one large room with five circular tables at which men play cards or dice games. The Hounds do not take a cut; they simply provide an area where people can meet. Having said that, they try to make sure one Hound is involved in each game, and over time they have become very skilled gamblers (and cheaters). The Hounds also serve alcohol, though they do not tend to drink much themselves whilst gambling.

After hours, there are 1d5+1 Hounds here, sleeping, drinking, or fighting amongst themselves. During business hours, there are 10 Hounds here along with 3d10+5 customers.

We're Closed!

If the PCs approach the building and knock at the door when the gambling den is closed a Hound answers but refuses any request the PCs may make to talk. Characters pretending to be gamblers are told to come back later. The PCs may decide to take a more direct approach and ask for Baer's stuff. This approach encourages other Hounds to join in the conversation and the bored gang members work to escalate it into a scrap. Breaking in, sneaking in, or fighting their way through are other possible strategies, though the success of each approach depends on the capability of the characters.

Baer's possessions are to be found in the storeroom. In addition to his purse, the PCs can snatch another 5 Gold Crowns and 8s from a few other purses the Hounds have stolen and stashed here. Money made from the gambling den is hidden elsewhere by the gang leader, Pim de Groot, the rest being distributed amongst the gang members. Pim is never in during the gambling den's closed hours.

We're Open!

The PCs may approach while the Den's open. It is easy to get inside and should they wish, they may join in games of cards or dice (these can be resolved using the Gamble Skill, or if both the GM and players want they could play some hands of poker instead). The Hounds look a little suspicious of newcomers, especially if any of the party stands out (Elves for instance, are never seen here). Attempts to ascend the stairs are rather obvious, and the Hounds quickly stop them. If questions are asked about Baer or about any related topics, the PCs are referred to gang leader Pim de Groot, who plays cards at one of the tables.

Pim, Pim, Pim

The PCs may talk to Pim about Baer. He doesn't know Baer's name, but if the PCs describe the circumstances of Baer's fate, Pim recalls the mugging and smiles broadly. He tells the PCs contents of Baer's purse have not yet been divided up amongst the gang. He offers to sell the contents for 5*gc*. Alternatively he offers the PCs a wager: They stake 2 *gc* and he stakes the purse. One hand of the card game "Sigmar and Gertrude" will be played

The Truth about Jurgen Baer

Baer was a member of the Cult of the Three Moons, a group devoted to the Plague Lord Nurgle. When the Chaos sorcerer Ruprecht—the villain who intends to use Karl as a puppet Emperor (see the **Introduction**)—lived in Marienburg, he gathered together a network of cultists, hiding in the sewers beneath the Dead Canal. Despite the dangerous location, Ruprecht used his considerable magic to keep his cult safe from the other inhabitants. Ruprecht has long since left, though he keeps in contact with the cult through an agent by the name of Tobias.

Baer was one of only a few cult members left behind when Tobias followed the Crusade of the Child. Once a respected scholar, he had little money and nowhere to go. So he stayed in the Dead Canal District, performing manual labour and drinking heavily whilst awaiting the cult's return. He met his end when a simple robbery turned nasty, landing him face up in the canal.

between Pim and one of the PCs, with the winner taking the gold and the purse. Any character with the Gamble Skill or who passes a **Common Knowledge (The Empire *or* The Wasteland) Test** has heard of "Sigmar and Gertrude," a fairly popular game played in drinking halls all over and named for a fairly blasphemous tale of Sigmar's supposed encounter with a peasant girl.

If the PCs agree to the stakes, one of them must be chosen to play. For simplicity, resolve this as an opposed **Gamble Test.** If Pim wins, he smugly takes their money. The characters may ask for another try, but Pim insists they raise their stake by 1*gc*, whilst he only stakes the purse each time. If the PCs run out of money then they will have to find another way of getting the purse. Alternatively, you could resolve this with a game of Poker, Blackjack, or some other card game. Feel free to cheat.

As always, things may get violent. If the PCs become aggressive and threaten Pim or other Hounds, the gang is not slow to fight. If things come to blows, most of the other patrons scramble out of the way, though a few may join in and attempt revenge against some of the Hounds who took their money. Other patrons may attempt to grab money from the tables whilst Hounds try to stop them. This fight should be chaotic, with loud crashes, flung tables and chairs, and plenty of screaming.

Pim and the Hounds

Male Human Gamblers

The Hounds are a small but well-known gang of the Dead Canal District. Members of the gang are easy to identify by their arms covered in tattoos of ferocious dogs. The Hounds do not keep dogs themselves; instead they often kill canines they come across and wear the teeth as decoration.

Their leader, Pim de Groot, is a typical Hound, though perhaps more cunning than the others. A shock of white hair runs through his otherwise dark brown mane. Use the standard Hound profile for Pim, but increase his Intelligence characteristic by 5.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
38	32	30 (3)	39 (3)	40	34	34	38

Skills: Blather (Fel), Common Knowledge (the Wasteland) (Int), Evaluate (Int), Gamble (Int), Gossip (Fel), Perception (Int), Read/Write (Int), Secret Language (Thieves' Tongue) (Int), Sleight of Hand (Ag), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int)
Talents: Coolheaded, Flee!, Savvy, Streetwise

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 13
Armour (Light): Leather Jerkin (Body 1)
Weapons: Hand Weapon (Sword) (1d10+3), Knuckle-duster (1d10)

Trappings

The Hounds wear common clothing, including sturdy breeches, shirts, and leather jerkins. Most wear fezzes on their heads. Each Hound has a pair of dice, deck of cards, and an ego to astound a noble. Each Hound has 1d10 Schillings, while Pim de Groot carries 3 *gc* bearing the face of Karl-Franz.

Resolution

Through whatever method, the PCs should eventually end up with Baer's purse. The purse contains 8s and a 12p. Also, the purse holds a fishhook and a folded up piece of parchment that appears to be a map. See **Handout #2** for Baer's map. The map refers to the underground tunnels of the Dead Canal District, and indicates an entrance to the tunnels through what is marked as "Burndt Bakery."

Of course the PCs may not be able to get past the Hounds and so may never get the purse. All they have to go on now is that the group Baer was part of hid somewhere in the tunnels beneath this district—something they should have learned from Dobbe. They will have to find their way down without help from the map.

If the characters still haven't learned about Baer's lair beneath the city, one of the PCs' employers may impart this information to the characters, or a local who has overheard the characters' queries about the man may approach them and sell them the information for 1*gc*. See the **"Oh Dear, Now What?"** sidebar for more suggestions on getting the PCs back on track.

Burndt Bakery

The bakery is not hard to find. Asking around requires a successful **Very Easy (+30) Gossip Test** to locate it. The Burndt family once owned the bakery but it is now abandoned. The PCs can easily break in and, amongst the old ovens, they can find the entrance to the basement with an **Easy (+20) Search Test.** Some sacks of mouldy grain remain, and rats scatter as the PCs enter. A hole in the wall appears to have been deliberately made, as does a short tunnel winding downward, which leads into a sewage channel below.

Oh Dear, Now What?

It's entirely possible for the player characters to not follow the logical progression of events and encounters and look for some other way into the tunnels. Be at ease. Placing a few coins in the right hands, or roughing up the right piece of scum, can reveal the existence of an old tenement building that has a basement with a collapsed wall leading into part of the sewers.

Alternatively the PCs may simply attempt to find any abandoned building they can and look for basements with access to the tunnel network. Any abandoned tenement building they enter has 50% chance of having a basement or sunken room, and each of those has a 10% chance of granting access to the tunnels. As well, characters may gain access to the sewers from the canals, where the tunnels spill out their contents into the river. Such places are usually infested with beggars, bone pickers, and riffraff, not to mention noxious plagues that would like nothing better than to live inside of a PC for a time. The PCs may be in for a long and fruitless search.

— Into the Sewers —

Marienburg's location has given rise to an increasing problem. As the city's islands become more and more cramped, building construction tends to go upwards rather than outwards. But as more and more floors are added to the tops of houses and shops, the buildings have begun to sink into the soft earth below. This situation is especially prevalent in areas where cheap buildings lack proper foundations or repair. Whole rooms are now below the surface of the streets above. Add to this cellars and basements, and the sewerage tunnels that run through certain parts of the city, and you have a complex network of rooms and passageways beneath the bustling surface of Marienburg. Of course, since the city is built on islands in the mouth of a river, many tunnels are always filled with water, and others flood in sync with the tides.

The Dead Canal District has its own maze of tunnels. The sewers have not been repaired since trade dried up, and when most of the population left, they abandoned their basements and sunken rooms. Collapsing walls and floors have made it difficult for anyone to attempt to find their way around. Yet still people have tried. The forgotten passageways are home to those who do not wish to be found, including Mutants and other creatures hiding from society, as well as smugglers and thieves who wish their activities to remain secret.

Beneath the Dead Canal

The labyrinth beneath the Dead Canal is convoluted and constantly changing with the movement of the tides, so much so that no attempt has been made to map the area. Instead, this section provides a selection of encounters and discoveries for you to use to keep your players busy. Feel free to map out sections of the sewers if you feel you must, but doing so is really not necessary. Instead, just make up the sewers as the characters explore them.

If the PCs do have Baer's map then the tunnel map should be based around this. Even so, the map is supposed to be a rough sketch and some rooms and passages may not be exactly as shown. Along the route describe a number of alternative tunnels branching off—holes in walls and rotten wood doors leading to places unknown. If the PCs are not using the map, you should give them plenty of options for routes to take. Occasionally these lead to dead ends, and often to strange encounters or findings.

The finds are simply here to add colour to the sewers as well as increase the paranoia of the PCs. Do not be surprised if the PCs discover something only to jump to strange conclusions or react in an unusual way. The finds can be liberally sprinkled throughout the characters' underground journey.

The encounters provided are designed to test the PCs in a number of ways and highlight the dangerous situation in which they have put themselves. You should provide more or fewer encounters depending on how the PCs have approached the situation. Should the PCs have Baer's map they should have roughly 3 encounters. If they are wandering around without the map then they should have about 6 encounters before reaching their destination.

Which encounters are used is up to you. Ten are included here, though you can whip up more as you like. The encounters presented are a mix of combat, puzzles, and moral choices. Select encounters appropriate to what your players enjoy, or what they will find most challenging.

Of course there are very few light sources underground. Should the PCs attempt to wander around in the dark then their journey will be pointless and probably fatal. Even characters with Night Vision require some light. GMs should feel free to make miserable the lives of such foolish PCs.

Describing the Tunnels

The sewage tunnels themselves are generally small, wide enough only for one or two to walk abreast. In many cases taller PCs will be forced to stoop under the low ceilings. The channels are lined with stone tiles, though these are mostly covered in green slime and pungent fungi. Most tunnels have fallen into disuse; sewage tends to be thrown into the canals or the streets. Often PCs find themselves wading through effluent, the wretched stench making their eyes water. At some points, the tunnels are filled with foetid canal water up to the waist of a normal man. At others, no water flows, but the floors of the tunnels are thick with dark sludge. Rats and lizards scurry back and forth, whilst insects crawl upon the tiled ceilings. Passageways branch off in many directions, often ending at a heavy rusted grate, a collapsed ceiling, or a brick wall.

The tunnels connect the room network beneath Marienburg, through collapsing walls or purpose-built doors. Some of the rooms were built for sewer jacks long ago; these tend to be stone-sided and still have the remnants of rotting furniture. Other rooms are basements to tenements above, or are those rooms that have sunk below the surface. The rooms and their contents therefore vary. The PCs might stumble across what was once a kitchen, a storeroom piled high with mouldy crates, or an old study complete with faded portraits on the wall. Some rooms may still show signs of use by the world above, but most are forgotten, filled with dust and decay, heavy with the smell of rot. Rooms connect to each other through doors or holes in the walls, whether man-made or caused by decay. PCs may have to climb up or down mouldy stairs to other rooms to proceed. Some doors and passages have become blocked, old gates might remain locked, and certain rooms simply lead nowhere.

The PCs therefore twist and turn their way through the underground network whilst you describe the rooms and tunnels. Meanwhile throw in however many findings and encounters are appropriate.

Smart Player Characters

No matter how they attempt to access the underground, the PCs may decide it is a good idea to get some information beforehand. Of course most people never have been in the tunnels anyway, though they all have heard tales of what goes on beneath their feet. Asking folk on the street requires a successful **Gossip Test,** and leads to the following rumours, amongst whatever else you'd like to add.

"Mutants. Chaos things. All the evil of Marienburg lurking just below us. Makes ya think, dunnit?"

"My cousin went down there one day. Came back few days later a changed man—doesn't talk about what he saw, just sits and drinks and drinks. I reckon it was ghosts of the dead folks trapped in the muck down there."

"Used by all sorts of bad 'uns as an 'ideout. 'Course, even them smugglas gotta look out for the strange beasties that lurk in the tunnels."

Though rumours, these statements are not far from the truth. Most of the citizens have never really imagined the full horror of what goes on just beneath them. The PCs may attempt to find someone to guide them through the tunnels, but it is impossible to find anyone that brave or foolish.

Table 1–3: Findings

Roll	Result
1	A foot severed just above the ankle, the foot still in a leather boot. The foot looks to have been torn off and there are jagged marks in the flesh and bone.
2	The tunnel walls are decorated in faded mosaic tiles. Any patterns or pictures are hard to determine but the PCs can just about make out the depiction of what appears to be an octopus.
3	The floor of an old room is covered in bluish beetles that crunch underfoot. If a light source gets close to them, hundreds scuttle away.
4	From the ceiling of a tunnel hangs a fetish of bird feathers and rodent skulls, smelling faintly of incense. It would appear to have been made, and put here, deliberately.
5	A pack of rats scurry away as the PCs approach, leaving behind the half-chewed remains of a cat with the nametag "Mr. Fluffy."
6	On the wall someone has scratched three crossing lines, forming a downward pointing triangle. PCs may identify this as a Skaven symbol if the GM decides they have the appropriate skills or they have seen it before.
7	A purse floats down a sewer tunnel. A PC willing to get his hands dirty can find it contains 4p and what appears to be a number of fingernails.
8	A skull has been placed in the middle of the room. It is mostly Human, except it has three eye sockets.
9	Footprints are easily visible is the mud. They appear to be from a barefoot Human, and head the way the PCs are going. After a few yards they stop in front of a wall.
10	A Human skeleton lies in the tunnel sludge, most of its skull caved in. Nothing of interest is to be found on it.

Encounter Descriptions

The following descriptions correspond to those generated or selected from **Table 1–4: Encounters.**

Desperate Mutants

This encounter can occur at any time whilst the PCs are moving through one of the main sewage tunnels. About 20 yards ahead of the player characters, there's a gaping hole in the tunnel wall. Call for **Perception Tests** to see if any of the PCs notice the hole (and dim their light). If not, as they approach, their light (if any) or sound of their passage alerts the six Mutants lurking in this large room.

The Mutants have laid claim to an old kitchen that long ago sank into the soft earth. It's a large room, some 8 yards square, and it holds decaying tables and chairs, with cupboards sagging on the walls. Six makeshift beds of straw and blankets lie on the floor haphazardly. A single tallow candle burns in the centre of the table.

If the PCs manage to get the jump on the inhabitants, they discover them sitting or lying on their palettes. The Mutants rise, drawing their weapons, but unless the PCs attack, they hold back and demand to know what the PCs are about. It's clear in the dim light that these men are changed. Otherwise, the Mutants conceal themselves as best they can and then spring out with weapons drawn, attacking quickly to put down the intruders. They break off their attack if two of their numbers fall. Their names are Durnkelm, Jan, Jon, Rikert, Simeon, and Timethus.

The Mutants are not spoiling for a fight. *"We want no trouble guv'nuh."* They want help—*"Spare a bit o' food?"* They believe the cult's lair holds the cure for their afflictions and beg the PCs to help them. Should the PCs agree to help them, the Mutants provide them with a map, thus reducing the number of encounters the characters are likely to face by one.

On the other hand the PCs may attack the Mutants—there is really no cure, after all—in which case the Mutants defend themselves. They are miserable but do not want to die. Should the PCs kill all of the changed, there is little to find in their room. The Mutants were smugglers before they were changed and all that remains of their contraband can be found in a pile of barrels and crates. The barrels once held food but it is now a mass of mould and the crates of expensive silks have been eaten away. A successful **Challenging (–10) Search Test** reveals 3 candlesticks (worth 5s each) and an unopened bottle of brandy amongst the decaying fabric.

Table 1–4: Encounters

Roll	Result
1	Desperate Mutants
2	The Prisoner
3	The Lizard in the Dark
4	Submerged
5	The Pit
6	Mould!
7	Ghoul Pack
8	A Scream in the Dark
9	What's this Green Glowing Ball?
10	Revenge!

Since there is no cure, the PCs returning this way are going to have to break the news to the Mutants, who immediately grow angry at the news, believing the PCs tricked them. Delivering such news may escalate into a fight depending on the PCs' actions, or this final crushing of their hopes may be all it takes to drive them mad and send them fleeing into the sewers to accept their fate as creatures of Chaos.

Wretched Smugglers

Male Mutant Smuggler

The men were once part of a group of smugglers that had used these tunnels for years. This room was their main meeting place, and from here goods were kept and redistributed round the city wherever a buyer could be found. When Ruprecht and his cult took up residence nearby, the smuggling operation was affected. The tunnels became more dangerous than ever as Ruprecht unleashed diseased creatures to clear the area. The smugglers were trapped, unable to find a way out. They survived on a stock of stolen foodstuff and by catching rats, but their proximity to Ruprecht's corruption left them changed, thus barring them from ever returning to the surface. The smugglers realise the cult worshipped the Plague Lord, and believe there must be a cure to their mutations in the cultists' lair.

Insanity Points: 5

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
32	39	28 (2)	26 (2)	39	38	31	33

Skills: Common Knowledge (the Wasteland) (Int), Concealment (Ag), Drive (Ag), Haggle (Fel), Perception (Ag), Row (S), Search (Int), Secret Language (Thieves' Tongue) (Int), Silent Move (Ag +10), Speak Language (Breton, Reikspiel) (Int), Swim (S)
Talents: Flee!, Streetwise
Traits: Mutations (varies)

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 12
Weapons: Poor Hand Weapon (Sword) (WS 22; 1d10+2)

Trappings

The smugglers are all in wretched shape, wearing common clothing that is rotting off their backs. Some have just one shoe, and the rest have none at all. Each of them carries a small pouch holding 1d5–1 Schillings and 1d10 Pennies.

Mutations

The six Mutants have each acquired one or more unpleasant mutations as follows.

- **Durnkelm:** Of the smugglers, Durnkelm has suffered some of the worst physical changes. His flesh and sinew tore free from his body, sliding across the floor to join the current of filth flowing in the sewer, leaving him little more than a sack of organs surrounded by bloody bones. To keep his guts from falling onto the floor, he wraps himself in filthy bloody rags. Horns sprout forth from his exposed skull. But strangest of all is his ability to communicate with the power of his mind. With a **Will Power Test,** Durnkelm can transmit a message to another intelligent creature within 10 yards. He can also read surface thoughts by winning an **Opposed Will Power Test** against an intelligent creature within range. However, on a failed test Durnkelm must make a **Will Power Test** or gain 1 Insanity Point.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
24	21	14 (1)	26 (2)	46	38	31	27

Traits: Frightening
Movement: 4
Weapons: Poor Quality Hand Weapon (Sword) (WS 22; 1d10+1), Horns (1d10)

Mutations

- **Jan:** Jan's legs have grown incredibly long and a fine mesh of black scales covers his skin. *Movement:* 5; *Armour:* None (Head 1, Arms 1, Body 1, Legs 1). He also gains the Unsettling Trait.
- **Jon:** Jon acquired an extra mouth on the palm of his left hand. It whispers dark things to him as he sleeps. In addition to the skills common to all the Mutants, Jon also has the Ventriloquism Skill. He gains the Menacing Talent.
- **Rikert:** Looking not unlike a Dwarf, Rikert has short stubby legs and a shock of blue hair. *Movement:* 3.
- **Simeon:** Simeon's body crackles with electricity. In place of a normal attack, Simeon may attack a target with an Unarmed Strike. On a success, he deals 1d10+5 Wounds (or 1d10+7 Wounds against creatures wearing metal armour) and this attack ignores armour points. He must wait 1d10 rounds between uses of this ability. If he has not yet used this ability in combat and is struck by a metal weapon, his attacker must pass an **Agility Test** or take 1d10+5 Wounds as the current travels up the weapon. Ag 45; *Movement:* 4.
- **Timethus:** Whenever Timethus fails a **Fear** or **Terror Test,** he must immediately successfully pass a **Will Power Test** or collapse in a flurry of froth and flailing limbs. Each round, he may attempt another **Will Power Test** to break free from his fits.

The Prisoner

This encounter can occur whenever the PCs come across a door. The door is locked. Should they try to pick it or break it down, they hear a muffled shout from the other side followed soon after by a banging at the door. Though it is difficult to tell, it appears to be a woman crying for help. The PCs can break down the door with a successful **Challenging (–10) Strength Test.**

The room beyond is dark. Though large, it contains only a bed and a chamber pot. Another locked door on the opposite side of the room provides another way out if broken down (same test), whilst anyone looking up notices a trapdoor in the centre of a high ceiling. The cry for help comes from a dirty woman in rags looking at the PCs with a mixture of fear and hope.

The young woman is Katarine Winsen, who is married to a merchant named Adolph. Katarine thought the marriage would bring her some semblance of security, but not long after they were married Adolph turned out to be an evil brute. He forced Katarine to do everything for him, whilst spending his coins on drink. After an attempt to stand up for herself, he locked her in the cellar, accessible only by a ladder dropped down from above.

The PCs may have a number of reactions to Katarine's tragic tale. If they chose to simply ignore her sobbing please for help, then she escapes the way they came and attempt to find her own way out (unlikely—she probably winds up very, very dead). The PCs never know her fate. The PCs may take her with them, though the unarmed woman may prove somewhat of a hindrance. PCs may try and help her out of her situation other ways. If they make too much noise Adolph opens the trapdoor and peers down to investigate. He does not drop down the ladder if the PCs are visible unless they can somehow trick him. Instead he stays at the top and swears at them, telling them to mind their own business and threatening Katarine if she tries to escape.

If the PCs deal with Adolph and find a way up out of the trapdoor they end up in the basement of a merchant's shop. Adolph trades mostly in clothing. His stocks are Poor Quality but are all the inhabitants of the Dead Canal can afford. Searching the shop above can gain the PCs 4 *gc* and 10s. Most of the money Adolph makes he spends on drink and gambling. Still the PCs have found another exit from the tunnels and may be able to use this opportunity to find supplies or healing.

Of course, robbing Adolph causes all sorts of problems for Katarine, who is now destitute. How this develops is up to you, but she might seek revenge at some later point or inform the authorities about the murder of her husband.

Katarine

Female Human Servant

As a naïve girl of eighteen summers, Katarine though that marrying a merchant, even one as lowly as a clothes seller in the Dead Canal, would bring her financial security for the future. Two years on and her otherwise pretty face shows cuts and bruises from the times she has tried to defy Adolph. Locked in the cellar, she looks dirty and ragged, her long brown hair grubby and tangled.

Insanity Points: 1

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
30	30	31 (3)	30 (3)	42	36	35	37

Skills: Blather (Fel), Common Knowledge (the Wasteland) (Int), Dodge Blow (Ag), Gossip (Fel +10), Haggle (Fel), Perception (Int), Search (Int), Sleight of Hand (Ag), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int), Trade (Cook) (Int)
Talents: Coolheaded, Flee!, Hardy, Lightning Reflexes, Savvy

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 12
Weapons: Unarmed Strike (1d10–1; Special)

Trappings

Katarine is dressed in a tattered and soiled dress. She has no shoes and nothing of value.

Adolph

Male Human Burgher

Fat and lazy, when Adolph is not selling ragged clothing to the citizens of the Dead Canal he is down at the local taverns sinking pints and groping barmaids. He sees his wife as little more than a servant, there to do his every bidding. When he lets her out of the cellar to cook and clean for him, his podgy fingers keep her on a tight leash.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
34	32	35 (3)	42 (4)	32	32	35	34

Skills: Common Knowledge (the Wasteland) (Int), Consume Alcohol (T), Drive (Ag), Evaluate (Int), Gossip (Fel), Haggle (Fel), Perception (Int), Read/Write (Int), Search (Int), Speak Language (Breton) (Int), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int +10)
Talents: Dealmaker, Savvy, Super Numerate, Very Resilient

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 13
Weapons: Dagger (1d10)

Trappings

Adolph wears a snug shirt and unbuttoned breeches. His clothes are stained with ale, food, and a little vomit. He keeps his much-used dagger in a sheath on his belt, but he constantly fidgets with it because the pommel digs into his rolls of fat. In his purse, he has 1 *gc* and 6s.

The Lizard in the Dark

This simple combat encounter is to highlight the dangers of the tunnels. In a narrow sewer channel, wide enough for only single file, a large albino lizard sets upon the PCs. Who knows how this fearsome beast grew to become this way, hidden in the twisting tunnels. Although the creature is probably not a match for a group, the passageway is narrow and only one PC can fight the beast at a time.

Albino Sewer-Lizard

Large and ferocious, this lizard is just one of many beasts that have somehow found their way into, or possibly grown up in, the twisting tunnels beneath the Dead Canal. This lizard is as big as a large dog, its scaly skin is milky white, and tiny red eyes peek out from behind a mouth filled with sharp teeth.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
30	0	53 (5)	36 (3)	32	10	22	2

Skills: Perception (Int +10), Swim (S)
Traits: Keen Senses, Natural Weapons (Bite), Scaly Skin, Unsettling

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 12
Armour: None (Head 1, Forelegs 1, Body 1, Hind Legs 1)
Weapons: Bite (1d10+5)

Submerged

The PCs are wading through a sewer tunnel when it suddenly slopes downwards until the way ahead is completely underwater. The PCs have to decide whether to swim through the passage or turn around and find another way. Swimming the passage causes a number of difficulties for the PCs. Initially the PCs have no idea how far the flooded section lasts. It is also likely that only some (if any) of the PCs have the Swim Skill, making this a challenge. Also the PCs must decide how to carry any light sources through the water as well as any items that would be ruined if wet.

In reality, the flooded section is not very long; it's just one short section of the tunnel. Two successful **Easy (+20) Swim Tests** are sufficient to make it through, the first taking the character to the centre and the next out the other side. Penalties can be applied if a PC is carrying a large amount of heavy or bulky gear. If a PC fails a test then he has swum at an odd angle and hit a wall or snagged his clothing on a rock. A character failing two or more tests must make a test for **Suffocation** (see *WFRP* page 136 for details). They may stop making suffocation tests as soon as they have passed their second **Swim Test** and escape.

The PCs may come up with solutions involving rope or more bizarre methods to transport themselves and their gear under the water. The success of the plan is up to you. The flooded section is 7 yards long. Whether or not the water (and sewage) ruins any items is also up to you, but books, papers, food, and clothing are likely to be damaged.

This encounter is ideal if the PCs are following Baer's map. If the map indicates they must continue this way, then they are forced to think their way through the situation. Of course, if they do decide to go through this tunnel then they have to try and ensure Baer's map readably survives an underwater journey.

The Pit

As the PCs move through an underground room, they pass over an area of weak and rotten floorboards. A character that successfully makes a **Very Hard (–30) Perception Test** notices the dangerous place. Alternatively, a character that has the Trade (Carpenter) Skill automatically notices these sections.

Any character moving through the room has a 30% chance of passing over a dangerous section of floor. If so, they must make an **Agility Test** to leap clear of the collapsing floor. On a failed test, they fall a few yards into the room below, taking 1d10+3 damage from the fall and the loosed debris. If two or more characters have the unlucky misfortune to find such weak spots, the entire floor gives way, dropping everyone into the room below.

The upper room is empty aside from a few decaying chairs. The lower room once stored food but the crates and barrels now contain nothing but black slime. There is no immediate exit from the lower room. A ladder once connected the two rooms but it has long since collapsed into pieces. There are only two exits out the upper room, the doorway through which the PCs came and another doorway directly opposite.

The two rooms are square, 6 yards across in both directions, and 3 yards high. The walls are damp and slippery. Escaping takes a **Hard (–20) Scale Sheer Surface Test**. PCs must come up with a way across to the other exit, whether they collapse the floor or not. PCs can come up with all sorts of ingenious plans for this, perhaps using ropes and bits of wood. You should allow any reasonable plan to work.

Mould!

At some point when the PCs enter one of the many sunken rooms, they can face this encounter. Across the room there's a door, but everything inside the chamber is covered with a strange red mould. Any quick movements disturb the mould, causing it to release its spores.

Crossing the room without disturbing the mould requires a **Routine (+10) Agility Test.** On a failure, the mould spews forth a thick cloud of spores, potentially affecting everyone in the room. The spores burn when they come into contact with flesh. All characters in the room take 1d10+4 points of damage ignoring armour points. Characters that covered their mouths and noses reduce this damage by 2. Any character that loses at least 1 Wound from the spores finds he sees and hears

strange things taking a –10 penalty on all Will Power and Fellowship Tests for 24 hours. At the end of this time, the character must pass a **Toughness Test** or discover his body is now covered in strange patchy red growths as the mould begins to take root. The patches can be cleansed with a **Challenging (–10) Heal Test.** Each day the mould remains, the character must attempt a **Toughness Test** with a –10 penalty for each day the patches are present. If the character fails two consecutive tests, the mould kills him.

The spores from a disturbed patch of mould linger in the air for 1d10 minutes before dispersing.

Ghoul Pack

The tunnels below Marienburg are full of horrors: dark secrets best hidden from the city-dwellers above. In a forgotten basement, the PCs come across one such secret: a band of flesh-eating scavengers. The Ghouls periodically raid the surface to snatch people from the streets before returning to their lair to feast. Sometimes they are lucky, and their meals come to them.

Adding this combat encounter is ideal for PCs who particularly enjoy fighting. Amidst piles of chewed bones the Ghouls attack. For starting parties, one or two Ghouls should be sufficient to cause a challenge, but for experienced groups add a few more.

Ghoul

Scrawny, hunchbacked Humans with wild stares, Ghouls attack with vicious talons. Sane people fear their twisted humanity; perhaps because they are a reminder of to what depravities people can sink.

Insanities: The Beast Within

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
32	0	37 (3)	45 (4)	34	18	31	5

Skills: Concealment (Ag), Outdoor Survival (Int), Perception (Int), Scale Sheer Surface (S), Search (Int), Shadowing (Ag), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int)
Talents: Rover
Traits: Fearless, Frightening, Natural Weapons (Claws), Night Vision, Poisoned Attack

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 11
Weapons: Claws (1d10+3)

Trappings

The Ghouls have nothing but the rags they wear.

Poisoned Attack

A living creature that loses at least 1 Wound from a Ghoul's claws must succeed on a **Challenging (–10) Toughness Test** or lose an additional 2 Wounds.

Succeeding at a **Search Test** of the lair turns up 1d10 Pennies, and a character who succeeds by three or more degrees of success turns up an additional 1d10 Schillings. The Ghouls left this treasure in a pile of cracked bones from past victims.

A Scream in the Dark

At any point whilst the PCs are traversing the sewers, they hear a shrill scream echoing through the tunnels. Presumably, this scream is from Katarine, or if she's already encountered and freed, from a victim of the Ghouls (or from another Ghoul pack). Characters can follow the sound of the cry and reach the point of origin after 1d10 rounds.

What's this Green Glowing Ball?

As the characters move through the tunnels, call for **Perception Tests.** Any characters succeeding spot a strange luminescence coming from a puddle of filthy water. Investigating the puddle, the PCs discover the light emanates from a small glass ball filled with brightly glowing gas. A character with the Common Knowledge (Skaven) Skill can automatically identify the object as a Poisoned Wind Globe. Some Clan Skryre Clanrat dropped the ball while fleeing some other horror.

To use this weapon, the player must select a space within range. Close range for the Globe is 4 yards, while long range is 20 yards. The player then tests Ballistic Skill as normal. On a success, the globe shatters on impact. Use the small template. All creatures caught in the cloud take 1d10+4 points of damage that ignores armour points and Toughness Bonus. The cloud remains for 1d5 rounds. Each round, the cloud moves 1 or 2 squares in a random direction (see following). On a roll of 1, the cloud stays put. On a roll of 10, the cloud dissipates.

On a failed Ballistic Skill test, the character misses his target. Roll a dice. On a 1, the globe drops to the ground but doesn't shatter. On a 10, the globe drops to the ground and shatters. On a 2–9, the globe lands 1d10 yards away from the target, with 2 being NW, 3 N, 4 NE, 5 W, 6 E, 7 SW, 8 S, and 9 SE.

Revenge!

This final encounter serves to let the PCs wrap up any loose ends they may have left behind in the city. Any NPCs they crossed but that got away will choose this time and place to get their revenge. The nature of the ambush and the numbers present is up to you. Good choices include the surviving members of the Stromfels cult, Hugo and his lackeys, the Hounds, and so on.

— The Cult's Lair —

Though abandoned, the inner sanctum of the Cult of the Three Moons has not been left unguarded. The cultists left behind a repugnant horror grown long ago from Ruprecht's dark magic. The monster guards the tunnel just outside the cult's lair. The beast resembles a gigantic slug as big as a warhorse, with a gaping maw and face full of tentacles. Its slime-covered body is pocked with boils and pustules, and an odious stench of decomposition overwhelms those who come near. As the PCs enter the tunnel it attacks. Though blind it senses movement and lashes out with its tentacles to feel for its prey and drag them into a cavernous mouth.

Nurglish Creature

This creature was created by Ruprecht to guard the cult's lair. It obeyed only his will and now he has left it behind where it has lived eating rats and smugglers unwise enough to venture that way. Its tentacles are coated with powerful venom that burns its victims and paralyses them. Once a victim is paralysed the monster's tentacles drag the unfortunate into the maw, where it is slowly digested.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
23	0	35 (3)	61 (6)	10	5	12	0

Skills: Perception (Int +20), Swim (S)
Traits: Fearless, Natural Weapons (Tentacles), Paralysing Tentacles, Terrifying

Combat

Attacks: 3; **Movement:** 3; **Wounds:** 20
Weapons: Paralysing Tentacles (1d10+3)

Paralysing Tentacles

Any creature that loses at least 1 Wound from a Nurglish Creature's Paralysing Tentacles must succeed on a **Routine (+10) Toughness Test** each round or take a cumulative –10 penalty to all tests and a –1 cumulative penalty to movement. Once the character passes three consecutive tests, he throws off the venom and the penalties are removed. If

the character's movement drops to 0, the character is effectively paralysed. If the Nurglish Creature is still adjacent, it can gobble up the hapless character as a full action and eat him alive, effectively ending the character's life. Multiple hits from a Nurglish Creature's Paralysing Tentacles do not have a cumulative effect. Paralysed characters that escape being eaten overcome the penalties to tests and Movement 1d5 hours later.

Once the creature is defeated, the PCs can explore the rest of the cultists' lair. Three rooms lead off a central hub. The first is a large room with old furniture, crates, and beds. It appears people once stayed here but if they had any possessions they have been taken. The second room is bare, holding only an empty bookcase and table, perhaps suggesting this was once a study. Prevalent in both these rooms are strange runes scratched and chalked into the walls. These symbols are of the Chaos God Nurgle, and any character who passes an **Easy (+20) Academic Knowledge (Daemonology) Test** recognises them for what they are.

A sickly stink pervades the lair, not only from the Nurgle beast but also from the third room. The room's entrance has an iron gate locked shut, but the key hangs on the wall outside. The PCs can see into the room through the gate. Inside the room is a horrible sight: a wild looking man covered in rags and filth sits on a muck covered floor, greedily chewing on a dead rat. His hair and beard are long and matted, and his eyes dart around the room wildly.

This man is Ruben van Toor, once a respected scholar at the University of Marienburg. Many years ago, Ruben began hearing voices in his head. Fearing such insanity would discredit him in the academic circles, he tried everything to cure himself but to no avail. As the voices became louder and louder, in desperation he turned to the Dark God Nurgle, hoping to be spared from his suffering. Father Plague listened, and soon Ruben was contacted by Tobias to join their cult.

Of course the cult did not save Ruben from madness. Instead they embraced his insanity and believed the voices were from Nurgle himself. As Ruben slid deeper into derangement, the cultists listened to his fevered rantings. When Tobias and the cult disbanded it was clear Ruben could not join them. Tobias ordered Jurgen Baer to kill Ruben, but Baer could not bring himself to do it. He kept Ruben alive, but locked up, and would occasionally come down to feed him and listen to his rants. Baer has not been down in a while when the PCs arrive, and so Ruben has lived off eating rats and insects. Ruben's stats are not necessary. One solid blow from a weapon is enough to end his wretched life.

Apart from Ruben, his room is empty except for smears of excrement on the walls. Should the PCs enter, Ruben himself does not notice and continues his meal of rat, whilst rocking back and forth. A PC getting near him must abide the stench but does notice Ruben clutches a scrap of paper.

Talking to Ruben is an interesting experience, as his mind is almost completely detached from reality. PCs should not receive actual answers to questions, no matter what they ask about. Instead he utters phrases along the following lines:

"Blood! The streets fill with blood, and the blood cannot wash down the sewers. The people drown in their own blood whilst the moons look down and laugh."

"Beetle and Fly had a race. How did Beetle win? Beetles cheat!"

"I saw three of them then. Three moons where once there were two. He showed me the third moon! How blind I had been not to see it before. He told me its name, and how I wept."

"He had a tongue like a serpent, a poisoned serpent. The master could not see how much he suckled upon his sores, his tongue in the master's wounds."

"I dreamt I had no bones and lay in filth unable to move. Glorious!"

"She is looking for them. The bait is set but the teeth of the trap are black and rotten. She underestimates her prey."

The only time the PCs manage to get Ruben's attention is if they mention Jurgen Baer. Somewhere in Ruben's mind, he knows Baer disobeyed Tobias' order to kill him and since then has given him food. This small mercy and kindness touched Ruben in some way, and should the PCs mention Baer's name Ruben's eyes light up, he murmurs, *"Jurgen. Jurgen Baer!"* and pushes the scrap of paper into a character's hands.

PCs tired of Ruben's ranting may decide to kill him. Ruben will not make any attempt to resist. Of course, the PCs may argue it is merciful to put the madman out of his misery. Or they may decide to leave him alive, free to crawl round the sewers until he is eaten by some other denizen of the under city.

When the PCs retrieve the note in Ruben's hands they find out it is a letter to Baer (see **Handout #3**.) The PCs now have information that someone within the Crusade of the Child is a follower of Nurgle and attempts to direct the mob to some unknown ends. The PCs should take this information to their employer, though of course they first have to get back aboveground.

If they mapped their route, or followed Baer's map, then they can easily retrace their steps. Otherwise a successful **Follow Trail** or **Navigation Test** is required. Groups getting lost can encounter more surprises in the tunnels, as you decide. Eventually the PCs return to the surface, probably exhausted, possibly wounded, and certainly reeking of the sewers.

Wrapping Up

Having acquired all they can learn from the sewers, the player characters reach the conclusion of *The Call of Chaos*. The information they've acquired should be sufficient to send the PCs back to their employers to make their final report. What transpires next depends on for whom they're working. If you're not using one of the provided adventure hooks, you will need to devise some way to convince the PCs to press on and follow after the Crusade. Feel free to take any of the following ideas.

Avatil Foamstrider (Foolish Humans)

The PCs find the Elf merchant in the heart of Elftown in his large estate house. There, he listens gravely to the characters' report and nods with

approval at their good choices and shakes his head at their mishaps. Once they have concluded, he leans back and says, "You have done well and have earned your pay." He gestures to a chest, "You will find all that I promised within. If you find you like earning honest coin, however, I may have another task for you…"

Witch Hunter Roderick (In the Service of Sigmar)

Having learned a great deal on behalf of their master, the PCs may return to their headquarters. If this is the first time they return, they find their master has left with instructions to meet him in Altdorf. Along the way, the PCs are likely to find themselves following the path left by the Crusade.

Crispijn van Haagen (Missing Daughter!)

Crispijn is quite pleased by what the characters have achieved and the information he's learned has set his devious mind in motion. He believes that there's profit to be had in this Crusade, and given the Child's obvious allure and success, there may be financial rewards if he could ingratiate himself with Karl. He believes this in spite of all the ominous news and so he asks the PCs to approach young Karl on his behalf and send a greeting. He would like the PCs to represent his interests in offering foodstuffs and supplies in exchange for reasonable prices. If the Child is amenable, the PCs are to pass along the details of the arrangement (which are spelled out in a very long contract that he hands the group) to his representative in Altdorf. Curiously, Crispijn seems to have forgotten his daughter, and if she's mentioned, he says, "Oh yes, and if you find her, bring her back to me and I'll pay you double what I paid you today."

Wilhelm Schmidt (We're All Prisoners Here)

Wilhelm Schmidt meets the PCs at his office in front of a warehouse in the Suiddock. Whatever hour the PCs arrive, he is around and sees them. He ushers them into the warehouse, which is piled high with crates and then asks the PCs what they have found out. He makes sure he is clear both on the Child's origins (in the marshes) and who the assailants were (cultists of Nurgle). The PCs should hand over the letter from Ruben van Toor. If not, he prompts them by saying *"How do you know they were Nurgle cultists?"* and *"Did they leave no clue as to their next move?"*

Wilhelm ponders matters for a moment before bringing out a sealed envelope (**Handout #4**) which he hands to one of the PCs.

> *"This letter was prepared by Schmidt. It's a letter of introduction to a noble by the name of Lord Frederick, who lives in Altdorf. This letter permits travel from Marienburg to Altdorf—but only to Altdorf. If you are found travelling different roads that do not lead to the Empire's capital, and are recognised as outlaws, then you will be arrested and probably hung. Anyway, Lord Frederick will issue you with a full pardon when you meet him.*
>
> *"I will leave you with one last thought, though. What you do with it depends on how much you care for that beloved Empire of yours. If the influence of Chaos is upon the Crusade, and the child is attracting as many followers as he did in Marienburg, then it could mean dark times for humanity. I would suggest you discuss the matter with Lord Frederick. He may request you attempt to root out this new threat."*

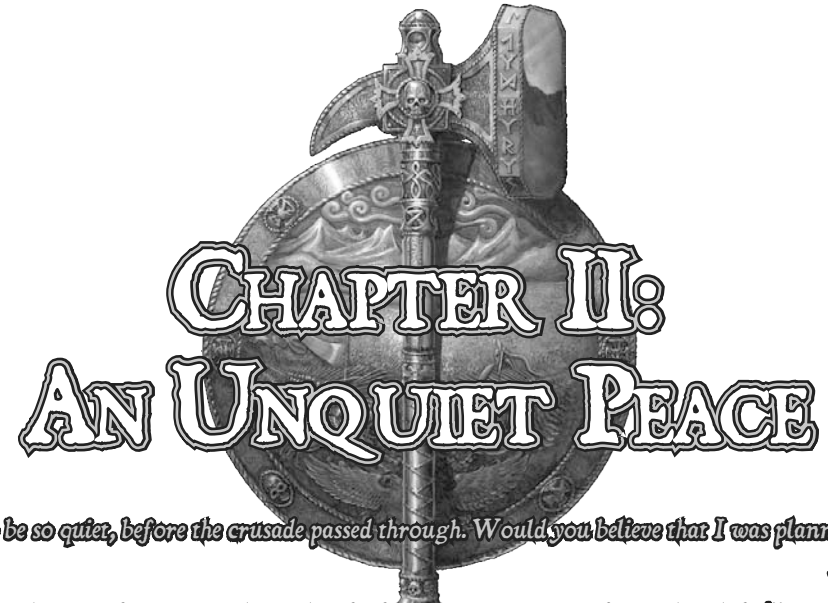
If the PCs do not specifically ask for a reward, Wilhelm still gives them 4 *gc* each for travelling expenses to Altdorf. It they do request some recompense for what they have undertaken he gives them an extra 2 *gc* each. Finally, if they have promised to deal with whatever has happened with the Crusade in Altdorf he raises the reward to an extra 4 *gc* per PC.

Selena Reiva (A Lovely Lady)

As with the previous meeting, Selena is ensconced in her exquisite house and there she listens to the characters' full report. Upon learning that a Cult of Nurgle-worshippers is somehow involved, she is even more concerned, for if the boy is indeed the Champion of Night, the prophecy is at risk of not coming to fruition if the cultists reach the boy first. Selena asks the PCs to find the Crusade and find a way to stay close to the boy, to protect him, and root out any villains that might be manipulating him. She dismisses any concerns about the boy being more than he seems, saying, "This young man is special and his destiny is written in the stars. I aim to see that he fulfils the promise made to… my people." With that, she gives the PCs another 10 *gc* and asks that they make haste to catch up with the Crusade before it's too late.

Rewards

Action	XP
Correctly deducing the Shallyan orphanage from rumours	10
Learning of the Shallyan orphanage from the relic vendor	10
Not killing the relic vendor	5
Meeting the Abbess at the orphanage	10
Successfully talking with Maida	25
Successfully talking with Osric	25
Surviving the marsh	10
Defeating the Mutants at the Stromfels temple	50
Learning about the Jolly Boatman at the temple	5
Getting information from Dobbe	10
Getting information from Dobbe after killing his rival	5
Getting the map from the Hounds for the purse without resorting to violence	20
Getting the map from the Hounds	10
Defeating the Nurglish Beast	10
Getting the note from Ruben	10
Good roleplaying	50–100



Chapter II: An Unquiet Peace

"This town used to be so quiet, before the crusade passed through. Would you believe that I was planning to retire here?"

—Johannes Gephardt

"That crusade wrought more devastation than a hundred Incursions, Sigmar damn their hides!"

—Frau Gertrudt

By Chuck Morrison

An Unquiet Peace finds the player characters on the hunt for the Crusade of the Child following the events of **Chapter I**—indeed, in this chapter the PCs discover that they missed finding the cult by a mere three days. The action in **Chapter II** centres on the village of Pfeifeldorf, a normally quiet forest town that has been thrown into disarray by the passage of the Crusade of the Child. When the PCs arrive, they are tasked with a seemingly unimportant investigation as their identities and innocence are verified. The investigation, however, leads them straight to the village's ruling nobility and eventually to that family's mausoleum in the nearby Garden of Morr, where the PCs encounter a darkness the depth of which they've never experienced.

Adventure Background

Pfeifeldorf is a small, quiet, farming and timber-harvesting town at the southern edge of the Drakwald Forest that has in recent years attracted not some little attention as a quaint respite for the wealthy. A Charter was granted to the Von Speier family in 2362 for unspecified "services." Since that time, rule of the village has passed through an unbroken chain of eldest male children. The current patriarch, Lorentz von Speier, is a kindly man loved by the villagers. He has only recently entered his dotage and feels that although the time is near to pass along the day-to-day burden of village rule, his eldest son Lennhardt is not up to the task. Indeed, Lennhardt is an inveterate gambler whose laziness, selfishness, and cruelty are spoken of with fear and loathing amongst the townsfolk. The younger son Lucas is more compassionate and studious, and for years, many Pfeifeldorfers have quietly wished for an accident to befall Lennhardt so Lucas could take his father's place instead. Lucas believes himself to be the more qualified of the two as well, and some years back, he founded an organisation of nobles dedicated to doing away with the idea of primogeniture (the passing of familial wealth to the eldest child without regard to merit or circumstance) which is the most common form of inheritance in place within the Empire. That organisation, called the Blauesblut, figures prominently in this chapter.

Recent events have served to crystallise a sense of urgency within Lucas: Six months ago, Old Man Eysen, a nearly blind and mostly deaf farmer, stumbled across Lennhardt's path, tripping the noble and bringing him to the ground in a most unceremonious fashion. Incensed, Lennhardt had the elderly man imprisoned and appealed to the elder Von Speier to order the peasant's execution. Lucas intervened on the peasant's behalf, and the old man's life was spared. But despite Lucas's best efforts, Eysen was sentenced to a public flogging, which Lennhardt personally supervised with great satisfaction. This brutal show of force against a helpless old man convinced Lucas that Lennhardt must never be given power over the people of Pfeifeldorf, no matter the cost.

One month ago, Lorentz von Speier took ill and has not left his bed since. Knowing his father could pass on at any time and the village would then fall into his brother's hands, Lucas cast about in desperation for any solution to present itself. Then, seemingly in response to his desperate pleadings with the Gods, it did. On his journey back from a routine trading venture in Marienburg, Lucas encountered a severely wounded man surrounded by the corpses of a dozen feral creatures with large canine teeth (who were, unbeknownst to Lucas, Strigoi Vampires). Lucas placed the man in his carriage and burned the remains of his victims. During the journey back, he discovered from the man's fevered ramblings that he was a Vampire. Immediately, perhaps prompted by his proximity to such a creature of fathomless evil or maybe even seeded by the Vampire itself, a two-pronged plot sprang to mind: Lucas could either implicate Lennhardt in a "blood cult" and thoroughly disgrace him, or, as a last resort, sacrifice him to the Vampire, a line of reasoning that surprised himself with its callousness, yet somehow seemed perfectly reasonable to this otherwise good and decent man. To this end, he promised to heal the Vampire in exchange for his assistance. Lacking strength and faced with no alternative, the Vampire agreed.

Caspar Schmidt, the town baker, was also present on the trading journey. He was aware of the wounded man, but he was not aware of his identity as a Vampire until much later. Always on the lookout for a good deal, Caspar negotiated his part in the plot against Lennhardt. In exchange for guarantees of tax relief and rights to sell his wares along the profitable trade routes to Marienburg, Schmidt agreed to begin a vigorous campaign to spread rumours as to Lennhardt's involvement in a blood cult. At Lucas's suggestion, he even agreed to help gather animals (disguised in the wounded man's cloak so as not to be caught himself) to further rouse suspicion. All was going according to plan until the

The Blauesblut

The Blauesblut is a group of 30 young nobles (26 male, 4 female) united only by their collective sense of disenfranchisement: as younger siblings, they are each forced to stand idly by as their oldest sibling inherits the entire family estate, whilst they are left with only a title and perhaps a few Gold Crowns for their trouble. Often they have no recourse other than to enter into debt after their coin is spent, or face a life of hard work and drudgery. The Blauesblut works to change this system of sole inheritance to the oldest to something more egalitarian, though precisely what that may be is vigorously debated within their ranks. The current leader of the Blauesblut is Lucas von Speier (see page 54), but other duties prevent him from leading them in the field. The field leader—that is, the person who is currently pursuing the PCs—is cofounder and second-in-command, Arnolt Schade, an expert swordsman, 26 years of age.

Crusade of the Child passed through Pfeifeldorf, throwing everything into disarray. The town quickly lined up into two factions: those who had fallen under the sway of the Crusade, and those who hadn't. Caspar was an instant and passionate convert, and informed Lucas he could no longer take part in his intrigues as he intended to follow after the Child and seek his salvation. Shortly after this discussion, his wife found Caspar hanging from a rope attached to the large timber crossbeam of his main room. His death was ruled a suicide.

It is into this strange mixture of intrigue, good intentions, dark ambition, and the polarising effects caused by the passing of the Crusade of the Child that the PCs enter when they stride into Pfeifeldorf.

Adventure Synopsis

An Unquiet Peace is an investigation-style adventure in which the characters, rightly or wrongly, are hired to look into the matter of a missing chicken on their way to catch up with the slow moving Crusade. As the characters dig more deeply into the matter, they soon learn of strange plots, rumours of blood cults, and a foul presence that seems to cast a deep shadow over the community. The player characters must negotiate through the tangle of evidence, deal with a cast of strange and interesting locals, and ultimately discern the true threat that the village faces.

Hooking the PCs

The primary hook used in this adventure is that the PCs are wanted criminals. This motivation works especially well if you're using the "We're All Criminals Here" hook from **Chapter I,** since the characters may still be wanted in the Empire for whatever landed them in trouble in the first place. Otherwise, you can hook the characters in several ways. Tobias—the Chaos sorcerer's agent—may be aware of the PCs from their actions in Marienburg. This scenario is unlikely, given that Tobias's allies in the city are all dead and that Tobias left Marienburg whilst the PCs were still investigating the origins of the Crusade, but Ruprecht is a powerful servant of Nurgle and his eyes and ears could be anywhere.

Another potential hook is if the PCs caused a lot of trouble in Marienburg. There are all sorts of ways the characters could have crossed the Black Hats and it wouldn't take much for descriptions of the PCs to circulate, even to the edge of the Empire. If the PCs were honest little angels, caused no trouble, and left Marienburg pretty much as they found it, then the fact that the wanted posters look like them could just be chalked up to a poor artist's rendition.

In truth, it doesn't matter whether the PCs are innocent or not, or whether they look like the people on the posters since the Blauesblut (see above) aren't picky and take prisoners first and justify their actions later.

A Small Note

Throughout this chapter, the behaviour of the PCs toward certain NPCs should be noted, as it impacts decisions made by those same NPCs later in the scenario. Whenever this is important, there will be a note in the text or a sidebar alerting the GM to carefully note the interaction. It may be helpful to record the results on a separate piece of paper or small notepad for ease of future reference.

— Beginning the Adventure —

The adventure begins several days after the PCs leave Marienburg. The journey thus far should be mild and mostly pleasant in spite of trudging through the bleak marshes and the occasional shower. As the characters travel, you should describe the change of the countryside from boggy wetlands to drier ground and wide fields punctuated with copses and herds of sheep. Eventually, the seemingly endless Wasteland gives way as the characters enter the familiar ground of the Empire. Following the road eventually leads them into the shadow of a large forest at which point you're ready to introduce the Blauesblut.

Enter the Blauesblut

The forest itself seems ancient and foreboding, and the sky is often obscured for long distances when the forest's canopy thickens and closes over the road. During these times the PCs walk through varying degrees of shadow. Here and there, wanted posters nailed to trees tremble in the summer breeze, some of which bear the likeness of the PCs. It should be clear their journey through the Empire is not going to be easy.

A few hours into the forest, call for **Hard (–20) Perception Tests** for the PCs to hear sounds of the Blauesblut's movements. These men have caught the scent of the PCs and move in to capture the characters. On a success, a character hears a lot of movement coming from the trees around him.

Arnolt Schade (see Blauesblut sidebar and following text) follows the PCs from the forest until they reach a curve in the road, at which time he springs his trap. Schade is quite aware of the reward for the PCs and plans on giving credit for their capture to his depressed lieutenant, Wendell Ott. To this end, Schade approaches the PCs and quietly explains that they are surrounded *("I have twenty-two troops positioned behind the cover of trees and shrubs, sixteen of whom have crossbows trained on you as we speak.")* and will be escorted by his men to the town of Pfeifeldorf for holding. He also explains one of his men, Wendell, has been suffering from a particularly resilient melancholy of late, as a result of a calamitous combination of lost fortune and lost love; so if the PCs would kindly cooperate, that would go a long way towards raising his spirits. *"Come along now, be good sports. It's for a good cause, you know."* Schade then signals to Wendell, and Wendell (reluctantly) approaches.

Arnolt Schade

Male Human Duellist, ex-Pistolier, ex-Noble

Schade shares a sense of entitlement and superiority with his friend Lucas von Speier. He has a keen strategic sense, and resents that his older brother has inherited the Schade estate when Schade was so much more adept at his studies. Schade left his family at the age of 16 and spent his meagre inheritance, going from town to town, working odd jobs to earn his way

until he met Lucas von Speier. Together the two founded the Blauesblut out of an acute sense of bitterness at their fate, but the group has grown more to represent Schade's ideals and unrealised dreams as Lucas has concentrated on other matters. Schade is prepared to die for his belief in equal inheritance for the nobility and the destruction of the rules of primogeniture. Currently, the Blauesblut act in the service of the Von Speier family to provide added security to Pfeifeldorf, but Schade has plans to grow beyond the small town in the near future.

Insanity Points: 3

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
51	55	43 (4)	54 (5)	42 (52)	42	44	48

Skills: Animal Care (Int), Charm (Fel), Command (Fel), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int+10), Consume Alcohol (T), Dodge Blow (Ag +10), Evaluate (Int), Gamble (Int), Gossip (Fel), Intimidate (S), Perception (Int +10), Read/Write (Int), Ride (Ag +10), Secret Signs (Scout) (Int), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int +10)

Talents: Coolheaded, Disarm, Etiquette, Master Gunner, Public Speaking, Quick Draw, Rapid Reload, Savvy, Sharpshooter, Specialist Weapon Group (Fencing), Specialist Weapon Group (Gunpowder), Specialist Weapon Group (Parrying), Strike Mighty Blow, Sure Shot, Swashbuckler

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Fate Points:** 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 14
Armour (Medium): Full Mail (Head 3, Arms 3, Body 3, Legs 3)
Weapons: Rapier (1d10+4; Fast), Main Gauche (1d10+3; Defensive), Pistol (1d10+6; Range 8/16; Reload 1 Full; Impact, Unreliable; Sharpshooter, Sure Shot)

Trappings

Although Arnolt's clothing is of fine quality, it is beginning to show signs of wear. He keeps a purse on his waist that holds 10*gc*. He keeps his pistol shot and powder in a horn he hangs from his belt. He rides a light warhorse named Sol, which is equipped with a saddle and harness.

Representative Phrases

"Inheritance should be based on merit, not on some accidental order of birth."

"Occasionally, peasants may find themselves possessed of some small noble quality or other, that I will grant. But nowhere will you find every noble quality together except in the noble himself."

"Dignity is due to all creatures formed in Sigmar's image. Possibly even peasants, too."

Feelings About the Crusade

"Ordinarily, it is good for business when these fanatical groups pass through—the Von Speiers are forced to increase security, and increased security means more coinage for us. This mob was particularly large, however, and particularly disruptive. I was glad to see them go."

Wendell Ott

Male Human Roadwarden, ex-Noble

Wendell is a younger son of a relatively unimportant noble family in Reikland. He is currently deep within the throes of melancholy, having lost his entire inheritance in a single, ill-advised trading endeavour. To make matters worse, upon discovering that Wendell was penniless, his fiancée promptly left him for a wealthier suitor. He joined the Blauesblut four months ago in a semi-suicidal fit and is little better off today. Schade is desperately trying to lift his spirits by granting him the considerable boon of capturing the PCs.

When playing Wendell, always begin speaking with a loud and prolonged sigh, as if the mere act of talking requires an inordinate amount of effort. Raise your eyebrows in a forlorn fashion, and let your facial features droop. Fumble around for words, and pause intermittently to think of ways to better rephrase what you've just said. Contradict yourself, catch the contradiction, and mutter about how incompetent you are. Pause in the middle of a sentence to sob softly. Above all else, convey the utter hopelessness of your worldview to the players. When you are finished, they should either feel terribly sorry for Wendell, or terribly impatient for the action to continue.

Exaggerate. Play this exchange for sympathy. Play it for laughs if you have a particularly cruel group of PCs (don't we all?). But if the PCs ever seem as if they're not enjoying the conversation, have Schade take over and get right to business, which just furthers Wendell's conviction the entire world is out to get him.

Insanity Points: 2

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
38	43	28 (2)	34 (3)	38 (28)	37	29	39

Skills: Blather (Fel), Charm (Fel), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int +10), Gossip (Fel +10), Performer (Musician) (Fel), Read/Write (Int), Ride (Ag), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int +10)
Talents: Etiquette, Hardy, Public Speaking, Resistance to Magic, Savvy, Schemer, Specialist Weapon Group (Gunpowder)

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 15
Armour (Medium): Leather Jack, Mail Shirt (Arms 1, Body 3)

Weapons: Hand Weapon (Sword) (1d10+2), Shield (1d10; Defensive, Pummelling), Pistol (1d10+4; Range 8/16; Reload 2 Full; Impact, Unreliable)

Trappings

Even Wendell's clothing suggests his depression, being a rumpled black tunic and breeches. His shoes are muddy, a fact that he complains about bitterly. He keeps his powder and shot in a small pouch on his belt. His light warhorse, Tragedy, is black with a white blob on her head. In addition to a saddle and harness, the horse bears a coil of rope about 10 yards long.

Representative Phrases

"Huuuuuhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh."

"You lot have to come with me. Or else, uhh, well… Hrmmm… Oh, I'm not very good at this. I'm never going to be any good at this. It's hopeless."

"It is not *the melancholy talking. It's … reality." (sobs)*

"No, it's my fault. I don't know why I'm even out here. I should have taken father's advice and gone into the Clergy."

"That's what my fiancée used to say, Sigmar bless her." (weeps softly)

"Schade, take over here. Oh, I'm just no use to anyone."

Feelings About the Crusade

"Crusade? What crusade? Why am I always the last to find out about these things?"

Take careful note of how the PCs treat Wendell, as they may need his help later on in the scenario. Instant capitulation, kind or sympathetic words, and expressions of remorse grant the PCs a lifelong friend. Sarcasm, insults, or attempts to undermine Wendell in front of his companions are met with hostility by both Wendell and Arnolt Schade.

Noble PCs and the Blauesblut

Any noble-born characters in the party who reveal their heritage and proof of it may receive some better treatment from these knaves—but only if said character is (or says he is) a younger heir. Such PCs bear the brunt of Schade's endless tirade and he focuses much of his conversation on them, looking for a convert to add to his ranks. Should the character play along, he will find that Schade becomes rather favourable of him or her and as such will gain him as an ally as the adventure unfolds.

Dealing with Wendell

Wendell does not look the PCs in the eye and is given to prolonged sighing and mumbling. He is fully convinced the world was designed with the sole purpose of making him miserable. If the PCs challenge him at all, he backs down immediately and then mutters an apology for his incompetence and lack of social graces—*"It's why my fiancée left me, I'm certain."* He often casts a furtive glance back to Schade for guidance, which Schade reciprocates with a single supportive nod. Wendell then swallows and clears his throat before continuing.

Ideally, the PCs play along and allow Wendell to "capture" them to bolster his ego and assuage his melancholy. A polite and immediate surrender, paradoxically, grants them the strongest negotiating position, since they have done Schade a favour (but they may ruin this at any time by harassing Wendell). If they agree to be escorted to Pfeifeldorf without incident, Schade allows them to keep their weapons and armour and proceed in the direction they were already heading, without any disruption except two Blauesblut on horseback in the front and rear. Of course, the PCs hear sounds from the forest and may catch a glint of steel from the tip of a crossbow bolt now and then, evidence they are being guarded very carefully. Every once in a while, Wendell glances back at them in fear that they will escape and shatter his shining moment.

If the PCs do not play along or harass Wendell to tears (not a difficult task), eventually Schade takes over and scolds them for being so cruel to his lieutenant. He informs the PCs he has a raft of archers stationed at either side of them to ensure their cooperation. They are to follow him back to Pfeifeldorf without any trouble, and there answer for their crimes against the Empire. They must surrender their weapons immediately and allow their arms to be bound behind them. If any of them balk at this, Schade signals half of the archers to fire warning shots at the PCs' feet. In answer, eight crossbow bolts fly from the forest (four from each direction), sticking in the ground near the PCs' feet.

The PCs are outnumbered and very likely outgunned. They may try to negotiate by showing Schade their credential (or a letter of freedom given in **Chapter I** for the prisoner hook). If this is the case, Schade takes the letter and reviews it. After he has finished, he folds it up and places it in his pocket. *"This paperwork appears to be in order,"* he says. *"But I operate under the authority of the Von Speiers, and this letter needs to be vetted by them if I am to surrender my reward for your capture. Allow me then to act as your escort to the town of Pfeifeldorf where our scribe may verify this letter's authenticity."* Schade allows them to keep their hand weapons and armour if they agree to follow him in peace but insists they turn over any ranged weapons. He is also suspicious of any obvious spellcasters in the group but respects their dignity if they can produce a license and promise not to cause trouble. If they cannot, he has no qualms about gagging and binding them, as they represent a serious danger to himself and his companions. Any questions about what crimes they might be accused of are met with silence—not even Schade knows for certain.

Should the PCs decide to fight, they should be made fully aware it is a risky endeavour. Any attempt to retreat is cut off by eight Blauesblut on horseback, each armed with a sword and crossbow. Should the PCs attempt to try their luck in battle, allow the combat to continue until a PC takes a Critical Hit; at this point Schade offers to accept surrender in exchange for their weapons. After binding the PCs, he summons one of his troops to provide minimal medical care to the wounded PC. Definitive medical care can be provided by the physician in Pfeifeldorf and should spur some sense of urgency in the remaining PCs.

During the journey to Pfeifeldorf, Schade talks incessantly about the evils of primogeniture and how unfair it is that all noble wealth is transferred only to the eldest heir, without regard to suitability or merit. He discusses the plight of the Blauesblut and the bleak situation poor Wendell finds himself in, all due at least in part to the most common inheritance system in place throughout the Empire. He complains this system has created a disenfranchised class within the nobility and that something must be done about it soon or else the Empire might find itself torn apart from civil strife. Schade is diligent and passionate, and knows when to exploit a

captive audience, but it should be obvious to the PCs that he has droned on at length to each of the Blauesblut on this very subject. Although exasperated Blauesblut may share Schade's views, they are quite tired of hearing him espouse them. They roll their eyes when Schade isn't looking, and mutter ruefully that they cannot escape another of their field leader's long-winded lectures. Intermittently, Wendell sobs for no apparent reason. By this point, the PCs should greatly look forward to arriving in Pfeifeldorf, no matter what fate lies in store for them.

— Pfeifeldorf —

Though the noble Von Speier family runs Pfeifeldorf, Lorentz von Speier has entrusted the day-to-day details to his Steward, Zecharius Lauer. Lauer, in turn, has hired a bailiff, an old veteran named Reinhardt Neytz, to whom he has given responsibility for the security of the town. Within the past two years, as wealthy tourists have taken to Pfeifeldorf as the currently fashionable place of rest and respite (Altdorf nobility in particular enjoy visiting rustic villages as quaint reminders of how "the other people" live), the need for security has increased. Lauer often hires the services of the Blauesblut to provide additional force of arms. Indeed, since the Chaos Incursion, the Blauesblut have been on constant Von Speier retainer.

Recently, however, the Crusade of the Child has passed through and polarised the village into two camps: those who subscribe to the Crusade of the Child, and everyone else. There is an almost palpable tension evident from the moment of entry; villagers eye other villagers suspiciously—Crusade members fear the others will try to sway them away from their newfound salvation, and the non-Crusade populace rightly suspects the Crusade members of angling for political and mercantile power by virtue of their numbers. However, most of the NPCs the PCs interact with in this chapter do not belong to the Crusade of the Child (the only exceptions are zealots and proselytisers). Most Crusaders have a persecution complex, and they also tend to keep to themselves to prevent outside influences from causing them to *"fall away from the fold."* Not to worry: PCs will have plenty of opportunity to interact with cult members later on in the campaign.

Welcome to Pfeifeldorf

The manner of the PCs' arrival depends entirely upon their actions in the previous encounter. They may arrive complete with weapons and armour or bound, gagged, and dragged along behind the Blauesblut. Regardless, their first sight upon reaching Pfeifeldorf is a haggard-looking child, dressed in sackcloth, who is wandering to and fro calling out the name, *"Baldy! Baldy!"* If asked, the child tearfully recounts how his pet rat (named on account of a nearly colourless patch of fur at the top of his head) went missing three days ago and has not come back. He asks the PCs if they have seen a bald rat wandering about, because it has never been gone this long before. When answered in the negative, the child frowns and continues searching.

The town itself is in a state of bad disrepair. Various buildings have caved in and many village residents carry heaps of garbage out to the far side of the village, where several thick black plumes of smoke coil and rise above the forest's canopy. Also, something quite rare has occurred in a village where most people are tied to the land: a great many villagers have left their housings, positions, and belongings to follow after the Crusade. Many of the buildings in Pfeifeldorf are empty, abandoned in religious fervour with meagre belongings still inside.

Just 10 yards in front of the PCs, two peasants, one tall and one short, carry bundles of refuse. Suddenly, the tall one trips the other, bringing him down and causing his barely contained rubbish to spill out over the ground. The tall one crows, *"If you had joined the Crusade of the Child, the blessings of Karl's protection would be over you, and things like that wouldn't happen."* The short one brings himself to his feet, yanks a pamphlet out of the tall one's pocket and tears it up. Aghast, the tall one drops his refuse and screams, *"The words of Karl! You* heathen!" before diving headlong into the short one. Both disappear in a hail of garbage and flailing fists.

If asked, Schade simply shrugs. *"Welcome to Pfeifeldorf. This petty fighting has been going on since the Crusade of the Child passed through last week."*

The PCs are taken by a ramshackle group of open stocks to the office of the town Steward, Zecharius Lauer. Lauer is a harried-looking sort hunched over a desk full of papers. Schade leads the PCs into the entryway, where they are told to stay put whilst he discusses their case with Lauer, who hands Schade a small bag of coins. Hushed words are exchanged and every once in a while Lauer looks questioningly over Schade's shoulder back at the PCs. Upon passing a **Routine (+10) Perception Test** alert PCs may overhear fragments of the conversation, including:

> *"They don't look tough enough."*
>
> *"Are you sure they're up to it?"*
>
> *"I have my doubts, but I concede that it appears to be the only solution."*

Finally, Lauer motions for the PCs to come forward.

> *"I will need to verify your stories. This process typically requires a day or two—by pigeon of course. During this time I need to decide what exactly to do about the presence of potential criminals in my village."*

Lauer shifts in his seat and glances at Schade, who gives an approving nod. He continues,

> *"You appear to be a rough and ready lot who have seen and survived your share of adversity. I can respect that. Typically, we place suspected criminals in our stocks while their bona fides are being reviewed for signs of forgery. But I'm a reasonable man."* He takes a deep breath and his countenance darkens. *"There is a matter of importance that I would like you to attend. Should you agree to cooperate, you may have your freedom to move about town over the next twenty-four hours, though of course you will have to surrender your weapons. You have my word that regardless of the success or failure of your investigations, you will be released and free to go after the time has elapsed—assuming your claims are authentic, of course."*

Questions, Questions

Why us? Because you have the time, and you appear to be able to handle yourselves. As well, you're not of the village and therefore you are impartial.

What is the exact manner of the task? Investigation. Here is a small map of the town. I've marked the house where you are to begin your investigations. Please hurry.

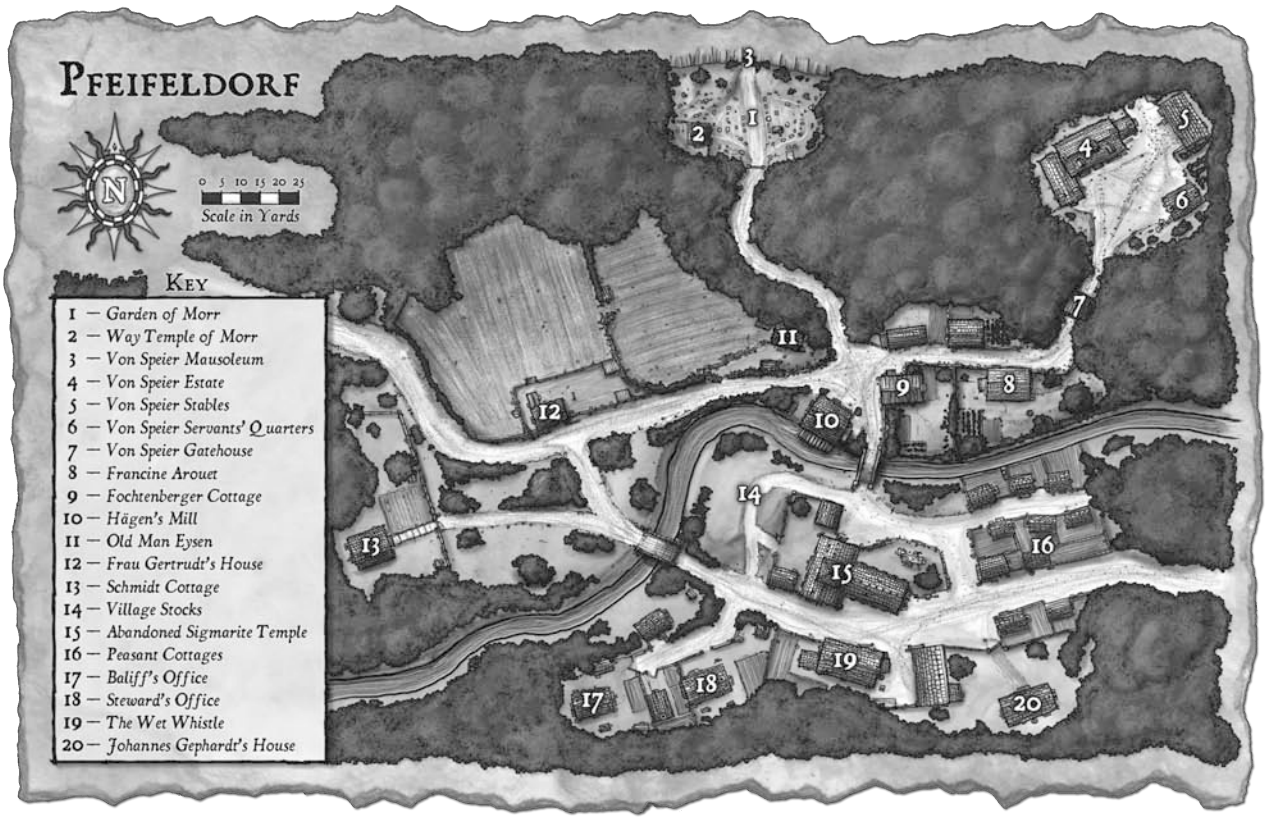
What are we investigating? A theft.

What is our reward if we successfully investigate, er, whatever it is we're investigating? The gratitude of the town of Pfeifeldorf. And, of course, your freedom.

What if we fail? Then you will not have the gratitude of the town of Pfeifeldorf. But you will be free to go, provided everything checks out.

How will you be assured that we will do our duty? Now that is a suspicious question, isn't it? But rest easy. You will be accompanied by the town scribe, who will make his own report.

Is that the same town scribe who is supposed to be busy verifying our papers? He is a very talented man.



The PCs should have a few questions for the steward, which are answered in the **Questions, Questions** sidebar.

In reality, Lauer has been plagued by a rather unpleasant woman named Hester Gertrudt because one of her chickens went missing four days ago, and he is eager to placate her by foisting the investigation off onto the PCs. Accordingly, Lauer is vague with the PCs, giving no details because he fears they will refuse to investigate something as unimportant as the disappearance of a village woman's farm animal. If the PCs do refuse to cooperate, he sighs and then informs them suspected criminals should technically be placed in the village stocks whilst their names are cleared anyway. He motions for the Blauesblut to escort them to the jail—*"Unless, of course, you'd be willing to help us in our time of need? A show of good faith on your part so I may justify your freedom to our noble, the honourable Lorentz von Speier?"*

If the PCs continue to refuse, Lauer breaks down and tells them they are investigating a minor matter—the disappearance of a chicken from the farm of a local village woman. To sweeten the pot, he adds the hen belongs to a young, attractive, available lady of the village (Lauer is not being completely untruthful here: Frau Gertrudt *is* available) who would be quite grateful for the assistance. PCs who wonder why he was not more forthcoming with this information in the first place will break down all of Lauer's remaining resistance: he tells them Frau Gertrudt is a monster of a woman and he would consider it a personal favour if they would simply go to her house and make a show of investigating the disappearance—they do not need to find the chicken or even search very hard, they merely need to do whatever is required to placate the woman so she stops bothering him. He tried to tell her it was most likely a hungry member of the Crusade—indeed, the town has been plundered, but unfortunately, animals kept disappearing after the mob departed three days ago, and she has been up in arms ever since.

At this point Lauer is willing to offer the PCs *3gc* each (from his personal fund; he has been embezzling small amounts of money from the Von Speiers for years) for their time, one Karl now and two on completion of the investigation. If the PCs are still unwilling to cooperate, Lauer regretfully turns them over to the town bailiff, Reinhardt Neytz, with an order to lock them up for the *"safety and general well-being of Pfeifeldorf."*

He lets them stew in the village stocks for twenty-four hours, subject to all of the abuse angry villagers may choose to heap upon them, and then release them as promised. The PCs may be very sorry they took this course of action when the events detailed in **Climax Rescinded?** inevitably unfold.

Lauer informs the PCs of one last thing before they depart: if indeed their papers do not check out as promised, they represent a valuable investment to him in terms of reward money for their capture. Therefore, he has retained the Blauesblut to guard the borders of Pfeifeldorf against their departure. If they try to leave Pfeifeldorf at any time before he has personally granted permission, they are to be shot dead. He then bids them farewell and good luck and to please have a nice stay in Pfeifeldorf.

The Curious Town Scribe

If the PCs agree, they are introduced to the scribe of the village, a Dwarf named Dwali Runeborn. Dwali always appears a bit irritated. He is irritated that he lives in a Human village, in open space above ground, instead of within a Dwarf kingdom beneath comforting mountains. He is irritated his research did not resonate with the Loremasters of his home clan and he was thus forced to pursue his experiments in the domain of Men. And he is especially irritated he has been taken away from his studies to baby-sit a group of Humans, whilst they search for some misplaced poultry.

Dwali is a quiet sort, possessed of very few social skills (even for a Dwarf). He appears to take pleasure in interpreting vague bits of conversation in the worst possible light, if only to watch the offending Human squirm; indeed, he is always on the lookout for such an opportunity. Consequently, Dwali's features are carved into a strange mixture of suspicion, distrust, and restrained bemusement.

Living in a perpetual state of distraction, Dwali often pauses in mid-conversation as his mind returns to more important matters. He spends most of his time scribbling away in his heavy journal, taking extensive notes about his pet theories on steam-powered devices. So concerned is he with his work, he tends to ignore what's going on around him,

muttering and tut-tutting all the while. Dwali uses plentiful Khazalid when muttering or talking to the PCs. Their investigations are *"a load of kruk"* (a disappointing vein of ore) or *"a bloody grik"* (pain caused by stooping in narrow mine shafts). The players themselves are *"skrati"* (poor prospectors) and if they are Human, they may well be called *"wattock umgi"* (unsuccessful miners of the race of shoddy things) or *"grumbaki umgi"* (whining shoddy folk). Characters who make mistakes will hear *"Or dok af bok"* (I see you banging your head on a mine wall) or simply a low tut. If anyone seems to understand Khazalid, or attempts a conversation in the tongue, Dwali abruptly stops using these terms and refuses to speak anything other than Reikspiel.

Dwali is uncomfortable around Dwarf PCs, and does his best to ignore them and if forced to talk with them, he treats them as he does Humans. After all, it's his fellow Dwarfs that led to his exile.

On the Proper Implementation of Dwarf Scribes

Dwali can be a helpful resource for the PCs during this portion of the campaign. He knows where everything is located in town, he can provide introductions to various (non-noble) NPCs, and he is forthcoming regarding any information the PCs may require as he wishes to dispense with this silliness and return to his research. You may even use Dwali to impart helpful hints when the PCs become stuck in their investigations. Be careful, however, to avoid having Dwali simply become your mouthpiece. For every accurate piece of information Dwali imparts, offer a rumour that is enticing but false; perhaps Dwali has become irritated at the PCs because of some imagined slight, or perhaps he simply doesn't have access to correct information—the villagers of Pfeifeldorf, after all, do not exactly hob-knob with the Dwarf, and he is certainly not acquainted with the latest gossip making the rounds. Do not allow the PCs to become lazy and rely overmuch on Dwali; you are handling him correctly if they feel it necessary to independently verify the information he provides.

Let the Investigation(s) Begin

Frau Gertrudt's house is an old, squat, one-storey building that seems to be held together by patches of mud, rock, and sheer force of will. Around to the rear stands a chicken coop and to the east, a small plot of land for grazing and farming. An earthen path leads from the main road up to a single large, splintered wooden door at the front of the structure. For his part, Dwali verifies the PCs have the correct house, but hangs back at the road unless specifically pressed to continue—he is busy scribbling.

The house directly west of Gertrudt's is a bustle of activity. In addition to a zealot singing the praises of Karl, Sigmar Reborn, many villagers are bringing brushes and buckets of water from the nearby river and entering the house. Other villagers exit and pour a darker-coloured liquid out on the ground before heading toward the river to refill their bucket. If any of the villagers are stopped and questioned, they are very forthcoming about the only real piece of knowledge they have concerning the event: the suicide of one of Pfeifeldorf's most prominent merchants took place at this home two days ago. Every other piece of knowledge gleaned from the villagers is speculation, rumour, or hearsay. See the **Rumour Mill** sidebar.

After hearing from various villagers about the Schmidt affair, the PCs may decide to continue their investigation into the missing poultry, or attempt to investigate the suicide, especially in light of the revelation that Herr Schmidt may have been involved in a blood cult. Should the PCs consult Lauer at this point, he informs them the Schmidt household is a private residence belonging to people who were prominent members of the community, and as such it is off-limits to the PCs. Lauer has already conducted his own investigation into the suicide, the results of which, he cheerfully informs the PCs, are none of their business. He also questions why the PCs are not carrying out the investigation he ordered (and possibly paid) them to do.

Rumour Mill

"It's a shame, sure enough. Poor widow Schmidt has to carry on and manage the whole business without him now. Why do men think only about themselves?"

"First the animals start disappearing, and now this. It bodes ill for Pfeifeldorf, sure as I'm standing here."

"Pay no mind to the rest of these folk; they're blind as a bat and not half as wise. You want to know what really happened? That chicken of Frau Gertrudt's—the one what went 'missing' a few days back? That's the real culprit. Mutated two days ago into a giant three-legged battle *chicken, and pecked that poor blighter to death. Saw it with me own eyes, I did."*

"Herr Schmidt put up a good front, but there's been talk of late that he was involved in the dark arts. Member of a blood cult he was, sure as I'm standing here. Wouldn't be surprised to hear the hoof beats of the witch hunters next—to burn the bodies, you know. Never can be too careful, I says."

"I suspect the wife's to blame. Always nagging poor overworked Herr Schmidt. If she'd just left him alone, he'd still be with us, Morr rest his soul."

"No use lookin' fer a reason, cause there ain't no explainin' such things."

"'Twas the passing of the Crusade of the Child, that's what did him in. Mixed up a good number of folks here in Pfeifeldorf—even seduced our own priest of Sigmar, who up and left 'is Way Temple and followed after them. But the baker, he was torn between his wife's old faith and his new one, and I hear it drove him mad."

If the PCs are intent on investigating the Schmidt suicide, they just have to be subtle, clever, or both. Frau Schmidt is in a state of mourning and interviewing her requires delicacy at least. Meeting up with Francine Arouet (see the **Wet Whistle** on page 47) prior to commencing the Schmidt investigation should impart some helpful ideas, but if they are persistent in starting off investigating the suicide, by all means, let them have at it. Of course, the case of the missing chicken still awaits their attention. Details of both investigations can be found in the following sections.

The Unflappable Frau Gertrudt

Hester Gertrudt is currently outside her house, spreading mud over a raft of graffiti scrawled along her walls. If any of the PCs are literate and can read Reikspiel, they may discern the following messages, which can also be found painted, written, or carved into many other structures throughout Pfeifeldorf:

"Turn your soul over to Sigmar reborn."

"Tread with wisdom or wisdom will tread on you."

"May Karl-Child bless and watch over us all, because Karl-Franz has not."

"Shudder, false pretenders! Weep and wail, for judgment has arrived!"

Frau Gertrudt is a behemoth of a woman, standing fully 6 foot 4 inches tall and nearly as broad. Having seen as many as fifty-three summers (the truth of the matter is, she lost count a few years back), she is impatient, gruff, and does not suffer fools lightly. Despite her imposing exterior, she is respected by most of the villagers, who are awed by her sharp mind and many years and often seek out her advice on matters large and small. She thus has her finger firmly on the pulse of the entire village and would be an important source of information for the PCs, if she didn't thoroughly distrust strangers.

As the PCs approach, Frau Gertrudt is busy cursing those members of the Crusade who were responsible for the scrawling on her walls. She peers angrily at the tallest approaching PC and asks,

> *"What do you want? I don't know any of you lot. Stragglers from that damned Crusade, are you? Oh ho, is that Dwali skulking about back there? What, are you running with outsiders now? Too good for the likes of us Pfeifeldorfers, eh? A pox on the lot of you."*

If there is any hesitation in responding, Gertrudt's frown deepens into a scowl and she continues:

> *"Well? Out with it. Why are you loit'rin around my house? I've a lot of things to do today and yer not on the list."*

When it becomes apparent the PCs are here on Lauer's orders, Frau Gertrudt becomes even more irritated. Looking over their shoulders (and heads too, most likely) toward the Steward's office, she says,

> *"So that nitwit is pawning me off on a bunch of strangers, eh? I see what's happening here."*

She looks back at the PCs.

> *"What makes you think you can find my Gretta? She's been four days gone already."*

Regardless of their answer, Gertrudt sighs.

> *"It disappeared around back, follow me. Mind your boots if you like 'em clean, there's mud."*

Frau Gertrudt leads the PCs to the coop behind her house. She counts the chickens one by one*:*

> *"Agnes, Otilia, Genevieve, Irmel, and there's Hans over there."*

She turns to the PCs.

> *"You don't see Gretta anywhere, do you? Some rotten blighter stole her, that's why. And it wasn't that bloody Crusade either, if that's what you're thinking. Animals keep on disappearing, and the Crusade is three days gone. So I want to know who took Gretta. What are you waiting for? There's the henhouse. Give the place a good once over, but you leave everythin' just like ye found it. I got my eye on you."*

With this, Gertrudt walks to the side of her house and begins mudding over the graffiti once more. Good as her word, she never takes her eyes off the PCs.

Gertrudt's Henhouse

A careful inspection of the chicken coop turns up just one solitary clue. A **Routine (+10) Search Test** (if none of the PCs are successful, give the information to the PC with the lowest roll) reveals a group of flies seem to be drawn to one particular bundle of hay in the far corner of the coop. Lifting the bundle reveals a small streak of blood. A **Follow Trail Test** leads eastward, before it ends at a broken fence bordering Old Man Eysen's property. A **Challenging (–10) Search Test** reveals several brittle, purple fibres caught on one of the sharp edges of the broken wood.

At this point, the PCs should have some inkling that the chicken has met a foul end and turn their attention back toward Frau Gertrudt. Some common questions are answered in the sidebar, **Questions for the Lady.**

After questioning Frau Gertrudt, the PCs should have two leads: Old Man Eysen and Reinhardt Neytz. It's possible the PCs will want to stop investigating here, as they've *"made a show of it."* If so, Dwali peers up from his papers and informs them neither Zecharius Lauer nor Frau Gertrudt will find their efforts acceptable until they at least converse with the two people Gertrudt spoke of—Dwali is acutely aware of the temperament of both the Frau and the Steward. After saying this, if none of the PCs make a remark that can be construed to be an insult, he goes right back to scribbling in his notebook.

Old Man Eysen

In contrast to Frau Gertrudt, who still has her wits about her, Old Man Eysen has seen nearly sixty summers and his mind is starting to fray. He has been known as "Old Man Eysen" for so long no one remembers his first name, not even Eysen himself. Additionally, he is notoriously hard of hearing and never understands spoken language correctly the first time, even if it is shouted directly into his gigantic "hearing horn" (which, in any case, is so heavy he often leaves it on his doorstep). Consequently many townsfolk have given up talking to Eysen at all, which suits the old man just fine.

Unfortunately, Old Man Eysen is nearly blind as well—his pupils appear a dull white instead of the normal black. None of this prevents him from getting up every morning to care for his small farm, but his forgetful nature often means he performs the same chore twice and sometimes three times over. Good-natured villagers have taken to leaving him anonymous care baskets at night—anonymous, of course, so they don't have to talk to him in the morning, which is a difficult task in the best of times.

Eysen can be found working in his fields planting seeds. It doesn't matter which season it is—Eysen has long since ceased keeping track and his "seeds" are mostly small rocks anyway. His hands are filthy—but little more so than the rest of his body; Eysen despises water and needs both hands to count the number of years it has been since he has taken a bath. A **Routine (+10) Perception Test** grants a glimpse of freshly healed whip scars criss-crossing his back, seen through Eysen's torn working clothes. He brushes any questions about the scars away with a wave of his hand: *"Not worth a mention."*

The majority of his planting area seems to have been trampled flat by many feet, and large areas have been used, apparently very recently, as camping sites, with bent and flattened plant stalks strewn around seemingly at random. A brief survey of the area reveals the remains of several fire pits,

Questions for the Lady

The PCs will likely have plenty of questions for Frau Gertrudt. Here is a list of some of the more common ones.

Does anyone in town have any reason to dislike you? Anyone bear a grudge? Against me? What are you implying? Of course not.

Have you crossed anyone recently? No. And as far as I know, neither has Gretta.

Was anyone at or around your home at the time of the chicken's disappearance? Now that you mention it, like as not Old Man Eysen was workin' his fields—those ones, right across from mine. Might be worth having a chat with him.

Is anyone in town particularly fond of your chickens? Of course, they're the envy of Pfeifeldorf. But come to think of it, Herr Neytz the Bailiff had a hungry look in his eye that's disappeared a few nights past. You don't suppose he pinched one during his rounds?

Where can we find Herr Neytz? He's usually playing cards at the Wet Whistle. If he's got my chicken, you just let me know and I'll take care of the rest.

What's all that writing on the outside of your house? That damned Crusade passed through here last week. Not a care for anyone in the world 'cept themselves. I ain't too bad off, but they nearly destroyed Eysen's whole farm, what with their camping and their tromping and their carryin' on.

and one sizable portion of the fence surrounding Eysen's lands has been broken through. Charred wood found in the fire pits matches the timber from the broken fence. Clearly, a horde of people recently passed through here and left quite a mess in their wake. Eysen is, of course, oblivious to the state of his fields.

Eysen does not have much useful information for the PCs; see the box, **Bringing Eysen to Life.** The only relevant clue he can offer—assuming, of course, he even understands what the PCs are after—is a torn piece of cloth he stumbled onto while planting seeds three days ago, the morning after the chicken disappeared. Before he reveals this piece of information, the PCs have to somehow make Eysen understand two things: one of Frau Gertrudt's chickens has disappeared and this disappearance occurred a few days ago. Only once Eysen comprehends both of these pieces of information (which typically requires acting the conversation out with many hand gestures and possibly drawings in the dirt), will he reveal the torn piece of cloth.

If the PCs entirely fail to convey this information, or if they conclude too quickly Eysen is not a useful source of information, grant them each a **Challenging (–10) Perception Test**. Passing this test allows them to spot the torn piece of cloth protruding slightly from Eysen's pocket.

The cloth piece bears a repeating mark of what appears to be an ancient family crest or heraldry: a gold-trimmed shield with a purple background encasing a gold lion rampant (see **Handout #5**). A **Very Hard (–30) Academic Knowledge (Heraldry) Test** identifies the crest as being associated with the Hollenbach family, a useful discovery and aids the PCs greatly in later research about the family. (See **Back to Gephardt** on page 53.)

Eysen is quite fond of the piece of cloth and believes it brings him good luck, so his memory is uncharacteristically keen regarding when he found it (four days ago) and where it was (hanging from a broken piece of fence wood). He does not give it up without some type of compensation. He has no use for money, but he has a soft spot for pie. He agrees to exchange his good luck charm for a slice of Francine Arouet's famous Swamp Pigeon Pie—frog being the key ingredient—which can be obtained by visiting her at the **Wet Whistle,** the town's only tavern.

Of course, the PCs may take the low road and simply steal it from him. This act, while mean-spirited, is likely to be successful. Eysen cannot put up much resistance, and likely forgets about both the cloth and the thievery within the hour (he certainly won't remember talking to the PCs in any case). There is, however, a chance such thievery will be witnessed by one of the townsfolk. Many of them are out and about, busy cleaning in the wake of the disaster left by the passage of the Crusade of the Child, and the people of Pfeifeldorf are nothing if not notorious gossips. If witnessed, news of this terrible theft quickly spreads throughout the town, and the PCs may find the villagers have suddenly become silent at best, downright uncooperative or even hostile at worst.

However, if the PCs take precautions to avoid being seen, there will likely be no ill consequences for such boorish behaviour.

Bringing Eysen to Life

Old Man Eysen's eyes, ears, and mind are not what they once were. Always squinting without receiving any benefit for his efforts, he often mistakes people for coat racks or trees and treats them accordingly. He is able to make out large shapes as well as lights and darks. If Eysen realises the amorphous blob in front of him is another person, he has no qualms about placing his dirty hands all over the person's face in order to get some idea of what he or she looks like.

He never hears bits of dialogue correctly the first time but cheerfully carries on with any interpretation that sounds vaguely similar, even if it doesn't seem to make sense; as a matter of fact, Eysen figured out a long time ago that conversations tend to be shorter and people leave him alone a lot more quickly if those conversations do not make any sense. He is particularly fond of food (since taste is the one sense that still seems to be functioning normally), and often falls back on favourite meals or foods when he frankly doesn't understand a word the other person is saying. Eysen is pragmatic and cheerful but, above all, brief. He has work to do.

Have fun with the conversation. Play on rhymes as a guide for Eysen's misunderstandings, and steer the topic toward food. Last of all, if the conversation seems to be going too well, Eysen simply falls asleep. Some examples follow.

Do you mind if we search your house? Ain't had trouble with no mouse since I got me a cat. Took care of the mouse all right, but then it up an' went missin' jest last week.

Frau Gertrudt lost her chicken. Sorry. Ain't got no pickle here.

Were you working your fields a few nights ago? Need to be healed, do ya? Way Temple's across town.

Did anybody suspicious come around here four days ago? ZZZzzzZZZZzzzzzzZZZZzzz.

Did you see or hear any—ah, what's the use. Don't got no juice, jest milk. He'p yourself, there's plenty more where that came from—that is, 'less that durn goat wandered off agin.

The Wet Whistle

The Wet Whistle is Pfeifeldorf's only tavern, a small three-bedroom building run by proprietor Mertin Kleinschrott. Outside the tavern the PCs are met by a Crusade of the Child zealot, who warns them against entering the *"den of iniquity"* and offers them salvation if only they would heed the wisdom of Sigmar Reborn. He has no useful information to impart.

Herr Kleinschrott is a reedy wisp of a man, gaunt and drawn, who seems to be suffering from some wasting disease. From time to time, he coughs softly into his filthy kerchief, which he keeps tucked away for just such an occasion in his left breast pocket. He believes his time in the world is drawing short, and so is preparing his rather portly young son Pauls to take over when he passes away. Pauls is a bit of a mischief-maker but is keenly interested in visitors—especially adventurers—and their stories of places far away from the confines of Pfeifeldorf.

If the PCs spend any amount of time with the tavern-keep, he asks them first where they hail from, and second if they have seen a mangy brown dog in their travels. When they answer in the negative, he remarks:

> *"Shame. Used to be there was a quiet little dog what laid claim to my patrons' leftafters. Haven't seen the mutt in almost a week, and I'm startin' to miss the thing. Anyway, there's nothing for it. What'll you be havin', then?"*

If the PCs inquire about the missing animals, Kleinschrott leans in conspiratorially, looking as if he's about to whisper something, and then coughs in the nearest PC's face. *"I'm sorry,"* he says, then removes his moist kerchief to wipe the PC off. If the PC allows this, he or she must make a **Challenging (–10) Toughness Test** or contract the *Weevil Cough* (see *WFRP*). After apologizing profusely time and time again, he grants the PCs his insight into the missing animals:

> *"'Tis a blood cult's what I hear. Sweeping through the town, turnin' otherwise right folk to the dark forces—more'n likely that's what went wrong with our baker. First they do things to animals—terrible, terrible things—then they move onto people. Could be anyone in town, though I wager the witch hunters'll be along soon enough to sort it all out."*

Unfortunately, this is all Kleinschrott knows. For a tavern-keep, he is remarkably ill informed on the comings and goings of the people in Pfeifeldorf—of course, harbouring a chronic wet cough makes keeping up with current events somewhat difficult.

The tavern itself is in good repair except for the odd scrawling on its exterior, which is similar in nature to the messages on Frau Gertrudt's house. The interior appears as if it has survived the passage of the Crusade of the Child relatively unscathed, and indeed, instructed to *"avoid entering that den of iniquity,"* the cultists largely ignored the place. It is one of a very few buildings in Pfeifeldorf that remains much as it was before the Crusade passed through.

Those villagers commonly found inside the Whistle are all described in detail as follows.

Reinhardt Neytz

Male Human Bailiff, ex-Soldier

Reinhardt Neytz is a large and imposing man, though not quite as large or as imposing as Frau Gertrudt. Neytz is a teetotaller and refuses alcoholic beverages of all kinds but enjoys the company of the villagers he finds in the tavern and is often cajoled into telling stories of his days in the Imperial Army.

Neytz has two flaws: he is extremely competitive at card games and he cannot hold his liquor (this is the true reason behind his aversion to alcohol, though he prefers to couch his abstinence in moral terms, as a test of his willpower and singular devotion to Sigmar). Indeed, even the first sip of ale serves to blunt his inhibitions. He has often woken up missing several hours' worth of memories after imbibing a few beers, only to be reminded (sometimes very rudely) that he blurted out many things that should have been kept quiet. His post as bailiff makes him privy to many private and confidential matters, and he is quite aware he would be ruined if he ever loosened his tongue on any of these sensitive matters. Therefore, to ensure his continued gainful employment, he has striven to abstain entirely from wine and spirits. This abstinence makes the pub a dangerous place to pass his time, but so far, he has been successful in his efforts to avoid alcohol while still entertaining—and being entertained by—his fellow villagers; and he is loath to give it up.

The PCs' first visit with Neytz should meet with polite rejection. He is currently engaged in a rousing game of *Bloody Royals*—a popular card game imported from Bretonnia, where it is illegal—and refuses to dispense any information, even when informed that they are on official business from the town steward. If pressed, he becomes blunter: plain and simply, they are outsiders, he does not trust them, and he will not engage them in anything more than the briefest and most superficial of conversations. If Lauer has any questions for Neytz, he informs the PCs, Lauer can ask him personally.

To unlock the Bailiff's lips, the PCs must at least discover he becomes open and gregarious when drunk (Francine Arouet has this piece of knowledge, and happens to be sitting at a different table in the tavern), and then come up with a suitable plan to get the good Bailiff to imbibe. The most successful of such plans would involve mingling alcohol with Neytz's weakness for cards. For example, a PC might loudly boast that he could best anyone in the tavern at a game of *Bloody Royals*, with one caveat: a large glass of mead must be consumed by the loser each round until one of them passes out (PCs with the **Consume Alcohol Skill** will be particularly successful). Neytz would struggle with this for a while as his abstinence and sense of self-preservation do battle against his competitive nature, but if his honour as a card player is impugned, or if it is suggested that he is in any way afraid to test his mettle in such a fashion, he announces that he will join the fray immediately.

The card game can be resolved in one of two ways: consecutive opposed **Gamble Tests** on which Neytz is granted a bonus of +20, or actually playing cards (spades or hearts are close enough) during the game. If the PCs win two rounds out of any three, the imbibed alcohol has its intended effect on Neytz and he opens up quite uncharacteristically. He tells the PCs he saw Walther Schnee, his reeve, walking around past curfew four nights ago, which was strange because they take alternating patrols, every other night. Neytz then recites three or four eyebrow-raising stories about a few of Pfeifeldorf's most prominent citizens, after which he belches loudly and promptly passes out. Any NPCs who happen to be playing sit there briefly in stunned silence, then slowly gather their coins and filter out of the tavern.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
41	38	39 (3)	30 (3)	40	39	33	36

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Law) (Int), Animal Care (Int), Charm (Fel), Command (Fel), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int), Dodge Blow (Ag), Gamble (Int), Gossip (Fel +10), Intimidate (S +10), Perception (Int), Read/Write (Int), Ride (Ag), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int)

Talents: Acute Hearing, Excellent Vision, Public Speaking, Quick Draw, Rapid Reload, Specialist Weapon Group (Gunpowder), Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Stun

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 13

Armour (Light): Full Leather Armour (Head 1, Arms 1, Body 1, Legs 1)

Weapons: Hand Weapon (Sword) (1d10+3), Firearm (1d10+4; Range 24/48; Reload 2 Full; Impact, Unreliable)

Trappings

Reinhardt dresses in quality clothing, impeccably tailored by a family friend living just outside of Altdorf. The maker's mark is in the stitching—a large X. He owns a horse named Ruben, which he keeps in a local stable. He's rather fond of his horse and can sometimes be found feeding it apples.

Representative Phrases

"I don't speak to strange folk."

"You have a problem with your ears, son? I said I don't talk to strange folk."

"It would be in your best interest to continue on your way."

Feelings About the Crusade

"Boatload of fanatics, that's what they are. Cut the town in two with their talk of salvation and Sigmar reborn. Never been so busy in all my life. You going to ante in, son, or are you just going to stare at your cards all day?"

Francine Arouet

Female Human Agitator

Francine-Marie Arouet is a Bretonnian in exile, forced to emigrate to the Empire after publishing a rather pointed but popular political tract decrying Bretonnia's *"execrable caste system."* She has railed against the Bretonnian form of government for years, and is quite talkative about it to anyone who listens. Arouet is a remarkably witty and charming individual who is currently lying low, hoping memories of her past endeavours fade so she may return to Bretonnia to resume printing her tracts. Failing this, she plans to move to Marienburg soon and assume a pen name under which to publish pamphlets she can legally export to Bretonnia proper. She views her stay in Pfeifeldorf as an opportunity to survey the rustics of the Empire, and obtain a first-hand view of the Empire's political system as it affects the common man. Thus far, she is impressed with the lot of the common folk in the Empire relative to their counterparts in Bretonnia but still decries what she deems a very artificial class line between the nobility and the peasant. She speaks fluent Reikspiel, with a hint of a Bretonnian accent.

Representative Phrases

"Eet is dangeroos to be right when ze Emperor is wrong."

"I 'ave made but one prayer to ze Lady, a very short one: 'O Lady, make ma enemies ridiculous.' And ze Lady granted eet."

"If Sigmar did not exist, eet would be necessary to invent eem."

"To succeed in Bretonnia eet is not enough to be stupeed, you must be well-mannered also."

Feelings About the Crusade

"Those 'oo can make you believe ze outrageous, can make you commit atrocities."

Using Arouet

Arouet is well aware of the effect of alcohol on Reinhardt Neytz from the last time he went on a "binge"—three ales, six months ago—and told the inhabitants of the **Wet Whistle** that Niklas Hägen (the village Miller) had been fined recently for mixing stale old grain with the new, fresh batch in order to maximise his profit. The next day, Hägen was nearly run out of town. Eventually things quieted down, but Hägen is still regarded as untrustworthy and has become quite bitter about the whole affair.

Arouet is also a bit of a gossip; she is quite happy to chat with the PCs and sees them as fascinating compared to the rest of the dreary inhabitants of Pfeifeldorf. Her current favourite topic is the same as most other villagers: the suicide of Caspar Schmidt, town baker and prominent merchant.

She freely converses about most topics and people. If the PCs mention her Blood Sausage and Bratwurst Pie (as requested by Old Man Eysen), she states she has just finished baking one and would be happy to give them a slice if they would do a simple favour for her: track down a specific tome on Empire History (see **On Reinhardt Neytz,** following). If they do return with the book, she is so grateful she will offer a tip on how to get Neytz to open up to them, free of charge.

On Caspar Schmidt

"Old Caspar cracked shortly after ze Crusade of the Child passed through. You are aware 'e committed suicide not two days past? Hanged eemself by ze neck—terrible way to go. Eet was religion zat brought about 'is downfall. Ee took to ze Crusade like a drowning man to a piece of driftwood, and it changed 'im. Now you'll 'ear rumours zat 'e was also in a blood cult, and zat's what drove eem to it. In ze absence of any evidence, I would dismiss such rumours as ze idle gossip of people with too much time on zer hands."

On Frau Schmidt

"A charming woman devastated by 'er husband's suicide. Try as I might, I 'ave not been able to cheer 'er. I suspect only ze passage of time will salve that particular wound. You're not thinking of talking to 'er, are you? She isn't taking visitors now because she is in ze mourning, but it may be 'elpful to bring a gift as a condolence offering. And by all means, do choose your words carefully."

On Frau Gertrudt

"A woman of ze earth. Don't cross her."

On Old Man Eysen

"Poor sod. Lennhardt von Speier 'ad eem whipped some months back for crossing 'is path and tripping eem up—more evidence of ze cruelty inherent in ze class system. We tried to take up a collection for eem, spearheaded, oddly enough, by Lennhardt's brother Lucas. Eysen took our brass pennies, all right, but I'm fairly certain 'e planted them. Perhaps he will reap gold crowns, non?"

On Reinhardt Neytz

"Does 'is duty well enough. Neytz 'as a weakness for ze cards but thinks 'imself a better player than 'e actually is. Ee is very reticent but easy to get talking if you know how."

If pressed on how to get him to open up, Arouet demurs, *"I'd be 'appy to 'elp you out if you'd do a favour for me."* She explains she is in need of a particular tome about Imperial history. Unfortunately, the only library in this town (apart from the inaccessible library owned by the Von Speiers) is Johannes Gephardt's personal library, and Gephardt won't let her borrow any more books—he discovered she was using her research to pen political tracts and Gephardt wants no trouble. If the PCs would kindly borrow the book for her, she tells them how to get Neytz to open up. Arouet agrees to return the book within 24 hours; she is looking for a very specific passage and she can transfer that to her own papers in a brief amount of time. The book is *A Right & Honourable Accounting of the Empire's History: Provincial Perspectives from the Common Man,* by Trubert Steiner.

On Walther Schnee

"Ze town reeve thinks too 'ighly of eemself for 'aving such a low intellect. Take ze approach of ze rest of ze village and avoid eem."

On The Von Speier Family

"Lorentz, ze father, doesn't oppress the villagers overmuch. I am afraid that may end when Lennhardt, 'is eldest son, takes up ze reins. Ee has a cruel streak, and in any case appears more interested in wine and women than ze rigours of running a village. Lucas is more competent and compassionate. I truly believe Old Man Eysen would be out on 'is ear tomorrow—ee doesn't contribute to ze community and ee's wasting some valuable farmland—if not for Lucas's pleadings on 'is behalf."

On Zecharius Lauer

"Ee's a fair enough Steward, I suppose. Does 'is job and that's enough."

On Johannes Gephardt

"Brilliant man. Did you know ee used to be ze Imperial Mathematician? Why ee's come to Pfeifeldorf, I'll never know."

On Niklas Hägen

"Just like a merchant to take advantage of 'is privileged position to squeeze profits from ze working folk. Word of advice: remove all your jewellery before shaking 'is hand."

On Kristoff Fochtenberger

"Our town priest seemed very devoted to this village and its people before ze coming of ze Crusade of ze Child. And then, quite suddenly, 'ee left his temple and position of many years to follow after zem. The Gods can be fickle masters indeed. Now I must admit that I find your religions more than a bit baffling. Weren't the priest and this new Crusade both followers of Sigmar?"

Other NPCs in the Wet Whistle

A few other NPCs mill about the Wet Whistle, but none are important. Neytz plays cards with three nondescript individuals—Franz, Rolf, and Pindel—who do not respond to any inquiries. An empty seat stands in the far corner; Kleinschrott lost his minstrel to the Crusade of the Child. There is a drunkard at the bar—Frank—who is fully in his cups; his responses consist of gibberish and the occasional belch. A few others—feel free to make up names and details as needed—loiter around in groups but shy away from any PC interaction, preferring the company of people they know.

Johannes Gephardt and his Estimable Collection

Johannes Gephardt is a retired Empire Mathematician and easily the most famous person in town. Surprisingly accessible, he entertains all comers but prefers the company of other scholars. He is currently engaged in studying the motions of the stars and planets in an attempt to ascertain any pattern to their cosmic travels in the form of regular equations. Sadly, he lost most of his sight to a childhood illness (which also littered his face with pockmark scars), and so observations through his personal telescope are not as detailed as he would like. He is also writing a book that rails against the collegiate system of magical training. Gephardt believes knowledge should not be sequestered away, available only to those who happen to have the talent for magic use; instead, it should be freely open and accessible by all who seek it. Only in this way can the Empire move forward, out of darkness, and into a time of enlightenment and progress.

The majority of the villagers avoid him on two counts: They are intimidated by his knowledge of the inner workings of the world, and they suspect because of the prominent pockmarks on his face that he is a Mutant. In point of fact, if not for his fame and prestige within the Emperor's Court, the superstitious people of Pfeifeldorf would not have tolerated his presence.

Gephardt welcomes the PCs graciously, whether they come announced or not. He asks Dwali how he is enjoying the brief respite from working as his scribe, but Dwali is too busy scribbling in his notebook to respond.

Gephardt is quite used to (and somewhat bemused by) this behaviour, and orders his servant to bring his guests some tea.

Gaining the Book

Gaining the book they are after requires some finesse. Although Gephardt is a gracious host, his most prized possession is his library and he is loath to loan any of its volumes out, especially to people he does not know (or who are just passing through town). The PCs must meet two requirements in order for Gephardt to feel comfortable about loaning out his book.

They must give assurance the book will be returned in the same condition in which it was received. Leaving an item of equal or greater worth, say around 30*gc*, is the only way of satisfying this condition. (Gephardt, however, tends to overvalue his books, for sentimental reasons.) The item is taken by Gephardt's servant and is returned upon receipt of the book.

They must give a very good reason for desiring the book in the first place. Scholarly research is a winning bet; Gephardt believes in the free sharing of information for the greater good and does not refuse the request of a fellow researcher. In order for Gephardt to believe the PCs are interested in research, they must demonstrate some knowledge of the subject in question. Empire History is not one of Gephardt's areas of expertise, but he asks the PC in question to tell him, in detail, about the particular area of history in which the PC claims expertise. Convincing Gephardt takes a **Very Easy (+30) Academic Knowledge (History) Test.** If not, roleplay it out. Make the PC sweat for a bit, and then judge Gephardt's reaction based on the performance.

If the PCs show Gephardt the piece of torn cloth and ask him what it means, he obtains his glasses and scrutinises the fragment for a time.

> *"Purple pigment—now that's expensive. This scrap probably belonged to someone of noble blood, or perhaps a particularly well-to-do merchant. The weave looks ancient; this pattern was common a few hundred years ago but is largely abandoned today. The fibres are brittle, too, which supports the old age hypothesis. This imprinted repeating pattern is probably a heraldic crest of some sort. Where did you obtain it, if I may ask?"*

Regardless of the answer given, Gephardt admits he is intrigued. He informs the PCs Caspar Schmidt approached him to study heraldry in the days preceding his suicide, and he allowed him access to his library, though Schmidt did not ask to borrow any books. Neither does Gephardt know which books Schmidt looked through while he was here. Unfortunately, he informs the PCs, all of his books on heraldry are arranged alphabetically, and are quite thick, with small print; therefore, randomly looking through the tomes for a heraldic pattern could take hours to days. To illustrate the point, he removes a gargantuan tome from the middle shelf titled, *On the Mark of the Noble: History & Heraldry of Selected Bloodlines* by Tomas Aberlin. He opens it to page 489 (more or less the middle of the book) and removes a magnifying glass to read the text. *"Feel free to peruse it. The search for knowledge is intoxicating, isn't it?"*

Searching the text with a magnifying glass requires 2d10 hours. Gephardt recommends they attempt to associate a name with the crest—should they find a family name, he could be of more assistance.

Getting to Know Walther Schnee

If the PCs are successful in obtaining information from Reinhardt Neytz, their next target may be Walther Schnee, the town reeve (which is the Pfeifeldorfian term for "bailiff's assistant"). He is not much taller than Dwali, but he is full of puffed-up self -importance at the authority he believes is granted by virtue of his position. This superiority is reflected in his speech; he tends to use overly complex words he has heard from visiting nobility but does not quite understand, and always refers to himself by his position instead of his name: *"Salutations, foreign personages. Pfeifeldorf's reeve is disposed to identify your inclinations."* As a matter of fact, it may be prudent to keep a thesaurus handy whilst playing the part of Schnee. Townsfolk tend to avoid him for the same reason they avoid Old Man Eysen: Carrying on a meaningful conversation with him is difficult at best.

This perceived self-importance also grants him an aura of invincibility: Schnee cannot be intimidated unless he is actually wounded. Therefore, ignore the results of any **Intimidation Tests,** at least initially (although he crumbles after a successful torture session). Schnee truly believes he is insulated from harm by virtue of his position in the community, and that belief has been reinforced during his entire tenure as reeve. With the villagers, he brooks no disrespect because he knows he can make their lives miserable. With unknowns such as the PCs, however, this aura of invincibility can be quite temporary. He puts up an initial bravado but cowers quickly if he perceives any real threat to life or limb. He is immune to small bribes (anything less than 5*gc*), being afraid to lose his job over so meagre an amount. He is also quite suspicious of large bribes (anything greater than 5*gc*); he realises he is not important enough to warrant such treatment, and so views any large bribe as some sort of trap.

So the only way to get the truth out of Schnee is to threaten him, and then back it up with real force. He initially responds with his usual bluster, *"Personages of malevolent intent! You may discontinue hostile endeavours; the reeve is not easily unmanned!"* He then threatens back: He states with conviction he will report any actions the PCs take against him to the town steward and his immediate superior, the bailiff. In reality, however, he does no such thing; he believes if either the Steward or the Bailiff ever find out about his cowardice, he would lose his job. If the PCs use any real force (for example if they cause 1 or more Wounds), Schnee must pass a **Will Power Test,** modified by –10 for each Wound the PCs inflict.

If he passes the test, or if the PCs never go so far as to actually hurt him, he states what Lucas von Speier has paid him to tell any who ask: *"The reeve did indeed visualise the personage of one Lennhardt von Speier, fowl in hand, perambulating in the opposite direction of Frau Gertrudt's abode."*

If asked why he did not report this to his superior Neytz, he responds: *"The Von Speiers are the proprietors of Pfeifeldorf by virtue of charter. Is it an offence to steal what one owns oneself?"*

If he fails the test, he breaks down completely and tells the truth. He is so nervous even his curious speech pattern disappears: *"All I know is that I saw Caspar Schmidt walking near Eysen's farm on the night in question. I stopped him and he told me he was just out for some fresh air. I still don't know what he was doing, but he's an important person in town and I didn't have any reason to bring him in, so I didn't. Can I go now?"*

If asked if Caspar had a hen in his possession, he answers, *"I don't know, perhaps. Can I go now?"*

If asked why he didn't tell the bailiff about Caspar's nocturnal wanderings, he says, *"I didn't think Caspar did anything wrong. Only a few days later, when a lot more animals started disappearing, did I think maybe he was involved in a blood cult, all right? By then, I couldn't report it because suspicion would fall on me for waiting so long. I thought it best to just not mention anything. Can I go now?"*

If asked what he was doing out at night when he was not supposed to be on patrol, he replies, *"The Crusade of the Child was causing quite a stir over at Eysen's place, so I was watching them to make sure there wasn't any trouble. Can I go now?"*

Finally, if Schnee first gave the false answer first and then under duress gave the true answer, the PCs may wish to inquire why he lied the first time around. His answer: *"I was paid to say that to anyone who asked me about that night."* Who paid him? *"Lucas von Speier. I don't know why."*

Schnee has no further information. When released by the PCs, he brushes himself off and says quite calmly, *"The reeve castigates such nefarious actions with the utmost opprobrium."* He then walks off with as much dignity as he can muster, quietly unsure if what he has just said makes any sense at all.

For the purpose of defence (he will not initiate an attack), Schnee has WS 33, Toughness 30, Will Power 41, and Wounds 12. He has a dagger (1d10–3). He's not wearing any armour.

Representative Phrases

"What ill wind blows you fine people to Pfeifeldorf?"

"The reeve is disturbed at your confrontational deportment. Disturbed indeed, though not, I hasten to add, unnerved."

"Undertake to do your worst, malevolent characters! The reeve cowers before no man!"

Feelings about the Crusade

"The reeve is predisposed to accord all deities admiration, and in times of necessitation, veneration."

Other NPCs in Town

The only other important NPCs in Pfeifeldorf (other than Frau Schmidt, who is detailed in the following section) are Niklas Hägen and his wife, and Frau Fochtenberger, wife of the Sigmarite priest who left to follow after the cult. None of these people have any information regarding the disappearance of Gertrudt's hen nor of Schmidt's suicide. Frau Fochtenberger says she met briefly with Frau Schmidt on the day of the suicide, but they simply discussed their own husband's peculiar devotion to the new Crusade. Frau Fochtenberger recommends the PCs talk to Frau Schmidt if they have any questions, but she tells them to please be diplomatic.

Are We Done Yet?

The PCs may well feel their job is done and return to Lauer with a report. If so, Lauer excitedly asks them for the name of the thief. If the PCs produce the name of Caspar Schmidt, Lauer asks what evidence they have to support that assertion. He does not accept Schnee's word alone, *"and besides,"* he points out, *"Schnee never said of a certainty that Caspar had the chicken in his possession,"* but instructs the PCs to investigate the Schmidt household. If requested, he grants them a writ, which enables easy entry into the house, and allows them to investigate each room for evidence connected with Frau Gertrudt's missing hen.

If they decide to pursue conversations with either Lennhardt or Lucas von Speier, Lauer informs them they require letters of introduction to speak with the nobles of Pfeifeldorf—even in the case of noble PCs. Unfortunately, he cannot provide them, as the younger Von Speiers only see those who come recommended by other nobles (the head of the family, Lorentz von Speier, would see people introduced by the Steward, but Lorentz is currently too ill to entertain visitors). Lauer recommends they investigate Schmidt first but, if pressed, recommends they see a noble friend of the Von Speiers, a member of the Blauesblut. *"He's a sad sort, that one. Wendell Ott's his name."* Should the PCs decide to go through with the conversation at this time, see **Wendell Revisited** on page 53.

At this point, Lauer begins to suspect there may be some truth to the rumours of a blood cult operating within town. Instead of mobilising his own resources, however, he is content for now to allow the PCs to continue their investigations—and take responsibility for any problems that arise should witch hunters come calling.

Caspar Schmidt's Untimely Demise

Investigating the Schmidt suicide is more difficult than tackling the Frau Gertrudt affair. Townsfolk have no more information than that given in the **Rumour Mill** sidebar on page 45. Gaining entry to the crime scene without authorisation (which certainly will not be forthcoming from Lauer unless the PCs present him with Schnee's accusations) is dangerous. It requires waiting until after dark, and then either breaking a window or picking the lock at the front door. If no precautions are taken whilst breaking the window (such as wrapping the weapon in cloth to muffle the noise) or if the lock requires more than 5 rounds to pick, the activity is noticed by the bailiff, Reinhardt Neytz or his reeve, Walther Schnee. Neither is happy to find the PCs fooling about the Schmidt home, especially if Lauer has already told them the Schmidt affair is off limits. Should they gain entrance, they must be very quiet in order to avoid waking Frau Schmidt, who is inside. She has an **Intelligence** of 42 for the purposes of any **Perception Tests,** which are however made at a –30 between dusk and dawn, when she is sleeping (further modifications can be based on how much noise the PCs seem to be making). Upon awakening to intruders in her home, she screams and runs directly for the bailiff's quarters in a panic.

There are only two safe (and legal) methods for gaining entry into the Schmidt household: obtain a writ of investigation from Zecharius Lauer, or approach the widow Schmidt directly. The first is detailed in the preceding section, but the second is not easy, as Frau Schmidt is in mourning and not accepting visitors, especially total strangers. However, the Schmidts do not have servants and thus there is only the Frau herself to answer the door (a fact the other villagers reveal on questioning). Thus, the PCs can gain her attention rather easily—but can they gain entrance into her home?

The Poor, Unfortunate Frau

Clara Schmidt is a not-unattractive woman in her early forties. Usually vivacious and full of spark and vigour, she has felt her husband's death deeply and is uncharacteristically sombre and restrained in her interactions with others. She is a trusting soul, preferring to yield strangers the benefit of her doubt until they prove otherwise. She is also sharp and clever, and it is this intellectual acuity that makes coming to grips with her husband's suicide so difficult: she simply cannot make sense of it.

To gain entrance into her abode, the PCs need only present the writ of investigation given them by Lauer. At first, this puts Frau Schmidt in a foul mood, as she believed the investigation over. Slowly, however, she warms

to the idea as she does not agree with the results of the first investigation and actually welcomes a second. This warming process is helped by kind and compassionate actions and comments, and hindered by arrogant, condescending ones.

Otherwise, the PCs have to bring a gift; she shuns all others during her period of mourning but considers it impolite to turn down a gift freely given. Upon opening the door, she eyes the hands of the PCs so as not to offend any gift-givers, but if no gift is forthcoming, she politely informs the PCs she is in mourning and cannot entertain visitors. Upon seeing a gift, the PCs need to make a **Challenging (–10) Fellowship Test** in order to gain entry, modified by how eloquently they express their sympathies (including relevant skills such as **Charm**), the value of the gift, and any requests they may make to enter. Outright rudeness or inappropriate humour, such as crass things about swinging from rafters, suicide, and so on, cause Frau Schmidt to swiftly close the door—after accepting the gift, of course. Passing the **Fellowship Test** gains entry into the Schmidt abode, and the Frau disappears shortly to bring the PCs some tea, granting them a few minutes to look around.

Inside, a pall hangs over the main room. It is large and lit by only a few candles that cast long, dark shadows across crevices and corners. The ceiling is a meshwork of logs, propped up in triangular fashion above a huge central crossbeam. Toward the middle of this crossbeam is a small groove where the wood stain has been rubbed off, a lone scuffmark in an otherwise pristine piece of lumber.

Frau Schmidt has no choice but to entertain in the very room in which her husband died (she would, of course, prefer to be elsewhere, but there is no other room capable of accommodating so many guests). If the widow catches a PC looking at the scuffmark on the central crossbeam, she says forthrightly, *"That is where Caspar hanged himself. For the life of me I still don't understand why."* Then she looks pleadingly at the PCs and asks, *"Are you friends of his? Did you know him well? Why would he do such a thing? Was I to blame? No one has been able to give me an adequate explanation."*

Note the answer from the PCs: A flippant, sarcastic, or hurtful remark assures Frau Schmidt will not help the PCs during the rest of their investigation—she may be forced to cooperate if the PCs have Lauer's writ, but she does not volunteer any information.

After tea has been served, the Frau takes a seat. If the PCs have been kind to her, or if they have the writ of investigation, she is ready to answer any questions they may have. All of the information she possesses concerning the death of her husband is as follows.

What Really Happened

Although it is not necessary for the PCs to uncover the truth of the dark deeds that occurred in the Schmidt household, here is exactly what happened three days ago. Hearing of Caspar Schmidt's involvement in the Crusade of the Child and concerned about the ramifications for his plot to remove his brother Lennhardt from the line of succession to the Von Speier estate, Lucas von Speier arranged to hold a discussion with Caspar. Accordingly, Caspar sent his wife away so they might hold the discussion (sure to be heated) in private. During the course of this conversation, Caspar informed Lucas of his intention to repent of his crimes and reveal the plot to the townsfolk and more importantly, the town bailiff and even Lennhardt himself. Lucas cajoled, pleaded, and finally threatened Caspar but to no avail. Finally, desperate and without options, Lucas strangled Caspar in his den, and then tied a rope around his neck, hoisted his body over the main crossbeam, and set an overturned chair beneath him in a hurried attempt to make it appear that Caspar had committed suicide. Knowing full well there would be an investigation, Lucas ransacked the den in a mad rush to find any evidence that might reveal his plot against Lennhardt or his connection with Caspar and the rumoured blood cult. Unfortunately, this search was cut short by the untimely arrival of Caspar's wife, and Lucas fled out the den's window and made his way home.

She argued with her husband on the afternoon of his death about his newfound religion; she was shocked that her husband, who had never shown much interest in the Gods before, was so passionate about this particular group. He wanted to leave everything in Pfeifeldorf behind and follow after the Child, and could not be made to understand why his wife would not accompany him. He was, in fact, irrationally unshakeable in his determination to go. Frau Schmidt is haunted by a deep and lingering regret over her refusal—she believes it led directly to his suicide and would be quite grateful indeed to hear this was not the case.

A few hours after their argument diffused without resolution, Caspar met with one of the younger Von Speiers (she does not know which one) to *"discuss important business affairs."* Caspar sent her away and told her not to return for several hours. She visited with Frau Fochtenberger (wife of the town's Sigmarite priest) and commiserated about both of their husbands' sudden religious conversions to the Crusade. When Frau Schmidt returned home, she found her husband swinging from the central crossbeam. Her face pales and her voice breaks when she recounts the tale—she has yet to recover from the horror of that day.

The only other disturbance in the home was in her husband's den, which she found in total disarray. She informed Neytz immediately, who contacted Lauer.

Lauer ordered an immediate investigation into the death but spent very little time on it, telling Frau Schmidt it was an obvious suicide. He examined the den in a very cursory manner before locking it and informing the Frau he would send a representative to examine the room and log its contents. When the representative was not forthcoming, she believed the matter was closed. Now that the PCs are here, she wonders if they have come as Lauer's representative.

If presented with the piece of torn cloth from Old Man Eysen, Frau Schmidt stares at it for a time, and then mentions she overheard her husband talking about researching heraldry at Gephardt's library a day or two before his suicide. She doesn't know anything else about it, as he quickly converted to the Crusade of the Child and afterwards talked about little else.

After the PCs finish questioning Frau Schmidt, she offers to take them on a brief tour of her house. Information gained from a search of the Schmidt cottage follows.

The Scene of the Crime

By the time the PCs have an opportunity to search the Schmidt's household, it has already briefly been looked over by Lauer and thoroughly cleaned by Frau Schmidt and a group of appointed villagers. However, the cottage has yet to be thoroughly searched, and certain pieces of information remain to be found.

A successful **Search Test** yields the following: Scuffmarks on the main room's crossbeam point to where Caspar hung himself. Upon a successful **Challenging (–10) Perception Test,** a PC realise the splinters from where the rope dragged against the crossbeam are all pointing up. If this information doesn't mean anything to the PCs, have them each make **Intelligence Tests.** Those who are successful realise if Caspar had hung himself, the force of his weight on the rope would cause any resultant splinters to point downward. The only way the splinters would point up is if the rope were dragged upwards against the beam with a heavy weight already secured to it. The conclusion: Caspar did not commit suicide. He was murdered.

The door to the den is locked. Should the PCs gain entry, they find an utter mess: papers strewn everywhere, books pulled off the shelves to lie where they fell, tables and chairs overturned. Lauer has not investigated this room—he merely concluded that an argument took place that may have contributed to Schmidt's decision to commit suicide, and locked the place until he could spare either the time or manpower to clean it up.

Gaining entry to the den requires the key currently in Frau Schmidt's possession, or a quiet, successful lock-pick while she is distracted. A careful search of the den requires at least three uninterrupted hours (making the prospect of performing said search without the knowledge of Frau

Schmidt difficult to say the least). If the PCs expend all three hours, they automatically uncover each of the following clues:

- Scattered propaganda pamphlets from the Crusade of the Child (see **Handout #6**).
- A letter from Wendell Ott to Caspar stating that Lennhardt von Speier has agreed to allow him access to his extensive library on Imperial Heraldry. The word "Hollenbach" is scribbled in the margin (see **Handout #7**).
- A receipt for goods purchased recently at a Marienburg shop, marked *"one tonic to be used in case of restlessness."* Frau Schmidt knows nothing of her husband ever having trouble with insomnia: *"No, no, he always slept quite well. I am a very light sleeper, and he never stirred in all the years we were together."* She also does not know the current whereabouts of the tonic, nor has she ever seen it around the house (see **Handout #8**).

If the search is performed under time constraints, allow a single **Search Test** and grant one of the above pieces of information for every degree of success achieved—the only exception is that propaganda pamphlets for the Crusade of the Child are automatically found without effort.

A Crossroads

By the time the search is over, the PCs have several clues and may even believe their investigation to be at an end. As before, however, Lauer will not let them off the hook unless they can give him a name:

> *"You say you are finished with your investigations but you do not yet have a culprit? I believe it may take a while longer to verify your credentials. Please, you are making quite a bit of progress. Can you not see things through until the end?"*

The various clues the PCs may wish to follow up on are as follows:

- Caspar Schmidt was murdered, but no one knows who did it or why it was done. According to Frau Schmidt, however, one of the young Von Speiers was the last person to see him. To converse with either of the noble brothers, however, it is first necessary to obtain a letter of introduction through Wendell.
- Caspar Schmidt was researching the very family crest displayed on the torn piece of cloth found by Old Man Eysen, and his efforts resulted in a single word: *"Hollenbach."* The PCs have two options: to try to obtain permission through Wendell to peruse Lennhardt von Speier's heraldry library, or attempt a similar search in Johannes Gephardt's library.
- A receipt for a sleeping tonic purchased on Caspar's recent trip to Marienburg.

Unfortunately, there is no way to follow up on the sleeping tonic purchase just yet. Therefore, at this point the PCs have two choices: to attempt to obtain permission to converse with a Von Speier brother or gain access to their library through Wendell Ott, or to make a trip back to Johannes Gephardt's library to mount a search for a peculiar family crest. Both options are detailed in the following sections.

Back to Gephardt

A return visit to Gephardt, armed with the name Hollenbach, is fruitful. Gephardt removes the same massive tome he perused through earlier, but this time, he immediately turns to the Hollenbach entry. It is brief and bears an exact duplicate of the crest found on Eysen's cloth. Beneath the crest, they find the following text.

> *"The Hollenbach family once boasted of several prominent members having the direct ear of the Electoral Count of Nordland, but their fortunes were not to last. Peasants began disappearing in great numbers along the roads leading to and from the Hollenbach estates, and it was not long before several less prominent noble families accused them of trafficking in such things as Vampirism and Sorcery. Witch hunters descended on their lands on Hexenstag in 2066 and burned the entire family en masse for 'consorting with malevolent forces.' However, some believe the Hollenbachs did not rest quietly. Indeed, although Nordland's Elector Count was assured that the entire noble family had been put to flame, peasants continued to vanish for another nine years. It is notable that when a 'Hollenbach Scare' revived on the disappearance of peasants some thirty years later, many of the noble family's corpses were exhumed by order of the new Count. Each Hollenbach skeleton still had a stake embedded in its chest."*

Uncovering this information should disturb even the most hardened PC, and obtaining this knowledge triggers the final events of the chapter. It is at this moment that they receive an unexpected visitor: Lucas von Speier, whose features bear a look of harried concern. (See **Lucas Leads On.**)

Wendell Revisited

If the PCs inquire around town about how to arrange a meeting with either Von Speier brother (or if they simply ask Dwali), they receive a single answer: Wendell Ott of the Blauesblut is the only one whose letter of introduction will be recognized by either brother—apparently Wendell has some sort of relationship with the family. Therefore, all roads to the younger Von Speiers lead through Herr Ott.

If the PCs travel to Lauer asking him to write the letter, he informs them a letter coming from the town steward would do no good; his relationship is with Lorentz von Speier, the patriarch who is currently too ill to take visitors. The younger Von Speiers are independent, and have made it clear they do not wish to entertain non-nobles without first receiving a letter of introduction from someone of noble blood. Lauer believes this policy is a result of too many townsfolk attempting to bypass the town steward and complain to the father directly through his sons. Should they ask his assistance in obtaining a letter of introduction from Wendell, he tells them to approach Wendell first—Lauer only gets involved if Wendell refuses. He warns them to be nice to Wendell. *"He's a victim of the melancholy, you know."*

So, if the PCs treated Wendell poorly in the beginning of the chapter, they have to come grovelling on their hands and knees now to request a letter of introduction from him. If he does not feel kindly disposed toward the group, he takes pleasure in watching them suffer through their apologies, one by one. Should they refuse to apologise and retreat back to Lauer, he sends a letter to Wendell inquiring why he refuses to help the PCs in their investigation. The immediate response, *"They refuse to apologize for their earlier boorish behaviour toward me. To be treated in such a manner, by peasants no less, tries my very soul."*

Lauer is not pleased at the bother and rapidly becomes irritated at both the PCs and Wendell. He informs the PCs it is well within Wendell's rights to have them imprisoned or worse and a trial in this town would not go well for them because they are already under suspicion of malfeasance as it is.

> *"If I could impart a bit of advice," he says, "make a performance out of it. In his current state of mind, Wendell is likely unable to discern truth from sarcasm. Grant Wendell the most thoroughly ridiculous, over-the-top apologies ever heard in the Empire, and you will meet his conditions with your pride intact."*

In fact, this turns out to be true. Wendell undergoes a strange transformation if the PCs act out their apologies: his countenance changes from sheer despondency to curiosity to mild bemusement. A rousing, over-the-top performance cheers him up considerably—indeed, the more they debase themselves the happier Wendell becomes—and the PCs have a new, lifelong friend. After the apologies are given, Wendell personally escorts the PCs to Lennhardt's door.

If the prior behaviour of the PCs was splendid and warranted no apologies, Wendell greets them in his usual state of melancholy. He agrees to assist

them immediately in an attempt to rid himself of them. He listens patiently whilst the PCs explain what they need, then sighs loudly and scrawls out a note to the Von Speiers: *"These are my friends. —Wendell."*

This note is enough to see the PCs through the doors of the Von Speier estate.

The Von Speiers

The Von Speier estate is located a half-mile northeast of Pfeifeldorf proper. Compared to the rest of the village, the Von Speiers live in unbridled luxury, but to well-travelled, cosmopolitan adventurers, the accommodations appear rather sparse and smallish, and hint at a secret envy of the mansions of more prominent nobility. The estate is surrounded by a large stone wall that is in need of repair. The wrought-iron gate bears the Von Speier name but is missing the second "e" as well as one of its hinges. The Von Speiers are clearly the most prominent family in Pfeifeldorf, but by any standard outside of the small village, they are "barely noble"—a family subsisting solely on memories of glories long forgotten by everyone else.

If Wendell accompanies the PCs, the entire interaction goes smoothly. They are whisked inside the mansion and placed in an anteroom if they are seeking conversation with Lucas or Lennhardt. If they are here to research Heraldry and possess the note from Caspar Schmidt with the Hollenbach name, give them **Handout #9.** When they finish reading it, Lucas appears with a worried look on his face. Proceed to the events detailed in **Lucas Leads On**, below**.**

Researching the crest without a name takes several hours, but the Von Speier library is more extensive than Gephardt's on the subject of the noble heraldry of the Empire, so eventually they find the information given in **Handout #9**. The visit by Lucas follows and events proceed to **Lucas Leads On** just as before.

If Wendell is not present, gaining entry is only slightly more difficult. As the PCs pass under the Von Speier gate, two armed guards stop them and demand a reason for the PCs' trespass. If the PCs do not produce a letter of introduction from Wendell, the guards demand that they leave the premises immediately. Failure to do so within 5 rounds causes one of the guards to blow on a horn. Both guards draw swords and attack if the PCs do not leave within 1 round after that. Reinforcements (in the form of 6 more guards) arrive within 1d5 rounds. Use statistics for **Town Guards** in *WFRP.*

Upon receipt of the letter, the guards' demeanour instantly softens. The PCs are escorted into the Von Speier mansion and are allowed access to the library under supervision of the guard if they are present to research heraldry (which proceeds as detailed above) or told to take a seat in the anteroom if they are here to hold conversations with one of the Von Speier brothers. After a short wait, the PCs are told Lennhardt von Speier is unavailable, but Lucas von Speier will be with them shortly.

A conversation with Lucas can go one of two ways. If the PCs have succeeded in obtaining incriminating evidence against him from Walther Schnee, events proceed as detailed in **Lucas Unveiled.** Otherwise, Lucas appears as if he has a great deal on his mind. Events then proceed as detailed in **Lucas Leads On.**

Lucas Unveiled

If the PCs obtained incriminating information from Schnee and present it to Lucas, he sighs and admits the entire scheme. *"It is true. I'm simply not cut out for this type of intrigue,"* he says, and congratulates the PCs on uncovering the evidence and following it. He details everything, including finding the Vampire amidst a group of corpses (likely of other Vampires), and plotting to spread rumours of his brother's involvement in a Blood Cult. He remarks he is impressed that the PCs—*Peasants, even!*—discovered his plot so quickly. He will not, however, admit to the murder of Caspar Schmidt unless pressed,

> *"It is true, and it was an unfortunate occurrence. If not for the Crusade of the Child… Ah, but what's the use? I killed him and I cannot undo that."*

Then his visage turns grim.

> *"I cannot tell you how relieved I feel to finally get that off my chest. I say, chaps, it was those eyes… Strange, those. Anyhow, you folk share in my dilemma as well. My father is on his last legs. I do not expect he will survive the night, and the rule of Pfeifeldorf shall pass to the oldest surviving heir before morning. How could I have set upon such a cruel course? Those eyes… I no longer know what is right from what is wrong."*

He gazes pleadingly at the PCs.

> *"You have demonstrated a steely resolve in the face of adversity, so I shall not question your moral fibre. I put it to you, then. Even now, my brother is being carried to our mausoleum to be slain by the Vampire, Wilhelm Hollenbach. I slipped a sleeping tonic in Lennhardt's after-dinner wine, so he is unconscious and will feel no pain. My brother is a cruel man, and increased power will only make matters worse. So, men of honour, here is the question before us: Do we let Lennhardt live to rule Pfeifeldorf with an iron fist, to likely destroy the lives of dozens of villagers and their children? Or do we let him die a painless death, knowing the lives of others will benefit? I cannot see the good from bad any more, so I turn to you to make this impossible decision."*

Lucas sighs heavily and drops his gaze.

> *"I honestly do not know what is right any more. I will agree to follow your decision, whatever that may be. Please, make it quickly."*

Lucas indeed agrees to abide by whatever the PCs decide. If they advise inaction, Lennhardt dies at the hands of Wilhelm Hollenbach. As for Wilhelm, he will not be fully himself even after drinking Lennhardt's blood, and afterwards is overcome by the Strigoi and taken away to become an unwilling participant in their Thousand Thrones Ritual (see the campaign **Introduction**). Lucas obtains ruling privileges of Pfeifeldorf by morning, and the PCs are informed their claims have been verified (and any weapons or armour that may have been confiscated are returned to them) and allowed to continue on their way.

Lucas, however, does believe he needs to send the PCs a message he is not afraid of them, and so orders the Blauesblut to *"rough them up a little as they leave town."* To this end, Schade meets them at the edge of Pfeifeldorf and tells them never to speak of what they know, nor to return to this area on penalty of death. He also informs them they *"will get a running start before the bolts begin to fly."* True to his word, they are given 1 round before he orders his companions to fire upon them. The PCs should leave Pfeifeldorf battered and bruised but alive.

Should the PCs decide Lennhardt needs to be rescued (or equivalently, that the Vampire needs to be taken down for the safety of the surrounding lands), Lucas insists they accompany him to aid in the combat against the Vampire—otherwise he will not go either. In other words, refusing to help Lucas fight Wilhelm is a de facto decision to let Lennhardt die. If the PCs agree, Lucas gathers what others he can on such short notice (Neytz, Schade, Ott, and two other Blauesblut), and leads the entire group to the door of the mausoleum—but not before the PCs are given back their weapons and armour. Proceed to the events detailed in **Morr's Gate.**

Vampiric Preparations

If the PCs are aware that they may be facing a Vampire in the mausoleum, they will wish to take some precautions. Lucas can provide each of them with a silver dagger and a necklace of garlic cloves. Unfortunately, he has no access to holy water (since the town priest left suddenly with the Crusade of the Child) or magical weapons.

Lucas Leads On

This section is triggered either by uncovering the information about the Hollenbach noble family or seeking out a conversation with Lucas without

first obtaining incriminating evidence against him by interrogating (and wounding) Walther Schnee. Wherever the PCs meet up with Lucas, he appears harried and concerned.

Lucas is experiencing a crisis of conscience. He does not wish to be responsible for his brother's death—Caspar's death has cured him of such violent thoughts. At the same time, he still does not wish to allow Lennhardt to gain power over the people of Pfeifeldorf. To this end, Lucas believes he has reached a compromise that will allow him to spare the life of his brother and rid Pfeifeldorf of the Vampire (which he is responsible for bringing to town in the first place): muster up a company of stout men to raid the mausoleum, slay Wilhelm Hollenbach, and rescue Lennhardt. Lennhardt, of course, will be implicated in the blood cult and forfeit his status as heir. Lucas, in turn, will become a town hero and the eldest remaining son. The only lingering uncertainty Lucas has now is the battle-readiness of Hollenbach. Lucas believes Wilhelm is far from full strength, but at the same time, he is uncertain that he can overpower even a wounded Vampire. So he enlists the help of the PCs:

> *"I have only recently discovered that my brother Lennhardt is involved in a blood cult. He has, even now, left for the family mausoleum in Morr's Garden to participate in some dark, unknown ritual. I cannot allow this to take place, of course, and am willing to take whatever steps are necessary to prevent it. I have discussed the issue with Zecharius Lauer, and he assures me that other than the Blauesblut and our bailiff, you people are the only ones in town equipped to assist me in stopping the ritual. Forget about the investigation, I will purchase another hen for the Frau. I don't know how many people are involved in this cult, so I am going to need all the help I can muster. Please, the Blauesblut are spread all over town and I can only contact four of them. I am asking you to accompany me to the mausoleum to stop this madness. Will you help Pfeifeldorf in its time of need?"*

The PCs have the upper hand, should they wish to negotiate. Lucas is willing to pay them up to 10 *gc* each for their immediate assistance, with a 50 *gc* bounty for the one who slays Lennhardt's "friend"—Lucas states it was this friend who dragged Lennhardt into the dark arts in the first place. And besides, isn't ridding the Empire of evil cults what adventurers do?

If pressed on the question of the Hollenbach family, Lucas only states the friend of Lennhardt is likely a remnant of the Hollenbachs, some lost scion who evaded the purging flame of the witch hunters. Lucas will not go into any more detail, as time is of the essence. He reiterates that not only will the PCs benefit monetarily, not only would they be ridding the land of a practitioner of the dark arts, but the future leader of Pfeifeldorf (Lucas himself) will be in their debt.

Should the PCs agree, their gear is returned. Proceed to **Morr's Gate.** Should they refuse, proceed to **Climax Rescinded?**

Lucas von Speier

Male Human Noble

Lucas is an attractive young man with shoulder-length blond hair and a thin beard. He has strong noble features, blue eyes, and a handsome smile.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
43	28	36 (3)	32 (3)	28 (38)	36	39	46

Skills: Charm (Fel), Command (Fel), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int +10), Gossip (Fel +10), Performer (Musician) (Fel), Read/Write (Int), Ride (Ag), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int +10)
Talents: Coolheaded, Etiquette, Public Speaking, Savvy, Schemer, Specialist Weapon Group (Fencing)

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 13
Armour (Medium): Full Mail Armour (Head 3, Arms 3, Body 3, Legs 3)
Weapons: Rapier (1d10+2; Fast), Silver Dagger (1d10), Pistol (1d10+4; Range 8/16; Reload 2 Full; Impact, Unreliable)

Trappings

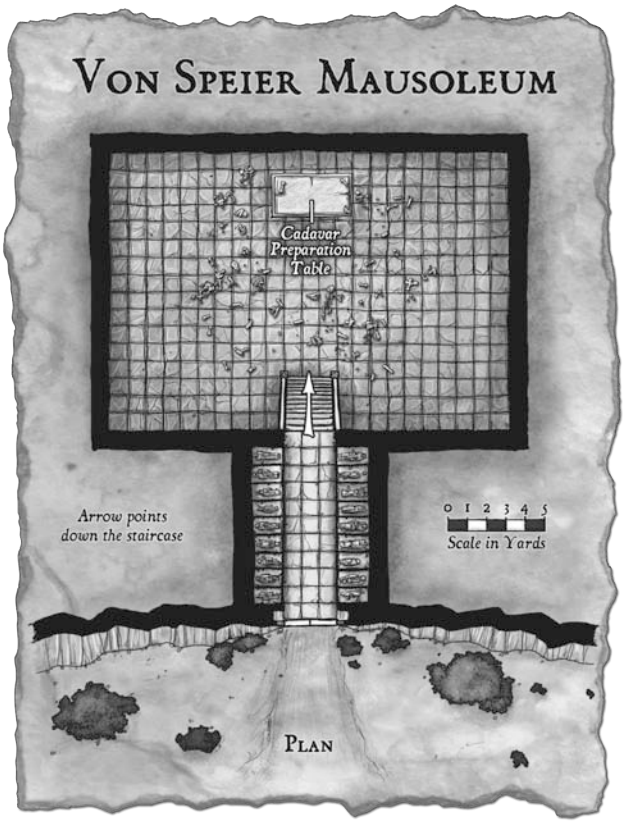
Overtop of Lucas's fine suit of mail, he wears a tabard that show's his family's colours. He keeps a purse of 10 *gc* at his side and wears a signet ring worth 10 *gc* and a golden necklace worth 26 *gc*. He stores his shot and powder in a horn hanging from his belt.

Morr's Gate

Pfeifeldorf's Garden of Morr is located on the north side of the village, in a clearing bordered to the north and east by a low, rolling hill. The interior of this hill has been excavated to make room for the Von Speier mausoleum, and houses the slowly decaying corpses of each ruling member of the Von Speier family (other, less prominent members are interred in an adjacent plot). The gate to this mausoleum is a heavy oak door surrounded by a recessed stone archway. The name "von Speier" has been deeply carved within the marble of the arch itself. It is dusk, and Lucas hands out torches to those few who have gathered: the PCs, Arnolt Schade, Wendell Ott, two other Blauesblut, and Reinhardt Neytz. Lucas then opens the door and asks who will enter first.

The order is not important. If the PCs do not volunteer to lead, Neytz takes point. Though he has a steely gaze and determined features, the PCs may notice, on a **Routine (+10) Perception Test,** a slight tremble as Neytz takes up his torch and heads into the darkness. If asked about it, he frowns and denies any misgivings about their task at hand, but the truth of the matter is Neytz has never battled anything other than ordinary people before. He is quite frightened of what they may encounter within the depths of the mausoleum.

The PCs pass along a thirty-foot hallway, lined by alcoves carved out of the gently arching stone wall. Cobweb-covered corpses of prior Von Speier patriarchs populate the alcoves, dressed in fine, decaying armour and clasping rusty weapons against their chests. The air is thick and close—its scent musty and somewhat sweet. No sound can be heard over the footfalls of the company. Those looking at the stone floor can make out an area in the centre where the dust has been swept clean, flanked by footsteps. Apparently a large object was dragged down this hallway very recently.



The hall ends abruptly at a second arched doorway, which opens onto stairs leading down into darkness. The torchlight penetrates only weakly, and the far wall cannot be seen. They can barely make out the ceiling, vaulted and thrown into relief by a scramble of shadows (some of which, on a **Perception Test,** appear to move of their own accord—these are the Strigoi in bat form). The floor at the end of the stone steps can be seen only by those with the Excellent Vision Talent (or the Night Vision Trait, if the torch is held away from the eyes)—it is covered in a thick layer of dust, interrupted here and there by tiny ephemeral whorls, recent footsteps, and several dark smudges. No candles or lanterns light the area, and it seems to have been abandoned but for the footsteps and marred dust on the stairs.

"Do not be afraid," Lucas whispers. "This room is simply where the bodies of my ancestors are prepared for their interment in the alcoves we just passed. If Lennhardt and his friend are here, we have them cornered. There is no way out of the mausoleum, except the way we just came."

Upon reaching the floor, the torchlight barely illuminates the room. The floor itself is littered with the corpses of recently slain animals, including a dead chicken. Across from the stairs is a stone table, upon which lies the still form of Lennhardt von Speier, blood seeping from two holes in his neck. Behind him crouches Wilhelm Hollenbach, his mouth and chin dripping with Lennhardt's blood. He hisses at the light, and then stands to his full height of over six feet tall.

"So," he says with an air of tired resignation. "I am betrayed. I give you all a warning: it is no mere Vampire who stands before you. I am a Blood Dragon, master of blade and body, whose martial prowess is second to none. Attack me at your peril."

Whilst still gazing at the group, Wilhelm quietly summons the dead Von Speiers to rise from their alcoves and commands them to attack his enemies (use statistics for **Zombies** in *WFRP*). Echoes of crunching bones and jingling mail reverberate behind the PCs as the dead rise for one final battle.

"Cover your ears, lest he cast some dark spell upon you!" Lucas screams. "He has killed my brother! To arms!"

Wilhelm Hollenbach

Blood Dragon Vampire

Last scion of the Hollenbach family, Wilhelm is interested in nothing other than honing his martial prowess. Recently, he was attacked by a group of Strigoi for no apparent reason. He fought them off but was severely wounded. He is currently subsisting on animal blood brought to him by Lucas von Speier, gathering strength for his escape. For more information on Vampires, see *Night's Dark Masters.*

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
68	39	60 (6)	66 (6)	47 (57)	40	69	45

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Genealogy/Heraldry, History, Strategy/Tactics) (Int), Charm (Fel), Command (Fel +10), Common Knowledge (Bretonnia, the Empire, Vampires) (Int), Dodge Blow (Ag +10), Evaluate (Int), Gossip (Fel), Intimidate (Fel), Magical Sense (Int), Perception (Int), Ride (Ag +10), Scale Sheer Surface (S), Search (Int), Speak Language (Breton, Reikspiel, Tilean) (Int), Torture (Fel)
Talents: Disarm, Lightning Parry, Specialist Weapon Group (Cavalry, Two-handed), Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure, Strike to Stun
Traits: Blood Gifts (Blood Drain, Iron Sinews, Natural Necromancer, Pass for Human, Vampires' Curse), Frightening, Keen Senses, Natural Weapons (Claws, Fangs), Night Vision, Undead, Unstoppable Blows
(The new traits are described in the Appendix.)

Combat

Attacks: 3; **Fate Points:** 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 22; **Magic:** 1
Armour (Heavy): Damaged Full Plate (Head 3, Arms 4, Body 3, Legs 4)
Weapons: Claws (1d10+7; CV +1), Fangs (1d10+7; CV +1); Unstoppable Blows

Trappings

Aside from his battered ancient armour and rotting clothing, Wilhelm has no trappings.

Development

At this point, Wilhelm assumes his true Vampiric form and the PCs must make **Fear Tests.** Neytz fails and is frozen to the spot for the duration of battle, useless. If the PCs do not act, the two Blauesblut rush Wilhelm (use the stats for **Sell-swords** in *WFRP*). Wilhelm lithely avoids the first blow, disarms one Blauesblut, and kills both of them with his blade. He stoops momentarily to obtain the other's blade, and then rises once more to face the group. His next attack is against a randomly chosen opponent who remains to face him. Wilhelm's goal is not necessarily to slaughter everyone but simply to make it past the group and through the door. His bravado was somewhat of a façade—he has regained enough strength to resist but remains unsure how long that strength will last.

Between the 8 Undead Von Speiers behind them and the Blood Dragon in front of them, the PCs should have their hands quite full. The combat should continue until either Wilhelm or one of the PCs suffers a critical hit, or Wilhelm has succeeded in gaining entrance into the hallway. At that point, 8 Strigoi descend from the ceiling and fall upon the group. Four of them attack Wilhelm and four attack the group. The aim of the Strigoi is not to kill, maim, or even wound, but to escape with Wilhelm. This strategy should not be difficult amidst the general mayhem already occurring within the vault—the Strigoi should escape with an unconscious Wilhelm within 3 rounds, leaving the PCs exhausted and bloodied but alive to tell the tale.

(For more on running this scene, see **Adjudicating the Battle** on page 57.)

Strigoi Vampires

Strigoi Vampires are feral beasts of the night.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
59	28	59 (5)	63 (6)	63	43	62	25

Skills: Command (Fel), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int), Concealment (Ag +10), Dodge Blow (Ag), Magical Sense (Int), Perception (Int +10), Search (Int), Speak Language (Reikspiel, Strigany) (Int), Torture (Fel)
Talents: Frenzy, Rover, Strike Mighty Blow
Traits: Blood Gift (Bat Form, Blood Drain, Natural Necromancer, Vampires' Curse), Frightening, Keen Senses, Natural Weapons (Claws, Fangs), Night Vision, Undead
(The new traits are described in the Appendix.)

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 24; **Magic:** 1
Weapons: Claws (1d10+6), Fangs (1d10+6)

Trappings

The Strigoi Vampires have nothing but their furry hides.

Bat Form

As a half action, a Strigoi Vampire may transform into a Vampire Bat. He gains the characteristics, skills, talents, and traits of the new form, though he retains his Intelligence, Will Power, Wounds, Magic, and Insanity Points, as well as all skills, talents, and traits. All weapons, armour, and trappings worn or carried are absorbed into the new form and reappear when he regains his normal form. The Vampire can remain in his new form for as long as he wishes. Changing back to his Vampire form requires another half action.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
33	0	31 (3)	30 (3)	34	43	62	25

Skills: Dodge Blow (Ag), Perception (Int +20)
Talents: Strike Mighty Blow
Traits: Enhanced Senses*, Flier, Frightening, Keen Senses, Natural Weapons, Undead
* Vampire Bats can "see" in complete darkness, up to a range of 30 yards. This process is not silent; any character within range of the echolocation may make a **Perception Test** to hear its high-pitched squeals.
Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 4/fly 8; **Wounds:** 24; **Magic:** 1
Weapons: Teeth (1d10+4)

Blood Drain

Strigoi Vampires may drain blood with their fangs. If they inflict at least 1 Wound on an enemy whilst grappling, the victim also loses 1d10 points from his Strength Characteristic. If the victim survives the encounter, he regains 1 point of his Strength each hour.

Adjudicating the Battle

The climactic battle is difficult to manage under the best of circumstances. Blow-by-blow, action-by-action dice rolls should be reserved for the PCs and their opponents only; feel free to describe the rest of the scene as a "narrative combat" as you wish it to play out. Or don't describe it at all—certainly in the dark depths of the Von Speier mausoleum, lit only by a few torches that may or may not have fallen to the stone floor, all actions appear as blurs of glinting metal or splashes of dark, stringy liquid. You may wish to reserve detailing who lived and who died as a surprise, only to be revealed when the din of clashing blades dies down with the escape of the Strigoi.

General strategies followed by each NPC are as follows: Schade stages a fighting retreat against the Undead Von Speiers, avoiding combat with Wilhelm if at all possible. Wendell cares little for his own safety, and has no reservation whatsoever about attacking Wilhelm directly. Neytz does not move during the entire combat, and is likely cut down soon after the two Blauesblut. Lucas desires to right the wrong he has committed, and joins Wendell in a direct assault against Wilhelm. Lennhardt has been drained of most of his blood, and dies on the stone slab within 1d10 rounds unless someone reaches him first and succeeds on a **Challenging (–10) Heal Test.**

Every one of the main NPCs is expendable (and quite vulnerable, in the small confines of the vault) except for Wilhelm, who is carried out by the Strigoi. When Wilhelm falls unconscious, the Undead Von Speiers continue to struggle for 1d5 rounds (preventing the PCs from giving chase) and then fall lifeless to the ground. The quick exit of the Strigoi and their prey should signal the end of hostilities.

Climax Rescinded?

Should the PCs refuse to assist Lucas, they are escorted back to the Wet Whistle as night falls. Lucas expresses his disappointment but is resolved to continue without their help. A few hours later, blood-curdling screams echo across town. PCs emerging from the tavern to see what is amiss view a horrible sight: the corpse of Lucas von Speier lays crumpled in the main road; a trail of blood leading back toward the Garden of Morr (after he was wounded in the battle against Wilhelm, he attempted to crawl back to the village to seek help). A nondescript peasant woman—from whom the screams likely emanated—has collapsed in fright a few feet from him. At this moment, nearly a dozen Strigoi Vampires, mad with bloodlust and seeing no opposition rise against them, crest the hill and attack random villagers in a frenzy.

The PCs no longer have a choice—combat is upon them. If they earlier refused participation in this chapter's scenario and find themselves in the stocks now, that is very unfortunate and may well cost them a Fate Point each.

The Strigoi battle anyone who offers resistance for several rounds, but once they realise they face determined opposition, they withdraw. In practice, this occurs when one or more PCs suffer a critical hit. Again, the PCs should emerge from the combat wounded and worse for wear, but alive.

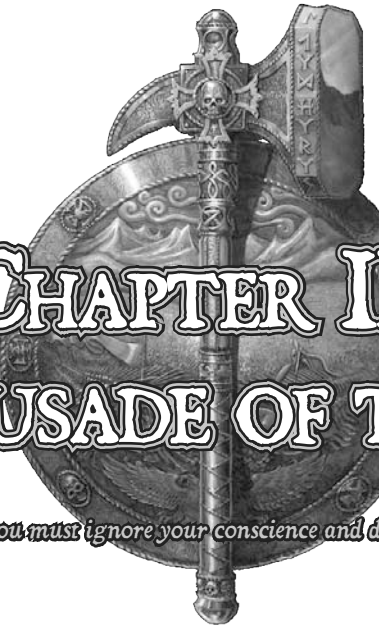
Aftermath

No matter how the scenario draws to a close, the PCs should be wounded and in need of healing. Unfortunately, the town's only priest left several days prior with the Crusade of the Child. At this time, Zecharius Lauer presents the PCs with any weapons or armour that may have been confiscated as they have been duly verified. If the PCs earned any reward for their assistance with Wilhelm, he honours the obligation and pays them in full. He allows them to keep any silver daggers Lucas may have given them, as souvenirs from a town grateful for their assistance. Lauer wishes them well, and directs them east: *"The Crusade travelled on in that direction. Keep a brisk pace and you should reach an inn by nightfall. You do not wish to be found in these woods after dark."*

He thanks them for their help with his investigation, and passes along the thanks and good wishes of Fraus Gertrudt and Schmidt. *"Farewell, my friends. And may Sigmar watch over you in your travels."*

Rewards

Action	XP
Treating Wendell Ott well	10
Avoiding combat with the Blauesblut	10
Finding the bloodstain in Frau Gertrudt's henhouse	15
Finding the purple fibres on Old Man Eysen's fence	5
Obtaining the piece of cloth from Old Man Eysen	20
Obtaining information from Reinhardt Neytz	20
Obtaining the truth from Walther Schnee	20
Obtaining entry into the Schmidt abode	5
Treating Frau Schmidt kindly	10
Uncovering the murder of Caspar Schmidt	25
Discovering information about the Hollenbach family	20
Roleplaying interactions with villagers	10
Apologizing to Wendell	20
Uncovering Lucas's plot	25
Agreeing to accompany Lucas to battle the Vampire	50
Assisting the villagers against the Strigoi menace	15



Chapter III: The Crusade of the Child

"When faced with a moral dilemma, you must ignore your conscience and do what your head tells you is right."

—Father Johannes

By Nathan Long and Robert J. Schwalb

Crusades are nothing new to Old Worlders. From the glorious expeditions into Estalia and Araby to the bold attacks against the daemonic hordes of Chaos in the north, the Old World spawns such bellicose and unruly legions whenever there is a cause for which it's worth fighting. Rare, though, is the mob that marches against the Empire, cutting its way to the heart of the Sigmar's land to demand attention and recognition from its noblest ruler. Few are the crusades whose cause is so just, whose leader so charismatic, that its ranks fill near to bursting with each new farmstead, new village, and new city through which it passes. Truly, the Crusade of the Child has brought mayhem, sorrow, and destruction to those with the misfortune to find themselves in its path. Yet oddly, for each broken life, the Crusade fills a dozen with religious fervour, with hope, and clarity of purpose, for who can resist the flood of emotion that arises when in the presence of young Karl? Few can, and so it is that this new mob of freaks, outcasts, exiles, fanatics, scum, and heroes march on, to demand audience in Altdorf—to demand Karl-Franz himself bear witness to the boy who is Sigmar and name him the rightful Emperor of these lands.

Adventure Background

When any such group emerges in the Old World, its presence surely sends ripples throughout the Empire. Word travels on the wings of rumours and lies, traded over mugs of frothing beer, or whispered amidst the din of the marketplace. News of the Crusade has spread quickly, like an ink stain across the pure white cloth of the Empire, and those who stand in the path of the Crusade make ready for the growing throngs, hoping to benefit from their religious enthusiasm or preparing to safeguard themselves and their families from their excesses.

Word of this unruly mob has reached even the ears of the ancients and the monstrous. Beastmen herds have stirred from their forest redoubts to prey upon those villages drained by Karl's Crusade, sweeping across the narrow, twisting roads to harass merchants and caravans, to butcher roadwardens and their ilk, and cause mayhem and mischief wherever they can. With the Beastmen activity comes the twittering, shrieking cries of the lost and misbegotten, those unspeakable victims of Chaos's cruel hand: the Mutants. From the bowels of the Drakwald and other bleak places in the Empire, they emerge to reclaim that which has been denied to them, to exact revenge against those who treated them poorly or take supplies to continue their wretched existence beyond the bounds of civilisation.

The beasts of Chaos are not the only ones called to action by this gathering's passage. Goblins and Orcs, sensing weakness in their age-old Human foes, choose this time to plunder and kill, while Ghouls, eaters of men, emerge from their shadowy lairs to rend, to tear, and rip asunder. But of all those monsters stirred to action by the disruption caused by the Crusade of the Child, none are as feared as the Vampires.

The emergence of the boy Karl, and the rumours planted by the Black Witch (see the **Introduction**), have led many of the Night's Masters to believe that this young man is none other than the prophesied Champion of Night. None of the Vampire Lords can agree upon the true interpretation of the ancient texts, but most see far too many coincidences between the boy's story and the Vampire Prophesies to ignore or discount him, particularly if that means allowing their rivals to gain power over them. To be safe, each Lord wishes to keep the boy from the others and use him for their own ends.

The leader of one such Undead faction is a Strigoi Vampire named Orlock. Like others in his extended "family," he interprets the prophesies in a somewhat unusual manner, in that he truly believes young Karl is Sigmar Reborn. Why this is significant to Orlock and those of his ilk is because they all believe Sigmar, before his ascent, was reborn as a creature of the night by Nagash, fusing the essence of the greatest necromancer with the divine essence of mankind. Orlock believes that for Karl to become the Champion of the Night, he must be given the blood kiss and become a Vampire himself. Orlock also believes the various bloodlines are too diluted, too weak from ages of inbreeding and contamination to allow the boy to undergo his apotheosis. The only way for Karl to become the Champion of the Night is to accept the blood kiss from all five major bloodlines, combining their ichors in his young body and transcending the curse placed upon all Vampires.

Orlock is certain that representatives of each line will be present on the consecrated ground where the *Ritual of Awakening* will take place on the appointed day—all except for the Blood Dragons. Knowing their obstinacy, Orlock has contrived to kidnap a Blood Dragon and have him taken to Kislev to await the ritual.

All Orlock needs now is the boy, and as soon as possible. Orlock fears the influence of Chaos on the Child, and rather than letting the Ruinous Powers seize the boy and make him their creature—and thus prevent the fulfilment of the Prophecies—he intends to intervene by plucking him from the Crusade encampment and taking him to Kislev. The boy is unfortunately well protected, so Orlock works to amass a legion of Ghouls and restless dead to attack the camp while he claims his prize. With the Blood Dragon in hand (see **Chapter II**), the time is nearly right for his attack.

Adventure Synopsis

Since the player characters left Marienburg, they have raced across the countryside in search of the Crusade. Following the mob hasn't been too difficult, but bandit attacks, a missing chicken, and a dreadful encounter with Undead horrors delayed their progress and likely left the adventurers in need of a bit of rest and recuperation. Finding such a haven has been a challenge, as those places the PCs passed have already met the Crusade and are in no condition to attend to the needs of vagabonds. So, onwards the PCs travel until they finally leave the verdant fields and occasional pockets of trees, and enter the gloomy shadows of the Drakwald. Luckily, just beyond the edge of the forest lies the Reaper's Bounty, a heavily fortified coaching inn that ought to be resistant to the heaviest attacks and the most coercive bands of fanatics. It seems, though, that the PCs are bound to find only disappointment, for this sanctuary is emptied, abandoned, and showing all the signs of the Crusade's passage.

Faced with the imminent arrival of an angry storm, and the onset of darkness in a famously dangerous wood, the PCs likely hunker down to lick their wounds and get out from the rain in the abandoned inn. But if the characters were thinking they'd be in for an easy night, they are soon corrected. Shortly after arriving in the place, they are joined by Father Johannes and his entourage—a young scribe named Nils and a pair of Hammer Bearers. Tensions rise when Johannes suspects the PCs of being bandits.

As if dealing with a pompous, self-serving priest isn't enough, the PCs may find, in exploring the compound, a hidden Wood Elf, a lone survivor of a Kithband who were attacked by Beastmen while travelling back from a ceremony in the Laurelorn Forest. Injured and weak, the Wood Elf keeps his own counsel, content to observe the PCs for a time. Before the characters can decide what to do next, a band of starving Mutants, hidden in the inn's well, emerge in search of food. The situation likely turns nasty as the PCs, the priest, his men, and the Wood Elf argue about what to do with the Mutants.

Then suddenly, a Beastman's horn sounds from the forest. The rest of the night is spent fighting for their lives, enlisting the aid of the various factions, and smoothing tempers as they weather wave after wave of Beastmen attacks.

The next morning, the attacks end and help arrives in the form of Kithband warriors. Having no use for the Mutants, they quickly kill the changed and round up the PCs and the other survivors. Depending on how the characters acquitted themselves with the Wood Elf and in the defence of the inn, the Wood Elves may be inclined to talk, and if so, the characters learn that this group of hunters intend to go to the Crusade encampment and find out just what this boy is all about and why the Crusade is leaving the countryside in tatters.

Assuming the PCs accompany the Elves, they reach the encampment without much trouble, but it's soon clear that the Elves intend to eliminate the boy, lest his influence create grave troubles throughout not only the Old World, but all the world. The PCs must decide if they will help the Elves, warn the boy, respect the wishes of those who hired them, or simply go on their way. They don't have much time for debate for, after the sun sets, Orlock and his force descend on the Crusade, intent on slaughtering the cultists and taking the boy alive.

The adventure concludes in the aftermath of this intense battle, when the PCs are given an audience with Karl, and likely fall under his spell….

Adventure Hooks

The player characters, by now, could have a number of different motivations for involving themselves in this adventure, based on the identity of their employer. If the PCs played through **Chapter II**, they have not had the chance to reunite with their master (or mistress) and thus their impetus, described at the end of **Chapter I**, should still be intact. If you're using an adventure hook of your own design, the PCs likely have reason to keep following the Crusade if they survived the previous chapter.

From the **Adventure Synopsis**, it should be clear that this adventure ties in closely to the events in the previous chapter and the one to come. As such, it takes a bit more finesse to divorce this scenario from the campaign if you're inclined to run this as a separate instalment. Whilst difficult, it is not impossible. The characters might become roped into the plot when they happen upon the Reaper's Bounty on the edge of the Drakwald, either searching for a place to stay while on the way to some other location, only to become drawn into the plot by the various factions. As the adventure develops, the PCs might make an attempt on Karl himself, fight to defend him, and so on as their motivations crystallise from what they learn.

Replacement Characters

Should any of the PCs fall in **Chapter II**, you can easily introduce replacement characters at the Reaper's Bounty. Such PCs may be other travellers who happened on the place or they could hide inside, looking for shelter. Alternatively, you could replace either of the Hammer Bearers that accompany Father Johannes with martial-oriented PCs. Character deaths that occur late in the adventure may be replaced with already-deluded folks in the encampment—this is quite handy since it helps justify the events that follow in **Chapter IV**.

The Drakwald

The Drakwald's reputation as a haunted or evil forest is well justified. Home to Beastmen, Mutants, Greenskins, and worse, few sane men travel beneath its shadowed boughs, wisely skirting the depths for safer

Drakwald Encounters

You can use these encounter ideas as inspiration for building combat and roleplaying encounters as the PCs travel through the Reikland. Even if you don't play them out, mentioning them in passing helps set the mood.

- A group of Sigmarite pilgrims travel to Altdorf on their knees. They ask for alms.
- A heavily armed merchant caravan sits by the side of the road. Half are dead. Their cargo is gone. They curse the Crusade of the Child and warn the PCs not to seek them out.
- Furtive figures move in the shadows of the trees. It is impossible to get a good look at them, and they run away if approached. (These figures are the Mutants who show up later.)
- Six starving outlaws chase a wild boar through the trees. The boar crashes through the PCs. The outlaws fight if the PCs try to stop them or try to keep the boar for themselves.
- A group of ten Valtenite Heretics make their way down the road. They believe Valten is a God. They offer pamphlets, then demand a tithe of one crown per PC, and fight for it if the PCs refuse. They run at first blood.
- The PCs find a group of adventurers accompanying refugees to Middenheim (see **Through the Drakwald** in *WFRP*).

regions. While the Drakwald could provide countless adventures and side-treks, for this adventure, the PCs are just travelling through it on their way to Altdorf and the more sinister nature of the forest should be reserved for creating the grim ambience needed to emphasise to the players why sheltering in the Reaper's Bounty is a good idea. **Chapter V: Metamorphosis of Villa Hahn** has a great deal more information on the Drakwald, and should it be necessary, you should refer to that chapter for random encounters, setting details, and other strangeness.

— Part I: Whispers in the Dark —

The adventure begins a day or two after the events in **Chapter II: An Unquiet Peace**, with the characters making their way down the path created by the Crusade. Signs of the mob's passage are everywhere. The most noticeable element is the smell. Excrement, rotting food, and no few corpses mar the trampled earth, a testimony to the frantic pace maintained by the mob. The foetid terrain of the Midden Moors finally gives way to the dark and brooding atmosphere of the Drakwald. Through the trees, the PCs can see a black storm front rolling at a fearsome pace across the heavens, lightning crashing from above and painting the sky a weird green colour. Assuming the party keeps travelling, they eventually catch sight of the Reaper's Bounty.

The inn is one of the fortified inns maintained by coach companies as safe stops along the Altdorf Road. It is a squat, imposing structure, with whitewashed stone walls topped by crenulated battlements and towers in all four corners. The main gate is reinforced too, with heavy wooden doors. The PCs see the gates are wide open and no light shines from the towers. At this time of day, this is decidedly unusual.

Have the PCs make **Routine (+10) Perception Tests**. With one degree of success they notice a great number of footprints, hoof prints, and wagon tracks heading out from the gate. With two degrees of success, they notice the tracks are heading towards Altdorf. With three degrees, they find a crumpled pamphlet (see **Handout #6**).

Calling out to the coaching inn finds only silence, and after a few moments, it's clear no one's about. The inn is entirely deserted, but there are no signs of violence. It's as if everyone vanished in mid-action, but such is not the case. The place has been thoroughly stripped of all food and stores. In the whole of the enclosure, the PCs find only a few forgotten personal items—shirts, hair pins, pipes, books, pamphlets, tankards but nothing of any real value.

General Features

The Reaper's Bounty is a typical Coaching Inn by Empire standards. It consists largely of four walls surrounding the inn itself and a stable. The walls stand nearly 15-feet tall, and are topped with crenellations and equipped with a narrow catwalk for guards to man. At the corners where the walls meet, is a narrow tower that rises another 7 feet above the walls. These towers have several floors connected by a central spiral staircase, and from inside, through the hammer-shaped arrow slits, one can get a good view of the surrounding forests. Climbing the outer walls without use of a grapple and rope requires a **Hard (–20) Scale Sheer Surface Test**.

Key Locations

All of the following locations can be found in the Reaper's Bounty.

Gates

The only access to the courtyard, stables, and inn is through the gates facing the road. Flanking reinforced wooden doors are two more towers, about the same height as the corner towers. More arrow slits provide a good look at the road and offer protection for those manning them. The gates are heavy and need at least four strong men to push them closed. A heavy wooden bar can be dropped on hangers to keep them closed.

The gates can be broken open with a degree of success on a **Very Hard (–30) Strength Test**. The gates can be battered down. They effectively have a Toughness Bonus of 7 and 24 Wounds.

The western tower holds a guardroom containing a few chairs and a table. There are no weapons or armour here, but a stein of ale sits half drunk on the little table.

The Courtyard

This area is covered in dusty, hard-packed earth. The inn door is straight ahead. The sign over the door—a painting of a scythe leaning against a bundle of wheat—creaks ominously in the freshening wind. A wing of the inn runs down the right side of the courtyard. The two-storey stable building is to the right, with the privies next to it.

The insignia of the Crusade of the Child—a crude symbol of a hammer haloed by a shining heart—has been daubed on the wall of the inn in mud.

The Stables

There is a tack room, space for a coach, and stalls for twelve horses on the ground floor, an armoury, and a hayloft on the first, with a square hole in the floor, and a door in the courtyard side wall with a winch over it for raising hay. The armoury has been stripped but for a few arrows and some shot. The hayloft has no hay.

The Alley

An alley wide enough for a coach to pass leads from the courtyard to the kitchen garden. No windows face it.

The Kitchen Garden

A neat garden, picked entirely bare. There isn't a pea or a carrot left. There are bee-hives and a bread oven to the right of the scullery door, a broken down cart to one side, a tower with a spiral stair leading to the battlements in one corner, and a semi-circular well built into the fortified exterior wall. A few cats wail piteously around the kitchen door, hungry.

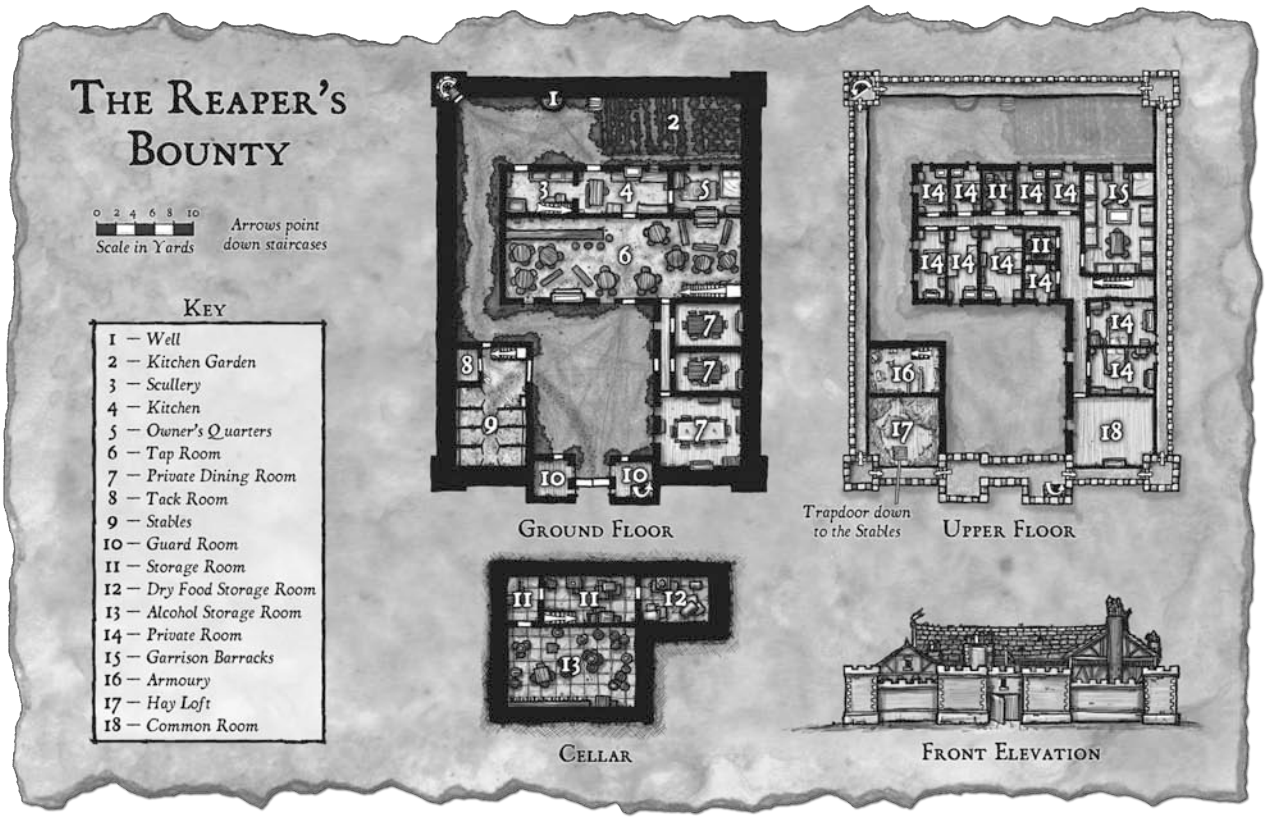
There is a secret tunnel under the wall that opens into the well, but it is 12 feet down and the well is very dark. A character climbing down—a **Challenging (–10) Scale Sheer Surface Test**—and searching the well can find the tunnel entrance with a **Hard (–20) Search Test**. Note that this is where the Mutants are hiding (see **Event 3**) and an enterprising character that finds the tunnel may be in for a fatal surprise when he gets to the bottom. The tunnel leads beneath the inn and travels for about 100 yards east before it breaks the surface in a cunningly concealed pit in which stands three inches of brackish water.

The Ground Floor

The tap room is a long, low room with a long bar against the back wall and two large fireplaces. Tables, chairs and benches dot the room, and the floor is laid with rushes. Behind the bar are cradles for large ale kegs but no kegs. Embers burn in the hearths, filthy plates covered in flies sit on the tables, and a mop and bucket stand in the middle of the floor. Also scattered about are cheaply printed pamphlets (**Handout #6**) proclaiming *"And a Child Shall Lead Them!"* These bear the insignia of the Crusade and call for the faithful to join the Followers of the Child, the only true cult of Sigmar.

The kitchen and scullery are large and well ordered, and also stripped bare. Not just the food, flour and lard, but all the pots and pans, forks, and knives have been taken—anything not too big to leave behind. Below the scullery in the cellar are three rooms, all bare except for some rusty tools and seasonal decorations in one room.

In a room off the kitchen are the innkeeper's quarters. This chamber holds a table, two chairs, a large stripped bed, a bedside table, an empty wardrobe, a rug, a fireplace, and a window onto the back garden. On the bedside table, hidden under a "Followers of the Child" pamphlet,



is a beautiful, well-seasoned, superior burlwood pipe. Smoking it is an enjoyable experience. (The owner of the pipe shows up later.) Hidden in the rafters is Lorinoc, an injured Wood Elf. See **Event 2** for details on this important character.

There are three private dining rooms down a hall off the tap room. Each has a long table and chairs. The largest room has two tables.

Upstairs

Upstairs are fifteen guest rooms, ranging from small and cheap to grand, as well as the barracks room for the garrison of soldiers who guard the inn day and night. All the bedding has been stripped from the beds, and all the soldiers' weapons and armour is gone.

Events

Allow the player characters to make a quick search of the compound to assess that it is indeed empty (or mostly empty).

Event 1: Timely Guest

Shortly after the characters arrive, but long enough for the PCs to make a good search of the coaching inn, more guests arrive. Allow the characters to make **Perception Tests** to hear the sounds of the coach's approach. The difficulty is Average (+0) if they are outside and Hard (–20) if they are indoors. Fourteen rounds after this test, the coach arrives, so the characters have about this long to prepare themselves for the new visitor.

The first order of business might be to shut the gates. This work is tough, requiring four strong men—two pushing on each door—and takes 12 rounds. Each additional character that lends his weight to the task reduces the time by 1 round.

When the coach is within 6 rounds of approaching the inn, PCs standing in the towers or who otherwise have a good view of the road see a fine coach drawn by a team of six horses coming from the direction of Gootten, a small town several miles down the road to the south-east. Characters are entitled to another **Perception Test** to make out a few details. Each round that passes until the coach arrives allows them another test if they choose to take it. Each degree of success reveals one of the following details.

- The coach is very fine, being of dark lacquered wood and gold scrollwork, and drawn by a team of six black horses. The rails are polished and shine in the darkening light.
- There's a big trunk on the top of the coach.
- Two footmen dressed in black and white livery sit on the buckboard.
- An enamel sign of the twin-tailed comet is painted on the coach door.

Dealing with the Coach

The guards, Hammer Bearers named Klaus and Ernst, expect the doors to be closed since this is normal practice for coaching inns. If the doors stand open, they become suspicious and draw weapons. Ernst stays with the wagon, whilst Klaus creeps forward to see if anyone is about. Assuming the characters reveal themselves, Klaus immediately interrogates the PCs, asking them what they're about, what happened to the proprietors, and so on. Characters that explain what should be obvious may attempt a **Routine (+10) Charm Test** to put the Hammer Bearer at ease. A failed test indicates that Klaus suspects the PCs are up to no good and retreats back to the carriage to report to his master. Father Johannes orders a retreat and the carriage races off to the nearest settlement to report what they believe is banditry.

If the PCs managed to close the door, Klaus pulls on the reins of the team and Ernst calls out to the tower, demanding entrance for his master, Father Johannes Seibolt, honoured priest of Sigmar.

Should the PCs simply throw open the gates without argument or question, the Hammer Bearers snap the reins and drive into the courtyard, not suspecting anything amiss. Should the characters hesitate for more

than a round or two, the guards become suspicious. One leans inside the coach to confer with the occupants for a few moments and then demands again that the gates be opened. The other Hammer Bearer draws his weapon, readying himself for combat. Characters who open the gates now find the coach driven within, but the guards are suspicious and unfriendly, imposing a –10 penalty to all Charm Tests made to negotiate with the Hammer Bearers.

Demands for payment or any kind of conversation also provokes a hostile response and a –20 penalty on Charm Tests. If the PCs ask for money in exchange for sheltering the priest, the Hammer Bearers become furious, and indignant questions spill from the interior of the coach. The Hammer Bearers demand entrance, saying that, as citizens of the Empire, the PCs have a duty to give shelter to its priests. If the PCs still refuse, then they pay, reluctantly. Being trapped outside at night in the Drakwald is too terrifying.

If still refused or if the PCs ask an impossible demand, the guards suspect the coaching inn has been taken over by bandits. As they turn the coach around, they threaten to send the militia to clean the brigands out of the place. After 1d10+10 hours, a patrol of ten watchmen in the company of the coach and its occupants return to do just this (use **Town Guard** statistics in *WFRP* page 235).

Characters that hide to avoid attracting attention also make the guards suspicious. The coach turns away after a few minutes of conferring and then heads on to the next town, where they rouse up a militia to investigate the coaching inn. The militia arrives in 2d10+10 hours, consisting of ten watchmen, the two Hammer Bearers, the priest and his assistant.

Father Johannes and Entourage

When the coach enters the courtyard, it stops just inside. The Hammer Bearers dismount and open the coach door. Out comes Nils, a scrawny young acolyte. He sets a footstool before the coach door and then holds the door for an immensely fat priest, Father Johannes.

Father Johannes immediately begins ordering the PCs around, assuming they are servants of the inn, while Nils fetches down an enormous golden hammer strapped into a wooden rack from the roof of the coach. Johannes tells them to take his trunks to his room, run him a hot bath, and have a meal for him and his servants sent up to his room.

No matter what the PCs do, Ernst and Klaus quickly learn that the inn is deserted—the lack of food, fire and fellow travellers tipping them off. Father Johannes becomes indignant and frightened, and outraged when he learns what happened. The Hammer Bearers immediately go on guard, telling the PCs to keep back. Ernst then scouts the inn while Klaus guards Johannes and questions the PCs, asking them in more detail where the tavern owner went and what happened to all the people, and who they are. Showing them the embassy letter eases their suspicions.

Should the guards be suspicious when entering, they stop the coach in the centre of the yard and tell Father Johannes to remain within. Ernst checks the inn and stables while Klaus guards the coach and questions the PCs. When Ernst determines the PCs are the only threat, Klaus opens the coach and Nils helps Father Johannes out.

Either way, once his safety is assured, learning the PCs are not servants of the inn doesn't bother Father Johannes much. Here is some sample dialogue to work from.

> *"What? Gone you say? Where? All joined a cult? Which cult? Let me see that." He reads the pamphlet and then flings it away. "May Almighty Sigmar curse all heretics and false prophets! This sort of crackpot nonsense is exactly what I was sent to this backwater fleapit to investigate. Boy! Make a note of the name. Crusade of the Child. Come, come, initiate, where is your ink pot? Well, don't stand there. Put down the hammer and get it. Not in the dirt, you fool! It is a holy instrument! Do you lack brains as well as breeding?" He sighs and turns to the PCs. "Well, it is too late to find another inn. If the hostler has left, then you will have to do. Take my trunks to the best room and prepare a meal and a bath. I have had a very trying day."*

If the PCs baulk at this, Johannes becomes angry. He assumes the PCs will do his bidding because of his position. Before any argument can get out of hand, Nils intercedes, placating both parties. He tells Father Johannes he will see to all his needs and, out of Johannes's hearing, apologises to the PCs for his master's behaviour.

Klaus and Ernst

Male Human Temple Guardians*

*See *Tome of Salvation*

The Hammer Bearers are impressive fellows—tall and burly, with fierce beards and cropped hair. Klaus is red-haired. Ernst is blond. They wear black doublets and breeches, with white showing through the slashing. Around their necks hang small silver hammers. Their weapons are great hammers.

Though not knights or nobility, they are snobs. They think their positions as Guards of the Temple of Sigmar make them holier and more important than anyone without a title. They treat the PCs like the lowest conscripts.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
37	32	36 (3)	35 (3)	30	33	42	32

Skills: Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int +10), Dodge Blow (Ag), Gossip (Fel +10), Intimidate (S), Perception (Int), Search (Int), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int)
Talents: Acute Hearing, Coolheaded, Stout-hearted, Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Stun

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 12
Armour (Heavy): Full Leather, Breastplate, Helmet (Head 3, Arms 1, Body 3, Legs 1)
Weapons: Hand Weapon (Warhammer) (1d10+4), Dagger (1d10+1)

Trappings

The Hammer Bearers wear black and white cloaks over their fine armour. Each man has a purity seal on his chest attached to which is a passage copied from *The Life of Sigmar*.

Father Johannes Seibolt

Male Human Priest (ex-Initiate, ex-Noble)

In his late fifties, Father Johannes is so weak and obese he cannot walk far without the aid of a staff. He has thinning hair and a snooty, jowly face. He wears gold rings and gold-embroidered robes. He is a snob, a bigot, and a coward—in short, everything Luthor Huss thinks is wrong with the Cult of Sigmar in one blubbery package.

Born to a noble Reikland family, Johannes won his position—interrogator of the Order of the Cleansing Flame—through influence, not merit. He is a poor inquisitor, so enthusiastic that he has often killed his subjects before extracting confession. His family is too influential for the cult to defrock him, so as punishment for his latest error, he has been sent north to investigate the recent upsurge in lunatic Sigmarite cults, and to determine if any are a true danger to the Empire.

When he left Altdorf, Johannes had a retinue of twelve Hammer Bearers. Some died in a clash with bandits, and others who he sent to listen to a Valtenite prophet joined the Valtenites and stole his travelling funds. Only Klaus and Ernst are left.

Johannes addresses Nils as "initiate" or, more often, "stutterer" or "boy." He never calls him by his name.

Insanity Points: 5

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
37	38	30 (3)	36 (3)	32	47	45	46

Skills: Academic Knowledge (History, Theology) (Int +10), Channelling (WP), Charm (Fel +10), Command (Fel), Common Knowledge (Dwarfs) (Int), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int +10), Consume Alcohol (T), Gamble (Int), Gossip (Fel +10), Heal (Int), Magical Sense (WP), Perception (Int), Read/Write (Int +20), Ride (Ag), Speak Arcane Language (Magick) (Int), Speak Language (Bretonnian) (Int), Speak Language (Classical) (Int +10), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int +20)
Talents: Etiquette, Excellent Vision, Master Orator, Petty Magic (Divine), Public Speaking, Savvy, Schemer, Strike to Injure, Suave, Very Strong

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Fate Points:** 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 16
Magic: 1; Petty Magic (Divine)
Weapons: Dagger (1d10; CV +1)

Trappings

Father Johannes wears thick black robes that somewhat obscure his great weight. He keeps a massive copy of *The Life of Sigmar* chained to his belt along with a string of prayer beads. Hanging around his neck is a small silver hammer. Bejewelled rings encircle each finger worth at least 100 *gc* in all. Inside his trunk are spare clothes, several books on theological subjects, history, and Tilean philosophy, as well as a stack of letters in various stages of completion addressed to such luminaries as the Grand Theogonist, lectors, and elector counts.

The thing would be worth a fortune (300*gc*) if one could ever find a fence brave enough to buy it. Breaking it down to its component parts halves the value, but still, one would have to find a smith or jeweller brazen enough to handle it.

Nils Freiborg

Male Human Initiate

Thin, with a mop of dark hair that hides timid eyes, Nils, seventeen, is a Sigmarite initiate. He is shy, sweet-natured and naive, with a slight stutter that gets worse when under stress. The son of a successful Altdorf chandler, he is torn between joining the Order of the Silver Hammer and seeing the world, or joining the Order of the Anvil and living a life of quiet contemplation.

He accompanied Father Johannes because it was an adventure, and he has enjoyed the adventuring aspects. The fight with the bandits was thrilling. But Father Johannes's treatment of him has been less enjoyable. Nils understands an acolyte must learn humility, but the abuse Father Johannes heaps upon him seems excessive. The priest uses Nils as his scribe, porter, waiter, errand boy, valet, and as the butt of his jokes, sneering at his stutter and his merchant background.

Nil addresses Father Johannes as "Inquisitor" or "Your Holiness."

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
38	35	31 (3)	37 (3)	37	37	34	37

Skills: Academic Knowledge (History, Theology) (Int), Charm (Fel), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int), Gossip (Fel), Heal (Int), Perception (Int), Read/Write (Int), Speak Language (Classical) (Int), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int +10)
Talents: Lightning Reflexes, Public Speaking, Resistance to Disease, Super Numerate, Warrior Born

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Fate Points:** 2; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 12
Weapons: Dagger (1d10)

Trappings

Nils wears common white robes with the symbol of the hammer stitched on the breast. He carries a sling bag that holds a battered copy of *The Life of Sigmar*, a small pot of ink, a pen, three extra nibs, several rolls of bandages, needle and thread, a couple of healing poultices, and finally a jar of foul-smelling cream (for Father Johannes's rump buttons).

Nils would make an excellent replacement PC if any of the players' characters dies during this adventure.

Father Johannes's Hammer

The symbol of his office, Father Johannes's warhammer is a huge, gold- and gem-encrusted monster, so baroquely made and heavy it cannot be used as a weapon. Father Johannes is not strong enough to carry it, so when he must appear with it in public, Nils carries it on a special wooden frame on his back and then places it at Father Johannes's side once he is sitting comfortably.

The Long Hours of the Night

With the arrival of the unexpected guests in hand, the PCs are free to go about their business, either scuttling around and attending the haughty priest, or if they refuse, keeping up their guard against his tough Hammer Bearers. While Nils installs Father Johannes in the best room, Klaus and Ernst unhitch the horses from the coach and stable them, whilst ordering the PCs to close and lock the main gate (if they haven't already done it). As the sun finally sets, blanketing the area in darkness, lightning flashes and thunder soon follows, presaging the arrival of the storm. Lorinoc remains hidden until the PCs find him, at which point he contents himself by observing the characters, but doing nothing to help or hinder them in their routines.

Setting Watches

The Hammer Bearers then go off to sleep in the room next to Johannes's, contemptuously instructing the PCs to post watches and wake them at first light or if anything happens. If the PCs set watches, have them use the map to show where they patrol and when. If they don't set watches, have them use the map to show where they sleep.

The Life of an Initiate

After he sees Father Johannes safely to bed, Nils seeks out the PCs and offers to see to their wounds. He has the Heal Skill and a few healing poultices, so he can do some good and little harm.

He is a shy but inquisitive boy and is very interested in the life of an adventurer. He is hesitant at first but asks the PCs to tell of their adventures, and he hangs on every word.

If they ask him about his life, he tells them about growing up a chandler's son, hearing the call of service to Sigmar, and the day-to-day life of an initiate—learning the ways of the cult, keeping the temple and the seminary clean, meditation, prayer, and tending to the priests.

He tells them of his uncertainty of which path to follow—a life of contemplation and humility with the Order of the Anvil, or a life of adventure and spreading the word of Sigmar with the Order of the Silver Hammer.

If they question Father Johannes's treatment of him, or insult Johannes, Nils quickly comes to his defence, saying the priest is a great man—the cares of his high position do not allow him to care for himself properly.

> *"He needs someone to look after him, and I was honoured to accompany him. I have never been further from Altdorf than Carrosburg. I would not pass up this opportunity to see the world."*

If pressed, he admits Johannes is sometimes overly harsh and that his temper is a trifle volatile.

> *"But that is because I am a very poor servant, and often fail in my duties. I have much to learn, particularly in the ways of service and humility. I believe Father Johannes is testing me, and through him, Sigmar is testing me. I must not fail these tests."*

He cannot be shaken from this attitude, and gets upset and respectfully leaves the PCs if they persist in trying to convince him Johannes is being unreasonably cruel.

Event 2: A Surprising Discovery

This event can occur at any time after the PCs arrive at the Reaper's Bounty. When either the PCs or the Hammer Bearers make a thorough search of the place, someone is bound to find Lorinoc. This young Wood Elf was part of a pilgrimage to the Laurelorn Forest, where he and his fellows performed a ceremony of consecration on a Waystone, a potent menhir infused with magical energy designed to hedge in the worst of Chaos's influence in the Old World. With the ritual complete, Lorinoc and his cohorts set out to make the long journey home to Athel Loren, when a few miles north of the Reaper's Bounty, they were beset by a rampaging herd of Beastmen. The fighting was short, ugly, and fatal for the Wood Elves, and only Lorinoc escaped, injured, bleeding, and in no condition to make the rest of the journey to his homeland. As he stumbled through the Drakwald, he came upon the Reaper's Bounty, and finding it empty decided to hole up here until he felt well enough to return to his people and share with them the tragedy that befell his companions. Lorinoc has been here for just over a day. He's still in bad shape and so when he heard the PCs arrive, he slipped under the bed in his chosen room to hide until they went on their way.

Ideally, the PCs should find Lorinoc, but if the characters are careless and don't do a thorough search of the inn, have one of the Hammer Bearers find Lorinoc instead. The Wood Elf is no coward; he just knows that he's the last of his band and it's his duty to relate what happened to his kin. He has little to say to what he deems are savages, and unless the PCs succeed on a **Challenging (–10) Charm Test** or a **Hard (–20) Intimidate Test**, he remains silent. If the PCs manage to get him talking, he speaks slowly as if he finds the Reikspiel words distasteful. He relates his story in short terms and explains he was recovering from his injuries here until he was strong enough to make it to Athel Loren. He doesn't know anything about the hostler or the Bounty's staff and he honestly doesn't care.

Lorinoc has little use for Father Johannes, his Hammer Bearers, or anyone else affiliated with the Cult of Sigmar, having witnessed firsthand the destruction wrought by the Crusade of the Child. He knows little about the mob, except that they are a force of destruction and that they cannot be trusted.

Lorinoc

Male Wood Elf Kithband Warrior (ex-Hunter)

Lorinoc is young and hotheaded but sheltered. He has spent his whole life in Athel Loren and had only the occasional encounters with men. This journey was his first into Human lands and he is horrified. He finds men to be savage, clumsy, uncouth barbarians, and doesn't know why his elders ever accepted them as allies.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
36	68	38 (3)	36 (3)	57	39	39	30

Skills: Common Knowledge (Elves) (Int), Concealment (Ag +10), Dodge Blow (Ag), Follow Trail (Int +10), Heal (Int), Outdoor Survival (Int +10), Perception (Int +10), Scale Sheer Surface (S), Search (Int), Secret Signs (Ranger) (Int), Silent Move (Ag +10), Speak Language (Eltharin, Reikspiel) (Int), Swim (S)
Talents: Excellent Vision, Hardy, Lightning Reflexes, Marksman, Rapid Reload, Rover, Savvy, Specialist Weapon Group (Longbow)
Traits: Night Vision

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Fate Points:** 1; **Movement:** 5; **Wounds:** 14 (currently 2)
Armour (Light): Leather Jack (Arms 1, Body 1)
Weapons: Elfbow with 10 Arrows (1d10+3; Range 36/72; Reload Free; Armour Piercing), Hand Weapon (Sword) (1d10+3), Dagger (1d10)

Trappings

Lorinoc wears a leather jack dyed in greys and greens to blend in with his surroundings. A forest green cloak held fast by a silver clasp hangs about his shoulders. A small pouch on his waist contains an antitoxin kit.

Event 3: Strangers Among Us

The weather gets more threatening as the night goes on. When darkness falls, the PCs hear thunder and see lightning to the east. The wind becomes strong and cold, and carries the scent of wet ashes. This phenomenon continues throughout the night.

A Guarded Well

In the unlikely event that the PCs discovered the secret tunnel in the well and now guard it, after midnight, those guarding it must make opposed **Perception Tests** against Lena Orbach's (see page 66) **Silent Move Test**. If she wins the test and if only one PC is on guard, she climbs up the well and puts a dagger to his throat, saying, *"Shout and die."* She holds the PC until Feodor Geisel and Piers Kruger can exit the well, then gag and tie him up.

If there is more than one guard at the well, Lena scouts, then beckons Feodor and Piers to come up fast and subdue (but not kill) the guards as quickly and quietly as possible. Any fight at this point doesn't wake Johannes, Nils, or the Hammer Bearers.

If the fight doesn't quickly end in the Mutants' favour, Feodor begs the PCs for mercy, and the scene proceeds with **The Quality of Mercy**.

An Unguarded Well

Three Mutants creep quietly out of the well and make their way around the inn building to the main gate. They attempt to open it and let in the Mutants waiting outside. Feodor, Piers, and Lena know the PCs are there (but don't know about Father Johannes or Lorinoc) and avoid them if they can.

If a PC guards the gate, the Mutants try to subdue (not kill) him. If no one guards the gate, hearing the gate open requires an **Easy (+20) Perception Test** if the PCs are in the courtyard or on the battlements overlooking it. If they are in a room facing the courtyard the test is **Average (+0)**. If they are in further rooms or the back garden the test is **Challenging (–10)**.

With the gate opened, another sixteen Mutants come inside, and once there, the Mutants try to subdue everyone in the inn quietly, one at a time, and then raid it for the stores they think are there.

Should the PCs discover the Mutants before they get the gate open, and there is any fighting or raised voices, the Mutants outside climb the walls and jump down, ready to fight (this takes 10 rounds). If the door is open and all the Mutants are already in, they wait for Feodor's orders.

The Quality of Mercy

Confronted with the Mutants the PCs immediately see they are starving to death. Even the massive Piers is gaunt. Feodor begs for mercy as soon as they are discovered. If the PCs attack anyway, he shouts for help, and the rest of the Mutants start climbing over the walls while Bull wades in swinging and Lena runs and hides, crying *"We only wanted something to eat!"*

If the PCs don't attack, Feodor tells them he doesn't want to hurt them. He and his band of outcasts are starving and came to the inn because they thought it was deserted.

> *"We saw all the servants and the guests leave with the pilgrims, heading towards Gootten—even the garrison went. We thought the inn would be undefended. We just want some food. There must be enough to spare a little. Please, have mercy on poor outcasts."*

Let this play out however the PCs want to play it. If the PCs are understanding, and show Feodor there is no food, he agrees to leave, but Piers suggests they eat the PCs. Feodor is angry with him. *"We don't do that! We will not become like the others!"* Unsympathetic PCs who tell Feodor to leave without allowing him to see that there is no food force Feodor to reluctantly call his gang to capture (not kill) them.

Finally, if the PCs attack, Feodor calls his gang and they fight without mercy.

Kill the Mutants!

Any fighting or raised voices wake Klaus and Ernst, who come to investigate. When they see the intruders, they attack, shouting, *"Mutants! Kill them!"* The Mutants, terrified by their Hammer Bearer uniforms, try to kill everyone. *"They are servants of Sigmar! We must kill them! They'll bring the witch hunters down on us!"*

If there are no raised voices and the scene threatens to end peacefully, Klaus interrupts anyway, stepping out into the courtyard to use the privies. When he sees the Mutants, he runs back to get his weapon, calling loudly for Ernst, and things proceed as above.

Three rounds after the fighting starts, Johannes appears in a voluminous white nightshirt, Nils at his side, lugging the useless golden hammer. Nils tries to get into the fight, but Johannes forbids it, telling the boy to protect him. Johannes takes cover, screaming. *"Destroy them! All of them! They are abominations in the eyes of almighty Sigmar! They cannot be allowed to live!"*

Any attempt by the PCs to calm things down after that fails. No one listens to reason, and once the fighting starts, the Mutants attack the PCs as ferociously as they do the Hammer Bearers.

Let the fighting last for 5 rounds before everyone present hears the sounds of the Beastmen's horn (see **Part Two: Attack**).

Changed Outcasts (16)

Male and Female Mutant Vagabonds

This mob of Mutants is a riot of tentacles, spots, weird colours, and more. They are thin and ravenous, willing to sell their lives for a scrap of food.

Insanity Points: 5

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
30	25	21 (2)	21 (2)	36	31	31	21

Skills: Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int), Concealment (Ag), Navigation (Int), Outdoor Survival (Int), Perception (Int), Secret Language (Ranger Tongue) (Int), Secret Signs (Ranger) (Int), Silent Move (Ag +10), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int), Swim (S)
Talents: Flee!, Fleet-footed, Orientation, Seasoned Traveller
Traits: Mutations (Cosmetic)

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 11
Weapons: Poor Hand Weapon (Club) (WS 20; 1d10+2)

Trappings

The Mutants have nothing but rags to their names.

Mutations

For simplicity, the Mutants all have cosmetic mutations. At your option, you can randomly generate a mutation for each using the mutation tables in *WFRP, Old World Bestiary,* or *Tome of Corruption*.

Feodor Geisel

Male Mutant Outlaw (ex-Tradesman)

A tall, gangly former tailor whose hair mutated into porcupine quills after he fought against Archaon's hordes in Ostland. Feodor fled into the forest, where he fell in with a gang of Mutants led by a villainous bully. Determined not to let his mutation turn him to evil, he helped overthrow the bully, and now leads the band, who try to make a life for themselves in the woods without resorting to violence or murder.

Insanity Points: 5

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
36	27	30 (3)	36 (3)	38	51	39	36

Skills: Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int), Concealment (Ag), Drive (S), Evaluate (Int), Gossip (Fel), Haggle (Fel), Perception (Int), Read/Write (Int), Secret Language (Guild Tongue) (Int), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int), Trade (Tailor) (Ag +10)
Talents: Flee!, Rover, Savvy, Strike to Stun
Traits: Mutation (Quills)

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 15
Armour (Light): Leather Jerkin (Body 1)
Weapons: Hand Weapon (Sword) (1d10+3), Shield (1d10+1; Defensive, Special), Bow with 10 Arrows (1d10+3; Range 24/48; Reload Half)

Trappings

Wearing the tatters of his uniform, he hides it as best he can beneath a blanket that serves as his cloak. He has several patched and empty sacks, and flint and steel in a small tinderbox he keeps in a pouch hanging from his rope belt.

Mutations

Feodor's scalp is covered in thick porcupine quills. As a free action, Feodor may fling a quill, making a **Ballistic Skill Test** to hit the target. An ejected quill has a range of 6/12 and deals 1d10+2 damage on a hit.

Lena Orbach

Female Mutant Outlaw (ex-Servant)

Pretty, shy and petite, Lena is a former housemaid who developed her mutations soon after reaching maturity. She has two pupils in each eye, and her bones are hollow like a bird. She can climb walls easily but is very fragile.

Insanity Points: 3

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
31	41	27 (2)	23 (2)	55	36	39	41

Skills: Animal Care (Int), Blather (Fel), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int), Concealment (Ag), Dodge Blow (Ag +10), Evaluate (Int), Gossip (Fel), Perception (Int), Ride (Ag), Search (Int), Scale Sheer Surface (S), Secret Signs (Thief) (Int), Set Trap (Ag), Silent Move (Ag +10), Sleight of Hand (Ag), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int)
Talents: Acute Hearing, Etiquette, Flee!, Lightning Reflexes, Rover, Sharpshooter
Traits: Mutations (Dual Pupils, Hollow Bones)

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 12
Armour (Light): Leather Jack and Greaves (Arms 1, Body 1, Legs 1)
Weapons: Hand Weapon (Axe) (1d10+2), Sling with 10 Stones (1d10+3; range 16/32; Reload Half; Sharpshooter)

Trappings

Lena wears once-fine clothing given to her by her mistress, but life on the run has left them worn and tattered. In her pack, she carries a pewter tankard, tinderbox, a flask of lamp oil, and three empty sacks.

Mutations

Lena has two mutations.

- **Dual Pupils:** Having two pupils in each eye grants Lena a +20 bonus to sight-based Perception Tests.
- **Hollow Bones:** Lena's bones are hollow, like those of a bird. She increases her Agility Characteristic by 10. When making Scale Sheer Surface Tests, she uses her Agility instead of Strength. However, she is fragile, reducing her Toughness Characteristic by –10. These changes are included in her profile.

Piers "Bull" Kruger

Male Mutant Outlaw (ex-Peasant)

A huge, dour ploughman, Piers is heartbroken and hates the world because the love of his life, his wife, was petrified of him and betrayed him to the witch hunters when he began developing his mutations. He has thick, leathery skin, and hands like thick horn chisels. He cannot feed himself, or pick small things up, but he's brutal in combat.

Insanity Points: 6

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
43	31	48 (4)	47 (4)	37	36	41	23

Skills: Animal Care (Int), Animal Training (Fel), Charm Animal (Fel), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int), Concealment (Ag +10), Drive (S), Gamble (Int), Set Trap (Ag), Silent Move (Ag +10), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int), Trade (Farmer) (S)
Talents: Flee!, Hardy, Specialist Weapon (Sling)
Traits: Mutations (Chisel Hands, Leathery Skin), Natural Weapons (Chisel Hands)

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 16
Weapons: Chisel Hands (1d10+4; Armour Piercing, Impact, Slow)

Trappings

Piers wears worn peasants' garb consisting of a homespun tunic and breeches. He has three empty sacks, and wears a cheap locket around his neck. Inside it is a lock of blonde hair.

Mutations

Piers has two mutations.

- **Leathery Skin:** Grants +10 to Toughness Characteristic, included.
- **Chisel Hands:** Piers gains the Natural Weapons Talent and when making attacks with his hands, they count as having the Armour Piercing, Impact, and Slow Qualities.

— Part II: Attack —

Five rounds after the fighting begins, or 1 minute after the PCs peacefully deal with the Mutants, all present and awake in the inn hear the ominous sound of a blown horn echoing through the night until it's drowned out by thunder. Just then, it begins to rain. If either of the Hammer Bearers are still alive, they recognise the sound, *"Beastmen,"* and they immediately grow pale. Otherwise, any of the Mutants says the same. It should be clear that Beastmen are coming and that unless they all do something and quick, they will be overrun.

The Beastmen

The warherd consists of 18 Gors, 9 Ungors and Brays (total), and Korska, a Bestigor champion.

Korska

Bestigor Champion

Sensing a profound disturbance in the currents of reality, Korska, a Truegore—the smartest and most dangerous of their kind—under the advice of his tribe's Bray-Shaman, leads a war party to slaughter and plunder Human settlements. He has no idea of what's inside the walls of the inn, but if there are people, there's food. Korska is a big shaggy thing, with matted black hair and two curling black horns. His eyes weep sticky pus, clotted with flies and maggots.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
70	30	59 (5)	67 (6)	51 (61)	50	42	36

Skills: Command (Fel+10), Concealment (Ag), Dodge Blow (Ag), Follow Trail (Int), Intimidate (S +10), Outdoor Survival (Int), Perception (Int +10), Shadowing (Ag), Speak Language (Beast Tongue, Dark Tongue) (Int)
Talents: Menacing, Rover, Savvy, Specialist Weapon Group (Two-handed), Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure, Very Strong
Traits: Keen Senses, Mutation (Animalistic Legs, Bestial Appearance, Horns ×2), Silent as the Beasts of the Woods

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 5; **Wounds:** 19
Armour (Medium): Full Mail Armour (Head 3, Arms 3, Body 3, Legs 3)
Weapons: Great Weapon (Saw-toothed Sword) (1d10+6; CV +1; Impact, Slow), Shield (1d10+5; CV +1; Defensive, Special), Horns (1d10+5)

Trappings

Korska has never removed his full mail and as his body has swollen with corruption, it has begun to fuse with the armour, piercing his flesh and clinging tightly to his body. In addition to his weaponry, he wears a bandolier across his chest from which hang six rotting Human heads. He also carries a large hunting horn carved with profane glyphs of Chaos.

Silent as the Beasts of the Woods

Beastmen gain a +20 bonus on Silent Move Tests and a +10 bonus on Concealment Tests.

Gors

Gors are brutish Beastmen, tough and powerful, superior to Mutants and lesser Beastmen in nearly every way. Among the Gors attacking the inn, most have goat or ram heads and a few have cow heads.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
40	25	35 (3)	44 (4)	33	26	25	25

Skills: Concealment (Ag), Follow Trail (Int), Intimidate (S), Outdoor Survival (Int), Perception (Int), Shadowing (Ag), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Language (Beast Tongue, Dark Tongue) (Int)
Talents: Menacing, Rover
Traits: Keen Senses, Mutations (Animalistic Legs, Bestial Appearance, Horns), Silent as the Beasts of the Woods (as Korska)

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 5; **Wounds:** 12
Armour (Light): Leather Jack (Arms 1, Body 1)
Weapons: Hand Weapon (1d10+3) or Spear (1d10+3; Fast) or Hand Weapon (1d10+3) and Shield (1d10+1; Defensive, Special); all have Horns (1d10+2)

Trappings

The Gors are all carrying rotting burlap sacks to hold their spoils, lengths of rope and grapples, and various personal effects, ranging from the downright disgusting—a Human ear, a necklace of flesh, or a fistful of dung—to the strangely Human—a doll, a silver pendant of the twin-tailed comet, or a locket holding blond hairs.

Ungors and Brays

These individuals are the weakest of the Beastmen. They lack much in the way of the distinctive horns, if they have them at all. Smaller, frailer, and more cowardly, they are driven forward by the Gors to bear the brunt of the defenders' attacks.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
30	21	31 (3)	35 (3)	30	24	24	20

Skills: Concealment (Ag), Follow Trail (Int), Outdoor Survival (Int), Perception (Int), Shadowing (Ag), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Language (Beast Tongue, Dark Tongue) (Int)
Talents: Rover
Traits: Keen Senses, Mutations (Animalistic Legs, Bestial Appearance), Silent as the Beasts of the Woods (as Korska)

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 5; **Wounds:** 10
Weapons: Spear (1d10+3; Fast)

Trappings

The Ungors and Brays are weak and pathetic things compared to the Gors. They have nothing of value and are crawling with lice and swarmed with biting flies.

The Siege

From the sounding of the horn, the PCs have 2 minutes to make themselves ready for the attack. In spite of Father Johannes's protests, the Hammer Bearers are willing to stop fighting the Mutants if the PCs are, and the Mutants stop fighting the PCs if both the characters and the Hammer Bearers break off the fight. The likely first order of business is to close the gates—assuming they were opened for the other Mutants outside. If not, and if the 16 Mutants are still huddled near the gate, they begin to scream for help, fearing the bestial tide. The Hammer Bearers refuse to open the doors and will block the other Mutants inside if the PCs don't stop them. They are swiftly slaughtered by the Beastmen once they close on the inn and the sounds of their feasting forces everyone present to make **Will Power Tests** or gain 1 Insanity Point.

Aside from barring the gate, the PCs may take whatever other precautions they like in the time they have remaining. Fleeing the Coaching Inn is not a good option since the Beastmen likely know the forest far better than the characters and a **Routine (+10) Academic Knowledge (Strategy/Tactics) Test** reveals that there's little chance the PCs could outrun these enemies and that if they must make a stand, there are few better places than inside a fortified coaching inn.

Managing the NPCs

Tracking the actions and choices of the PCs along with all the Mutants, the fat priest, his assistant, and the Hammer Bearers is undoubtedly going to challenge your skills as a GM. To help you through the rest of this section, use the following general guidelines to adjudicate what the NPCs are most likely to do—assuming they survived the initial conflict (if there was one) with the Mutants. Make sure Father Johannes and Nils survive. These two characters have more of a role to play as the rest of the adventure unfolds. Everyone else is expendable.

Father Johannes

The prospect of a Beastmen attack is more than the priest is willing to face and he orders his Hammer Bearers to make ready the carriage for their escape. Neither of the Hammer Bearers thinks this is a good idea, but they will abide by the priest's orders unless the PCs convince the priest his idea is foolish—an **Intimidate Test** will do the trick. Even if the characters fail, it takes about 10 minutes for the carriage to be ready, and by then, the inn is already under attack. At this point Johannes flees inside the inn and cowers in one of the rooms until the attack is concluded.

Nils

At first, Johannes commands Nils to stay by his side, but once the fat priest flees to hide, Nils is left to his own devices. He follows the PCs' orders and does his best to defend the inn.

The Hammer Bearers

Klaus and Ernst are sworn to protect Father Johannes and so their first acts are to safeguard the priest. Once Johannes locks himself in his room, the Hammer Bearers look to any obvious martial characters for orders—good choices include nobles, soldiers, and anyone else with fighting experience. Lacking any such characters, the Hammer Bearers take positions on the walls to kill any Beastmen thinking to scale them.

Lorinoc

While he has little love for the PCs—including any Elves among them—Lorinoc realises he must pitch in if he would live through the night. He will accept orders from any clear leader in the party, but if no one steps forward, he races to the gate, climbs the guard tower and peppers the Beastmen using his bow.

The Mutants

The Mutants look to Feodor for guidance. If he's still alive, he places his minions on the walls to fight back any attempts to scale them. If he's dead, the Mutants look to the PCs for instructions. Lena, Feodor, and Piers all use the secret tunnel to escape if the Beastmen manage to break down the gate or pour over the walls.

Resources

There's little of use in the inn; the Crusade took just about everything of value. In fact, the only real resource the characters have is the carriage. While they could pile inside and make a break for it, they will have to protect the steeds from the cruel swords of the corrupted horrors outside.

Beastmen Tactics

Once the Beastmen arrive, they dispatch anyone outside of the inn's walls and then push through the doors if open. Assuming the PCs closed the doors, the Beastmen break up into smaller groups. Six Gors and 3 Ungors or Brays each attack from the north, west, and south. The position of the inn within the walls makes penetrating from the east an unlikely approach. The Beastmen start by tossing up the grapples and ropes and goading the Ungors and Brays to make the initial assault. If these lesser Beastmen fail, the Gors take their time, attacking in waves, one wall at a time, hoping to weaken the defenders until they can make another concerted strike. As the night progresses, more Beastmen arrive (in numbers of your choosing) to replace those who have fallen.

Managing the Siege

There's a lot going on in this battle and if the PCs achieved at least a temporary alliance with the Mutants, they should be able to repel the initial attack. Otherwise, this desperate fight could spell the end of the characters, and the PCs will likely need to spend Fate Points to survive.

The best way to handle this fight is to keep your attention on the player characters. Describe the raging battle around them in a narrative fashion and don't worry about making tests for all the combatants. To decide the battle's progress, assume that for every Beastman slain, the Hammer Bearers each kill a Beastman and the Mutants kill 1d5 Beastmen. For every round in which no Beastman is slain, 1 Mutant falls and there's a 20% chance for one of the Hammer Bearers to fall. You can modify casualties based on other actions by the PCs, rewarding clever play and penalising the defenders for foolish mistakes.

Of course, you can, if you want, run this as a normal combat. Your best bet here is to divide up the Mutants among the PCs to control, giving the players something to do while waiting for their characters' next actions.

Escaping the Siege

The situation is particularly dire and unless the characters are all skilled warriors, they could very well meet their end here in this lonely inn. The PCs, understandably, may be inclined to flee. If so, they must escape the inn before the Beastmen arrive. Otherwise, their only real chance is to slip through the secret tunnel in the well. At first, the PCs should not be followed, at least until the Beastmen realise there is nothing or little of interest in the coaching inn. The Beastmen then fan out to round up and eat those who got away. Most of the surviving Mutants, if any, meet a terrible end as a Beastman's meal. Depending on how the PCs treated Lorinoc, he may help them slip away and hide them in the forest,

giving them a chance to survive the night and the attack. Whether Father Johannes and company are included in this, depends on whether the PCs think to take them along and if they can convince Lorinoc to help—requiring a **Challenging (–10) Charm Test**.

Saved!

Whether the PCs are still fighting the Beastmen at the Reaper's Bounty or are running for their lives through the Drakwald, Beastmen hot on their heels, salvation finds them when the stormy night gives way to a rainy day. A group of Kithband warriors from Athel Loren have come into the Empire to learn the fate of those missing Wood Elves who were to return from their ceremony in the Laurelorn Forest. The Elves make short work of the remaining Beastmen—whether outside of the inn or in the forest harassing the PCs, peppering them with arrows and then, ghostlike, moving among them and cutting throats with their blades to put these abominations out of their misery.

Coriael

Male Wood Elf Captain (ex-Sergeant, ex-Kithband Warrior)

Coriael has seen it all. He has fought Beastmen, Mutants, and Kurgan. He has been a liaison with Human leaders during the recent Chaos Incursion and has dealt with Empire and Bretonnians alike. He has just as much contempt for Humans as Lorinoc does, but he is resigned to the fact they're not going away and that the Elves must remain on good terms with them to survive. He is not one to do anything rash, or that might upset his lords back home. He treats Humans with an aloof, condescending amusement.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
68	63	51 (5)	48 (4)	61	46	56	54

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Strategy/Tactics) (Int +10), Animal Care (Int), Command (Fel +10), Common Knowledge (Elves) (Int +10), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int), Concealment (Ag), Dodge Blow (Ag +20), Follow Trail (Int), Gossip (Fel), Intimidate (S), Outdoor Survival (Int), Perception (Int +10), Read/Write (Int), Ride (Ag), Scale Sheer Surface (S), Search (Int), Secret Language (Battle Tongue) (Int), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Language (Eltharin, Reikspiel, Tilean) (Int), Swim (S)
Talents: Coolheaded, Excellent Vision, Lightning Parry, Quick Draw, Rover, Rapid Reload, Seasoned Traveller, Specialist Weapon Group (Longbow), Street Fighting, Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Stun
Traits: Night Vision

Combat

Attacks: 3; **Fate Points:** 1; **Movement:** 5; **Wounds:** 18
Armour (Light): Full Leather (Head 1, Arms 1, Body 1, Legs 1)
Weapons: Elfbow with 20 Arrows (1d10+3; Range 36/72; Reload Free), Superior Hand Weapon (Sword) (**WS** 78, 1d10+6), Shield (1d10+4; Defensive, Special)

Trappings

Coriael wears a suit of dyed full leather, camouflaged to help him blend into his surroundings. He has a long cloak about his shoulders clasped in place with a silver pin. He travels light, having a sling bag filled with a few healing poultices, antitoxin kits, and dried foods. Coriael rarely goes without his band of loyal followers, which consist of ten Kithband warriors.

Kithband Warriors (10)

Male and Female Wood Elf Kithband Warriors

These warriors are capable and experience in fighting Humans, Beastmen, and other creatures that intrude into their woodland homes.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
40	54	31 (3)	34 (3)	48	41	39	24

Skills: Common Knowledge (Elves) (Int), Concealment (Ag), Dodge Blow (Ag), Follow Trail (Int), Outdoor Survival (Int), Perception (Int), Scale Sheer Surface (S), Search (Int), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Language (Eltharin, Reikspiel) (Int)
Talents: Excellent Vision, Marksman, Night Vision, Rapid Reload, Savvy, Specialist Weapon Group (Longbow)

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 5; **Wounds:** 12
Armour (Light): Leather Jack (Arms 1, Body 1)
Weapons: Hand Weapon (Sword) (1d10+3), Dagger (1d10), Elfbow with 10 Arrows (1d10+3; Range 36/72; Reload Half; Armour Piercing)

Trappings

The Kithband warriors wear boiled leather jacks underneath their forest green cloaks. They have fine swords and daggers in sheathes hanging from their belts, and quivers of arrows slung on their backs.

Dealing with the Wood Elves

The Wood Elves—there are ten, both male and female—confront the PCs. Their leader is Coriael, a proud, cold-seeming Kithband warrior whose black hair hangs down in front of one eye. If Lorinoc is with the PCs, he says *"Friends, you are in danger here. More Beastmen are coming. Many more. Come with us and we will lead you to safety and see to your wounds."* Otherwise, Coriael regards the PCs coldly and then withdraws into the forest, without extending the offer, though the PCs are free to follow and the Wood Elves move slow enough to let the PCs keep up. The offer of assistance, whether spoken or implied, does not extend to the Mutants, and any that attempt to follow are shot. The Elves allow Father Johannes, Nils, and the Hammer Bearers, if any are still alive, to accompany them.

If the PCs had any sympathy for Lena or the other Mutants, and press Coriael to let the Mutants come along or baulk at the violence against them, Lorinoc answers that Mutants are a distortion of the natural order, and must be cleansed. *"Their lives are a misery. It would be a mercy to end them."*

If they ask him why he's intervening on their behalf, he says the Elves have always honoured their alliance with the Empire. *"We would not let innocents die when it was in our power to prevent it."* Elves in the party are entitled to a **Challenging (–10) Intelligence Test** to realise that the Elves hide something. Two degrees of success tells them the Wood Elves don't like Father Johannes. If there are any Elves in the PC party, the test is Average (+0).

Development

The characters have two main options. They can accompany the Wood Elves or they can go their own way. Father Johannes is grateful to the PCs for their valiant efforts and follows their lead. He's not particularly inclined to follow the Elves, considering them tree-worshipping heathens not to be trusted. He says he knows the tales of men being taken into the woods never to be seen again, so he doesn't want to go with them. The Wood Elves couldn't care less if the PCs accompany them or not, but if they are favourably disposed to the characters, they may mention that there are more Beastmen about when Father Johannes asks the Hammer Bearers or PCs to get the coach ready and take him to the next town. Confronted with this, Johannes may become more amenable to the idea if the characters succeed on a **Charm** or **Intimidate Test**.

Racial Animosity

Because of their instinctual mistrust of all Elves, any PC Dwarfs should probably suspect the Elves of duplicity no matter what. In turn, the Wood Elves treat Dwarfs like strange, untrustworthy wild animals. They not only dislike them, they fear them. Most have never seen one in the flesh.

What are the Wood Elves Up To?

It is true that the Wood Elves have entered the Empire to find Lorinoc and any other survivors, but their journey has also made them aware of the Crusade of the Child and they are disturbed by the upheaval this mob seems to be creating. Before returning to Athel Loren, they intend to scout out the encampment and make an assessment about the Crusade's purpose and composition. They keep this concealed from the PCs, since the Wood Elves are not quite certain if the PCs are affiliated with the mob or not.

Regardless, Father Johannes offers them gold to be his bodyguards. *"I do not want to go on alone. I will give each of you a ring from one of my fingers."* A successful **Evaluate Test** reveals his rings average 5 *gc* each (1d10*gc*) and he has plenty to go around.

It's not necessary for the PCs to accompany the Wood Elves; they will encounter them again later in this adventure and further down the road in the campaign. Beastmen are indeed haunting the Drakwald, and the PCs may have a few more encounters with these horrors on their way to Altdorf at your discretion. Not long after the characters set out, the PCs come across the Crusade's encampment as described in **Part Three**. Father Johannes decides that he needs to look into the matter of the Crusade, so he and the surviving members of his entourage follow along, and Johannes may offer to hire the PCs as bodyguards as described above.

A Journey Through the Woods

The Wood Elves lead the PCs north and east through the woods, at first paralleling the road, which they say is being watched by Beastmen, and then continuing straight as the road curves south. They move swiftly and silently, without torch or lantern, through the dripping woods, travelling ahead and behind Johannes, Nils, and the PCs. Johannes slows very quickly. He can barely walk in the best of circumstances, and this is difficult terrain. He leans heavily on his staff and Nils, who is already overburdened by the Hammer of Office.

If the PCs help him, things go quicker, but it won't be pleasant work. Johannes stinks from his unaccustomed exertions, and he is ungrateful as well. *"Watch where you're going! Lift! Higher! Hold me steady, Sigmar curse you!"* On top of this, Johannes seems to have caught a cold from the rain. He sneezes at regular intervals. The Elves are strangely patient with Johannes's progress. There may be contempt in their eyes, but they say nothing.

Eventually, after a few hours of travel, the Wood Elves settle in a clearing. Lorinoc, if present, confers with Coriael and may vouch for the PCs here. He imparts his tale and the deaths of his comrades, and then tells the captain anything the PCs told him back at the coaching inn about their purpose in the Drakwald, being especially sure to relate their interest in the Crusade should he know about it. When he finishes, or if Lorinoc isn't present, Coriael questions the PCs to get their stories, asking about where they came from, where they're heading, and what they're about. Coriael is trying to discern whether or not the PCs can be trusted and if they're worth recruiting for the scouting mission. Evasive PCs are eventually cut loose after receiving a healing draughts each and sent on their ways. Otherwise, the Coriael invites the PCs to accompany his men, sensing that non-Elf characters can infiltrate the encampment better than his team and then report their findings to him. Coriael is disappointed if the PCs refuse but lets them go on their way regardless.

Catching up with Karl

Whether in the company of the Wood Elves, with the priest, or on their own, the PCs should eventually catch up with the Crusade and continue on their way to Altdorf. The Crusade is currently settled just outside of a tiny town called Gootten.

Evidence of the cult's recent passage is everywhere, and easy to follow; angry farmers complaining of stripped fields and pilfered livestock, inn owners missing half their staff, cult symbols, and pamphlets painted and plastered on every barn side and tree.

Father Johannes is absolutely exhausted, and if the PCs want him to keep up, they are going to have to take turns helping poor Nils carry him. Johannes is not in the least grateful, complaining at every bump and lurch. Finding him a cart would be a blessing. It might be difficult though. The Crusade already took everything along the way that wasn't nailed down.

PCs in the company of the Wood Elves find their new companions do their best to conceal their features beneath the hoods of their cloaks and keep their distance from other travellers. If the characters want to join up with other travellers, the Wood Elves refuse and may go their own way.

That Old Time Religion

A few hours after noon, the party reaches Gootten, a small farm town in a patch of cleared forest, a mile off the main road. The Crusade is camped on the far side of the town, in fields surrounded on three sides by forest, and on the fourth by the town. It is a sprawling, messy sea of tents, wagons, and horses that the PCs can see beyond the town.

Most of the Crusaders seem to be in the town, however. Roughly a thousand people—fanatics and townsfolk—congregate in the central square. The town is tiny, having fifteen widely spaced buildings at the most, and the PCs can see the crowd and the square from far away. Farmers and other locals travel towards the town in twos and threes to see what all the fuss is about. Father Johannes wants to get closer too. This phenomenon, after all, is what he was sent to investigate.

A wooden platform and a round blue tent have been set up in the square. Four Crusaders in robes with blue sashes kneel with a Dwarf shield on their shoulders. Another man, (Helmut, though the PCs don't know this yet) walks a small figure out of the tent and helps him onto the shield. The four Crusaders stand and mount the platform so everybody can see the figure, who is, of course, Karl. Even the sight of him sends a ripple of wonder through the crowd.

The PCs can't hear Karl's words unless they come within 20 yards. If they do, they must succeed on a **Very Hard (–30) Will Power Test** or fall under his spell (see sidebar). If there are any PC Elves, they sense and hear him 40 yards out, and must pass a **Routine (+10) Will Power Test** or fall under his spell. The test is **Easy (+20)** for Dwarfs and **Average (+0)** for Halflings.

When Karl raises his arms and speaks, the crowd becomes utterly silent, straining to hear every word, then cheers him lustily when he finishes, instantly converted. A very few townsfolk are not converted and argue, trying to snap their friends out of their delusion. A few violent arguments break out as the Crusaders usher the Child back to his tent.

In the background, the newly converted villagers eagerly give the Crusaders the contents of their larders and their barns. Even a stern looking priest of Sigmar is bringing the mob all his temple's finery.

Father Johannes

Assuming the Sigmarite is still with the PCs, he beckons them to him, his eyes glowing with avarice. In whispers, he orders the PCs to help him kidnap the Child, promising them gold and influential contacts once they help him bring the boy to Altdorf. Nils looks troubled but says nothing.

If The PCs Fall Under Karl's spell

It might be wise to stop the play session here (or at least take a break) and let the PCs sort out what falling for Karl means to their characters. His aura doesn't alter their personalities, only makes Karl the centre of their universe. They want to help him any way they can, and prevent anyone else from harming him. How they do these things should be consistent with how they've played their characters so far.

Also, it might be useful to remind them that, because they now love Karl so much, they should be even more motivated to succeed with the mission given to them in **Chapter I**, especially if they're searching for a hidden cultist amidst the boy's ranks.

The Elves

If Lorinoc or Coriael are present, they draw in shocked breaths. If the PCs continue to advance they are told to stop. *"Do not approach. There is great danger here. The aura of power around that child is like none I've ever seen."* He and the other Elves observe the rally in silence at a distance of 50 yards, their faces grave. Though he cautions the PCs, he won't physically try to stop them from getting closer. There are too many other Humans around for him to risk manhandling them.

When the boy has finished, the PCs hear their allies talking amongst themselves in their own language, looking very serious. Characters who speak Eltharin overhear them arguing about the nature of the Child, with some claiming the boy is a font of magic energy, others suggesting he's a Mutant, while a few suspect there may be some truth to the Humans' claim, though these are quickly silenced.

Before the PCs have a chance to answer, Coriael approaches them, his face hard.

> *"Very disturbing. It goes far beyond righting the wrong done to us and our wood. A power like this let loose in the dominions of man would threaten the entirety of the land. If this child—this abomination against nature—were allowed to reach his maturity, war and madness would spread across the Old World. He is too powerful, and too naive to know to what vile ends the men around him mean to use him. He is a weapon—and indeed is as innocent as a weapon—but who controls him would perhaps become the most dangerous power the world has ever seen. The Child must die."*

Coriael wants to camp in the woods until nightfall, and then kill Karl that very night. He wants to keep Father Johannes as a hostage and send the PCs to scout the camp beforehand to discover where the boy sleeps. The Elves say they will take care of the rest. Coriael won't let the PCs assist in the killing. He says the Child's power is too great. If the PCs got close enough to him to kill him they would almost certainly fall under his spell.

Their plan is to retire to the woods east of the camp with Johannes as hostage while Nils and the PCs explore the camp. They wait for the PCs to return with the location of Karl's sleeping quarters, then sneak into the camp and kill Karl. Lorinoc says that when the PCs learn the location they should just walk into the woods east of the camp and the Elves will find them.

If the PCs refuse to help, the Elves try to kill Karl without them. Afterwards, they look for an opportunity to kill the PCs without risk to themselves. Note this outcome has dangerous repercussions later in the campaign, so you should keep in mind the hostile relationship between the Elves and the PCs in future meetings.

Note that Father Johannes—if with the group—does not enter the encampment. Johannes, however, does pull one of the characters aside and makes the same offer as described above. He sends Nils along, assuming the lad is still alive, to ensure the PCs don't double-cross him.

The PCs are Alone

In the off-chance that the PCs are alone, they may be under the boy's spell or not depending on the results of their tests. Regardless, the PCs may want to do some snooping about on their own, so you can run the following section pretty much as written. The Wood Elves, however, have followed the PCs and now lurk at the edge of the encampment, waiting for the moment to strike, and reveal themselves later that night.

Keeping Things Straight

There are all sorts of chances for things to go wrong from here on out, all of which depend on who's with the PCs at the time of their arrival. The PCs might betray the Elves, betray the priest, or even betray each other. There's no way to predict what your players will do here, so the best advice we can give you is to let the scene play out naturally. Keep the motivations and goals in your mind as the characters decide on their course of action.

— Part III: The Crusade —

Once the PCs determine what they're doing, and who they're doing it for, the playing field for their plan of action is the town, the camp, and the woods. This section is more freeform than the previous sections, with the PCs doing a lot of exploring and snooping, so what follows are descriptions of where they can go, and who and what they can see. Let the PCs follow their noses, but keep in mind that, though the PCs shouldn't know it, the clock is ticking. The rally in the town square happened around three in the afternoon. Mad Orlock, the Strigoi described in the **Adventure Background**, attacks the camp just after midnight.

The Town

Gootten is a typical small Empire farming community. There is a tavern, a small temple of Sigmar, a shrine to Shallya, a general store, a mill, a blacksmith's shop, and a few private houses, with ransacked freehold gardens out back.

At the moment, it is nearly deserted. Almost everyone has moved to the encampment of the Followers of the Child, taking all their food, drink and portable possessions with them. Only a few sad men and women who failed to fall for Karl's charms are left, weeping at the loss of loved ones and property. These folks cower and hide from the PCs, or threaten them, thinking them part of the Crusade.

If the PCs attempt to search or plunder any of the empty houses they find little of value. The people who lived here were poor to begin with. Some cheap furniture and a few personal items were left behind but little else.

The Encampment

This is the PCs' first direct contact with the Crusade of the Child, and it should be a bit overwhelming. The camp is a crowded, filthy, busy, bizarre place. There are Crusaders cooking, eating, washing up, as well as praying, performing religious ceremonies, doing laundry, grooming each other, trying to sleep, preaching, talking about The Child, arguing doctrine, welcoming new converts into the fold, and so on.

Encampment Sights

Use the following sights to add flavour to the encampment. Use as many or as few as you like.

- A group of "foragers" laugh and whoop as they return from raiding a nearby farm. They herd a few cows before them, carry live chickens under their arms, and drink freely from stolen liquor jugs.
- A man praying to Karl for the recovery of his wife. She lies beside him, trembling and sweating, her skin the colour of urine, her belly bloated.
- Six tough-looking Crusaders push around a candle seller. They tell him that all candles must be blue, in honour of Karl. They confiscate all the white candles. *"These candles will be destroyed."*
- A group of naked, painted flagellants march through the camp, lashing themselves with branches and chanting with each step. *"Karl is Sigmar! Sigmar is God! Karl is Sigmar! Sigmar is God!"*
- A group of men shout and cheer around a wash tub in which two rats fight over a scrap of meat. Wagers are taken and coppers are exchanged.
- A sultry woman stands outside a tent, eyeing all the men who pass. She asks a passing PC, *"Join me in prayer, brother?"*

The sanitation is awful. There is filth underfoot and ghastly odours waft through the air. Inescapable clouds of flies drift everywhere. Only a few well-organised campsites have latrines, most squat where they can—another reason for PCs to watch where they put their feet.

Most of the fanatics are as dirty and smelly as their campsites, and many are diseased. (Use the **Proprietor** statistics in *WFRP* page 235 for typical Crusaders.) Close quarters and poor cleanliness have taken their toll on them, no doubt not helped by the large numbers of vermin scampering through the filth. Sneezing, hawking and moaning are common sounds.

The layout of the encampment is very hodgepodge, but there is a rough order to it. Karl's compound is in the centre, and the camp spreads out from this nucleus in rings of decreasing prestige. The closer to Karl's compound one's campsite is, the higher up in the pecking order one is. This pecking order is indeed often settled with violence, so the factions closest to the compound are fairly tough, or at least well connected. Those on the furthest reaches of the encampment are the lowliest or newest members.

Not all those in the encampment are devout followers of Karl. Some are preying on the others. Some hope to ride Karl's coat-tails to glory. Some are spies, for the Empire, the Cult of Sigmar, or other rival cults. Some are criminals and con-men, fleecing gullible followers and doing their best never to be around when Karl shows his face, so as not to be converted. Some are just selling the mob goods and services. There are merchants of all kinds spread throughout the camp. The PCs can buy, sell and trade here as if they were in a town, though only Common and Poor Quality items are available for sale. A colourful Strigany clan camps at one edge of the camp, offering knife sharpening, fortunes told, clothes patched, and more.

Bands of poorly armed Crusaders—representatives of the various factions—regularly patrol the camp (at least their area of it), armed with poor swords or cudgels and wearing patchwork armour. (Use the **Bandit** statistics in *WFRP* page 233 for typical militant NPC Crusaders.)

Wilhelm Eisenbach's (see page 133) spearmen also make two daytime patrols, dressed in his house livery, with badges of the cult's Hammer and Heart symbol pinned to their chests. They are professional soldiers, fully armed and armoured. One full circuit of the camp takes them four hours. They make one in the morning, and one in the afternoon.

If they aren't already under Karl's spell, the PCs may worry that they're going to come face to face with the Child unexpectedly. Let them worry. It won't happen… yet.

Ahmed

As the PCs pass the Strigany camp, the son of Ali, the camp's leader, a bright-eyed young boy named Ahmed, accosts them, offering in a shrill voice Strigany services. Ahmed is important later, so he must be planted here, but he can't be seen as important. Instead, make him a pest. Every time they pass through the encampment he should find them at some point.

"Sharpen your swords, your worships? Patch your cloak? Polish your armour? Only a penny. Tell your fortune? Madam Mira knows all, for only two pennies. Roasted rat? Killed fresh this week. Only a penny."

Butcher Groff

Butcher Groff is a friendly, heavy-set Marienburg man with an unkempt appearance and a booming voice and laugh. He provides cheap, relatively clean butchering for those who bring him game or "liberated" cattle. He takes cuts from each animal in payment, and sells these to the cultists. He has an ugly purple boil on his lip. His shop is always busy, and Karl's inner circle of advisors all buy their meat from him.

He seems to know everybody but isn't worth much as a gossip, as he hasn't an unkind word for anybody. *"Oh aye, Captain Krieger. Stout fellow. Salt of the earth. Likes a nice kidney. Liver too, if it's fresh,"* is the sort of thing he says about everybody.

Groff is revealed as a Cultist of Nurgle in **Chapter IV**, so introducing him as a friendly presence who sells better than average food in this chapter sets him up nicely.

Karl's Bounty

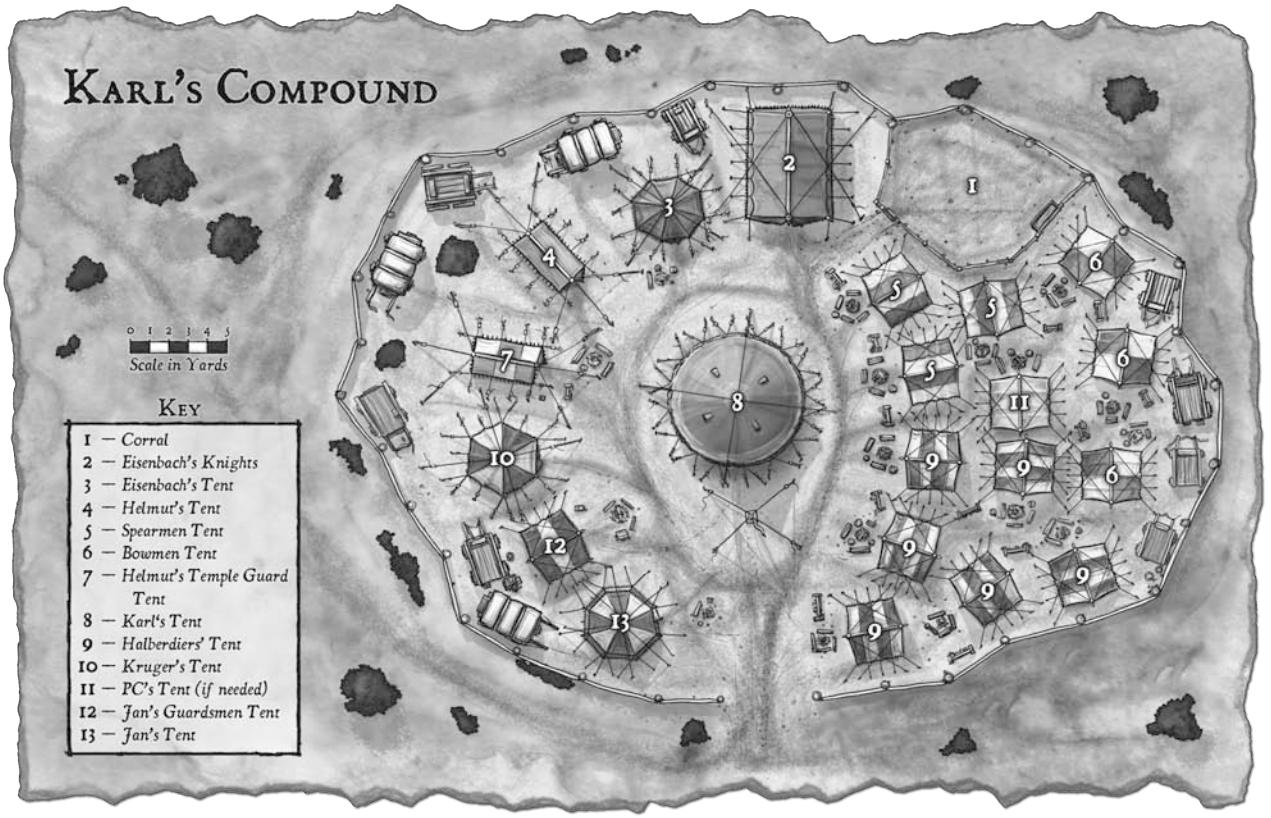
Karl's Bounty is two large wagons piled high with kegs of ale, whisky and brandy. A banner hangs from the back, painted with an insignia of a scythe resting against a sheaf of wheat and the words Karl's Bounty. The PCs should recognise the insignia as the sign of the fortified inn where they met Nils. Six soldiers from the inn's old garrison act as bouncers for the ale wagons, so the place is relatively calm.

The proprietor, Rudi Margelt, and his wife, Hanna, are a bustling, red-faced couple, with a cheerful business-like manner. They seem too busy to talk. Their ale wagon is always busy. But if the PCs mention that they visited the old Reaper's Bounty, Rudi gives them more attention. He barely reacts if they tell him it was raided by Beastmen.

"Beastmen? Damn shame, but this is my tavern now, serving the servants of the Son of Sigmar the only way I know how." What he really wants to know is if they found his pipe. *"In all the excitement, I left it behind, and I miss it. Never had a pipe with a better draw or mellower flavour."*

If the PCs have the pipe and give it to him, Rudi is extremely grateful. They get a round of drinks on the house, and half price from then on. He also gives them all the camp gossip without having to make **Gossip Tests**. He helps them find decent lodgings, better quality merchants, and in general help them settle in. Hanna, however is unhappy. *"He'd almost quit that filthy habit. Now you've started him going again."*

If they don't give Rudi the pipe he is still a useful source of gossip—as long as they keep buying drinks—but he won't help them as much.



Karl's Compound

In the centre of the camp, but closer to the woods than the fields, is Karl's compound. This large enclosure is screened off with linen sheets stretched between rows of stakes hammered into the soft soil. There is only one gap in the enclosure's wall, well guarded by eight of Krieger's halberdiers. Just inside the linen sheets, pairs of halberdiers patrol the parameter at 20-yard intervals.

Within the enclosure are the tents of the leaders of the cult, Helmut, Jan (Tobias), Eisenbach and Krieger, as well as barracks tents for Krieger's halberdiers, Eisenbach's knights and infantry, and the leaders' personal guards. All their coaches, horses and luggage are stored there as well. Karl's tent is in the centre of the compound—a large, round blue tent. The tent is guarded day and night by four of Helmut's Sigmarite temple guards, two inside and two outside. A large blue banner with Karl's hammer and heart insignia flaps on a very tall pole outside the tent and can be seen from anywhere in the camp, even outside it.

Camp Factions

This sampling of camp factions is only a small one. There are almost as many groups as there are Crusaders, each with its own idea of what Karl stands for. Use them to add colour to the camp. None of them are critical to the story. (If you want to make up your own factions, see the **Faction Creation Table** in **Chapter VI: Heralds of the New Dawn**.)

The Singers of the Holy Word

This group of white-robed (well, they used to be white) Crusaders go about in a very sanctified manner. They believe the best way to honour Karl is to sing his praises. They wander the camp in double file, singing songs of praise to Karl, but they also sing everything they want to say, even if they're ordering a drink or asking where the privies are.

The Fist that Holds the Hammer

Also known as Karl's Fist, this is really a bunch of gangsters pretending to be a militia. They run a protection racket, extorting money from the followers and merchants in the camp in exchange for "protecting" them from rival cults and roving monsters. They are all peasants, and can't afford real weapons, so they walk around in cast off leather jacks and carry huge wooden tent-peg mallets. They wear red headbands as a uniform.

The Brothers of the Unclosed Wound

Fierce rivals of the Burdened Hearts, the Brothers of the Unclosed Hand are extremely filthy flagellants who cut hammer (T) shapes into their chests and have sworn that they will not allow the wounds to heal until Karl is made Emperor. They constantly re-cut themselves to keep the wounds fresh. They are a popular sect, and win many new converts, but their numbers have not grown greatly because the unsanitary conditions in the camp cause the open wounds of many of their number to fester and rot. Nearly as many die as join the cult every day.

The Burdened Hearts

Fierce rivals of the Brothers of the Unclosed Wound, the Burdened Hearts have sworn that until Karl is made Emperor they will carry the weight of the world's ignorance on their shoulders. Any book they find that doesn't mention Karl—which is all of them—they affix to their bodies by means of chains, ropes or straps. Some have hung cages full of books from ox yokes, which they then shoulder. Consequently they can barely move, and are sometimes days behind the rest of the Crusade, catching up only when they have made camp for a few days. Many never return, collapsing from heart failure on the road or being eaten by wild animals.

Leaders of the Crusade

All of the following are the luminaries of the Crusade.

Karl

Though the figurehead of the Crusade, he has little to do with the actual leading except for demanding that it head for Kislev. (See page 244 for statistics.)

Helmut

Male Human Demagogue (ex-Anointed Priest, ex-Priest, ex-Initiate)

Helmut is the spiritual leader of the cult, but he is also its official voice to governments and representatives of the various temples. He is the Crusade's face.

A tall older man with a gaunt face and a once-brawny, but now ageing, warrior's build. Helmut is a good man who fell hook line and sinker for Karl. He doesn't believe Karl's power is magical. He thinks anyone who converts does so because of Karl's goodness and purity.

Though pleasant and soft-spoken, in the pulpit he is moved by holy fervour and becomes a powerful orator. Though he seems dreamy and unworldly, he was one of the highest-ranked priests of Sigmar in Marienburg and is no stranger to politics and intrigue.

Having been exposed to Karl, he now devotes himself entirely to promoting the boy's divinity. He is suspicious of Jan (Tobias), because he suspects he only wants Karl to succeed to improve his business.

Insanity Points: 5

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
51	49	41 (4)	39 (3)	47	56	55	70

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Astronomy) (Int +10), Academic Knowledge (History, Theology) (Int +20), Academic Knowledge (Law), Channelling (WP +10), Charm (Fel +20), Command (Fel), Common Knowledge (the Empire, the Wasteland) (Int +10), Dodge Blow (Ag), Gossip (Fel +10), Heal (Int +10), Intimidate (S), Magical Sense (WP), Perception (Int), Read/Write (Int +10), Ride (Ag), Speak Arcane Language (Magick) (Int +10), Speak Language (Breton), Speak Language (Classical) (Int +10), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int +20), Swim (S)
Talents: Aethyric Attunement, Ambidextrous, Armoured Caster, Divine Lore (Sigmar), Etiquette, Hardy, Lesser Magic (*Aethyric armour*, *dispel*), Master Orator, Petty Magic (Divine), Public Speaking, Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure, Very Strong, Warrior Born

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Fate Points:** 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 16
Magic: 2; Petty Magic (Divine), *Aethyric armour, dispel,* Lore of Sigmar
Armour (Heavy): Full Plate (Head 5, Arms 5, Body 5, Legs 5)
Weapons: Hand Weapon (Warhammer (1d10+5; CV +1), Dagger (1d10+2; CV +1)

Trappings

When not in full dress, Helmut wears black robes with a blue sash around his waist. In official matters, he dons his full plate armour to remind people that he is a servant of Sigmar. Helmut keeps a leather-bound copy of *The Life Of Sigmar* with him at all times, and among his personal possessions he has a stack of books covering topics of astronomy and the movements of the celestial bodies, histories of Marienburg, the Empire, and elsewhere, plus a few law books on Empire legal matters. In a trunk inside his tent, he has a writing kit, which includes several pots of ink, quills, and a dozen sheets of paper. He typically wears spectacles for reading. An influential figure, Helmut has the protection granted to him by eight bodyguards who flank his carriage when they travel.

Jan Vanderpeer (Tobias)

Male Mutant Charlatan (ex-Journeyman Wizard, ex-Apprentice Wizard)

Jan (or really Tobias) is Karl's manager. He stages his appearances and controls access to him. He also manages the Crusade's day-to-day logistics. He deals with town leaders and religious leaders that the Crusade meets. He is the hard-nosed fixer, doing the dirty work of foraging and persuading that keeps everybody fed and moving. Jan claims to have highly placed friends within Karl-Franz's government.

In his mid-forties, Tobias is short, round and red faced. He pretends to be Jan Vanderpeer, a prosperous Marienburg importer, and dresses the part. As Jan, he claims connections within Karl-Franz's cabinet, and holds this over the other cult leaders' heads whenever they challenge his authority, asking if they want to introduce Karl to the Emperor or not.

He hides his wizardly cunning behind a mask of snippy, know-it-all pomposity, appearing to be a petty tyrant, fawning to Karl, and a bully to anyone less important.

All his claims about connections in Karl-Franz's cabinet are true, at least for the real Jan Vanderpeer, whom Tobias murdered and replaced in order to join the Crusade as a leader.

Insanity Points: 4

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
39	41	36 (3)	51 (5)	47	56	46	59

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Daemonology) (Int), Academic Knowledge (Magic) (Int +10), Blather (Fel), Channelling (WP +10), Charm (Fel), Common Knowledge (Bretonnia, the Empire) (Int), Common Knowledge (the Wasteland) (Int +10), Concealment (Ag), Disguise (Fel), Evaluate (Int), Gamble (Int), Gossip (Fel +20), Haggle (Fel), Intimidate (S), Magical Sense (WP +10), Perception (Int +10), Read/Write (Int +10), Search (Int), Silent Move (Ag), Sleight of Hand (Ag), Speak Arcane Language (Magick) (Int +10), Speak Language (Breton) (Int), Speak Language (Classical) (Int +10), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int +20), Swim (S)
Talents: Aethyric Attunement, Dark Lore (Chaos *or* Nurgle*), Dark Magic, Fast Hands, Flee!, Hardy, Lesser Magic (*Aethyric armour*, *dispel*), Mighty Missile, Petty Magic (Arcane), Public Speaking, Savvy, Schemer, Seasoned Traveller, Very Resilient
*Nurgle if you have *Tome of Corruption.*
Traits: Mutation (Chaos Organ)

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Fate Points:** 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 17
Magic: 2; Petty Magic (Arcane), *Aethyric armour, dispel,* and Dark Lore (Chaos *or* Nurgle)
Armour (Light): Leather Jack and Greaves (Arms 1, Body 1, Legs 1)
Weapons: Hand Weapon (Sword) (1d10+3), Dagger (1d10+1)

Trappings

When in his Jan disguise, Tobias dons quality merchant's garb, including a red jacket, brown breeches, and leather shoes with bright silver buckles. A large pillow hat sits on his head, sprouting a blue feather. The clothes don't fit perfectly, being snug around the waist. Jan also owns a fine carriage that hauls about his chest full of 400GG. He wears a golden ring set with an emerald (worth 25*gc*) and a chain about his neck that bears the Vanderpeer family crest.

Mutation

Beneath his clothing, Jan (Tobias) grows a strange and sentient tumour. The organ reveals itself later in the campaign.

Krieger Brighalter

Male Human Captain (ex-Sergeant, ex-Soldier)

A tall, powerful captain of sword with sandy hair and a neat beard, Krieger is a stolid, pious man. From Leydenhoven, his sword company was dispatched to arrest the Crusade leaders and disperse the mob. But meeting Karl converted him and his men. After many brave acts in Karl's service, he was made captain of Karl's guard.

Krieger is no wild-eyed fanatic. He believes Karl is the reincarnation of Sigmar, but Krieger maintains the same levelheaded stoicism he has always had. He thinks that the Empire must be exposed to Karl's divinity, and those men in power who want to stop Karl from proving his divinity are misguided and must be converted or killed.

He is a calm, gentle person, and commands the respect of his men by his honour and bravery, not by bullying. He is loyal only to Karl but favours Helmut over Jan.

Captain of Karl's personal guard, Krieger gained his post because of his loyalty, bravery and ability. He is utterly incorruptible.

Insanity Points: 2

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
65	51	55 (5)	54 (5)	40 (50)	39	45	57

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Strategy/Tactics) (Int +10), Animal Care (Int), Command (Fel +10), Common Knowledge (the Empire, the Wasteland, Tilea) (Int), Dodge Blow (Ag +20), Gossip (Fel +20), Intimidate (S +10), Perception (Int +10), Read/Write (Int), Ride (Ag +10), Secret Language (Battle Tongue) (Int +10), Speak Language (Kislevarin, Reikspiel, Tilean) (Int), Swim (S)
Talents: Disarm, Lightning Parry, Menacing, Quick Draw, Resistance to Disease, Specialist Weapon Group (Cavalry, Flail, Two-handed), Street Fighting, Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure, Strike to Stun
Traits: Night Vision

Combat

Attacks: 3; **Fate Points:** 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 19
Armour (Medium): Full Mail (Head 3, Arms 3, Body 3, Legs 3)
Weapons: Flail (1d10+7; CV +1; Impact, Tiring), Lance (1d10+7; CV +1; Fast, Impact, Tiring), Superior Great Weapon (Tw0-handed Sword) (**WS** 75; 1d10+6; CV +1; Impact, Slow)

Trappings

Krieger wears a crisp uniform of the Reikland colours with a captain's braid hanging on his arm. When making his rounds through the encampment, he does so from the back of his trusted steed, Tempest. Thirty loyal soldiers recognise him as their commander and they respect not only his skill at arms but also his tactical mind. Krieger keeps a charm around his neck, picked up from a tinker in Pfeifeldorf. A pamphlet of the Crusade of the True Son hangs from his armour.

Lord Wilhelm Eisenbach

Male Human Noble Lord (ex-Knight, ex-Squire, ex-Noble)

Tall, heavy-set and red-faced, with long, neatly braided grey hair and beard, Eisenbach is a blustery country lord from southern Middenland, more concerned with hunting and his prize pumpkins than with Imperial politics. He is in his early fifties, and has a hearty, absent-minded manner.

During the recent Chaos Incursion, Eisenbach allowed Reikland troops to camp on his lands and forage in his game reserve with the understanding he would be paid when the war was over. This repayment has not occurred, and he has joined with the Crusade because, since falling under Karl's spell, he believes once Karl meets Karl-Franz all wrongs will be righted.

Wilhelm is the Crusade's military commander. He advises Karl on matters of strategy.

Insanity Points: 5

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
57	36	49 (4)	51 (5)	37 (47)	46	47	49

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Genealogy/Heraldry) (Int +20), Academic Knowledge (History, Strategy/Tactics) (Int), Animal Care (Int), Animal Training (Fel), Charm (Fel +10), Command (Fel +10), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int +20), Consume Alcohol (T), Dodge Blow (Ag +10), Gossip (Fel +10), Perception (Int), Read/Write (Int), Ride (Ag +20), Secret Language (Battle Tongue) (Int), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int +20), Speak Language (Tilean)
Talents: Acute Hearing, Etiquette, Master Orator, Public Speaking, Savvy, Schemer, Specialist Weapon Group (Cavalry, Flail, Tw0-handed), Strike Mighty Blow, Super Numerate

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Fate Points:** 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 17
Armour (Heavy): Full Plate (Head 5, Arms 5, Body 5, Legs 5)
Weapons: Demilance (1d10+5; Fast, Impact, Tiring), Morning Star (1d10+5; Impact, Tiring), Shield (1d10+3; Defensive, Special)

Trappings

Wilhelm's dress and possessions make it clear that he is accustomed to the finer things and despite his loyalty to the boy, he's unwilling to do without the comforts afforded by his station. When not in combat or leading his troops, he goes about dressed in fine noble's garb that would almost be fitting for Karl-Franz's court. He keeps several different outfits in trunks that his servants unload from his personal carriage whenever the Crusade makes camp. He has a large tent that could sleep a dozen men but is for the noble, all by himself. One of his most important possessions is his rheumatism salve. He has to apply it each night, lest he ache too much to do anything on the following day.

In battle, Wilhelm rides his mighty destrier named Revenge. The steed wears barding of a design similar to his own full plate. Hanging from the horse's armour are purity seals and fragments of parchment bearing holy words from *The Life of Sigmar.*

Finally, Wilhelm is incredibly rich and he shows this by the bejewelled rings on his fingers and the thick silver necklace he wears around his neck. The servants closest to him resent the noble's wealth, believing that Wilhelm's riches (527 *gc* and about 550 *gc* in jewellery) are enough to feed the Crusade all the way to Kislev and back.

Camp Gossip

Asking questions isn't particularly dangerous or difficult for the PCs. The Crusade is constantly awash with new recruits who want to know more about the Child, and most of the cultists are eager to talk about their saviour. As long as the PCs seem enthusiastic and curious no one pays them any mind, but if they question the Child's divinity or make disparaging comments about the Crusade itself, they start getting unwanted attention.

Neither is there a problem asking where the Child is. Everyone asks this. All new converts want to gaze again upon his beauty. They are told he resides in the compound in the centre of the camp. There is also no trouble asking about the hierarchy and structure of the Crusade, who is in charge, that sort of thing (see the various **Gossip** entries, following).

But if they start asking questions about how Karl is defended, or about his habits, or other questions of a suspicious nature, they are forcibly held by cultists and reported to Krieger's men. There have already been a few attempts on Karl's life, and the Crusaders are on the lookout for dangerous rivals and assassins.

The following information can be gained with **Gossip Tests**. A success grants one bit of information, with addition information available with each extra degree of success. Feel free to inject a few red herrings as you see fit.

Gossip about the Leaders

"Well, Karl's our leader, but he's young and convent raised, so he ain't wise to the ways of the world. Father Helmut and the Marienburger Vanderpeer watch out for him—the spirit and the body, if you get my meaning. Helmut takes care of his religious training and Vanderpeer makes sure he's fed. Makes sure we're all fed, really. Then there's Krieger and Lord Eisenbach. They keep us safe."

"What do we need any of those vultures for? Karl is the Son of Sigmar. We need no other leader."

Crusade Security

Although the Crusade resembles little more than a mob, it is well defended and equipped with numerous capable warriors. They are as follows:

Krieger's Halberdiers (30)

Male Human Soldiers

These men serve as Karl's personal guard. They are loyal to Krieger and Karl.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
43	31	31 (3)	36 (3)	35	25	33	28

Skills: Animal Care (Int), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int), Dodge Blow (Ag), Drive (S), Gamble (Int), Gossip (Fel), Intimidate (S), Perception (Int), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int)
Talents: Disarm, Hardy, Specialist Weapon Group (Two-handed), Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure, Strike to Stun, Warrior Born

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 12
Armour (Light): Full Leather (Head 1, Arms 1, Body 1, Legs 1)
Weapons: Halberd (1d10+4; CV +1; Special), Hand Weapon (Sword) (1d10+4, CV +1), Shield (1d10+1; CV +1; Defensive, Special)

Trappings

Krieger's men wear Reiklander uniforms but with a blue sash around their waists.

Eisenbach's Knights (10)

Male Human Knight (ex-Squire)

All of Eisenbach's men are loyal to their master and to Karl. They see to general camp security and defence. They are loyal to Eisenbach and Karl.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
43	39	38 (3)	36 (3)	25 (35)	32	23	32

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Genealogy/Heraldry, Strategy/Tactics) (Int), Animal Care (Int), Animal Training (Fel), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int), Dodge Blow (Ag), Gossip (Fel +10), Ride (Ag), Secret Language (Battle Tongue) (Int), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int +10)
Talents: Acute Hearing, Etiquette, Resistance to Poison, Specialist Weapon Group (Cavalry), Strike Mighty Blow

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 3; **Wounds:** 15
Armour (Heavy): Full Plate (Head 5, Arms 5, Body 5, Legs 5)
Weapons: Hand Weapon (Sword) (1d10+4), Shield (1d10+2; Defensive, Special), Lance (1d10+5; Fast, Impact, Tiring)

Trappings

These elite warriors dress in fine suits of full plate armour and carry shields bearing the heraldic device of Eisenbach's family incorporated into their own family coats of arms. They ride powerful destriers. Each knight wears a symbol of the Child on his arm, and most carry substantial wealth, having 3d10 *gc* each.

Eisenbach's Spearmen (20)

Male Human Militiamen

The men are conscripts drawn from Eisenbach's lands.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
35	34	32 (3)	30 (3)	33	32	36	25

Skills: Animal Care (Int), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int), Dodge Blow (Ag), Drive (S), Gamble (Int), Gossip (Fel), Outdoor Survival (Int), Perception (Int), Search (Int), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int), Trade (varies)
Talents: Savvy, Specialist Weapon Group (Two-handed), Strike Mighty Blow, Strong-minded

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 11
Armour (Light): Leather Jack and Skullcap (Head 1, Arms 1, Body 1)
Weapons: Spear (1d10+4; Fast), Hand Weap0n (Sword) (1d10+4)

Trappings

Eisenbach's spearmen wear uniforms of the Reikland colours with badges that display their liege's heraldry. Each man has a slingbag holding a wooden tankard and cutlery, rations, waterskin, and 1d10 Schillings. Each man also has some personal affectation, such as a locket with a bit of hair, a lucky charm, or something else of the like.

Eisenbach's Bowmen (20)

Male Human Militiamen

Like the spearmen, these men are conscripts drawn from their master's lands.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
26	47	28 (2)	36 (3)	35	26	30	33

Skills: Animal Care (Int), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int), Dodge Blow (Ag), Drive (S), Gamble (Int), Gossip (Fel), Outdoor Survival (Int), Perception (Int), Search (Int), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int), Trade (varies)
Talents: Hardy, Marksman, Rapid Reload, Strike Mighty Blow

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 12
Armour (Light): Leather Jack and Skullcap (Head 1, Arms 1, Body 1)
Weapons: Hand Weapon (Sword) (1d10+4), Bow with 10 Arrows (1d10+3; Range 24/48; Reload Free)

Trappings

Eisenbach's bowmen wear uniforms of the Reikland colours with badges that display their liege's heraldry. Each man has a slingbag holding a wooden tankard and cutlery, rations, waterskin, and 1d10 Schillings. Each man also has some personal affectation, such as a locket with a bit of hair, a lucky charm, or something else of the like.

Faction Militia (200)

Male and Female Human Zealots

Consisting of poorly armed and ill-trained fanatics, they see to general camp security and defence. The groups are loyal to their faction leaders and Karl.

Insanity Points: 1d5+1

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
31	26	24 (2)	43 (4)	33	26	33	27

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Theology) (Int), Charm (Fel), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int +10), Gossip (Fel), Intimidate (S), Read/Write (Int), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int)
Talents: Coolheaded, Hardy, Public Speaking, Resistance to Disease, Specialist Weapon Group (Flail), Strong-minded

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 11
Armour (Light): Leather Jack (Arms 1, Body 1)
Weapons: Flail (1d10+3; Impact, Tiring)

Trappings

The faction militia members all wear simple, filthy clothing, which generally consists of stiff sackcloth robes beneath leather jacks. Their apparel is littered with inscriptions, worthless relics, and other junk they believe is somehow important to young Karl.

Helmut's Men (6)

Male and Female Human Temple Guardians*

These temple guards came from Marienburg and protect Helmut first, then Karl.

Insanity Points: 1d5–1

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
41	27	35 (3)	40 (4)	37	34	27	30

Skills: Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int +10), Dodge Blow (Ag), Gossip (Fel +10), Intimidate (S), Perception (Int), Search (Int), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int)
Talents: Hardy, Sixth Sense, Stout-hearted, Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Stun

*See *Tome of Salvation*

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 14
Armour (Light): Leather Jack (Arms 1, Body 1)
Weapons: Hand Weapon (1d10+4)

Trappings

Helmut's men wear the livery of the Temple of Sigmar in Marienburg, being mostly black robes with blue stitching. They each have 1d10 Pennies.

Jan's Guard

These six sell-swords protect Jan and Jan only. These men all secretly worship Nurgle and are disguised as merchant's bodyguards. Use **Sell-sword** statistics in *WFRP* page 235.

Gossip about Karl

Karl's aura does not make someone believe any particular doctrine. It only makes them love him. But in their love for him, he becomes a mirror for their hopes and dreams. Therefore what a person believes Karl stands for has much more to do with what they want him to stand for, than Karl's personal wishes. Because of this, many Crusaders have entirely conflicting philosophies, uneasily united under Karl's banner.

- *"Karl is the light of hope in a black world. He will set all to rights. He will banish the darkness and drive out the Mutants, and the Beastmen, and the Elves, and the Dwarfs! Even the foreigners!"*
- *"He's just a wee lad, ain't he? A sweet boy who loves the whole world."*
- *"He's the champion of all who have suffered under the Empire's corruption. All the banished in Marienburg, all those branded heretic by the narrow-minded priests and cruel witch hunters."*
- *"Karl is the Holy Child, Sigmar's Hammer, come back to smite the unrighteous! Woe to they that doubt his divinity, for they shall be the first to feel his wrath."*

Gossip about Jan Vanderpeer (Tobias)

- *"Vanderpeer's a bit hard in his business practices—well he's Marienburger, ain't he? They're all like that. But he gets the job done. A practical man."*
- *"Vanderpeer has a sharp mind, but he ain't Empire is he? Can't have a Marienburger leading us. Ain't right. Maybe Krieger. He's a good man."*
- *"I know Jan Vanderpeer. All Marienburg knows him. Rich as a Dwarf king. An honest trader. Fancy stuff from Tilea and the like. They say he saw Karl speak at a rally and decided then and there to use his fortune to help him be crowned successor to Karl-Franz. Got a lot of pull in Altdorf they say. Lots of favours he can call in for the lad."*
- *"Vanderpeer don't care about Karl. He cares about Marienburg. Wants it to be part of the Empire again, with him as elector. That's why he's with us."*

Gossip about Father Helmut

- *"Father Helmut is a great man. The first holy man to recognise Karl's divinity. He should be the one to lead us."*
- *"Helmut is too old and too "head-in-the-clouds" to lead us. If it comes to war, he'll go all to pieces."*
- *"He's too old! He looks like a shrivelled turtle in that armour."*

Gossip about Captain Krieger

- *"Not a friendly sort of fellow, but he's as honest as the day is long. Cares more for Karl's safety than his own life."*
- *"Came to arrest Karl right after we crossed the border. Sent by his lord to bring us all in for heresy. Soon as he sees Karl he realises it's his lord and the rest of the Empire that's heretics. Been his most steadfast follower ever since."*
- *"Given to moods, he is. Wanders off by himself at night. Nobody knows where he goes. Moon touched, I'd say."*

Gossip about Lord Eisenbach

- *"A fine old fellow. Gives us some muscle too, with all his troops. We'd have been stopped any number of times but for his knights riding out front."*
- *"Well, he's a jolly old gent, ain't he? Not a bit of a snob. Talked to me for a full hour the other day about breeding pigs, just 'cause I happened to mention that my pa kept prize Gerlschtrubes before the war. Me, who's nothing but a Middenland dirt farmer."*
- *"Just riding Karl's coat tails. Never got paid for quartering the army during Archaon's invasion and he's got a bone to pick with Altdorf about it. Thinks Karl will give him his due when he's made Emperor."*

Gossip about the Cult's Future

- *"Karl leads us to Altdorf to receive the blessing of the Emperor and the Grand Theogonist, then on we march to the wastes beyond Kislev to destroy the dread hordes once and for all. All hail his name!"*
- *"Come friends, join the True Son's Holy Crusade to the Chaos Wastes! Though we lack weapons, the light of our faith will burn the daemons to powder, and drive away the shadows in which they hide!"*
- *"Karl-Franz and Volkmar are quaking in their boots. If Karl's divine, they've got another Valten on their hands, and that nearly split the temple, didn't it? 'Course, all that will fall away when they meet him. The whole Empire will line up behind our lad, see if they don't."*

- *"The army? We've naught to fear from the army. Karl-Franz doesn't dare send troops against us, not until he determines if Karl's a God or not. Imagine being known as the Emperor who killed the True Son of Sigmar. Not to mention his troops would be ours once they got a look at dear Karl."*
- *"Volkmar's a villain if he refuses to see Karl. Corrupt like the rest of the Cult of Sigmar. More afraid of losing his position than admitting Karl is Sigmar's son."*

Gossip about Life in Camp

- *"It's rats that spreads it. They're evil animals. Kill all the rats and the Yellow Death will pass in a week."*
- *"Those Brothers of the Unclosed Wound. That's proof of faith for you. Bleed every day for Karl. 'Course, they could bathe now and then."*
- *"The path of the cup is the one true path! None can receive true enlightenment without supping from the cup that Karl drank from as a babe."*
- *"Have you seen my daughter? Elise is her name. Red hair? Green eyes? She was helping in the sick tent yesterday but no one's seen her since."*
- *"Watch out with them traders over on the north edge. Sold me a charm they said had one of Karl's own toenails in it, but I still fell in the latrine yesterday. The thing is worthless."*
- *"There's something watching us from the woods. Something evil. Ever since Leydenhoven I've sensed it."*

Conclusions

Having investigated the camp, and with night closing in, the PCs should be deciding what to do next.

Warning the Crusaders about the Elves

If the PCs are working on behalf of the Wood Elves, they may be tempted to reveal their intent to the Crusaders, especially if one or more PCs are affected by the Child's aura. Betraying the Elves to any of the mob members sees the information passed along to the faction leaders, who in turn pass the message up the chain of command, taking the credit for themselves.

If they tell Krieger's or Eisenbach's men, the soldiers bring them to their commanders, who meet them at the entrance of the compound. Krieger or Eisenbach question the PCs closely, asking how they know about the Elves, how they fell in with the Elves, and what they want with Karl and the Crusade. Krieger or Eisenbach then bring them into the compound under heavy guard and take them to Jan's (Tobias's) tent. Helmut is brought, and Helmut and Jan (Tobias) questions them even more closely. Jan wants to know where they came from and where they're going to and why. Helmut wants to know if they are all good Sigmarites, and if they swear by him that they are telling the truth. Both are extremely suspicious of any non-Humans or foreigners in the group.

Once everyone has questioned them, they are put under guard in a barracks tent, while their questioners withdraw to speak among themselves.

Killing Karl

If the PCs attempt to kill or kidnap Karl on their own, warn them that they are in for a bloody end. If they insist on trying, here is what they have to get through: eight Halberdiers stand at the entrance, circling two-man patrols every 20 yards, the garrison tents, the 2 guards outside Karl's tent and the two guards inside Karl's tent. If they fail any of the constant Opposed **Silent Move Tests**, as many as fifty armed soldiers plus Helmut come running. If they get through all that, actually killing or kidnapping Karl is nearly impossible, because a single *"Don't!"* from the boy's lips forces the PCs to make a **Very Hard (–30) Will Power Test** or fall under his spell. And if they fall under his spell they would rather kill themselves than see him come to harm.

Staying with the Crusade

If the PCs decide to stick with the mob for now, they need to make some arrangements to sleep. Finding a place to lay their bedrolls isn't hard on the edge of the camp, but closer to the centre, no one wants to share. It is impossible to sleep very near Karl's pavilion. The closer one gets to him, the more popular the real estate.

If they ask Rudi Margelt, the proprietor of Karl's Bounty, he can get them space in a large tent with a man and woman whose three sons joined the Brothers of the Unclosed Wound and then died of their unclosed wounds. This tent is halfway between the camp perimeter and Karl's pavilion.

Should Nils be present with the PCs, he becomes very upset if he thinks the PCs are betraying Johannes. Any evidence that the PCs are reneging on their agreement sees Nils scurry off to report their treachery to Johannes. If the PCs try to convince Nils that Father Johannes's plan is dangerous, and he can't be trusted to do the right thing, Nils reluctantly agrees in principle but still feels that as an initiate of Sigmar he owes Johannes his loyalty. It takes a **Challenging (–10) Charm Test** to convince Nils not to return to his master.

Returning to the Elves

Upon returning to the Elves, Coriael questions them closely about the camp's defences. He tells the PCs that when the time comes, they will accompany him to the edge of the camp in order to point out landmarks, and then remain there whilst he and his scouts infiltrate the camp. Coriael, Lorinoc, and the scouts are fully prepared to die in order to kill Karl.

— Part IV: The Dead of Night —

There are three beginnings here, depending on which path the PCs chose.

Path One: Sleeping with the Enemy

If the PCs have remained in the camp, then an hour after midnight, call for **Hard (–20) Perception Tests** if they're asleep or **Challenging (–10) Perception Tests** if they're awake and alert. If they pass their tests, they are the first to notice the Zombies shuffling into camp, and they can raise the general alarm. If they fail, they wake to screaming and the clash of weapons.

From here, use the fight from **Path Three**, minus the Elves, and have it take place within the encampment instead of in the woods. While fighting the Zombies, have the PCs overhear one of the Ghouls say, *"The diversion is complete. Signal the master."* They can do with that information as they see fit—tell the other Crusaders and keep fighting the Zombies, bring the warning to Karl themselves, or not deliver the warning at all.

Path Two: Under Guard

Three hours before midnight, Eisenbach has the PCs lead 10 spearmen and 10 archers to where they think the Elves will attack. Krieger orders the soldiers to hide, and puts the PCs under guard in a filthy tent commandeered from a Crusader. He is friendly with them but brusque, telling them that if they have tricked him, he won't hesitate to kill them. They settle in to wait.

An hour after midnight, there is still no sign of the Elves, and Eisenbach gets impatient, growling at the PCs. But then Zombies and Ghouls start coming out of the woods.

The Power of the Child

Karl's aura causes people affected by it to love him, protect him, and help him any way they can. Once under his spell, any request by him, or by his agents, that doesn't go directly against the character's normal moral judgement or sense of self-preservation, is not tested. The character does what is asked.

A dangerous or morally troubling request grants the character a **Hard (–20) Will Power Test** to refuse the request. Likewise, a clearly suicidal test allows the character to attempt a **Challenging (–10) Will Power Test** to refuse the action. Passing a test breaks Karl's hold over the character until re-exposure.

The Child's aura has limits. In order to be exposed, a subject must be within 20 yards of him and be able to see and hear him. Elves, Vampires and characters with the Magical Sense Skill can sense him from 40 yards away. Dwarfs can only sense him from 10 yards away.

Whenever a mortal looks upon the boy and is within his effective range, a character must make a **Will Power Test**. Generally, the test is **Very Hard (–30)** for Humans, but it's **Routine (+10)** for Elves and **Easy (+20)** for Dwarfs.

If a character fails his test, the effects of the Child's power lasts four days, but any re-exposure resets the clock, and re-exposure whilst still under the Child's influence is not retested. Also, a character doesn't automatically stop liking or being loyal to the Child after a week of non-exposure, but will then be able to listen to argument and can be convinced that they have been charmed.

Any time a character passes their Will Power Test against the Child's power, any re-exposure is easier to defend against. Each successful test makes the next one a difficulty step easier. But any failed test makes the next test **Very Hard** once more.

From here, use the fight from **Path Three**, minus the Elves and the perimeter guards. Krieger thinks the PCs have betrayed him somehow, but he's too busy fighting Zombies to kill them. As more come out of the woods, the PCs are unguarded and can join the fight or run.

Either way, they hear a Ghoul say, *"It is even better than we hoped. Half the boy's guard is here. Signal the master."*

Path Three: With The Elves

If the PCs are with the Elves, Lorinoc waits until after midnight when the camp has quietened down, then asks the PCs to lead his warriors to the edge of the woods with the easiest access to the Child's compound. The Elves bring Johannes as well. When they can see the camp, Lorinoc asks the PCs to point out Karl's tent and the other defences, and then he and four picked scouts make ready to sneak into the camp.

Before they can begin, it becomes apparent that the Elves are not alone in the woods. Any Elves or Dwarfs among the PCs can make **Routine (+10) Perception Tests** to notice strange sounds or horrible smells coming from nearby. If the PCs are all Human, then the Wood Elves notice first.

The woods are crawling with Zombies and Ghouls, all moving towards the Crusade's camp. This detail should be revealed in a spooky, "who goes there?" sort of way; a shadowy movement in the trees, another movement to the other side of the party, a decaying face appearing in a patch of moonlight, the reek of death assaulting the PCs from all sides.

At the first signs, the Elves draw weapons and pull the PCs into cover, but Johannes is their downfall; terrified by the noises and shadows, he trips and crashes noisily into a bush. He and the PCs and the Elves are seen.

The Zombies are on course for the camp and don't stop, but the Ghouls who lead them recognise the threat and command the Zombies to attack. There should be three times as many Zombies as PCs and Elves combined, and a Ghoul for each PC. (There are ten Zombies and half the Ghouls at the start, and then five new Zombies and one new Ghoul every 2 rounds until they run out. The Strigoi who is the ultimate leader isn't here. He is on the other side of the camp, waiting for the Zombies to create a diversion so he and his shock troops can sweep in from behind and take Karl alive.

Ghouls

Scrawny, hunchbacked Humans with wild stares, Ghouls attack with vicious talons. Sane people fear their twisted humanity, perhaps because they are a reminder of the depravities to which people can sink.

Insanities: The Beast Within

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
32	0	37 (3)	45 (4)	34	18	31	5

Skills: Concealment (Ag), Outdoor Survival (Int), Perception (Int), Scale Sheer Surface (S), Search (Int), Shadowing (Ag), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int)
Talents: Rover
Traits: Fearless, Frightening, Natural Weapons (Claws), Night Vision, Poisoned Attack

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 11
Weapons: Claws (1d10+3)

Poisoned Attack

A living creature that loses at least 1 Wound from a Ghoul's claws must succeed on a **Challenging (–10) Toughness Test** or lose an additional 2 Wounds.

Zombies

A mob of decaying Humans, these Undead horrors shuffle through the woods, soft moans spilling from their oozing mouths. Many sport terrible wounds, leaking foul ichor on the ground. Others are missing limbs, jaws, eyes, and other body parts. They are unimpeded by their appalling injuries.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
25	0	35 (3)	35 (3)	10	—	—	—

Traits: Frightening, Mindless, Night Vision, Shambling, Undead

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 3; **Wounds:** 12
Armour (Light): Leather Jack (Arms 1, Body 1)
Weapons: Hand Weapon (varies) (1d10+3)

Mindless

Zombies cannot take or fail tests based on Intelligence, Will Power, or Fellowship.

Shambling

Zombies cannot take the run action.

Developments

After 4 rounds, the fight draws the attention of three of Eisenbach's spearmen, and six poorly armed cultists on the perimeter of the camp, and they come to help. After 2 rounds, three more spearmen show up but no more. The others are busy fighting at other points on the perimeter, but poorly armed cult militia keep coming, three every 4 rounds.

When the spearmen arrive, the Elves realise with the camp roused, they will not find a chance to kill Karl tonight. They slip away into the woods, leaving the PCs behind.

After 10 rounds, one of the Ghouls should say, within earshot of the PCs, *"This diversion is enough. Signal the master."* A Ghoul blows a silver whistle that appears to make no noise.

If the PCs are astute, they realise what this dialogue means. They can warn the Crusaders someone is attempting to attack Karl and using the Zombies as a distraction, or they can try to reach Karl and save him (or kill him) on their own. Or, if they have been intending to kill Karl, they may think that "the master" might do their work for them. But they can't be sure, can they?

If they don't warn the Crusaders, then one of Eisenbach's spearmen has heard too and figured it out for himself. He sends a spearman into the camp to warn Karl's personal guard.

There are once again, three paths from here: the Boring Path, the Exciting Path, and the Crooked Path.

The Boring Path

If the PCs let the spearman bring the warning, and instead continue fighting Zombies, then Karl's personal guards chase away the Vampire off-stage, and when the Zombies are defeated, the PCs are thanked by the Crusaders and asked to come receive the thanks of Karl for their brave attempt to foil the attack. Any refusal to meet the Child is met with suspicion. Why wouldn't they want to meet the saviour? And if they weren't helping to defend the camp, what were they doing sneaking about in the woods in the middle of the night? And who were those tall strangers? And where did they go? The PCs are brought by force into the camp or killed if they persist in refusing to meet Karl.

The Exciting Path

If they stop fighting Zombies and instead go to warn the compound guards, things get interesting.

Running through the camp is difficult. Confusion reigns. People strike torches, gather weapons, run everywhere, screaming, challenging each other, calling for loved ones, tripping over each other. The various factions are defending their own patch of ground. Eisenbach's knights and the other guards are nowhere to be seen.

When the PCs finally reach Karl's Compound, it is in uproar. A few soldiers tear down all the linen walls whilst a pitifully few archers try to watch all approaches. Krieger is at the entrance, shouting at four entrance guards. He has five men at his back.

> *"Why are there so few of you? Every man should be here!"*
> *"Sorry sir! The attacks came while you were on patrol, sir. Undead, pouring out of the woods on all sides. Father Helmut sent half of us off to the north edge, and Eisenbach took his knights south. Father Helmut and his six temple guards are in the tent with the Child."*
> *"And where are Vanderpeer's men?"*
> *"Guarding Vanderpeer."*

Or, if the PCs were with Eisenbach

> *"Sorry sir! The attacks came while you were on patrol, sir. Undead, pouring out of the woods on all sides. Father Helmut sent half of us off to the north edge, and Eisenbach's knights went south. Lord Eisenbach hasn't returned from watching for Elves. Father Helmut and his six temple guards are in the tent with The Child."*
> *"And where are Vanderpeer's men?"*
> *"Guarding Vanderpeer."*

Krieger is furious. Everyone should be guarding Karl, not spread all over the place. He sends a soldier to get the others back and starts ordering the remaining guards to guard the approaches from the woods, leaving the west side of the compound almost completely unguarded.

If the PCs give their warning, Krieger shifts all his men around to the field side of the tent, and just in time too. Out of the churning, terrified mob comes a phalanx of ten Ghouls, dressed in cloaks with blue belts to blend in with the Crusaders. The guards ready themselves just in time. The Ghouls throw themselves on the guards in a frenzy trying to push past to Karl's tent. If the PCs hadn't warned them, the guards would have been caught unawares and overwhelmed by the disguised Ghouls.

This fight should be crazed and vicious, fought in the midst of a sea of screaming, panicked Crusaders. The PCs' biggest difficulty should be that it's hard to tell who's a Crusader and who's a Ghoul until their claws shoot out of their long sleeves and slash at their faces.

After 5 rounds, a Vampire Bat flies overhead, heading towards Karl's tent. It takes a **Routine (+10) Perception Test** to notice it in the middle of all the fighting.

If the PCs don't notice, one of Krieger's men does. The guards break off from the Ghouls as best they can and chase it to the tent. It rips through the fabric of the roof, and sounds of fighting come from within, as well as the shrieks of a frightened young boy, and Helmut's voice raised in invocation. Two temple guards fly out of the tent flap, ripped to shreds, armour clawed open.

As Krieger's men run, so do the Ghouls, disengaging from the PCs to race for the tent. If the PCs give chase, they hear a roar and a snapping of ropes, and Karl's tent rises and twists, then swoops around in a wild arc. Something immense is using the tent pole as a weapon. As it knocks back Krieger's men, the PCs get a look at it. It is a Strigoi Vampire—about 8 feet tall and as thin and corded with muscles as his Ghoul followers. Its fingers are as long as its forearms and its eyes glow like red fire. It shrieks like a banshee. Four temple guards form a ring around Karl and Helmut, while Krieger and the rest swing at the Strigoi.

The Ghouls try to assist the Strigoi. Krieger's men fight both. If the PCs join the fight, you might like to let one of their strikes turn the tide. If not, Krieger gets a solid chop to the Strigoi's hip, cutting it deeply.

It staggers back, roaring, throws the tent pole at its attackers, then leaps into the air and turns into a Vampire Bat again. It flaps off into the night, followed by a few shaky arrows. The Ghouls, if any remain, run.

Jan hurries up, eyes frightened. *"Is he safe? Is Karl safe?"*

Krieger nods wearily. *"Aye. Safe."*

Jan seems confused. *"Why would a Vampire want to kill the Holy One?"*

Helmut speaks up. *"It wasn't trying to kill him. It was trying to take him."*

Mad Orlock

Male Strigoi Vampire

Mad Orlock is a disturbing Vampire of bestial appearance.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
59	28	59 (5)	63 (6)	63	43	62	25

Skills: Command (Fel), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int), Concealment (Ag +10), Dodge Blow (Ag), Magical Sense (WP), Perception (Int +10), Search (Int), Speak Language (Reikspiel, Strigany) (Int), Torture (Fel)
Talents: Frenzy, Rover, Strike Mighty Blow
Traits: Blood Gift (Bat Form, Blood Drain, Natural Necromancer, Vampires' Curse), Frightening, Keen Senses, Natural Weapons (Claws, Fangs), Night Vision, Undead (See **Appendix** for details on new traits.)

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 5; **Wounds:** 24
Magic: 1
Weapons: Claws (1d10+6), Fangs (1d10+6)

Trappings

Mad Orlock has nothing but his furry hide.

Bat Form

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
33	0	31 (3)	30 (3)	34	43	62	25

Skills: Dodge Blow (Ag), Perception (Int +20)
Talents: Strike Mighty Blow
Traits: Enhanced Senses*, Flier, Frightening, Keen Senses, Natural Weapons (Teeth), Undead
* Vampire Bats can "see" in complete darkness, up to a range of 30 yards, using a form of echolocation. This process is not silent; any character within range of the echolocation may make a **Perception Test** to hear its high-pitched squeals.
Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 4; fly 8; **Wounds:** 24
Magic: 1
Weapons: Teeth (1d10+4)

Who's Guarding Karl?

Krieger, Twelve of Krieger's Halberdiers , Ten of Eisenbach's bowmen, Helmut, Helmut's temple guards. Jan's guards are busy guarding Jan's tent

The Crooked Path

If the PCs mean to take advantage of the confusion and kill Karl, or perhaps prevent his guards from protecting him, or do something else entirely, use your best judgement. The defenders are detailed above, as are the Ghouls and Vampires. Neither welcomes the PCs interference, so they may be attacked by both sides.

In the end, whatever the PCs do, the cultists drive off the Vampire, though their losses are worse without the PCs' help. If the PCs reach Karl, they must make a **Very Hard (–30) Will Power Test** or fall under his spell.

If the PCs fight the defenders, Krieger's men try to arrest them. If they run, Helmut calls to the mob, saying *"Stop them! They tried to kill Karl!"* The PCs are overwhelmed and pinned.

— Outcomes —

How the PCs involved themselves during the attack on the encampment determines what happens next. In every case, they should catch a glimpse of the boy and in the best circumstances, deal with him directly. Should the characters act in a manner not described in this chapter, simply have the boy run to the PCs in the thick of the fight, begging for their protecti0n. Whenever a mortal looks upon the boy and is within his effective range, a character must make a **Will Power Test**. Generally, the test is **Very Hard (–30)** for Humans, but it's **Routine (+10)** for Elves and **Easy (+20)** for Dwarfs.

Characters that fought on the boy's behalf in the fight against the Undead find themselves being rewarded for their services by being introduced to the boy. It's possible that Krieger or some other leader speaks on their behalf, saying something like *"We would have been sunk if it wasn't for these men. They learned that the Zombies were just a diversion and told us to watch out for the real attack. Might not have survived otherwise,"* or, *"These fellows acquitted themselves very well against those horrors. They would make fine replacements for the men we lost."* After this, a high, pure voice comes from behind the wall of guards. *"Who are they? I would meet the brave souls who saved my life."* Karl comes out of hiding and steps up to the PCs. He is a handsome boy of nine, dressed in a nightgown of finest quality, with a sweet face and bright, inquisitive eyes. He looks at each of the PCs in turn, then bows deeply and says, *"I thank you, gentles. I am forever in your debt."*

Cheating on the Test

In the interests of group interaction and more entertaining roleplay, it might be wise to cheat and make sure one person passes the test. Then he or she can be the unheard voice of reason while the others are busy loving Karl. If everyone fails their test, Nils can serve in this capacity.

If the players wail about the lack of free will, remind them roleplaying can mean playing many different roles, and also being under Karl's spell doesn't change the PCs' basic personality. They are the same person they were before, they have just substituted Karl for whatever it was that they worshipped or believed in before.

As mentioned before, the point where the PCs fall under Karl's spell is a good place to end the game session or at least take a break. This respite gives the players a little time to decide how they are going to play their characters while under Karl's influence.

Characters following the Crooked Path have a slightly different outcome. They are disarmed and brought before Helmut. If they acquitted themselves well in the fight a soldier or leader speaks up, saying *"They can fight, at least, and we need fighters. Let them speak to Karl. If they see the light, they can be replacements for those we lost. If they remain unconverted, then we will kill them."* Helmut nods. *"Very well. But observe them for a few days. There have been some who have lapsed."* He calls Karl forth. *"Come and show these ignorant heathens the light of your countenance and make new men of them."*

If any of the PCs try anything foolish before Karl manages to speak, such as attacking him, or covering his mouth, they won't live to regret it. His guards attack mercilessly. And, as mentioned before, if threatened, Karl throws up his hands and says *"No!"* requiring the **Will Power Test** as described above.

PCs that run away before Karl speaks are hunted down, disarmed, and brought back. Krieger tells any PC who asks that they will not be killed. *"Once you look into the eyes of the True Son of Sigmar, you will come to love him as we do, and there will be no need to punish you. Such is the power and the truth of his word."*

Characters passing their tests see the boy as he is: a nice, friendly, slightly shy nine year old, a little spoiled by all the attention he gets. Even though they managed to resist the compulsion, they still feel the tug of the aura. They are aware it is there, but they have managed to shrug it off, for now.

Conclusion

The adventure ends when Father Johannes (and Nils, if he isn't with the PCs) is brought before Karl by guards. Father Johannes instantly falls under Karl's influence. He tells Nils to present Karl with his Hammer of Office. Nils does not fall for Karl, and seems very disappointed in Father Johannes and any PCs who have failed their tests, but still he does what Johannes tells him.

Rewards

Action	XP
Explore the Reaper's Bounty	5
Find the well and secret passage	25
Find Lorinoc	10
Deal peacefully with Father Johannes	10
Befriend Nils	15
Defeat the Mutants	0
Deal peacefully with the Mutants	25
Flee the Reaper's Bounty, leaving all to their fates	10
Flee the Bounty but attend to the other folks fighting alongside them	20
Defend the Reaper's Bounty	25
Kill the Bestigor leader	10
Befriend the Wood Elves	5
Explore the Crusade's encampment	10
For each NPC they talked with	2
For each rumour gained	2
Fighting the Zombies	5
Fighting the Ghouls	10
Aid in Karl's defence	50
Become enamoured with Karl	25

Chapter IV: Written in Blood

"The stench betrays our city's true nature. It rots from within, and as it decays, so too does our mighty land."

—Seiger Rohr, Street Preacher

By Nathan Long

The undisputed centre of the Empire is its capital, Altdorf. A massive sprawling city that spills over on either side of the Reik, it is a wonder to behold. Following its twisting narrow streets, one can find the Colleges of Magic, the Emperor's Palace, the great Temple of Sigmar, and much more. It is here where the fate of the Crusade will be decided and where the shape of the player characters' destiny is revealed.

Adventure Background

As the Crusade marches across the Reikland, Altdorf braces itself for the impending arrival. Whilst the city is secure behind the high walls that protect it from the horrors of the Old World, confident in the eldritch might of its magisters and the swords and spears of its doughty soldiers, word of the Crusade has reached its citizens, and a spark of excitement has ignited their imaginations, filling them with both apprehension, and the hope that this mysterious boy could indeed be the Scion of Sigmar.

Indeed, word of the Child's exploits has aroused the interest of more than just the common folk: the witch hunters, lectors, magisters, and even the Emperor, want to know more of the Child. But none have as personal an interest in Karl's destiny as do Baroness Theodora Margrave and her mistress Neferata. The Lahmian Vampires are certain that Karl is the spawn of Sigmar and that his blood is the key to freeing their kind of the Blood Curse. Neferata Queen of the Night and one of the first vampires of Nehekhara, believes mingling her blood with that of the boy will free them and usher them into a new era of mastery over the Human cattle. To this end, the mighty Vampire has dispatched her loyal servant Theodora to capture the Child and bring him to her tower high in the Worlds Edge Mountains.

Theodora, a native of Altdorf, knows the boy is coming to the city seeking an audience with Karl-Franz and the Grand Theogonist. She has no intention of letting the young man reach the palace, and her agents are arranged to abduct the boy once he enters the city. Meanwhile Tobias, the Chaos sorcerer Ruprecht's trusted servant, urges the Crusade to push for Altdorf since he intends to kidnap the boy there and meet up with another cultist named Ansel, for reasons that may be revealed to the PCs when they enter this massive and fabulous city.

Adventure Synopsis

Written in Blood picks up directly after the end of **Chapter III**. The PCs have somehow gained a place of trust and kinship with young Karl and are asked to serve as guards. The Crusade slowly moves across the Empire, drawing ever closer to Altdorf. Along the way, the PCs have a chance to discover many terrible things about the Crusade, including uncovering a terrifying plot to concoct a dreadful disease and spread it throughout the capital city. However, before they can uncover the mastermind behind the plot, young Karl is kidnapped.

With Karl missing, the PCs, either at the behest of their allies in the Crusade or their employers, search the city for Jan—the cultist Tobias—and the missing boy. Their hunt takes them all over Altdorf, from a Shallyan hospital to the poorest sections of Altdorf. It becomes clear that Jan is somehow connected to a successful vigilante named the Vengeance of Sigmar, and so the PCs turn their attentions to tracking down this killer of Mutants. Tragically, they are too late, but they find evidence in his belongings that reveals his former association with the disturbing cult of Nurgle that has caused so much trouble this far.

After some further investigation, the PCs come across a missing journal that reveals a horrific ritual that can force a mortal to love another. The journal also explains the vigilante's fall and offers a dire warning about what Tobias intends. As the PCs go to inform the authorities, they are ambushed by thieves and a Vampire who steals the journal. In the end, the PCs have a vague idea of where they need to go, realising they must follow after the Black Coach if they intend to stop Tobias from performing the ritual on young Karl.

This adventure is structured as a series of mysteries. Do your best to give the PCs all the clues they need, but try not to put them together for them, or make the links too obvious. The fun in this should be the moments of realisation when the PCs figure out who is who and what's going on. Note that many of the events happen at a particular time and so the various sections are noted by day. Generally, events proceed as described and potential information is available during a particular day. If the characters make a mess of things, you may need to modify the timetable to get the PCs back on track.

Karl's Aura

Being under Karl's influence may be a fun challenge for the PCs for a while, but they will likely get tired of it before too long. Not to worry. In this adventure, the PCs learn a disgusting way to immunise themselves from Karl's, power and if they don't care for that option, they find themselves separated from Karl long enough for the effects of his aura to fade, allowing them to think for themselves again. Of course, there's always a chance for his charm to reassert itself…

Getting Started

The adventure begins shortly after the encampment repelled the Undead host that intended to claim the anointed boy for their own dark purposes. The PCs are likely to be in the company of the leaders as described in the previous chapter. All is a mess and the screams of the dying fill the air, pregnant with the stench of blood, voided bowels, and the reek of decay.

Father Johannes has just pledged his loyalty and his golden hammer to Karl, and the Crusaders of the Child are taking stock of the carnage wrought by the Strigoi and his Ghouls. Physicians are summoned and the PCs are offered simple healing. There is a lot going on while this happens. Here are the significant things that the PCs should notice.

Krieger sends guards out into the camp to restore calm and bring back reports of fighting and damages.

Lord Eisenbach and his troops arrive next, covered in gore. Eisenbach is chagrined that he was drawn away by the ruse. (Or, if the PCs were with Eisenbach when the Zombies attacked, he is suspicious of the PCs and wants to know what happened to the Elves—assuming the PCs revealed the Elves' presence to Eisenbach.)

Jan and Helmut argue. They don't like each other and are fighting to be first in Karl's eyes. They are very snippy. *"And where were you?"* asks Helmut, *"I didn't see you defending young Karl."*

"I was mediating a conflict between two of the more aggressive factions. I got here as soon as I could. You don't appear to have seen much action yourself. You are unwounded."

Jan doesn't trust the PCs, and reminds Karl, before they can truly join the Crusade, that he must ask them "The Question." Karl pouts at this, but at last he turns to the PCs and asks them, *"What was your reason for seeking out The Followers of the Child before you met me?"* As answering this question could be the death of the PCs, attempting to lie is "only" a **Hard (–20) Will Power Test**.

It is likely someone will fail the test and reveal the PCs' original reasons for seeking the Crusade. They may think this is the end, but the inner circle takes the news calmly. They have been infiltrated many times, but a meeting with Karl always makes the spies abandon their tasks and join the mob. Helmut and Krieger add the Elves and Lord Frederick to their list of enemies, and welcome the PCs to the Crusade with open arms. Both Helmut and Jan loudly deny the existence of any agents of Chaos within the Crusade. *"Our cause is united and our loyalties are clear."*
Jan is more wary of the PCs than the others, suggesting they are Altdorf spies sent to sow discord and suspicion among the leaders. He insists that the PCs be watched.

Helmut is pleased to see another priest of Sigmar joining the Crusade and offers to make Father Johannes his assistant. Johannes eagerly agrees and leaves with him. Nils stays with the PCs as Krieger leads them to their tent.

— Part I: The Hour of the Child —

Having been accepted into the Crusade, the PCs acclimate to the unusual environment and make ready to travel the final few days' journey to Altdorf.

Under Canvas

Krieger shows the PCs to a tent where guards are removing and selling off the possessions of those who died fighting the Vampire. He tells them they will be given uniforms tomorrow, and asks them to divide their number into three guard shifts, day, evening, and night. The day shift starts at daybreak the next morning. After a curt good-night, he leaves.

The PCs are alone, with a lot to talk about—setting shifts, their loyalties, and deciding what to do next. This opportunity is perfect for those who didn't fall under Karl's spell to begin arguing with those who did. Or, if all the PCs were converted, Nils does the arguing. Encourage the PCs to roleplay their delusions, but remind them their personalities haven't changed, only their allegiance.

Whatever they talk about, they might be overheard. Krieger has placed a man across from their tent, giving the PCs privacy but making sure they don't leave. If the PCs shout, he hears them. Jan (Tobias) has also sent a spy to listen through the canvas. He is one of Krieger's halberdiers, and kneels behind the tent, pretending to fix his boot. Unless the PCs say they are whispering, he hears them.

If the PCs mention checking for eavesdroppers, they notice both men. If not, have the PCs make a **Challenging (–10) Perception Test** before their discussion. If any succeed, they detect Jan's spy before betraying any information. Call for another **Challenging (–10) Perception Test** after the conversation. If any succeed, they hear the spy leaving.

The Spy

If the PCs exit the tent to catch the spy, Krieger's watcher asks what they're doing. The spy doesn't run. Instead, he protests his innocence, saying he only stopped to take a stone out of his boot. Krieger's man sides with the

What if the PCs don't Join the Crusade?

This scenario is certainly a possibility and one that will require some finesse. You have a couple of options here. If the PCs flee into the woods after the Wood Elves, you can hook the PCs with a side adventure that eventually leads them back to the Crusade.

Also, fleeing PCs may wish to keep track of the mob, following from a safe distance. If so, you can relegate their characters into the background and give the PCs new ones that somehow acquitted themselves well in the combat. These new characters follow along as described here, while the PCs monitor the events from afar. There may be instances where these characters intersect with the PCs' previous characters at other points in the adventure where it's logical for the original PCs to pick up in the new characters' stead. Part of being a GM is adapting to the choices the players make. You can take this opportunity to expand the cast of characters to make the environment more dynamic.

spy, as do other guards, because they know him. Krieger sides with him too, if he is called in to arbitrate.

Krieger or his watcher tells the PCs to go back to bed and stop jumping at shadows. *"There are no spies here. We are all united in our love of young master Karl."*

If the PCs try to slip under the back of the tent and attack the spy, he raises the alarm, saying the PCs were trying to escape. Krieger's man comes running, and the scene plays as above.

While interacting with the spy, a character who succeeds on a **Routine (+10) Perception Test** notices the man has an ugly boil on his lip.

Escape

Sneaking off at this point makes it very difficult for the PCs to get close to Karl later. They will be mistrusted and not allowed near the compound again and therefore not privy to the conversations of the inner circle.

If the PCs try it anyway, leaving the compound is difficult. Their tent is among the other guard tents, and Krieger's man is watching it. If he sees a PC leaving the tent, he politely asks where they're going. If more than two PCs leave the tent, he asks them to stop and calls for backup. Guards exit nearby tents in 2 rounds. If the PCs can't explain themselves, the guards order them back to their tent and guard it until Krieger arrives.

If the PCs sneak out the back of the tent, make an Opposed Test, pitting the PCs' **Silent Move Tests** against a **Challenging (–10) Perception Test** for the Guard (see **Halberdier** statistics on page 76).

Outside the tent, many guards wander the garrison area, and if seen, armed adventurers out of uniform draw lots of attention. Make plenty of opposed tests. If they are caught, the guards order them to their tent and call for Krieger.

If the PCs try something elaborate, like starting a fire, or raising a false alarm, play it out using the maps and list of troops from the previous chapter as a guide.

Once the PCs successfully reach the mob area of the camp, they are in the clear. Nobody pays them any mind. They can go anywhere except back into the inner circle.

Rejoining the Cult

If the PCs have left the cult on bad terms and wish to sneak back in, there is little difficulty rejoining the mob. So many people come and go they won't be noticed. If, however, they get close to any of the inner circle they met previously, they need to make an Opposed Skill Test, pitting the NPCs' **Perception** against the PCs' **Challenging (–10) Disguise Tests**.

If they weren't in trouble when they left, and want to rejoin the inner circle, they need a good excuse and at least one **Routine (+10) Charm Test**.

Day One: Early Morning

At daybreak, guards wake the PCs and give them uniforms. Those on day watch must go on duty. This employment allows them to learn more about Karl and the men surrounding him, whilst the off-duty PCs can move up and down the long-strung-out column of the Crusade on the march.

Guard duty consists of marching before the coach that carries Karl and Helmut along with six of Krieger's men. Two Hammer Bearers ride in the coach, and six march alongside it. Lord Eisenbach's knights ride behind.

As the inner circle roll up their tents and hitch their horses, the PCs witness more arguing between the leaders. Jan thinks they have enough Crusaders and wants to hurry directly to Altdorf to confront Volkmar and Karl-Franz. (It isn't his real reason; he's obeying Ruprecht's orders to hurry and find Ansel in Altdorf.)

Lord Eisenbach sides with Jan. He wants his reparations as soon as possible.

Jan's Motives

Jan (Tobias) sent the spy to learn what the PCs intend. If they mean to kill or kidnap Karl, he orders his spies to watch them and foil their attempt. If they mean to escape immediately and report to someone about what's going on in the camp, he lets them. At this point they know nothing of consequence.

But if they intend to root out the Chaos cultist, or stay and investigate, or if they only want to follow Karl for the rest of their lives, he intends to use them as pawns to kill Krieger, who he wants out of the way, and then, once the dirty work is done, kill them.

If his spy was discovered before he learned anything, Jan's other spies shadow the PCs until they learn what they mean to do.

Fighting In the Camp

There are a few points in the adventure where putting a foot wrong may get the PCs into a lot of trouble. If steel is drawn, here's how to play it.

In the Compound

If the PCs provoke a fight here, they must either run or they will very likely find themselves overwhelmed. There are too many guards, and they are too well trained—Krieger's men, Eisenbach's men, Helmut's Hammer Bearers, and Jan's guards. When a fight starts, more men come running every round until the PCs are overwhelmed. Their only hope is running into the mob, where they can lose pursuit. Feel free to play this out using statistics from the previous chapter, but the outcome is nearly certain.

In the Mob

Fights are easier here. Only interested parties aid the fighters. Everyone else runs away, calling for help. Again, statistics for these Crusaders can be found in the previous chapter.

Aftermath

If the PCs are chased from the Crusade and hide nearby, search parties keep them moving, but nothing happens. If they look for the Wood Elves, they have left the area, or at least are invisible to the PCs.

Helmut wants to recruit in every town. *"Altdorf and the Temple must see our might! There can be no question of them denying us."*

Karl sides with Jan. He wants to go quickly too. He says he has had a premonition they must get to Kislev quickly to prevent a great victory of Chaos. (It isn't his real reason; he wants to hurry to his mother, who he thinks is waiting for him in Kislev.)

Karl wins. They decide to travel as quickly as possible.

Special Orders

As the on-duty PCs march, Helmut asks to speak with them in private. He says he denied the existence of a Chaos cultist within the camp the night before because he didn't want to alarm anyone, but privately, he fears it's true. Some of the sects in the mob seem very sinister, and some witch hunters who tried to infiltrate the Crusade came down with fatal diseases that failed to spread to anyone else. He asks the PCs to investigate.

> *"Though you may not believe it, there are too many conflicts of loyalty for me to trust the conclusions of anyone I might ask within the Crusade. They all love Karl so much that they wish to be first in his eyes and would be willing to denounce as followers of Chaos any they think might be before them in his affections. You are perfect. You have not been here long enough to form any loyalties yet."*

Further Orders

Note: If Jan thinks the PCs mean to kill or kidnap Karl, this scene doesn't happen. Instead, he waits for them to make their move.

At the same time, Jan approaches the off-duty PCs and asks them for help. He says he suspects an agent of Chaos in the cult. He wants to keep it quiet, as it would affect morale. Also, he fears that the investigation will lead to the heart of the Crusade, and since the person he suspects is well-liked, he thinks he would be disbelieved if he made his suspicions public. Play him as genuinely concerned and uncomfortable.

> *"I know I am disliked. I am a hard man of business. It is I who says no while Helmut says yes, I who enforces order while Helmut preaches freedom. But someone must. We would not have made it through the marshes if Helmut had been leader. But it has made them mistrust me. Therefore, it must be you who find this traitor and report your findings to Karl and Helmut. They will not accept the evidence from me, but you are new to us, and untouched by the infighting. They will listen to you."*

Searching for the Daughter

If you're using the Missing Daughter! hook, one of the first orders of business while travelling with the Crusade is to find the lost girl. Unfortunately, she's no longer around, having succumbed to an outbreak of the plague that's eating away at the Crusaders. A **Very Hard (–30) Gossip Test** reveals this fact. Otherwise, feel free to string the characters along, with glimpses of women that match her description, mixed reports, and so on until the party reaches Altdorf at which point they learn the truth.

Jan mentions the same diseased witch hunters as Helmut did but also claims to have heard weird voices coming from Captain Krieger's tent, and seen strange boils on the lips of some of his men.

> *"I believe Krieger to be a worshipper of the Plague God. I hope I am wrong, for he seems a good man, but there have been too many strange occurrences that I can explain no other way. I know he seems a paragon. Would a cultist advertise his corruption? But I believe he means to corrupt Karl, or kidnap him for some horrible ritual."*

Day One: Morning & Afternoon

You can roleplay acquiring this information, have the PCs make **Gossip Tests,** or both. If you choose the latter two, the PCs gain one bit of news with each degree of success on a **Gossip Test**. They may also hear snippets of this information if they're just keeping their ears and eyes open.

Krieger, Helmut, Eisenbach and Jan

As the people most responsible for the daily workings of the camp, they are too busy for idle talk. Krieger constantly rides up and down the column, policing the mob. Helmut travels with Karl in his coach, tutoring him, or he meets with officials of the communities they travel through. Jan travels in another coach, dealing with the running of the camp. Runners come to him with questions, and he dispatches them with answers. He also meets with town leaders.

Inner Circle Gossip about Krieger

- From one of his men: *"Captain's the best commander I've ever served under. Honest as the day is long, and good about getting us our pay. When he joined the Crusade, some of the lads didn't like it. Thought he'd turned his coat. We was supposed to be arresting 'em, after all.*

But I didn't see it like that. Captain's a true follower of Sigmar. If he says the boy is Sigmar reborn, that's good enough for me. And if it's true, then it ain't turning yer coat, is it? It's everybody else what's got it wrong."

- From one of Helmut's men: *"A decent man. Doesn't play favourites or try to win favour. Just does his job. Would have made a fine Hammer Bearer."*
- From one of Jan's men: *"He seems all right, but you never know, do you? Keeps to himself too much. Makes you think he's hiding something. Likes to go walking too, late at night. Into the woods. Don't know what that's about."*
- Questioning others about this will confirm it. Krieger sometimes goes for walks out of camp at night. (He is wrestling with his conversion and finds it difficult to sleep.)
- From Krieger's personal servant: *"Who's asking? Captain's a great man. The best of this sorry lot of lunatics. Weren't for him they'd never have made it out of the swamps. He don't have to answer to the likes of you."*

Inner Circle Gossip about Lord Eisenbach

- From one of Helmut's men: *"A fine man, and a great asset to our cause. His knights and fighting men may make the difference if it comes to civil war."*
- From one of Jan's men. *"As much farmer as lord, if you ask me. A real noble don't get his hands dirty with the planting, does he?"*
- From a squire to one of Eisenbach's knights. *"I might have wished to be boarded with a more venturesome lord. M'lord Eisenbach isn't much for battles. Last spring he had the knights pulling ploughs! But he's a good man for all that."*

Beloved of God

Karl spends the morning bored, being tutored by Helmut in the finer points of Sigmarite dogma. Using a call of nature as an excuse for a break (six of Helmut's Hammer Bearers escort him behind a bush and face out with weapons drawn while he does his business) he stops to walk with the on-duty PCs, asking them boys' questions about their adventures while ignoring Helmut's calls from the coach to return to his studies.

"How did you become adventurers?"
"What is the biggest thing you've killed?"
"Have you ever seen a dragon?"
"Jan says you met some Wood Elves. What are they like? Are they wild and fierce like the old stories say?"
"Did the Vampire hurt you? Can I see?"
"I had an adventure once!"

He tells of being kidnapped from the orphanage and escaping his kidnappers. If the PCs ask Karl detailed questions about this, particularly about exactly when he acquired the mark of the twin-tailed comet on his chest, Jan appears before he can answer, and sends him back to his studies. Karl scowls but goes meekly.

"I wish we didn't have to go to Altdorf. It is to Kislev that I wish to go."

Questioned about this, Karl closes up, saying, *"I had a vision. There is a great danger coming from the north, from Kislev. I must stop it. And it must be soon!"*

PCs should take a **Hard (–20) Intelligence Test** (their thinking is clouded by Karl's aura) to realise Karl is lying. If the PCs pass the test and press him, Karl clams up and hurries back to his lessons.

Regardless of what questions are asked, after roughly 5 minutes Helmut drags Karl back to the coach, saying, *"You will meet the Grand Theogonist in a few days, my lord. How will it look if you don't know your catechism."*

Karl pouts but goes with him, waving a friendly farewell to the PCs.

Walking and Talking

The Crusade moves in a long, stretched-out column, with no real order to it, except the leaders travel at the front, and the slowest bring up the rear. There is a lot of chanting, singing, and marking of walls and trees with Karl's symbol as they go. The off-duty can move up and down the column as they like, talking to whom they wish.

Estranged Strigany

Now would be a good time to bring back the Strigany boy, Ahmed, still trying to sell the PCs everything under the sun.

"Dog pie! Fresh and hot! Only a penny. Fix your boots, your worships? Only a penny. Two pennies for three pair. Wash your woollens? Trim your beard? Look nice for Altdorf. Only a penny."

People around the PCs glare at Ahmed and mutter under their breath, *"Strigany scum. That vampire what attacked last night came from their wagon and no mistake."* (Not true.)

Further down the line, the PCs see Ahmed's father Ali and the rest of the Strigany arguing with a crowd of angry Crusaders. At last, with a curse, Ali allows one of the mob to search his caravan. After a moment the Crusader comes back out, unhappy, and speaks to the crowd. *"No coffin. No grave dirt. But that don't prove nothing. He could be hiding somewhere."*

He glares at Ali.

"We're watching you, tinker. Don't think we ain't."

The crowd breaks up.

Yellow Death

Groff concocted this plague. Victims develop a high fever, which soon makes them terribly thirsty, and yet unable to void their bladders. The pain of this blockage is excruciating, but the victim cannot stop drinking, so it only gets worse and worse. The skin turns yellow and the sweat reeks of urine. Victims eventually die of fever, hallucinating and screaming, their brains boiled.

Duration: Seven days

Effects: Each day the character has the Yellow Death he must make a Toughness Test or lose 5 from every characteristic on his Main Profile. If Toughness is reduced to 0 or less, the character dies.

Special Rule: At the moment, the only way to catch the Yellow Death is to eat tainted meat from Groff's butcher stall. He is testing the disease for effectiveness. But when the cult reaches Altdorf, Groff changes the disease so it becomes a plague. He feeds tainted meat to the Altdorf citizens who come to the Crusaders of the Child's last rally. Those who catch the disease from the meat become carriers. Anyone who touches a victim's sweat must pass a Toughness Test or catch the disease.

Mob Gossip

What the mob thinks about the leaders and the future of the Crusade is covered in **Chapter III**, feel free to use any quotes you haven't used yet. If the PCs ask about agents of Chaos within the cult, have them make a **Gossip Test** each time. If they fail they get indignant denials, such as, *"Impossible! The light of Karl's goodness would burn them to cinders! There can be no evil where he walks!"*

But if they pass the test, they get all kinds of responses.

- *"None that I've seen. But I've heard. There's things in the woods. People disappear."*
- *"Hmmm, well, I wouldn't wonder if it were them Brothers of the Open Wound. Unhealthy if you ask me."*
- *"Beware the Singers of the Holy Word. Nobody that saintly can be true. They're hiding something."*
- *"The old crone in the next row over. She's one for sure. Gave me the evil eye last week and this morning I got a hangnail!"*
- *"There was some witch hunters here. Snoopin' about. Thought they was clever. Pretended to be tinkers. Heh. Didn't fool a soul. Well, one morning, they all wake up dead in their wagon, covered in horrible purple lumps, with their tongues all black. But the spooky part is, nobody else gets sick. Nobody. Is that the Dark Powers at work or no? I ask you."*
- *"A villain among the leaders? Naw! Who would it be, then? Old Father Helmut, a priest of Sigmar for forty years? Vanderpeer? He's a villain right enough, but it's coin he worships, not ruin. Krieger? The ramrod? Not likely. He thinks the sun shines out of Karl's fundament. And it couldn't be Eisenbach. A hearty old duffer like that? Naw! Next you'll be suspecting Karl himself. Away with ye!"*
- *"A black lake! A woman in a black lake! 'Ware! 'Ware!"*

- *"There's a plague of boils. Everywhere I look, people with boils on their lips. Witches spread it, or I'm a Goblin."*
- *"The others think the Yellow Death is the work of the Dark Powers, but that's nonsense. With all the filth and squalor in this travelling cesspool, does disease need an unnatural origin?"*
- *"The Yellow Death? It hasn't claimed many, but it's horrible. Thirst. Terrible thirst, but you stop… going, if you understand me. And you turn yellow with it. You die, yellow and sweating, as parched as a desert and as full as a barrel."*

Tailing the Tailers

As the PCs move along the column they are followed. A **Challenging (–10) Perception Test** finds her—a bedraggled peasant girl with a boil on her lip. If she sees she's been spotted she tries to lose herself in the crowd. If the PCs catch her, she bites down on her boil and dies a horrible death—vomiting blood and oozing pus from her eyes and nose.

Once they notice her, another **Challenging (–10) Perception Test** allows them to notice other people with boils watching them. If the PCs successfully follow any of these people, they eventually lead them to Butcher Groff, one of the camp provisioners.

Butcher Groff

Male Mutant Cult Acolyte of Nurgle* (ex-Burgher)

*See *Tome of Corruption*

Butcher Groff provides cheap butchering for those who him bring game or "liberated" cattle. He takes cuts from each animal in payment, and sells these to the Crusaders. He too has a boil on his lip. He is Jan's (Tobias's) lieutenant. People visit his wagon all the time, even on the march. He has an assistant drive while he butchers in the back. This cover is perfect for the coming and going of Jan's boil-afflicted spies. Jan sends one of his guards once a day to buy a cut of meat and get reports. Krieger, Helmut and Eisenbach also get their meat from Groff, so the link to Jan isn't obvious.

Groff keeps a sealed kettle filled with a black, slimy mould. There are also diseased swords and daggers hidden among his luggage. If PCs are cut with the blades or open the kettle, they must pass a **Routine (+10) Toughness Test** or catch the Yellow Death.

The PCs may think that Groff is the Nurglist they're looking for, but if they successfully eavesdrop on him speaking with another cultist, they hear him speak of *"The Boss"* and *"Tobias,"* but the PCs don't learn Tobias is Jan until the third day, right after the Crusaders arrive at Altdorf.

Butcher Groff is a friendly, heavy-set Marienburg man with an unkempt appearance and a booming voice and laugh. Behind this jovial mask, he is a cultist of Nurgle, dedicated to spreading the gifts of Father Nurgle far and wide. He has joined Tobias and Ruprecht because they have promised him that he will be allowed to spread the greatest plague the Empire has ever known. He's so happy about this that his jolliness isn't really an act.

Insanity Points: 5

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
37	31	32 (3)	46 (4)	33	52	45	45

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Daemonology) (Int), Channelling (WP), Common Knowledge (the Empire, the Wasteland) (Int), Concealment (Ag), Disguise (Fel), Drive (S), Evaluate (Int), Gossip (Fel), Haggle (Fel), Intimidate (S), Magical Sense (WP), Perception (Int), Read/Write (Int), Search (Int), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Arcane Language (Daemonic) (Int), Speak Language (Breton) (Int), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int +10), Torture (Fel)

Talents: Dark Magic, Dealmaker, Fearless, Flee!, Petty Magic (Chaos), Resistance to Disease, Savvy, Very Resilient
Traits: Mutation (Extra Mouth)

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 14
Magic: 1; Petty Magic (Chaos) *or* Petty Magic (Hedge) if you don't have *Tome of Corruption*
Armour (Light): Leather Jack (Arms 1, Body 1)
Weapons: Hand Weapon (Cleaver) (1d10+3)

Trappings

Butcher Groff keeps most of his possessions in his large, enclosed wagon. What's visible to the outside are the typical accoutrements of a butcher, including hooks, saws, hammers, and other nasty-looking tools. Groff wears shabby clothing, with the sleeves rolled up. A blood-sodden apron hangs around his neck.

Mutation

Hidden in his left armpit is an extra mouth. It occasionally burps. He feeds it rotting flesh, and at night it spews forth diseased slime, which he uses in his plague concoctions.

Day One: Night

After the Crusade makes camp for the night, the PCs on guard duty are told to patrol the perimeter of the compound, inside the linen barrier. Because they are on probation, those not on duty are not allowed to leave the compound. They are to remain in or around their tent.

There are a few comings and goings during the night—patrols of Krieger's guards and Eisenbach's spearmen leave and return. Krieger leaves by himself after midnight and comes back more than an hour later. Three of Jan's bodyguards go out, laughing and carrying a bottle, and return three hours later, still laughing, but with an empty bottle. When Eisenbach's spearmen come back, two hours before midnight, one tells Eisenbach that a Crusader's mare is foaling, and the birth is going poorly. Eisenbach goes out with the man, rolling up his sleeves. He comes back more than an hour later, bloody but elated. The foal is on its feet, and the mare survived.

Any attempt to follow any of these excursions is stopped by the gate guards. The on-duty PCs must remain on duty. The off-duty PCs must remain in the compound until their probationary week is over.

If the PCs try to sneak out, that's possible, but make sure they lose the trail of whoever they're following in the camp, and then make it hard to get back in the compound.

Day Two: Morning

The second day is much the same as the previous, with more opportunities for investigation and chatting.

Inner Circle Observations

If they say they are eavesdropping, the PCs on guard duty can observe or overhear the following.

- Krieger asking his servant if he has seen his left glove.
- Before the Crusade gets underway a PC overhears the following exchange between two of Jan's bodyguards. There is no test required to hear this, because the men want the PCs to overhear them.

  "Captain Krieger wandered off again last night," mentions a guard. "*Went into them trees there. Couldn't have been going for a squat. He walked right past the latrines. Makes you wonder what he's up to.*" "*Let him be,*" his fellow adds. *"Krieger's got a lot on his mind. Probably just couldn't sleep."*

Investigating the Wood

If the PCs take the Krieger bait and go into the wood, they easily find heavy boot prints leading to a small clearing with a circle of Chaos runes in its centre. The runes are black and shimmer with movement. Closer inspection reveals the movement to be tens of thousands of flies, feasting. These rise in a huge buzzing swarm, revealing the runes were written in excrement and slime.

In the circle is a dead sheep. It has not been wounded. Instead it seems to have died of horrible plagues. It reeks, and red boils cover its face. Instead of hooves it has little shrivelled baby hands. Characters ought to make **Will Power Tests** or collect an Insanity Point or two from the dreadful scene.

Investigation reveals the heavy boots walked around the circle. Also, there is a man's glove on the ground, smeared with slime and excrement.

Show And Tell

If the PCs announce their discovery to the inner circle, they come see. Helmut prays. Jan loudly hopes no one from the camp is responsible. Eisenbach curses and spits. Krieger is horrified and vows to find and kill the cultists responsible.

If the PCs show the glove publicly, Krieger recognises it and asks them where they found it. If they ask if anyone lost a glove he readily admits it. He is aghast if the PCs say where they found the glove. Jan then accuses Krieger of consorting with Chaos.

Going to Krieger

If they approach Krieger privately, he is shocked, then coldly angry. *"Villainy. Someone means to befoul my name and reputation. I must get to the bottom of this."* He doesn't get a chance. One of Jan's men eavesdrops the conversation and runs to Jan. Jan and Helmut enter here, demanding an explanation. Helmut is baffled and horrified. Jan accuses Krieger of consorting with Chaos and the PCs of sympathising with him. *"You should have come to us!"*

Going to Helmut or Jan

The PCs are thanked for their diligence and given a reward. Helmut gives them 1 *gc* each and lifts their probation, giving them the freedom to come and go as they please within the camp. Jan also lifts their probation and gives them 30s each. Whoever they went to gathers the rest of the inner circle and goes to arrest Krieger as above.

Krieger's Fall

Krieger denies the charges but cannot deny that it is his glove. Helmut regretfully asks Krieger and his men—who are guilty by association—to submit to being locked up until the matter can be investigated further. Believing his innocence will soon be proven, Krieger agrees. He and his men are put in one tent and guarded by Eisenbach's knights.

If the PCs went to Krieger first, Jan demands they be locked up too. Helmut reluctantly agrees, and his men attempt to arrest the PCs. If the PCs fight, the usual rules for fighting in the compound apply. If they submit to arrest, they are returned to their own tent and guarded by Eisenbach's spearmen. Karl is downcast at the PCs' fate but says nothing.

Day Two: Afternoon

If the PCs haven't left the Crusade or been arrested, they are free to continue their investigations. Bring Ahmed back one more time, this time offering an attractive sword. Before he can make a sale, an angry Crusader sees him and shouts at him to give him his sword back. Ahmed drops the sword and sprints off. The cultist shouts anti-Strigany slurs after him.

Day Two: Night

What follows this night depends on the developments during the day.

Krieger's Death—Path One

If the PCs haven't left the camp or been arrested, at midnight they hear horrible screams and the clash of weapons. These sounds come from the tent where Krieger and his men are held.

A terrible battle is taking place. Krieger and his men have ripped out of the tent. They scream in agony and rage as buboes and boils erupt on their skin and they grow hideous mutations. They lash out at their captors, who fearfully hack them down. On the sidelines Helmut and Jan watch, aghast. Jan screams, *"You see! Proof that they were cultists! The curse of their God has come upon them!"*

The PCs can help kill the Mutants, who are all unarmed and so sick that all their stats are reduced by 10 (use the **Mutant** statistics in *WFRP* page 230).

Krieger sees the PCs and calls out to them before he is cut down by one of Jan's men. *"A rat! A rat! Villainy!"*

If the PCs investigate the tent where Krieger was held, they see a dead rat, horribly diseased and hopping with fleas. If they show it to Helmut and Jan, Jan claims it as more evidence. *"Krieger's familiar! Burn it!"*

Helmut is more thoughtful but won't follow up.

If any PCs get within 2 yards of the rat, have them roll a 1d10. On a 7 a flea bites them, forcing them to make **Routine (+10) Toughness Tests** or catch a supernatural strain of Neiglish Rot. The bout lasts only 30 minutes, but the afflicted must make a **Toughness Test** every 10 minutes or gain an exciting mutation—use whatever mutation tables you have, but if you have *Tome of Corruption*, use the Nurgle tables, condemning him to a brief and unpleasant life. In addition, every 7 minutes, the victim must pass another Toughness Test or take a cumulative –5 penalty to all tests. Should these penalties exceed the victim's Toughness Characteristic, his body explodes in a spray of wet, green gore. Two consecutive successes is enough to throw off the Toughness penalty and stop the more lethal effects of this disease.

Krieger's Death—Path Two

If the PCs are imprisoned in their tent, they hear screams and fighting. People run by. Their three guards ask passers-by what's happening. "*It's Krieger. He and his men are Mutants! They're attacking Eisenbach's knights!*"

A knife cuts through the back of the PCs' tent and a dead rat is thrown in, covered in pustules and fleas. It lands in the centre of the tent. The fleas start hopping towards the PCs. Any PC within 2 yards of the rat must roll a 1d10, as above.

If the PCs try to leave the tent, either by tent-flap or out the back, their guards hear and fight to stop them. No one comes to help the guards. Everyone's too busy with Krieger. If the PCs defeat the guards, no one else is around. They can escape or chase the rat flinger, who is a Nurglist who will pop his boil and die before they catch him. If they go to the Krieger fight, and they are seen, they will be attacked.

Consequences

Characters that acquire a profound and overt mutation that they can't hide are rounded up and dropped on a pyre come morning. Have the potentially melancholy player roll up a new character, but, if you're feeling guilty (tsk tsk), give the player a second dose of Shallya's Mercy. Characters suspected of collusion with Krieger are thrown out of the Crusade for lack of evidence. These PCs can follow along, try to slip back into camp, or sit on the roadside and starve. Work them back into the plot in whatever way you like.

Day Three: Morning

With the unpleasantness of the previous night behind them, the Crusaders of the Child prepare for their arrival at Altdorf, putting on their best clothes and decorating their carts with banners, ribbons, and paper hearts and hammers. They are in a cheerful mood, certain Karl will be welcomed into the city, his divinity immediately recognised by Grand Theogonist Volkmar, and that Karl-Franz will announce him as heir to the throne of the Empire. Then they get underway, playing music and singing happy Karl songs.

If the PCs have stayed out of trouble, the day watch guards Karl as usual.

In the late morning, a delegation from the Altdorf City Council comes to see Helmut and Jan, asking them to bypass Altdorf, and offering a substantial bribe to go to Talabheim instead. Helmut refuses. The delegation warns that Karl will be shot if he approaches the gates.

Day Three: Afternoon

In the middle of the afternoon the Crusaders reach in the fields outside Altdorf and make camp. A stage and food-and-drink tents are erected for a fair and rally.

Jan, Helmut, and Eisenbach approach the Empire Gate, the largest northern landside entrance to the city, a massive, heavily guarded, fortified gate. The delegation is escorted by Eisenbach's knights and any of the PCs who wish to go—if they aren't in trouble. Karl does not come. The delegation is politely turned away by a representative of the City Council—backed up by a company of halberdiers and crossbowmen on the walls—who says Karl-Franz and Volkmar are too busy, and the delegation should come back again next week.

The delegation return to camp, angry and frustrated. Jan seems more resigned than the others.

Groff Lets the Cat Out

Have any PCs who are amongst the crowd make a **Very Easy (+30) Perception Test**, but cheat. There's no way they can miss this one. They overhear someone say, *"Tobias."* When they look around, they see Butcher Groff speaking to one of Jan Vanderpeer's guards in the gap between two closely set tents.

Groff says, *"Tell Tobias the soup is ready. The Death has become the Plague. When should I make the meal?"*

Jan's Guard replies, *"I'll ask him and tell you when I come for the meat order."*

The two men part. If the PCs successfully follow Jan's guard, they see him return directly to Jan's tent, then come back immediately to Groff. *"At the last rally before we leave Altdorf. And six lamb chops, please."*

Confronting Groff

It isn't hard to find a moment when Groff is alone, but he's never alone long. People come by the shop all day, but if the PCs get him in his living quarters (a curtained off part of his tent behind his shop area) and keep him quiet, they are undisturbed. If they are heard, however, people come to his aid. Groff is well liked, and his customers attack the PCs or call guards if they are outnumbered.

Unlike the other Nurglists, Groff doesn't immediately kill himself. He has plague to spread before he dies. Instead, he fights and calls for help.

Groff isn't likely to reveal his part in the Yellow Death plot, but clever PCs who think quickly or are afflicted with a boil may be able to convince the cultist that they too work for Tobias. Such a tactic requires the character doing the talking to make Opposed Test, pitting his **Charm** against Groff's **Perception**. If the character wins, Groff grudgingly accepts the PC but doesn't reveal anything about the plot. Success with two or more degrees of success gets the butcher to spill the details. Pressing Groff in any way

Jan's (Tobias's) Minions and the Cure for Karl's Aura

Jan's Nurglist minions come from every strata of the camp. There are about thirty of them—butchers, flagellants, wagon masters, camp followers and so on. All have two things in common. Boils, either on their lips or inside their mouths, that allow them to commit suicide if they are discovered, and a curious disease—Ruprecht's Tintinnabulations—that protects them from Karl's aura at a cost to their hearing and their Fellowship.

Observant PCs may notice the Nurglists wiggling their fingers in their ears, or asking for questions to be repeated, or they may detect the disgusting side effects of the disease. Making a **Challenging (–10) Perception Test** lets the PCs notice the afflicted are not affected by Karl's Aura. The Nurglists pretend well, but they can't quite fake the cheerful, unquestioning faith in Karl the rest of the Crusaders have.

Getting the secret of their immunity from the Nurglists is tough, because they attempt suicide first. Only if the PCs surprise one completely and find a way to stop him from biting his boil can they torture the secret out of him. If they're successful, the Nurglist tells them it's a gift from Father Nurgle—a cold in the head that makes one's ears ring, and stops Karl's voice from making one love him. Jan (Tobias) infected them by making them cut their tongues, then kissing them.

Cutting their tongues and kissing a Nurglist, including Jan, gives the PCs the disease and frees them from Karl's influence.

Mercy Boils

When bitten, the boils on the lips of the Nurglists release a horrific poison into the mouth that causes the Nurglist to instantly start projectile vomiting blood and excreting pus from the eyes and nose. Anyone within 3 feet of the afflicted cultist must make an **Agility Test** or be spattered. If any of this foul material gets on a PC's skin, they must make a **Toughness Test** or in twenty-four hours they develop a boil on their lip or on the inside of their mouth. If they break this boil, they die in 5 rounds, spewing everywhere. The boil goes away of its own accord after seven days, but until then, the afflicted PC must make a **Very Easy (+30) Agility Test** every time he eats or he bursts the boil. A priestess of Shallya can cure the boil with a *cure disease* spell.

Ruprecht's Tintinnabulations

A disease handcrafted by Ruprecht, it affects the hearing. Victims experience a ringing in the ears. Voices and sounds sound screechy and harsh. If the disease proceeds unchecked, the ringing and the distortion get worse, until at the end of the duration they can hear nothing but the ringing.

The disease is not caught easily. It requires body fluid contact (The easiest way is a deep kiss).

Duration: Thirty-five days

Effects: The disease distorts the sounds the victim hears, giving them a +10 bonus to all Will Power Tests that involve hearing. (For the sake of the adventure, it also grants absolute immunity to Karl's Aura.) For the same reason, it gives the victim a –10 penalty on all Perception Tests involving hearing. The effects get worse (and better!) every seven days, improving the bonus and worsening the penalty by 10, so that after seven days, the bonus increases by 10 and the penalty worsens by –10.

If the disease is not cured before its full duration, the character becomes permanently stone deaf. The damage is physical and not repairable except by magic.

In addition, a victim must roll every five days to see if a minor disgusting side effect manifests.

1d10	Effect
1–5	*I feel great!* No change.
6	*Dear Gods! What is that smell?* The character acquires a profound stink of old cheese and spoilt potatoes.
7	*Ah, you have something there… no just there.* The character drips snot from his nose continuously.
8	*It appears you have a rash.* The character's face breaks out in a weeping facial eczema.
9	*Fetch a cloth will you?* The character acquires urinary incontinence.
10	*Did you hear that?* The character suffers from explosive flatulence.

makes him suspicious and he may be moved to violence if the conversation takes a strange turn.

If tortured, he pops his boil, but if the PCs win an Opposed **Agility Test** they can stop him from biting down. Torture makes him talk. He's willing to sacrifice himself for Nurgle but can't stand prolonged pain. He reveals the plan.

The Nurglist Plan

Jan means to kidnap Karl in Altdorf. He is to bring Karl and an arcane necklace to Ruprecht's home and put the necklace on Karl. After this, Karl will love Ruprecht as a father, and do whatever he wishes.

Also, Groff is to feed tainted meat to the citizens of Altdorf who come to see Karl at the last rally before the Crusaders leave Altdorf. The tainted meat will infect the citizens with the Yellow Plague, a highly contagious version of the Yellow Death. Once they return to the city and get sick, anyone touching their sweat will also become sick.

Ruprecht means to bring Karl back to Altdorf and have him "cure" the plague. Really it will be Ruprecht doing the curing, but people will believe it is Karl, and this will be the final proof of his divinity. In their gratitude for saving the city, the people will crown him Emperor, with Ruprecht as his hidden advisor.

So, who's Ruprecht? Groff isn't quite sure but believes he's Tobias's master.

Killing or Exposing Groff

If the PCs tell the inner circle of Groff's plague plot without mentioning Jan, Helmut rewards them (2 *gc* each) and Jan thanks them—then attempts to kill them that night. (Use the **Diseased Rat** scene described on page 90.) If the PCs kill Groff and say nothing to the inner circle, events proceed as normal, but Jan hears of it and attempts to kill them with the diseased rat that night.

Accusing Jan

Attempting to expose Jan fails. If they bring Groff to testify, he cowers in Jan's presence and changes his tune, claiming he, not Jan, is the leader. If they try to connect Jan to Groff via Jan's guard, the guard says he only went to Groff to order meat. Jan denies everything and allows Helmut to search his tent. There is no evidence. Jan carries nothing to connect him to Nurgle. He is mutated under his clothes—an ugly lump—but won't submit to a strip-search.

Because Jan is important, and the PCs powerless newcomers, everyone believes Jan. Even Helmut, who dislikes Jan, needs his organisational skills and money too much to arrest him. Helmut unhappily orders the PCs arrested for questioning.

Karl begs mercy for the PCs. *"They were mistaken in their accusation, but they were only trying to protect me. I would not see them imprisoned for it."* He

suggests they be banished instead. Helmut is willing, but Jan says releasing enemies is too great a risk at this critical time. He wins the argument. Helmut orders the PCs' arrest.

Attacking Jan

If the PCs try to kill or search Jan, his guards defend him and call for help. Eisenbach's men join the fight. Jan accuses the PCs of being Nurglists. Helmut orders the PCs' arrest for questioning. If the PCs are successfully arrested they are put in their tent. Three guards watch them.

Day Three: Late Afternoon

An hour before the closing of Altdorf's gates, Helmut and Jan lead a big rally in a field outside the camp, addressing the Crusaders and thousands of curious Altdorfers who have come to see what all the fuss is about.

The rally comes during a big fair, with food and drink provided by the Crusade, as well as juggling, tumbling, music, and passion plays about Karl and Sigmar.

A blaze of trumpets calls the faithful and the curious to the stage. Helmut tells the assembled crowd Karl has been denied entry into Altdorf. The faithful roar angrily. Helmut urges patience.

> *"There will come a time when they will have no choice but to let us in. Meanwhile, let us show our guests that we are gracious hosts. Let us show them the light of our lives."*

He brings out Karl, who speaks briefly. Almost all the visitors are converted. Jan tells them to return to Altdorf and spread the word. The crowd cheers and the Altdorfers head back to the city.

Day Three: Night

If the PCs are still compound guards, they can overhear a private meeting between Helmut, Eisenbach, Karl and Jan, held in Helmut's tent, where Jan suggests to Helmut they can't wait for Karl-Franz to let them in. The camp will soon run out of food, drink, and morale. He suggests that he sneaks Karl into the city whilst Helmut stages another rally in the camp to draw attention. Jan will bring Karl to the Temple of Sigmar and expose him to the priests and the crowds. Then nothing will be able to stop him. Helmut is less than enthusiastic about the plan's dangers, but he sees the sense of it. Karl and Eisenbach side with Jan. Helmut reluctantly agrees.

Day Four: Morning

If the PCs are somehow still not in trouble, Helmut asks them privately to help Jan sneak Karl into the city. He's afraid Jan means to try something, though he doesn't know what. Karl's four bodyguards are going too, but Helmut wants Jan's six men to be outnumbered.

Out of the Loop

If the PCs are in the camp in disguise, they see Jan, Jan's six men, the four Hammer Bearers and a disguised Karl sneaking out of the camp whilst the rest of the camp attends another rally. Following them would be a good idea.

Entering Altdorf

While Helmut stages another rally, Jan, Karl, his four bodyguards, and Jan's six men (and possibly the PCs) disguise themselves as merchants, go to the main road, and flag down merchant wagons on their way to Altdorf. There is no need to rob them. Karl just smiles and asks to use the wagons. Instantly converted, the drivers happily allow the party to ride with them.

One merchant is a coffin maker. Jan hides Karl in a child's coffin. The party enters the city through the Market Gate, a smaller but busier gate to the west of Empire Gate. They are unchallenged.

Kidnapped!

On the Austauschenstrasse, a busy mercantile street not far inside the Market Gate, Jan and his men turn on Karl's bodyguards (and the PCs, if present). In addition to Jan's guards, a dozen more Nurgle cultists come out of the shadows and attack as well. Jan uses Nurglist magic, revealing himself as a sorcerer at last. The wagon drivers scatter. They don't help in the fight.

No matter how well the PCs do in this fight (if they're involved in it at all) two things happen. First, one of Karl's bodyguards tears Jan's coat as he dies and in the process, he catches a piece of parchment Jan carries. Second, Jan escapes, dragging Karl's coffin after him. The PCs should find it impossible to follow. The crowd that gathers to witness the fight is too thick to push through quickly. When they do, Jan and the coffin have vanished.

For Jan's men and for the cultist reinforcements, use **Sell-sword** statistics in *WFRP* page 235. For the bodyguards, use statistics for Helmut's Men on page 77.

— Part II: The Year of the Mask —

Part two takes place primarily in Altdorf. The city hasn't changed physically since *Spires of Altdorf*, but a city's mood is always fluid. Here are some news items and observations to give any NPC conversations more depth and flavour.

The Mood of the City

Altdorf is bitter, volatile, and slightly manic. Bitter and volatile because, after the deprivations during the Chaos Incursion—rationing, shortages, loss of family and friends—the citizens hoped life would return to normal with victory, which has not happened. The shortages remain because food stocks are depleted, and refugees have come south. The people blame the government for mismanagement and corrupt collusion with merchants. Riots and general brawling are common, and street corner demagogues are everywhere, blaming everyone from Karl-Franz to foreigners to Elves.

But with this bitterness comes also a strange, manic energy. Believing the end near, people are throwing propriety to the winds. Bawdy satire plays on every stage, and tavern songs are full of sharp wit and slander. Women show more cleavage and men more flair. The youthful nobility are more debauched than ever, and doomsayers declare that what the Ruinous Powers failed to win through strength of arms, they are winning with distilled spirits and deviant behaviour.

Current Events

Here are a few recent troubles that have afflicted the city.

The Pay Wagon Riots

State Troops from Reikland and Averland have not yet been paid for their service in the defence of Middenheim. Both groups sent large delegations to Altdorf to demand their back pay, which has not been forthcoming. They've clashed with the watch and with each other. The people were sympathetic at first, but the nightly drunken brawls are aggravating, and now Altdorf just wants them gone.

Reporting to Employers

Upon arriving in Altdorf, the PCs will undoubtedly wish to contact their employers or agents of their employers.

Avatil Foamstrider (Foolish Humans)

Characters working for the Marienburg Elf may snoop around for one of his agents. An **Easy (+20) Gossip Test** in the city gets the PCs a name—Lord Frederick. An encounter with the noble plays out as described under **Wilhelm Schmidt**.

Witch Hunter Roderick (In the Service of Sigmar)

The PCs learned in Marienburg that their witch hunter employer left the Wasteland for Altdorf, but finding the witch hunters turns out to be a harder task than they may first think. A trip to the Temple of Sigmar along with a **Routine (+10) Gossip Test** reveals that the templar, if he's in the city, has not checked in with the temple and no one has seen him since he left for Marienburg.

Crispijn van Haagen (Missing Daughter!)

The contact the PCs are to meet in Altdorf is a man named Lord Frederick. A minor noble, but one with some presence in the Emperor's court, he proves a useful contact for the characters. Finding him requires an **Easy (+20) Gossip Test** and he sees the PCs right away when they can give proof of their employment. Frederick listens to their report of the missing girl's death and pays them the agreed upon amount. He adds, *"It seems you are free of your obligation to Crispijn. Have you any other plans now that you're in Altdorf?"* Frederick is ambitious and he wants to increase his standing in the court. He believes that uncovering information about the Child and perhaps revealing his true nature will elevate his status considerably. He asks the PCs to continue with their investigation and promises to pay them well for their services. The exact amount is up to you, but somewhere around 50 *gc* for the whole lot should be sufficient. Further encounters play out as described in the following section.

Wilhelm Schmidt (We're All Prisoners Here)

The PCs' first visit to Lord Frederick starts the same, regardless of at what point in the adventure they visit him.

Directions to Frederick's house are **Easy (+20)** to obtain, as is entry. Lord Frederick likes adventurers, and they are welcomed in. The butler brings them to his study, where Lord Frederick is reading old manuscripts. He welcomes them, sending the butler for food and drink, and asks the PCs to tell him their adventures. If they tell him they have been with the Crusade, he becomes extremely interested.

If they ask for help, he wants to know the identity of the agent of Chaos within the Crusade of the Child first, and won't give them anything more than sympathy until they can provide it. Once they name Jan, he gives them 100 *gc* and helps them with information and resources.

As an agent of Government House, Frederick wants to know the details of the Chaos cultists' plan, and the extent of Karl's powers—if they are divine or a mutation. However, he won't withhold help if the PCs can't tell him these things.

If Frederick discovers that the PCs are under Karl's spell, he is cautious, but as long as they imply they want to protect Karl from Chaos he says, *"It appears our interests coincide. As dangerous as he is, the boy would be more so if he fell under the influence of the Ruinous Powers."*

On subsequent visits, they are welcomed as long as their last visit was friendly. If not, they are turned away, and guards fight if they insist on entering.

Selena Reiva (A Lovely Lady)

PCs working for Selena have no contacts in the city, and so to report to their mistress, they need to return to Marienburg, or at least send a message. It takes a considerable amount of time for any correspondence to reach Selena and twice as long for the characters to gain a reply. For now, their duty should be clear, but if they are taxed for supplies or coin, they may receive an anonymous gift from their mistress.

The Bread Riots

Thousands of refugees from destroyed northern towns have become beggars in Altdorf, and food grows scarce. Grain merchants, fearing that their stores won't last the winter, have raised prices for grain astronomically. People complain that the merchants hoard the grain while people starve. Mobs have broken into grain warehouses and northern beggars have been beaten to death.

The Vengeance of Sigmar

For the past year, Altdorf has been spellbound by the exploits of a vigilante the people call the Vengeance of Sigmar—a masked mystery man who finds, kills and exposes Mutants, witches, warlocks, necromancers and Chaos sorcerers that the witch hunters miss. He strings them up with a tin badge of Sigmar's twin-tailed comet nailed to their foreheads. The people love him, and have occasionally helped him escape official scrutiny.

Jealous of his successes and suspicious of his motives, the witch hunters hate him. The Temple of Sigmar and the Colleges of Magic are more sympathetic, because, unlike the witch hunters, he doesn't make mistakes. No honest scholars have died by his hand, whereas the witch hunters often catch the good with the bad and don't care. The authorities want to know his identity, and either kill him or control him.

Odd Boots

There is a craze among young dandies for mismatched boots. They parade around town in boots of different colours and different styles—tall on the left, short on the right, *etc*. Some wilder bloods even wear boots with heels of different heights, limping grandly about town with expensive walking sticks.

After the Attack

With Karl missing and Jan revealed as a cultist, the PCs are probably ready, eager even, to hunt down this villain. What happens depends on what came before.

If the PCs Helped Fight Jan

The PCs can talk with the surviving guards, finding Jan's note in the hand of their dead leader (**Handout #10**). The surviving guards order the PCs to find Jan and decipher the note. They carry their dead comrades back to camp and inform Helmut of Jan's treachery.

If the PCs return to camp anyway, Helmut begs them to search Altdorf for Karl and Jan, and orders them to say nothing to anyone. *"No one must know Karl is missing!"* He sends them because he needs the guards to maintain the illusion that Karl is still in his tent.

Searching Jan's tent reveals nothing. He carried nothing to connect him to Nurgle.

If the PCs Watched the Attack but Didn't Participate

They see the guards carry their fallen comrades away, and then can search the scene. They find Tobias's note in the gutter.

If the PCs are with Lord Frederick

Frederick's spies bring him news of the strange incident. Descriptions make it clear Jan attacked someone and he dragged a child's coffin away from the scene. Lord Frederick asks the PCs to investigate. The PCs get to the scene after the guards have left, finding the note in the gutter.

The Scene of the Crime

In this last case, when the PCs reach the scene they won't find much physical evidence. Altdorf life moves too fast. The merchants have returned to their wagons and left. The bodies have been cleared away and the blood stains are trampled into the mud.

The street is a lower-class mercantile street, lined with taverns, shops, and pie stalls catering to travellers weary from a long day on the road. Half-timbered houses tower five and six storeys above it.

A success and each further degree of success on a **Gossip Test** gets one of the following stories from the locals.

A Costermonger

"Didn't see it start, no sir, but all of a once I hears a scream and a crash and I looks up from polishing me apples and I sees all these mad-men battering at each other with swords. Couldn't make no sense of it. Merchants they were, bringing their wares to town. A coffin maker, a cabbage farmer, a skins and furs man. But then one—the coffin maker, a squat little fellow—starts shouting words I never heard in Sigmar's temple. Horrible, filthy stuff. And when he's done, some of the fellows start falling and clawing at their faces, the skin bubbling as though it were pudding on the boil. Well, tain't ashamed to say I ran at that. Don't pay to hang about when sorcery's in the air."

A Woman Tavern Owner

"I don't know what it was about, I'm sure. Violence in the streets, and the watch nowhere to be seen, as usual. Bad for business. And vile sorcery. Thought the Colleges were supposed to prevent that sort of thing. What do we pay our taxes for? No, I didn't see the end of it. I closed my shutters and prayed to Sigmar."

A Young Flower Seller

"It was awful. The men…" She sobs. *"The men. Their skin fell off their bones. The smell. Their faces…"* She covers her face and can't go on.

An Urchin

"Sorcerer killed some bravos." He shrugs. *"Sort of thing y'see every day in Altdorf. 'Course hicks like you might gawp. Give us a copper."*

A Tailor

"It was witch hunters. They saw that coffin maker for a cultist and attacked him. Got the worst of it though. Weren't much left of them when he was through with them. Well, he'll get his. No sorcerer is safe in Altdorf these days. Not with the Vengeance of Sigmar watching out for us. Where did he go? He ran off down the street somewhere, his men with him. A boy? No. Didn't see no boy."

If the PCs ask about the Vengeance of Sigmar, the tailor says, *"Nobody knows. Nobody's ever seen more than his shadow, but he strikes down the wicked and corrupt, whoever they are. Warlocks, Mutants, witches, all die by his hand. He's worth a hundred witch hunters. I thank Sigmar every night that he makes Altdorf his home."*

Where did Jan/Tobias/the Sorcerer Go?

If they ask people specifically about where Jan went they get answers like these.

A Dandy

"Ran towards the Suderich (a fish market). *Fat little fellow dragging a child's coffin like it was a wagon. Appalling taste in clothes. Puffed up like a Marienburg merchant. A boy? Not unless he was in the coffin. Haw haw."*

A Cloth Merchant

"I should say I saw him! Seven feet tall if he was an inch and carrying a coffin on his shoulder like it was a carpenter's box. His eyes glowed green and he left smoking hoof prints! Well, they've been covered up now. Headed for Luitpoldstrasse, it looked like."

A Tavern Wench

"Jumped to the roofs like he had springs in his heels. Never seen the like. Coffin? It were a sea trunk. Naw, didn't see no boy."

A Knife Sharpener

"Went towards the Konigplatz. By the time I looked up all I saw was a box bumping around the corner. No. Didn't see a boy. Might be I heard a kid screaming though, now you mention it."

Jan's Note

Ideally, the PCs found Jan's note. If not, an urchin finds the note and seeks out the PCs when rumours swirl that they're asking about the confrontation. He offers to sell the characters the scrap for a few Pennies.

Once Jan's trail goes cold, the PCs will be forced to figure out what his scribbled note means. Asking about someone named Ansel doesn't work. It's a common name. *"D'ye mean Ansel the apothecary? Or Ansel the drunk what warms a bench at the Graublaut Arms. Or maybe y'mean Ansel Anders, the tanner. His shop's on Olendz Street. Downwind, thank Sigmar."*

Asking what Estlemann's is has similar results if they only ask people on the street. *"Estlemann's? Sounds like a pub, hey? Never heard of it though."*

One person they ask says that the PCs aren't the first to ask him about Estlemann's. They describe a short fat man in nice merchant clothes. The man had bodyguards but did not have a boy with him.

If they show Jan's note or mention Estlemann's to a scholar, noble, wizard, priest or witch hunter, or other person of letters (Lord Frederick, for instance) they know the name. Priests and witch hunters despise Estlemann and won't help the PCs, except to say he is a seller of forbidden books. They are suspicious of the PCs for asking. Nobles, wizards and scholars say he is a useful but shady resource, and give the PCs directions to his shop, which is in the Schlafstadt area, next to the University District.

Asking Lord Frederick

Lord Frederick has been a customer of Estlemann's but does not like him.

> *"Estlemann is an antiquarian, a seller of old books. I have bought from him myself, for he procures volumes no other can find. I use him only as a last resort, however. He is dangerous to know. The witch hunters watch him constantly, owing to rumours that he deals in less savoury works as well. But no*

Badge Sellers

All over the city, men and women carry trays displaying decorative badges of all kinds on every street corner. Some badges are humorous or bawdy, some have devices of the various knightly orders, or trade guild insignia, but most popular are religious badges, representing the Empire's major Gods—hammer badges, twin-tailed comet badges, dove badges, antler badges, even crossed finger badges.

Mention these wherever the PCs go in their investigations. They're going to be important later in the story. Putting them into the background now plants a seed in the players' minds that soon bears fruit.

search of his shop has ever turned up any forbidden books, so the hunters only prowl and prowl but never pounce. He will come to a bad end one day, I think. If this Jan seeks him, it is likely he is seeking some arcane tome. Be wary." He gives the PCs directions to Estlemann's shop.

Day Four—Afternoon

After a morning of investigation, the PCs may finally come upon Estlemann's shop.

Estlemann's

Estlemann's shop is on Hoffbann Street in the Schlafstadt, a shabby neighbourhood behind the Colleges of Law, consisting mostly of tottering grey brick buildings filled with impoverished students and the working poor. The bottom storeys are filled with dealers in antiques, second-hand furniture, tools and weapons, and old books. Hoffbann Street is all book sellers—mostly of the law and literature texts that are required reading at the university—but others sell plays, novels, political pamphlets, cheap romance literature, rare books, and art prints.

As they approach the neighbourhood, the PCs see a column of smoke rising over the rooftops. Turning onto Hoffbann, they see flames and people milling around at the far end. People run buckets from the well in the local square and throw water on the fire. Others lay wet blankets on the roofs of adjacent buildings, trying to protect them from flying cinders.

A tall brick building is on fire, and those structures on both sides are starting to catch. Burn and smoke victims huddle in the street, coughing and screaming. A crowd watches, stunned, but most people help, desperate to keep the fire from spreading. The building is an inferno, impossible to enter until the fire dies down.

Estlemann's building is on fire. The fire started in his shop not more than a half hour ago and spread quickly. Estlemann crawled from his shop, alive but badly burned and unable to walk. He was taken to the nearly Shallyan hospital. The PCs can get directions to the hospital and Estlemann's full name—Janus Estlemann. No one remembers if anyone visited him before the fire.

Characters talking with the locals or succeeding on an **Easy (+20) Gossip Test** learn some or all of the following.

- *"Had it coming, didn't he? Dealing with all them nasty books and shady villains. Only a matter of time."*
- *"I never had no trouble with him. Nice enough old gent, despite what some say. Kept to himself."*
- *"I warned his landlord. Ask anybody. I warned him a hundred times. A danger to the neighbourhood, I said. Toss him out. I said. But did he listen? No. And now look what's happened."*

Before the PCs leave, seven witch hunters arrive. Their leader, Golphus Drabben, watches the fire with grim satisfaction and then draws his sword and stops the bucket brigade. *"Let it burn."* His men enforce this, asking questions about Estlemann from the locals. The bystanders, angry that Drabben has stopped them from saving their homes, are surly and reluctant to talk. Drabben uses force. Voices are raised.

The Shallyan Temple and Hospital

The Shallyan temple stands at the edge of the University District. The temple is a low white marble building, connected to a three-storey hospital with an enclosed yard behind. They have separate entrances. The temple sisters direct them to the hospital.

The hospital lobby is small and functional—a square room with a small door in the left wall and a large open door in the back wall guarded by two male temple guards (use statistics for Helmut's men). Two more stand at the street exit. Hard benches run along the walls. A middle-aged sister-matron sits behind an elevated podium. There is a large ledger on the podium, and shelves of books beside her.

If the PCs ask after Estlemann, she says, *"Oh yes, he's here, the poor man. Badly burned and both legs broken. We've put him in the second floor injury ward. Are you kin of his?"*

The PCs need a moderately compelling reason before the matron lets them see Estlemann. A **Challenging (–10) Charm Test** works. Saying they are kin or concerned neighbours works too unless they're armed to the teeth, in which case she suspects villainy and turns them away. In any case, no more than two PCs may visit him, and they have to leave their weapons.

Other Ways In

If the PCs fail to gain admittance, they can try sneaking through the temple, which is connected to the hospital—or through the carriage yard behind the hospital. This covert activity is difficult but not impossible in civilian dress, but acquiring Shallyan robes or temple guard uniforms makes it easier.

On its right side, the hospital is separated from a brick tenement by a six-foot wide alley. The hospital has no windows on its ground floor and the wall is smooth plaster, requiring a **Hard (–20) Scale Sheer Surface Test** to climb.

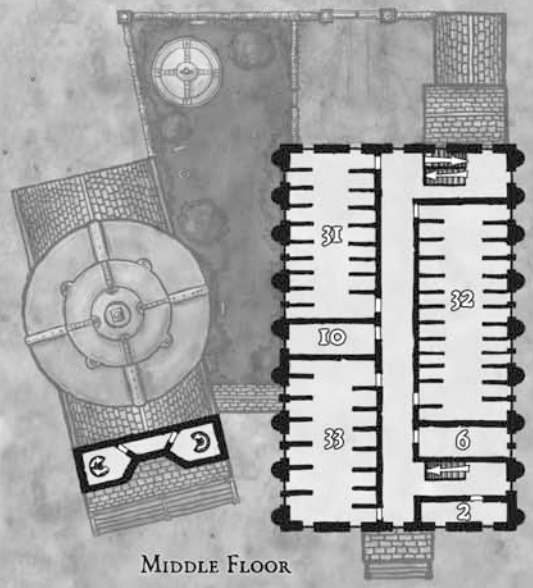
If they enter the tenement, they can make their way to the roof and leap the gap. The tenement and temple are the same height but the temple's roof is slanted slate. A **Challenging (–10) Scale Sheer Surface Test** is required to stick to the landing. Easily levered-open dormers lead into an attic. The dormers are narrow. A Dwarf or a very muscular or fat Human won't fit. Once inside, moving around is difficult without disguises.

There are two guards per floor. They challenge PCs in off-limits areas but fight only if provoked. Sisters also challenge PCs but run from aggression, calling for guards.

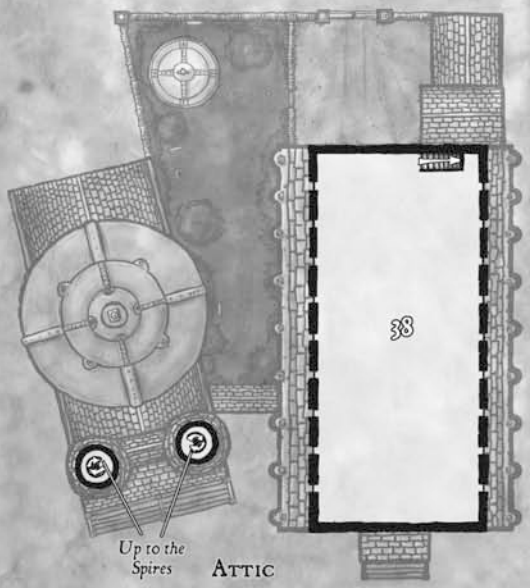
Interviewing Estlemann

Estlemann occupies a bed in the injury ward on the second floor—a long room with beds running down both walls and windows that look over the carriage yard. There are doors at each end. Floor-to-ceiling white curtains on rings separate the beds from one another. These curtains make it hard to see who is in the room, but any normal conversation can be heard anywhere here.

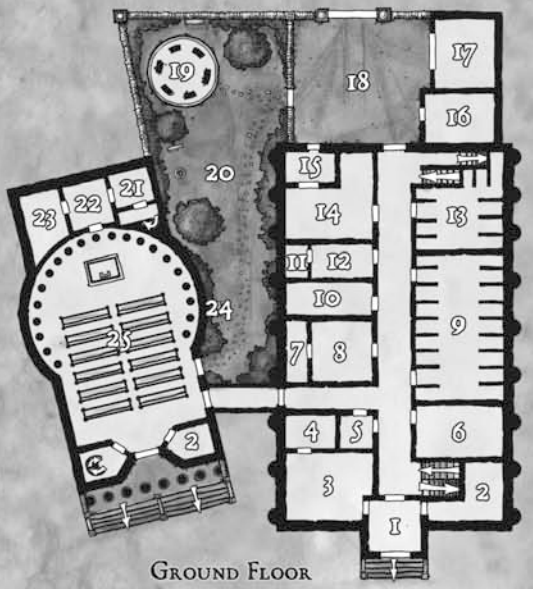
Shallyan Temple and Hospital



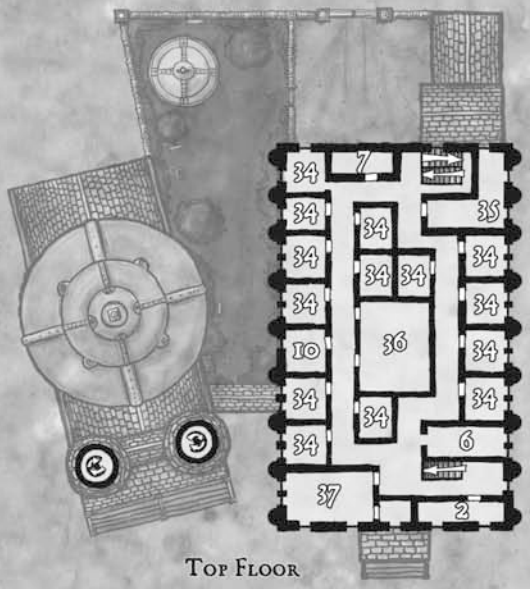
Middle Floor



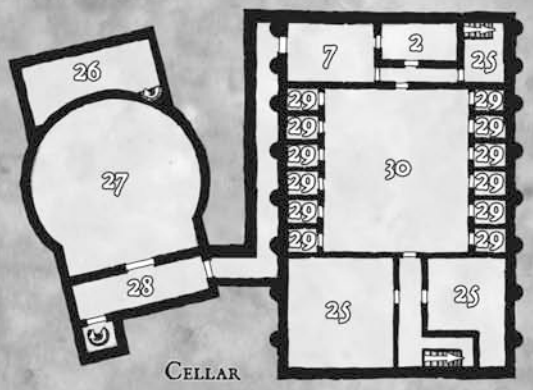
Attic



Ground Floor



Top Floor



Cellar

0 2 4 6 8 10
Scale in Yards

All arrows point down staircases

Key

1 — *Lobby*	20 — *Meditation Gardens*
2 — *Guardroom*	21 — *Vestry*
3 — *Administration*	22 — *Chantry*
4 — *Abbess's Office*	23 — *Abbess's Vestry*
5 — *Nurse Station*	24 — *Morr Shrine*
6 — *Baths*	25 — *Temple Hall*
7 — *Office*	26 — *Store Room*
8 — *Surgery*	27 — *Vault*
9 — *Common Disease Ward*	28 — *Reliquary*
10 — *Toilets*	29 — *Patient Cell*
11 — *Apothecary's Cell*	30 — *Sanitorium*
12 — *Apothecary*	31 — *Serious Injury Ward*
13 — *Rare Disease Ward*	32 — *Injury Ward*
14 — *Kitchens*	33 — *Maternity Ward*
15 — *Scullery*	34 — *Cell*
16 — *Laundry*	35 — *Library and Verena Shrine*
17 — *Stables*	36 — *Initiate Quarters*
18 — *Coach Yard*	37 — *Abbess's Cell*
19 — *Gazebo*	38 — *Attic*

The patients are men and women suffering from traumatic injuries—broken limbs, sword cuts, missing eyes, *etc*. Sisters enter and leave the room constantly. Every minute the PCs stay, there's a 50% chance another one enters or leaves. Sisters call guards if the PCs are there unofficially. Posting guards near the doors gives the PCs a 2-round warning of anyone approaching the room.

Estlemann is midway along the interior wall—the only burn victim. He is heavily bandaged, particularly his hands, and both legs are splinted. His face is covered in minor burns, and slick with salve. He moans, semi-conscious, when the PCs find him, but he snaps awake and is frightened when he sees them, asking, *"Who are you? What do you want?"*

If the PCs ask him about Ansel he shouts, hysterical, *"I already told the other men! Leave me alone!"*

A **Challenging (–10) Perception Test** lets a PC notice a black pigeon with beady red eyes among the grey and white pigeons on the sill of the nearest window.

If the PCs calm Estlemann—a **Routine (+10) Charm Test**—and ask about the other men, he describes Jan and his guards. No child was with them. He didn't know them. They burned his valuable books one by one until he told them about Ansel, then they broke his legs and set fire to his shop. He crawled out and escaped using only his hands.

A successful **Routine (+10) Intimidation Test** makes Estlemann tell the PCs what he told Jan. He says Ansel was once a loyal customer, buying from Estlemann's special stock. He then moved to Marienburg. Last year he returned, a horrible scar on his forehead, painfully thin, and insane. He held Estlemann at sword's point, copied his list of "special customers," and threatened to kill him if he told anyone he was back in Altdorf. Estlemann never saw Ansel again.

> *"The man who broke my legs forced me to give him the same list I gave Ansel. All my special customers, past and present. I had no choice. Oh, they will never forgive me. I have betrayed them, twice!"*

If the PCs ask for the list, Estlemann says Jan has the only copy. If they ask him to remember the list he dithers and says that he can't, but then he pauses and says, *"There is a way. But no, I cannot. If I recover from my injuries it will be my only chance at making a living."*

The PCs can press him, even torture him, but he won't speak. *"No! Not even facing death."*

Witch Hunters!

Just as Estlemann says this, the PCs hear heavy boot steps and Shallyan sisters shouting in the hall. *"You cannot enter! You have no authority here!"* Harsh male voices bellow, *"Stand aside or be charged with harbouring a tool of Chaos."*

Estlemann shrieks. *"Witch hunters!"* He begs the PCs to kill him and spare him from the hunters' torture. If the PCs don't try blackmailing him with this, he offers to reveal the list of names if they promise to kill him.

In 3 rounds (5 if the PCs set a lookout) Golphus Drabben and his six witch hunters enter the ward, looking into every bed for Estlemann and finding him after a couple of rounds.

If some PCs remain in the lobby when the witch hunters arrive at the hospital, they can try to warn those upstairs. The witch hunters arrive just as the upstairs PCs find Estlemann, and it takes 4 rounds for them to bluster past the sisters and guards, during which time nobody pays attention to the PCs. If a PC in the lobby runs upstairs and warns the others, they have 8 rounds before the witch hunters arrive.

If the PCs agree to kill him, Estlemann fumbles out a key on a neck chain.

> *"Take this! In my cellar, under a table, is a trapdoor. Go down the trap and you will reach a sewer. Follow it north to an iron door, seemingly rusted shut. The key opens the door. Inside is my… my special stock. The shelves on the left are marked with the names of my customers. It is where I put books I hold for… Oh, Gods, hurry! Kill me! Kill me now!" It takes him 2 rounds to say this.*

Killing the Pigeon

Throughout this adventure, the PCs may note the constant (and perhaps annoying) presence of the black pigeon. If the PCs kill the pigeon (see page 105 for statistics), it doesn't reappear. Also, when the Lahmian Vampire reveals herself at the end of the chapter, she demands recompense for the loss of her minion and is generally unfriendly to the PCs.

Witch Hunters

Male Human Bounty Hunters

These hardened men are freelance witch hunters, having sold their services to the Order of the Cleansing Flame. Although somewhat affiliated with the templars of Sigmar, they often use tactics that run counter to those used by their employers.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
36	42	36 (3)	31 (3)	44	28	37	29

Skills: Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int), Follow Trail (Int), Gossip (Fel), Intimidate (S), Outdoor Survival (Int), Perception (Int), Search (Int), Shadowing (Ag), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int)

Talents: Ambidextrous, Rover, Sixth Sense, Specialist Weapon Group (Entangling), Sharpshooter, Strike to Stun

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 12

Armour (Light): Leather Jerkin and Skullcap (Head 1, Body 1)

Weapons: Crossbow with 10 Bolts (1d10+4; Range 30/60; Reload Full), Hand Weapon (Sword) (1d10+3), Net (no damage; Range 4/8; Reload Full; Snare)

Trappings

Each witch hunter wears a black uniform, cloak, and a tall, wide-brimmed hat. Manacles and keys hang from their belts, and in their packs they each carry flint and steel, oil, and a length of rope about 10 yards long. Finally, they each carry 1 or 2 *gc* and 1d10 Schillings.

Getting Away

If they catch the PCs talking to Estlemann, the witch hunters move to arrest them and Estlemann. If the players hide and don't kill Estlemann, the witch hunters take him away, weeping piteously. If the players kill Estlemann and hide, the witch hunters hunt them and try to arrest them. If the witch hunters don't find them, they leave Estlemann's body and place a watch on the temple and hospital exits.

If the witch hunters find the PCs, they fight to subdue them. They want to question them, not kill them. If they succeed, they shackle the PCs' wrists and march them out of the hospital with Estlemann—if he's still alive.

Mysterious Benefactors

If the witch hunters successfully arrest the PCs, or if they chase the PCs into the street, then, as they exit the hospital, the PCs notice a black pigeon flying off. A few blocks later, a mob of 30 angry men and women block the witch hunters' way, armed with brooms and shovels. *"There they are! Those are the cursed zealots who wouldn't let us put out the fire! You robbed us of our homes!"*

The mob attacks the witch hunters, allowing the PCs to escape, or if the PCs are shackled, chasing the witch hunters off. In that case, the witch

hunter with the keys is knocked senseless, and the mob chases the rest, leaving the PCs standing shackled but unguarded with the keys at their feet. None of the mob sticks around to answer questions. The black pigeon circles overhead.

A **Challenging (–10) Perception Test** lets PCs realise the mob didn't approach from the direction of Estlemann's, and that none of them were among those fighting the blaze. These people were only pretending to hate the witch hunters. Why?

Day Four—Evening

Armed with the secret location of Estlemann's private stores, the PCs are free to follow up on this potentially dangerous lead.

Estlemann's Cache

Estlemann's building is a charred wreck, as are the buildings to either side of it. Estlemann's shop was on the ground floor, and the four floors above it have collapsed into a blackened pile of timber and brick. The fire is out, but the place still radiates heat. Orange embers crawl in the depths of heavy beams. The crowd has dispersed. A **Challenging (–10) Perception Test** lets the PC notice the black pigeon watching from a roof.

Hidden witch hunters watch who comes and goes. One hides on the roof of a four-storey tenement across the street. Another acts like a beggar in the alley behind Estlemann's. If they say they're looking, it takes a **Challenging (–10) Perception Test** to notice the watchers. If they don't say they're looking, it takes a **Very Hard (–30) Perception Test**.

Sneaking past the witch hunters is tricky, requiring a **Concealment Test** opposed by the witch hunters' **Perception Test**. If the witch hunters see the PCs enter Estlemann's, one goes for reinforcements whilst the other keeps watch. The PCs can also subdue or kill the watchers, but there are ways to get to the sewers without entering Estlemann's or being seen.

Iron grates cover storm drains at most street corners, and there are privies in the yards behind all the tenements. The drains are a cleaner but more public path. It takes two PCs to lift a grate. The privies are filthy, narrow, and claustrophobic until one gets to the main channel, but private. All lead to the same sewer and, twenty feet north of Estlemann's shop, the rusty iron door.

Entering through Estlemann's is dangerous and difficult but possible. The timber is hot and covered in char. Each PC should pass a **Routine (+10) Agility Test** or step wrong and fall through the floor landing roughly and taking 1d10+1 damage. The ground floor has partially collapsed into the cellar. The stairs are gone, but there is a big hole in the floor.

In the cellar are hundreds of charred books, burnt trunks and shelves. Nothing of value survived. In one room is a table. It has been flattened by a falling beam, legs splayed, the books on it burned and scattered. The trapdoor is under the table that is under the beam. The beam is heavy and still burning on the inside.

It takes four PCs passing a **Routine (+10) Strength Test** at the same time to lift the beam (each PC less than four increases the difficulty by one step). This noise could alert the witch hunters—allow them a **Challenging (–10) Perception Test**—and they may come to investigate. If one PC fails, the beam slips out of their hands. If the PCs are bare-handed, they must pass a **Routine (+10) Toughness Test** or take 1 Wound (ignoring Toughness bonus or armour points) from burning on each lift attempt. Under the trapdoor, a narrow chimney with iron rungs leads down to the sewer.

When the PCs reach the rusty iron door, they find it wide open! It appears it was forced with a pry bar. The iron is twisted, the lock damaged. There are faint sounds of movement inside.

Inside is a large closet with another giant, rusted door in the centre, long unused, and bookshelves on three walls. A rat in a far corner shreds a fallen book. There are no other books. The shelves are entirely bare. Dozens of footprints in the dust lead out to the sewer. The shredded book is an Arabyan bestiary, and in its current condition worth 10 *gc* to a collector.

The shelves on the left have small strips of paper pasted to them, each with a neatly printed name. Some shelves have new names pasted over older ones. There are twenty-seven names in all. The strips easily peel off the shelves. Give the PCs **Handout #11**.

If the PCs exit through Estlemann's and haven't avoided or defeated the witch hunter watchers, they find Golphus Drabben and ten witch hunters (see page 97) waiting to arrest them on the ground floor. Again, the witch hunters want to subdue the PCs, not kill them.

Golphus Drabben

Male Human Witch Hunter (ex-Vampire Hunter, ex-Bounty Hunter)

Grey haired, grey eyed, dour and sarcastic, Golphus Drabben is a hunter of men. If he were more of a fool he would have been an assassin, but he likes being on the right side of the law. It allows him to hunt openly. He is not a particularly religious man. He is a cynic, and does not believe humanity can be saved, or ridding the world of witches will make it a better place. He hunts witches because they are in season.

Insanity Points: 5

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
61	63	53 (5)	55 (5)	55	46	55	35

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Magic, Necromancy) (Int), Command (Fel), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int +20), Concealment (Ag), Dodge Blow (Ag), Follow Trail (Int +20), Gossip (Fel +10), Intimidate (S +10), Outdoor Survival (Int), Perception (Int +20), Ride (Ag), Scale Sheer Surface (S), Search (Int +20), Shadowing (Ag +10), Silent Move (Ag +20), Speak Language (Classical) (Int), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int +10)

Talents: Hardy, Lightning Parry, Marksman, Menacing, Mighty Shot, Public Speaking, Rapid Reload, Rover, Sharpshooter, Sixth Sense, Specialist Weapon Group (Crossbow, Entangling), Stout-hearted, Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure, Tunnel Rat, Warrior Born

Combat

Attacks: 3; **Fate Points:** 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 18
Armour (Medium): Full Mail (Head 3, Arms 3, Body 3, Legs 3)
Weapons: Crossbow Pistol with 10 Bolts (1d10+3; CV +1; Range 8/16; Reload Half), Repeater Crossbow with 10 Bolts (1d10+3; CV +1; Range 16/32; Reload Free; Special), Superior Hand Weapon (Sword) (WS 71; 1d10+5; CV +1)

Trappings

Golphus is the quintessential witch hunter. He wears a full suit of mail beneath a long black coat with silver buckles (10s each for a total of twelve buckles). A wide-brimmed hat sits on his head and he 0ften chews on a smoking cigar. He carries a leather case, which holds five stakes, three flasks of blessed water, a silver symbol of Sigmar, and a new copy of the *Life of Sigmar*. A coil of rope, five yards long, completes the kit.

The Fight

Combat here is dangerous. Each round, on their turn, a combatant must pass a **Routine (+10) Agility Test** or fall through a weak spot in the floor, dropping him to the cellar below (and dealing 1d10+1 damage). In addition, there's a 10% chance each round of combat that rubble falls down from above, hitting a random combatant. Use the small template. All characters beneath the template take 1d10+2 damage and must make an **Agility Test** or fall prone.

If the PCs are in danger of being arrested, once again "fate" intervenes. A brick falls and cracks Drabben on the skull. He drops, unconscious, and his men concentrate on protecting him and getting him away. They stop fighting the PCs unless the PCs continue attacking.

If the PCs look for the source of the brick, they see the black pigeon flying off.

Investigating Estlemann's Names

Asking peasants or merchants about the first eighteen names gets few results. Local nobles are known but not the others. Mentioning the pasted-over names gets better responses. Any noble knows most of the names, and recognises the pasted-over ones as victims of the Vengeance.

A Ditch Digger

"Grigor Vladek? Weren't he one of the black magisters the Vengeance of Sigmar killed? A banker he was, when he weren't sacrificing virgins in his back garden. The Vengeance sacrificed him, all right. Strung up with his own innards and with the twin-tailed comet nailed to his forehead. Saw it myself, in the Harnplatz."

A Merchant

"I know Maltus Dortinger's name. A Bright Wizard and well thought of in the Colleges, until the Vengeance strung him up naked and showed he had a third arm under his robes. None would have known but for him, Sigmar bless him. Rooting out corruption, even in those on high."

A Craftsman

"That Von Schtuck got what he deserved. A nobleman's son. Dabbled in "natural philosophy" he called it. Nothing natural about it. He was found hanging from the sign of the Sheaf and Shears not two months ago, the Vengeance of Sigmar's badge nailed to his forehead. Turned out he was the leader of some pleasure cult. Dirty deviant!"

Lord Frederick

"These are Estlemann's preferred clients? Some of these names… well, they're very highly placed. The witch hunters would… er, would you mind if I copied these? Hmmm, these more faded ones are all dead, at least all those I recognise. This one died by the hand of the notorious vigilante, the Vengeance of Sigmar, as did this one, and… Sigmar's blood! At least six of these men were killed and exposed as Mutants or servants of Chaos by the Vengeance. Could it be Estlemann was in league with… No, impossible. Why would he kill his best customers? It makes no sense."

He does not recommend investigating or trying to speak to any of the men on the list. They would only get in trouble and draw unwanted attention to themselves.

Complications

Enterprising PCs may think to blackmail the people included on the list. Or, the PCs might think to hand over the list to the witch hunters. In the case of the former, the PCs are likely to gain many enemies, some of whom are likely powerful. In the case of the latter, the witch hunters are grateful but arrest the PCs anyway. The characters will have to find some way to escape their cells, or perhaps another faction might rescue them in exchange for information, services, or something far stranger.

Finding Lodgings

By this time, it should be late night. If Lord Frederick is helping them, he gladly puts them up, otherwise there are many inns that have available rooms, although the rates are a bit high.

Day Five: Morning

It should be clear from the previous day's investigation that the Vengeance of Sigmar has some connection to the situation at hand.

About the Vengeance of Sigmar

Many wild stories are told about the Vengeance of Sigmar (feel free to make up your own), but the important points are as follows.

- He first struck about a year ago.
- He wears a black mask that covers the top half of his face.
- He always leaves a tin badge of Sigmar's twin-tailed comet nailed to the forehead of his victims.
- He has killed and exposed both rich and poor, Mutants and warlocks alike.
- Many of his victims came from Estlemann's list, but just as many were not. Bakers, actors, rag pickers, and tradesmen who were Mutants or hedge wizards.
- The poor and the merchants love to tell tales of the Vengeance's exploits, particularly stories about the wealthy brought low, but if the PCs ask about where the Vengeance lives, or who he is, they clam up. He is their hero and they don't want him found. In every story he's tall and powerfully built, dressed all in black with a flowing cape and a broad hat. He comes and goes from the shadows.
- Asking rich or noble citizens gets more detail, though the details might not be right. They are offended that members of their class are being killed like common criminals, no matter what crime they're accused of. They consider The Vengeance a common murderer. *"Guilty or no, these were men of property. They deserved to be tried before they were executed. The rule of law must stand."*
- The rich say they've heard that the Vengeance is a commoner who lives in a poor neighbourhood. They say he is tall, thin, and slightly stooped, and snuffles like a dog on the hunt.

Hunting the Vengeance

The PCs may begin to wonder if Ansel and the Vengeance are the same person. No one, rich or poor, can tell the PCs exactly who the Vengeance is or where he lives, and in the poorer neighbourhoods that line of questioning will come to dead ends and possibly get them in trouble. The commoners are very protective of their hero. Even Lord Frederick is reluctant to investigate the Vengeance. *"When a man is rooting out evil with such miraculous success, one doesn't look too deeply into his provenance."*

However, a few points can be investigated. Try not to suggest these to the PCs. It will be much more satisfying if they think of them on their own, but if they are completely stumped, you might give them a hint.

No matter what they investigate, they see glimpses of the black pigeon following them all day.

Investigating the Tin Badges

If the PCs think to hunt for the badge seller who sells the Vengeance his twin-tailed comet badges, asking every badge seller in the city if they sold badges to someone answering Ansel's description is weary work but gets results after five hours, so long as the description of Ansel is accurate—tall, thin, with a horrible scar on his forehead. Success requires five successful **Gossip Tests**, each test taking about an hour.

A badge seller in the Kaiserplatz finally says, *"A scar? On his forehead you say? You don't mean Brother Axel? Sad old duffer. Thin as a reed, and not at all well. Buys 'em by the handful. Gifts for children who come to the temple, he says. Get 'em young, eh? I'm a Taalist, myself."*

Passing a second **Easy (+20) Gossip Test** gets, *"Brother Axel works in the Temple of Sigmar. The big one just down the street. A lay brother or something. Lives west of here, I think. Leastways he always walks to the temple from over yonder, and walks back at the end of the day."*

If they ask him about any connection between Brother Axel and the Vengeance of Sigmar he laughs. *"Old Axel, the Vengeance? Not likely. He's a bit frail. Snap like a twig in a stiff wind, he would."*

Investigating the Mask

If the PCs think to hunt for the mask maker who sold the Vengeance his mask, asking the poor won't get great results. They don't have much use for masks and costumes. A **Very Hard (–30) Gossip Test**, though, supplies *"Think I seen something like that in a shop window up Jaegerstrasse way. Fancy stuff for the quality up that way."*

Asking tradesmen, merchants, or nobility works better. Six **Easy (+20) Gossip Tests** get four names. Let them investigate them in any order.

- Gustaf Ziegler, bespoke tailor, costume maker, and maker of cloth masks for the wealthy and the nobility. His shop is on the edge of the wealthy Obereik District.
- Artoine of Leonesse, wig and mask maker, exclusive to the nobility. He makes extremely dainty cloth masks. His shop is in the Palast District, one of the wealthiest areas of Altdorf. Unless they are dressed as servants, nobles or guards in livery, it will be difficult to avoid the eye of the watch here.
- Paeter Kohl, saddle maker, armourer and mask maker for the merchant and tradesmen's classes, often used for secret guild rites. He makes leather masks.
- Rickard Raush, costumer and mask maker for actors, wealthy merchants and the nobility. He makes both leather and cloth masks.

Gustaf Ziegler

Gustaf Ziegler's shop is on a wealthy street in the Obereik. It has beautiful, diamond-pane windows, with fancy clothes, costumes, and masks in the windows. Gustaf is plump and grave. He dresses in discreet good taste, and is snooty and condescending.

> *"A man with a scar? Unless you mean duelling scars, I think not. Our clientele is very exclusive. I doubt any friend of yours could afford my masks. Now go away before I call the guard."*

Artoine of Leonesse

Artoine of Leonesse's shop is in the ground floor of his Palast District townhouse. The only sign that it is a shop is a small brass plaque next to the door that says, *"Leonesse—By Appointment Only."* Artoine is short and slender, with a pencil thin moustache, and oiled blond hair. He wears extremely gaudy, beribboned clothes. He is snooty and very Bretonnian.

> *"Non non, you moost nah coomb een. Eet eez appointment ahnly. Can you no read? Hey? What do you want? Eh name? Ee do not tell mee customer's names! A scarred man? Non! My customers are the most beetiful and noblest lords and ladies of the land. Zey do not have scars! Now away with you! Away!"*

Paeter Kohl

Paeter Kohl's shop is next to a tannery in the Werkstette District, an area of workshops and manufactories. It has no windows, only a sign painted on the front wall showing pictures of saddles, leather jacks, and masks. He is a wiry, greying man in a leather apron. His shop is dark and cluttered, filled with half finished pieces.

> *"I get a lot of scarred men. Soldiers mostly. Want something to cover up their war wounds. I specialise in leather noses, eye patches, plague masks too. But a tall man, and thin, with a scar on his forehead? I don't recall. Not in the past year, I don't think."*

Rickard Raush

Rickard Raush's shop is on Temple Street in the Theatre District. The street is full of costumers, shoe and hose makers, drapers, theatres, coffee houses, and bordellos. Raush's shop has glass windows displaying better-quality merchandise, and dressmakers' dummies and wig stands on the street displaying cheaper items. A sign over the door shows the masks of comedy and tragedy and the words "Raush—Costumer." This shop is the one the PCs want.

The door to Raush's shop is open. When the PCs walk in, it at first appears that no one is there. The shop is empty, but moans come from a back room.

In the back room is a wide tailor's table. Bolts of cloth and sizing dummies and scissors, needles and thread, and all the other tools of the tailor's trade are neatly stored around the room. Rickard Raush lies spread-eagled on the table, his legs tied down and his hands nailed to the table through the palms with pinking shears. His shirt has been ripped open and his chest is horribly mutilated. **Will Power Tests** are required to avoid collecting an Insanity Point. There is a pool of blood on the table that drips onto the floor.

He looks up at the PCs in semi-conscious fear. *"Please, no! Will you torment me further? I have already told you all I know!"*

When he sees the PCs clearly, he is relieved. If they ask who hurt him, between sobs and signs, he describes Jan and his guards. If the PCs ask him what he told Jan he shakes his head. He is finished talking. He just wants to end the pain. He begs them to kill him. Only if the PCs say they want to stop Jan will Rickard agree to talk. *"For I believe I have betrayed a good man to him, and would make amends."*

He begs them to fetch him the brandy under his counter. Once he has gulped down a few mouthfuls he speaks, his pain subsides, and he becomes a bit more lucid, though his eyes shine and a sheen of sweat paints his brow.

> *"I never knew who the Vengeance of Sigmar was, but when I heard descriptions of his mask I was certain it was one of mine. I made me proud. I thought perhaps he might be an actor or a noble, for many of my customers are of those classes, but I didn't care to pry. The less one knows, the less one can tell, yes?*
>
> *"But when this daemon, this torturer, mentioned a man with a scar on his forehead, I remembered a… a lay brother who used to pass the shop—a pitiful figure, tall and painfully thin, with a horrible scar, as if from a burn, on his forehead. He would stop and look at my masks every day. Every day. Then he stopped passing by. This was a year ago, perhaps. Around that same time, someone stole one of my masks from the heads outside. I never put the two together, until the torturer forced them out of me, curse him.*
>
> *"His name? I don't know his name. But he was a Sigmarite lay brother by his clothes. From the temple. Now please, I can stand it no more. Kill me quickly. I have done what I can to repent for my cowardice. I would end this pain."*

If the PCs do nothing, it takes Raush 1d5 excruciating days to die, and towards the end, he screams himself hoarse from the pain of the toxins coursing through his blood. Saving him is unlikely without powerful magic, and even then, there's a 50% chance that such magic won't work. The best bet for the PCs is to show a little mercy and end his life.

Day Four—Afternoon

Armed with a name and a location, the PCs might go to the Temple of Sigmar to find the vigilante.

The Temple of Sigmar

The Temple of Sigmar is a huge complex of buildings, home and workplace to numerous priests and lay personnel. Anyone is free to enter the sanctuary, and security is lax in general, so wandering around isn't difficult unless the PCs do something stupid, at which point Sigmarite templars and Hammer Bearers come out of nowhere and surround them.

Asking after Ansel or Axel won't work. There are many Ansels and Axels, some priests, some lay brothers. But if they describe him, that gets results with a **Routine (+10) Gossip Test**. *"With a scar? Just here? I know the man you mean. A lay brother. Works in one of the libraries. Go see Brother Hiltveld in the Cloister of the Sacred Anvil, just across the central court. He's in charge of the lay brothers."*

Across the central court is a four-storey building with tall, narrow windows. There is a stone anvil above its main door. Anyone in the area can direct them to Brother Hiltveld. *"Through the entry. First door on the left."*

Brother Hiltveld

Brother Hiltveld's office is in a dark corridor beyond the entry. Sounds of movement come from the open door. Inside, a fat monk at a desk scribbles in a large ledger and consults scrolls and lists. More ledgers fill crowded shelves. This man is Brother Hiltveld, overseer of the laity—a harried monk with spectacles and a stubbly head.

If the PCs ask about Ansel or Axel and mention the scar he glares suspiciously at them. *"And who are you, then? More witch hunters? You don't look it."*

If the PCs ask him what the witch hunters looked like, he describes Jan and his guards. *"Said Brother Axel was a heretic, a member of some cult. Wanted him for questioning. Just the sort of thing the poor mad fool would fall into. What do you want with him?"*

If the PCs tell him that it is Jan who is the cultist, and he's after Axel, Brother Hiltveld believes them on a **Routine (+10) Charm Test** but wants to know who they are and on whose authority they ask these questions. Dropping Lord Frederick's name, the name of their employer, or showing him any credentials at all allays his fears.

> *"Curse him. If he weren't such an odd duck I'd have tossed those men out on their ears. Didn't care for their manner. But Brother Axel has always been a strange one, subject to fits and black moods. I made him Under-Librarian in the Librarium Secularum to keep him out of sight. Wouldn't do to have him wandering around the sanctuary, scaring the faithful." He sighs. "He didn't come in yesterday or today, so when these fellows barge in asking after him, it was easy to believe he'd gone and done something crazed. Here. He lives on Bromelhoff Street close to the Heldenplatz, near the theatres. I don't know closer than that. Now hurry. If he's come to harm I'll never forgive myself."*

If they tell Brother Hiltveld that they think Axel is the Vengeance he'll laugh them out of his office. *"Brother Axel? The Vengeance? That old sot couldn't win a fight with a sick rabbit. Away with you or I'll call the templars."*

Brother Hiltveld

Male Human Monk (ex-Initiate)

Brother Hiltveld is a heavyset monk. He is a career bureaucrat, perfectly happy managing the day-to-day work of the Temple of Sigmar and then going out drinking with friends, the so-called "Theosophical Drinking Club" at night. He has no interest in rising any further in the church hierarchy. He is friendly, harried, and always a little sweaty.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
34	33	35 (3)	34 (3)	28	45	45	54

Skills: Academic Knowledge (History, Law) (Int), Academic Knowledge (Theology) (Int +10), Charm (Fel), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int +10), Gossip (Fel), Heal (Int), Perception (Int), Read/Write (Int +10), Speak Language (Classical) (Int +10), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int +20)
Talents: Hardy, Lightning Reflexes, Linguistics, Public Speaking, Suave, Super Numerate

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 17
Weapons: Unarmed (1d10–1; Special)

Trappings

Brother Hiltveld wears fine robes fitting for a monk. He wears a silver pendant of a hammer, signifying his order. His desk is cluttered with books, papers, inkpots, quills, and a bag of sand.

Stealing the Address

If Brother Hiltveld won't speak to them, they can try to steal the information. If they watch the office, Hiltveld goes to dinner at sunset. The addresses of all lay personal are in the ledgers. A **Search Test** finds the correct ledger. It takes 10 minutes to find it, but each degree of success reduces this time by two minutes. The entry for Brother Axel reads: "Brother Axel—Assistant Librarian/Librarium Secularum. Bromelhoff street in the Reikerbahn. Across from Theatre Grande."

Bromelhoff Street

The Reikerbahn is Altdorf's red-light district, a very rough neighbourhood of cheap beer halls and bordellos, beggars' hovels and thieves' dens clustered behind the main waterfront area of the docks. Hiltveld's information gets the PCs near Ansel's rooms, but they'll have to ask to find the exact address. It isn't difficult. Everybody within three blocks knows *"Poor scarred Axel."* The closer they get, the more precise the directions. *"Down that way." "Next block." "Above the coopers." "Top floor."*

A **Challenging (–10) Perception Test** reveals that the black pigeon follows them.

Ansel's Tenement

The tenement is six floors high. A narrow stairway to the left of the cooperage behind leads to the upper floors. The hallways are shabby and dim and smell of Human waste. Babies cry behind doors, and men and women shout.

On the last flight of stairs, passing a **Challenging (–10) Perception Test** reveals faint bloody footprints, going down. On the top floor the footprints are more obvious. The blood is still wet. Halfway down the corridor a door is open. The bloody footprints come from there. If they listen, all they hear are the usual tenement sounds.

Behind the Mask

Ansel's tiny room is as spare as a monk's quarters. There is a cot, a small table, a stool and a trunk—all smashed. A loose plank once hidden under the bed has been pulled up, revealing a small hiding place, now empty. The contents are strewn across the floor—patched black clothes, a black cloak, black leather mask, wide black hat, daggers, a sword, eight cloth-bound journals strapped together with a belt, and a small pouch full of cheap twin-tailed-comet badges, nails, and a hammer.

Ansel lies curled in a pool of his own blood, moaning softly. He is naked and horribly mutilated. He is also mutated—feathery diagonal gills under each arm open and close as he breathes, making a doggish snuffling sound. He is barely alive, mumbling half-coherent prayers under his breath. *"Sigmar forgive this flawed vessel. Do not let him die wearing these marks of shame."*

If the PCs speak to him, he slowly wakes from his reverie. *"I'm sorry, Frau Herlocher. I didn't mean to make a mess. I hope you won't find it difficult to get the blood out."*

If they ask him what happened, or about Jan, Ansel weeps, then speaks, as much to himself as them. *"Shouldn't have come back after I hid it, but I decided I would take my hunting clothes after all. Waiting for me. I… I tried not to tell him, but I… the pain was too much. He knows where I left the necklace. He knows the incantation…"*

If the PCs ask him about the necklace (see **The Nurglist Plan** on page 91), or where Jan is going, Ansel gets confused. He smiles and shakes his head. *"No, Tobias. Your tortures won't work now. I am beyond pain. I am beyond…"*

He dies. The gills under his arms close and are still.

There are eight numbered cloth-bound journals—5 to 13. Number 10 is missing. Flipping through them, the PCs find journal entries, notes, and diagrams in Reikspiel and Classical, rants, poetry, and lists of ingredients. Those who can read can piece together the sad arc of Ansel's life.

Ansel's Story

From the small northern town of Keck, Ansel was a bright, lonely merchant's son with an aptitude for magic. In his teens he fell for a wood carver's daughter. When she spurned him he ran away to Altdorf, determined to join the Colleges of Magic, intending to find a magical way to make his love fall for him.

When his teachers wouldn't tell him what he wanted to learn, he began looking in forbidden books. He ran away from the Colleges and studied on his own, buying books from Estlemann until the witch hunters came for him. He ran to Marienburg and fell in with Ruprecht, who promised him the power to win back his lost love.

Ansel didn't like Ruprecht or Tobias, who also assisted Ruprecht, but the promise of knowledge kept him in the sorcerer's service. Two years ago Ruprecht acquired the *Necklace of Unfailing Loyalty*—a necklace that would make the wearer love whoever placed it upon them. Ansel determined that he would steal it and use it on his lost love.

What happened next is in the missing Volume 10.

Volume 11 starts with Ansel in Altdorf, repenting his investigations into the dark powers and mourning the death of his love. He doesn't say exactly what happened, but it is clear the *Necklace of Unfailing Loyalty* killed the girl and gave him his scar and Mutant gills. His mutation is both a blessing and curse. He hates his gills and prays to Sigmar to take them away, but they also help him. He has decided to make his penance to Sigmar by killing as many Mutants and sorcerers as he can, and his gills can smell other Mutants. He uses this power to hunt down and kill them. On the last page of the journal is a final passage. Give the PCs **Handout #12**.

— Part III: Night of Black Wings —

This final act of this story leads the PCs through a desperate chase to track down Jan/Tobias and find the missing boy.

Day Four: Evening

The sun is setting as they leave Ansel's tenement. If the PCs chase Jan (Tobias), his trail is cold within the city. He left Ansel's apartment 30 minutes before the PCs arrived. If they run to the city gates, giving the gate guard Jan's description wins them this: *"I saw that man, not an hour ago. Spoke to him. He and his brothers were going back to their old village. Wanted to bury his boy in the family plot. Had a child's coffin on his wagon."*

If they follow the trail from there, even if they have horses, it goes cold. Karl, Jan and his men seem to have vanished. The only clue to where they're going is in Volume 10 of Ansel's notes.

The Hidden Journal

So, what does Helmgart's First Blood mean? It means the first edition of *Blood on the Reik*, by Tobias Helmgart. If the players are familiar with Black Library products, they may get this without any help, but if not, Lord Frederick or any learned scholar will make a guess. *"Hmmmm. Helmgart's First Blood. Well, Tobias Helmgart wrote a famous book called* 'Blood on the Reik.' *I can't think of another interpretation. But what first blood might mean I don't know."* The PCs should guess Ansel that hid the journal in a library, but if they fail to make the connection, Frederick can say, *"Perhaps he hid the missing journal in a library, and wrote this down to remind him where. But which library?"*

Back to the Temple

The Libraries of the Temple of Sigmar are closed for the night, as is Brother Hiltveld's office. If they ask for Hiltveld, they're told he's gone out with his Theosophical Drinking Club, bringing Sigmar to the masses over a pint. Anybody with authority is in bed. No one available is willing to wake anyone or open the library. They are told to come back in the morning. If they make a fuss about it, or try to explain what they want, they are told the same more forcefully, and then escorted to the street by the templars.

Coming Back in the Morning

The PCs can certainly try again in the morning, and it won't affect the story, but making them think it's vitally urgent they find Ansel's book and chase after Tobias immediately will create more interesting situations and heighten the drama.

In the morning, Hiltveld is in his office, cranky from a hangover. He is saddened to hear of Ansel's death, and agrees to help the PCs if they show him Ansel's notes. He brings them to Brother Lundgrin, a librarian, who takes them to the Librarium Secularum and helps them find the book.

The Library is a maze of interconnected rooms that snakes through several buildings. Some rooms are small, and some are several storeys high, with books on every level. Even the corridors between rooms are lined with books. It is quiet and dusty and thickly carpeted.

In the first room is a railed platform with twenty-six huge tomes on podiums, each with a large embossed letter on the cover. These books are the catalogue. Books are listed in the appropriate volume, and then in rough alphabetical order, but newly acquired books are stuck at the end of each tome. Each entry has the book's title and a code for its location. There are twelve rooms and corridors in the library, each with many bookcases, so the code might be: 4 L3 5 waist red—which translates to: Room Four, Level Three, Fifth Bookcase, Waist Level Shelf, with a Red Cover. There is no key to this code, but there are brass number plaques on the door of each room and each bookcase.

Brother Lundgrin opens Tome B and looks up *Blood on the Reik*. There are three copies listed one under the other, all filed in different places. Give the PCs **Handout #13**.

Brother Lundgrin leads them to each location in turn, and after a little hunting, finds the copies of *Blood on the Reik*. Unfortunately, Ansel's 10th journal isn't hidden in or near any of them.

Give them some time, but if the PCs can't figure out the problem, Brother Lundgrin asks to see Ansel's note. *"Helmgart's First Blood? Well, why didn't you say so? First editions are in the rare books room."* Or, if the PCs figure it out he says, *"A first edition? Why didn't you say so? Those are kept in the Rare Book Room."*

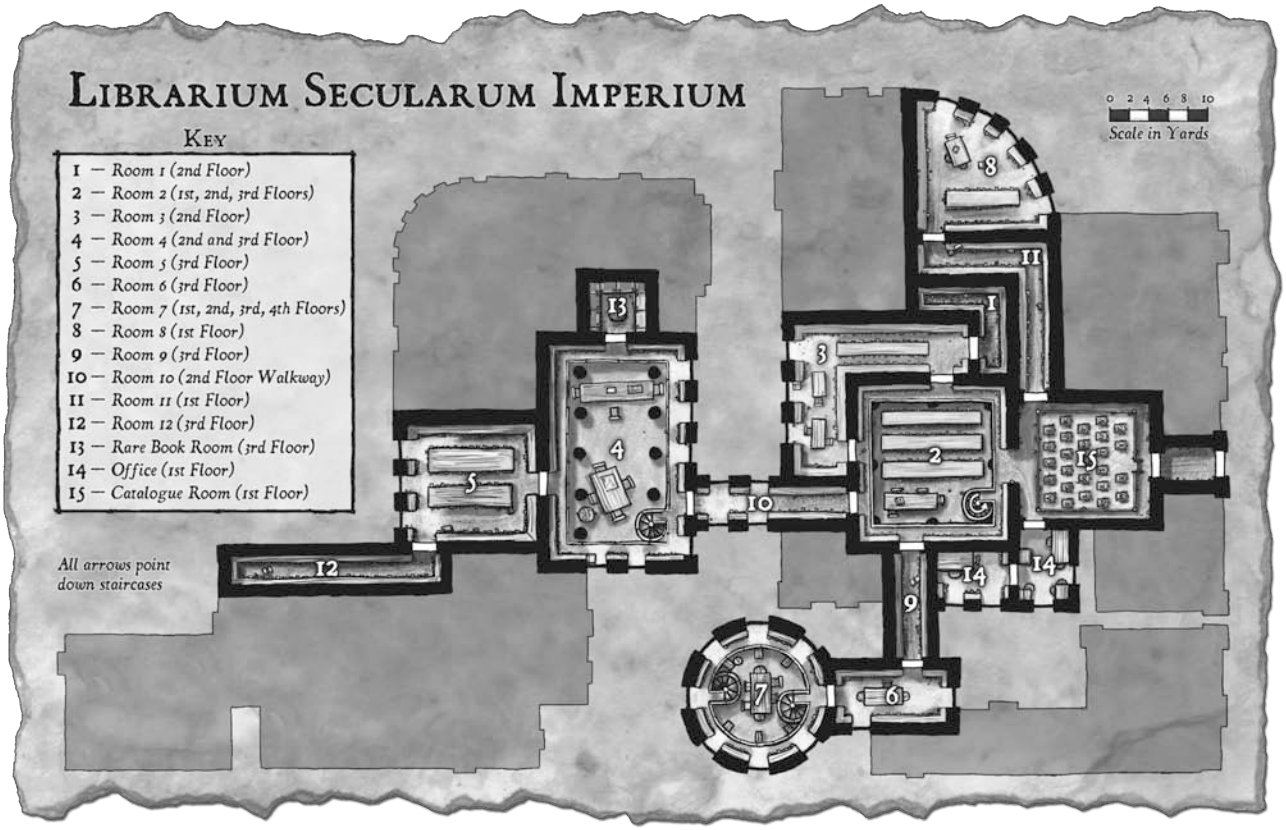
He takes them back to the catalogue room and looks in Catalogue Book B again—but this time towards the back. *"We acquired it recently, so it was entered at the back."* He searches through the recent entries, until he finds "*Blood on the Reik* (1st ed.)—R 7 chest black."

Brother Lundgrin leads them to the Map Room, a large room filled with maps, globes, atlases and large tables. A locked door reads "Rare Books." Lundgrin opens it with a key on his belt. The room is small and lined with glass cabinets containing rare (but not arcane or dangerous) books and ancient texts. There is a round table in the centre.

Brother Lundgrin finds *Blood on the Reik*. As he pulls it out, a small leather-bound journal labelled "10" falls on the floor.

Sneaking in that Night

Much more fun: the steps are the same, but the PCs have to do them all themselves. Getting someone to tell them where the Librarium Secularum



is requires a **Routine (+10) Charm Test**. *"The secular library is on the ground floor of the Western Annexe Building. Look for the fountain of Magnus the Pious, but it's closed until morning."*

The main door of the Western Annex building is open, but the library is locked. Smashing in the door brings brothers and guards. Picking the lock requires a **Challenging (–10) Pick Lock Test**. Also, the library is dark at night, and has windows to the outside. Any patrols see torchlight in the windows if the PCs aren't careful. Make sure the PCs work by candlelight or moonlight.

There should be no tests for figuring out the catalogue system. Make the PCs do the work.

The Rare Book Room lock takes three back-to-back successful **Pick Lock Tests** to open. One failure means starting again from the beginning and a 10% chance for a guard to hear their botched attempt.

The 10th Journal of Ansel Vorman

Much of the journal is written in Magick. There is a drawing of a necklace made of heavy chain, and several occult diagrams. Literate PCs with Speak Arcane Language (Magick) can understand some pages are directions for the *Ceremony of Unfailing Loyalty,* which requires possessing the *Necklace of Unfailing Loyalty*. However, the language is very elevated and requires a **Very Hard (–30) Read/Write Test** to understand it fully. There are also extensive Reikspiel journal entries. It requires an hour of study to find the pertinent passages. Assuming the characters can translate the passages, give them **Handout #14**.

The Journal Is Stolen

Let the PCs decide what they want to do: show the journal to Hiltveld? To Lord Frederick? Chase after Ansel immediately? Sleep on it? The Lahmians are going to steal the journal by hook or by crook, but it happens slightly differently depending on circumstances. Just allow the PCs to read it before it's stolen.

If They Show It to Brother Hiltveld

Hiltveld is aghast. *"By Sigmar, if this sorcerer binds the child to him with this ritual, then the cult will be firmly under the control of the Ruinous Powers. The Grand Theogonist must be warned. Come with me! We will wake his secretary on the instant. There is not a moment to lose."* Hiltveld doesn't allow them to hold the journal, and summons guards if they try to take it by force.

He carries the book through the plazas of the temple complex, heading for the Grand Theogonist's quarters. But as they pass the sanctuary, Hiltveld and the PCs are attacked by a flock of pigeons, led by the black one. They get in everyone's faces for 5 rounds while men in black clothes leap from the shadows and try to steal the book from Hiltveld, (make sure they get it). The men run off before any temple guards can be summoned. (The pigeons do no damage but reduce WS, BS and Ag by –20 for 5 rounds.)

Hiltveld is too winded and bewildered to follow. He tells the PCs to give chase. *"Get that book back! The Grand Theogonist must see it!"*

If They Show It to Lord Frederick

Lord Frederick is also aghast. *"This is terrible! If this sorcerer binds the child to him with this ritual, then the cult will be firmly under the control of the ruinous powers. The Emperor must be warned. Come with me! We will wake his chamberlain on the instant. There is not a moment to be lost."*

Frederick doesn't allow them to take the journal, and summons guards if they try to take it by force.

As he steps out of his mansion to his coach, guarded by two house guards, Frederick, the guards and the PCs are attacked by a flock of pigeons, led by the black one, and men in black, who steal the book (as in the Hiltveld scene) then run for the wall of the estate. (The pigeons do no damage but reduce WS, BS and Ag by –20 for 5 rounds.)

At the wall, the thieves throw the journal over the wall and turn to fight. Lord Frederick is too winded to help. He commands his guards to fight the

<sidebar>

Thieves!

Use the **Footpad** statistics included in *WFRP* page 234. There should be two for every character present. Give these fellows Hand Weapon (Swords).

thieves, and orders the PCs to exit his grounds and give chase. *"Get that book back! The Emperor must see it!"*

If the PCs Don't Intend on Showing the Journal to Anyone

Wherever they read it, the next time they take it outside, they are attacked by pigeons and thugs, who concentrate on stealing the journal (or whatever the journal is carried in) and running, rather than fighting to the finish.

If the PCs Go to Bed before They Step Outside

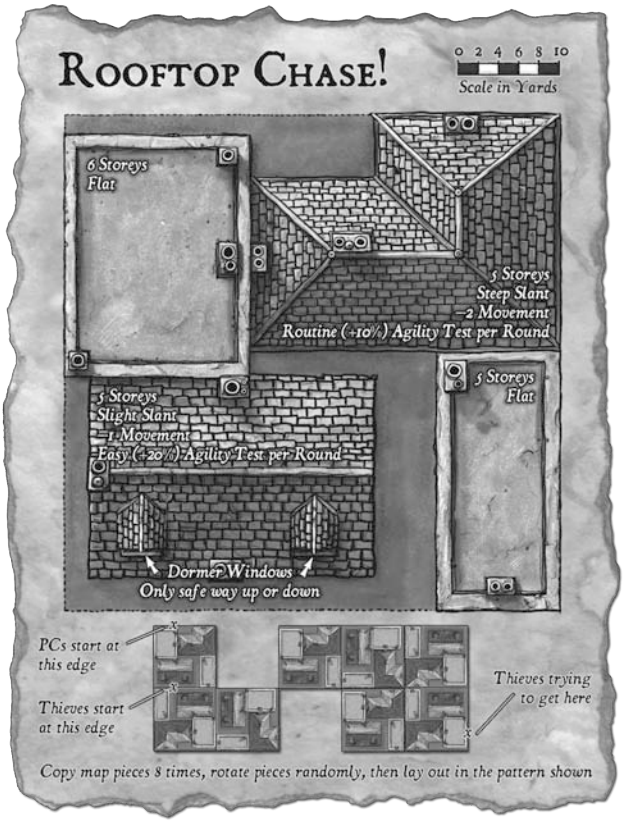
The Lahmian's thugs search the PCs' rooms for the journal but make a noise that wakes them just as they get it. Caught, the thieves throw the journal out the window, where accomplices in the street run off with it.

Chasing the Thieves

Wherever the chase starts, the thieves push through a narrow, crowded street, then switch tactics and enter a five storey tenement. They race up the stairs, throwing rubbish in the PCs' way. If the PCs catch up here, one thief draws his sword and turns, letting the others retreat up the stairs.

By the time the PCs defeat the first thief, the others have reached the roof, breaking into a garret apartment and climbing out a dormer window. The apartment door is open. An old couple hide in their bed, screaming for mercy.

Climbing out the window requires passing a **Scale Sheer Surfaces Test**.



Over the Rooftops

Copy the rooftop map insert eight times and cut it out. Turn the eight copies face down and spin randomly; then, place them face up, as shown. This jumble represents the block of houses the PCs find themselves upon. Any edge that doesn't touch another represents a gap too wide to jump. Start the PCs at one end and the thieves at the near edge of the second piece. The thieves are trying to reach the far edge of the last piece.

The maps show roofs of different heights, both flat and pitched. Each has a height, agility difficulty and a movement penalty marked on it. Jumping down requires an **Agility Test** but doesn't slow the PC down. A fall on a slanted roof requires a second **Agility Test** to stop sliding before the edge.

As the PCs reach the roof, one of the thieves calls to the bird. *"Get Sofia! Bring her here!"* The black pigeon flies away. Sophia arrives in 8 rounds.

If the PCs catch up, the journal thief runs ahead while the others try to engage. Fighting on roofs is dangerous. If a combatant is knocked down while on a pitched roof or near an edge they must pass an **Agility Test** or fall to the street.

If the PCs are about to catch or kill the journal thief, he leaps to his death with the journal to avoid capture. Characters using magic or missile weapons against the fleeing thugs find results similar to a near capture, though the thief may fling the book to another ally.

In 8 rounds, Sofia appears. She is a Lahmian bodyguard, a female Vampire dressed in men's black leather armour. She springs like a cat out of the darkness, landing next to the journal thief. If he is in combat, she attacks his attacker.

The thief gives her the journal, saying, *"Take this to our lady! We will deal with these."*

Sofia extracts herself from combat and leaps towards the far edge. The thieves protect her escape and try to kill the PCs. When she reaches it, Sofia jumps off the last building across a 14 yard gap to the roof of an expensive hotel, and then enters the top floor through an open window.

If the PCs are on the last map, they can see this. If not, when they defeat or escape the remaining thieves, they see a well-guarded black coach leaving the hotel. Sofia is closing the velvet drapes. The coach starts for the main city gates (away from the PCs) but the streets are crowded. It moves slowly. They can easily reach the ground and catch up to it.

Sophia

Female Lahmian Vampire Thrall (ex-Cat Burglar, ex-Thief)

Sofia was a cat burglar in Praag, known for her daring, swashbuckling ways. One night she broke into the house of a thrall of Baroness Theodora and interrupted the baroness feeding. The baroness was going to kill her, but was taken by her beauty and fearlessness. Instead she made Sofia one of her children. Sofia is her willing slave, thrilled with her newfound physical agility and happy to protect her mistress. She has a cocky, assured manner and likes toying with her prey. She is also a fine singer.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
53	41	56 (5)	56 (5)	84	42	52	54

Skills: Academic Knowledge (the Arts, Necromancy) (Int), Channelling (WP), Charm (Fel +10), Command (Fel), Common Knowledge (Kislev, the Empire) (Int), Concealment (Ag +10), Disguise (Fel), Dodge Blow (Ag), Evaluate (Int +10), Gossip (Fel), Haggle (Fel), Intimidate (S), Magical Sense (WP), Perception (Int +20), Performer (Singer) (Fel), Pick Lock (Ag +10), Prepare Poison (Int), Read/Write (Int), Scale Sheer Surface (S +20), Search (Int +20), Secret Language (Thieves' Tongue) (Int +10), Secret Signs (Thief) (Int +10), Shadowing (Ag), Silent Move (Ag +20), Sleight of Hand (Ag), Speak Arcane Language (Magick) (Int), Speak Language (Kislevarin, Reikspiel) (Int), Torture (Fel)

Talents: Alley Cat, Dark Magic, Etiquette, Lightning Reflexes, Petty Magic (Arcane), Quick Draw, Schemer, Specialist Weapon Group (Parrying), Stout-hearted, Street Fighting, Trapfinder, Unsettling

Traits: Blood Gift (Blood Drain, Natural Necromancer, Pass for Human, Vampires' Curse), Keen Senses, Frightening, Natural Weapons (Fangs, Claws), Night Vision, Undead

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 6; **Wounds:** 22
Magic: 1; Petty Magic (Arcane)
Armour (Light): Leather Jack and Greaves (Arms 1, Body 1, Legs 1)
Weapons: Superior Hand Weapon (Sword) (WS 63; 1d10+5), Superior Main Gauche (WS 63; 1d10+2; Defensive)

Trappings

Sofia wears black clothing cut for a man. She wears a couple of rings (each worth 1*gc*). Slung over her shoulder is a coil of rope and grapple, and she keeps an empty sack in her belt. Hidden in her left glove are a number of lock picks. Since she's just learned Reikspiel, she keeps a book of Reikspiel grammar in her backpack.

The Black Coach

The coach isn't hard to stop. The streets are too crowded and tight for it to evade them. The coach seems guarded only by two guards and two coachmen, and Sofia.

If the PCs demand the journal, Sofia exits the coach and orders them out of the way. If the PCs attack without parley, Sophia and the guards fight to kill, and ten more bodyguards come out of the shadows.

After the second round of the fight, or if the PCs don't fight but don't leave either, Baroness Theodora Margrave appears in the coach door and calls for peace. She is the most beautiful woman the PCs have ever seen, dressed in black velvet with white slashes. She has a black pigeon on her shoulder. "Stop! Do not kill them! These brave adventurers have done us a great service. They deserve a better reward than cold steel." She turns to the PCs. "Hear me, friends. Your anger is understandable. You have been our unwitting cat's-paws, doing things and going places that we could not. But have we not also helped you? Protecting you from those who meant you harm? Please, know that your enemies are our enemies, and that we wish neither you nor the child any harm. Now, take this token of our thanks and let us pass in peace."

At a nod from Theodora, Sophia throws a black suede purse at the PCs' feet. It sounds like coins (about 20 *gc* in fact). The PCs must make a **Challenging (–10) Will Power Test** against her **Charm Test** or Theodora rides on leaving the PCs alive and the purse where it is. If they succeed on the test and still want to fight, her guards fight to kill, and more servants appear from the shadows until the PCs die or run away. The PCs are not chased.

Baroness Theodora Margrave

Female Lahmian Vampire Countess (ex-Thrall, ex-Noble Lord, ex-Courtier, ex-Noble)

Over 300 years old, Baroness Theodora is a native of Nuln but has lived many places under many different names. A proud member of the Lahmian Sisterhood, she has devoted her un-life to promoting their agenda. Though generally a calm, peaceful woman, who prefers subtle manipulation to violence, she can be brutal if necessary. She is a patron of the arts. Particularly musicians and singers, and all of her servants can sing or play. She's after both the journal and the boy.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
61	50	61 (6)	74 (7)	66	58	67	84

Skills: Academic Knowledge (the Arts) (Int +20), Academic Knowledge (Genealogy/Heraldry, Necromancy) (Int +10), Academic Knowledge (History, Philosophy, Strategy/Tactics) (Int), Blather (Fel), Channelling (WP), Charm (Fel +20), Command (Fel +20), Common Knowledge (the Empire, Tilea) (Int +20), Common Knowledge (Kislev) (Int),

Concealment (Ag +10), Disguise (Fel), Dodge Blow (Ag +10), Evaluate (Int +20), Gossip (Fel +20), Haggle (Fel), Intimidate (S +10), Magical Sense (WP), Perception (Int +20), Performer (Musician) (Fel +20), Performer (Singer), Prepare Poison (Int), Read/Write (Int +20), Ride (Ag +10), Scale Sheer Surface (S +10), Search (Int +10), Secret Language (Thieves' Tongue) (Int), Shadowing (Ag +10), Silent Move (Ag +20), Speak Arcane Language (Magick) (Int), Speak Language (Classical) (Int +10), Speak Language (Kislevarin, Tilean) (Int), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int +20), Torture (Fel +10)
Talents: Aethyric Attunement, Dark Lore (Necromancy), Dark Magic, Dealmaker, Etiquette, Master Orator, Menacing, Petty Magic (Arcane), Public Speaking, Quick Draw, Savvy, Schemer, Seasoned Traveller, Specialist Weapon Group (Fencing, Parrying), Suave, Unsettling
Traits: Blood Gift (Aethyric Cipher, Blood Drain, Dark Majesty, Defy the Dawn, Natural Necromancer, Pass for Human, Vampires' Curse), Keen Senses, Frightening, Natural Weapons (Fangs, Claws), Night Vision, Undead

Combat

Attacks: 4; **Movement:** 6; **Wounds:** 24
Magic: 2; Petty Magic (Arcane), Dark Lore (Necromancy)
Weapons: Superior Rapier (WS 71; 1d10+5; Fast), Superior Main Gauche (WS 71; 1d10+3; Parrying)

Trappings

The baroness is fabulously wealthy, having deep coffers, homes scattered throughout most of the Empire, and in Praag and Miragliano. She employs a veritable army of servants, soldiers, and spies. As presented here, she rides in her black coach drawn by six black stallions. She wears a fine black dress with white slashes. She has at least 600 *gc* inside the coach and jewellery on her person worth another 300*gc*.

Black Pigeon

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
15	0	15 (1)	25 (2)	50	42	42	25

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Necromancy) (Int), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int), Dodge Blow (Ag), Perception (Int +10), Read/Write (Int), Speak Arcane Language (Magick) (Int)
Talents: Acute Hearing, Aethyric Attunement, Alley Cat, Flee!, Keen Senses, Resistance to Chaos, Resistance to Magic, Sixth Sense, Strong-minded, Unsettling
Traits: Flier, Link of Psyche

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 1; Fly 5; **Wounds:** 5

Link of Psyche

The black pigeon can communicate with its master telepathically up to any distance. Both gain a +10 bonus to Intelligence and Will Power while both are conscious and cooperative.

Theodora's Guards (4)

Male and Female Human Coachmen

These men and women are hardy Kislevites, who hired on to protect the baroness.

Insanity Points: 4

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
43	40	36 (3)	34 (3)	33 (43)	27	34	31

Skills: Animal Care (Int), Common Knowledge (Kislev) (Int), Drive (S), Gossip (Fel +10), Navigation (Int), Perception (Int), Ride (Ag), Secret Signs (Ranger) (Int), Speak Language (Kislevarin, Reikspiel) (Int)
Talents: Quick Draw, Specialist Weapon Group (Gunpowder), Very Strong, Warrior Born

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 14
Armour (Medium): Mail Shirt and Leather Jack (Arms 1, Body 3)
Weapons: Firearm (1d10+4; Range 24/48; Reload 2 Full; Impact, Unreliable), Hand Weapon (Sword) (1d10+3), Dagger (1d10)

Trappings

Aside from their weapons and armour, these guards have drab uniforms and purses holding 1d10 Pennies. Each carries shot and powder for 10 firings of their firearms.

The Return of the Witch Hunter

As soon as the encounter with the Lahmians is over, the PCs hear, *"You! Stop in Sigmar's name! You have eluded us long enough!"*

It's Golphus Drabben and six witch hunters. They again try to capture (not kill) the PCs. If Drabben captures them, there is no miraculous rescue this time because the PCs are no longer useful to the Lahmians. A **Hard (–20) Charm Test** and some good roleplay can convince Drabben that helping the PCs chase the black coach is more important than their arrest. But by the time the argument is over, no matter how hard they search, they won't be able to find the coach. Drabben believes the PCs tried to trick him, and tries again to arrest them.

If they are captured, the PCs spend the night in a dungeon. They are then released in the morning by either Brother Hiltveld or Lord Frederick, depending on who they last had friendly contact with.

Getting Help

If the PCs go back to Hiltveld or Lord Frederick and tell them what happened, they are sympathetic and extremely concerned. This speech works for either of them.

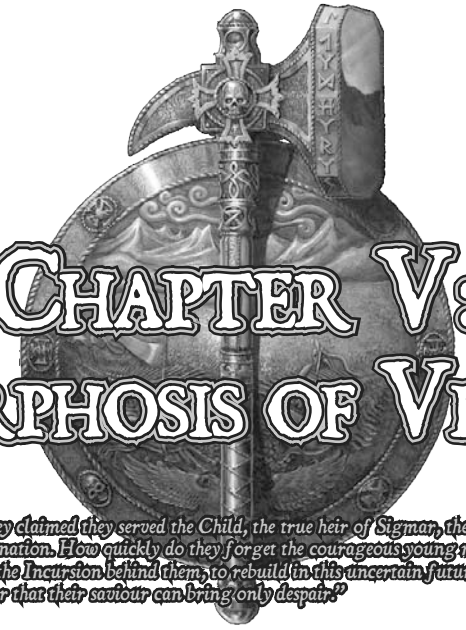
> *"Another player in the game! It gets worse and worse. Listen, the Emperor and the Grand Theogonist must be warned of all this, but if I know Altdorf politics, it will take weeks for an expedition to be given permission to go. This news cannot wait. Here. Take this purse and purchase what horses or coaches you need, then get to Ansel's home as quick as you may. Save the boy, and stop Tobias if you can. If the sorcerer has succeeded in his ritual, well, the kindest thing you can do for the lad is kill him. Do this and return to me, and ten times this amount shall be yours. Now go! Hurry!"*

Hiltveld or Lord Frederick gives them money (30*gc*) and semi-official notes saying they are on the business of the Church of Sigmar or Empire House. And so the adventure ends with the PCs making ready to ride as fast as they can.

Rewards

The player characters should acquire between 200 and 300 experience points by the end of this adventure.

Action	XP
Ingratiate selves with the inner circle	50
Befriend Karl	25
Uncover Yellow Death plot	25
Expose/Defeat cultists	25
Identify Jan as Tobias	25
Avoid a fight at the Shallyan hospital	25
Each time the PCs escape the witch hunters	10
Befriend Brother Hiltveld	15
Correctly identify the Vengeance of Sigmar	25
Piece together the *Blood on the Reik* clue	25
Find the tenth journal	25
Learn where Tobias is heading	25
Good roleplaying	25
Excellent roleplaying	50



Chapter V: Metamorphosis of Villa Hahn

"From the west they came, this unruly mob. They claimed they served the Child, the true heir of Sigmar, the scion foretold. How quickly they forget brave Valten and his great sacrifice for our glorious nation. How quickly do they forget the courageous young men and women who gave their lives in the face of appalling horror. People do their best to put the Incursion behind them, to rebuild in this uncertain future, but it terrifies this scholar how easily Old Worlders latch onto hope, even when it's so clear that their saviour can bring only despair."

—Altmar Nachtmann, Scholar

By Kevin Hamilton and Robert J. Schwalb

Wondrous Altdorf, the true jewel of the Empire and the capital of Sigmar's great nation, attracts all kinds. Wanderers, vagabonds, beggars, old soldiers, fanatics, zealots, and more come to this city, searching for something, some answer to the questions they seek, some guidance as they take the first faltering steps into the uncertain future. As with the countless drifters that approach the city walls, the Crusade of the Child descended upon Altdorf with the same zeal, the same questions, hopes, and dreams shared by every other pilgrim. Demanding recognition from the Grand Theogonist and Emperor as to their Child's divinity, the Crusade found only refusals and delays. Disappointment bloomed into resentment, and angry mutterings filled the gathered host. Yet strangely, in a few, the long-standing loyalties binding their fates to this young man they knew to be the son of Sigmar have begun to unravel, and gradually, the displaced and lost begin to abandon the holy Crusade, filled with shame and confusion as they take the long road home. Where is Karl? Why hasn't he shown himself? Why hasn't he quelled the doubts, fears, and misgivings that infect these Crusaders?

Adventure Background

The answer is simple. Karl is missing. Vanished. The inner circle, or rather those left of the inner circle, have done their best to conceal the boy's absence, making a great show that he spends his time in his grand tent, lost in prayer, but despite their explanations, the hold of the boy's unnatural aura has begun to break and the fanatic devotion wanes as clearer heads claim the day.

Contrary to the mutterings of some Crusaders, Karl has not abandoned them; he was stolen, plucked from their loyal hands after an ill-advised mission to force the Grand Theogonist to behold the glory of Karl and thus recognise his divinity. The inner circle knew corruption had been seeded in the Crusade, but the true culprit was clever, deflecting suspicion onto his rival. So whilst an innocent man died, the villain moved more freely and snatched the boy, fleeing into Altdorf's warren of streets and alleys, vanishing into the crowds.

Tobias, who masqueraded as a wealthy Marienburger named Jan, is just another pawn in a grand plot by the forces of Chaos to exploit the boy's power for their own nefarious ends. Following the instructions of his dreadful master, Ruprecht, Tobias scoured the city for his contact, Ansel, a former cultist who had aligned himself with Tobias in Marienburg to learn the ways of using fell sorcery to bend the heart of another towards affection. For his troubles, Ansel learned the ritual that would twist his beloved's heart, so she would return his affections, and he journeyed to a childhood home to speak the twisted incantations. Instead of awakening true love in her heart, the ritual made a monster of her, destroying her and cursing Ansel in the process. Realising his moral error, Ansel returned to Altdorf and committed himself to killing and exposing Mutants, witches, and other servants of Chaos in the hope Sigmar would cleanse his body of his physical corruption.

Tobias cared nothing for Ansel's newfound piety; the man had something he wanted: the ritual. Ruprecht commanded Tobias to recover the *Necklace of Unfailing Loyalty* from his former comrade, for it was a necessary component in the ritual that would bind Karl to Ruprecht and forever after make the boy a creature of Chaos. With the boy in his possession, Tobias scoured the city, dogged by the PCs who sought the Child for their own purposes—loyalty, affection, or for payment—and eventually located Ansel. He tortured the man and learned that Ansel left the item in the place where he performed the unspeakable ritual. Tobias gathered his minions and fled the city, leaving the PCs behind to desperately search for clues to Tobias's destination and the location of the Child, while contending with the other factions that have emerged to stake their own claims on the boy.

Adventure Synopsis

A series of misfortunes, double-crosses, and disturbing revelations have left the heroes empty-handed in Altdorf. The Child is missing. His cultist kidnapper is gone. The Crusade is being held together with a hastily assembled deception. The PCs have lost Ansel's journal to Baroness Theodora Margrave, but they still know Tobias heads for Ansel's childhood home.

Finding Tobias is challenging enough, but the PCs have had a number of strange encounters with Vampires since becoming embroiled in this mess.

Starting with a Blood Dragon, a Strigoi, and now a Lahmian, it should be clear this Child has attracted the interest of forces beyond Chaos. The Lahmians know where Tobias is heading, and they race out of Altdorf to stop him. Meanwhile, the PCs, who don't yet have the luxury of knowing exactly where they are going, must find some way to catch up.

Tobias has a good head start and manages to retrieve the *Necklace of Unfailing Loyalty* from the basement. He leaves the site for Ruprecht's childhood home, bringing along the struggling boy. Knowing that the PCs follow, he quickly writes a note to the leader of the Eternal Malady, the cultists that remained at the Plague Temple after Ruprecht left. The note says to gather a few men and track down and kill the PCs. Tobias does not believe the cultists can stop the PCs, but he hopes it will slow them down. Tobias then takes Karl to the underground temple to perform the ceremony that will link the boy with Ruprecht, giving Ruprecht control over Karl and, in turn, control of an army of followers.

The Lahmians also know to go to Ansel's house and have learned of its location. They attempt to capture Karl but discover Tobias and the boy have already gone. Unsure where Tobias is now heading, they decide to hide and follow the PCs in the hope that they can lead them to the boy.

The various threads are resolved at Villa Hahn, Ruprecht's family estate. There, the characters must sift through the horrors that befell the Hahn family, learn about Ruprecht, and find the hidden temple if they would rescue the boy.

— The Cultist's Trail —

It shouldn't be hard to piece together where Tobias is heading. From Ansel's journal, the PCs know Ansel performed the ill-fated ritual in the village of Ruhrhoff. The PCs should also know that Ansel fled the place, leaving behind the accursed *Necklace of Unfailing Loyalty* and the remains of his true love in the tatters of that home. Now, where this town lies is a good question, for it's not on most maps. There are a number of ways the PCs might locate this village, as follows.

Skill Tests

A character might have heard of this place with a **Hard (–20) Common Knowledge (the Empire) Test**. If you use the **Academic Knowledge (Geography) Skill** in your games and if a character has this skill, the village can be located with a **Challenging (–10) Test**. Finally, a character with the **Trade (Cartographer) Skill** might recall the place with a **Hard (–20) Test**.

Locals

Failing to find the village using the knowledge in their heads, the PCs could turn to local guides for help. A **Very Hard (–30) Gossip Test** enables the PCs to find someone who's heard about the place, and a character succeeds in getting enough information to find the location with a few successful **Challenging (–10) Navigation Tests** and a bit of luck.

Hiring a Guide

The best way to locate Ruhrhoff is to hire a guide to take them through the Drakwald. A **Challenging (–10) Gossip Test** points the characters towards Devin Schausmann, an expert ranger and tracker who's quite familiar with the woods and the various communities that shelter in the shadows of its trees. Devin offers to lead the PCs to the village for 3 *gc* a week. If the PCs win an Opposed **Haggle Test**, they can bring the price down to 2 *gc*. In all, the trip will cost the PCs 8 *gc* before they pay for supplies, but this is their best chance for getting to their destination.

Devin Schausmann

Male Human Scout (ex-Vagabond)

After his village was burned to the ground by a roving band of Beastmen, Devin Schausmann, against all odds, managed to survive. He lived off the land and learned the ways of the local hunters, as well as his way around the Drakwald. Since the loss of his community, he's been loath to put down roots for long and prefers life on the move. Before the recent war, Devin sold his services as a scout to merchants and travellers bound for Middenheim and Talabheim but did a stint with Boris Todbringer, hunting Beastmen in the Empire's forests. Now that the wars are over, he's tried to pick up his life once more, having just arrived in Altdorf.

Devin is a rugged man in his mid- to late thirties. He has close-cropped brown hair, plain features, and kind brown eyes. He picked up a nasty scar on his neck from a Beastman's spear and the wound has been slow to heal.

Insanity Points: 2

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
35	40	30 (3)	39 (3)	43	42	36	41

Skills: Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int +10), Common Knowledge (Kislev) (Int), Gossip (Fel), Haggle (Fel), Navigation (Int +10), Outdoor Survival (Int), Perception (Int), Secret Language (Ranger Tongue) (Int), Secret Signs (Ranger) (Int), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int), Swim (S)
Talents: Acute Hearing, Orientation, Rover, Seasoned Traveller, Strong-minded

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 14
Armour (Medium): Mail Shirt and Leather Jack (Arms 1, Body 1)
Weapons: Hand Weapon (Sword) (1d10+3), Shield (1d10+1; Special), Dagger (1d10)

Trappings

Devin is prepared. He wears a plain shirt of canvas and brown breeches of the same material. A long brown cloak hangs around his shoulders, worn for warmth, not style. A backpack hangs over one shoulder, filled with rations, a pair of water skins, and a coil of rope. He also owns a nag inappropriately named Boris. The horse carries his saddle, feed, a one-man tent, and a few other mundane supplies for travelling. Devin has little money, 12s.

Outfitting for the Journey

Before the PCs set off to get lost (or not) and die (or not) in the Drakwald and woods beyond, encourage them to do a bit of shopping first. The journey should take nearly a month, and there are places to stop and purchase extra supplies along the way. They need food and water for the journey, plus a number of other goods. However, their need for haste doesn't leave a lot of time for haggling, so they should pay full list price for their goods. Characters lacking for funds may be able to squeeze a few more coins out of Lord Frederick or their employer at your option.

Over the Hills and Through the Woods

Ruhrhoff is a small village about 350 miles north-east of Altdorf and about seventy miles south-west of Wolfenburg, placing the village somewhere on the far side of the Drakwald in the province of Hochland. Reaching it means travelling overland through a rather nasty stretch of forest reputed to be filled with all sorts of terrible things. Of course, the PCs might sail the Talabec, then the Wolf's Run, which would eliminate much of the Drakwald, but the town does not lie on a waterway, so eventually the PCs will have to brave the forest.

Although river travel is far faster, PCs crossing the countryside can cover about 16 miles a day by road at a typical walking pace or, by pushing themselves, cross 24 miles per day. As this journey requires travelling

through thick forest, at best, the characters should be able to walk about 12 miles a day. At this rate, it'll take the characters just under a month to reach the village, assuming no trouble. Horses don't speed things up much since the paths through the forest are dangerous and fraught with obstacles that steeds may find difficult to move through or around. In short, if the adventurers can find passage by river, they will cut their travel time by half.

Still, overland travel may be the only option and characters may cover 16 miles a day or 32 miles by road at a forced march. At the end of every day of forced marching, the characters must succeed on Toughness Tests. A failed test imposes a –10 penalty to all characteristics and reduces the amount of ground they cover on the next day by 1 mile. Multiple failed tests are cumulative and characters that gain excess of a –30 penalty must rest for a day or start taking Wounds—at the end of each day thereafter, they take 1 Wound that does not heal until the characters rest for at least one day per Wound gained. In short, this is a tough journey.

Major Settlements

A number of settlements in the area give characters a place to re-supply and rest. Ahlenhof, Feuerfahl, and Schmiedorf are all possibilities, as are Delberz and Untergard, descriptions of which follow.

Delberz

This small city stands on the River Delb along the Middenheim–Altdorf road. This successful community survives on the business brought to them by travellers. Characters approaching Delberz notice extensive vineyards fill areas cleared of the ancient trees, which produce a fine sweet wine favoured by the aristocracy all over the Empire. Inside this community are a number of inns and hostels catering to caravans and travellers. The accommodations are comfortable and reasonable.

Untergard

Up until the Chaos Incursion, Untergard was a prosperous village that straddled the River Taub, but during the invasion of Archaon's forces, a terrible battle was fought here, for it was a valuable crossing point. The results of the conflict left the town in ruins and the survivors fled to Middenheim for shelter. In the vacuum they left, Mutants emerged from the Drakwald and claimed the shattered community. They survive by kidnapping travellers that come too close, dragging them back to their Warpstone idol and subjecting them to its corrupting influence, thus expanding their awful numbers. Such a place is dangerous to visit or re-supply, but the PCs may have little choice. Characters can learn about Untergard and the dangers said to be found there by succeeding on a **Hard (–20) Common Knowledge (the Empire) Test** or a **Challenging (–10) Gossip Test**.

Drakwald Encounters

The Drakwald is as dangerous as it is dark and foreboding. Extended travel beneath the canopy of this ancient forest puts the characters in contact with all manner of terrifying creatures, many of whom relish the idea of making a meal of adventurers. Aside from the Mutants and Beastmen, the Drakwald hides Goblins, brigands, and the occasional band of warriors who fight on behalf of Boris Todbringer, scouring the woods of Beastmen and corruption. There's also a profusion of lost villages and old ruins of Elven or other origin, as well as the occasional statue, monolith, and Herdstone. It is a strange and unsettling forest, and in any shadow, doom could hide.

As the characters travel through the forest, they should have a number of encounters. The frequency and nature of these encounters is up to you, but a good method is a cumulative 5% chance for each day of travel, and if the PCs have an encounter, they should have a 30% chance of having a second encounter in the same day or night. Starting on the next day, the chances reset to 5%. If you prefer, throw encounters whenever you like. Rather than sifting through a number of sourcebooks looking for appropriate Drakwald encounters, you can roll on **Table 5–1: Drakwald Encounters**. Since space is a premium, this table references other *WFRP* sourcebooks. If it mentions a sourcebook you don't have, roll again, or pick something else.

Using this Chapter Separately

This instalment of *Thousand Thrones* can easily work as a stand-alone adventure. You can insert it into just about any campaign. Rather than the PCs actively searching for information about the villa, they may be drawn there after catching wind of some haunted place. Another hook is to seed the setting with missing adventurers who went to explore this old mansion, or simply make the place something the PCs can see from the road.

The ending battle in the Plague Temple can be played out in a number of ways. Karl could be an innocent boy from Kietchdorf that the PCs save from being sacrificed to the Dark Gods, giving the PCs a bit more reason to save and return him to his village. Sophia and the Lahmians can be left out completely, or they can still arrive for the final battle, thus giving you a hook for creating new adventures, perhaps leading the PCs on a further investigation to uncover why the Vampires were there in the first place.

Table 5–1: Drakwald Encounters

Roll	Encounter	Source
01–10	Corpses	—
11–15	Troll	*Old World Bestiary* page 111
16–25	Clearing	—
26–30	Goblins	*WFRP* page 229, *Old World Bestiary* page 79
31–40	Bandits	*WFRP* page 233
41–45	Herdstone	—
46–50	Mutants	*WFRP* page 230, *Old World Bestiary* page 102, *Tome of Corruption* page 25
51–60	Beastmen	*WFRP* page 228, *Old World Bestiary* page 83, *Tome of Corruption* page 96
61–65	Mutants	*WFRP* page 230, *Old World Bestiary* page 102, *Tome of Corruption* page 25
66–75	Hunters	See entry
76–80	Ruin	—
81–85	Orcs	*WFRP* page 230
86–95	Todbringer's Men	See entry
96–00	Roll twice more, ignoring this result	

Corpses

Hanging from ropes tied to the trees are 1d10+2 corpses in various states of decay. They are bloated, picked over by ravens, and where their feet dangle near the ground, they have been worried by forest scavengers. Each victim is naked, and the killers slaughtered men and women alike. Characters that linger here for more than a few minutes automatically trigger another encounter. Roll on **Table 5–1: Drakwald Encounters** again, ignoring a result of 01–10.

Troll

A profoundly fat Troll has claimed this section of the forest. The stench of rot, vomit, and excrement hangs heavy in the air. The Troll's lair is in the centre of a clearing with a mound of carcasses and bones that form a hill around its encampment. There's a 10% chance for this Troll to be a Chaos Troll.

Clearing

Hidden behind a wall of trees and undergrowth is a small clearing. Characters can spot this area with a successful **Perception Test**. This grassy area is dappled in sunlight (or moonlight depending on the time of day). There may be a few stones here but little else. Examining the area may (at your option) turn up some items of interest. Each degree of success on a **Challenging (–10) Search Test** uncovers one of the following items: a broken arrow, a split hunting horn, a chunk of bloody meat, a pile of pungent dung, a Human skull, an odd marking on one of the trees, an old sausage, or a torn pair of breeches. In some clearings—about 20%—is a plug set in the earth. A **Hard (–20) Search Test** locates it. Lifting the plug usually requires a **Challenging (–10) Strength Test**, but it might be harder or easier depending on how long it's been since it was last opened. Inside the hole is fresh clean water: in olden days, when the Middenlanders had a stronger hold on the Drakwald, hunters dug holes in the earth to tap underground streams to replenish their skins.

Goblins

A gang of Goblins set up an ambush in the forest. They've smeared their faeces on the trees in the hopes of attracting prey. When the PCs come within 8 yards, they loose arrows at the characters. There should be 2 Goblins for each player character plus 1 Goblin for each NPC. There's a 10% chance that these Goblins are led by an Orc (see **Orcs** in *WFRP* page 230).

Bandits

A band of ruthless bandits prowl the forest looking to waylay travellers. The bandits might be lying in wait for the PCs—in which case there's one for each PC plus one for every two NPCs—in the midst of attacking other travellers (a great chance for introducing replacement characters), or are fighting for their lives against some other denizen of the Drakwald.

Herdstone

Sticking out like a massive rotten tooth from the forest floor is a great dark stone. Around its base are the charred remains of timbers piled around it. Arms, legs, and bits of armour and broken weapons stick out from the burned wood. Soot covers the stone, though moss clings to it in places. Characters inspecting the stone find that tiny markings cover its surface. Those who can read the Beast Tongue can identify the markings as Beastmen names, prayers to the Ruinous Powers, or foul curses. There's a 10% chance for a Daemon Imp (*WFRP* page 229) to be hiding nearby and watching, placed there by Ruprecht to keep its eyes out for the PCs. If it's present, it might be working for Ruprecht or for some other Chaos servant of your choosing.

A **Challenging (–10) Search Test** turns up 2d10 Schillings, a superior hand weapon (+10 on WS Tests), or 1d5 days worth of rations. Other items of interest could be present as well—especially if PCs are fishing for a particular piece of equipment to qualify for a future career.

Mutants

A band of Mutants struggles to survive in this accursed forest. They have a bewildering assortment of mutations, ranging from cosmetic alterations to more profound changes. There should be 3 Mutants for every PC plus 1 for each NPC. They have little to nothing of value and attack out of need for food and water, rather than viciousness (though there may be a bit of that too). The Mutant statistics presented in *WFRP* and *Old World Bestiary* should be sufficient for running this encounter, but if you're feeling creative, feel free to throw together some Mutants using the tables in *Tome of Corruption.* You won't regret it, but perhaps your players might…

Beastmen

The most numerous creatures in the Drakwald are the hated Beastmen. It's just a matter of time before the PCs are found moving through these monsters' territory. If you just have *WFRP,* there should be one Beastman for each PC. If you have *Old World Bestiary,* there should be one Gor Beastman for each PC plus one Bestigor Beastman for every three PCs. Finally, if you're using *Tome of Corruption,* the same applies as with the *Old World Bestiary* reference, but you can whip up a crowd of particularly loathsome Beastmen to terrify your players.

Hunters

A group of three hunters emerge from the trees. They're hunting wild pigs, pheasants, and stags, and they are surprised—if not a bit suspicious—to see a group of travellers this far off the main roads. If the characters are lost, these men can point them in the right direction towards Kietchdorf with a successful **Charm Test**. Two or more degrees of success indicate that the hunters are willing to help the PCs. They accompany the characters for one day, plus one day for each two full degrees of success. While in the company of the hunters, the characters cover twice the normal distance, and the chance of encounter falls to just 2% per day.

Anden, Rupert, and Trent

Male Human Hunters

These three men are grizzled hunters and trappers. All are quite comfortable in the Drakwald, having learned to avoid the nastiest denizens. Anden has bright red hair and green eyes. Rupert and Trent both have brown hair and eyes.

Insanity Points: 1

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
34	45	38 (3)	45 (4)	47	31	33	26

Skills: Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int), Concealment (Ag), Follow Trail (Int), Gossip (Fel), Outdoor Survival (Int), Perception (Int), Search (Int), Secret Signs (Ranger) (Int), Set Trap (Ag), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int)

Talents: Hardy, Lightning Reflexes, Rapid Reload, Rover, Specialist Weapon Group (Longbow), Very Resilient

Combat

Attacks: 1**; Movement:** 4**; Wounds:** 14
Armour (Light): Full Leather (Head 1, Arms 1, Body 1, Legs 1)
Weapons: Hand Weapon (Axe) (1d10+3), Longbow with 10 Arrows (1d10+3; Range 30/60; Reload Free; Armour Piercing)

Trappings

The hunters all wear soft leathers and brown cloaks. They keep their longbows and quivers slung over their shoulders next to their backpacks, which are full of rations, antitoxin kits, water skins, and a couple of torches along with flint and steel.

Ruins

The Drakwald is littered with the ruins of those who tried to make their lives beneath the boughs of this sinister forest. Most evidence of past settlers is nothing more than a crumbling wall, an empty shell of an abandoned house, or an odd bit of statuary such as a caryatid column left over from some ancient Elven outpost or the massive severed head of an ancient stone monster. The ruins are not always empty. Whenever you get this result, roll again. If you get bandits, Goblins, Orcs, or Mutants, add them to the encounter. Otherwise, the ruin is empty and the PCs may use the site as shelter.

Orcs

A band of bloodthirsty Orcs marches through the forest in pursuit of some errand of death and destruction. The Orcs attack any living thing they encounter. There should be one Orc for every PC and NPC.

Todbringer's Men

Boris Todbringer commits his men to purging the Chaos infestations from the Drakwald. Emerging from the trees or following one of the many game trails are a dozen Knights Panther. They are not particular friendly, since folks wandering the Drakwald are typically up to no good. However, characters explaining their mission and passing a **Challenging (–10) Charm Test** can convince the knights of their honest errand. If Devin is with the PCs, the test is **Easy (+20)**. Should the PCs succeed on the test, the knights warn them that a plague has broken out in nearby Kietchdorf, and they urge the PCs to bypass the place. Characters that fail to impress the knights face arrest. If they resist, the knights fight until they lose about five of their number, at which point they retreat and spread word of the PCs' descriptions in Middenheim and throughout the region, claiming they are agents of Chaos. This rumour imposes a –20 penalty to all **Fellowship Tests** made in populated areas throughout the remainder of this chapter. If the PCs willingly give themselves up, they are marched to an encampment some 10 miles north, where they are left for about two weeks, until their employer hears about them and gets them out. How this plays out is up to you.

Knights Panther

Male Human Knight Panther (ex-Squire)

The Knights Panther are distinguished by the tall Beastman crests that top their helmets and the spotted pelts of great cats woven into their saddlecloths. They are grim and accustomed to all manner of horrors. Most are flawlessly loyal to the Graf Boris Todbringer, giving their lives in the defence of Middenheim.

Insanity Points: 3

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
62	32	47 (4)	45 (4)	30 (40)	34	50	36

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Genealogy/Heraldry, Strategy/Tactics) (Int), Animal Care (Int), Animal Training (Fel +10), Charm (Fel), Command (Fel), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int +10), Dodge Blow (Ag +10), Gossip (Fel), Perception (Int), Ride (Ag +10), Secret Language (Battle Tongue) (Int), Speak Language (Kislevarin), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int +20)
Talents: Coolheaded, Etiquette, Hardy, Specialist Weapon Group (Cavalry), Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure, Warrior Born

Combat

Attacks: 2**; Movement:** 4**; Wounds:** 18
Armour (Heavy): Full Plate (Head 5, Arms 5, Body 5, Legs 5)
Weapons: Hand Weapon (1d10+5; CV +1), Lance (1d10+6; CV +1; Fast, Impact, Tiring), Shield (1d10+3; Special)

Trappings

All of the Knights Panther ride powerful destriers equipped with full plate barding. They each carry common travellers' kits included a couple of days of food, water, torches, flint and steel, and grooming kits.

Evoking the Drakwald

There's absolutely no reason for you to describe each minute of the characters' journey to Ruhrhoff—doing so might result in your players sleeping, stabbing themselves with forks, or repeatedly slamming their heads on the gaming table. Instead, offer a narrative description, offering some details of the trip, pausing only to describe interesting things the PCs might see and encounter. Make sure that you seed your descriptions with places for the characters to explore and give the PCs opportunities to make decisions. Opportunities for side-adventures abound, what with the chance to get lost or passing through fascinating parts of the forest or close to unusual or nasty settlements. Spruce up the journey in whatever ways you wish.

— Kietchdorf —

About three days out from Ruhrhoff, the PCs come upon a tiny village named Kietchdorf. After a month of travel and harrowing encounters, a warm bed and hot food may be too good to pass up. As they draw close, the trees thin, giving way to a few small fields, houses, and farms.

During the Chaos Incursion, the villagers fled their homes for the safety of Middenheim and have just now begun the slow return home. Many of the structures show signs of neglect and abandonment, mainly in the form of boarded-up windows and doors, gaps in the thatch, or just as piles of rubble. Despite the often poor conditions, the townspeople have returned and work to make a new start. It once served as a stopping point for travellers going between Wolfenburg and Middenland, but given the former city's state, there has been little cause to visit, and people coming from there are regarded with dark looks and terse questions.

Despite the very best efforts of the locals to rebuild and resume their lives, a deeper darkness lurks outside their notice. Most reopened their shops and threw open the doors to their inns and taverns, and life has very nearly approached the normality so desperately desired. But a sickness has come.

It's not certain from where this plague came. Some blame the tainted earth left scorched by rampaging Beastmen. Others whisper about the Ratmen. A few even point at each other, suspecting former neighbours as being cultists of Old Father Nurgle. Regardless of the cause, most folks are quite ill, unable to rise from their beds. The symptoms are the same: quivering blisters that burst open with green filth and then seep endlessly.

The outbreak has had a disastrous effect on the village. The few travellers that existed now avoid Kietchdorf, moving on to find safer quarters elsewhere. It seems nothing the people can do has had any luck in stalling or halting the spread of the plague. Healers fail at every turn, and now, the village has sent for messengers to Middenheim, begging for the sisters of Shallya to come and ease their suffering. They know they have little chance of getting the help they seek, but they cling to their hope to stave off the growing despair.

Entering the Town

When the PCs enter the town, they do not see many people about and the ones they do look pale and sickly. Some cough continuously, and others are covered in boils and lesions. The few people that look healthy are doing the work of several or are tending to the needs of the sick.

Depending on their previous actions, there may be wanted posters describing the PCs and their alleged crimes. If this is the case, it does not matter if they take precautions because the citizens of the town have their own problems and make no effort to apprehend or report the party, though the characters take a –10 penalty to all Fellowship-based Tests.

Only a few places are open for business: the general store, smithy, and tavern.

The Seasoned Traveller

The village's general store is a modest-sized building with a sharply peaked roof and a chimney climbing the building's side. Beneath the veranda is the front door. A few broken glass windows fronting the shop offer a look inside, revealing a general supply store. Painted on the wall is a good likeness of a whistling wanderer, hefting a stick over his shoulder from which hangs a bag.

Uli Ghets owns the Seasoned Traveller. He's an old man but shows no sign of sickness and is polite, if a bit gruff. He has a limited supply of commonly available goods but doesn't have any perishables. Prices are a bit below average since there's no demand, and he sells everything at a 20% discount. He doesn't know much about what's going on in town, and if pressed, he suggests that they talk to Gerhard Dietrich at the Watering Hole. The PCs can question him about Ansel (see **Gossip** for details).

5–2: Gossip Tests

Gossip about Ansel Vorman

Degrees of Success	Rumour
0	*"Ansel Vorman? I think a family with that name lived in Ruhrhoff. Wouldn't be there no more tho'. 'Cause ain't no one there no more. 'Cause that town ain't there no more."*
1	"*I knew some Vorman's that lived in Ruhrhoff on the north edge of town. Had a two-storey cottage, they did, lucky bastards. Course, now that I think of what happened to the town, maybe they weren't so lucky."*
2	*"Now that you mention it, I could've sworn I seen someone near the old Vorman place as I was riding back from Schweisbach on my deliveries yesterday."*
3+	*"I saw a strangely dressed woman with a group of people coming out of the Vorman place."*

Gossip about Ruprecht Hahn

Degrees of Success	Rumour
0	"*Ruprecht? I wonder if you mean one of Lucius Hahn's boys. I don't think he was born noble, but he sure acted like it."*
1	*"Villa Hahn is a huge stately manor built by Lucius Hahn for his family. No idea if it's still there after what happened to Wolfenburg."*
2	*"Villa Hahn is about four miles west of Wolfenburg off the main road. Lot of strange things going on there the last couple of years. Most folk stay away."*
3+	*"Villa Hahn is haunted ever since one of their boys went insane and killed the entire family."*

The Arm and Hammer

The Arm and Hammer is the town smithy, owned by a despondent fellow named Timm Backer. The shop is out front and lacks walls to keep it cool. Instead, it's a roof supported by stout wooden columns running along each side. In the centre stands the forge. It's banked, and a quick look around shows no one's about; a **Routine (+10) Perception Test** reveals a soot-covered smith sitting like a lump on a stool staring blankly. He's easily missed because he blends in with the surroundings and doesn't move.

Behind the shop is the smithy's house: it's small, simple, and quaint. All the windows are broken, and there's some fire damage.

Characters that manage to locate the smith in the shop startle him. He quickly apologises, rubbing his hands on his leather apron. He mumbles a bit, so he's hard to understand. He can repair simple items but lacks the materials to forge anything anew.

If questioned, Backer reveals the situation plaguing the town (pun intended). A character succeeding on a **Charm Test** finds the man breaking down, big tears spilling out of his head. He moans, *"Them Beastmen took mah wife an' boy. Ain't seem 'em for weeks. I fears they be dead."* He describes them in detail. If the characters encountered the corpses in the Drakwald, an **Intelligence Test** recalls seeing bodies that matched the man's description. Should they reveal this to Backer, he hangs himself that night.

The Watering Hole

The only tavern open for business is the Watering Hole. Gerhard Dietrich keeps it open because it's the only thing he has left and because it doubles as a town hall. Inside is a collection of tables and chairs with a long bar on one side. When the PCs enter, three men are inside: two men each at separate tables, Gerhard Dietrich and Lukas Schmidt, and a man behind the bar named Niklas Petersen. If the PCs ask the barman about Gerhard or call his name out loud, he speaks up and lets the party sit with him. Gerhard Dietrich is an older man, in his fifties. He looks as if he has seen his share of hard work as well as sorrow.

Gerhard gladly gives his opinion about almost any subject. He believes Beastmen are the ones to blame for the town's current state. He believes there are a lot of unspeakable things still in the area left over from the war. He also believes there are people in the area that worship the Dark Gods.

The PCs can come back to the Watering Hole when and if they acquire additional information. If asked about Ruprecht Hahn, Gerhard says he knows of a mansion outside Wolfenburg that was owned by a Lucius Hahn, but he does not know if a Ruprecht lived there. If asked about Ansel Vorman, he replies that Ansel lived with his grandparents in Ruhrhoff, just at the edge of town. If they ask him about the boy, Gerhard gets choked up and becomes unable to speak. Tears well up in his eyes, and he says nothing relating to children. This silence is because his eldest son, Johann, has gone missing. When the PCs have exhausted their questions and begin to leave, Gerhard says the following,

> *"The way you people ask questions and the way you look, you have seen a lot. My boy went missing 'bout four months ago. Just up and disappeared one night. I believe it was them cultists that got him. Anyway, I was just wondering if you folks could keep an eye out for him? I know it's a long shot, but I have to ask."*

If the party declines to look for his son, his head lowers and he says, *"I unnerstand. It's rough out there, and someone else's burdens don't need to be piled up on yer own."* If the PCs offer to keep an eye out, he says, *"Thank you! His name's Johann, and he's nineteen years old. He might be wearing a family ring on his right hand. I couldn't find it anywhere at the house."* He then shows the PCs a ring on his own hand with an elaborate family crest on it. The ring seems cheaply made, and it is an obvious attempt for the

What's Really Going On?

Indeed, the true culprits are cultists of Nurgle. With the militia still scattered by the Chaos Incursion, the cultists have become brazen with their plots, striking almost openly. Their latest plot to turn the villagers to their diseased master is to pollute their drinking water with fluids drawn from a bound Plaguebearer. They creep into the village at night and pour the sweet sap into the wells. It is their hope the locals will turn to the Ruinous Powers for succour. Perhaps they might, if those messengers don't make it to Middenheim.

owner to look important. Johann Dietrich was not captured by cultists and is, in fact, the high priest of the Plague Temple.

Gossip

The PCs may question other people in town, or if they press on to Ruhrhoff, they pass several other travellers during the remaining three days of their journey. No one knows anything about the illness plaguing Kietchdorf, but they may answer questions relating to Ansel, Tobias, and/or Ruprecht if they don't know about him yet. If the PCs ask about Ruprecht or Ansel, have them make a **Very Easy (+30) Gossip Test** and consult **Table 5–2: Gossip Tests**. What they find out depends on their degree of success. Each person the PCs question only knows about one of the individuals asked about. If the PCs ask questions about Tobias, no one will know him by name. If they ask about a man with a boy, a **Very Easy (+30) Gossip Test** reveals the following.

> *"You know, now that you say it, I did see a man travelling with a boy. Reason I remember is 'cause the boy had a hood or something over his head, and the man seemed real nervous like and kept the boy behind him, so you couldn't get a good look at him."*

— Vormanhaus —

The town of Ruhrhoff has been completely devastated, another victim of the Chaos Incursion. Most of the buildings and houses have been burned to the ground, and those that do remain are boarded up. Occasionally the PCs see a yellow "X" on the doors of some of the buildings. Characters know this is a commonly used plague mark. Vagabonds and bone pickers can be seen rummaging through the debris and searching the bodies of the dead for anything of value. They run and hide when they see the PCs approaching. The roads have been cracked and torn up, and the ground is scorched beyond saving. The PCs must travel through the centre of town to reach the Vorman house, which is easy to locate.

Miraculously, the cottage still stands. A modest, two-storey building, the Vorman house would have been an idyllic place to live when the town was prosperous. But now the roof and most of the first floor are missing, the windows and doors are boarded up, the structure decayed, and the yard overgrown. The boards that were across the front door now lie discarded to the side and the door is wide open.

The interior of the house is mostly empty, the contents taken by the owners or ransacked long ago. Shattered pieces of wood and jagged stone that used to be part of the walls and ceiling lie about the floor. There is a staircase leading up to what remains of the first floor. Everything is covered in thick layers of soot and dirt. A foul smell hangs in the air, worthy enough to make a person gag.

A successful **Routine (+10) Follow Trail** or **Perception Test** reveals several footprints wending their way through the rubble from the front door to the cellar and back. With a successful **Hard (–20) Follow Trail** or **Perception Test** the PC can tell several people, not just two, have been through here recently. These footprints are of Tobias, Karl, and the Lahmians.

If some brave PC decides to search the upper floor of the house, the rotted floor is in danger of collapsing. There is a 15% chance per PC on the first floor of causing the floor to collapse. Make this check every round they spend on the first floor. If the floor collapses, it drops the PCs back down to the main floor where they take 1d10+1 damage for their trouble. There is nothing of value on the first floor.

Following what they can remember of Ansel's journal, the PCs should ultimately head down into the cellar. Once they do, they are immediately struck by a horrible smell and even worse sight. Dried blood covers the floor and walls. Shards of bone and lumps of oddly preserved desiccated flesh litter much of the cellar's floor in a great dark stain. It is what's left of Ansel's beloved Ermaline. The PCs must take a **Routine (+10) Will Power Test** or be immediately forced to leave the cellar. Any player able to stay can take a **Very Easy (+30) Perception Test** and see an outline in the blood where the *Necklace of Unfailing Loyalty* used to lie.

As the characters explore the cellar, a group of Eternal Malady cultists descend on the ruined house. The cultists lurked in the forest, and unless the PCs made an effort to explore the surrounding grounds, these cultists ought to get the jump on them—if the PCs did secure the grounds, they can fight the cultists before they explore the cottage. Tobias sent them to destroy or at least slow down the PCs. There's 1 cultist for each PC and 1 for each NPC still with the characters. Characters fleeing the cellar due to the horror they found there stumble into the waiting weapons of these wretched Nurgle servants. It takes PCs still in the cellar 1 round to rejoin their comrades up top.

Given the close quarters of the ruined cottage, fighting with a two-handed weapon or ranged weapon takes a –10 penalty to relevant tests. Fighting on the rubble also hampers movement (half the normal rate). Worse, each round, on their turn, a combatant must succeed on an **Easy (+20) Agility Test**. Failure by 10 or less means the character staggered and may only take a half action this round. Failure by more than 10 indicates the character slips and falls.

Eternal Malady Cultists

Male and Female Mutant Outlaws

The cultists encountered in this chapter are a group called the Eternal Malady, a minor cult of Nurgle started by Ruprecht when the construction of the temple began. After the completion of the unholy site, the followers stayed with Ruprecht, and he used them to capture victims for sacrifices in his rituals. Most left after the Chaos Incursion, but Ruprecht ordered several to stay behind and guard the temple in case it was ever needed again.

Cultists attack at specified times during the adventure, but feel free to have them attack the PCs at any time you feel is necessary. Opportune times are when the PCs are making loud noises or when they are heading in a direction you don't want them to go. The cultists roam Villa Hahn, inside and out, in an attempt to please the blessed occupants. The ratio of cultists to PCs should be about one to one, but feel free to raise or lower this amount based on how well the PCs are doing or how hurt they are.

Insanity Points: 4

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
45	35	27 (2)	32 (3)	39	29	40	29

Skills: Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int +10), Concealment (Ag +10), Dodge Blow (Ag), Perception (Int), Ride (Ag), Scale Sheer Surface (S), Secret Signs (Thief) (Int), Silent Move (Ag +10), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int), Swim (S)
Talents: Flee!, Rover, Strike to Stun
Traits: Mutation, Unsettling

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 12
Armour (Light): Leather Jerkin (Body 1)
Weapons: Hand Weapon (Sword, Mace, or Axe) (1d10+2), Shield (1d10; Special), Bow with 10 Arrows (1d10+3; Range 24/48; Reload Half)

Trappings

Aside from their armour and weapons, the cultists carry little. Each cultist has a 10% chance of carrying a small purse holding 1d5–1 Schillings and 1d10–1 Pennies.

Mutations

Each cultist has at least one mutation. Ten mutations and the necessary modifications to statistics follow. If you need more, feel free to roll on whatever mutation tables you have (*WFRP, Old World Bestiary,* or the Nurgle table in *Tome of Corruption*).

- *Acid Excretion:* A foul, green, caustic liquid issues from the pores of the Mutant's skin. This Mutant does not wear armour. When struck in combat, the attacking PC must successfully make an **Agility Test** or be splashed with the stuff, losing 1 Wound that ignores armour or Toughness Bonus.
- *Beast with a Thousand…:* Select a body part—ears, eyes, nipples, toes—the Mutant is covered with them.
- *Bizarre Colouration:* The Mutant is sickly green, urine yellow, or bruised blue.
- *Blood Substitution:* All of the blood in the Mutant's body has been replaced with pus and bile. Whenever this Mutant is hit in combat, his flesh splits and leaks, and if slain, his body explodes, spraying pus and bile 1d10×2 yards in all directions. Modify characteristics as follows: T 37 (3).
- *Cloud of Flies:* A cloud of horseflies hover about the Mutant, crawling in and out of his nose and mouth. Any PC within 2 yards (1 square) of the Mutant takes a –10 penalty to his Weapon Skill Tests as the swarming flies interfere with his attacks.
- *Corrosive Vomit:* Once during combat as a half action, the Mutant may spray the contents of its gut into an adjacent square. The vomit hits automatically for 2 damage and ignores all armour points. The spew may be dodged but not parried.
- *Foul Stench:* The Mutant's body produces a terrible odour, smelling of vomit, sour milk, and rancid ham. Any PCs with a sense of smell takes a –5 penalty to **Weapon Skill Tests** when standing within 2 yards (1 square) of the Mutant.
- *Grossly Fat:* Thick layers of fat have formed under the Mutant's skin in patches and blobs. Modify characteristics as follows: S 20 (2); W 13.
- *Plague Bearer:* The Mutant carries Neiglish Rot and tries to touch one of the PCs. See *WFRP* page 136 for details on this disease.
- *Warty Skin:* Every inch of the Mutant's body is covered in large, quivering warts. The Mutant gains 1 armour point on all locations.

Anytime a PC searches any of the cultists in this chapter, they discover a mark somewhere on their body depicting three circles with a fly sitting in the middle. A permanent Sigil of Flies has been magically branded into their flesh (see **Sigil of Flies** on page 116). If removed from the body, the Sigil does not retain its magic.

Searching one of the cultists from the Vorman house attack reveals a scribbled note followed by a description of the PCs (see **Handout #15**). After the cultists are defeated, the PCs may not know what to do next, even with the note. If they haven't received enough information, they may have to return and ask the townsfolk some more questions. They should eventually learn of Villa Hahn—but not necessarily the temple—and decide that travelling there is their only lead.

The Broken Bridge

Reaching Villa Hahn requires about a week of travel towards Wolfenburg. About six days into the trek, the PCs come upon the ruined remains of a stone bridge, a casualty of the Storm of Chaos. The river stretches some 20 yards across and is slow moving with clumps of green algae gathering on the shores. Crossing the river is not too dangerous since the current is not strong enough to carry them downstream, but the water is choked with disease, and anyone braving it must make a **Toughness Test** or be the proud victim of the Green Pox (see *WFRP* page 136).

The PCs might find another route around or across the river, eventually finding a safe crossing 1d10+4 miles upstream. They can travel the riverbank either upstream or downstream and will eventually find a safe way across. This delay adds another day to their travel time.

— Villa Hahn —

After nearly a week of travel up the lonely road to Wolfenburg, the PCs come upon a small, weed-choked path that leads to an old, sagging estate. The PCs are free to explore the estate in whatever order they wish, though most groups are likely to start with the manor. Most of the place hides some sinister danger, some foul threat spawned from the horrors of the cult that laid claim to the place before the Chaos Incursion. While terrifying and remorseless in its wickedness, the PCs will have much success in piecing together the identity of the villain behind the kidnapping of young Karl.

A. Gate

The path wends some 600 feet between thick woods shrouded in shadows until it ends at a rusted iron gate hanging in the centre of a mostly ruined wall. A bronze plaque on one of the pillars declares this estate to be Villa Hahn. The gate is in bad shape—half of it lies in the muck, nearly sunken in the mud. A **Routine (+10) Follow Trail Test** reveals evidence of recent traffic in this place. Wheel ruts in the soft mud reveal a heavy wagon or carriage recently came this way, but it fades when it hits the cobbled road leading to the manor house.

Little remains of the Villa's former splendour. Archaon's armies devastated the region, and the Villa is no exception, even though the mansion itself escaped unscathed. The land, however, was darkly poisoned, the once fertile soil now a sloppy marsh of foetid water and stinking mud. The mansion drank in the corruption of the grounds, and the once-bright paint is now faded, and a glistening sheen of sickening oil coats the structure, giving it an ochre hue. The windows are all bricked up.

All the beautiful landscaping that once existed is long gone. The sodden ground belches up streams of noxious gas reminiscent of the decay infesting the grounds. The once pristine and orderly flowerbeds are now choked with weeds, hideous plants, and eerie creepers. Clouds of annoying insects fill the air, seeking soft moist flesh in which to lay their eggs, while creating an unholy buzzing din as they swarm.

At night, darkness blankets the place, dimming torches, quenching candles, and producing a malaise of sorrow that seems to pollute the very air. In the early evening, the grounds are alive with the flickering green lights of fireflies, though these do little to chase away the oppressive bleakness of the environment.

B. Reflecting Pool

The muddy path improves after a few yards, giving way to a cobbled road leading up to the front of the manor and circling a long square pool. The pool contains a dark green, sludge-like liquid.

The cult used the pool for spawning Nurglings. The liquid is the oily green waste from these Daemons. Any PCs foolish enough to touch the liquid immediately contract something far worse than disease. The liquid enters the victim's body through the skin, travelling through the bloodstream until it coalesces into a tumour inside the abdomen, where a new Nurgling gestates. The Daemon feeds on the victim's waste and grows with terrifying speed. When it reaches full size, it becomes bored and leaves its host's body through the most convenient bodily orifice. This exit is not lethal, but it is incredibly terrifying and unpleasant, causing the PC to gain 1 to 3 Insanity Points. The incubation time for the Nurgling is usually several days, but feel free to shorten or extend the time period so the "birth" takes place at a time that is most embarrassing and inconvenient for the character.

Nurgling

A lone Nurgling is not much of a threat, and that is why these diminutive Daemons gather in swarms. When the Nurgling is born, it takes a few bites out of the closest PC—typically the host—before scrambling away to hide from any immediate predators. A Nurgling has a strange affection for its former host, seeing the poor wretch as something of a mother figure. The newborn Nurgling might follow its host, creeping into his bedroll to suckle on his skin or bury itself in a warm crevice. Generally, these Daemons are nuisances, spoiling foodstuffs, contaminating water supplies with their waste, and eating familiars, children, and pets.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
20	30	21 (2)	23 (2/4)	60	25	30	25

Skills: Concealment (Ag +10), Dodge Blow (Ag), Perception (Int), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Arcane Language (Daemonic) (Int), Speak Language (Dark Tongue) (Int), Swim (S)
Talents: Ambidextrous
Traits: Cloud of Flies, Daemonic Aura, Fearless, Instability, Night Vision, Plague, Unsettling

Combat

Attacks: 2**; Movement:** 4**; Wounds:** 7
Weapons: Claws and Teeth (1d10–2)

Cloud of Flies

A cloud of horseflies hover about the Daemon, crawling in and out of its nose and mouth. A PC within 2 yards (1 square) of it takes a –10 penalty to their **Weapon Skill Tests** as the flies swarm them.

Daemonic Aura

Against non-magical weapons, a Nurgling's effective Toughness Bonus increases to 4. A Nurgling's attacks count as magical, and they are immune to poison and suffocation.

Instability

On any round in which a Nurgling takes at least 1 Wound and fails to inflict any Wounds in return, it must successfully make a Will Power Test or become sucked back into the Realm of Chaos.

Plague

Any character that takes at least 1 Wound in combat with a Nurgling must immediately make a **Toughness Test** or acquire a disease of your choice.

C. Stable

The stable is one of the largest structures on the grounds. Although it's intact, there's not much here except for old droppings turned white with age, and a few rusty tools and rotten saddles. In one stall is a complete skeleton of a horse. A pitted green brass plate overhead proclaims the bones to be "Beauty."

The most interesting thing is the small cart attached to a very dead horse. Tobias didn't bother to unhitch the beast from the cart, merely leaving the animal in the stall. Wolves set upon the beast and ripped it apart where it stood. In the back of the cart is a child's coffin. The lid has been removed and flipped upside down. Scratch marks cover the inside.

D. The Manor

Years ago, this building would have rivalled some of the greatest manor houses in the Empire. A sprawling three-storey house with a dozen bedrooms, kitchens, servants' quarters, library, and numerous other chambers, it symbolised the Hahn family's wealth and power. The taint of Chaos has left an indelible mark on the place, staining the exterior foully and warping some of the carvings that decorate the structure's exterior. What were once icons of Sigmar, Myrmidia, and Taal are now dancing Daemons, foul spawn of Chaos, and suffering forms of the mutated. Queerly, the building defies reason, for wherever there were windows now stand strange seams as if some great giant pinched the walls to permanently seal shut these portals.

The Woods

The woods all around the manor are infested with Giant Wolves. Drawn by the carrion in the area and the easy hunting, they sniff around for fresher fare. Every time the PCs come upon a new location, there's a 10% chance for an encounter with the Giant Wolves. There's 1 Giant Wolf for each PC and NPC.

Giant Wolves

These massive monsters stand 5 feet tall at the shoulder. They have some of the characteristics of ordinary wolves but are far larger and more vicious in appearance.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
36	0	35 (3)	37 (3)	36	18	35	10

Skills: Concealment (Ag), Follow Trail (Int), Perception (Int +10), Silent Move (Ag), Swim (S)
Traits: Keen Senses, Natural Weapons (Bite), Night Vision

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 9; **Wounds:** 12
Weapons: Bite (1d10+3)

The Vampires

The PCs might notice that they have not yet encountered the Vampires. The fact is that the Lahmians are again letting the PCs do the dirty work for them. Baroness Theodora Margrave, Sophia, and a dozen servants lurk on the fringes of the woods just beyond the hedge maze. They have already pieced together that somewhere inside the maze is the cultists' temple, but they are not sure how to enter. Knowing the PCs are hot on their heels, the Vampire waits for them to make their way through and open the entrance to the temple. Once the PCs enter the maze armed with a Sigil, Sophia and her minions find another Sigil and then follow the PCs, arriving 3 rounds after the characters find the Plague Shrine. As a result, characters that backtrack once they enter the Plague Temple stand a good chance of coming across the sneaky Lahmian and her minions.

The most obvious entrance is through the front double doors. Made of stout oak, these are solid doors carved to display the symbol of Handrich, the God of Commerce. One of the two doors stands ajar, revealing darkness beyond. With a bit of pressure, the characters can shove the door open wider, causing the door to make a terrible groan as if in pain. In the back of the manor is the servants' entrance, which consists of a single locked door. A character can break it down with a **Hard (–20) Strength Test** or pick the lock with a **Challenging (–10) Pick Lock Test.** In either case, should the PCs force these doors, the inhabitants are all aware of intruders, and cultists may (at your option) come to investigate.

The interior of the mansion is dark and should make the PCs move even more cautiously than they would otherwise. Sounds from other rooms, the feeling of eyes watching, and quick movements behind them are all goods ways to keep the players on edge.

Nothing inside has been touched; it is exactly as it was left, except everything is covered in a thick layer of noxious mould, and the walls hold Green Hornet hives (see page 122), though these insects do not harass the PCs while they explore the manor. The air is particularly foul, and every 10 minutes the PCs remain inside, they must each successfully pass a **Toughness Test** or take a –10 penalty to all tests as they cough and vomit from the poisonous air. The penalty remains until they pass another test or until the character goes outside for at least 1 minute.

1. Vestibule

The entryway into the mansion looks well travelled. Everything is covered in mould and dust, and mildew soils the wallpaper. A **Very Easy (+30) Follow Trail** or **Perception Test** reveals muddy prints all throughout this area, heading into the main hall beyond and up the stairs there.

2. Main Hall

The main hall is a large, open room dominated by a grand staircase that leads up to the first floor. Two suits of rusted and pitted full plate armour painted in excrement stand on either side of the staircase, and several paintings hang on the walls. Two doors stand on the east and west walls.

When the PCs enter the main hall, call for **Perception Tests**. Those that succeed hear a quiet whimpering coming from up the stairs. The whimpering is from Genevieve Hahn (see **Room 12** for details).

3. Library

The library is an impressive room with bookshelves from floor to ceiling. There are several couches, chairs, and tables forming a semicircle in the middle of the room. The opening end of the semicircle faces a large fireplace set into the west wall. The library contains several old books about the history of Wolfenburg, the history of Villa Hahn, and books about importing and exporting. There is a book about the Hahn family with a family tree. Large portraits of the Hahn family cover the walls, but there are no nameplates or signs distinguishing who is who.

4. Study

Lucius's study is an impressive room. A large oak desk, several couches, and some bookshelves occupy the room. Searching through the desk, the PCs can find standard ledgers about Lucius's business with transaction dates, account numbers, and personalised notes. None of it is relevant and is standard business fare. A pipe and mouldy tobacco can be found in the main drawer.

The bottom drawer is locked. Casual inspection reveals it has scrapes and chips in the wood where someone failed to pry it open. Two successful **Pick Lock Tests** can open the drawer. Otherwise, a character must succeed on a **Hard (–20) Strength Test**—using a pry bar or something similar grants a +10 bonus to the test. The drawer holds a single ledger. Pulling the book out causes a piece of paper to slip free from its pages. The ledger contains notes detailing the importing and exporting of illegal goods into Wolfenburg from all around the Empire and beyond. Very high prices are listed next to these objects accompanied with initials, but no names are given. The note that fell from the ledger is addressed to Lucius from one of his managers at the docks. Give the PCs **Handout #16**.

The bookshelves in the room contain a number of books, but they are all damaged by mould and mildew. They are largely concerned with business, economics, and travelogues.

5. Servants' Anteroom

Used as a leisure area for the servants, this room is plain and simple. A couple of wooden chairs and a table can be found here. Doors lead out to the main hall, the servants' quarters, and the kitchen. The door leading outside is locked.

6. Servants' Quarters

The servants' personal quarters are decorated more plainly than the rest of the rooms in the house; they are simple and bare. A single, wooden bed and a dresser stand inside each room. Mouldy sheets and clothing can be found—but no personal items beyond that and nothing of any value.

7. Pantry

This large walk-in pantry contains sacks of food that have burst open and are now rotting. The food is covered in insects, and the smell is horrible. Sifting through the sacks along with a successful **Search Test** uncovers a Sigil of Flies (see sidebar).

8. Kitchen

The kitchen is large and designed for several cooks to be able to work simultaneously. Different preparation areas and several fireplaces and stone ovens line the north wall. Flies surround several piles of rotten food, and knives and cleavers of various sizes hang on the walls. Pans, pots, and utensils hang from the ceiling and lie scattered on the counter tops. A bloodstain covers the far corner of the kitchen, and lying in the centre of the mess on the floor is a nasty cleaver. There's no sign of a body.

Illegal Goods

Lucius's business of illegally importing and exporting forbidden items is beyond the scope of this adventure, but here are some ideas for furthering the adventure down that path.

The PCs may want to try and track down the items using the initials as clues. One lead they could follow would be to track down and question Frederick Geisten, the man who wrote the warning letter. Then they can bring these people to the authorities or attempt to keep the items for their own use.

The PCs may feel compelled to bring the ledger to someone high up in the Empire in hopes of gaining a reward or just as a moral duty. After alerting the authorities of the items, the PCs are hired to track down the items and then, through a very dangerous process, destroy them.

Sigil of Flies

The Sigil of Flies is made of a dull metal in the shape of the Nurgle symbol with a large fly on top of it. It is usually attached to a simple chain and worn around the neck. Ruprecht originally created the Sigil to allow the cultists to access the hidden temple. In this way, the Sigil served as a key. He then ensorcelled the hedge maze, making it nearly impossible for anyone without the Sigil to reach the centre. Eventually, Ruprecht devised a ceremony that could "bless" the cultists permanently by attaching the magic of the Sigil directly to the cultist's flesh. It was a very painful process for the cultists, and the unworthy perished during the ritual, but it ended the need for Ruprecht to produce any more Sigils. Cultists were easier to obtain than the metal for the Sigils. Thus only a handful of the Sigils remain on the manor grounds.

9. Dining Room

The dining room is a large room with doors to the main hall and the kitchen. A long, oak table stands in the middle of the room with a dozen plush chairs around it. Dusty plates covered with lumpy quivering mould and scattered silverware sit on the table.

After a few seconds of examining this room, a disembodied moan echoes through the room. Moments later, a shimmering manifestation of a ghostly woman appears—the Ghost of Irmella Hahn. As she coalesces, she begins to mutter, the shade of her body intensifying with each word. She moves jerkily, her head snapping side-to-side, as black bile oozes from her mouth. PCs can make out, *"Kill the killer… kill the killer… kill the killer,"* as her ghostly form writhes in agony. She doesn't respond to questions; she just wails and mutters, shuddering all the while. Once the PCs destroy Lucius in the Wine Cellar, the ghost never reappears.

Irmella Hahn

Lucius (see **History of Ruprecht Hahn**) brutally murdered his wife soon after the insects invaded his body. So appalling was her death, her spirit has been unable to move on to Morr's Fields and is trapped in this hellish house. She is very pale, translucent, and dressed in a slightly out-of-fashion dress. Her hair twists in an unfelt breeze, moving about, though her dress hangs still.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
25	0	30 (3)	30 (3)	42	31	18	30

Skills: Concealment (Ag +20), Gossip (Fel), Perception (Int +20), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int)

Traits: Ethereal, Fearful Touch, Frightening, Invisible, Night Vision, Place of Death, Undead

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 6; **Wounds:** 15

Fearful Touch

Irmella can attempt a **Weapon Skill Test** to touch an adjacent creature. If she succeeds, the creature must make a Fear Test. This attack can be dodged but not parried. To use this ability, Irmella must be visible. Creatures with the Undead Trait are immune to this Trait.

Invisible

Irmella can become invisible as a free action on her turn. While invisible, she cannot be targeted with ranged attacks, including magic missiles. Since she has the Ethereal Trait, she cannot be attacked with non-magical melee weapons.

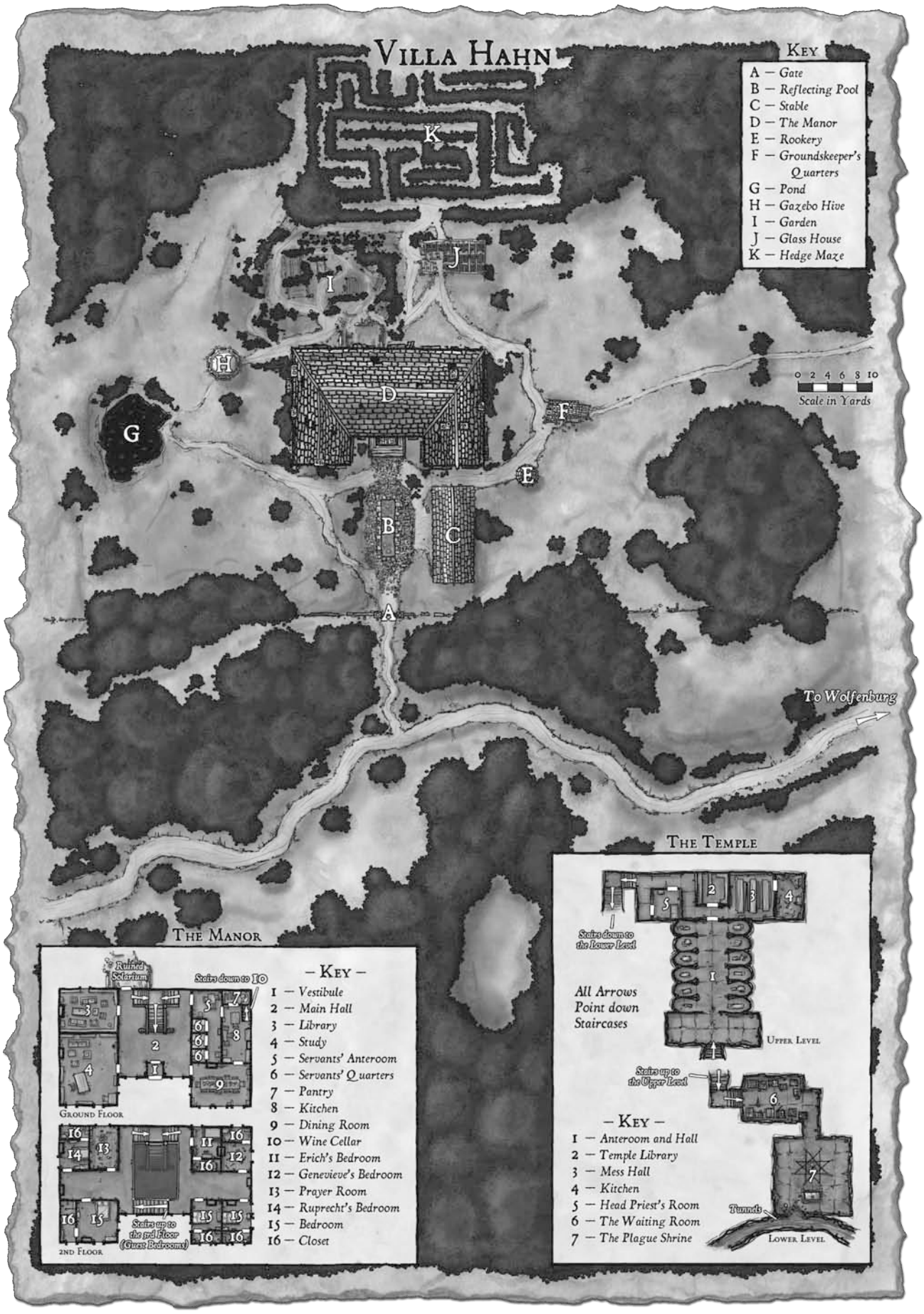
Place of Death

Irmella cannot move more than 36 yards from her place of death without some sort of magical compulsion.

10. Wine Cellar (Not Pictured)

A slick stone staircase leads into the cellar. As the characters descend, the stench of spoilt wine mixed with a foetid stink of rot grows stronger. The stairs stop at the cellar, where many smashed barrels and bottles around the rows and rows of wine racks fill the room. The wine cellar is big enough that the PCs cannot see the opposite wall from the bottom of the stairs. In the dim light, the PCs notice the floor seems to move slightly. Waves of black beetles scurry back and forth across the floor. The beetles simply move out of the way of anyone who enters the chamber, flowing around the intruder such that none of their numbers are crushed or even touched. A successful **Search Test** while exploring the cellar yields an unbroken bottle of Tilean wine worth 10 *gc* to a collector, and a degree of success on the test reveals a Sigil of Flies (see **Sigil of Flies** sidebar) lying on the floor. Whether they search or not, PCs moving into the room are bound to attract the attention of a shadowy form that moves in ways no Human could replicate. When they draw a bit closer, it speaks, revealing itself to be the master of this house, Lucius Hahn.

Lucius is careful to remain concealed in the shadows, commanding in a queer voice for the PCs to keep their distance. So long as they stay


Villa Hahn
Key
A — Gate
B — Reflecting Pool
C — Stable
D — The Manor
E — Rookery
F — Groundskeeper's Quarters
G — Pond
H — Gazebo Hive
I — Garden
J — Glass House
K — Hedge Maze
0 2 4 6 8 10
Scale in Yards
To Wolfenburg
The Manor
Ruined Solarium
Stairs down to 10
Ground Floor
2nd Floor
Stairs up to the 3rd Floor (Guest Bedrooms)
— Key —
1 — Vestibule
2 — Main Hall
3 — Library
4 — Study
5 — Servants' Anteroom
6 — Servants' Quarters
7 — Pantry
8 — Kitchen
9 — Dining Room
10 — Wine Cellar
11 — Erich's Bedroom
12 — Genevieve's Bedroom
13 — Prayer Room
14 — Ruprecht's Bedroom
15 — Bedroom
16 — Closet
The Temple
Stairs down to the Lower Level
All Arrows Point down Staircases
Upper Level
Stairs up to the Upper Level
Tunnels
Lower Level
— Key —
1 — Anteroom and Hall
2 — Temple Library
3 — Mess Hall
4 — Kitchen
5 — Head Priest's Room
6 — The Waiting Room
7 — The Plague Shrine

History of Ruprecht Hahn

The Hahn family story begins with its patriarch, an ambitious man named Lucius Hahn. Unskilled, untrained, and with few prospects, he worked as a common labourer in Wolfenburg. Despite his lowly stature, he had big dreams, plans to elevate himself above the common riffraff of the peasants. He resented his fellows and was prone to brawling over his snarling slurs at his co-workers or after a few toughs had finally had enough of his superior attitude. Blackened eyes and broken noses never managed to stamp out his motivation, and he pushed on, saving every penny that came his way in the hope of building a fortune to escape the accident of his birth. And then he met Irmella.

Irmella Drall was the daughter of a wealthy exporter in Wolfenburg. Under any other circumstances, a girl of her station would never deign to look at such a lowly peasant, but something about Lucius attracted her. It could have been his handsome, rugged features or perhaps her desire to rebel against her father's wishes by slumming with a commoner, but the fact remained, she was smitten. Lucius, who found her pretty enough, was drawn more by the promise of fabulous wealth. The Drall family was well known for its connections to the financial world, having representatives in Marienburg, Altdorf, and even Nuln. They also had political contacts despite their lack of noble blood. The Drall family represented the burgeoning middle class whose wealth and influence could and did rival that of some of the oldest families in the Empire. Marriage to Irmella was exactly what he needed.

Brazenly, he approached her father to ask for her hand in marriage. The proposal was refused. Such a marriage would be scandalous, and Herr Drall had no intention of sullying his status and reputation by marrying off his lovely (and valuable) daughter to a common labourer. Yet, Lucius knew Herr Drall made most of his fortunes smuggling contraband into the Empire. In fact, he was one of the largest suppliers of drugs and illegal goods in all the Old World, though he hid his illegal activities well. Before he could be thrown out of Herr Drall's offices, Lucius threatened to expose the source of the Drall fortune if he did not consent to the marriage.

Why Herr Drall allowed himself to be blackmailed is a story in its own right. It's possible, likely even, that Drall saw something of himself in the ambitious young man, and rather than having him killed outright, he agreed to the terms, sensing some promise and ability in young Lucius. It's also possible that Lucius had other leverage, though exactly what that might have been has been buried under years of lies and half-truths.

In any event, Lucius married Irmella and was welcomed, if grudgingly, into the family. Lucius was brought into the family business and proved to be just as savvy and corrupt as his father-in-law. It wasn't long before Irmella became pregnant, and after she was attacked in Wolfenburg's streets, Lucius had an estate built outside of the city, both for protection and to distance himself from his past. There, Irmella gave birth to their first son, Erich. Four years later, she gave birth to Ruprecht.

The two sons were as different as night and day. Erich favoured his father, had a head for business, and was dutiful in all things. Ruprecht on the other hand was a quiet and surly youth; he was disrespectful and grew bored with the lessons his father tried to instil in him. No amount of beating would make the boy see things Lucius's way, and so he washed his hands of his younger son, privately confiding in his peers that he didn't believe the boy came from his loins.

The relationship took a turn for the worse when Ruprecht started to show some talent for wizardry. Strange things began to happen around the estate, and Ruprecht frequently saw things others did not. Not only was this an embarrassment to Lucius, it also scared him senseless. He forbade his son from telling anyone about his "curse" and denied his entreaties to be sent to the Colleges of Magic in Altdorf. Had Lucius not dealt in illegal goods, he might have relented just to get the boy out of his hair, but placing the young man in proximity to such political power could ruin him.

Unfortunately, once the ability to access the Aethyr awakens in a person, it does not go away. Ruprecht secretly trained himself and scoured Wolfenburg for grimoires, meeting with accomplished witches and warlocks, learning all he could. His studies paid off, and he became quite the master of sorcery, even though he lurked dangerously close to the forbidden. It wasn't until he discovered a hidden book in one of his father's shipments that Ruprecht learned the meaning of true power. A minor treatise on Dark Magic was all that the young man needed.

After a couple of years, Ruprecht's mastery over Dark Magic was astounding. So great was his power that the Ruinous Powers themselves took notice. An emissary of Nurgle came to Ruprecht and asked that a temple be built in the name of Grandfather Nurgle to be used as a staging area for an upcoming battle. This battle would lead to Chaos dominating the entire world. In exchange for building the temple, Ruprecht would be blessed by Nurgle and receive even greater power, becoming a fully fledged Chaos sorcerer of Nurgle. Ruprecht readily agreed.

back, the PCs see a cloaked figure in the gloom that moves strangely. A **Challenging (–10) Perception Test** grants a PC a better look and an Insanity Point if he fails a **Will Power Test**. Lucius appears very pale, and his limbs hang from his body. The reason for his strange motions is because a monstrous creature has burrowed itself inside his body, pushing its legs into Lucius's arms, legs, head, and torso. But Lucius is not dead; the insect controls him like a puppet and uses him to incubate its eggs and as a living larder, using its long and horrible tongue to sample his weeping wounds. If the PCs approach him, Lucius warns them to stay back, but he grimaces in pain because the insect wants the food to come closer.

Lucius talks to the party and even answers certain questions. Conversation with Lucius should be unnerving as Lucius and the insect fight for control over the flesh. He has knowledge of the events that have taken place here and that the temple is in the hedge maze. If asked a question he doesn't know or just when you want to, Lucius says phrases like the following.

"I failed my son."
"The atrocities came, but they won't leave!"
"I didn't want to kill her. It wasn't me."
"Come closer to learn more…"
"Set me free."

Finally, if asked, Lucius relates the sorry tale of his life. He speaks as if he is looking on the life of someone else. He knows his son is to blame and has managed to piece together the details of his son's fall from journals and his own reflections. Read or paraphrase the **History of Ruprecht Hahn** sidebar.

Lucius does not follow the PCs if they leave the wine cellar.

Lucius Hahn

Upon close inspection, Lucius is little more than a coat of living flesh, kept alive by the foul will of the appalling creature that stole his skin. The massive insect is beetle-like with long, twitching antennae and an impossibly long tongue that it keeps curled up until it wishes to drink Lucius's fluids. It rests on Lucius's back with its six legs lodged into him, which is how it controls his movement and actions. It fights using Lucius's body as makeshift armour until he is gone, and then it fights on its own. The insect only has its legs inside Lucius, so if the PCs can surround the

insect and strike at its back, they may damage it directly. Because of this, the insect always keeps its back to a wall.

Insanity Points: 5 (Lucius only)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
42	30	41 (4)	34 (3)	23	37	36	12

Skills: Concealment (Ag +10), Dodge Blow (Ag), Perception (Int), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Arcane Language (Daemonic) (Int), Speak Language (Dark Tongue, Reikspiel) (Int)
Talents: Ambidextrous
Traits: Fearless, Flesh Armour, Natural Weapons (Pincers), Night Vision, Terrifying

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 5 (Lucius) 7 (Insect)
Weapons: Pincers (1d10+4)

Flesh Armour

The insect wears Lucius like armour, and every Wound slowly strips that armour away, killing Lucius in the process. Lucius screams in pain every time he is hit in combat. Unless specifically struck in the back, the creature ignores the first 5 Wounds suffered in combat, as these are taken out of Lucius's flesh. After the first 5 Wounds, it is completely stripped of Lucius's body and fights normally. The insect imbues Lucius with a sort of false life, so if the insect is slain, Lucius dies horribly soon after.

11. Erich Hahn's Bedroom

Erich's bedroom is filled expensive-looking furniture, including a four-poster bed. It is obvious a man and wife once lived in this room. The walk-in closet is full of mouldy suits and dresses. Searching the room uncovers Erich's personal diary in a nightstand. The diary contains mundane entries about work, parties he attended, and his love for his wife, Camille, and his daughter, Genevieve. There are several pages torn out of the middle of the diary, and the writing that follows looks like the hand of a different person (see **Handout #17**).

12. Genevieve's Bedroom

As the PCs draw closer to this room, they automatically hear the sound of a little girl crying. The bedroom is large and foul. Any civilised decorations or furniture in here is long gone, having been replaced with blood soaked walls and piles of bones and chunks of rotten flesh. The PCs see a man, Gregor Schlossberger, in leather armour and holding a sword in front of him. At his feet is what appears to be the body of a mutilated woman in a blood-soaked dress. The man stares across the room at a terrifying mass of flesh and sinew. Between him and the horror is a little girl—Genevieve Hahn—who's crying. A successful **Very Hard (–30) Perception Test** reveals Genevieve has a large sore on her neck and her nightgown is stuck to her as if she has been sweating.

The creature is a Chaos Spawn, and two people, a man and a woman, have been fused together at impossible angles to create it. Some of their body parts are recognisable as Human, but the parts stick out from unlikely locations. The skin of the creature is oily black like that of a slug, and it is covered in horrible sores and seeping pus. Razor-sharp spikes and tentacles stick out of the creature in random places, and the fingers and toes on its four legs, and four arms are webbed and have what looks like stingers on the ends. No heads are discernible, but one face is where the stomach would be and another is on its back. The creature waddles at the PCs, loosing a wet, bubbling scream.

Chaos Spawn of Nurgle

The Chaos Spawn rolls, slides, and waddles around, seemingly attacking at random. It attacks a different PC each round if it can.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
30	0	36 (3)	52 (5)	18	10	58	0

Skills: Perception (Int +20), Swim (S)
Traits: Afraid of Fire, Cloud of Flies, Keen Senses, Natural Weapon (Tentacles), Night Vision, Paralysis, Plague, Rubbery Hide

Combat

Attacks: 4; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 23
Armour: None (Mass 2)
Weapons: Tentacles (1d10+3)

Afraid of Fire

The Spawn of Nurgle must make a Fear Test whenever it encounters fire.

Cloud of Flies

A cloud of horseflies hover about the Spawn, crawling in and out of its orifices. Any PC within 2 yards (1 square) of it takes a –10 penalty to their Weapon Skill Tests as the flies swarm them.

Paralysis

Whenever the Spawn succeeds on a **Weapon Skill Test**, its target must succeed on a **Challenging (–10) Toughness Test** or become paralysed for 2d10 minutes. Paralysed creatures are helpless.

Plague

Any Character who takes at least 1 Wound from the Spawn must succeed at a **Challenging (–10) Toughness Test** or contract Neiglish Rot.

Rubbery Hide

The Spawn's rubbery hide grants it 2 armour points in all locations.

Gregor Schlossberger

Male Human Fence (ex-Bone Picker)

Gregor Schlossberger is a treasure hunter who came from Wolfenburg looking for plunder. He is not a brave man, preferring to steal from the dead or the unaware. He stands just over 6 feet tall and has short, straight black hair. He headed away from Wolfenburg because of the dangers in the ruins, the remaining cultists infesting the place, and word of the

Genevieve Hahn and Her Parents

Genevieve Hahn was an energetic little girl and the pride and joy of Erich and Camille Hahn. She lived in the mansion her entire life, not being allowed to interact with commoners by her strict father and grandfather. Because of the mutations given to her by her father, she looks to be about thirteen or fourteen years old but is far older. Her parents succumbed to the mutations first, accidentally infecting Genevieve much later. While in a grim embrace one day, her parents were merged into one hideous beast with Nurgle's blessing. Even in her diseased and chaotic state, Genevieve believes the Chaos Spawn is still her parents and brings it food, such as the PCs, whenever she can. She wears a Sigil of Flies around her neck given to her by one of the cultists just before she introduced him to her parents.

fast-approaching Crusade of the Child. Gregor decided Wolfenburg had pretty much been picked clean of anything useful or valuable by now, so it was time to move on to bigger and brighter cities. He entered Villa Hahn looking for anything to steal and fell for Genevieve's trap.

If it looks like the PCs are having trouble with the fight or are seriously hurt from previous battles, Gregor steps in and provides some help.

It is up to you whether or not Gregor remains with the PCs for the rest of this chapter or if he runs off after the skirmish. Gregor makes for a good replacement PC or as a companion for the PCs to go along with Nils or other characters the PCs may have picked up along the way.

Insanity Points: 2

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
38	37	43 (4)	46 (4)	40	38	40	42

Skills: Animal Care (Int), Charm (Fel), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int +10), Drive (S), Evaluate (Int +10), Gossip (Fel +10), Haggle (Fel +10), Perception (Int +10), Search (Int), Sleight of Hand (Ag), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int)
Talents: Coolheaded, Dealmaker, Hardy, Streetwise, Super Numerate, Very Resilient
Traits: Night Vision

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Fate Points:** 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 17
Armour (Light): Full Leather (Head 1, Arms 1, Body 1, Legs 1)
Weapons: Hand Weapon (Sword) (1d10+4), Bow with 10 Arrows (1d10+3; Range 24/48; Reload Half)

Trappings

Gregor lost his cart on the way out of Wolfenburg and his mule about a league from the estate. He has little to his name aside from his patched and threadbare clothes, a worn green cloak, muddy boots, and a headband of green silk. He carries a small purse that holds 1 *gc* and 9s.

Development

After the fight, the PCs get a good look at Genevieve. Her face is extremely pale, and her arms and legs are covered in leaking sores. When the PCs defeat the Chaos Spawn, Genevieve screams and lunges for the closest PC yelling, *"You killed my parents!"* She bites a PC to infect him or her with disease. The fight against Genevieve is supposed to be more disturbing than an actual challenge. If the PCs kill her and search the body, they notice she wears a Sigil of Flies around her neck.

Genevieve Hahn

Female Mutant Noble

Insanity Points: 6

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
26	31	31 (3)	34 (3)	37	29	32	27

Skills: Blather (Fel), Charm (Fel), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int +10), Concealment (Ag), Gossip (Fel), Performer (Musician) (Fel), Read/Write (Int), Ride (Ag), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int +10)
Talents: Etiquette, Flee!, Public Speaking, Savvy, Schemer
Traits: Diseased, Mutation (Stunted)

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 10
Weapons: Bite (1d10–1)

Trappings

Genevieve wears a filthy dress.

Diseased

Creatures injured by Genevieve's bite must make a **Toughness Test** or contract Neiglish Rot.

Stunted

Genevieve stopped growing when she became infected. She has the stature of a thirteen-year-old girl.

The Corpse and the Room

The appearance of the bloated, bloody woman's carcass suggests she's been dead for some time. Numerous bite marks and missing chunks of flesh also reveal that she's been a meal for someone or something.

A mucus-like substance covers the ceiling, walls, and floor of an attached dressing room off the master bedroom, which the Spawn uses as its nest. Should any PC enter the room and touch any of the foul-smelling, oily residue, they acquire a Nurgling just as if they had touched the water from the pool out front (see **Reflecting Pool**).

13. Prayer Room

This once-sacred room has been horribly defiled. The benches and altar have been hacked to pieces and smeared with excrement. Soiled tapestries lie in heaps, befouled by the cultists' leavings. A chipped and damaged symbol of Handrich still stands on the back wall but has a smiling face of faeces over it. There are symbols and markings on the walls, including the predominant symbol Nurgle. Any PC with the Dark Lore (Chaos) or the Dark Lore (Nurgle) Talent will be able to translate the symbols as a "cleansing" ritual to cover the area with the essence of Nurgle.

14. Ruprecht Hahn's Bedroom

Ruprecht's bedroom contains the same furnishings as the other bedrooms, but somehow everything appears darker. A large bed fills much of the room and a desk, dresser, and bureau are against the walls. The door to the walk-in closet is locked but can be forced open with a successful **Strength Test** or a single successful **Pick Lock Test**. The closet's floor is littered with boxes and lids, as if their contents were hastily removed and the boxes just tossed aside. The shelves are bare. It looks as if Ruprecht took everything with him when he left. Underneath the discarded boxes on the floor the PCs can find Ruprecht's journal (see **Handout #18**).

If the rest of the room is searched, the only item of interest that can be found is Ruprecht's personal diary. The dates in the diary show that the entries were written when Ruprecht was young (see **Handout #19**).

E. Rookery

Of all the structures on the grounds, only the Rookery remains completely intact. Inside this massive bird cage are a dozen black birds that caw and cackle madly. At the bottom of the cage are the remains of what is clearly a peasant. The carcass is bloated with corruption, and it's missing its eyes and tongue and has terrible damage in the softer flesh spots. Characters poking the body cause it to explode and squirt foul-smelling slime up to 2 yards in all directions. Those splattered must pass a **Will Power Test** or gain 1 Insanity Point. It is not possible to identify the corpse in the cage.

The rooks regard the PCs with black, beady, eyes, cocking their heads and squawking madly. The cage can be opened with a **Pick Lock Test**. Doing so causes the rooks to boil out and swarm around the PCs for 1d5 rounds, biting and nipping at them. Use the Large Template. All characters inside take 1d10+2 damage ignoring armour. Characters may flee the swarm of birds as a full action. After attacking, the swarm of birds flies off to alight on the trees at the edge of the forest. They might return and harass the PCs a bit further if the adventurers have had an easy time so far.

F. Groundskeeper's Quarters

This shoddy structure has not aged well. Consisting of one living area attached to a shed, the place is in shambles. One wall has collapsed completely, causing the roof to slope fearsomely towards the ground. The door long since fell down and is now a warren for mites and beetles. The interior consists of a darkly stained cot and an old table bearing a bent and broken lantern. The table's surface reveals a deep, oily stain that's furry with mould and grime. The shed is little better—it's empty except for the stench of manure and rot.

G. Pond

Not far from the gazebo is a pool of black sludge. Its opaque, oily surface casts a rainbow of colours when light shines upon it. The old wooden bench on the far side suggests this was once a peaceful, tranquil place. Now, it is a pit of filth. Characters coming within 4 yards of the pond automatically gain the attention of a dozen Nurglings, who emerge from the mire and attack.

Nurglings

Nurglings are miniature manifestations of Nurgle's filthy will. They are quite small, with mischievous faces and rotund little bodies equipped with disproportionate limbs.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
20	30	21 (2)	23 (2/4)	60	25	30	25

Skills: Concealment (Ag +10), Dodge Blow (Ag), Perception (Int), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Arcane Language (Daemonic) (Int), Speak Language (Dark Tongue) (Int), Swim (S)
Traits: Cloud of Flies, Daemonic Aura, Fearless, Instability, Night Vision, Plague, Small, Unsettling

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 7
Weapons: Claws and Teeth (1d10)

Daemonic Aura

Against non-magic weapons, a Nurgling's effective Toughness Bonus increases to 4. A Nurgling's attacks count as magical and they are immune to poison and suffocation.

Instability

On any round in which a Nurgling takes at least 1 Wound and fails to inflict any Wounds in return, it must successfully make a **Will Power Test** or be sucked back into the Realm of Chaos.

Cloud of Flies

Ordinarily, Nurglings crawl with flies, and when attacked, these diminutive insects swarm about the Nurgling's foes, imposing a –10 penalty on **Weapon Skill Tests**. However, given the watery conditions, the flies have found it difficult to fly, and so they drown, floating to the pond's surface.

Plague

Any character that takes at least 1 Wound in combat with a Nurgling must immediately pass a Toughness Test or acquire a disease of your choice.

H. Gazebo Hive

Connected to the back of the house are the remains of a sunroom. All

Brown Pox

Description: This horrible disease creates small blisters no larger than a quarter of an inch in diameter all over the bodies of its victims. The blistering can be limited to a certain area such as the back, arms, or neck, or in extreme cases, cover the entire body. They burst and release thick brown mucus, which can lead to some socially embarrassing situations, to say the least.
Duration: Ten days.
Effects: Afflicted characters take a –20 penalty to all **Fellowship Tests**. When the disease runs its course, the victim must make a **Toughness Test** again or takes a permanent –10 penalty to **Charm Tests** from the horrible scarring.

the glass has been shattered and the door leading into the house has been boarded up. A small stone path leads from the sunroom away from the house and to a gazebo. The gazebo's once bright white paint is chipped and dull and is now covered in patches of moss.

The buzzing gets louder as the PCs approach the gazebo. At least 1 swarm of Green Hornets per PC attacks the PCs if they get within 3 yards of the gazebo. If the PCs continue to move closer to the gazebo, more and more swarms emerge until the PCs withdraw. There is nothing of value or interest in the gazebo.

Green Hornet Swarms

Green Hornets are ordinary bees modified by the corrupting influence of Nurgle on the mansion. They gather in large swarms, buzzing and stinging anyone that draws too close. A Green Hornet swarm resembles a dark humming cloud. An individual Green Hornet is otherwise similar to any other hornet except it has six tiny green tentacles emerging from its abdomen. When it stings, one of these tentacles breaks off in the skin.

In combat, use the Small Template. The template can move 8 yards per round. Any creature beneath the template takes 1d10+1 damage bypassing armour points. A character damaged by the Green Hornets takes a –10 cumulative penalty to all tests. Each hour, the character loses –10 of the accumulated penalties. Should these penalties exceed the character's Toughness, the character dies.

Each time the character takes damage, he must make a **Toughness Test**. On a failed test, the character gains a point of taint as the tentacles burrow their way into the victim's flesh. After twenty-four hours, the character must pass a **Toughness Test** again. The difficulty depends on how many points of taint the character accumulated: 1—Easy (+20); 2—Routine (+10); 3—Average (+0); 4—Challenging (–10); 5—Hard (–20); 6—Very Hard (–30). If this test is failed, the character gains 1 mutation.

Fighting the Green Hornet swarm is difficult. Green Hornets are immune to all weapons, but fire and cold kill them. Dealing 5 or more damage from either destroys the swarm.

I. Garden

It's clear with a casual inspection that this area was once a garden. Curiously, there are still things growing in the thick tangle of weeds and briars. A **Routine (+10) Perception Test** is all it takes to notice a swollen red fruit beaded with moisture. A character must pass a **Will Power Test** or reach in to pluck the delicious treat. Once the character does, the thorny vines encircle the character's arm to no immediate ill-effect; however, when the character touches the fruit, it bursts open, spilling its rotten seed all over the character's hand. The goo is acidic, dealing 1d10+2 points of damage, and forces the character to make a **Toughness Test** or lose the use of his hand for 1 hour. Aside from the strange fruit, there's nothing of interest or value here.

J. Glass House

Just behind the mansion are the remains of an old greenhouse. The glass was shattered long ago, leaving behind a rusted iron frame. Inside the bent and nearly collapsed structure are four long tables that once held precious flowers and plants. The cultists now use this area to cultivate entirely different sorts of plants. Filling the tables and floor, and climbing the metal frame, are all sorts of terrible plants and fungi. Examining the Glass House is risky, since each minute the PCs spend here, there's a 20% chance that one of the plants sprays the character with nectar, spores, or some other slime. A character can make an **Agility** (or **Dodge Blow**) **Test** to avoid the noxious substance. A failed test indicates the character must test again or contract a disease of your choosing. A successful **Search Test** uncovers a Sigil of Flies beneath the second table.

K. Hedge Maze

Beyond the ruins of the glass house and the garden is an overgrown hedge maze. In the centre of this overgrown tangle of underbrush, thorny vines, and queer flowers, lies the Plague Temple. Without acquiring the Sigil of Flies (see page 116), the PCs have little chance of finding their way to the centre, since dark magic infuses the plants, causing them to twist and writhe, close off passages, and open new ones all in the effort to mislead the hapless wanderers and spit them out of the maze.

The hedge maze is generally made up of overgrown and untended bushes that stand some 12 feet tall. Infesting the growth is a thick tangle of thorny vines that sprout pale yellow trumpet-like flowers. The thorns are sharp enough to cut through leather, and characters that come into contact with them with any kind of force take 1d10 points of damage. The flowers, if disturbed, spray their pollen into the air, blinding all characters within 2 yards for 1d5 rounds unless they succeed on a **Hard (–20) Toughness Test**. A blinded character cannot test any skill or characteristic that relies on vision. In addition, a character swinging a handheld weapon takes a –30 penalty to his test. Finally, a character that moves does so in a random direction unless the character has the Orientation Talent and succeeds on a **Hard (–20) Navigation Test**. Movement, regardless of testing Navigation or not, is at half the normal rate.

Cutting through the maze has little effect. Aside from spraying the character doing the cutting with pollen and subjecting him to 2 hits dealing 1d10 damage from the thorns, the hedges gradually repair themselves.

Table 5-3: Hedge Maze Hazards

Roll	Result
1–2	The PCs wander around and eventually return to the maze's entrance.
3	The PCs have reached a dead end and must turn around or hack their way out of the hedge.
4–5	The PCs come across a group of cultists travelling to or from the Plague Temple. They attack the PCs. There is 1 cultist for each PC and NPC. Use the statistics for **Eternal Malady** cultists on page 126.
6–7	The PCs exit the maze from a different location than the one they entered.
8	The PCs come across a patch of blue mushrooms. Touching the mushrooms causes them to eject their spores. The character doing the touching must pass a **Toughness Test** or acquire Neiglish Rot. A death-seeking PC that eats the fungus must succeed on a **Very Hard (–30) Toughness Test** or gain 1d5 Insanity Points as he's plagued with strange hallucinations. In addition, the twit automatically acquires Neiglish Rot.
9	In a small clearing, the PCs find a stature of an armoured warrior. It has the shape of a man, but in place of his right hand is a knot of tentacles that grips a wicked halberd. The statue depicts Rolth, a Champion of Nurgle.
10	A bloated corpse lies buried under a heap of maggots and biting flies. Searching the body reveals the victim was a witch hunter by his dark clothing, wide-brimmed hat, and partly dissolved silver torch pin—if you're using the witch hunter hook from **In the Service of Sigmar** in **Chapter I**, this corpse is the characters' employer.

Furthermore, a character cutting his way through the foliage eventually comes out one of the other sides without ever actually finding the centre.

Examining the soft, loamy earth does turn up a fair number of tracks, but they are jumbled and heading in conflicting directions. A character that succeeds on three consecutive **Very Hard (–30) Follow Trail Tests** can pick out a path to lead the PCs through the growth and find the temple in the centre.

Characters might use the Navigation Skill to find their way through the mess. Naturally, the magical atmosphere interferes with most attempts, completely thwarting the effects of the Orientation Talent. It takes four consecutive **Very Hard (–30) Navigation Tests** to find the heart of the maze.

The best way to navigate the maze is to use the Magical Sense Skill. A character need only make two consecutive **Hard (–20) Magical Sense Tests** to find the proper path.

Finally, casting any sort of spell whilst in the maze cause the character to roll a Chaos Die. The Chaos Die does not apply towards the Casting Number but counts towards Tzeentch's Curse.

Characters failing any of these tests or entering the maze blindly must roll 1d10 on **Table 5-3**.

If the PCs have retrieved a Sigil of Flies from inside the house, then they have little trouble making their way to the centre of the maze. Only one character needs a Sigil to lead the rest of the PCs. When they do, they come upon a large clearing with a circular mound of oily blue-black flesh in its centre. The mound is about 1 or 2 feet in height and roughly 12 feet in diameter. Several black tendrils or roots extend from the mound and dig into the nearby dirt. The mound occasionally pulses as if alive, and they can see fluids of green and yellow racing through translucent veins just below the surface of its skin. When the PCs approach, the mound opens from its centre with a wet tearing sound, its flesh pulled tight to the outer edge of the circle, like a sphincter. Several cultists (use **Eternal Malady Cultists** on page 126) climb out of the newly formed hole. The cultists are as surprised to see the PCs at their temple as much as the PCs are surprised to see someone walk out of a giant mound of bruised flesh. The cultists attack the PCs, and the mound closes behind them. There's 1 cultist for each PC.

After the PCs dispatch the cultists, they go inside the temple. The sphincter does not open for the PCs when they approach it. The cultists know the correct spot and a certain way to rub the mound to make it open. The only way for the PCs to enter the temple is to hack through the material. This method is not pretty nor does it smell good. The skin of the mound is tough, so make the PCs really work at cutting through it. They should be covered in pus and blood and other disgusting goo by the time they make a large enough hole. The mound has no way of fighting back, but loud gurgling can be heard the entire time the PCs hack at it. Anyone taking part or even watching this must make a **Will Power Test** or gain 1 Insanity Point. Also, anyone covered in the fluid from the mound must make a **Toughness Test** or suffer from Brown Pox (see sidebar).

— The Temple —

Ruprecht's discoveries in his father's contraband eventually gained him the attention of Nurgle. The Plague Lord commanded his servant to construct a terrible temple, and to this end, the Dark God gave him servants to help. Ruprecht also recruited Wolfenburg locals into his cult. The threat of an ensuing war and the promise of being spared enticed more into service than even Ruprecht could have imagined.

The walls, ceilings, and floors of the temple are made from large blackish-blue stones that make every corridor and room look like bruised flesh. The air in the temple is almost unbearable: the smell of rot and decay permeates everything.

Throughout the complex, cloudy mucus oozes from between the cracks of the stones, dripping from the walls and ceiling and bubbling up from the floor. In places, these sticky strands of goo actually form webbing. Characters can avoid these places easily, but in the thick of combat, accidental stumbling is likely. Once per encounter, randomly select a PC or NPC. That character must succeed on an **Easy (+20) Agility Test** or stumble into the "webs." The goo imposes a –10 penalty on all physical tests for 1d10 minutes, at which point it dries up and flakes away.

1. Anteroom and Hall

Clearing away the darkened flesh, the PCs find a blue stone staircase descending into the earth. There are nine steps in all, stopping at a bare anteroom. Through an arch, the PCs can see a long hall pierced with a row of alcoves on either side. Through the arches are sleeping crèches for the cultists. They hold maggot-ridden scraps of cloth and bile -stained bedrolls. The hall stinks of vomit and urine. Yellow chalk drawings of what looks like flies and other insects along with symbols and runes cover the stone walls. A character that can Read/Write and succeeds on a **Challenging (–10) Speak Arcane Language (Daemonic) Test** can read the symbols as praises from the cultists to the Plague God and invocations for their foetid master to grace them with more plagues, so they might suckle upon the oozing decay that their bodies exude.

2. Temple Library

The temple library is barely that. It was mostly used as a storage area for Ruprecht's books and items too dangerous to keep in the house. A couple of small shelves house a few books, mostly covering topics such as the history of Nurgle cults and some depicting simple religious routines and rituals that are not of a magical nature. If the PCs search the shelves, they discover a leather-bound book of obviously higher quality than the others—*The Libram Pandemic*.

The Libram Pandemic

Penned by Hadred over 150 years ago, this book could be the single most deadly item known. Cataloguing hundreds of diseases, the book is more of a checklist than how to conjure them yourself. It describes the diseases, usual locations they are found, and even some cures for a couple of them. As a special bonus, Hadred had every page contain a sample of the disease showcased on that page. Any PC that touches the book must make a **Toughness Test** for each page touched or contract a disease of your choosing.

3. Mess Hall

This room contains rows and rows of long wooden tables and benches. Used as a mess hall by the cultists during the Chaos Incursion, it is now used only by those few remaining here. Wooden cutlery and plates lie on the tables and the floor, covered in mould. On the other side of the mess hall is the entrance to the kitchen.

4. Kitchen

The kitchen is an appalling chamber of horrors. Human legs, arms, and torsos hang from iron hooks set in the ceiling. Heaps of entrails and viscera clutter the butcher blocks that bristle with stuck cleavers and knives. The floor is slick with offal and streaked with disgusting filth. A profusion of boot prints suggests this room sees regular use. Touching anything here puts the characters at risk of catching Neiglish Rot, unless they successfully pass **Toughness Tests**.

5. Head Priest's Room

When Ruprecht fled north, presumably towards the Troll Country, he left the temple in the care of Johann, a talented cult acolyte of Nurgle. Johann is currently in the Plague Shrine helping Tobias with the ritual to bind Karl to Ruprecht.

The room contains a simple bed and bureau. If searched, the bureau reveals common clothes and a tattered book filled with unintelligible writing and markings. Characters that can read Daemonic see that the book is a manual of rites and rituals to be performed daily in Nurgle's honour. The rituals are praises to Nurgle and have no magical effects.

6. The Waiting Room

Descending a series of stone steps, the party enters the lower part of the temple. They see a single, long hall heading to the east that abruptly turns to the south. There are a dozen cages with rusty bars and gates on either side of the hall, presumably used as holding cells for sacrificial victims. Several of the cages contain lumpy masses that were probably Human at some point. If possible, the smell of decay is even worse down here. From down the hall and around the corner, the PCs can hear a constant droning—chanting from the cultists. The ritual to bind Ruprecht to Karl with the *Necklace of Unfailing Loyalty* has begun.

As the PCs pass one of the cages, a man reaches for them through the bars, screaming. His mouth, hands and chest are covered in blood. The body in the next cage has Human teeth marks in it. The man has eaten the decayed flesh of the person in the cell next to him to stay alive. The man blathers incoherently at the PCs and is unresponsive to anything they say to him.

The crazed man is not overtly harmful to the PCs, but the noise he makes may alert the cultists in the Plague Shrine down the hall. The PCs must figure out a way to silence the man if they would continue undetected. Have the cultists make **Challenging (–10) Perception Tests** to hear the commotion. Do note these cultists suffer from Ruprecht's Tintinnabulations, and so they are more or less immune to the boy's aura. See **Chapter IV** for more details on this plague. If they do hear, one withdraws from the Plague Shrine and comes to investigate and will most certainly draw the attention of others if needed.

The direct approach would be to kill the man. A **Very Easy (+30) Weapon Skill Test** kills the weakened man outright. The PCs can also attempt to free him. The gate can be forced open with a successful **Hard (–20) Strength Test**. Upon being freed, he attacks the closest characters in a crazed fit, biting and clawing at them.

Crazed Man

Male Human Peasant

The nameless man has been locked up for a long time and has gone completely mad. He has eaten rats and bugs and the prisoner in the cell beside him to stay alive. At one point, long ago, he had hopes of escaping, but those days are passed, and he attempts to stay alive out of habit more than anything else.

Insanity Points: 6

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
28	29	24 (2)	36 (3)	34	24	30	22

Skills: Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int), Gossip (Fel), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int)
Talents: Sixth Sense, Strong-minded

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 3 of 10
Weapons: Unarmed (1d10–2; Special)

Trappings

The crazed man wears dung-encrusted rags.

7. The Plague Shrine

When the PCs turn the corner, they see the Plague Shrine. An altar on the far side of the room stands 3 feet tall and is decorated with what appears to be viscera. Set into the floor with snot-green mosaic tiles is an octogram positioned in the centre of the room. Behind the altar is a gaping hole. Crumbled stone pieces lie on the floor in front of the hole as if something outside the shrine had forced its way in.

If the PCs were able to deal with the crazed man quietly, then the cultists are unaware of the PCs presence. When they enter the shrine, 9 cultists kneel around the octogram facing the altar. Tobias, Karl, and the high priest are standing at the altar with the high priest chanting and lifting the *Necklace of Unfailing Loyalty* above his head about to lower it around Karl's neck.

If the crazed man has alerted the cultists, then they are standing ready to fight the PCs when they enter. Tobias and the high priest are standing at the altar, as Karl sits behind them looking at the PCs.

Regardless, any PCs (and companions, if any) not immune to Karl's power feel an incredible urge to save the boy (see **Chapter III** for details on Karl's power). If the cultists are unaware of the PCs' presence, they can try to stop the ritual by attacking Tobias or the priest. If the cultists are aware, the PCs can attempt to negotiate for the boy with Tobias, or they can threaten him outright. Tobias stalls for time, pretending to consider any idea presented to him, as he and Karl slowly head towards the hole in the wall. If the PCs move towards Tobias, he immediately orders the cultists to attack.

Three rounds after combat begins, or at a time of your choosing, Sophia and twelve of her allies come into the room behind the PCs. Sophia says, *"I knew you would lead us to the boy. Humans are so simple. Neither one of you will be taking the boy. We need him. He will follow his destiny. He will be the Champion of the Night!"*

Tobias

Male Mutant Cult Acolyte of Nurgle (ex-Charlatan, ex-Journeyman Wizard, ex-Apprentice Wizard)

Tobias has abandoned all pretence at being Jan, and he now wears the sickening green robes that indicate his status as a cult acolyte of Nurgle. His long journey to Wolfenburg has given him a hunch on his back.

Insanity Points: 6

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
39	41	36 (3)	61 (6)	47	56	46	59

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Daemonology, Magic) (Int +10), Blather (Fel), Channelling (WP +10), Charm (Fel), Common Knowledge (Bretonnia) (Int), Common Knowledge (the Empire, the Wasteland) (Int +10), Concealment (Ag), Disguise (Fel +10), Evaluate (Int), Gamble (Int), Gossip (Fel +20), Haggle (Fel), Intimidate (S +10), Magical Sense (WP +10), Outdoor Survival (Int), Perception (Int +10), Read/Write (Int +10), Search (Int), Secret Language (Thieves' Tongue) (Int), Silent Move (Ag), Sleight of Hand (Ag), Speak Arcane Language) (Magick) (Int +10), Speak Arcane Language (Daemonic) (Int), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int +20), Speak Language (Classical) (Int +10), Speak Language (Breton) (Int), Swim (S), Torture (Fel)
Talents: Aethyric Attunement, Dark Lore (Chaos *or* Nurgle*), Dark Magic, Fast Hands, Fearless, Flee!, Hardy, Inured to Chaos, Lesser Magic (*Aethyric armour*, *dispel*), Mighty Missile, Mimic, Petty Magic (Arcane), Public Speaking, Resistance to Disease, Savvy, Schemer, Seasoned Traveller, Unsettling, Very Resilient
*Nurgle if you have *Tome of Corruption.*
Traits: Mutation (Chaos Organ, Hunchback)

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Fate Points:** 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 19
Magic: 2; Petty Magic (Arcane), *Aethyric armour, dispel,* and Dark Lore (Chaos *or* Nurgle)
Weapons: Hand Weapon (Sword) (1d10+3), Dagger (1d10+1)

Trappings

Tobias wears filthy green robes trimmed in ochre. A putrid amulet of Nurgle hangs about his neck. Vomit crusts his mouth.

Managing the Large Fight

A large battle like the one represented here can and will slow down the game. It's possible that what should seem like a big exciting epic conclusion will wind up dragging on, boring everyone as the grind of combat continues. You need not run the battle play-by-play; instead, narrate the events that happen around the PCs and keep the action on the characters. The most important thing is to keep the game flowing. Lahmian versus cultist fights don't need to be played out using the rules, so no unnecessary die rolls should be made.

At the end of each combat round, have at least one minion killed off by an opposing faction and, if you are keeping track of the number of minions, adjust this based on how well the PCs are doing. Have the tide of battle sway back and forth if the players are having trouble, that way the cultists and the Lahmians do a lot of the hard work. Or, if you think it would be easier, have one of the factions completely wipe out the other in a matter of a few rounds, so the PCs only have to deal with one of them. Keep in mind this could be a difficult battle for the PCs, depending on how well they have done and what they have encountered up to this point. But remember, if players are foolish they deserve what they get.

Also, keep the action of the battle cinematic. Even though the players may not be involved, describe to them what is going on with the other factions around them. Think of the possibilities of Mutants versus minions, such as a Vampire biting into a Mutant that excretes acid or a Mutant vomiting on a thrall.

If you keep it exciting, with the action unfolding all around, you won't be sorry.

Chaos Organ

Tobias has a muttering Chaos Organ growing in his gut. Should Tobias be slain, the organ tears free from the dead flesh, sprouts limbs, and waddles about spraying fluids everywhere. It uses the following statistics.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
19	20	18 (1)	30 (3)	23	28	23	29

Traits: Natural Weapon (Bite)
Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 8
Weapons: Bite (1d10+1)

Johann

Male Mutant Cult Acolyte of Nurgle (ex-Entertainer)

Poor young Johann fell in with a bad group, seduced by their power and influence in the region. He joined Ruprecht, selling his soul to the Ruinous Powers in exchange for the power they offered. Tragically, his naivety led to his physical corruption and de-evolution into something profoundly wrong. His mutations and knack for magic allowed him to gain the position of cult acolyte ahead of his peers.

Insanity Points: 4

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
39	44	39 (3)	68 (6)	42	36	34	33

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Daemonology) (Int), Blather (Fel), Channelling (WP), Charm (Fel), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int +10), Concealment (Ag), Disguise (Fel), Gossip (Fel), Intimidate (S), Magical Sense (WP), Outdoor Survival (Int), Perception (Int), Performer (Act, Sing) (Fel), Read/Write (Int), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Arcane Language (Daemonic) (Int), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int +10), Swim (S), Torture (Fel)
Talents: Aethyric Attunement, Dark Magic, Fearless, Flee!, Inured to Chaos, Lightning Reflexes, Petty Magic (Chaos or Arcane), Public Speaking, Resistance to Disease, Unsettling
Traits: Mutations (Blood Substitution, Corrosive Vomit)

Combat

Attacks: 1**; Movement:** 4**; Wounds:** 16
Magic: 1; Petty Magic (Chaos *or* Arcane)
Armour (Light): Leather Jack (Arms 1, Body 1)
Weapons: Hand Weapon (Mace) (1d10+3)

Trappings

Johann wears darkly stained green robes that bear blood and vomit stains.

Blood Substitution

Johann's blood has been replaced with a colony of biting insects. If slain, his body explodes 1d10×2 yards in all directions. Any time Johann is injured in combat, his body sprays his attacker with stinging bugs, forcing the foe to succeed on an **Agility Test** or take 1d10+1 damage and take a –10 penalty to all tests until he spends a half action to brush the pests away.

Corrosive Vomit

As a half action once every 1d10 rounds, Johann may spew the acidic contents of his gut at an adjacent foe. The vomit hits automatically and deals 1d10+2 damage ignoring armour points. The target may dodge this spew but not parry it.

Eternal Malady Cultists (9)

Male and Female Mutant Outlaws

As with the other cultists in the Eternal Malady, these individuals are completely loyal to Ruprecht and gladly give their lives in the service of the Chaos sorcerer and their Dark God.

Insanity Points: 4

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
45	35	27 (2)	32 (3)	39	29	40	29

Skills: Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int +10), Concealment (Ag +10), Dodge Blow (Ag), Perception (Int), Ride (Ag), Scale Sheer Surface (S), Secret Signs (Thief) (Int), Silent Move (Ag +10), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int), Swim (S)
Talents: Flee!, Rover, Strike to Stun
Traits: Mutations (varies), Unsettling

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 12
Armour (Light): Leather Jerkin (Body 1)
Weapons: Hand Weapon (Sword, Mace, or Axe) (1d10+2), Shield (1d10; Special), Bow with 10 Arrows (1d10+3; Range 24/48; Reload Half)

Trappings

Aside from their armour and weapons, the cultists carry little. Each cultist has a 10% chance of carrying a small purse holding 1d5–1 Schillings and 1d10–1 Pennies.

Mutations

Each cultist has one or more mutations, as follows.

- **Alfrida:** Alfrida has a twisted monstrous face not unlike that of a gargoyle. Sprouting from her back are two vestigial wings, though they are too weak and twisted to allow her to fly. From her mouth she may spit her long, sharp tongue to make ranged attacks against opponents up to 4 yards away. A head at the end deals 1d10+2 damage on a successful hit. Her tongue has the Piercing Quality. Alfrida uses the common statistics for Mutants, except her Fellowship is 21.
- **Eckhardt:** Eckhardt has the body and build of an ordinary Human, except in place of his head, he has a huge slavering rat's head, making him resemble a Skaven (proof that all that twaddle about Skaven is nothing more than misguided reports of Mutants). Eckhardt gains the Acute Hearing Talent and his Fellowship drops to 23.
- **Leopold:** Disturbingly obese, Leopold lumbers about on thick, slab-like legs. He uses the normal statistics, except his Strength drops to 20, and his Wounds increase to 13.
- **Mathilde:** Mathilde would be an ordinary pretty girl if she had a mouth. Her Fellowship is 24, but otherwise, her statistics are unchanged.
- **Pieter:** Pieter has a melted face, reducing his Fellowship to 18.
- **Rudiger:** This horrifying creature blends the form of a normal man with a centipede. His torso, head, and arms are all Human, but in place of his legs is the segmented body of a huge centipede. Rudiger's Movement is 5, and his Toughness Characteristic increases to 47 (4). He gains the Natural Weapons Talent. This altered form has made a coward of him, imposing a –20 penalty to Fear Tests and reducing his Will Power to 30.
- **Siegfried:** Siegfried suffers from awful black boils that cover his entire body. Complementing these oozing pustules is a myriad of brightly coloured polka dots. Siegfried modifies his statistics as follows: Toughness 23 (2), Agility 38, and Fellowship 12. He gains a +20 bonus to Intimidate and Torture Tests.
- **Theodora:** This once-attractive young woman is bent nearly double with her mutation, transforming her into an awful quadruped. Her arms are now legs, increasing her Movement to 5. Her Ballistic Skill drops to 0. Finally, her naked, twisted form gives off faint purple light, equivalent to a candle.
- **Ulrich:** The flesh of Ulrich's body has been replaced by living crystal. His Toughness increases to 59 (5), but his Wounds fall to 6.

Sophia

Female Lahmian Vampire Thrall (ex-Cat Burglar, ex-Thief)

Sophia's statistics haven't changed from the previous chapter but are included here for your convenience.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
53	41	56 (5)	56 (5)	84	42	52	54

Skills: Academic Knowledge (the Arts, Necromancy) (Int), Channelling (WP), Charm (Fel +10), Command (Fel), Common Knowledge (Kislev, the Empire) (Int), Concealment (Ag +10), Disguise (Fel), Dodge Blow (Ag), Evaluate (Int +10), Gossip (Fel), Haggle (Fel), Intimidate (S), Magical Sense (WP), Perception (Int +20), Performer (Singer) (Fel), Pick Lock (Ag +10), Prepare Poison (Int), Read/Write (Int), Scale Sheer Surface (S +20), Search (Int +20), Secret Language (Thieves' Tongue) (Int +10), Secret Signs (Thief) (Int +10), Shadowing (Ag), Silent Move (Ag +20), Sleight of Hand (Ag), Speak Arcane Language (Magick) (Int), Speak Language (Kislevarin, Reikspiel) (Int), Torture (Fel)

Talents: Alley Cat, Dark Magic, Etiquette, Lightning Reflexes, Petty Magic (Arcane), Quick Draw, Schemer, Specialist Weapon Group (Parrying), Stout-hearted, Street Fighting, Trapfinder, Unsettling

Traits: Blood Gift (Blood Drain, Natural Necromancer, Pass for Human, Vampires' Curse), Keen Senses, Frightening, Natural Weapons (Fangs, Claws), Night Vision, Undead

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 6; **Wounds:** 22
Magic: 1; Petty Magic (Arcane)
Armour (Light): Leather Jack and Greaves (Arms 1, Body 1, Legs 1)
Weapons: Superior Hand Weapon (Sword) (WS 63; 1d10+5), Superior Main Gauche (WS 63; 1d10+2; Defensive)

Trappings

Sophia wears black clothing cut for a man. She wears a couple of rings (each worth 1 *gc*). Slung over her shoulder is a coil of rope and grapple, and she keeps an empty sack in her belt. Hidden in her left glove are a number of lock picks. Since she's just learned Reikspiel, she keeps a book of Reikspiel grammar in her backpack.

Lahmian Minions (12)

Male and Female Human Thugs

These Humans worship Sophia and her mistress as Gods, bowing to their every command and subjecting themselves to their monstrous thirst.

Insanity Points: 3

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
46	30	43 (4)	41 (4)	33	32	41	41

Skills: Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int), Consume Alcohol (T), Dodge Blow (Ag), Gamble (Int), Gossip (Fel), Intimidate (S), Secret Language (Thieves' Tongue) (Int), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int)
Talents: Coolheaded, Disarm, Quick Draw, Strike to Injure, Strike to Stun, Strong-minded, Warrior Born

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 13
Armour (Medium): Mail Shirt and Leather Jerkin (Body 3)
Weapons: Hand Weapon (Sword) (1d10+4; CV +1), Knuckle-dusters (1d101; CV +1; Pummelling)

Trappings

These minions all wear black clothing beneath their long black cloaks. Dark animal-shaped masks cover their faces. Each also carries a small purse holding 1d10–2 Schillings and 1d10 Pennies.

A Grand Melee

The combat should start between the PCs, the cultists, and the Lahmians. The PCs actions decide how combat flows. If any PC not under Karl's influence attempts to attack him, then Sophia and her group (and possibly Gregor) step in to stop them and Tobias escapes with Karl through the tunnel behind the altar. If the PCs ignore Tobias and Karl and attack the Lahmians or the cultists, Tobias also escapes with Karl in tow through the tunnel.

In either case of Tobias and Karl escaping, Sophia and her group realise it is unnecessary to stay and fight. They retreat back through the temple, fighting anyone that gets in their way.

Should the characters attack Tobias and manage to kill him, they witness something moving beneath his cloak. A lump of black flesh tears free and writhes about on the floor, spraying fluids everywhere. Limbs sprout from the flesh and it looks like a miniature version of Tobias. This creature, a Chaos Organ, frees itself from its host's body. The Chaos Organ waddles towards the tunnel and escapes. While this happens, the Lahmians make their move to snatch the boy, forcing the PCs to turn their attention to the Vampire and her allies, as the thing gets free.

Finally, it's possible that the PCs manage to deal with the cultists, the minions, the Vampire, and Tobias, leaving just Karl. He weeps in thanks, flinging himself into the arms of a character who has been friendly to him in the past or that looks the least imposing. He asks the PCs to escort him to his family, the Crusade. He believes they wait for him at Wolfenburg, though he doesn't explain how he knows this.

If anyone tries to follow Tobias (either in his natural or Chaos Organ form), or if the PCs want to take Karl through the maze of tunnels to get to Wolfenburg, there is a chance of them becoming lost. There is a 30% chance that a group without someone with the Follow Trail Skill will end up either returning to the Plague Shrine or reaching the surface in a random area—or one of your choosing. Anyone who succeeds on a **Follow Trail Test** can find their way through the tunnels in pursuit of the fleeing cultist but at the Hampered Movement pace. Tobias knows the tunnels very well and easily gets to Wolfenburg ahead of the PCs.

If the PCs have killed the high priest and search his body, they discover a ring on his right hand with the Dietrich family crest on it, proving that he was Johann. It is up to the PCs whether or not they want to take the long journey back to Kietchdorf to return the ring to Gerhard.

Aftermath

If the PCs were able to kill Johann in the Plague Shrine and retrieved the *Necklace of Unfailing Loyalty,* then they must now decide what to do with it. They can attempt to use it themselves with horrific results (as you decide) or, the wiser choice, take it to someone more competent in such matters, such as a priest of Sigmar or Ulric in Wolfenburg, so it can be destroyed. They can also give it to the authorities in one of the major cities, so that it becomes their problem.

If the PCs decide to hang on to the *Necklace of Unfailing Loyalty,* there is a chance Ruprecht, or someone or something even worse, will steal it back from them later. If the PCs forgot about the *Necklace of Unfailing Loyalty* and leave it in the Plague Shrine, then some cultist will be by later to take care of it…

Further Adventures

The PCs give the *Necklace* to one of the religious orders and are treated as heretics. No amount of explaining convinces the priests they are innocent and not the original owners of the *Necklace*.

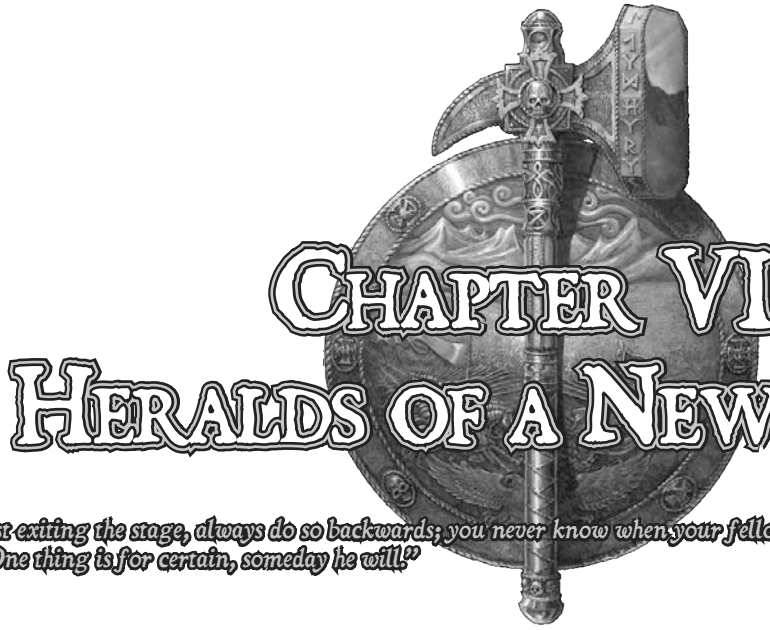
The PCs give the *Necklace of Unfailing Loyalty* to one of the religious orders, and they are asked to make a perilous journey to destroy the artefact. It must either be destroyed in a certain way, such as thrown into a bottomless swamp or melted in the fires of a volcano, or by a specific person, such as crushed by the Gromril hammer of a particular Dwarf runelord or released of its magic by a reclusive Elf wizard.

If the PCs left the *Necklace of Unfailing Loyalty* behind, then they later hear tales of an important politician doing uncharacteristic acts. If the PCs investigate, they discover a cultist has gained control of the politician with the *Necklace of Unfailing Loyalty* and now seeds unrest and upheaval throughout the city. The PCs must figure out a way to deal with the cultist while trying to convince the people around the powerful politician that he is being controlled.

Rewards

The player characters should acquire around 300 experience points by the end of this adventure.

Action	XP
Characters hire Devin to be their guide	15
Each character that survives the Drakwald	5
Agree to find Johann	10
Do not reveal the deaths of the smith's family to the smith	15
Learn key clues in Kietchdorf (per clue)	5
Explore the Vorman house	15
Defeat the cultists	25
Find a Sigil of Flies	25
Save Gregor Schlossberger	15
Destroy Genevieve	20
Destroy Genevieve's parents	25
Navigate the hedge maze	25
Silence the crazed man	10
Defeat the cultists	10
Kill Ruprecht	25
Defeat the Lahmians	25
Save Karl	50



Chapter VI: Heralds of a New Dawn

"Whilst exiting the stage, always do so backwards; you never know when your fellow performer will stab you in the back. One thing is for certain, someday he will."

—Detlef Sierck, Noted Playwright

By Dan White

In the shadows of the eastern arm of the Middle Mountains stand the ruins of Wolfenburg, the once-beautiful trade centre and capital of Ostland. The hordes of Chaos were not kind to this ancient city, and during the Chaos Incursion they swept through the Forest of Shadows, tore down the city's walls, and smashed its breathtaking architecture, leaving the once-teeming city a smoking ruin filled with dashed dreams, broken lives, and haunted memories of a sea of shrieking Mutants, vicious Beastmen, and countless other atrocities. Those beleaguered souls who scrape a life in the rubble of civilisation are cut off, severed from much of their countrymen, left to fend for themselves against the evils of the darkened woods. Although many cling to the promise of the Empire, looking expectantly towards the west for relief under Karl-Franz's banners, many have given up, turning to any of the strange new cults that offer relief or escape from the harsh and intolerable existence. And so, when the rabble of the broken, confused, and divided Crusade of the Child stumbled on the doorstep of this ruined city, it found a people searching for answers, who promptly added their numbers to this mob even though the champion who would lead them was lost, for they had to believe in something, and the half-truths, and insane mutterings of the Crusade's leaders were just as reasonable as the dark whispers of those soul peddlers that walked the shadows of Wolfenburg's lost greatness.

Adventure Background

Altdorf was a disaster. Infiltration by Chaos cultists, a blanket rejection from the Grand Theogonist and the Emperor, a jaded people with little interest in the message spread by the Crusade's people, and ultimately the loss of young Karl proved too much for the already-stretched Crusade and in spite of the inner circle's best efforts, the blows proved nearly too great for the mob to sustain its vigil beyond the mighty walls of the Empire's capital. While there were troubles enough—food shortages, crime, plague, to name just a few—the cement that held the various peoples, drawn from all walks of life, was missing, and what began as a trickle soon became a flood as Crusaders withdrew and made the long journeys back to their homes, confused and a little worried about the lives they left behind. Only the most devoted, those members who saw beyond the boy's allure and recognised the divine within him, chose to remain. Before the Crusade could lose more members, the inner circle decided to resume its march, heading east as the boy often spoke of travelling to Kislev to find his true destiny. They would prepare the way for their master and be ready for the next stage of his apotheosis.

With firm resolve, Helmut instructed his unruly flock of the plan, and soon after, the Crusade headed east once more, leaving behind Altdorf and heading for the broken landscape of the war-torn east. Onwards they marched, and sickness spread, factions were born, people fled, and people joined, so that by the time the Crusade crossed over into Ostland, there was little left of the earnest crowds that marched towards their future and instead was a nest of vipers, ambitious men and women who sought to profit from the mob in one way or another. By the time the Crusade reached the ruins of Wolfenburg, it was so fractured into rival groups that the people could no longer agree on which direction to travel.

For the last few days, the Crusade has settled in, trading with the locals and stripping the land of anything edible. A pall of despair has settled on the crowd and conflict seems to rule. There doesn't seem to be a day where someone isn't found dead, and to make matters worse, the contagion that has followed the Crusade from before Altdorf thrives, claiming even more lives. The pressure grows and unless Karl returns soon, the Crusade will implode.

Into this harrowing environment a Necrarch Vampire Lord named de Trois and his ghoulish minions have slipped. Seeking the boy for their own nefarious ends, they move through the crowds, masquerading as plague victims and fellow followers. They scoured the encampment, but to their frustration, they've learned that Karl is nowhere to be found—and they will butcher the entire Crusade if he doesn't soon arrive.

In addition, Lorinoc, the Wood Elf warrior from **Chapter III**, has led a force of Kithband warriors across the Empire in the hope of eliminating the Child. Newly arrived, the condition and climate of the Crusade has dispelled any misgivings they might have had towards the bloody deed they must perform. Unaware that Karl is missing, they make ready to infiltrate the mob and put this abomination to an end.

Adventure Synopsis

It is into this ugly environment that the PCs walk a few days after the troubles at Villa Hahn. Depending on the outcome of the previous

chapter, the characters may be pursuing the boy, have killed the boy and are now in desperate need of supplies, or are escorting young Karl to the encampment. If the characters thought they killed the boy or are chasing after him still, they find him newly arrived (a good use of a Fate Point by the young master!), safe and sound and firmly in the hands of the inner circle. Otherwise, the player characters can take the boy to the Crusade leaders where they are greeted with delight and relief, the boy safely back in their hands. Should the PCs have sought to harm the boy, Karl makes a great show of forgiving them of their crimes and showers them with his strengthening aura.

Regardless of the set up, the player characters are regarded as heroes, true champions of the Child, and named Templars of the Child. To celebrate the boy's return, the Heralds of the New Dawn, a minor but vocal and wealthy faction, declare they will put on a great play to celebrate the life of Sigmar and to rekindle the faith in the hearts of Karl's servants. As preparations are underway, Nils approaches the characters on a matter of some grave urgency. He believes that some fell agency intends to murder Karl.

To make matters worse, the characters discover an old friend murdered, which leads them into a convoluted investigation in the ruins of Wolfenburg, encounter several of the dominant factions, and more. Before the characters can fully sort out all the dangers against Karl, the play is to commence, and despite their protestations, the show must go on. Evidence points to this grand performance as being the night when something dreadful will occur and, at the urging of various characters the PCs have met along the way, the PCs participate, at some level, in the play, watchful for the attack they fear will occur.

— Getting Started —

As mentioned, the outcome of **Chapter V** directly informs how this chapter begins, all of which depends on how well the PCs fared against the cultists, whether or not they were able to rescue Karl, or if they decided to take matters into their own hands and destroy the boy themselves. The following scenarios describe possible outcomes from the previous chapter and includes tips for hooking the characters into the plot of this chapter.

What Has Come Before

In all likelihood, the player characters have endured many hardships on their way from Altdorf to Wolfenburg, by way of a horrific experience in the Villa Hahn. It is quite possible that one or more characters have contracted unpleasant diseases such as Neiglish Rot, Sphincteral Rash, or any number of other ailments contracted from handling the *Libram Pandemic*. Sensible characters should seek to receive care for these difficulties before progressing too far within the Crusade's encampment.

If the PCs are still in possession of the *Necklace of Unfailing Loyalty* then trying to get rid of this artefact without being subject to unwanted attention may be a priority. Finding a way to do this could be dangerous, however. Handing it over to Helmut or another of the Crusade's leaders may dim their view of the PCs and may cause some difficulty later in the campaign, whilst approaching inveterate hedge wizards within the Crusade could lead to all kinds of Chaos cult complications.

Wolfenburg

Up until the Chaos Incursion, Wolfenburg was the thriving capital of Ostland, a key trade centre in the eastern reaches of the Empire. Like other communities in this part of the world, it bore the brunt of Archaon's forces and even its tall walls and doughty defenders weren't strong enough to push back the tide of horror. In the end, the city was sacked, burned, its people enslaved, butchered, or scattered. Of the thriving population that lived here, only a thousand or so souls still call Wolfenburg home, and of them, they are a desperate, depressed, and ragged lot. Strange cults, no few of whom were thin masks to conceal their allegiance to the Ruinous Powers, have descended on the rubble like carrion birds, converting the despairing citizens and bringing them into their despicable fold. The longer Karl-Franz waits in sending relief, the worse the corruption will get until Wolfenburg is overrun by Chaos cultists, madmen, and the changed.

The ruins of Wolfenburg are a backdrop for this adventure and little else. The player characters are free to explore this area as they wish, but none of the events described here take place here and thus what horrors the PCs uncover in the city are left for you to describe. Wolfenburg is not a nice place, and the sights, sounds, and smells are dreadful indeed. Crawling through the rubble are starving men and women, and gangs of malnourished children armed with sharp knives that think nothing of setting upon a fattened merchant, while under the cover of night, Mutants emerge from old cellars to work their wickedness on the few honest folk still struggling to survive here.

The PCs Rescue Karl

This outcome is ideal, as well as the most likely one. Karl's aura should be strong enough to "encourage" the PCs to seek the best for him and protect him from harm. Once the characters have defeated all of the cultists and Vampires, Karl begs the characters to help him reach Kislev. He explains, *"I must go. Please. Help me."* A trip to Kislev ultimately takes the characters past Wolfenburg, where Karl spies the Crusade. He sighs and points to the crowds. He says, *"It seems we must go there first."*

Tobias or the Chaos Organ Escapes Alone

In all likelihood, something of Tobias escapes through the tunnels leading out of the Plague Temple to the ruins of W0lfenburg. Should Tobias escape with his life intact, a group of non-existent Skaven butcher him. Tobias's Chaos Organ tears free from the remains and waddles off in a huff, squirting fluid and ejaculating random curses as it makes its way towards Kislev. See **Chapter VIII** for the fate of this chunk of flesh.

Tobias Escapes with Karl

This outcome not the best, but it's not the worst either. Should Tobias manage to snatch the boy with Karl in tow, he flees towards Wolfenburg, where he hopes to gain/steal supplies to make the journey to the Troll Country where his master waits. Unfortunately for Tobias, he's ambushed by the Skaven as above, giving Karl the chance to escape and make his way out of the caves to Wolfenburg, where he's soon after reunited with the Crusade.

The Vampires Escape with Karl

Bad news indeed, for if the Vampires succeed in capturing the boy, they spirit him away to Kislev, to the lair of the Black Witch where they believe the boy will be crowned Champion of the Night. This outcome could develop into a harrowing chase across the countryside, and if the PCs do give pursuit, in the interest of maintaining the campaign's coherency, they should finally catch up, defeat or drive off the Undead, and regain Karl. Otherwise, Karl is effectively removed from the campaign until the end. The developments in this chapter and the ones that follow may proceed more or less as written, though you will need to modify many of the character motivations and many of the reasons for why things unfold as they do until such time that the characters brave the bowels of the Black Witch's Womb.

The PCs Kill Karl

The PCs may think they have cause—indeed, they probably do—to kill Karl, and if so, you might feel like the campaign is done and over with. Wrapping here is fine since you've had a good run with the previous

adventures and you can adapt the remaining adventures to eliminate the presence of Karl. Perhaps the Vampires are still heading for Kislev to have their grand ceremony and maybe the Black Witch can achieve her goals without Karl. Be flexible.

Another, perhaps heavy-handed solution, is to have the boy the PCs kill be a double. In light of the troubles plaguing the Crusade in Altdorf and his suspicions about Tobias, Helmut may have substituted a double. Since Tobias is warded from the boy's aura, he was unaware of the switch and the boy looks so similar to Karl that the PCs don't realise he's a double. Once the grim task is done, the PCs might press on to Wolfenburg—it is the closest settlement to Villa Hahn—for supplies only to find Karl is with the Crusade and more powerful than ever.

Another option is for the PCs to actually succeed in killing the boy. Instead of the Black Witch seeking to possess him (as described in the later chapters), she hopes to call forth his spirit from the fields of Morr using the Undead to facilitate this foul ritual. She believes by drawing forth his essence, she could gain a portion of his power and thus conquer the Empire in revenge for her wretched state.

— Reuniting with the Crusade —

To reach the Crusade's encampment, the PCs first have a two-hour long hike through the tunnels leading from Ruprecht's family home. As they are probably injured, seeking out the city gives them the opportunity to recuperate. The fact that the Crusade is now camped there is an added bonus. Once the PCs emerge from the tunnels, they see the shabby, disorganised remains of the Crusade.

Standing on a small bluff at the forest's edge you can see a chaotic jumble of tents, campsites, and ditches below your lofty position. The sprawling mass of humanity is arranged in a half-mile wide semicircle around the broken walls of once-mighty Wolfenburg, where the ruins of this famous city still send tendrils of smoke into the air from the few souls that still live here. Rising above the encampment is a sea of banners, snapping in the chill breeze, and beneath them tent awnings droop miserably, beggared men and women wander aimlessly, and carrion crows circle overhead.

A sudden gust of wind carries with it the stench of the unwashed, of open sewers and death. It also brings the low background murmur only a large crowd can generate, punctuated every now and then by the screams of the sick or the religious litanies of the pious.

As you scan the crowded mass below, you spot an enclosure encapsulating a gaggle of stained tents. The camp has been erected against a length of the city walls that seems to have escaped the destruction. The interior of this enclosure is busy with figures constantly moving to and fro, and flying from a wooden mast attached to the largest tent is the banner of the Child.

A rough trail leads down from the bluff and is easy to negotiate. Once the PCs have reached the flattened area below, they discover that a large tract of the forest has been cleared to make room for the Crusaders. Wooden stumps dot the ground and the ground between is a sodden morass of mud, excrement, and the other leavings of the Crusade mingled with the ruined soil from the hordes of Chaos that swept through this area.

The sanitation of the camp is awful, resulting in a mire of filth underfoot and a ghastly odour permeating the air, attracting clouds of flies that are impossible to evade. Only the most organised campsites contain latrines. Most of the Crusaders spend a penny where they can, resulting in squatting men and women being a common sight whilst navigating through the throng. Such unsanitary conditions are another reason for PCs to watch where they put their feet.

Most of the Crusaders reflect the unkempt state of their camps: they are dirty, smelly and many carry disease. Close quarters and poor cleanliness have taken their toll on them, no doubt not helped by the large numbers of vermin scampering through the effluvia.

One thing the characters should note as they make their way through the press are the guarded looks, the strange heraldry, and the occasional scuffle between Crusaders wearing different badges, costumes, or even tattoos. A **Perception Test** notices that the Crusade's composition has changed somewhat since the last time the PCs were here. Many distinct groups now have their own banners flying above dingy tents.

Without Karl

If Karl made his way here without the PCs, the tenor of the crowds is more excited and the Crusaders chatter amongst themselves even as they cast leery eyes at their rivals across the muddy paths. Some folks kneel in the effluvia, pressing their faces in the muck in gratitude of Karl's safe return, awaiting the moment when the boy issues his next command, while others renew their frantic flagellation to purge themselves of the impure thoughts and lack of faith they endured whilst Karl was gone. Shortly after the PCs arrive, the excitement builds and the din of many voices all speaking, all praying, all shouting at once becomes overwhelming. Eventually, Nils finds the PCs as described under **Nils' Tale**.

Note: If Nils has become a player character or has accompanied the PCs on their adventures into Altdorf and the Villa Hahn, replace this character with another priest who sought out the PCs based on their reputation.

With Karl

A far more interesting situation is if the PCs are escorting Karl into the encampment themselves. The change over the Crusaders is astounding. As the boy picks his way through the mire, arguments stop, fights halt, and the bickering exchanges fall silent as one by one the Crusaders drop to their knees at the boy's approach. Like a rippling wave, the entirety of the encampment stop what they are doing and turn to face this otherwise ordinary young boy. The characters sense this makes Karl uncomfortable and he even pauses in his march to look at the PC with whom he has the closest relationship and says, *"so many faces… I recognise none of them… tell me… who are these people?"*

Soon after, Helmut himself in the company of the other members of the inner circle along with an honour guard of a dozen armoured knights arrive. As with all the rest, they fall to the filthy ground, whispering prayers of relief. Helmut, tears shining on his cheeks, reaches forward to take Karl's hand and kisses his soft skin before placing the hand on his wet face, smiling, his eyes bright with relief and joy. After a few awkward moments, Helmut stands, his blue robes smeared with green mud, and calls out to the crowds *"Sigmar has taken mercy on us all and has returned from his enemies. Rejoice friends for our destiny is at hand!"* The crowds respond with cheers and music spreads throughout as the Crusaders celebrate the return of their champion.

Helmut and the rest of the Inner Council soon spirit the boy away towards the centre of the encampment, the high priest pausing only long enough to offer brief thanks to the PCs and inviting them to join the Council in an hour hence to give their reports. As the inner circle heads off through the crowds and mad cultists caper and dance and sing and play all around, the characters are left in the midst alone but for one familiar face: Nils.

Nils' Tale

In the month or so since the PCs last saw their ally, Nils has aged a great deal. Gone is the eager fresh-faced youth of the young acolyte of the Reaper's Bounty, and standing before them is a haggard man, with haunted eyes, and pale features. Despite his obvious fatigue and worry, Nils smiles

at the characters, revealing yellowed teeth and cracked lips that bleed with the gesture. *"Friends,"* he says, *"it is good to see you. Sigmar be praised that you have returned safely to us."* He steps a bit closer and whispers, eyes darting back and forth, *"But it is not safe to talk here. Enemies surround us. Come, I know a place where we can talk before your audience with the Inner Circle."* He then clasps one of the PCs' shoulders and then threads his way through the press of people, expecting the characters to follow.

Nils, assuming the PCs take him up on the invitation, walks about 10 minutes or so, deftly avoiding the large puddles of slime, slipping past exuberant celebrants, and finally comes to a large white tent, stained brown from use and the elements. He ducks inside and then turns to lift the flap to allow the characters to follow. The tent's interior is dark and smoky, pregnant with the smell of incense. A small shrine to Sigmar stands towards the back and damp rust-red rugs cover the floor. Nils takes a seat and gestures for the PCs to do the same. *"I fear that this is the one holy place left in this camp. Notice that it's empty,"* he says with a frown. *"It is no matter. We must get down to business."* Nils quickly summarises what has happened to the Crusade as described in the **Adventure Background** and then moves on to discuss his growing concerns.

"This business with the boy has never quite sat with me. Now I'm not denying that he may be Sigmar Reborn, oh no, I wouldn't dare, but the lad doesn't seem to have the same effect on me as he does others. Perhaps my faith isn't strong enough… It doesn't matter. If I cannot see it, I must strive harder to accept the revelation of my peers, and until then, I can work to save this boy from the evil that swirls about him.

"Friends, there are enemies everywhere. Just as Karl has drawn the pious, the mad, and the hopeful to his ranks, there are those who would use the boy for some foul end. We have already seen their efforts back in Altdorf, and whilst you were away, they have grown, spreading like a cancer through our ranks. All around us, the Crusaders, once united in their devotion to the boy, have now fractured, broken into different schisms built upon their own interpretations of Karl's divinity. The division has allowed undesirable elements to slip inside the Crusade and work their wickedness from within. The signs are everywhere. Certainly, Karl's return should smooth these troubles somewhat, but I fear the damage is done. The Inner Circle, the fools that they are, refuse to see the signs, refuse to listen to reason, and if they don't act now, it will be too late. The matter is even more tenuous now that Karl is back, for… dare I say it… ? I fear someone or something wants to kill the Child.

"Proof? I have none except for a growing feeling of dread. You can see it in the faces, in the soiled rags of the plagued, in the very filth in which we wallow. His life is in danger. I ask you… no, I beg you, if you have any love for this boy, please seek out this darkness and destroy it before it is too late. Even if you deny the boy's divinity, we must see this mad campaign to its end for Sigmar has opened this path before us and where it leads is divine will. I beg again, will you help me?"

Nils really has no idea where the PCs should start in their investigations or whom they should talk to, and lacks anything really helpful to get the characters started, but he advises them to keep their eyes open and watch for the signs, to put their faith in Sigmar and they will see the wickedness in all its horror. At this point, Nils has little to add and suggests that the characters make their way to the inner circle compound for their audience—if the PCs have this meeting scheduled, otherwise proceed with **The Crusade Encampment**. He walks with them for a time, but before they reach the centre of the encampment, he heads off, saying, *"I am no longer welcome there, but you know where to find me. Seek out the shrine and I'll be there."*

Nils Freiborg

Male Human Friar (ex-Initiate)

Nils has suffered greatly since joining the Crusade. While still a young man, he's aged before his time and his once-thick dark hair has thinned, and his timid eyes are now haunted and sunken. He has sallow skin, cracked lips, and is generally unhealthy because of the poor atmosphere of the encampment.

Nils had a falling out with Father Johannes during the march from Altdorf to Wolfenburg and because of dissolved association, Nils is no longer permitted to sit in on the Inner Council meetings—his former master finagled a seat there, replacing Jan/Tobias (see page 133 for Father Johannes). Having lost status and faced with the hopelessness of the Crusade, Nils has worked to improve the lots of the Crusaders, attending to the sick, mediating disputes, and struggling to be a good example of a God-fearing Sigmarite.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
38	35	31 (3)	37 (3)	37	47	44	42

Skills: Academic Knowledge (History) (Int), Academic Knowledge (Theology) (Int+10), Charm (Fel), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int), Gossip (Fel), Heal (Int+10), Outdoor Survival (Int), Perception (Int+10), Read/Write (Int), Speak Language (Classical, Kislevarin) (Int), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int +10)
Talents: Lightning Reflexes, Public Speaking, Resistance to Disease, Seasoned Traveller, Super Numerate, Warrior Born

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Fate Points:** 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 15√√√
Weapons: Dagger (1d10)

Trappings

Nils wears brown robes with the symbol of the hammer stitched on the breast. He carries a sling bag that holds a battered copy of *The Life of Sigmar,* a small pot of ink, a pen, three extra nibs, several rolls of bandages, needle and thread, a couple of healing poultices, and a few healing draughts.

The Compound

There's a marked contrast between the general encampment and the compound. As the PCs draw closer, the squalor diminishes giving way to far more sanitary conditions. Marking the edge of the compound is a thick row of stakes pointed outwards. Grim-faced and armoured guards stand at the ready, their blue tabards pristine despite the clinging mud. Spears in hand and swords at their sides, they are ready to give their lives to protect the Child. Beyond the perimeter is a large pavilion tent, also in blue and adorned with the hammer of Sigmar and the twin-tailed comet, identifying this place as the heart of the Crusade.

When the characters arrive, they are questioned by the guards and then led inside the large tent, through a corridor of canvas walls until they reach a large audience room. The walls are gaudy, decorated with gold and silver and hung with brilliant tapestries depicting key scenes from the *Life of Sigmar*. A thick carpet covers the floor of this oval room and comfortable upholstered chairs ring the outer edge of the chamber. In the centre of the room stands a wooden platform covered in gold leaf and on it sits a throne sized for a child.

When the PCs enter, Karl is already seated on the throne, and six of the chairs are occupied by the councillors. There are chairs for the player characters and they are invited to sit. Karl smiles warmly at the PCs and offers them a word of welcome. The councillors, who are described as follows, regard the PCs with a mixture of pleasure, pride, fear, concern, and even disgust.

Helmut

Male Human Demagogue (ex-Anointed Priest, ex-Priest, ex-Initiate)

Helmut remains the Crusade's spiritual leader and its official ambassador. With the upheaval surrounding the Crusade after Karl's abduction in Altdorf and with the shake-up within the inner circle, he's taken on more responsibilities, even going so far as to become the Crusade's prophet. The weight of his duties have taxed him somewhat and he wears his fatigue like a heavy cloak.

To Helmut, the PCs are divine servants of Sigmar, for it was they who rescued the boy, who proved themselves worthy of such an important task. As a result, Helmut becomes their biggest champion and supporter as this adventure unfolds and the characters will have a great deal more success in convincing him of their suspicions when and if they report their findings to the inner circle. See **Chapter III** for more information on Helmut.

Lord Wilhelm Eisenbach

Male Human Noble Lord (ex-Knight, ex-Squire, ex-Noble)

When Karl went missing, his hold over this ageing knight and country lord dimmed and finally vanished altogether. Eisenbach was surprised to find himself swept up in all this rabble and cannot recall what it was that led him to abandon his estates in Middenland. He might have taken his men and left, but his position of responsibility and his honour prevent him from doing so. He suspects something is not right, which is only reinforced by the boy's return. Unlike Helmut, he has not succumbed to the boy's aura and sees him as a scrawny, if fine-looking youth. For this reason, Eisenbach suspects that the boy is an impostor and the PCs are trying to pull a fast one on Helmut. Eisenbach isn't ready to move yet, but he sees the corruption, the despair, and the decay all around, and it's just a matter of time before he commands his men to clean up this mess. See **Chapter III** for more information on Wilhelm Eisenbach.

Father Johannes Seibolt

Male Human Steward (ex-Priest, ex-Initiate, ex-Noble)

Fatter than ever before, Father Johannes has found the Crusade much to his liking, even after the influence of the Child was lifted. Ever the shrewd politician, he worked quickly to ingratiate himself with the inner circle, working to fill the vacuum left by Jan (Tobias). His position in the temple, his being a priest of Sigmar, and his head for finances gave him the leverage he needed to secure a position amongst the Crusade's leaders. Johannes is responsible for funding the Crusade and managing foodstuffs, clothing, and other necessities for the Crusaders, a job he's neglected in order to provide himself with all the comforts he could want. His selfishness and corruption became the point at which his servant Nils contended and eventually led to a split between the two. So arrogant and self-absorbed is this fat priest that he can barely recall what Nils looks like and that he even once enjoyed the young man's company.

Now that Karl is among the inner circle once more, Father Johannes is nervous. He feels the same tug of loyalty to the boy, but his mischievous mind ever searches for a way to turn his mandatory service to his benefit. Johannes has little love for the PCs and doesn't trust them, and may even work against them. For now, though, he's content to watch, wait, and eat.

Insanity Points: 5

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
37	38	35 (3)	36 (3)	32	52	45	56

Skills: Academic Knowledge (History, Theology) (Int +10), Academic Knowledge (Law) (Int), Channelling (WP), Charm (Fel +20), Command (Fel+10), Common Knowledge (Dwarfs) (Int), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int +20), Consume Alcohol (T), Evaluate (Int), Gamble (Int), Gossip (Fel +10), Haggle (Fel), Heal (Int), Intimidate (S), Magical Sense (WP), Perception (Int+10), Read/Write (Int +20), Ride (Ag), Search (Int), Speak Arcane Language (Magick) (Int), Speak Language (Bretonnian) (Int), Speak Language (Classical) (Int +10), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int +20), Trade (Merchant) (Fel)
Talents: Etiquette, Excellent Vision, Master Orator, Petty Magic (Divine), Public Speaking, Savvy, Schemer, Strike to Injure, Suave, Super Numerate, Very Strong

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Fate Points:** 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 16
Magic: 1; Petty Magic (Divine)
Weapons: Dagger (1d10; CV +1)

Trappings

Father Johannes wears thick black robes that do little to obscure his great weight. Hanging around his neck is a small tarnished silver hammer. Bejewelled rings encircle each finger worth at least 100 *gc* each. Inside his trunk are spare clothes, several books on theological subjects, history, and Tilean philosophy, as well as a stack of letters in various stages of completion addressed to such luminaries as the Grand Theogonist, lectors, and elector counts.

Koller

Male Human Champion (ex-Veteran, ex-Soldier)

Koller is a veteran of the recent Chaos Incursion and survived the fall of Wolfenburg. A tall man, rigid in pose as well as principles, he is pig-headed and not easily dissuaded from his chosen course of action. His intense stares can be unsettling and he isn't slow to draw his weapons if trouble looms. He takes his responsibilities very seriously, some say too seriously, and so he was elevated to the position of Karl's Champion a short time ago. It is a position he relishes.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
65	58	59 (5)	65 (6)	55	29	59	37

Skills: Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int +20), Consume Alcohol (T), Dodge Blow (Ag +20), Evaluate (Int), Gamble (Int), Gossip (Fel +20), Heal (Int), Intimidate (S +20), Perception (Int +10), Ride (Ag), Secret Language (Battle Tongue) (Int), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int)
Talents: Disarm, Fleet-footed, Lightning Parry, Lightning Reflexes, Quick Draw, Specialist Weapon Group (Flail, Two-handed), Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure, Strike to Stun, Very Resilient, Very Strong, Warrior Born, Wrestling

Combat

Attacks: 3; **Movement:** 3; **Wounds:** 20
Armour (Heavy): Breastplate, Sleeved Mail Shirt, Leather Jack (Arms 3, Body 5)

Koller's Guards (20)

Male Human Zealots

These men protect Karl with their lives and even take on suicidal odds to do so. They spend most of their time honing their martial skills.

Insanity Points: 4

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
46	31	40 (4)	43 (4)	34	35	43	36

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Theology) (Int), Charm (Fel), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int +10), Gossip (Fel), Intimidate (S), Read/Write (Int), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int)
Talents: Hardy, Public Speaking, Specialist Weapon Group (Flail), Strong-minded, Very Strong, Warrior Born

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 13
Armour (Light): Leather Jack (Arms 1, Body 1)
Weapons: Flail (1d10+4; Impact, Tiring)

Trappings

Koller's guards all wear brown sackcloth robes underneath their leather jacks. Most have pinned to their robes some relic of young Karl including bits of fingernail, hair, or even smears of his leavings. All keep bottles of stout Dwarf ale handy to work themselves into a religious fervour.

Weapons: Superior Hand Weapon (Sword) (WS 75; 1d10+6; CV +1), Superior Great Weapon (WS 75, 1d10+6; CV +1; Impact, Slow), 2 Superior Daggers (WS 75; 1d10+3; CV +1), Superior Flail (WS 75, 1d10+7; CV +1; Impact, Tiring)

Trappings

Beneath Koller's well-maintained armour are a sturdy shirt, breeches, and small clothes of the sorts issued by the Empire to its soldiers. He keeps a small locket that contains a miniature portrait of a lost love around his neck on a thin gold chain. He keeps his impressive 20 *gc* in a small locked coffer in his quarters. He stores the key in his boot. He commands several squads of tough soldiers, all of whom are fanatically loyal to the Child.

The Audience

Once the PCs have taken their seats, Helmut invites them to recount their recent adventures, to share with them everything that has transpired. Once the characters have concluded their tale, and assuming they didn't try to harm the boy, Helmut rises and says:

> *"You have proved yourselves true champions of Sigmar and you are living examples of dutiful servants of our God. I, on behalf of this esteemed council, thank you. In recompense for your bravery and your great deeds, I name each of you Templars of the Child."*

Helmut smiles as he snaps his fingers for a servant to appear. A scrawny girl who's missed far too many meals slips into the room holding a black tabard for each character. Have the characters all make **Perception Tests** to notice Johannes frown, Eisenbach shake his head, and Koller scowl. Helmut places the tabard on each PC and once he does this he adds,

> *"Friends, I fear this title also carries some responsibility, for you see, whilst you did achieve much against the filthy cult that had infiltrated our ranks, I fear that these villains remain in our encampment, working against our holy cause and interfering with our progress. I ask that you walk amongst the people, watch and listen for any sign of corruption and wherever you find the agents of Chaos, you have the authority of this Council, nay of this Child, to cleanse these villains with holy flame. What say you?"*

The player characters have little reason to refuse and if firmly under the influence of young Karl, they should be eager to protect the boy. If they hesitate, Karl pleads with the characters, perhaps forcing another **Willpower Test** to resist his earnest entreaties. Even if the PCs refuse, though, Nils can rope them into the plot or the characters may stumble onto the various conspiracies by exploring the encampment.

Once the characters agree, the meeting is at an end as the Inner Council turns to the pressing matter of where to go next. The characters are given leave to go, as everyone's attention is on their new discussion. Any PCs that linger are ignored long enough to learn that the boy intends to go to Kislev. Once this morsel slips out, Helmut looks at the character, still smiling and says, *"I believe you have matters of grave urgency to attend?"* This statement ought to be all the impetus the character needs to be on his way. Otherwise, Koller makes them leave.

The Inner Council do not make themselves available to the PCs for conversation as a rule. They each have their own interests and goals, but if the PCs are persistent, they may be able to ferret some information from their descriptions above as you decide. Such meetings should be short, infrequent (if at all), and tense.

A Very Bad Idea

Shortly after the characters leave the chambers of the inner circle, they encounter a pair of men waiting for their turn to speak with the Helmut and the boy. The men are dandies, clearly, wearing fine, if threadbare, attire, large floppy hats with wilted feathers, and armed with slim foils. Upon seeing the PCs, one bows deeply and says, *"The Child's blessing upon thee."* He lifts back up, smiles and asks, *"I trust our boy is in good health?"* Regardless of what the PCs say, the man nods. Just as he's about to turn back to his conversation, he stops and his mouth drops open, as he looks at one of the characters (pick one).

> *"Sigmar's breath! Why, you are a natural, do you know? Why Rory, would you not agree?" The other man steps forward, shaking his head. "Indubitably! He (or she) seems made for the role!" The first man says, "My friend, we are putting on a grand performance in a few days to welcome the Child back and I must say that you would be perfect for the part of the Lass/Orc Chieftain/Soldier Three. My name is Wilhelm Schumacher, have you heard of me? I see. Well, if you are interested in participating in the greatest show in the lands, seek me out at the stage. I trust you are trained in theatre? No? No matter. Yes. You are perfect! Please, now that I have met you, I can't imagine the show without you!"*

Wilhelm Schumacher is the director of the passion play and he hopes that this grand performance will unify the Crusaders, as well as bring himself some small measure of fame. What he does not realise is that his actors are being killed off and replaced with assassins known as the Heralds of the New Dawn. These wicked men serve a Necrarch Vampire named Lord de Trois. With the Child newly returned, the Vampire intends to snatch the boy while the guards, inner circle and the rest are distracted by the performance. Dieter van Dorf knows the PCs by reputation and hopes to distract them from protecting the boy by involving them in the play. Whether or not the character agrees, the PCs will have plenty of other opportunities to become involved as shown in the following pages.

If one of the PCs takes Schumacher up on his offer, the PC lands the role of a supporting character and now has access to the play, which is of considerable importance later in this adventure.

— The Crusade Encampment —

Having been named Templars of the Child, or perhaps just helping out Nils, the characters are free to explore the encampment. The Crusade is fractured into dozens of small factions, each with their own peculiar notions about the Child, his purpose, and what he will ultimately do for them. Of all the factions, seven command the rest, having the resources, wealth, and muscle to keep the smaller, stranger groups in line. As the player characters explore this unusual environment, they may encounter all manner of oddness.

Encampment Conditions

The encampment is not a pleasant place, being crowded, filthy, and dangerous. Due to the cramped conditions within the camp, movement is **Hampered** (see *WFRP* page 137). In addition, it is difficult to conduct private conversations or to be surreptitious within the camp's confines. At worst, **Perception Tests** are of **Average (+0)** difficulty to overhear conversations or notice activity close by. Hygiene is also appalling and living with those conditions can lead to disease. PCs must make a **Challenging (–10) Toughness Test** within forty-eight hours of joining the Crusade to avoid contracting the Galloping Trots.

Impediments

In addition to the general unpleasantness of the encampment, there are many chances for the characters to face difficult obstacles. Use the following as they are or as inspiration for impediments of your own design.

- A PC slips into an uncovered privy and is drenched in all kinds of unmentionable fluids. He takes a –10 penalty to Fellowship Tests until he finds a way to bathe.
- A character accidentally treads on and breaks something belonging to a Crusader, who, in turn, loudly demands recompense, drawing attention from his neighbours.
- A particularly unsanitary part of the camp forces PCs to make a **Toughness Test**. A failed test indicates the character takes a –5 penalty to all tests for an hour.
- The characters overhear an unflattering conversation about themselves nearby.
- A PC trips over a buried rope and sprawls into a tent, landing heavily on its occupant. There is wounded dignity all round and possibly an angry confrontation.

Table 6–1: Faction Type

Roll	Result
1–2	Military
3–4	Political
5–8	Religious
9–10	Criminal

Table 6–2: Faction Size

Roll	Result
1–4	Small (1d10+1 members)
5–7	Medium (2d10+5 members)
8–9	Large (5d10+10 members)
10	Huge (5d10+50 members)

Faction Creation

Given the huge number of people found within the Crusade, you may wish to expand upon the characters' investigation and create your own sub-cults and factions to complicate matters. The faction creation tables on this page and the next can help you whip up such a group on the fly.

Encounters in the Encampment

The following encounters can be used to add additional colour to the characters' explorations. Each encounter offers a starting point, leaving it up to you to flesh out the details as needed. The more of these encounters the PCs face, the more texture and depth you add to this strange place. Do note that word of the characters' exploits has spread quickly through the encampment, making them celebrities. Add to this their possible new titles, and in the eyes of the Crusaders, the PCs are holy servants, who uphold and support Karl on his road to finding his destiny.

Table 6–3: Sample Faction Names

Roll	Result
01–04	Terrors of Talabheim
05–08	The Wolfenburg Veterans' Society
09–12	Rumster's Darlings
13–16	Magnus Teirich's Brown Company
17–20	The Frightful Fellows
21–24	The Silver Chalice
25–28	The Society for the Naturalisation of Foreign Peoples
29–32	The Bretonnian Gastronomic Society
33–36	The Crimson Fist
37–40	The Sons of Streissen
41–44	The Blackbloods
45–48	The Noose
49–52	Gruyden's Guardians
53–56	Confederation for the Equality of the Common Man
57–60	Popular Peoples Front of Averland
61–64	Peoples Popular Front of Averland
65–68	The Believers
69–72	Caliviari
73–76	The Haze
77–80	The Hammers
81–84	The Voice of the Moral Minority
85–88	The Dilettantes
89–92	The Artists' Circle of Altdorf
93–96	Valorous Sons
97–00	The Ten

Table 6–4: Faction Quotes & Quirks

Roll	Result
01–05	*"'Ere, I've got a brown shirt for you."* Wears distinctive uniform
06–10	*"Just flick the twin-tailed rat."* Uses secret hand signals
11–15	*"Respect is earned, fear is learned."* Has a motto
16–20	*"If you're over four-foot-six, you ain't getting in."* Non-Human membership only
21–25	*"We hates Elveses, we does."* Faction hates non-Humans
26–30	*"I'm off to lance me boils."* Faction beset by skin diseases
31–35	*"Hand me my saw, will you?"* Battle-hardened faction with many members missing limbs
36–40	*"What smell?"* Camp has no sanitation
41–45	*"I'd kill my own grandmother for a bite o' bread."* Food store running low
46–50	*"We crowned 'im."* A hammer-blow to the head initiates members
51–55	*"This here's Johann. Best friend a man can have."* Rats have overrun the camp, don't ask what's for dinner
56–60	*"Breathe it in, hold your breath now…"* Strange concoctions are commonly taken by members
61–65	*"What you lookin' at?"* Mad, bad, and dangerous to know
66–70	*"You'll have to make an appointment."* Pompous but popular leadership
71–75	*"We can make it happen, if you know what I mean."* Faction has contact with a renegade Hedge Wizard
76–80	*"The fire will cleanse the unbelievers."* Fanatics
81–85	*"You can't wear that here, take it off."* Strange and dictatorial rules revolving around clothing
86–90	*"All hail the Great One."* An effigy of Karl is the centre of frequent worship, the carrot nose is a bit wonky though
91–95	*"Keeps the blood going, you know."* Faction members remove anything that gets between them and worship of Karl, including their clothes
96–00	*"I'd die first."* Rabidly protective of the Child

Table 6–5: Common Faction Careers

Military	Political	Religious	Criminal
Bodyguard	Agitator	Initiate	Bodyguard
Bounty Hunter	Bailiff	Noble	Camp Follower
Hunter	Burgher	Outlaw	Entertainer
Mercenary	Messenger	Peasant	Protagonist
Militiaman	Noble	Zealot	Rogue
Noble	Scribe		Smuggler
Outlaw	Student		Thief
Soldier			Thug
Watchman			

Table 6–6: Faction Leader's Career

Roll	Military	Political	Religious	Criminal
1	Captain	Courtier	Anointed Priest	Assassin
2	Champion	Crime Lord	Friar	Cat Burglar
3	Duellist	Demagogue	High Priest	Charlatan
4	Flagellant	Guild Master	Interrogator	Crime Lord
5	Knight	Herald	Judicial Champion	Demagogue
6	Pistolier	Noble Lord	Knight	Fence
7–8	Sergeant	Politician	Priest	Master Thief
9	Targeteer	Spy	Scholar	Outlaw Chief
10	Veteran	Steward	Witch Hunter	Racketeer

Save my Baby!

A woman with a sick child approaches the characters and begs them to help her get to see Karl. She is convinced that the boy will be able to work a miracle and heal the babe. The inner circle of course will not allow any one or thing that is contagious near to Karl, and some even think that the woman is an assassin. The inner circle refuses any requests to see Karl, and throws the woman out of Karl's camp. This act reveals the distance and isolation of the inner circle members and underscores the tragedy that has come to define the lives of the Crusaders. PCs with medical skills might be able to help the sick child. If they do so, the grateful mother will name it after the healer.

Save Me!

Wretched mobs of Crusaders surround the player characters, begging them to take petitions to the boy. These papers have been written by an unscrupulous notary. He's fleeced the desperate Crusaders of whatever meagre belongings they had in exchange for his writing services. If the characters are literate, they realise the so-called "petition scrolls" are no more than worthless tax writs and other legal forms. The notary is barely literate at all and was simply an indentured copyist before joining the Crusade. He has written the scrolls from memory, lacking the skills to reproduce anything other than the forms he had copied thousands of times before. Should the characters track down this opportunist, he flees.

Share our Bread

A minor faction invites the player characters to a grand banquet in their honour. Once there, the PCs notice that the Crusaders are all starving, gaunt and sickly, but the meal they serve is sumptuous and fine. Should they make enquiries about the food, the Crusaders apologise for its rudeness, explaining that it is the last of their stores.

Beastmen Among Us

A concerned Crusader leads the characters to a "witch," who is in fact a midwife who attended a woman that gave birth to a Turnskin—a Human that quickly reveals its Beastman tendencies shortly after birth. When the characters arrive at the midwife's tent, they find it surrounded by an angry mob of Crusaders who are calling for her death. They want to roll her down a hill in a barrel full of nails because *"everyone knows witches have tough skin. Iff'n she lives, we burn her! Iff'n she don't, well, t'werern't one of us what killed 'er!"*

The Ballad of the Brave Heroes

Soon after the characters begin their patrols through the encampment, they begin to hear songs played and sung in their honour, each of which recounts their brave deeds and exploits. A few days later, the characters hear the same songs, but the tone has changed, and it becomes obscene, involving several verses about a Halfling's daughter, the PCs, and a "rather loud duck" (at least, that's what it sounds like).

Adoring Fans

While moving through a particularly crowded area, the PCs find themselves followed by strange men and women with wide eyes and adoring expressions. Soon after, the odd people flock around the characters until the PCs are surrounded. Oddly, none of them speak, but they all reach out to touch the player characters. As they grope, one of their number shouts, "Karl!" to which all the others shout "Praise Him!" This adulation continues for a few minutes at which point the crowd disperses.

Helpful Children

Several small children follow the characters everywhere, and ask to be their sword bearers, horse tenders and boot polishers. If the PCs relent, they find that whenever their back is turned, the children are charging others to allow them to hold the sword/put on the boots/ mount the horse and so on, whilst loudly proclaiming the characters' items have "miraculous healing powers" and are "Karl blessed." The PCs might not be happy to find lepers have been wearing their boots in the hope of a cure!

A Proposal

A large man approaches one of the player characters and asks him to marry his daughter. *"I've always said only the best is good enough for her, and, if you're good enough to guard Karl, you're good to guard my Gurda's virtue also!"* The girl unfortunately has a face like slapped arse and a sulky personality to match. The man offers a pig in dowry, as well as a brace of rather ripe pheasants. When the character turns him down, he seems upset. *"Perfectly good bloody pig that! Don't you know how much they're worth… You saying my daughter isn't good enough for you?"* and so on. A few days later they spy young Gurda on the arm of a thin fellow. The man wears a jerkin spattered with pig grease and a shamed look on his face.

Plagued

No matter where the PCs go, there always seems to be a plague victim nearby. This man (or woman) dresses in darkly stained rags that cover every inch of his skin except for dark eyes beneath a heavy cloak. If the characters approach this disturbing fellow, he flees into the crowds, escaping in a matter of moments. Let the players make some **Agility Tests** to let them feel like they have a chance of catching their prey if they give chase, but ultimately, the man in rags should get away. This person, by the way, is none other than Lord de Trois, and he keeps an eye on the PCs to watch their progress and to assess their capabilities.

A Job Offer

The actor playing the part of Grimgut in the passion play approaches a tough and burly player character with a proposition. The actor, a one Sir Phineas Rucht, is old and tired and wants nothing of the duel, so he offers to pay the PC, who's roughly the same size as the actor, a shiny Gold Crown if he stands in for him. This opportunity is a great in for the PCs and allows them to participate in the play—and hopefully thwart the plans of villainous killers.

— Part I: Too Many Crooks —

Plots within the Crusade have been moving apace since the characters were last present, and one group in particular has become more important. They are the Heralds of the New Dawn, a collection of agitators, demagogues and troublemakers who have been subverted in a plot to murder Karl.

To this end, the Heralds have planned to infiltrate a group of actors due to perform for the Child. They have purchased three vials of a potent poison from a herbalist living in the ruins of Wolfenburg. Their plan is to murder the actors that will perform in the passion play and take their place, giving them and their master, Lord de Trois, access to the Child.

To make sure the poison is potent enough for their needs, the Heralds test it beforehand. The unfortunate victim chosen for the trial run is Ali, the Strigany whom the party may have met as early as **Chapter III**. Although the victim of this crime is totally random, PCs may believe Ali was targeted purposefully as a warning to them, which is a good thing.

Complications

If Ali died previously or if the PCs are not friendly enough with him to prompt their participation in subsequent events, consider having one of the characters be the victim of the poison's trial run. This action should gain their attention and set their feet upon the right track. The GM is urged to have the affected PC recover quickly from the poison, so he may play a full part in the rest of the adventure.

A Day or So Later

A grim drizzle falls over the foetid morass of the camp, making the dismal place even more distasteful. As you are scraping the clinging mud from your boots, a sudden scream rises above the perpetual din of the camp and draws your eyes up from the dirt.

A man is staggering drunkenly through the throng, clutching at his throat, his face is a livid purple.

His legs finally giving way, he collapses into your camp, a last death rattle escaping his lips.

With shock, you realise that the dead man is Ali the Strigany, Ahmed's father. His black tongue lolls from a slack mouth and an empty wineskin dangles from his lifeless fingers. The wineskin has a stylised coiled serpent motif embossed upon its surface.

Given the victim's identity and the fact that he died in the PCs' camp, the characters are probably very nervous at this point. However, after no other threat materialises, they can investigate the body more closely and interview Crusaders nearby to see if they know anything.

Upon investigation, Ali's body is found to be in otherwise good condition; he has no actual injuries. PCs looking for a cause of death and succeeding on a **Challenging (–10) Heal Test** discover that suffocation was the cause of death and this was not caused by choking on a foreign object. Sniffing the wineskin for suspected poison, a **Challenging (–10) Trade (Herbalist) Test**, reveals that he was poisoned and the venom used was Chokeweed Extract. Chances are the PCs suspect poison even if they have not substantiated that fact.

Tracing Ali's steps is difficult, since he wandered through the mob and any footprints he might have left have since been trampled by the passers-by. Do let the players roll a few dice so they get the impression that they can track him.

Questioning the locals about the meaning of the coiled serpent motif found on the wineskin reveals it is most likely the makers' mark of the tradesman who made the flask. Characters asking after someone whose makers' mark matches that on the wineskin are told that the best chance of finding that information is to visit the headquarters of the Saddle Makers & Leatherworkers Guild of Wolfenburg. They are warned before braving the city, that the building will likely be ruined. However, it is one of the only leads that the PCs have. A successful **Gossip Test** gains the characters directions to the Guild house.

PCs might also make enquiries about the poison that killed Ali, if they have established that as the cause of death. A **Routine (+10) Gossip Test** gets them directions from a Crusader to Boris's house within Wolfenburg, explaining that he is a maker of exotic concoctions. Whichever course of action they take, the PCs find that all roads lead to the herbalist's door.

The City's Carcass

In order to progress in their investigation, the adventurers must face the ruins of Wolfenburg. The city is a mess. Hit hard during the Chaos Incursion, few of the original structures remain, being a mass of broken masonry, rubble, charred wood, and the bones of those who died here. Some reconstruction has begun, but since Ostland was never a wealthy province in the first place, it's slow going. The once-mighty walls encircling the city have all but toppled and those that still stand bear the dimples of impacts from stone tossed by catapults.

Luckily, the PCs don't have to dig too deeply into the city to find the Leatherworkers Guild House. The converted tavern is located just inside the walls of the city and if the PCs manage to get directions, they should have little trouble.

However, characters that did not acquire the information they need are in for hours of wandering through the nearly deserted streets. Finding the Guild House requires the PCs to talk to the tattered Human population found in the city and to succeed on a **Challenging (–10) Gossip Test** that takes 1d5–1 hours and a few days worth of food used as bribes. A successful test reveals, *"The Guild House is in an old ruined tavern. I can take you there if you like. For say, 5 Schillings?"* Each hour the PCs search, they have a random encounter. Roll 1d100 on **Table 6–7: Wolfenburg Encounters** to see what happens.

Chokeweed Extract

This venom is prepared by brewing the roots of a Chokeweed plant with fluids drained from the bile duct of a common cat. This unpleasant procedure requires the feline victim to be fresh, so a ready supply of cats is needed to produce large amounts of poison.

The resultant liquid must be imbibed to be effective. The imbiber must make a **Hard (–20) Toughness Test** or begin to suffocate. Whilst suffocating, characters must make a **Toughness Test** once per minute, with a cumulative –10 penalty for each previous test. The third **Toughness Test** for instance, would have a –20 penalty. A character falls unconscious once he has failed two tests. Unless the victim receives magical healing or is the recipient of a successful **Challenging (–10) Heal Test,** he dies. The suffocation inflicted by Chokeweed Extract lasts for 1d10 minutes. Victims of this foul brew usually exhibit a swollen and black tongue.

Each dose of this poison costs 40 *gc* and requires a **Routine (+10) Prepare Poison Test** to make ready.

Table 6–7: Wolfenburg Encounters

Roll	Result
01–10	A band of 1d10 beggars, bone pickers, and vagabonds emerge from the rubble to beg food and supplies from the PCs
11–20	A group of 1d10 deserters hide in the rubble of an old house. They are a beaten lot and do not threaten the PCs
21–30	A chunk of masonry falls from a ruined building. Select a character at random. That character must make an **Agility Test** or take 1d10+2 damage from the debris.
31–40	A pack of six feral dogs roam the area. They are hungry and aggressive. Use the **Dog** statistics in *WFRP* page 232.
41–50	A heap of 1d10 rotting corpses lie on the street. Disturbing them causes a cloud of biting flies to swarm up and harass the PCs
51–60	A burned humanoid corpse lies on the street. It is too badly damaged to identify properly but does possess remarkably long incisors
61–70	A flock of carrion birds regard the PCs through dull eyes and then return to their meals
71–80	A crater in the road contains a number of unburied bodies on which scavenging animals are consuming. All PCs must succeed on **Will Power Tests** or gain 1 Insanity Point. A pack of four Ghouls (see statistics on page 79) emerge from the shadows to attack the PCs after a few rounds
81–90	A nearby building collapses, sending clouds of choking smoke into the air. Visibility drops to just a few yards and PCs must succeed on **Toughness Tests** or lose 1 Wound from the befouled air
91—00	A swarm of fat brown rats scurry across the street. Hopping from their bodies are thousands of fleas. Characters within 2 yards of the street must succeed on a **Routine (+10) Toughness Test** or contract the Green Pox

The Saddle Makers & Leatherworkers Guild

Luckily, this converted tavern has survived the sack of the city relatively intact. Although the roof has fallen down in places, there is little fire damage, and once entered, the dingy interior is found to be undamaged when compared to other buildings in the area—obviously, the place wasn't worth looting, although it's worth noting that all the tavern's store of ale has long since been stolen. It doesn't take the PCs long to sift through the rubble and locate the door that leads to the Guild's main office.

The headquarters of the Saddle Makers & Leatherworkers Guild is a single common room located to the rear of the tavern. Dust covers the floor and the half-dozen tables located around the room's perimeter, no doubt caused by the timber that has fallen through the roof. Apart from that, it is in a decent state. The place is deserted, but PCs looking for evidence have plenty of paperwork to sift through. It takes the characters an hour or so to locate ledgers detailing practicing tradesmen, their makers' marks, and bills of sale.

After some eye-straining reading, the characters find a bound leather ledger with a coiled serpent embossed on the cover. Success! The ledger reveals the serpent motif is the makers' mark of one Burgher Felix Vendt, a tradesman down on his luck, if the bills of sale in the ledger are anything to go by. A little bit of detective work reveals that wineskins were not his main line of business, however, each sale is listed. The PCs have half a dozen names to investigate.

Paper Chase

With this information in their hands, the PCs have a good chance of finding the killer. However, the most recent entry to the ledger is over two months old and the oldest was over a year ago, so things are not likely to be simple… and so it turns out. Flay Court is a rubble strewn wasteland, the Hops Market is home to some inebriated soldiers who came home from the war with missing limbs and madness in their heads, and the Imperial Barracks are so distressing that sifting through the diseased bodies there requires an iron will.

Use the **Table 6–7: Wolfenburg Encounters** once every hour of the characters' search through the ruined city. The PCs need to make a **Gossip Test** to locate each of these locations unless they were once native to the city.

Widow Curst

Flay Court is a barren wasteland stripped of anything of use and inhabited by no more than rats. Sifting through the rubble is a very long job should the PCs decide to do so, but those who persevere find their patience rewarded. Among the rubble, the PCs find a store of the wineskins they are after. Pinned to the sack that holds them is a clumsily written letter

The Suspects

Name	Location	Units Bought	Payment Received
Widow Curst	12b Flay Court	3	16s
Bernt Hessler	Brewers Guild house, Hops Market	20	12*gc*
Boris Leichgart	Smithy, Lower Wall Walk	10	2 geese, a whet stone and two tonics
Captain Yeller	Officers' Quarters, Imperial Barracks	10	10*gc*
Ernst Krantz	The Fiddlers Inn	5	60s
Ollo Veorhoven	Ollo's Panoramas	5	65s

promising *"Durn"* that more flasks will be forthcoming as the army *"overcharges for them so much."* No more information can be found on this suspect and all other enquires turn into dead ends.

Bernt Hessler

When the characters approach the Hops Market, they notice signs of habitation increase compared to other parts of the city. Small lean-tos are pitched against tumbled walls and dirty faces peer from the rubble as the characters pass. The perimeter of the market, however, is totally deserted and the square itself a picture of chaos; overturned wagons, spilled barrels of ale and vermin by the privy load vie for the characters attention. As soon as they start searching, it becomes apparent to the PCs that they are not alone; a boot softly tapping on cobbles or a surreptitious snort follows them around the ruined square. It is when the PCs enter the large hops warehouse that opens onto the market that the authors of these noises show themselves. Three drunken soldiers lurk here and have kept the locals from moving back in. Inebriated almost beyond standing, they nevertheless charge the PCs.

Use the **Sell-sword** statistics in *WFRP* page 235 for these drunken wretches.

Boris Leichgart

See **House of Death** on page 140 for details on Boris.

Captain Yeller

The Empire Barracks is an easily found building, being one of the largest in the city and located near to the palace. Once reached, the devastation is shocking. When the walls were breached, this was one of the primary targets of the Chaos army and corpses still lie were they fell many months ago. Empire soldiers lie atop Beastmen, and are smeared messily about the walls as though some giant hand had picked them up and dashed them against the masonry. There is even one body impaled on the top of the flagpole, some twenty feet in the air. That's just the exterior. Inside the barracks there are dozens of soldiers who didn't even make it outside. They lie slaughtered at the base of their cots, in the doorways, and one poor soul still resides with his head in the privy hole, his legs poking up into the air.

It's an upsetting experience searching through the rubble. Characters must make a **Will Power Test** or be violently ill after 10 minutes of exposure, resulting in a –5 penalty to all tests until they leave the area. They may also contract a nasty disease if they poke about too much. The Green Pox, in particular, is rampant in this area of the city.

Due to the devastation, few brave souls have ventured here since the Chaos assault; tales of the vengeful dead and the very real risk of disease keep looters away. As a consequence, PCs can find a lot of loot here, should they be interested in such things: 10d10 *gc* worth of valuables can be hauled away per day of searching (which certainly raises eyebrows within the Crusade. No one likes grave robbers). Of more interest perhaps, the office of Captain Yeller can be located after a day or two (along with his upper torso; the legs were eaten). The body has one of Vendt's flasks on it. The time of death rules Yeller out of the investigation.

Ernst Krantz

The Fiddlers Inn was once a renowned spot to catch the latest musical talent on the way to stardom in the city. As such, it was a favourite haunt of the lesser-born sons of the nobility and those with some disposable income. All that ceased with the assault on Wolfenburg, however. Now, the inn is empty of both music and patrons… except one. Ernst Krantz can be found here among the wreckage. He beds down in a corner of one of the attic rooms, while he keeps an eye on Ollo's Panoramas, which is across the street.

When he hears noise from the inn below, Ernst creeps from his hidey-hole to see who is responsible and unless the PCs are hostile towards him, he approaches them readily enough. Ernst is a member of the Skulls faction (see **Chapter VII** for details) and is spying on his rival who resides in the art shop opposite. Not that he admits to any of that, mind. Ernst tells the PCs that since the sack of the city, he has been homeless and as he came to the Fiddler often in happier days, decided to make his new home here. If he is pressed about the wineskins (one of which can be found on his person), he tells a version of the truth, which is that he bought some for friends of his in the Crusaders outside the city. He tells the PCs they have moved on (which is a lie; the Skulls can still be found within the crusade).

Ernst makes note of the PCs' power of deduction and their resourcefulness during their conversation as he may well approach them later in the campaign (**Chapter VII**) with work.

Ollo Veorhoven

Across the street from The Fiddlers Inn are the remains of Ollo's Panoramas, a single-storey structure that once sold landscape portraits to the well-off of the city. The interior of the building is surprisingly clean of debris. The reason for this is that Ollo Veorhoven of the Hammers faction (See **Chapter VII** for details) has taken up residence here for the time being. He was instructed to search the galleries of the building for clues as to the whereabouts of the Sigmar panel of the Lanfranchi triptych (for details, see **Chapter VII**). Although he hasn't had any luck, he has stayed in residence to keep Ernst occupied (he soon realised his rival had moved in across the road).

Once the PCs have announced themselves Ollo is pleasant and answers all of their questions to the best of his ability (although he keeps the real reasons for his presence secret). Once more, the PCs see one of Vendt's wineskins on Ollo's person and the Hammer spins a similar tale to Ernst.

Like Ernst, Ollo also makes notes on the effectiveness of the PCs' questioning. They may prove useful to him once the events in **Chapter VII** start to play out.

The House of Death

Boris Leichgart lives in a cramped attic above the burned out remains of a smithy. The blackened walls of the ground floor attest to the ferocity of the

fire that claimed the life of the smith and his apprentice, but those same walls saved the attic room from destruction.

After the sacking of the city, Boris found the location to his liking and moved in, destroying what was left of the internal staircase to ensure privacy. Now the only entrance to his abode is via the single window on the ground floor. When Boris is receiving a visitor, or has a need to travel, he lowers a knotted rope to allow access. Considering the nature of his profession, this arrangement suits Boris fine.

Once the PCs have located the smithy, the only way to get the herbalist's attention is to call out and to wait for him to appear at the window. If the PCs are threatening or rude, Boris under no circumstances lowers the rope, however, if they express an interest in his skills or wares, he relents and allows them up.

The heavily clothed figure of Boris lowers a frayed, knotted rope from the open casement. Beckoning you silently, he retreats into the shadowed confines of the attic. Climbing the rope, whilst awkward, is not difficult and you soon tumble over the sill of the window into the dark, musty smelling interior.

The sloping eaves of the roof force you to stoop as you walk towards the recess where Boris sits calmly. Bunches of dried herbs hang from the ceiling, covering another altogether more unpleasant odour with their sweet scent. As you approach the shadowed alcove, you see a bench to one side, its surface cluttered with arcane devices; glass tubes, copper funnels, geared mechanism0,s and other paraphernalia.

Pitiful mewling draws your eyes towards a row of cages beneath the bench, where you see a number of small animals have been secured. Only one cage has a living occupant—a wee creature that lies unmoving on the floor of its prison, only its pitiful cries indicating life. Ravaged and rotting bodies fill the other cages, one of which has had its organs removed and carefully placed beside the body. No doubt Boris's concoctions require strange ingredients.

Boris Leichgart

Male Human Artisan, ex-Tradesman

Boris is of average build and covers his frame with tightly wrapped black robes. The left side of his face is a burned mass of scarred tissue gained during the sacking of Wolfenburg. It extends down from his face onto his chest and stomach. He is in great pain and he must massage oils and unguents into the skin twice daily. If he misses this regimen, he becomes irritable.

Although he escaped the sacking of Wolfenburg with his life, the fire that he had to brave to escape nearly ended him. The experience has left more than bodily scars on Boris, he has started creating more exotic concoctions than before and has no compunction as to their eventual purpose or to whom he sells them. Boris has become selfish and removed from humanity, retaining his cowardly ways.

His conscience may have deserted him, but his piety has remained, so once the Crusade of the Child appeared before the tumbled walls of Wolfenburg, he placed his services at their disposal. He puts great store in customer confidentiality, so is a tough nut to crack for those seeking information.

Insanity Points: 5

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
37	31	39 (3)	43 (4)	41	44	41	23

Skills: Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int), Drive (S), Evaluate (Int +10), Gossip (Fel +20), Haggle (Fel +10), Perception (Int +10), Read/Write (Int), Secret Language (Guild Tongue) (Int +10), Speak Language (Reikspiel), Speak Language (Tilean) (Int +10), Trade (Brewing, Herbalist) (Int +10), Trade (Embalmer) (Int)
Talents: Dealmaker, Etiquette, Resistance to Poison, Sixth Sense

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 14
Weapons: Dagger (1d10)

Trappings

Boris wears long black robes that conceal his ruined flesh. In a small pouch on his waist are vials of ointment that he uses to keep his flesh from cracking. His home is chock full of tools, bottles, and oddities. Beneath a floorboard, Boris keeps the sum of his wealth—25*gc*.

Dealing with Boris

Boris is polite and forthcoming as long as the conversation is concerned with buying or commissioning draughts and concoctions. He has several draughts for sale should the PCs be interested. Although Boris takes currency for them, he is currently more interested in bartering for goods of comparable value than taking cold, hard cash.

If the PCs ask him for details about the poison that killed their friend or the wineskins with the coiled serpent motif, he clams up and becomes very guarded. The only way to gain information from him at this stage is either by making a **Challenging (–10) Intimidate Test** or a **Charm Test**. If one of the player characters was the victim of the poison, the Intimidate and Charm Tests become **Hard (–20)** and **Challenging (–10)** respectively. PCs searching the attic room soon come across a stack of the wineskins they have been tracking down, however, and this evidence lowers the difficulty of the Intimidate and Charm Tests by one step.

What Boris Knows

- Chokeweed Extract can be used for purposes other than murder. If one part of the poison is diluted with ten parts of water, the resultant solution can be used to remove warts, hair and general skin blemishes. Diluted with twenty parts of water, it makes a very good dye. Care must still be taken when preparing these alternative solutions.

- Brother Marcus, the leader of the Order of the Veil (see page 142), purchased a vial of the poison from him. The Orders' members are devout followers of Karl and use a mysterious artefact as the centre of their worship.
- A mean-looking man named Karl purchased three vials of the poison from him. Boris was too scared to barter very hard with the man and sold the vials for less than their actual worth. The man wore a distinctive blue belt.
- A distinguished-looking gentleman who named himself Dieter van Dorf bought three vials from him. He paid in Gold Crowns.
- If you have created your own factions for use within the Cult, then Boris may have sold vials of the poison to them also.

The Old-Fashioned Way

If the PCs do not have the skills necessary to gain this information, then they may search the attic room for documentary evidence. They find bills of sale that confirm the names of the buyers and scrawled notations by Boris that contain the information detailed above.

If the characters harm Boris in any way, he never deals with them again and considering the draughts that can be bought from him, this is not a very good idea.

Draught	Cost
Antitoxin Kit	3*gc*
Healing Draught	5*gc*
Healing Poultice	5p
Chokeweed Extract	40*gc*

Concoctions from other sources or of your own devising can be added to this list, if you wish.

Back to the Encampment

Finding Ali's killer inevitably requires the PCs to spend a lot of time slogging through the Crusade's encampment and interacting with the locals. The actual information gained about the three men who bought the poison is detailed separately, but collecting that information is both difficult and time consuming.

Each **Gossip Test** attempted by the PCs represents a day of investigation and information gathering. Certain conditions in the camp may impede their enquiries somewhat, so it is worth throwing mundane impediments (see page 136) at them as they carry out their investigations.

Investigating the Order of the Veil

This group of quiet and contemplative monks wanders constantly among the Crusade of the Child spreading comfort where they can. They are led by the determined but respectful Brother Marcus.

Surrounded by eight full brothers and up to fifty lay devotees, Marcus's Order of the Veil is quietly gaining converts among some of the poorest elements found within the Crusade.

A mysterious Veil forms the cornerstone of their ceremonies and serves as a focus for their prayers. It is protected carefully by Marcus and only brought into the light of day when he is conducting services or seeking to prove the veracity of Karl's claim.

Asking Questions

Once the PCs start investigating this suspect, have the characters make a **Gossip Test** and then consult **Table 6–8: Order of the Veil Gossip**.

The Service

Every day at noon, Brother Marcus holds a service honouring Karl a short distance from the boy's compound. These services attract many of the poorer members of the Crusade, who seek to touch the Veil of the Child and take away the free morsels of food handed out at the ceremony's end.

PCs don't face the risk of being observed from the compound because the press of people is too great, but being this close after being told to stay clear may make them nervous. A few random dice rolls at this point will help to make them even more so.

There is a decent crowd of people waiting for Brother Marcus's arrival, and at the stroke of noon, he and his brothers appear.

A hush descends upon those gathered as a dignified line of monks appears from the throng. A tall man, his face creased with worry, leads the procession. He holds a rough staff upright before him; a crosspiece formed by another staff nailed to it. Draped across these staves is a stained garment. Looking closely, you can see the outlines of a form on the dirty surface of the linen, perhaps the form of an infant. This cloth must be the mysterious Veil.

People respectfully hold out their hands to touch the garment as the procession continues, short prayers on their lips.

The tall man eventually calls for silence, his earnest face scanning the gathered disciples.

"I can see some new faces amongst you, my friends," he intones gravely. "For their benefit I shall relate the story of the miraculous Veil this day."

There is a soft murmur of approval from those present, which quickly subsides as the tale begins.

"It was whilst I was a travelling Friar that I first came across stories of a remarkable youth in Marienburg. I lost no time in reaching that great port city as I was searching for meaning in my wandering life, disillusioned with the cult of Sigmar.

"Well, I found that meaning once I had settled. I spoke to the fishermen who had seen the Child; I spoke to the abbess of the orphanage where he was kept safe. I even saw the lad from afar on one occasion and the conviction that he was indeed special grew in me. You cannot look upon the face of the divine and not be affected.

"It was years later that the miracle happened. Evil men had come for the boy and taken him away from the tender mercies of the Sisters of Shallya. I was caught up in a mass of humanity sweeping the streets of Marienburg, searching for the lad.

Table 6–8: Order of the Veil Gossip

Degrees of Success	Result
0	*"Let me see now, yes, I seem to recall the name being mentioned. I think they hold regular services where all are welcome. Where? Sorry, I don't know."*
1	*"Nice people they are. They always have a bite to eat for those of us who have nothing. Very pious man, that Brother Marcus."*
2	*"Ah them, yeah those idiots hold a service by our blessed Child's compound each day at midday."*
3	*"They say the Veil they display came from blessed Karl's back itself and bears his countenance!"*
4	*"Brother Marcus looked really worried the last time I saw him. Such a shame for a man as good as he is to have the worries of so many on his shoulders."*

"Eventually I ended up where I needed to be in order to see our beloved Karl fight off his captors. Hammer in hand and the mark of the comet at his breast, the men had no chance and were slain. I stood like a man enraptured at the sight as Karl fled the scene. It was in my trance that my eyes alighted upon a torn garment on the ground where the boy had made his stand. As I picked it up, my fears evaporated and the film covering my eyes withdrew, showing me the Truth!

"I held in my hands an artefact of the boy, a garment that had clothed him and taken his marks upon it. This Veil!"

Brother Marcus holds the garment aloft to great acclaim from his audience before calling for quiet once more.

"Since that day, my friends, I have never once doubted the font of Karl's heritage and whence he came. He will lead us to great things, things that will improve us all!"

Once more there is thunderous applause. When things have at last quietened those gathered queue before Brother Marcus for blessings and the chance to touch the relic of the Veil.

The PCs' best chance to discover more about Brother Marcus is to speak to him. Due to his popularity, he is seldom alone and has no permanent campsite, preferring to wander and preach as he goes. If the PCs join the line of petitioners that forms after the sermon is over, they have the opportunity to ask for an audience. Although Marcus looks slightly distracted, he certainly grants the request and suggests that they speak after the last of the pious have left.

The Confession

Once they have a semblance of privacy, the PCs may question him. If confronted with the information Boris supplied them with, he denies the charge point-blank and looks nervously around. He refuses to speak further unless the PCs make a successful **Challenging (–10) Intimidate** or **Charm Test**, or they agree to keep everything he says secret and to help him collect food for future sermons—the Order is running low on supplies. If they agree to the latter, he speaks to them on the following day, once he has taken delivery of the supplies. This agreement could be an opportunity for the PCs to interact with more of the Crusade's encampment, perhaps including an encounter with an infamous butcher who never seems to run out of supplies.

The burden of worry Marcus carries has nothing to do with murder and everything to do with his faith. He did buy the poison from Boris, but he has been using it as a dye. In pained and hushed tones, he informs the PCs that the miraculous markings on the Veil have been slowly fading. So, to make sure that this artefact of the boy remained for all to enjoy, Marcus has been using diluted Chokeweed Extract to touch up the Veil, ensuring the markings remain clear.

After this confession is extracted from him, Marcus collapses sobbing to the muddy ground, tortured prayers spilling from his mouth. Characters making a successful **Routine (+10) Perception Test** are able to hear hushed conversations from those Crusaders nearby as news of a "fake" spreads like wildfire through the mob. Before long, angry Crusaders confront Brother Marcus and things start to get ugly. Although neither the PCs nor Marcus are the targets of attack, a scrum forms around them as the angry mob tear the Veil from its mounting and rip it apart. Unless the PCs leave, they run the risk of being swept along with the crowd, as the press is so dense. Those swept along must make a **Strength Test** or loose anything carried in their hands. It will be an hour before the PCs can try to retrieve any lost items and they must succeed in a **Perception Test** in order to recover them. Otherwise, the items have been lost or carried away by a grateful Crusader. The PCs have discovered that Brother Marcus is not their murderer, however, they have left him a broken man.

Brother Marcus

Male Human Friar (ex-Initiate of Sigmar)

Brother Marcus has always been a very quiet and peaceful man. During his travelling days, he brought the good word of Sigmar to isolated communities. However, he became disillusioned with the rigid structure of the cult and decided to go it alone as a friar. One of his first stops was Marienburg, where, as luck would have it, the first rumours of the Child soon appeared.

His life given purpose once more, Marcus made it his business to document the life of the Child and interviewed many witnesses to the events surrounding him. It was Karl's abduction from the orphanage that really set Marcus's feet on his current course. He found the Veil after witnessing the battle between Karl and his abductors.

Ever since that day, he has preached for the Child, parading the miraculous garment for all to see. The recent deterioration of the Veil has given his face a worried and distracted look.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
42	41	43 (4)	42 (4)	34	53	50	48

Skills: Academic Knowledge (History) (Int), Academic Knowledge (Theology) (Int +10), Charm (Fel), Gossip (Fel), Heal (Int +10), Outdoor Survival (Int), Perception (Int +10), Read/Write (Int), Speak Language (Classical, Reikspiel) (Int +10)
Talents: Excellent Vision, Lightning Reflexes, Public Speaking, Seasoned Traveller, Suave, Warrior Born

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 17
Weapons: Unarmed (1d10; Special)

Trappings

Brother Marcus wears brown sackcloth robes with a small wooden hammer hanging around his neck. His most treasured possession is the Veil, which he genuinely believes is authentic. Whether it is or not doesn't really matter… or does it?

Investigating the Bluebelts

The Bluebelts preach the supremacy of Karl's divine heritage over all other claimants and faiths. Their leader Morgan Schloppel (Karl 2nd) has instilled xenophobia, arrogance, and intolerance into his followers.

Named for the dyed leather belts that all members wear, the Bluebelts are religious cultists of the worst sort, intolerant, surly and fanatical.

Putting the fanaticism of his followers to good use, Morgan has started amassing a small fortune in goods "confiscated" from those who do not measure up to the Bluebelts' exacting standards. He has taken it upon himself to declare several tenets for worship of the Child (all designed by Morgan to fill his own pockets), and groups of Bluebelts can sometimes be seen amongst the mob making sure these tenets are followed.

Although most members of the Bluebelts believe they act in the best interests of the Crusade by enforcing these tenets where they can, the leadership introduced them in order to fleece the ignorant of their valuables. Morgan and his closest friends run the Bluebelts as a criminal enterprise under this cover.

Asking Questions

Supplied with only a name and the information about Karl's distinctive blue belt, the PCs may think that the tip given to them by Boris is of little help in hunting down this suspect. However, asking questions about him, they discover that even this sparse description pays dividends. Once the PCs start investigating, have them make a **Gossip Test** and then consult **Table 6–9: Bluebelt Gossip**.

Blue Murder

The Bluebelts' campsite is located at the eastern edge of the Crusade's encampment, in the fringes of the surrounding forest. Gaudy blue tents are

arranged in a circle around the central meeting area where Morgan holds court daily.

At any given time, ten members occupy the circle of tents; the remainder are usually mixing elsewhere within the Crusade on business for Morgan. Only at night do all of the Bluebelts retire to the camp.

There is no security worth mentioning, so approaching unseen is not a problem. However, gaining the centre of the camp unseen or entering one of the tents requires both a **Hard (–20) Silent Move Test** and a **Hard (–20) Concealment Test** to avoid notice, as the campsite is fairly cramped.

Those who enter the camp surreptitiously find little of interest within the gaudy tents. The Bluebelts' members hand over all wealth and belongings (bar weapons and leather jacks) to Morgan on entry to the group. The only tent holding anything of interest for the PCs, other than resting Crusaders of course, is Morgan's. Held within a locked strongbox dug into the ground under his bed—a **Hard (–20) Pick Lock Test** to open—is a small cache of valuables. The strongbox contains 112*gc*, 234 s, a bolt of silk worth 25*gc*, and an old journal containing details of Morgan's early years in the priesthood of Sigmar. This journal sheds some light on his life of crime from an early age.

Interlopers who are spotted are roughed up and thrown out; the Bluebelts are rough folk with rough methods but normally engage in unarmed combat only. They aren't killers (with one notable exception). If blades are drawn, they will do likewise, but they do not initiate armed combat.

PCs who approach openly in order to speak with Morgan find the camp to be quiet, with members offering prayers and small sacrifices for the Child's safety. There is little here to cause alarm.

Upon the PCs' arrival, Morgan is informed swiftly and calls for refreshments to be brought and the central table to be laid. In short order a modest feast is prepared to honour the Child on this, the Day of the Hammer (Morgan has just made this "festival" up, as he wants to divine what the characters want of him and, in his experience, putting potential enemies at ease has been more successful than more physical methods). The PCs and Morgan's inner circle of friends are invited to partake in this impromptu feast.

Although rather intense in manner and outspoken in their views about how the Crusade of the Child should worship Karl, the atmosphere is unthreatening. If the PCs mention their investigations to Morgan or accuse one of his men of poisoning Ali, he is genuinely surprised.

> *"Frankly gentlemen, I'm shocked that you would suspect one of my men of this heinous crime. We are a peaceful religious group, not common murderers! If you ask me, this herbalist chap you mentioned has lied to you; we would never do such a thing. As you are my guests, I'll take this no further."*

If Morgan is asked permission to search belongings or to question members of the Bluebelts, he politely turns down the request. Confronted with violence, he calls his minions and the PCs may face a nasty fight if they push the point.

Characters asking Morgan for information about the two other men on their list, learn the following:

> *"Hmm… not heard of this Dieter fellow you mentioned, but Brother Marcus I do know. He's a devout chap, I'm sure he had nothing to do with this. You can find him at noon on the commons outside of the blessed Child's compound. He holds a service there daily."*

Morgan may be innocent of purchasing the poison, but one of his associates most certainly is not. Karl 3rd, his closest confidant, purchased the poison to kill Morgan and assume leadership of the Bluebelts.

With the arrival of the PCs, Karl 3rd sees an opportunity to kill Morgan and deflect the blame onto them. He intends to poison Morgan's meal and accuse the characters of the deed. It requires a **Very Hard (–30) Perception Test** during the meal to catch him in the act.

Tenets of the Bluebelts

The colour beloved of the Child is blue and some token containing this colour must be worn at religious ceremonies.

Members must change their name to venerate the Child named Karl or face confiscation of property.

Uttering the name of a false God (any other than Sigmar) in any manner other than derogatory is not permitted.

Blasphemers shall give up all worldly goods.

Table 6–9: Bluebelt Gossip

Degrees of Success	Result
0	*"I heard of some lot o' rascals who call themselves the Bluebelts. Maybe he's one o' them."*
1	*"Yeah, I've heard of a Karl in the Bluebelts. Keeping the Crusade pure they are. More power to 'em, I say."*
2	*"Don't get on their wrong side young 'un, otherwise you'll get a visit from Herr Slap and Frau Knuckle, if you know what I mean. They aren't shy in telling people how they should act and aye, not shy about beating that fact into them."*
3	*"Yes, the Bluebelts, good bunch o' lads, they've got a camp on the edge of the forest out east."*
4	*"Ha! Bunch of madmen if you ask me, those Bluebelts. Did you know they're all called Karl in honour of our beloved Child? Good luck in your search, you'll need it."*

Once Morgan shows signs of being poisoned, Karl 3rd leaps to his feet, pointing an accusing finger at the PCs,

"It was all a ruse! They came to kill us! Don't eat any more of this tainted food. Come brethren, let's teach them the error of their ways!"

With this, the Bluebelts close in on the PCs, determined to kill them if Morgan is slain, or to beat them to within an inch of their lives and deliver them to the Child if Morgan resists the poison. Trying to reason with them is pointless; Karl 3rd has chosen his time too well.

If the characters discover Karl 3rd poisoning Morgan's food, he cannot divert the blame elsewhere and is led away, bound hand and foot to await justice. Morgan looks utterly betrayed but thanks the PCs profusely.

"Thank you, gentlemen, you have no idea how much this hurts me. I've known him for many, many years and for him to do this? Was it about power? Probably.

"Anyway, I forgot something that may help you in your investigations. That Dieter you mentioned. Very strange company he keeps if this is the same fellow. He was seen with an Elf a few days ago according to my boys. I think he's one of those political types, you know, always on his soapbox."

With that, Morgan bids farewell and the PCs may leave.

Morgan Schloppel (Karl 2nd)

Male Human Crime Lord (ex-Demagogue, ex-Initiate)

Having spent his youth indentured to a Sigmarite priest, Morgan had a good grounding in the articles of faith from an early age. He and his most intimate circle of friends survived the sack of Wolfenburg (twice) by calling upon aid from the Sigmarite temple.

With his disciples, Morgan wandered ravaged Ostland until recently, when he stumbled across the Crusade of the Child. Moving amongst the hordes of the Child's followers, Morgan seized his chance for greatness. Converting easily to the tenets of the Crusade, Morgan began exerting his considerable persuasiveness and collected more followers.

Although he runs the Bluebelts as a criminal organisation, Morgan dislikes violence and is blissfully unaware of the methods used by his disciples to extort money. He has his suspicions but is content that out of sight means out of mind.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
55	46	39 (3)	45 (4)	57	62	44	66

Skills: Academic Knowledge (History) (Int +10), Academic Knowledge (Law, Theology) (Int), Blather (Fel), Charm (Fel +20), Command (Fel), Common Knowledge (Empire) (Int +20), Concealment (Ag), Disguise (Fel), Dodge Blow (Ag +10), Gossip (Fel +20), Heal (Fel), Intimidate (S +10), Perception (Int +10), Read/Write (Int), Secret Language (Thieves' Tongue) (Int), Secret Signs (Thief) (Int), Speak Language (Classical) (Int), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int +10)
Talents: Excellent Vision, Master Orator, Public Speaking, Resistance to Poison, Street Fighting, Streetwise, Suave, Very Strong, Warrior Born

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 19
Armour (Light): Leather Jack (Arms 1, Body 1)
Weapons: Hand Weapon (Sword) (1d10+3), Crossbow Pistol with 10 Bolts (1d10+2; Range 8/16; Reload Full)

Trappings

Aside from his stowed treasure, Karl 2nd wears the common homespun robes common to all in his faction. He wears the blue-dyed leather belt around his waist. He hides an extra set of superior clothes fitting for a noble along with 100 *gc* in another place to use if he needs to make a quick getaway.

Karl 3rd

Male Human Racketeer (ex-Thug)

Even Morgan doesn't know Karl 3rd's real name. He grew up in the gutters of Wolfenburg and fell in with Morgan when given the opportunity to make some money at the expense of others. He is a malicious man who delights in the Bluebelts' strong-arm tactics; in fact, he largely instigated this policy.

He now believes that the time has come for him to take over operations from Morgan, who has become lazy. Karl 3rd intends to forge the Bluebelts into a fearsome force.

Insanity Points: 2

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
55	40	46 (4)	43 (4)	38	29	46	39

Skills: Command (Fel), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int +10), Consume Alcohol (T), Dodge Blow (Ag +10), Evaluate (Int), Gamble (Int), Gossip (Fel +10), Intimidate (S), Secret Language (Thieves' Tongue) (Int), Shadowing (Ag), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int)
Talents: Disarm, Lightning Reflexes, Quick Draw, Resistance to Magic, Street Fighting, Streetwise, Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure, Strike to Stun, Strong-minded

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 16
Armour (Light): Leather Jack (Arms 1, Body 1)
Weapons: Hand Weapon (Club) (1d10+5; CV +1), Knuckle-dusters (1d10+2; Pummelling)

Trappings

Karl 3rd is dressed in the same garb that everyone else in the Bluebelts wears. The only difference is a round cap that sits on his head. He's stashed away 25 *gc* in a hole near where he squats.

Typical Bluebelt

Male or Female Human Peasant

A typical member of the Bluebelts is nothing more than a gullible peasant drawn in by Morgan's charm or Karl 3rd's intimidation. They are a generally pious lot, but they tend to follow orders blindly.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
34	30	32 (3)	35 (3)	31	29	32	34

Skills: Animal Care (Int), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int), Concealment (Ag), Drive (S), Gamble (Int), Gossip (Fel), Outdoor Survival (Int), Row (S), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int), Swim (S), Trade (Cook) (Int)
Talents: Excellent Vision, Flee!, Hardy, Rover

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 12
Weapons: Hand Weapon (Club) (1d10+3)

Trappings

The Bluebelts give over their worldly possessions upon joining this faction. They are then equipped with brown or grey robes and a blue-dyed leather belt.

Investigating the Heralds of the New Dawn

This group of political agitators has existed for five years. Founded by Dieter van Dorf as a reaction to the perceived political excesses of the Middenland nobility, they proved to be a thorn in the side of many a petty

noble before vanishing two years ago. Thought by many to have been assassinated by an exasperated landowner, Dieter and his small group of cronies really fell under the sway of Lord de Trois. Having this clandestine group under his control, de Trois used Dieter to investigate rumours about the Crusade of the Child.

Angry that the Vampire Prophecies had been subverted by mortals, de Trois embedded the Heralds into the Crusade with the intention of killing the Child and proving once and for all he himself is the chosen subject of the prophecies. To this end, the Heralds plan an attack against Karl and through the poisoning of actors they intend to take part in the passion play to be performed for the boy. Although they are not commonly seen around the camp, those who know the Heralds see them as satirists of the Child's doubters—a cover they use well.

Asking Questions

PCs investigating the Heralds should make **Challenging (–10) Gossip Tests** and then consult **Table 6–10: Heralds of the New Dawn Gossip**.

The Green Pavilion

The Heralds' camp is a large green pavilion situated to the north of the Crusade's encampment. It is pitched within a ring of rubble gathered from Wolfenburg's fallen walls and cunningly arranged by a hired engineer (who was later murdered), so there is only one safe corridor through the rubble. This arrangement affords Dieter and his companions a measure of privacy; a good thing considering some of the people they deal with. The Heralds know the route through the rubble well and are loath to share it with outsiders lest their insidious plans be compromised.

Unless the characters secure an invitation and a guide, which may be arranged in whatever way you see fit, the PCs must pick their way through the debris and pass an **Agility Test**. Should they fail, they take 1d5+1 damage from the sharp rocks. A failure by 20 or more indicates they've made such a racket—cursing, causing a rockslide, cursing some more—that 1d5 Heralds come out of the tent to investigate.

Inside the ring of rubble, the ground is cleared out to a 10-yard radius around the pavilion. The Heralds do not post guards, relying on the barrier of rubble to warn them of visitors or spies.

If the PCs have successfully navigated the ring of rubble and want to cover the cleared area around the pavilion discreetly, then they must make a successful **Silent Move Test** after the **Agility Test** in order to do so. Failure indicates they have been heard.

The pavilion houses not only Dieter and his second, Frederick Manninger but also five members of the Heralds who have not yet been embedded among the ranks of the actors for the passion play. The pavilion also houses Lord de Trois when he visits for updates on the Heralds' progress. De Trois is not present at any time during the PCs' investigation, however.

The Direct Approach

Approaching the pavilion openly brings out Dieter and Frederick. The other Heralds station themselves near the entrance so they may emerge swiftly, should there be trouble.

Confronting the Heralds openly, even if they have not overheard the plot, still gives the PCs some valuable information. Although both of the Heralds deny any knowledge of purchasing the poison, eagle-eyed characters succeeding on a **Challenging (–10) Perception Test** spot the top third of a wineskin poking out of Dieter's wide belt. A stylised serpent motif can be seen embossed onto the leather. It is the motif of Burgher Felix Vendt, whom the PCs investigated earlier and the same as those seen by the PCs when they visited Boris Leichgart and imprinted on any draughts they themselves bought. They also observe Heralds within the tent moving a couple of elaborate actors' costumes away from the entrance.

If challenged about the makers' mark on the wineskin, Dieter and Frederick call for help and their comrades emerge from the tent spoiling for trouble—the PCs cannot be allowed to get away. The Heralds are a bit more circumspect should the characters have overheard their plot, trying to talk their way out of the situation by claiming that the characters only heard a part of the play. Eventually, however, should this ploy fail, then the Heralds emerge from the tent to kill the PCs.

Table 6–10: Heralds of the New Dawn Gossip

Degrees of Success	Result
0	*"Dieter van Dorf you say? I recall seeing someone named Dieter preaching about the perils of the sanitation system around here. He had a bright green banner with him, maybe that's him."*
1	*"Well-dressed gentleman? Yeah, he's one of those soapbox preachers. Always telling you what you're doing wrong but never giving you a better alternative. You know the type. They always have a retinue of toadies with them as well don't they?"*
2	*"Don't be fooled by his respectable image, he keeps strange company. My cousin George saw him talking with a Daemon of the forest. On my life, it's true!"*
3	*"Dieter, yeah, good man. He and his companions have a big green pavilion tucked away from prying eyes amongst the rubble of the wall up north."*
4	*"Come here! Quietly now, shush! The last person who started asking questions about that van Dorf fellow was found in a ditch one morning as pale as a ghost and dead as a dormouse! My advice, don't go snooping or you may be next!"*

Dieter van Dorf

Human Spy (ex-Charlatan, ex-Agitator)

Dieter van Dorf has always been trouble. If he wasn't canvassing for changes to local policies, then he was trying to extort money from those who made the policies. Eventually things got a little bit too hot for him and he fled to Tilea with some friends who shared a similar outlook. Dieter stayed there for three years. It was whilst he was on his way back to the Empire that Lord de Trois entranced his group and started using them as spies in the Empire, where the emergence of Karl had been rumoured.

Dieter is a cultured man, even if his methods are not. He does not baulk at murder, so it is of no concern to him that he has been tasked with the killing of a child. He holds on to the reins of the Heralds tightly and his leadership is only in question when de Trois makes an appearance.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
50	46	42 (4)	41 (4)	56	53	77	50

Skills: Academic Knowledge (History, Law) (Int), Blather (Fel), Charm (Fel +10), Common Knowledge (the Empire, Tilea) (Int +10), Concealment (Ag +10), Disguise (Fel +10), Evaluate (Int), Gamble (Int), Gossip (Fel +10), Haggle (Fel), Lip Reading (Int), Perception (Int +10), Performer (Actor) (Fel), Read/Write (Int), Secret Language (Thieves' Tongue) (Int +10), Sleight of Hand (Ag +10), Speak Language (Eltharin), Speak Language (Reikspiel, Tilean) (Int +20)
Talents: Coolheaded, Excellent Vision, Flee!, Linguistics, Mimic, Public Speaking, Schemer, Seasoned Traveller, Sixth Sense, Strong-minded

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 16
Armour (Light): Leather Jerkin (Body 1)
Weapons: Hand Weapon (Sword) (1d10+4), Hand Weapon (Hammer) (1d10+4)

Trappings

Dieter wears fine clothing consisting of a green shirt, black breeches, and brown leather boots. A short black cape hangs from his shoulders and is tied around his neck with a silver clasp (worth 2*gc*). He keeps a disguise kit in his tent along with a costume for the performance. He has 15 *gc* tucked away in the bottom of his kit.

Frederick Manninger—Dieter's Second

Male Human Politician (ex-Bailiff)

Frederick Manninger was once a man of some minor power, but Dieter changed all that when he turned up at Frederick's village and opened the young bailiff's eyes to the injustice around him. Frederick fled with Dieter into Tilea and once de Trois found the Heralds, he was one of the Vampire's easier conquests.

Now Frederick does as he is told, even though he harbours some misgivings about the Heralds' activities. He is far too scared to flee, as he knows that De Trois would find him, no matter how far he ran.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
39	34	28 (2)	33 (3)	31	51	44	54

Skills: Academic Knowledge (History) (Int), Academic Knowledge (Law) (Int +10), Charm (Fel +10), Command (Fel), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int +10), Gossip (Fel +20), Intimidate (S), Perception (Int +10), Performer (Actor) (Fel), Read/Write (Int), Ride (Ag), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int)
Talents: Etiquette, Hardy, Master Orator, Public Speaking, Schemer, Super Numerate

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 17
Armour (Light): Superior Leather Jack (Arms 1, Body 1)
Weapons: Superior Hand Weapon (Sword) (WS 49; 1d10+2)

Trappings

Frederick wears fine, though worn clothing, consisting of blue pantaloons and a white shirt beneath a red vest. Low brown leather shoes cover his feet. He carries thirty or so flyers for the passion play and 10 *gc* in a purse on his belt.

Typical Herald

Male or Female Human Entertainer

These underlings are the fetchers and carriers of the organisation. They are not skilled enough actors to have been imbedded into the play and are used by Dieter for all the dirty jobs, including repelling intruders.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
36	32	30 (3)	31 (3)	39	25	33	31

Skills: Animal Care (Int), Blather (Fel), Charm (Fel), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int +10), Evaluate (Int), Gossip (Fel), Perception (Int), Performer (Actor, Singer) (Fel), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int +10)
Talents: Lightning Reflexes, Mimic, Public Speaking, Suave

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 12
Armour (Light): Leather Jerkin (Body 1)
Weapons: Hand Weapon (Sword) (1d10+3)

Trappings

The Heralds all wear quality clothing and carry 1d10–2p

The Sneaky Approach

If the PCs decide to approach the pavilion unnoticed and are successful, they hear Dieter and Frederick in conversation. Be sure to drop in some mundane conversation such as the weather, an amusing story or the price of eggs in the camp before the following important discussion occurs.

"Once we've finished up here, we should make sure that everything is packed up and moved away," says a rich, sonorous voice.

Rustling of parchment follows this declaration.

"I'm not comfortable with all of my lines yet Dieter," replies another man.

You hear a long-suffering sigh. The rich voice then responds, "Very well Frederick, we can go over your speech in the second act, but first I think we should go over the escape plan. There are more important things than remembering a few lines in the damned play."

"Of course, Dieter," follows a stung reply. "After he's dead, there will be so much confusion in the camp that we won't be missed. The smoke will just add to the confusion."

"You are sure it's still usable?"

"Yes, I checked it myself. The tunnel runs through the wall southwards, then we exit at the nearest point where the walls have collapsed and leg it. No one will know what happened."

"And the diversion will work, yes?" asks the rich voice.

"Absolutely. Once that goes off, we can jump from the stage with the others and do the deed."

"Okay, I'm convinced. Now, let's polish up your speecha bit. There's no call to produce a sloppy job is there? Let me hear you project!"

This conversation undoubtedly rings some alarm bells with the characters. Given the trouble Karl has attracted already, they should make the connection that this is a plot to kill the Child. What the PCs do next may determine whether they are in a position to stop it or not. They may tackle the Heralds head on, or try to warn Karl and his advisors.

Searching the Tent

In the unlikely event that the PCs somehow manage to infiltrate the Heralds' tent, they find that cushioned chairs and feathered mattresses fill the interior of the pavilion, revealing the relatively rich accommodations. It's clear from the number of beds that any Heralds the PCs have already encountered in their meeting—either from spying or from a direct assault—are but a fraction of the larger numbers and there must be many more in the encampment—at least eight.

On a wooden table in the centre of the pavilion is a pamphlet for the passion play, which is to be performed one day hence in Karl's honour. Two sheaves of parchment containing lines to the play can also be discovered, upon which two parts have been underlined. Give the PCs **Handout #20**.

A quick search of the Heralds' possessions turns up two elaborate actors' costumes and some less richly appointed extras apparel. On a successful **Challenging (–10) Common Knowledge (the Empire) Test**, a character recognises the elaborate costumes as depicting Grimgut Bonecrusher, the notorious Orc warlord, and the Dwarf King Ironbeard. There is also a vial of a viscous black fluid (which is a contact poison meant to be applied to the gloves of the King Ironbeard costume, should de Trois' original plan go awry).

A **Hard (–20) Search Test** reveals that the mattresses contain the wealth of their former owners. Within them can be found a total of 56*gc*, 207s, and a signet ring containing a ruby, worth 50*gc*.

Putting Two and Two Together

Once the Heralds have been dealt with and the pavilion searched, the PCs should have enough information to deduce that Karl is to be killed at the staging of the play on the following day. The PCs should also know that many Heralds are unaccounted for, and they may already be embedded within the play. With the actors' costumes available to them, and the script of the play at hand, the players should make the connection and seek to infiltrate the play to root out the assassins.

If the PCs did not overhear the plot however, another clue may be needed to get them to the play. Seeing the actors' costumes being stashed by the Heralds should certainly indicate involvement in the play, and having the characters come across a pamphlet elsewhere in the cults' camp can support this. However, if PCs are only aware of the Heralds' role in Ali's death but not their involvement in the play; then later in the evening, they should come across the Heralds' latest victim; an actor who is gasping his last breath. A desperate warning such as, *"The Child, the Child. They plan to kill the Child,"* should set the characters' feet upon the right track.

Warning the Inner Council, Nils, or Both

The best allies the characters have are Nils and Helmut, and they would do best to report their findings to their friends. Whichever one they approach first responds as follows.

> *"Friends, it is clear the Heralds you have already encountered are but a few and that this plot is already well underway. We must cancel the play and shore up our defences before Karl's enemies spring their attack. This situation is troubling, indeed, for it was my hope that this play would lift the spirits of the Crusaders and remind them of their united purpose. If only there was a way that the show could go on and for us to be able to catch the killers."*

If none of the PCs suggest it, Helmut or Nils smiles broadly and says:

> *"I've got it! The Crusade needs the play and Karl needs to catch whomever it is that's behind this plot. What if one or more of you participated in this drama, taking a role in the performance. I realise that this gives you little time to prepare, but it would give you access behind the stage as well as give you a commanding view of the audience! What do you say?"*

Helmut opts to keep this information between himself and the characters for he does not fully trust the other members of the Inner Council, so he advises that the characters act with caution. If the PCs approach both men, the second comes up with a similar solution but also adds that some of the characters should seed themselves in the audience to react to the threat whenever it reveals itself.

All the PCs must do now is purvey some costumes. If none are readily available, then characters may attempt to make their own. Costume construction requires a **Challenging (–10) Trade (Tailor)** or **Trade (Carpentry) Test** to pass muster. Of course, it's also possible that one of the PCs is already involved in the play, having been "discovered" by Wilhelm Schumacher.

Finally, if the characters alert Helmut, once they leave, he approaches Karl and reveals the imminent danger. Karl agrees to remain in his tent, whilst Helmut dresses up another boy who looks a bit similar in Karl's clothes. If the PCs are right, Karl will not be at risk. Helmut keeps the PCs in the dark about this development because he is smart enough to trust no one.

— Part II: Exit Stage Left... —

The PCs have a day before the play is to be performed. They must learn their lines in that time if they wish to infiltrate the ranks of the performers seamlessly. The text of the play is not detailed here (although some flavour text is supplied for each act). It is recommended that a **Challenging (–10) Intelligence Test** be made in order to master the lines and avoid suspicion from the other actors or Wilhelm Schumacher, the playwright.

Places, Everyone!

The performers set up the stage and costume area just outside the Child's compound. This area is a chaotic jumble of tents, props, carts, and actors. The staging area is not fenced off from the Cult's campsite, so curious Crusaders also stand around and generally get in the way, much to the distress of Wilhelm, who is nearly pulling his hair out.

Actors wearing elaborate costumes stride through the chaos practising lines in booming voices or trying to find something small and defenceless to kick. Meanwhile, milling masses of grubby extras chatter excitedly.

After a few minutes, the PCs have spotted no less than four Sigmar characters in the press. If a successful **Hard (–20) Secret Language (Thieves Tongue) Test** is made, the PCs notice that one of these Sigmars flicks a sign saying, *"Everything is set."*

The PCs may ask questions in an attempt to uncover the Heralds before the play starts. In this case, have them make **Hard (–20) Gossip** or **Charm Tests**, with success indicating they have spotted one of the fake actors. Each test represents an hour of investigation and only reveals one Herald. The characters must make eight tests to find them all. Save the uncovering of the Herald playing Sigmar until last.

What the PCs do next, once they have discovered the Heralds determines whether they can pull off their cover or not (see **Running the Play** for tips on how to handle player character actions).

All this investigation may even tip off the Heralds to the fact that the PCs are not who they seem, especially if knowing looks and nods are not returned by characters wearing the costumes found at the Heralds' pavilion.

Running the Play

Running this part of the adventure is challenging. The PCs will, in most likelihood, be split between the onstage and backstage areas of the play and maybe out in the audience. Since the events take place in both areas simultaneously, and with unexpected developments of the characters' actions, and having no less than three separate groups of people trying to influence the direction of the play, you've got your hands full.

Karl faces at least two killers (not including the PCs if they have such grim motives): Lorinoc and Lord de Trois. Should either killer get the chance, they will take it and put an end to this lad (see **Getting Started** for options if Karl dies), however, it is assumed that the PCs have the boy's best interests at heart and take steps to protect him. Since the player characters are not entirely certain from which direction the attacks will come, they should spread out through the performance area, ideally with some characters performing on stage, some working in the back, and others seated near or within sight of Karl.

The most important consideration should be to anticipate how the PCs' actions influence subsequent events. The best tool is the **PCs' Play**

Words of Wisdom from Detlef Sierck, Noted Playwright

"Never work with Halflings or animals."

"The standard of The Golden Sigmar awards for excellence in writing and performing have really gone downhill in recent years. They now celebrate nothing more than a bunch of talent-less hacks that spend the Guilds' money on cheap wine and an afternoon of backslapping. Next year, I'm going to instigate The Golden Snotling awards for performances that really stink the place up."

"Money? You think there's money to be made in acting? My dear fellow, if I had a Gold Crown for every time I heard that, I'd have two summer mansions instead of just the one."

Blood Bags and Crunch Sticks

The passion plays of the Old World place the audience in the middle of the action and give them a sense of immersion. As many folk in a typical audience have had some experience of violence, simply clutching a sword to your side and collapsing in a heap when struck fools no one. So Englebert Keutscher, one-time stagehand to Detlef Sierck, came up with the Blood Bag and Crunch Stick.

The Blood Bag is a bladder filled with pig's blood that is strapped to the actor's body in strategic locations. The actor then punctures the pack when he is struck so that blood spurts from the bladder, sometimes spraying those worthies sitting in the front rows to much merriment (this is why front row seats are in such high demand and generally cost more money than a seat further back).

Similarly, Crunch Sticks are small wooden rods inserted into the arms and legs of the actor's costume and are designed to snap loudly when struck with a wooden sword or hammer, giving the impression of bones cracking across the battlefield.

Table 6–11: PCs' Play Timetable

This table is designed to make running the play a bit easier and has been split into onstage and offstage sections. Make sure that the players taking the roles of Grimgut Bonecrusher and King Ironbeard know when they are due on stage and when they leave it again.

	Time	Onstage/Backstage/Audience
Act I	–30 minutes	*Audience:* Crusaders fill the area. Lord de Trois, wearing the plague victim garb, loiters near the perimeter of the audience. Noticing him requires a **Very Hard (–30) Perception Test**.
	5 minutes	*Onstage:* PC peasant takes to stage. **Perform Test**.
	15 minutes	*Onstage:* PC peasant leaves stage.
		Backstage: PCs may attempt **Lip Reading** or **Secret Signs (Thief) Tests** to notice Heralds' conversation about the bomb.
	20 minutes	*Backstage:* Bomb placed in boar prop, which is noticeable with a successful **Perception Test**.
Act II	21 minutes	*Audience:* Lord de Trois gets a better seat, hiding within the audience. A **Hard (–20) Perception Test** notices the plague victim. Characters in the audience see movement in the galleries if they succeed on a **Very Hard (–30) Perception Test**. This movement is Lorinoc's Kithband warriors taking position to kill Karl.
	25 minutes	*Backstage:* **Perception Test** to notice conversation about bomb.
	27 minutes	*Backstage:* Porters wanted for boar.
	28 minutes	*Onstage:* Boar takes to stage. Attempts to defuse bomb, **Strength and Ventriloquism Tests**.
	35 minutes	*Onstage:* Boar leaves stage.
		Backstage: **Perception Test** to notice angry Heralds and additional **Perception Test** to notice they wield real weapons.
Act III	36 minutes	*Audience:* Lord de Trois moves a bit closer. A **Challenging (–10) Perception Test** notices him.
	40 minutes	*Backstage:* Actor playing Sigmar becomes ill. **Gossip Test** to determine replacement.
	50 minutes	*Onstage:* PC playing Grimgut takes to the stage. **Perform Test**.
	52 minutes	*Backstage:* Guards search the backstage area. **Charm Test**.
	55 minutes	*Onstage:* Duel between Grimgut and Sigmar. Sigmar has real weapon. Crowd boos if PC strikes Sigmar. Possibly Strike to Stun, Disarm, or Street Fighting needed.
	60 minutes	*Backstage:* Guards leave backstage area.
Act IV	61 minutes	*Audience:* Lord de Trois closes in on the stage. **Average (+0) Perception Test** notices him.
	65 minutes	*Backstage:* PC poisoned by blade.
	70 minutes	*Onstage:* PC playing Ironbeard takes to the stage. Perform Test.
	75 minutes	*Onstage:* Perception Test to see prompts by Heralds to poison Sigmar actor.
		Backstage: Notice de Trois arrives, Sixth Sense or **Magical Sense Test**.
	80 minutes	*Onstage:* PC actor tripped coming off stage.
Act V	81 minutes	*Audience:* Lord de Trois is very close to the stage and near Karl. **Routine (+10) Perception Test** notices him. A character in the audience that succeeds on a **Challenging (–10) Perception Test** sees shadowy figures in the gallery ready bows.
	85 minutes	*Onstage:* PC extras combat Heralds on stage
Act VI	90 minutes	*Onstage:* Necrarch revealed and attacks Karl.
		Backstage: Wood Elf attack.
	91 minutes	*Onstage:* Wood Elf attack.

Timetable, which is split between Audience, Onstage, and Backstage events for convenience. Use the events in the order specified so no one feels neglected, and make sure that they are involved equally in the action. If there is an event you would like to add in response to the PCs' actions, simply make a notation next to the time that it should take place.

Lord de Trois cares nothing for the play except as being the best chance to eliminate Karl once and for all. He might have just ignored the actors altogether, but his movements in the audience are most conspicuous to people onstage, so he wanted allies there to ensure he was undetected until he was ready to reveal himself. What de Trois does not expect is the presence of the characters onstage and once they show their hands, de Trois' minions work quickly to kill them, without disrupting the performance and de Trois' chance to kill Karl.

Now, the player characters may have allies in Nils and possibly Helmut, but if they are working with either man, they have been advised to keep a low profile for neither man trusts the rest of the men on the Council and suspects there may be some complicity between the Council and these so-called Heralds. Any direct attempt to stop the play before there is a clear and obvious threat results in the characters—Templars or no—being tossed out. Murdering the Necrarch's agents backstage or starting a fight probably results in the same manner.

The trick to success lies in thwarting the Necrarch's plans whilst remaining anonymous to the Child and the rest of his advisors. This manoeuvring requires some lateral thinking by the PCs. If they appear stuck, give them an encouraging word or have an actor mention something in passing that they might take advantage of. For example, when the PCs are attempting to put out the smoke bomb but cannot think of a way to do so without drawing attention, an extra passer-by mumbling about a leaking Blood Bag may give them a much-needed hint.

Pitfalls and Disasters

For all the promise in the play sequence, disaster haunts every shadow and if the PCs make a misstep, everything could collapse like a house of cards. The ideal outcome is for the entire scene to erupt in violence at the start of **Act VI**, however, the entire scenario can quickly unravel if the PCs notice Lord de Trois early, spot the Wood Elves hiding in the galleries, or simply make a mess of things. If this happens, don't worry. *You don't have to finish the play!* In fact, the earlier the characters "screw things up," the easier it will be for them to save Karl's life. Let things flow organically and do not force things to develop as scripted.

The Players

The following characters are participants either in the drama onstage or in the drama in the audience.

Lord de Trois

Necrarch Vampire

Lord de Trois is a Necrarch Vampire of ancient lineage. His real name is lost to the annals of history, but if his studies are to be believed, he was the third mortal to receive the Blood Kiss from the Scion of Nagash, when he fled from Araby.

Such tales can easily be believed once you have looked upon his visage; skin leathery with great age and eyes holding the wisdom of centuries stare out from a face riddled with corruption. To see him unmasked is a thing of such horror that few survive it.

Lord de Trois is a Necromancer of surpassing skill, having had centuries to hone his art. However, his devotion to the Thousand Thrones prophecies is what drives him. He has seen a pattern emerging from his research and has been preparing for the events that have been played out in this campaign for many years.

It's all about the numbers. Numbers never lie. Lord de Trois was the third recipient of the lost Scion's Blood Kiss. Nagash himself returned to the world on three occasions. Sigmar has returned to the world twice, as Valten and Karl, and de Trois himself has been transformed twice; first when he received the blood kiss and again when he pierced the mysteries of the Prophecies. In order for the second and third conditions to be met, Lord de Trois must act.

A little known legend amongst the Necrarch clan states that when Sigmar travelled to the Tree of Hope, beyond Morr's realm, he met Nagash there and received the Blood Kiss from one of the Necromancer's lieutenants, thus mixing Sigmar's and Nagash's bloodlines. In order for the Age of a Thousand Thrones to arrive, it must happen again. He must undergo the third transformation of his un-life and Sigmar must return once more.

Lord de Trois must drink the blood of Karl, Sigmar reborn. The act will bring de Trois' third transformation and result in the third rebirth of Sigmar, held captive within the Vampire's own bloodline. Thus the triumvirate of conditions will be met, and de Trois will be the chosen of the Age of a Thousand Thrones.

It could be argued de Trois has spent too much time alone with his books and now slips into madness, but he has convinced enough of his brothers of his theory that they have not intervened. Thus de Trois hatched his plan to kill Karl once he heard about the Crusade of the Child.

Insanity Points: 6

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
51	48	65 (6)	59 (5)	58	54	72	20

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Astronomy) (Int +10), Academic Knowledge (Genealogy/Heraldry, Necromancy, Numerology, Philosophy) (Int), Channelling (WP), Charm (Fel +20), Command (Fel), Common Knowledge (Tilea, the Empire) (Int +10), Concealment (Ag), Disguise (Fel), Dodge Blow (Ag), Evaluate (Int), Gossip (Fel), Intimidate (S), Magic Sense (WP), Perception (Int), Prepare Poison (Int +10), Read/Write (Int +10), Ride (Ag), Search (Int), Shadowing (Ag), Silent Move (Ag), Sleight of Hand (Ag), Speak Arcane Language (Magick) (Int +10), Speak Language (Eltharin, Khazalid) (Int), Speak Language (Reikspiel, Tilean) (Int +10), Torture (Fel)

Talents: Aethyric Attunement, Dark Lore (Necromancy), Dark Magic, Fast Hands, Lesser Magic (*dispel, magic lock*), Meditation, Petty Magic (Arcane)

Necrotic Powder

A grey powder carried in an alchemically treated pouch.

Academic Knowledge: Necromancy
Powers: Necrotic Powder magically ages anything it touches, whether living flesh or solid steel. Only practitioners of Necromancy are immune to this effect. Usually the Necromancer blows a handful of the substance at a target (Ballistic Skill Test if the target is not stationary), which immediately inflicts 2d10 Wounds bypassing Toughness Bonus and armour points. This attack may be dodged but not parried. Necrotic powder may be used to rust metal, rot wood, or cause paper to decay into dust.
History: Developed by Necrarchs using methods first described by Nagash, necrotic powder is *Dhar* distilled into a physical form using Warpstone dust as a base. Those who carry the substance have proven impossible to capture as a handful is enough to eat through any lock and several guards.

Traits: Blood Gift (Blood Drain, Master of the Black Arts, Natural Necromancer, Vampire's Curse), Keen Senses, Natural Weapons (Fangs & Claws), Night Vision, Terrifying, Undead

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 5; **Wounds:** 24
Magic: 3; Petty Magic (Arcane), *dispel, magic lock,* Dark Lore (Necromancy)
Weapons: Fangs or Claws (1d10+6)

Trappings

During the performance, Lord de Trois lurks in the audience, wearing a heavy cloak overtop stained and filthy rags. In this disguise, he can move mostly unseen in the crowds. So long as he conceals his visage behind the rags, he does not have the Terrifying Trait. He carries two handfuls of Necrotic Powder (see **Sidebar**).

Wilhelm Schumacher

Male Human Tradesman (Playwright)

Wilhelm saw a performance of *Great Days of the Empire* when he was a child growing up in Altdorf. Since then, he has disappointed his parents, attempting to make his name as a playwright instead of taking over his father's butcher shop. To date, Wilhelm has found little success, almost bankrupting himself on several occasions. The appearance of the Crusade of the Child gave him a golden opportunity. He wrote *Heldenhammer*, a new take on the life of Sigmar. He hopes that the play will cement his reputation as a playwright of note.

He's an anxious little man, with nondescript features and a nasally voice, which quickly grates. He does not tolerate bad actors on his set, which is just as well as most of them aren't bad, they're terrible.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
32	30	31 (3)	36 (3)	40	41	42	34

Skills: Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int), Drive (S), Evaluate (Int), Gossip (Fel +10), Haggle (Fel), Perception (Int), Read/Write (Int), Secret Language (Guild Tongue) (Int), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int), Trade (Butcher, Playwright) (Int)
Talents: Savvy, Super Numerate, Warrior Born

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 14
Weapons: Hand Weapons (Club) (1d10+3)

Trappings

Wilhelm paces about the stage. He's nervous, and to quell his misgivings, he reads and rereads the script, making little notes in the margins. He wears a sweaty linen shirt and brown breeches, leather shoes on his feet, and a brown cap on his head. He's rather poor, having only 10s to his name.

Sigmar, Herald in Disguise

Male Human Sergeant (ex-Mercenary)

This Herald keeps his name secret from all but Dieter and Frederick, and they're not telling anyone. He has been employed by the Heralds as some much-needed muscle, and is trusted to act as a liaison between the leadership and the common members. Unless Dieter, Frederick or de Trois say otherwise, "Sigmar" can order the other members about; which is something he enjoys. If de Trois' bomb plan is foiled, then this Herald is given the job of killing the PC who has taken the role of Grimgut Bonecrusher.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
56	51	41 (4)	41 (4)	30 (40)	42	43	36

Skills: Command (Fel), Common Knowledge (the Empire, Tilea) (Int), Dodge Blow (Ag +10), Drive (S), Gamble (Int), Gossip (Fel +10), Intimidate (S), Perception (Int), Secret Language (Battle Tongue) (Int), Speak Language (Reikspiel, Tilean) (Int)
Talents: Disarm, Marksman, Sixth Sense, Street Fighting, Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 14
Armour (Medium): Full Mail (Head 3, Arms 3, Body 3, Legs 3)
Weapons: Hand Weapon (Hammer) (1d10+5; CV +1), Shield (1d10+3; CV +1; Defensive, Special), Unarmed (WS 66; 1d10+2; CV +1; Special)

Trappings

"Sigmar" walks around on stage wearing the beatific mask of Sigmar, ringed with a halo of light. His armour is part of his costume as is the long, flowing white cloak. He keeps a dozen Gold Crowns in a pouch on his belt.

Lorinoc

Veteran, ex-Kithband Warrior (ex-Hunter)

After the Wood Elves failed in the earlier attempt on Karl's life (detailed back in **Chapter III**) Lorinoc received further instructions from his captain. He was told to shadow the Crusade and has been doing so ever since.

When the mob settled around Wolfenburg, Lorinoc saw his chance for another assassination attempt and snuck in one or two heavily disguised warriors into the throng per night. His plan was nearing completion when disaster struck. Just as he prepared to kill Karl, Lord de Trois' men abducted two of his warriors.

Lorinoc put his plan on hold and tried to track down his missing warriors. It is on the night of the passion play that he locates them within de Trois' tent backstage from the play.

When the Necrarch reveals himself in the crowd, Lorinoc fears that the Vampire intends something other than the boy's death, and so he peppers the Undead with arrows, perhaps giving young Karl the chance he needs to escape.

Insanity Points: 4

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
50	65	36 (3)	42 (4)	62	51	52	30

Skills: Common Knowledge (Elves) (Int), Concealment (Ag +10), Dodge Blow (Ag +10), Follow Trail (Int +10), Heal (Int), Outdoor Survival (Int +10), Perception (Int +20), Scale Sheer Surface (S), Search (Int), Secret Signs (Ranger) (Int), Silent Move (Ag +10), Speak Language (Eltharin, Reikspiel) (Int)
Talents: Excellent Vision, Hardy, Lightning Reflexes, Marksman, Mighty Shot, Rapid Reload, Rover, Savvy, Specialist Weapon Group (Longbow), Strike Mighty Blow, Warrior Born
Traits: Night Vision

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Fate Points:** 1; **Movement:** 5; **Wounds:** 17
Armour (Light): Full Leather and Helmet (Head 3, Arms 1, Body 1, Legs 1)
Weapons: Elfbow with 10 Arrows (1d10+3; Range 36/72; Reload Free; Armour Piercing), Hand Weapon (Sword) (1d10+3), Dagger (1d10+2)

Trappings

Lorinoc wears a leather jack dyed in greys and greens to blend in with his surroundings. A forest green cloak held fast by a silver clasp hangs about his shoulders. A small pouch on his waist contains an antitoxin kit.

Kithband Warriors (6)

Male Wood Elf Kithband Warriors

These quiet and professional Elves take orders unquestioningly from the experienced Lorinoc. They are used to privation but the state of the Crusade of the Child's camp has distressed them. They want this job over with so they may return home. They do not hesitate to assault the stage once ordered by their leader.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
40	54	31 (3)	34 (3)	48	41	39	24

Skills: Common Knowledge (Elves) (Int), Concealment (Ag), Dodge Blow (Ag), Follow Trail (Int), Outdoor Survival (Int), Perception (Int), Scale Sheer Surface (S), Search (Int), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Language (Eltharin, Reikspiel) (Int)
Talents: Excellent Vision, Marksman, Night Vision, Rapid Reload, Savvy, Specialist Weapon Group (Longbow)

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 5; **Wounds:** 12
Armour (Light): Leather Jack (Arms 1, Body 1)
Weapons: Hand Weapon (Sword) (1d10+3), Dagger (1d10), Elfbow with 10 Arrows (1d10+3; Range 36/72; Reload Half; Armour Piercing)

Trappings

The Kithband warriors wear boiled leather jacks underneath their forest green cloaks. The have fine swords and daggers in sheathes hanging from their belts and quivers of arrows slung on their backs.

Heralds (7)

Male Human Thugs

The Heralds that are already imbedded take on a number of roles in the play, from extras to more complex parts, depending on the PCs' actions. They are highly motivated, as de Trois will destroy them if they fail.

Insanity Points: 2

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
43	34	42 (4)	36 (3)	22 (32)	26	41	37

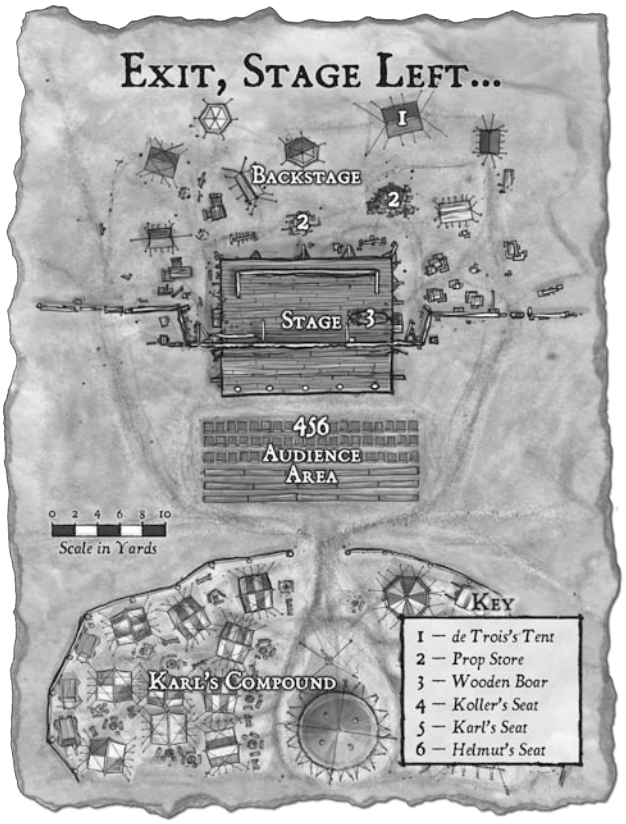
Skills: Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int), Consume Alcohol (T), Dodge Blow (Ag), Gamble (Int), Gossip (Fel), Secret Language (Thieves' Tongue) (Int), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int)
Talents: Disarm, Lightning Reflexes, Quick Draw, Strike to Injure, Strike to Stun, Very Strong
Traits: Night Vision

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 14
Armour (Medium): Mail Shirt and Leather Jerkin (Body 3)
Weapons: Hand Weapon (Sword) (1d10+4; CV +1), Knuckle-dusters (1d10+1; CV +1; Pummelling)

Trappings

The Heralds all wear costumes appropriate for their parts in the play.



The Play

The play has six acts that are unlikely to occur as the playwright intended.

Act 1: The Birth of Sigmar

"Under a sky full of portents I found him."

—Act I Scene II, *Great Days of the Empire* by Kleghel

The first act of the play details the birth of Sigmar and his youth.

Audience

The crowd quietens as the patchwork curtains are pulled apart. A sea of faces stare at the stage, eager for the religious experience they have been promised as part of this show. As the players take their places, Lord de Trois emerges from the shadows and lurks at the edge of the audience. Characters on stage might see him but only if they succeed on a **Very Hard (–30) Perception Test**.

Selected Lines from Act I

"Forsooth, mine lady, it is for mine own father to decide how best to proceed. Betwixt this and the foul deeds on this green sward, we are sorely pressed."

"Nay, good swineherd, 'tis not the new day that doth pain mine eyes, but the glory that lies beneath the rising sun and that doth cast that mighty body into shadow. It is the boy that makes me cast shadow on mine eyes. He is both mighty and fragile; a true puzzle for a pious man such as myself."

"Alas, poor Frederick, for he has looked upon the great and his mighty heart could not forsake the strain."

Onstage

The first act involves a dozen actors playing the parts of shepherds, warriors, and midwives. One is late for his scene and Wilhelm asks a PC present (if any) to take the part of Peasant Three. The part requires little more than standing around but does have one line of dialogue. *"No, I ain't never seen nuffin' like it milord."*

The PC actor taking this part may attempt a **Routine (+10) Performer (Acting) Test** to be convincing in his role. Otherwise he corpses awfully and gets a telling off on leaving the stage.

If there are no PCs present, Wilhelm plays the part himself.

Backstage

The backstage area heaves with activity. Actors awaiting their cues crowd the stage exits whilst other interested parties look on, mouthing the words to the play along with those onstage. Watchful characters with the **Lip Reading** or **Secret Signs (Thieves) Skill**s may attempt a **Challenging (–10) Test** to notice a surreptitious conversation, which is taking place between two extras. They are talking about planting the smoke bomb into the boar prop that will be the centre of the action in **Act II**.

If the characters fail to catch this discussion, they get another chance to notice something untoward—the planting of the bomb in the prop to be specific—if they are actively watching the backstage action and succeed on a **Routine (+10) Perception Test.** The prop is at the centre of a scrum of people, effectively keeping the prop out of reach.

Act II: Sigmar and Blacktusk the Boar

"Desperate times make desperate men and it is these times that doth move our hands the better."

—Act III, Scene IV, *The Strange History of Dr. Zheikhill and Mr. Chaida* by Detlef Sierck

This act chronicles the young Sigmar's battle with the infamous boar that terrorised the countryside.

Audience

When the curtain raises for the second act, any character watching the audience may notice a repellent beggar in the crowd by succeeding on a **Hard (–20) Perception Test**. Characters in the audience have a chance at noticing as well, but the test is **Very Hard (–30)**. The grotesque and afflicted were kept out of the theatre so as not to offend the audience with their pungent humours, a fact the characters can confirm by succeeding on a **Routine (+10) Gossip Test**. Note that if the characters confront the beggar, the jig is up and Lord de Trois, in his madness, attacks.

Finally, any characters that are part of the audience and succeed on a **Very Hard (–30) Perception Test** notice a quick flurry of movement in the galleries. The movement is of Lorinoc's Kithband warriors who are taking position to kill Karl. If any of the characters are in the galleries, things get a bit trickier. The Kithband warriors are under orders to kill anyone they find and quickly, so if one or more PCs are up there, a fight is bound to break out. The audience thinks this is all part of the show, but the fight is real enough and with high stakes since the Kithband warriors fight to the death. At the end of the fight, the audience applauds. Regardless of the outcome, Lorinoc and his surviving warriors withdraw from the scene and are not encountered again until **Chapter IX**.

Backstage

Quick-thinking PCs that noticed the bomb placed inside the prop may volunteer to be the porters, which requires a **Routine (+10) Charm** or **Haggle Test**. If the characters delay, two other men take the job and wheel the prop out onto the stage.

Any talk of bombs is scoffed at, or at worst is seen as an attempt by the props crew to enhance the scene.

An examination of the prop reveals a slow-burning fuse. It has been trimmed expertly so as to detonate the bomb at exactly the right moment. The PCs may throw water on the boar or empty one of their Blood Bags onto it, as water is not generally available backstage. Doing so puts the fuse out. There is no time to remove the bomb before the boar is due on the stage, so if they have not put out the fuse backstage, they have to do so onstage!

PCs remaining backstage may see some interesting activity. Characters watching the actors' area carefully may attempt a **Challenging (–10) Lip Reading**, **Perception** or **Secret Signs (Thieves) Test** to notice two Heralds talking about the plot. This talk becomes animated and angry if the Heralds saw the PC porters foil their plan. If the characters miss this exchange, then the two PCs who foiled the bomb plan are in for a surprise ambush later when the Heralds seek revenge.

A further **Perception Test** reveals both of the plotters have real weapons hidden under their costumes.

Onstage

As in **Act I**, there are a dozen actors involved in this part of the play, featuring a young Sigmar and his father's warriors. The centrepiece of the act is the wooden prop of Blacktusk the Boar—a large wheel-mounted mechanism that requires two porters to push it onto the stage and manoeuvre. This prop holds the bomb.

In order to move the boar onto the stage and to manoeuvre it once there, both porters must make a **Very Easy (+30) Strength Test**. If both tests pass, the boar moves around very realistically. If one fails, then a bit of effort is required to stop the crowd from laughing at the jerky prop. If both fail, then the thing hardly moves at all and rotten fruit and eggs are thrown onto the stage.

Not only is the prop difficult to move, but the porters are also expected to imitate the snorting and grunting noises that a pig would make. A successful **Routine (+10) Ventriloquism Test** results in a decent impersonation, as will using the Mimic Talent. Otherwise, one or two taunting squeals come from the watching masses. Who said acting was easy?

PC porters may still pour water or blood onto the boar whilst onstage. Another alternative is to try a **Hard (–20) Sleight of Hand Test** to remove the bomb whilst the play is taking place and to hide the act from the crowd. If neither of these actions is taken, then running the thing backstage to spare the crowd is another option. This action results in a cloud of smoke in the actors' area only, thus thwarting the Necrarch's plan. The whole thing is blamed on the props staff. If the bomb is not defused or taken backstage before it goes off, Lord de Trois rushes forward through the crowds, grabs the boy, and tries to escape to kill him. If Lorinoc and his Kithband warriors are still present, they attack, loosing arrows into the smoke in the hope of striking the boy. Proceed to **Chaos Erupts**.

Selected Lines from Act II

"Young Sigmar quailed, thought all was for naught,/The moment he saw the bristled snout,/Tusks like a swine's, yet twice as big,/The tales told true, 'twas no ordinary pig."

"See yonder there, 'tis not fearsome rage that plagues this beast but pain whose burden robs it of its soothing nature."

"Make no movement swift or action harsh, 'less you wish your wife a widow be."

Act III: The Battle of Astofen Bridge

"...and he struck off his head."

—Act III, Scene V, *The True History of Sigmar Heldenhammer* by Detlef Sierck

This act is concerned with the young Sigmar earning his shield in battle against the war band of the Orc warlord Grimgut Bonecrusher.

Audience

Lord de Trois creeps ever closer, and between acts, he moves a bit further towards the stage. Characters on stage may notice him by succeeding on a **Challenging (–10) Perception Test**. Those that succeed by 10 or more notice his eyes are glowing. If the PCs attack or call attention to the Vampire, proceed with **Chaos Erupts**.

Backstage

Events are escalating. As **Act III** starts, it becomes evident to the PCs that the actor cast as Sigmar has fallen ill. If they make enquiries about his replacement a **Challenging (–10) Gossip Test** locates him. The replacement is an agent of the Heralds (depending on their previous investigations, the PCs may or may not know this). A **Challenging (–10) Perception Test** reveals that the Herald has a real weapon at his side.

To make matters worse, guards from Karl's compound patrol the actors' area during this act. Any suspicious behaviour draws the guards' attention and may require a **Charm Test** by the characters to talk themselves out of trouble. If bodies are hidden backstage, then there is a 10% chance of the guards discovering them. The guards have left by the time Grimgut and Sigmar finish their duel, but this event may disrupt the characters' attempts to help their companion fighting onstage.

Now then, earlier in this adventure, a PC may have been confronted by the actor that's supposed to play Grimgut and if so, here's the chance the PC needs to show his acting mettle. Otherwise, Wilhelm approaches any PC that's backstage and hastily dresses the character in the costume, pressing the lines in his hands, and claiming the actor who was to play the part is besotted and unable to carry on. Within moments, the hapless character is tossed out onstage. If no characters are present, Wilhelm plays this part himself and is stabbed with a poisoned weapon near the end of the act to prevent the fussy director from interfering with the Heralds' plot.

Onstage

At its most chaotic, the large battle scene in this act sees as many as forty actors on stage; dressed as Orcs, Goblins, and Human warriors. It is also the first opportunity for a PC actor to show what he is made of.

Grimgut Bonecrusher takes to the stage early in the act and remains until the end. He has a large chunk of dialogue, most of which is spoken in a

Smoke Bomb

Lord de Trois manufactured this unusual device after conducting exhaustive research into gunpowder weapons and the properties of acrid smoke. It took many attempts, but he eventually managed to create a bomb that was stable and could be relied upon to spew smoke even if it used a slow burning fuse.

Once the fuse has burned down, use the Large Template to measure the area covered by smoke. The bomb continues to spew smoke for 5 rounds. During this time, visibility is reduced to 2 yards (1 square) in the affected area. The smoke does not cause any other ill effects. Depending on prevailing weather conditions, the smoke may drift or be dispersed quickly.

These bombs malfunction on a roll of 1 on 1d10.

Given the correct reference materials and ingredients, smoke bombs may be crafted by those with the Trade (Gunsmith) Skill or by those who have decades to spare for trial and error. Each bomb costs 15*gc*.

Selected Lines from Act III

"Snargh schniss ach mardar! Morrghh! Arghh! Kneiss ablch Waaagh!" Many historians believe this quote is incorrect, as when translated it makes far too much sense.

"Do not tarry this day abed but carry your scorn to the enemy. Let that be your armour and let you sword show your righteous anger that such beasts as stand before us still see the light of day. Many of those not standing beside us will look back with great sorrow that they did not vanquish their share; that they tarried where they should have been swift, that the glory awaiting us should be denied them. Make them weep with shame, brothers!"

Selected Lines from Act IV

"This pact I do pledge, before all gathered this day, and honour it I shall, even though all the world doth bid me forsake it. This is my word to you."

"Never in such a field of conflict have the Dwarfs owed such a debt of gratitude, even though we are few."

language that may or may not be genuine Goblin Tongue. No one has had the courage to confront Wilhelm about the authenticity of his lines.

Due to the difficulty of his lines, most of which are utter gibberish, the character playing Grimgut needs to improvise. He must make a **Hard (–20) Performer (Acting) Test** in order to pull off his role realistically. If the PC does not have the Performer (Acting) Skill, then he may attempt a **Very Hard (–30) Fellowship Test** instead. A successful test prevents the more raucous elements of the crowd from throwing handfuls of mud, dung, or rotten vegetables at him.

Bad acting aside, the frantic finale of **Act III** is what holds the real danger for a character playing Grimgut. The actor cast as Sigmar has been taken ill (actually poisoned by the Heralds) and has been replaced by a Herald, who wields a real weapon.

Once the mythical duel between Grimgut and Sigmar begins, the Herald playing Sigmar attempts to kill the PC. Considering the Blood Bags and Crunch Sticks contained within all of the costumes, the Herald has an effective cover for his murder attempt. Unless the PC managed to bring a weapon of his own onto the stage, there is a good chance that he will be in real trouble once the duel starts.

In order to survive this duel, the character playing Grimgut must reverse history and defeat Sigmar! This move incurs the wrath of the crowd, which boos at every blow landed by Grimgut. Should this happen, Lord de Trois makes his move, and you should proceed with **Chaos Erupts**.

The PC may have to devise something a bit subtler to survive. The Strike to Stun, Disarm, and Streetfighting Talents may help to disguise his fight for survival as a choreographed scene. He must make sure, even if he kills Sigmar, that the crowd has no cause for alarm. This task is not easy and may require help from characters who are backstage. Of course, the character may just flee the stage, and if so, the crowds roar with laughter.

Act IV: King Ironbeard

"Pilfered gold will glisten all the brighter, but that given freely outshines the Sun."

—Act II Scene I, *The Tragedy of the Bretonnian Courtesan*, unknown

This act spotlights the PC playing King Ironbeard, and deals with Sigmar's rescue of the Dwarf king and their subsequent alliance. At its peak, as many as twenty actors are onstage, and the fact the Dwarfs are being played by Humans and are thus too tall seems to have passed Wilhelm by.

Audience

Any characters in the audience with the Sixth Sense Talent feel sudden shivers down their spines and a sense of imminent doom. Lord de Trois draws ever closer and is nearly at the stage. A character watching from the stage may notice him or his progress with a successful **Perception Test**. Any character near Karl (or his double) notices the Vampire with the same test. Success on either test by 10 or more reveals the Vampire's glowing eyes. Attacking the Vampire triggers **Chaos Erupts**.

Backstage

If Wilhelm is still alive and if there are any PCs backstage, he frantically searches for someone to play the part of King Ironbeard, preferably a Dwarf—though any character will do. As with the previous act, the character is shanghaied and dressed against his will, lines stuffed in his hands, and then unceremoniously shoved onstage.

By now, the Heralds have probably identified any PCs who are backstage, and move to eliminate them. During a particularly hectic moment when props are being moved or extras gathered, a Herald jabs the PC with a blade daubed with Manticore Spoor. In the press, the killer need only make a **Very Easy (+30) Weapon Skill Test** (70 or lower) to hit, and should the character succumb to the venom he slumps to the ground. Any character trying to locate the attacker must succeed on a **Hard (–20) Perception Test**.

Onstage

King Ironbeard takes to the stage near the beginning of the act and remains there until its conclusion. Once more, the character playing this role has a great deal of dialogue to memorise. In order to remain convincing, he must make a **Challenging (–10) Performer (Acting) Test**. In the absence of this skill, a successful **Challenging (–10) Fellowship Test** halts the worst of the crowd's derision.

The Heralds' contingency plan is supposed to be carried out during this act, and if they remain unaware that a PC is wearing the Ironbeard costume, they wait in the wings to prompt him. The idea was that the gloves of the Ironbeard costume would have a poison applied. Once Sigmar clasped hands with the Dwarf, the poison would work its way into the actor's system, allowing another Herald to take to the stage in subsequent acts.

To coordinate this plan, two of the Heralds make hand signals onto the stage from the wings. If the PC actor makes a **Secret Language (Thieves' Tongue) Test** he is able to understand the instructions. Otherwise, he simply observes some extras sending him strange hand signals.

Once the act has ended and the Ironbeard character leaves the stage, the Heralds have discovered that there is an impostor in their ranks. The PC is tripped whilst exiting the stage, requiring an **Average (+0) Agility Test** to avoid falling prone. The Heralds then melt into the ranks of the actors gathered backstage.

Act V: Battle of Black Fire Pass

"To flee or not to flee."

—Act IV Scene III, *Romulus and Brunhilde* by Magnus Opperheim

Act V covers the huge Battle of Black Fire Pass and presents opportunities for as many characters to take to the stage as wish to do so. The gallons of pig blood, spilt from torn Blood Bags onstage, ably improve this staggering spectacle.

Audience

Lord de Trois is nearly ready to strike and any character on stage or in the audience notices him on a **Routine (+10) Perception Test**. A character in the audience that succeeds on a **Challenging (–10) Perception Test** sees shadowy figures in the gallery stand and ready bows.

Backstage

At the start of this act, any PCs still backstage have a chance to strike at the Heralds, and so efforts to slip into the mob for this huge battle scene are successful. PCs remaining backstage find themselves on their own except for a few prop handlers and extras. If the characters haven't noticed Lord de Trois in the audience, give these characters a chance to notice the Vampire as above. Should they think to attack de Trois, proceed with Chaos Erupts.

Onstage

This act affords the characters an opportunity to swing their sword arms freely and confront any remaining Heralds openly onstage. It would obviously help the PCs to have gained real weapons by this point, as those Heralds still remaining attack the PCs and they do have real swords.

The combat serves as an excellent cover for all manner of underhanded tactics and murders. Even though the combat is choreographed, there are still some rather nasty injuries sustained, and actors being carried senseless from the stage are not an uncommon sight at these types of events.

If possible, the Heralds try to double up on their targets, increasing the odds in their favour.

Act VI: Sigmar Battles Nagash

"Beware the brides of Necrarch."

—Act II Scene I, *A Farce in the Fog* by Detlef Sierck

"All the Old World is our stage, though we are merely Slayers."

—Act IV Scene IV, *The Desolate Prisoner of Karak Kadrin* by Jacopo Tarradasch

In this final act, the battle between Sigmar and Nagash is fought. However, the hostility that has simmered behind the scenes is soon brought into the open by two events, and the play descends into chaos if it hasn't yet already.

Chaos Erupts

Any characters remaining backstage during this act have little to see until de Trois reveals himself in the audience. Proceed with **Chaos Erupts**.

This act opens with a dozen actors on the stage, playing Sigmar and his few loyal retainers. Things go as planned until Nagash takes to the stage. It is at this point when everything falls apart (if it hasn't gone south beforehand). The following developments should occur.

- Lord de Trois flings off his disguise, striking terror in all who see him. He then lunges for Karl (or Karl's double).
- The crowd explodes with panic. If Karl is really present, about half of the numbers surge forward to protect the boy, but if not, the people struggle to flee, pouring up the aisles and trampling each other in terror.
- If the Wood Elves are still in the gallery, they shower de Trois with arrows, thinking the Vampire will steal the boy away.
- The surviving Heralds attack the PCs in the confusion.

Any PC within sight of Lord de Trois must pass a **Terror Test** or flee. Those who succeed or who cannot see the Vampire may act normally, fighting the Vampire, the Heralds, or the Wood Elves. Koller and his men give the PCs a few rounds, and they sell their lives to protect the boy (false or no). Most battles should be one on one and characters should have 1d5 fights with individual opponents or small groups each.

The combat continues for as long as needed. Lorinoc leads his Wood Elves out of the fight if two or more of their numbers fall. The Heralds fight to the death and Lord de Trois fights until reduced to 5 Wounds or less, at which point he flees by whatever means he has available, and isn't seen again until the final chapter in this adventure. In the battle, Karl's double should be slain. Otherwise, Helmut tries to help the boy get away.

Selected Lines from Act V

"They blacken the ground with their poisonous aspect. Let not their countenances sway your courage, nor their unmanning cries rob you of your skill. Before we are done this day, they will lie adrift on this field of battle."

"Seven times seven times did I smite at them, yet still as many took their places. Men fell about me, but I kept my arms swinging until with blood pounding behind mine eyes did I at last have the field."

Selected Lines from Act VI

"Humans are cattle."

"Blasted hill and blasted face, but still he kept up killing pace,/Walking dead and walking tall, mighty Sigmar would not fall,/Magic fell and magic grim, did its best to unman him,/Flashing light and flashing blade, Sigmar's legend had been made."

The Aftermath

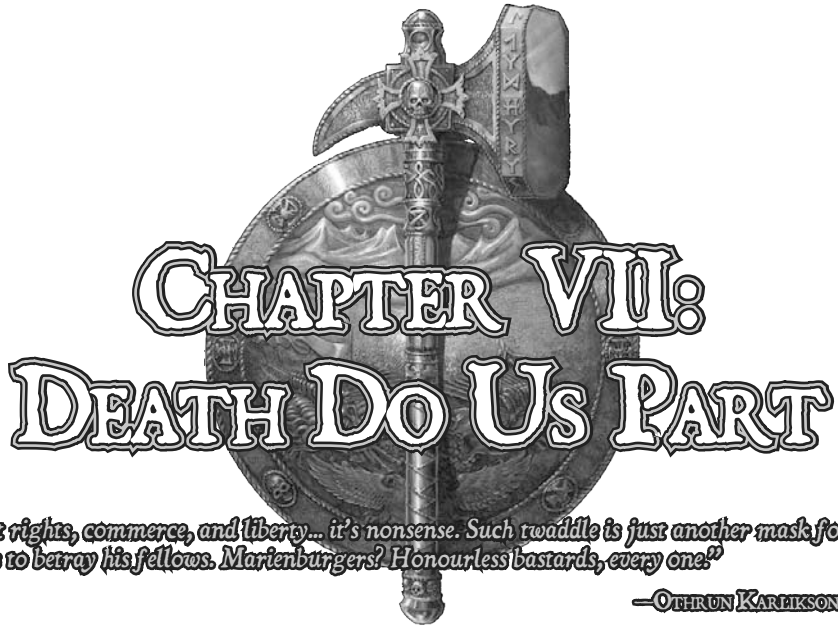
In the end, whether de Trois kills Karl, his double, or if de Trois flees in failure, at some point in the battle, he drops a leather-bound journal onto the stage. PCs who notice this can pick up the book with little trouble. Subsequent study of this tome reveals it to be a set of cryptic prophecies and riddles. This tome is de Trois' hand-written journal on the Vampire Prophecies introduced in **Chapter VII** and can act as foreshadowing to events in that chapter. Give the PCs **Handout #21.**

Koller and his men (or Eisenbach's men if Koller is slain) lock down the area. They have questions and they mean to get answers. Since the backstage is open to the rest of the encampment, the PCs can slip free with little trouble. However, if they linger, they, along with all the other remaining actors, are rounded up and imprisoned. Over the next 1d5 days, the PCs and the actors are questioned about what's going on. Captured characters that had designs on killing Karl during the play may be hanged for their part, though a well-spent Fate Point can give the PCs an out and a possible hook into the next chapter. Those who helped to protect Karl are hailed as heroes once more and Helmut approaches them as described in **Chapter VII** for their assistance.

Rewards

The player characters should get around 300 experience points by the end of this adventure.

Action	XP
Characters safely return Karl to the inner circle	10
PCs meet and agree to help Nils	10
Each character that finds a way to get involved in the play	10
Find the manufacturer of the poison	20
Reveal Brother Marcus's secret	10
Help keep Brother Marcus's secret	15
Characters kill/thwart Karl 3rd	5
Characters successfully eavesdrop on the Heralds at the green pavilion	10
For each Act of the play in which the PCs took part	10
Stopping the Wood Elves	20
Stopping de Trois	20
Saving Karl's life or that of his double	50
Defeating all the Heralds	20
Great roleplaying	50–100



Chapter VII: Death Do Us Part

"All this talk about rights, commerce, and liberty... it's nonsense. Such twaddle is just another mask for Human greed and his willingness to betray his fellows. Marienburgers? Honourless bastards, every one."

—Othrun Karlikson, Dwarf Pit Fighter

By Jude Hornborg

Throughout the campaign, various Vampire Lords have conspired and plotted to capture the boy for their own wicked ends. Driven by their own interpretations of an ancient prophecy, they each see the appearance of the lad as their opportunity to ascend to greatness, to become something greater when the Champion of Night takes his place on the throne of the world. Death Do Us Part reveals yet another wicked plot, this time by Lydia von Carstein of Sylvania.

Adventure Background

Thus far, the adventurers have crossed half the Empire, their fates tied inextricably to that of Karl. Whether as assassins, spies, or loyal followers, they have served the boy, rescued the boy, and maybe have even tried to kill the boy. All the while, the Crusade drifted eastward, leaving a swathe of destruction, broken lives, and madness in its wake. Now, after the most recent attempt to slay Karl—this time at the hands of a wicked Necrarch Vampire—Karl has disappeared once more, and many of the remaining members of the inner circle believe it was another kidnapping.

Of course, Karl was not kidnapped. Amidst the confusion of the play, Karl slipped away, crossing alone through the forests to locate a seer in Talagaad named Madame Yaga. Earlier in the evening, Karl had received a vision, instructing him that Madame Yaga could assist in finding his mother. Karl revealed his vision to two advisors: Helmut and Brother Frederich of Morr. Karl asked Frederich to escort him, incognito, to Talagaad and back, while Helmut remained to reassure the Crusade during his absence.

Frederich's plan was to spirit Karl away in a coffin drilled with tiny air holes. Fortunately, no one questioned why Frederich abruptly left camp on the night of the play, driving a great black hearse to, presumably, perform funerary rites. The coffin ruse would ensure Karl's secrecy and keep away unwanted followers. Karl is not afraid of the dark coffin—he overcame any fears during his abduction at the hands of Tobias. In fact, he finds the trip to be a welcome respite from the constant attention. The plush interior of the coffin is also rather comfortable.

It's important to note Karl's "vision" was actually a dream projected by the Black Witch, plotting to use Madame Yaga as a medium to discover the names of Karl's advisors. Before the Black Witch can use her dream magic to access a person's mind, she must first learn that person's name. The PCs might soon experience the Black Witch's dream magic firsthand.

The Vampire Prophecies

Across the Old World, scholars of ancient Nehekhara work at piecing together the history of Necromancy. Many scrolls and hieroglyphs have been recovered from the Land of the Dead over time, but these artefacts are often damaged or mistranslated—or were deliberately encrypted by their authors a millennia ago. The ambiguous nature of these records has fostered conflicting theories concerning the origins of Vampirism in Lahmia, the Vampires' exodus to the Old World, and the High Priest of the Mortuary Cult who would become the Great Necromancer Nagash.

In fact, there is a devoted following of academics working in secret to uncover the truth behind the Nagash apotheosis legend. After the Great Necromancer was driven from Khemri in –1650 IC, he seemingly vanished from recorded history for nearly 500 years. Based on recent exploration and secondary sources, most historians now agree Nagash attained godhood, raised Nagashizzar, and fought a major war against the Skaven during those missing years.

Scrolls from the Nehekharan city of Zandri link Nagash's apotheosis to the five Vampire bloodlines. The exact translation of these hieroglyphs is heavily debated, but they seem to indicate Nagash's bloodline was cursed by the Old Gods, and extensive conditions must be met in order to lift the curse. Interpretations of the curse vary widely, according to the nationality and religion of the interpreter. This field of scholarship comprises a hodgepodge of historical half-truths, rumours, and theological exegesis collectively known as the Vampire Prophecies.

Of course, Vampires rarely agree on mundane issues, much less the true nature of their curse and, more importantly, what must be done to lift it. (See the **The Vampire Prophecies** in the **Introduction** for the five bloodlines' differing beliefs about the prophecies.)

The Qu'rashi Nomads

Having previously discovered the Elixir of Life, Nagash was over 300 by the time he was driven from Khemri. The infamous elixir kept the exiled

priest young, but it failed to protect him from desert exposure. Only a chance encounter with a tribe of nomads saved Nagash from certain death. Qu'rashi oral tradition maintains Nagash was rescued and lived among them for a time before they became aware of his true identity. When the mortal Nagash fell in love with a woman of the tribe, he revealed himself to the elders.

At first, the Qu'rashi were conflicted, as they knew of the high priest's notorious fall from grace. But Nagash embodied the nomadic ideals of cunning and resourcefulness, and besides, the Qu'rashi had already partaken of his fertility magic. While the Qu'rashi and Nagash agreed on most subjects, the nomadic view on the sanctity of death forced the elders to reject his elixir. Eventually, Nagash was accepted as a full member of the tribe and permitted to marry his true love. Soon after, the Great Necromancer's last child was born. It is probable this child lived and died without ever knowing the significance of his infamous heritage.

For 50 years, Nagash continued drinking the longevity elixir, avoiding the ravages of age. With the tribe's refusal to utilise the elixir, Nagash's wife grew old and died. Nagash was heartbroken, his ageless existence promising only an eternity of unanswered longing. Nagash soon left the Qu'rashi in search of a means to reunite with his beloved. His search took him to the realm of Morr.

It is interesting to note that within the extensive volumes of Nagash's collected memoirs (as interpreted by Kadon), the desert dwellers are mentioned once and never by name.

Nagash and the Tree of Hope

At the edge of the world stands a great tree that carries the hidden secrets of life upon its branches. Legend says the tree is guarded by Morr, and one must cross his domain in order to reach it. How Nagash came to the Tree of Hope remains a mystery. Only the greatest champions of mankind have ever stood before the tree, and presumably, Morr would deny Nagash access. However, recovered Lahmian tablets suggest the Great Necromancer went before the tree, and it was there he underwent apotheosis and attained godhood.

Curse of the Old Gods

Finally, with Nagash gone, the reformed Mortuary Cult reclaimed its respectable status within Nehekharan society. But deep within the "reformed" cult, a secret cabal loyal only to Nagash continued plotting in his name. In Lahmia, High Priest W'soran turned Queen Neferata against the reformers, and many of the disloyal were banished or killed outright. After eradicating their opposition, W'soran and Queen Neferata erected the Temple of Blood as a rallying place for the scattered acolytes of Nagash. Deep within the temple, diabolical minds worked feverishly to recover the lost secrets of Nagash's elixir. After a time, the cultists were able to partially simulate Nagash's formula but with terrible side effects. The flawed elixir granted Neferata a limited form of immortality and a healthy thirst for Human blood.

The age of the Vampire had begun.

The Gods of Nehekhara were greatly angered; their priests had been expelled from the city and their followers converted to this new Cult of Blood. The vengeful Gods convened a hasty council, wherein they cursed Nagash and his bloodline for indirectly birthing the Vampire menace. Most commonly cited is the pronouncement of Ptra the Sun God, ruler of the pantheon, which states Nagash's bloodline will remain childless for as long as Ptra rules the sky. Variants of the curse have also been attributed to Asaph, Goddess of the Asp; and Phakth, the Hawk God, among others. In a bitter twist of irony, Nagash would later invoke these same gods to command the vampires against the armies of Khemri.

The Three Returns of Nagash

Over the next millennium, Nagash returned three times. Nagash's first return came when a great host of unified Nehekharans expelled the Blood Cult from Lahmia. At first, Neferata and the Vampires believed Nagash was acting in their interests. They had been humiliated by the Nehekharans

and were eager for Nagash's magical aid in the upcoming counterattack. Unfortunately for Neferata and her ilk, this same magical "aid" also bound the Vampires to Nagash's will. Of course, the counterattack failed, and the Vampires were driven north. Eventually, Neferata and her fellows were able to break free of Nagash's direct control, but the legacy of his betrayal would live forever in the Blood Curse. On his second return, Nagash cast his Great Ritual and transformed the Kingdom of Nehekhara into the Land of the Dead. Nagash returned once more during the age of Sigmar Heldenhammer.

Sigmar and the Great Necromancer

Nagash's *Crown of Sorcery* played a pivotal role in Sigmar's defeat of the Great Necromancer in 15 IC. Just as Kadon had done many years before, Sigmar gained knowledge of Nagash's history simply by wearing the soul-forged crown. Fortunately for the Empire, Sigmar was not as easily corrupted as Kadon had been, so he was able to turn the necromancer's knowledge against him. Sigmar's defeat of Nagash was the last great battle before he departed the Empire to become a God. Scholars claim Sigmar witnessed the Tree of Hope on his journey from the world, just as Nagash had done.

Direct connections between Sigmar and Nagash are vehemently denied by Sigmarite scholars. Anyone suggesting Sigmar was tainted by the *Crown of Sorcery* is charged with blasphemy. However, Grand Theogonist Volkmar's resurrection after the Storm of Chaos caused whispers to spread throughout the Empire. Whilst the majority of Esmer loyalists prefer to couch their attacks against Volkmar in terms of Chaos taint, sceptical theologians of other Gods—particularly those of Morr and Ulric—have begun to wonder if Sigmar's apotheosis was gained at a terrible moral cost.

The Zandri Scrolls

During the late 15th century, Tilean prince Giovanni Lanfranchi mistakenly landed his crusading army on the northern coast of Nehekhara. They plundered ancient tombs in the city of Zandri and recovered hordes of gold and scrolls dating back to the first return of Nagash. Lanfranchi led his army onwards into Araby, paying little heed to the scrolls. But years later, after retiring from the crusades, Lanfranchi translated the Zandri Scrolls with the aid of Morrian Priest Anton Aethelbert. The content of the scrolls was most disturbing.

Among the scrolls was a series of encrypted testimonials written for King Alcadizzar by his high priests. They were dated at around –1190 IC, just after the fall of Lahmia. Alcadizzar had been urged to dispatch his navy and hunt down the scattered Vampires, for among them was one individual who might undo the curse of the Old Gods and bring darkness upon the world. The identity of this errant Lahmian has never been ascertained, but Aethelbert concluded one of Nagash's descendants must have been overlooked when the Old Gods cursed his bloodline. *"Whilst searching the Temple of Blood,"* the high priests had written, *"evidence was found that a cataclysmic spell will be unleashed if the curse of the Old Gods is undone."* Only 40 years later, all Nehekhara had been destroyed by Nagash's Great Ritual. Those survivors who had known of the high priests' warnings assumed that this was the foretold cataclysmic event. They were wrong.

The errant Lahmian's identity was never ascertained, but Aethelbert concluded one of Nagash's descendants must have been overlooked when the Old Gods cursed his bloodline. Lanfranchi and his chaplain also discovered a series of numeric codes which they were unable to crack, but which Lanfranchi incorporated into a triptych painting for future scholars to unravel. These numerals represent encoded power words, sacred to the old Nehekharan gods. The sacred words were uttered by Nagash after his first return, and together with the power of Vashanesh's ring allowed Nagash to bind the vampires to his will.

Priory of the Spear

Lanfranchi was gravely concerned by the Zandri Scrolls and used his considerable fortunes to establish an order of elite Myrmidian Vampire hunters called the Priory of the Spear. The order's headquarters was located in Lanfranchi's home town of Monte Negro, near Remas. A base was also built near the village of Siegfriedhof in Stirland, chosen for its close proximity to Sylvania, where Aethelbert believed Vashanesh, a known Scion of Nagash, was hiding. The true purpose of the Priory was well concealed, for if the Vampires learned a descendant of Nagash had escaped the curse of the Old Gods, they would take every measure necessary to protect him. The Priory of the Spear was ruthless in its pursuit of Nagash's descendants, murdering any druid, Strigany, or Arabyan migrant who could be justified to have connections with the Great Necromancer.

By the time of Lanfranchi's death, the Priory of the Spear had gained considerable notoriety. Anton Aethelbert, now a saint and commander of the fortress in Siegfriedhof, implemented a reformation of the order under the guidance of a Morrian sect called the Fellowship of the Shroud. The fortress at Siegfriedhof was converted into an abbey, and the order's charter was officially re-written to emphasise a defensive role. Unofficially, the Fellowship of the Shroud remains very much an offensive order to this day; its core mandate is to hunt and kill the Scions of Nagash. Famous historical figures have lent their support throughout the Shroud's 1,000 year existence, including Leonardo da Miragliano and Empress Magritta I.

Old Faith

During the Vampire hysteria of the 16th century, druids of the Old Faith were executed for performing blood rituals similar to those of the Qu'rashi nomads. Druids were also linked with the Barrow Kings; Undead champions of the pre-Imperial tribes who rose from their mounds to punish trespassers on their sacred land. Also, an obscure field of druidic lore has been linked with the Vampire prophecies, the most intriguing of which links the old Sun God Oermath—former husband of the Earth Mother Ishernos—with the Nehekharan Sun God Ptra. Scholars have claimed that Ishernos' sister, an obscure moon goddess, granted Nagash's apotheosis for some hidden purpose in the feud with Oermath. According to these theories, Nagash's fourth return would signal the restoration of the Earth Mother.

Adventure Synopsis

In the aftermath of the Wolfenburg play, the adventurers' simple assignment to shadow Karl again becomes a complicated search for the missing boy. Their search takes the characters south through Talagaad to Wurtbad and then east along the River Stir to Siegfriedhof, where they encounter the Order of Morr. Information gained at the abbey leads the PCs to Sylvania, and a final confrontation with a Vampire baroness named Lydia. Afterwards, the players realise they have chased the wrong boy and

Red Herring

Ultimately, the events of this chapter serve to divert the PCs from the Crusade's journey north into Kislev. If at any point the players lose patience pursuing this red herring, do not feel obligated to force the adventure to its conclusion. Simply deduct travel fees, and summarise the return trip in a few minutes of game time. If the players aren't itching to rejoin the Crusade immediately, you may wish to play the return trip in detail using the *Thousand Thrones* web enhancements from www.blackindustries.com.

must now rush off to save the real Karl in Kislev. For a detailed guide to the clue trails and subplots of this adventure, see the sidebar **Ancient Scrolls, Sacred Stones, and Dead Painters** on page 184.

Alternate Travel Routes and Pacing

The locations in this chapter follow a linear route, requiring three or four weeks of in-game travel. With some preparation, the PCs' travel route may be modified to proceed eastwards from Wolfenburg and then south, instead of southwards and then east. Replace Talagaad with Küsel, Hermsdorf/Wurtbad with Stahlhof, and Siegfriedhof with Essen. You may also wish to move Lydia's Castle closer to Waldenhof or Eschen. If *Death Do Us Part* is being used outside of the *Thousand Thrones* campaign, then adventurers coming from the Altdorf region could travel along the River Talabec to Talagaad and proceed from there. In any event, the travel portions of this adventure may be abstracted to increase momentum or played out in detail using additional material from the Black Industries' website, www.blackindustries.com.

Playing as a One-Shot

Death Do Us Part is suitable as a self-contained adventure divided into three or four sessions. The following background text may be used to update players on the story so far. Note that this recap is slightly modified for simplicity.

> *Two months ago, a splinter group of the Cult of Sigmar emerged from Marienburg, travelling in a large caravan. At the centre of the Crusade was a young boy named Karl, said to be the new incarnation of Sigmar. Karl preached tolerance and compassion, and his Crusade gathered followers at an astounding rate. After its pilgrimage eastwards through Altdorf and Middenheim, the Crusade came to rest outside Wolfenburg, the shattered capital of Ostland. Amid sprawling tent villages, the boy's story would finally be revealed through a passion play staged by group of mummers called the Heralds of the New Dawn. When the play approached its climax, violence erupted on stage, and the audience was thrown into confusion by errant pyrotechnics. Someone had sabotaged the play, and when the smoke had settled, Karl was gone.*
>
> *You arrived in Wolfenburg a few nights ago, seeking an audience with Karl. The inner circle of the boy's cult was discovered to be inaccessible, but you did manage to befriend one of Karl's senior advisors, a man named Helmut. It is now the morning after Karl's disappearance, and Helmut visits you with urgent business.*

Additional Plot Hooks

In addition to the factions you created or used in **Chapter VI**, there are two more Sigmarite factions that can hook the PCs. These factions are engaged in a doctrinal feud over the resurrection of Volkmar and the nature of Sigmar's apotheosis. Either of these factions may hire the PCs to retrieve the Sigmar panel of Lanfranchi's triptych, stolen from the Skulls a week before the play. If the PCs have previously lost Helmut's trust and have not befriended any of Karl's other advisors, the triptych hook is the best option. A third hook is available to parties who befriended Ahmed's mother Suri in a previous chapter. The PCs may be hired by the fearful Strigany woman to visit Talabheim and serve as bodyguards for Ahmed until the Order of Morr decides how to proceed. Ahmed's mother pays the PCs with exotic goods.

Sigmarite Flagellants of the Skull

Faction Type: Religious
Faction Size: 21 (Medium)
Faction Quirk: Fanatics
Members: 12 Zealots, 8 Flagellants
Leader: Scholar

The Skulls are a band of frothing zealots led by the mad genius Ludwig Buchholz. Their shouting can be heard above the din of the crowd, but Ludwig is a quiet scholar who rarely makes public appearances. Once a renowned academic and theologian from Nuln, Ludwig acquired the Sigmar panel of Lanfranchi's triptych three years ago and was driven mad by his subsequent findings. According to Ludwig's personal exegesis of Sigmarite holy texts, the famous hero was tainted by Nagash's *Crown of Sorcery* before his final departure from the world. The recent resurrection of Grand Theogonist Volkmar provided convincing evidence of a theory that Ludwig already suspected, and he was able to win converts with articulate and well-researched lectures.

The PCs may be introduced to Ludwig by **Ernst Krantz** in Wolfenburg (page 139). Ludwig's resources are limited, but he's willing to pay 50 *gc* for the return of the recently stolen Lanfranchi triptych. Ludwig knows the thief was Corpus Aeternum blood cultist from Wurtbad, and he reveals this information to the PCs if they appear sympathetic to his cause.

Ironically, Ludwig never intended to create a cult of blasphemers. His own faith in Sigmar is strong, but to openly worship the God after making such heretical proclamations would have drawn charges of Necromancy, so Ludwig instead declares himself an atheist. He quietly hopes that Sigmarites will someday acknowledge the dark taint of their God and modify their doctrines accordingly.

Skull faction members are primarily former clerics who have lost faith in Sigmar under the continued encroachment of Chaos, and they have been convinced by Ludwig that Sigmar was tainted with dark magic before attaining godhood. They wear ornamental skulls and tattered robes, and they carry crude, makeshift flails. The Skulls often clash with other factions, and their numbers would be greater if not for frequent casualties.

The Righteous Hammers of Sigmar

Faction Type: Religious
Faction Size: 82 (Huge)
Faction Quirk: Pompous but popular leadership
Members: 57 Initiates, 10 Priests, 9 Outlaws, 6 Nobles
Leader: Anointed Priest

The Righteous Hammers of Sigmar are a well-funded faction of Volkmar loyalists led by Prelate Jan Richter—one of the Theogonist's most trusted advisors. The Hammers' chief directive is to defend Grand Theogonist Volkmar from accusations of Chaos taint after his controversial resurrection during the Chaos Incursion.

The Righteous Hammers are engaged in a fierce propaganda war with the Skulls. Their enmity has turned violent at times, but Jan Richter prefers to counter the Skulls' heretical proclamations with reasoned debate over force whenever possible. Secretly, Richter fears that Sigmar may, indeed, have been tainted by the *Crown of Sorcery*. Obtaining the Lanfranchi triptych panel might limit the spread of Ludwig's blasphemous teachings.

Richter may approach the PCs in person if they have been especially conspicuous at the Crusader camp. He behaves like an arrogant noble and is accompanied by a minimum of two banner-carrying heralds at all times. Richter offers the PCs a large sum of gold for recovering the painting but avoids quoting an exact amount. Note that Richter's surprise appearance at the end of **Chapter VII** may occur whether or not the PCs accept employment from him.

The majority of Hammers are initiates and priests who were purged from the clergy by Volkmar's replacement, Grand Theogonist Esmer. Among the Hammers are also several Reikland nobles and a handful of hardened criminals who gained clemency by swearing service to Sigmar. Only half of the Hammers travel with the Crusade of the Child at any given time. The remaining members serve elsewhere as agents (see **Ollo Veorhoven** in Wolfenburg, page 139) or run messages between Richter and his advising priests.

— The Lanfranchi Code —

Chapter VII begins outside Wolfenburg in the aftermath of the ill-fated play. Karl is missing, and the adventurers are approached by one of his advisors, Helmut, with information on his whereabouts.

Helmut's Offer

The PCs might be the only people in camp whom Helmut trusts. A distraught Helmut approaches the PCs on the first morning after Karl disappears.

> *"Good morning, friends. Quite a ruckus last night, wasn't it? Getting straight to the point, I come this morning with both a confession and a request. Are we alone? Good.*
>
> *Karl was not kidnapped at the play. He slipped out with the aid of Brother Frederich, a Senior Priest of Morr who sits with me on the boy's inner council. Karl had a vision that convinced him to visit Talagaad to receive wisdom on a matter of great importance to him—from a seer in Little Kislev. The woman's name is Madame Yaga…or something like that. Brother Frederich has hidden the boy in a black hearse and is transporting him under the pretext of performing funeral duties. Now, I don't question the priest's resources, but I have reservations concerning his competence, and—now that I've become implicated in this plan—perhaps his motives too. Though our wonderful boy insisted on travelling unescorted, it would ease my worries if you'd be willing to shadow the coach and ensure his safety. I could pay you 10 Gold Crowns each and another 20 apiece upon Karl's return."*

If the PCs do not possess their own means of transportation, then Helmut arranges passage for them aboard a coach from the Tunnelway Company. The coachmen have been bribed to keep an eye out for Brother Frederich's hearse, alert the PCs when the vehicle is spotted, and then shadow it. Additional travel beyond the Talagaad round trip is to be paid by the PCs, but Helmut assures them of reimbursement upon their return. All that's required is a stamped note from the coaching company indicating their total fare.

Tunnelway Coachmen

Male and Female Human Coachmen

Karin and Lothar have worked the Wolfenburg-Wurtbad run for years and know every coaching house along the way. The pair often supplements their meagre pay with a few "off the book" jobs, circumventing the dispatch office in Talabheim. Typically, Karin rides guard, while Lothar drives. The pair keeps a forged copy of the Tunnelway Stamp for special runs such as this. Karin is a no-nonsense redhead, and Lothar's face is creased beyond his age. They invent dirty jokes to pass the time (the best of which are shared with their passengers), but their relationship is entirely platonic.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
34	39	30 (3)	32 (3)	36	29	31	31

Skills: Animal Care (Int), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int), Drive (S), Gossip (Fel), Haggle (Fel), Navigation (Int), Perception (Int), Ride (Ag), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int)
Talents: Acute Hearing, Hardy, Seasoned Traveller, Specialist Weapon (Gunpowder)

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 11
Armour (Medium): Mail Shirt and Leather Jack (Arms 1, Body 3)
Weapons: Blunderbuss with Ammunition for 10 Shots (1d10+3; Range 32/—; Reload 3 Full; Shrapnel), Hand Weapon (Sword) (1d10+3)

Trappings

The coachmen both wear sombre grey uniforms consisting of doublets, breeches, black leather boots, and woollen cloaks. They carry bronze coach horns, and each has 3 *gc* and 11*s*. Hidden beneath the bench of the coach is a strongbox containing a Tunnelway Stamp and 20 *gc* that they use for bribes.

Travelling to Talagaad

The journey from Wolfenburg to Talagaad takes nearly six days by coach. The first leg lasts three days and follows the Hergig Road southwards through devastated villages. Each night, the PCs may find accommodation at a number of roadside inns (see **Lodging** in *WFRP* page 121 for guidelines). While Karin and Lothar obtain fresh horses in Hergig, the PCs are given an hour to shop. From Hergig, the route runs west through more devastation, before turning south on the Old Forest Road to Talagaad. The PCs should arrive in the port town during the early evening of their sixth day.

Fresh Horses in Hergig

The PCs haven't much time to explore the burned-out remains of Hochland's capital, and there isn't much to see. Hergig's small population largely consists of labourers, merchants, and craftsmen involved with the reconstruction of Count Ludenhof's damaged keep and the gate of the East Bridge, both of which are dressed in scaffolding. Traffic passing through Hergig is concentrated in the Old Market District, which has largely been restored and features the Wooden Donkey coaching inn. Any shopping the PCs conduct is limited to commonly available goods.

Talagaad and Talabheim

Talagaad is rather noisy and smells of wood smoke and raw fish. The port town is overcrowded with Hochlander refugees, creating tension with the town's large Kislevite community. The PCs arrive by the Old Forest Road to the north docks of Talagaad, from which the Wizard's Crossing spans the River Talabec to the south docks and Little Kislev.

Beyond Talagaad, the Taalbaston crater rises from the forest, sheltering the city of Talabheim within its perimeter. The PCs are unlikely to linger after visiting Madame Yaga and the Temple of Morr; therefore, only a few locations are included. Additional details on Talabheim and Talagaad can be found in *Terror in Talabheim*.

Karin and Lothar pass time at the Ten-Tailed Cat—a famous and disreputable inn—until the party is ready to depart. PCs inquiring about Little Kislev or Madame Yaga are directed to the Balalaika tavern. Approaching one of the Kislevite dock workers gets them a personal guide to Madame Yaga's house—for a small fee of 1 *s*. Wandering through Little Kislev without a guide may attract the attention of a pickpocket, who steals a random PC's purse on a successful **Opposed Test** pitting the cutpurse's **Agility Test** (40) against the victim's **Perception Test**. If the pickpocket is caught, he grovels and mentions his three wives, eight hungry children, and elderly mother.

1. The Balalaika

The Balalaika is a traditional Kislevite tavern serving pickled herring, strong kvas, and other Kislevite fare. Madame Yaga is popular among the

Three Cultists, Two Boys, and a Priest

At this point, Karl hasn't arrived in Talagaad yet because Brother Frederich's hearse lost a wheel 20 miles south of Hergig. Fortunately, the hearse crashed only two miles from a farmstead. While the farmer's eldest son repaired their wheel, Karl played with the other children. The children got along so well that Karl wanted to stay—and really, who's going to deny the Chosen of Sigmar his playtime? You can adjust the duration of Karl and Frederich's visit to the Gruyer farm. Karl arrives in Talagaad approximately two days after the PCs have departed (pursuing the wrong boy). Therefore, Karl may only be intercepted if the PCs wait for him in Talagaad.

The kidnapped boy is a Strigany named Ahmed—the very same Strigany boy whom the PCs have likely met a few times in the Crusade, whom Lydia believes to be a Scion of Nagash and subject of the Vampire Prophecies. When it was discovered that a blood cult of Nagash called the Corpus Aeternum sought Ahmed, his mother Suri entrusted his protection to the Talabheim Cult of Morr. Prior to the PCs' arrival in Talagaad, the Corpus Aeternum's senior assassin infiltrated the Temple of Morr, killed the priest, and kidnapped Ahmed by disguising him as a soot-faced charcoal burner. In his dying moments, the priest left a number of clues about the Vampire Prophecies. The fleeing Farouk—the senior assassin priest of Corpus Aeternum—told Ahmed that he's being taken to Mama Raluca, a friend of Ahmed's mother, keeping the boy quiet thus far.

locals. Her predictions are uncannily accurate, and the PCs have no trouble obtaining directions to her home. This place is also perfect to plant further adventure seeds. Any **Gossip Tests** made here are **Challenging (–10)** if the PCs don't speak Kislevarin but improve to **Routine (+10)** if the gossiper joins in one of the patrons' raucous drinking songs. Use only results listed under "General" or "Kislevites" on the **Gossip in Talagaad** sidebar for information gathered here.

2. Madame Yaga

Tucked away in a dark alley is Madame Yaga's small abode. A teenaged boy named Yuri sits on the front step managing Yaga's clients. Yuri informs the PCs that Madame Yaga is busy, but he takes a character's name (this is important!) and recommends they wait for two hours at the Balalaika. Yuri doesn't recall Karl, but many boys visit the Madame, and only she would remember for certain.

Returning later, the PCs are admitted to a murky single-room dwelling filled with incense smoke and shadows. Madame Yaga is a wizened crone with a long nose and feathers woven into her hair. Nobody in Little Kislev knows the true source of her abilities, but Madame Yaga is rumoured to commune with nature spirits. Lately, the Black Witch of Kislev has been stalking Madame Yaga's dreams, and although the old seer is aware of the Black Witch's presence, she does not understand the witch's motives. Yaga is especially cautious as a result.

"Were you sent to me by someone, or did you come of your own free will?"

If the characters respond that they were sent, Madame Yaga demands the name of their patron. Characters who lie must win an **Opposed Charm Test** against Madame Yaga's **Intelligence Test** (53), or she detects the bluff. Yaga doesn't get annoyed with liars—she gets even by giving them poor counsel. Once satisfied the PCs aren't spies, Yaga performs her first reading. She arranges a pattern of gnarled twigs, seeds, and herbs on the table, and she asks one of the PCs to step forward. Impatient characters may wish to ask directly about whether Karl has already been there.

"Karl? Which Karl? The fishmonger Vasil's Karl? Or that Karl with a limp that asked me about his true love? No? Then maybe he was here under another name—What did the boy look like? How old? Is he in danger?"

If the PCs tell Yaga Karl leads the Crusade of the Child, she insists she hasn't seen him, for surely a presence so great would have left an impression on her. PCs that initially lied about their business are told to inquire about Karl in The Jakes (**Location 3**), where a few other less competent seers ply their business. In any case, she does not give the PCs any information about Karl, since she has not seen him. She instead invites PCs to ask about their own fortunes.

Gossip in Talagaad

General

- The price of smoked carp is sure to go through the roof this winter. Stockpile all you can.
- The Grand Theogonist has rejected Karl's claim of being Sigmar reborn. Altdorf agents are working to discredit his followers.
- Some folks are saying that one of Talabheim's nobles provides refuge for Elector Count Feuerbach, who secretly returned from the war horribly mutated.

Hochland Refugees

- Kislevite dock workers are stealing food and supplies sent by the Emperor to relieve the refugees' hunger.
- New diseases have been spreading since the devastation of Hochland, and physicians don't know how to cure them.
- When Hergig is rebuilt, Elector Count Ludenhof intends to repay his debts by selling the lands of returning Hochlanders who lack proper documentation.

Kislevites

- A demon dog called Black Ice roams the steppes of Kislev. It's rumoured that if you meet his eye, you'll die.
- Talabheim's merchants plan on replacing the "lazy Kislevite workers" with cheap, desperate Hochlanders.
- The Governor of Praag is being blackmailed by one of his own boyars who serves the Ruinous Powers.

PCs wishing their fortunes read must supply their names and Star Signs—Star Signs are generated during character creation. If they comply, the PCs are seated at the table one at a time, while musky incense is burned in a wooden dish. Following are some sample readings that Madame Yaga may give. Note that PCs who lied about their business will receive one of the false readings.

"That which you seek is not what you are destined to find. Learn to love the ugly folk and savour the simple pleasures, then happiness will be yours."

"I see great perils ahead. Beneath the mountain is a stagnant lake by a tainted well, and therein lies your fate. Fear is your worst enemy."

"Before the grand wedding, you must acquaint yourself with the bride. Then you will know how to proceed. Let not your vanity misguide you."

"There is one who's gone ahead to clear your path. When you arrive at the tree, understand that the path leads only where your scout could go."

(False Reading) "Explore every cave, for one will contain unguarded treasures. Sleep not on your back, or you may choke upon your tongue."

(False Reading) "The sign of the Raven hangs above your head like a sword. Break the bird's wing, given a chance, and your doom may be postponed."

Madame Yaga charges 5s to non-Kislevites for readings and considerably less to her kinfolk. Yuri collects payment at the door. As the PCs are preparing to leave, the floor trembles slightly, and Yaga goes rigid receiving a true vision—though not exactly one the PCs seek.

"Wait, I do see a boy, and he's in great peril! The men with faces of coal have taken him from the garden of stones. If you hurry, you might reach him in time!"

Yaga then slumps into her chair. Yuri explains that when this happens she wakes up hours later with no memory of her words. The vision refers to the Temple of Morr in Talabheim, where an assassin disguised as a charcoal burner killed a priest and kidnapped the boy Ahmed only a few hours ago. Yaga has been visited by a portent from Morr.

- With a **Routine (+10) Common Knowledge (Empire) Test,** characters remember graveyards are commonly referred to as "Gardens of Morr." Any bystander can give directions to the temple (**Location 4**). It takes half an hour to ascend the Wizard's Way, descend the other side of the crater into Talabheim, and jog to the temple.
- Another **Common Knowledge (Empire) Test** may be rolled to realise that "coal-face" is a slang term for a charcoal burner. Most citizens are aware of the Burning Pit (**Location 5**) just south of Talagaad, since its smoke has been intermittently drifting into town for the past week.

If either of these **Common Knowledge Tests** are failed, the PCs may be unsure of how to proceed. The same information may be obtained through **Gossip Tests** or by asking the Tunnelway coachmen. However, if the PCs delay their visit to the temple by over an hour, the crime scene will have been cleaned up.

3. The Jakes

Visitors approaching the north gate pass through "The Jakes," as the locals call it. This ramshackle refugee camp contains over a thousand Hochlanders displaced by the Chaos Incursion. Characters on foot are swarmed by 2d10 malnourished men, women, and children begging for aid.

If the PCs hint to any of the refugees that Karl might be in Talagaad, word spreads like wildfire. A group of 2d10 refugees insists on following the PCs around with the hope of receiving a blessing from the boy. These supplicants are weak combatants and are more likely to be a nuisance than offer meaningful aid. Use the **Beggar** statistics in *WFRP* page 233. None of the charlatan seers in The Jakes have seen Karl, though it still costs a few Pennies to learn this.

4. Temple of Morr

The temple consists of a domed mausoleum surrounded by rows of winged, skeletal statues bearing scythes. The temple is protected by an iron fence covered in black roses. The outer gate is open, and a lone watchman guards the entrance to the mausoleum within. A **Charm Test** or a **Routine (+10) Intimidation Test** is required to get past the watchman. Mentioning Brother Frederich or "business related to the crime" gains automatic entry.

Inside, a crowd of priests, watchmen, and city officials stand in a wide circle talking loudly and ignore the approaching PCs. Laying in a pool of blood at the centre of the room is a murdered Morrian priest. The crime scene has been cordoned off while the watch cleans up. The dying priest left a number of clues for his colleagues, some of which the PCs may recognise.

- *His legs are crossed and his head turned sideways, one hand folded over his breast and the other extended to his side.* Characters with **Academic Knowledge (Theology or Art)** Skill may attempt a **Routine (+10) Test** to recognise the oft-sculpted pose of Myrmidia, the Tilean Goddess of War (minus her spear and shield). A famous old fresco at the Myrmidian Temple in Wurtbad depicts the Goddess standing in this pose before the Tree of Hope.
- *The bloodied index finger of his outstretched hand points to the south-east, where a crumbling statue of the Tree of Hope stands.* Characters with **Academic Knowledge (Theology)** may attempt an **Easy (+20) Test** to recall Sigmar is often cited as having witnessed the withering Tree of Hope (see **Vampire Prophecies** on page 157), before departing the world for godhood.
- *A series of geometrical shapes has been drawn on the floor in blood.* give the heroes **Handout #22**. Characters with **Academic Knowledge (Engineering)** may attempt a **Routine (+10) Test** to recognise the underlying rectangle/triangle combination as the *"Miragliano Model,"* a key to the fundamental principles of engineering (though most engineers fail to understand it). Characters with **Academic Knowledge (Runes**, **Science,** or **Philosophy)** may attempt a **Routine (+10) Test** to realise the seven connected circles are a Life Rune commonly found on obelisks of the Old Faith. Similar patterns are still used in natural sciences to diagram taxonomy (species classification). The model has been adopted by naturalist philosophers to explain structures of logic and rhetoric

Give the players about 30 seconds to copy the blood pattern before a watch sergeant hustles them out the door.

5. The Burning Pit

Just south of Talagaad is a camp of charcoal burners. The Corpus Aeternum cultists—a sinister group with its own plans and theories about Nagash—have been staying here undercover for a few days. If the PCs ask about suspicious activity, they should make a **Challenging (–10) Gossip Test**. Charcoal burners rarely betray each other, and bribery is required to obtain any information on a failed test.

"There were some burners who shared a tent, but they didn't seem to do much work. Two or three, I reckon—I didn't really pay them any special mind. Just recently, two of 'em packed up their gear and headed south by wagon. A third burner passed through the camp a few hours later with a boy we figured was his son, though we'd never seem him afore. Seeing his friends had left already, he went after 'em on horseback. Seemed to be in a hurry. He headed down thattaway, south on the Old Forest Road, I think?"

Astute players may wonder how the charcoal burners managed to resist Karl's charisma. If the players already suspect that the boy is not Karl, then you may wish to keep them off track by having the next NPC comment appropriately (*e.g.* "*Seemed like a real special lad, he did.*").

— Wurtbad Bound —

By now, the party has plenty of reasons to head south along the Old Forest Road. Karin and Lothar still await them at the Ten-Tailed Cat, and if the PCs request passage south, they'll be asked to pay in coin—the running fare is tallied for Helmut's reimbursement. The fare is 7 *gc* per day, with a surcharge of 3 *gc* for night-time departures. The complete journey to Wurtbad takes five days by coach. PCs refusing to pay the coachmen may walk, which doubles travel times, or they may purchase their own transportation.

Pursuing the Cultists

The Corpus Aeternum has at least a two-hour head start on the PCs, possibly more. Jorgen and Jamal loaded their wagon with provisions and then met Farouk at a pre-arranged spot. The cultists drive through the night to get far from Talabheim, though they don't realise they're being pursued. Eighteen miles south-east of Talagaad, at the southern base of the Talabheim crater, is the village of Waldfärhte. If Karin and Lothar have been riding all day, Waldfärhte is the farthest they go before resting their horses. There's an inn at Waldfärhte called The Countess's Elbow, where the cultists (still disguised as charcoal burners) stopped to eat. The innkeeper reveals the men headed south in a hurry with a frightened and exhausted boy in tow, *"By Taal, t'aren't right for children to work so hard at such a tender age!"*

After Waldfärhte, there are two villages (Liebstedt and Warghafen) before the Old Forest Road enters the wooded Färlic Hills. The coaching inns of the region are walled to protect against the many clans of herdsmen turned outlaw. Despite the increased attention of road wardens, deserted toll stations are a common sight. The Old Forest Road is bumpy, making sleep en route impossible. At every inn, the charcoal burners were seen passing through at least a half a day ago. The party may push themselves (see **Over the Hills and Through the Woods** in **Chapter V** on page 108) to try and cut Farouk's lead, but Karin and Lothar will not injure their horses. If the PCs cannot reduce the cultists lead, Farouk remains ahead of them until Hermsdorf. The Black Witch, however, does catch up to the PCs along the way.

Dreaming in Black and White

During the second or third night on the way to Wurtbad, the Black Witch begins probing the PCs' dreams for information. Only characters who revealed their names to Madame Yaga are visited, starting with the first PC to reveal his name and progressing in sequential order. If Helmut's name (or another employer's) was given to Madame Yaga, then he is probed during the second night in place of a PC; however, Helmut resists her magic. To avoid incurring the wrath of Morr, the Black Witch only probes one individual per night. If none of the PCs gave Madame Yaga their true names, they are not visited by the Black Witch.

Dream Timeline

The dreams should follow this timeline, more or less.

Night One

Madame Yaga is visited. The Black Witch extracts names from Yaga's subconscious but is confused by the vision from Morr concerning Ahmed, which the seer re-examines in her sleep.

Night Two

Helmut is visited. If the PCs didn't yield a patron's name to Yaga (or if the name was false), then a PC is visited instead, as per night three. Karl arrives in Talagaad and visits Yaga during the day.

Night Three

PC one is visited, or if the PCs didn't yield a patron's name to Yaga, then PC two is visited.

Read the following text to visited PCs.

> *You stand on a vast, white field at the convergence of a thousand intertwined stairways. Above you, hundreds of black stairs stretch infinitely into white space. Below you, hundreds of white stairs descend into a black void. Down the black stairwell a figure approaches—your mother. She looks exactly as you remember her, except she's made entirely of (roll on* **Table 7–1: Random Dream Mother Material***). She stops for a moment at the great convergence and then speaks: "I'm leaving now." She then descends one of the white stairways.*

Table 7–1: Random Dream Mother Material

Roll	Result
1–2	water
3–4	jade
5–6	smoke
7–8	mud
9–10	wood

If the "mother" is permitted to leave or is touched in any way before reaching the staircase, the dreamer awakens. If the mother is followed, the dream continues.

> *You must run to keep up with your mother, even though she is only walking. You arrive at a still pool, and your mother is gone. Two reflections appear in the pool. One is Karl. The other is you as a young child. Both children reach up to you, the palms of their hands skimming the surface.*

If a dreamer touches Karl's hand, the Black Witch assumes he is following Karl, and she tries to enchant the party on night five. If the dreamer does *not* touch Karl's hand, she assumes that their meeting with Yaga was coincidental but attempts to mislead them on night five to be safe. Either way, the dream world fades after this sequence, and the PC awakens.

Flagellants of the Skull

You may wish to have the PCs encounter a band of 1d5+2 crazed Sigmarite Flagellants of the Skull (see page 159) coming from Wurtbad. The flagellants travel tirelessly, sleeping only a few hours per night, and carry no money. They rely on the kindness of strangers (like the PCs) for food and shelter. At this stage of their journey, the flagellants will only join forces with PCs who vocally support their cause, but they will accept an alliance of convenience if encountered again later in Sylvania.

The leader of the mob, a former priest named Zigmund, is the only coherent one among them. The PCs may recognize Zigmund from the Crusade camp in earlier chapters. His mob left the camp a few days before the PCs at the behest of the Skulls' intellectual leader, Ludwig Buchholz, after receiving a tip from agent **Ernst Krantz** (page 139). Zigmund bestows His Dark Lordship Sigmar's blessing upon PCs who offer food, and then he reveals that he is seeking a religious artefact. Having just received divine guidance at the old Temple of Myrmidia in Wurtbad, the mob is now headed eastward.

Night Four

If any of the PCs revealed that they're following Karl, the Black Witch rests on this night, and Yaga is not visited again.

If none of the PCs revealed they're following Karl, Madame Yaga is visited once again, and the Black Witch extracts vital information received from the boy after he reached Talagaad, which he has done by now. Madame Yaga figures out the Black Witch's plan when she awakens, and then she dies, her old heart succumbing to the strain of the past week's events. Even from Morr's realm, however, Yaga may yet be a useful ally to the adventurers.

Night Five

If the PCs did not reveal that they're following Karl, the Black Witch now manifests in their dreams to confuse them and lead them even further away from the Crusade.

You stand on an open plain of black stone. The sky is pure white, and your child-self stands before you, miles away yet almost within arm's length. A huge raven with (roll on **Table 7–2: Random Dream Raven Appearance***) descends from the sky and carries the child away in its claws. On the horizon, you can see a garden of stones, in the centre of which stands a withering tree.*

Table 7–2: Random Dream Raven Appearance

Roll	Result
1–2	Red, smouldering eyes
3–4	Featherless, leathery skin
5–6	Talon-like Human hands
7–8	An unusually long, pointed beak
9–10	Giant plant leaves for wings

If the PCs *did* reveal they're following Karl, the Black Witch probes their subconscious for information.

You stand at the base of a mountain. On one side, a rugged footpath leads to the summit, and on the other, a staircase is cut into the rock. Karl stands at the top of the staircase, looking down at you.

If the character ascends the footpath, he avoids the Black Witch's dream trap and causes the dream to end. Otherwise continue.

As you near the top of the staircase, you notice a cave opening behind Karl. He slowly turns and enters.

If the PCs follow Karl into the cave, everything goes black, and they must pass **Will Power Tests**. Make a note of the PCs who fail, as this will be important in future encounters. Either way, they awaken after their decision is made.

It's important to remember that these effects occur simultaneously on all PCs who gave their real names to Madame Yaga. You may wish to take each player aside individually or pass notes to prevent collaboration during the dream sequence. After this, the Black Witch rests for a few days and then directs her attention once more at Karl, who's just returned to Wolfenburg safely in the company of Frederich after his belated visit with Yaga.

Gossip in Wurtbad and Hermsdorf

- An entire family disappeared last week while foraging near the Barrow Kings' mounds.
- Wurtbad's most popular hot spring bath has begun to bubble with a noxious gas, staining many customers purple.
- Vampire Count Mannfred von Carstein of Sylvania has grown stronger over the past year and soon plans to claim all of Stirland. The Emperor will not intervene.
- The Halflings have imposed a Mill Tariff on Stirland grain merchants to raise the price of Mootland flour. The surplus Stirland grain has been left to rot in the fields.
- Corpses have been found completely drained of blood just north of Wurtbad.
- A prominent Elf was recently slain near Siegfriedhof in an altercation with locals. An Elven envoy is investigating the incident.

Hermsdorf

The southernmost settlement on the Old Forest Road is a small logging town with nearly 400 inhabitants. Hermsdorf is built near the crest of a low hill, overlooking the Wurtbad valley that extends 15 miles to the south. The local ruler, Baron Waldemar von Züten, spends most of his time carousing in Wurtbad and leaves routine administrative duties to his bailiff. Hermsdorf is situated at the junction of two major roads along the River Stir and receives a great deal of traffic.

Therefore, locating the charcoal burners in the busy town requires a **Challenging (–10) Gossip Test**. The Corpus Aeternum is lodged at the smaller of Hermsdorf's two inns; the One-Toothed Saw. Their coal wagon is parked beside the stable, in plain view. If the PCs were not delayed on the road from Talagaad, the cultists may be encountered here.

If the PCs were delayed on their trip to Hermsdorf, then Ahmed has already been transferred to Mama Raluca for delivery to Sylvania, and the cultists have retreated to their hideout. Finding the cultists' cave at this point should be nearly impossible, but a **Very Hard (–30) Follow Trail Test** may identify their wagon's tracks on the heavily travelled highway. Even if the PCs fail to catch the cultists here, they might wish to see Miragliano's fresco across the river in Wurtbad, which in turn may compel them to visit Siegfriedhof.

The One-Toothed Saw

This small, appropriately named inn is frequented by migrant woodsmen and is situated in front of the town's lumberyard. If the players question the innkeeper, he has not seen Ahmed. The innkeeper noted Farouk's foreign appearance and accent but could not ascertain his origins, *"Estalian perhaps?"* Farouk's story is that his crew came to Hermsdorf to scavenge cheap scraps for burning. The innkeeper is only convinced that the charcoal burners are really kidnappers on a **Challenging (–10) Charm Test**. The boy was quietly smuggled past the innkeeper in the night.

The cultists' coal wagon and two horses are stabled at the inn. The wagon contains 200 enc worth of charcoal, two spades, and a tarpaulin.

Fighting the Corpus Aeternum

Cornering Farouk at the inn is very difficult. One of the three is on lookout at all times, and during the day, Farouk lays awake 50% of the time, watching his disciples through half-closed eyes. During the night, there is a 50% chance that one of the disciples is out stealing supplies. Otherwise, all three men remain together in the room. If the PCs assault the cultists, they (and Farouk) discover just how fanatical Jorgen and Jamal are to their blood oath. To complicate matters, a spring-fed water channel runs directly beneath their window, offering an escape route and improving **Silent Move Tests** by +10.

Smashing down the door, which is locked, requires a **Strength Test.** The door has **TB 3** and **W 10**. The disciple on lookout braces the door, making subsequent smash attempts **Hard (–20).** Loud noises rouse Farouk and the sleeping disciple after one round. At the first sign of trouble, Farouk looks out the window and fires a *magic dart* at PCs below, using a normal dart

Minions of Corpus Aeturnum

Farouk, Assassin Priest of Corpus Aeternum

Male Human Assassin, ex-Priest*, ex-Initiate

Farouk is a senior member of the Nagash blood cult Corpus Aeternum. Four years ago, the Wurtbad chapter was destroyed by a band of witch hunters, and Farouk and his two disciples were the only survivors. Since that day, Farouk and his followers have been on the run. Farouk believes that the cult was undone by a traitor (possibly an agent of the Shroud) who infiltrated their ranks. Now he spends every moment looking over his shoulder, not even sure how loyal his own disciples are. When Lydia's letter arrived, Farouk saw an opportunity to play a part in the forthcoming return of Nagash.

Farouk's nocturnal lifestyle has given him a lighter complexion than the typical Arabyan, and he is often mistaken for Estalian or Tilean. A skilled and remorseless killer, Farouk is trained in both swordplay and the ancient art of blood sorcery.

Insanity Points: 4
Venomous Thoughts (*WFRP* page 207)*:* Farouk trusts nobody, including members of his own cult.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
63	51	45 (4)	41 (4)	56	49	49	50

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Theology) (Int +10), Academic Knowledge (History, Necromancy) (Int), Channelling (WP), Charm (Fel), Common Knowledge (Araby) (Int +10), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int), Concealment (Ag), Disguise (Fel), Gossip (Fel +20), Heal (Int), Magical Sense (WP), Perception (Int +20), Prepare Poison (Int), Read/Write (Int), Ride (Ag), Scale Sheer Surface (S), Secret Signs (Thief) (Int), Shadowing (Ag), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Arcane Language (Magick) (Int), Speak Language (Arabyan) (Int +10), Speak Language (Classical, Reikspiel, Tilean) (Int)
Talents: Armoured Caster, Lightning Parry, Lightning Reflexes, Lucky, Petty Magic (Divine), Public Speaking, Quick Draw, Specialist Weapon Group (Parrying, Throwing), Street Fighting, Streetwise, Strike to Injure, Swashbuckler, Very Strong, Warrior Born

Combat

Attacks: 3; **Fate Points:** 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 15
Magic: 1; Petty Magic (Divine); Invigorating Vitae (*WFRP* page 162)
Armour (Light): Helmet and Leather Jerkin (Head 2, Body 1)
Weapons: 4 Darts (1d10+1; CV+1; Range 6/12; Reload Half), 2 Hand Weapons (Scimitars) (1d10+4; CV+1), Unarmed (73, 1d10+1; Special)
*Farouk's blood cult adds assassin to the career exits for priest.

Trappings

Farouk travels as inconspicuously as possible. He wears a heavy, hooded grey cloak and carries a backpack that contains a few days of rations, a water skin, 10 yards of rope, a grapple, and some personal effects. In a small pouch on his belt, he has two steel vials each containing a dose of Viper Kiss (*Old World Bestiary* page 73), a small icon depicting the Claw of Nagash, and 12 *gc* and 18*s*. Finally, he carries the Sigmar panel of Lanfranchi's triptych (see **Handout #30**).

Viper's Kiss

A **Challenging (–10) Prepare Poison Test** is required to use this poison. If a weapon envenomed with this poison deals at least 1 Wound to a target, that target must succeed on a Hard (–20) Toughness Test or die after a number of minutes equal to his Toughness Bonus. Each minute until the target dies, the victim takes a cumulative –10 penalty to all tests and loses 1 Wound.

Corpus Aeternum Disciples

Male Human Initiates

Jorgen and Jamal are the only other surviving members of Farouk's Corpus Aeternum chapter. The pair communicates in Arabyan most of the time, avoiding unnecessary contact with others. While Farouk isn't certain, both Jorgen and Jamal are unquestioningly loyal to their master.

Jorgen has pasty white skin and a chronic cough. Jamal has brown skin marred by self-inflicted scars. Their faces are smeared with soot when masquerading as charcoal burners. Daggers and pendants are hidden under folds of cloth.

Insanity Points: 3

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
36	29	31 (3)	35 (3)	34	33	37	26

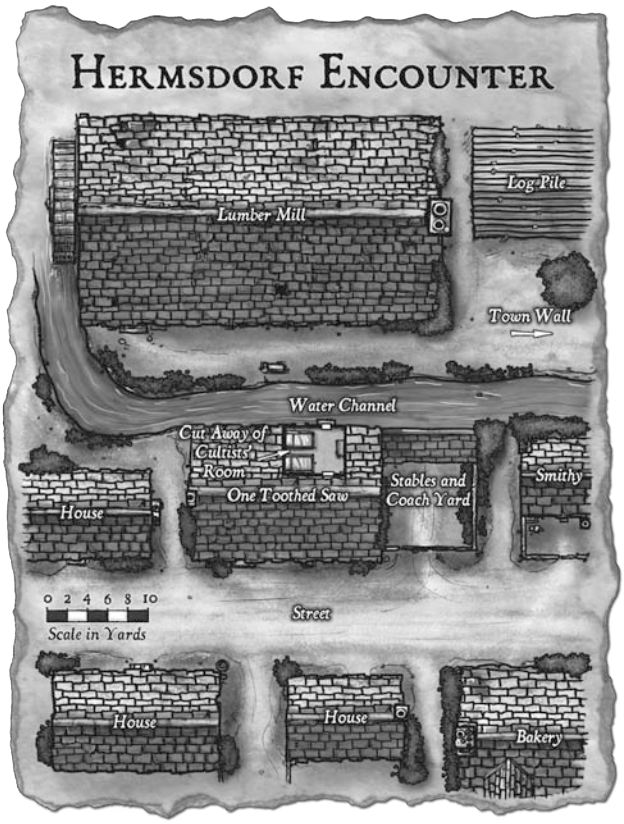
Skills: Academic Knowledge (History, Theology) (Int), Charm (Fel), Common Knowledge (Araby) (Int), Gossip (Fel), Heal (Int), Perception (Int), Read/Write (Int), Speak Language (Arabyan, Classical, Reikspiel) (Int)
Talents: Coolheaded, Hardy, Lightning Reflexes, Public Speaking, Warrior Born

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 12
Weapons: Curved Dagger (1d10)

Trappings

Beneath their hooded, grey travelling cloaks, they wear dark purple robes. They hide religious icons of the Claw of Nagash beneath their shirts. Jorgen has 1*gc* and 4*s* and Jamal has 3*gc* and 1s.



and Dark Magic Talent for casting bonuses. He continues doing this until the door is smashed down, and then he grabs Ahmed and leaps into the water channel. If no PCs are below the window, Farouk escapes without delay. The second disciple's reaction depends on the PCs. If any characters wait below the window, he leaps out before Farouk to cover his escape. Otherwise, he joins his fellow disciple at the doorway.

The waist-deep water reduces falling and jumping damage (*WFRP* page 138) to 1d10+1 damage. The channel flows quickly towards the town wall through a hole, cascading down a steep gully into the River Stir. Riding the rapids requires a **Very Hard (–30) Swim Test** to avoid taking 1d10+6 damage from the rocks. Remember Farouk has a Fate Point that may be used here. Carrying Ahmed requires one arm, adding a –10 penalty to all physical tests that Farouk makes. PCs reacting immediately have a chance to track the assassin to his hideout with a **Challenging (–10) Follow Trail Test**; otherwise, Farouk covers his tracks and escapes. If Farouk escapes unchallenged down the rapids, it can be assumed that Ahmed is successfully handed over to Mama Raluca for delivery to Sylvania. PCs who witness Farouk's escape with Ahmed (who is bundled in a cloak) may attempt a **Hard (–20) Perception Test** to notice that the boy doesn't look like Karl.

Interrogating captured disciples requires a **Challenging (–10) Torture Test**, opposed by their **Willpower**. Jorgen and Jamal have become hardened to pain by years of blood sacrifice. Successful interrogation reveals the boy is to be taken to a town called Helfurt in Sylvania, where he will serve the Dark Master's plan. Tortured disciples also reveal the location of their hideout south of Hermsdorf. Failing to gather information from the cultists should not impede the progress of the adventure, since clues leading to Helfurt may also be found later in Siegfriedhof.

Corpus Aeternum Hideout

In the four years since his narrow escape from Wurtbad, Farouk and his disciples have relocated to a cave five miles north. The cave is hidden from the road and can only be located by interrogating Jorgen and Jamal or tracking them from Hermsdorf.

The cave contains: 3 bedrolls, a boulder stained with dried blood, a sacrificial dagger, stale provisions, and two hand-written tomes containing prayers to Nagash. In the fire pit is a partially burned letter from Lydia (**Handout #24**). If Farouk was injured in Hermsdorf, a blood-drained peasant's corpse is discovered—the victim of Farouk's special *Invigorating Vitae* assassin-priest ability (see *WFRP* page 162).

Wurtbad

The provincial capital of Stirland is visible miles away, its white-washed buildings gleaming in the sunlight. The valley around the city is dotted with private chalets and vineyards. With under 9,000 inhabitants, Wurtbad is one of the smaller provincial capitals but important, nevertheless, due to its status as a leisure retreat for the elite. Visitors to Wurtbad are advised to bring sufficient money for the gentlemen's clubs, bathhouses, and gourmet restaurants at every turn. PCs dressed like vagabonds can expect constant harassment by watchmen.

Wurtbad contains enough intrigue to fuel an entire campaign, but only the old Temple of Myrmidia is detailed for this adventure. The PCs' discoveries at the temple should encourage a visit to Siegfriedhof without delay.

Temple of Myrmidia

During the first wars against the Vampire Counts of Sylvania, Tilean mercenaries flooded Wurtbad seeking employment. The Temple of Myrmidia was completed in 2011 IC as a place for the mercenaries to worship. The domed ceiling is painted with a famous fresco by Leonardo da Miragliano, the brilliant inventor and gifted artist. The fresco was Miragliano's last commissioned work before entering the Emperor's service.

The temple is poorly kept, and only a single priest maintains it. The columns are crumbling, and the walls are stained from weather. Few mercenaries visit Wurtbad these days, but the temple remains a historic landmark.

Fresco—Myrmidia, Beloved Daughter of Morr, at the Tree of Hope

Show the players **Handout #23**. The paint has faded on this fascinating piece of art history, known as *Myrmidia at the Tree of Hope*. The fresco is based on an earlier painting by the crusading Tilean Merchant Prince Giovanni Lanfranchi of Remas, a highly skilled artist and devoted theologian 500 years before Miragliano's time. The Lanfranchi originals are lost, but it's believed that Miragliano copied *Myrmidia at the Tree of Hope* from one panel of the triptych. The content of the other two panels is unknown, but a **Hard (–20) Knowledge (Art) Test** reveals one of the panels depicts Sigmar's vision at the Tree of Hope. In truth, Tilean art historians have suppressed evidence that suggests Myrmidia's apotheosis shares any similarities with Sigmar's.

A Helping Hand

When the PCs examine the fresco, a loud crash erupts from a nearby alcove. *"Would you mind giving me a hand over here?"* calls a voice from the shadows. Priest Pirello lays buried beneath a pile of fallen armour formerly mounted on the wall. If the PCs assist Pirello, he thanks them and mutters about urgent temple repairs. PCs offering to help repair the temple are given three tasks. Pirello offers the PCs additional information as they help him. If PCs ask about the fresco, Pirello offers the basic information above. For further details, the PCs need to perform his tasks.

Task One: Clear Cobwebs from the Rafters

Pirello fetches a tall ladder. With a **Very Easy (+30) Scale Sheer Surface Test**, the cobwebs are cleared in an hour.

Task Two: Replace Broken Tiles on the Floor

Any character with Trade (Carpenter, Gem Cutter, Miner, or Stoneworker) achieves automatic success. Other characters must succeed on an **Agility Test** or damage even more tiles, creating a tripping hazard. This task takes 3 hours (double for characters without a Trade Skill).

Task Three: Fix a Leak in the Apse Dome

If left unchecked, this leak could result in irreparable damage to the fresco. Characters succeeding on a **Very Easy (+30) Scale Sheer Surface Test** may climb up and fill the crack with pitch—a temporary fix that takes 15 minutes. Relevant Trade Skills and a few hours on the roof are required to conduct permanent repair work. Any character reaching the top of the ladder may attempt a **Very Easy (+30) Perception Test** to notice a loose brick on the fresco, at the base of the tree. A successful **Search Test** of the fresco from this vantage point spots the brick automatically. Removing the brick causes a metal object to fall out—the Miragliano Puzzle Box.

What the PCs Learn

Depending on the number of tasks completed, the PCs can learn further information.

One Task Completed

The PCs learn Lanfranchi collected artefacts and scrolls on his crusades to Araby and founded the order that would precede the Fellowship of the Shroud, a Morrian sect based in Siegfriedhof.

Two Tasks Completed

The PCs learn one of Lanfranchi's expeditions landed him in Nehekhara by accident, where his army fought against the Zandri Tomb Kings. Lanfranchi later became a renowned Vampire hunter.

All Tasks completed

PCs learn that the third, unknown section of the original triptych is rumoured to be buried in Lanfranchi's crypt in Siegfriedhof.

The Miragliano Puzzle Box

This ingenious little box, made of brass and steel, was crafted by Miragliano to safeguard the secret of the Siegfriedhof druids. Miragliano understood Lanfranchi had wrongly persecuted the druids, but Miragliano withheld his revelations until the Vampire hysteria subsided. Miragliano's puzzle box has remained untouched for 500 years and bears only a tinge of rust.

Opening the box requires knowledge of the Miragliano Model. PCs might recall the model as the pattern of triangles set within a druidic Life Rune at the Talabheim crime scene (see **Handout #22**). PCs discover the box has many moving parts, which can be configured into different shapes. If solved, the box becomes a cube with a pyramid lid on one face. PCs may attempt one **Very Hard (–30) Intelligence Test** each hour spent working the puzzle box. Referencing the Miragliano Model raises the test to **Easy (+20)**. The box may be forced open with some effort, but doing so releases an acid that dissolves the scroll hidden within unless an **Agility Test** is passed to retrieve it.

Inside the box, PCs discover a tiny scroll with six words forming a circle of Classical script. Clockwise from the top, the words are: Portal, Man, Blood, Earth, Life, and Mother.

— Eastwards to Siegfriedhof —

The journey between Wurtbad (or Hermsdorf) and Siegfriedhof takes eight or nine days. The north road runs through the Great Forest, crossing the River Stir at Marburg, before entering Hundsheimer Wald. The south road is a more scenic option, offering a view of the rolling hills and misty fields of western Stirland.

Mama Raluca and her clan choose the southern road to bypass Siegfriedhof. The PCs can catch up with Raluca and Ahmed by maintaining a brisk pace. Ahmed feels safe with Mama Raluca and will not leave her voluntarily. Unless the wagons are searched, the boy remains hidden.

Portent of Morr

At some point on the journey between Wurtbad and Siegfriedhof, the PCs are granted a vision directly from Morr in the form of a dream.

> *You are in a dark chamber. Before you rests a stone sarcophagus, its lid slightly askew. A rat emerges from within, followed by another, and another, until the lid is forced aside by a surging torrent of chittering vermin. Rats are everywhere. You awaken just as they overwhelm you.*

Siegfriedhof

On the north shore of Lake Svarsee, the town of Siegfriedhof is built into the face of a rock pinnacle high above the surrounding landscape. Below the new town lie the ruins of Old Siegfriedhof, destroyed by a Skaven assault half a century ago. Now all that remains is an overgrown clutter of charred foundations. Skaven tunnels still exist beneath the ruins of Old Siegfriedhof, but they are flooded and unsafe.

When Siegfriedhof was rebuilt by the Order of Morr, the town was moved to high ground next to the Abbey of Blessed Aethelbert. Of the town's 300 inhabitants, nearly one third reside within the abbey. The remaining two thirds are composed of farmers, woodsmen, and oblates serving the Order.

A Cold Welcome

When the PCs arrive, they are approached by a motley patrol of four suspicious militiamen. Questions are asked about the PCs' purpose and destination. If mention is made of Undead, Morr, dreams, or the Shroud, the party is invited to meet the Grand Abbot of Blessed Aethelbert. But first, the patrol suggests that coach and horses should be stabled at the Widower's Comfort. If PCs resist the invitation, the militia strongly urges the party to reconsider. If the PCs flatly refuse, the militia calls for aid and attempts to subdue them. The militia will only pursue PCs to the town limits. If weapons are drawn, the militia abandon restraint and attempt to kill the PCs. Troublemakers are often lynched, without a chance to speak at the temple court. Use the **Town Guard** standard profile in *WFRP* page 235.

Audience with the Abbot

Whether the PCs reach the abbey willingly or not, they are met by two silent Black Guards (page 171) blocking the entrance with crossed axes. A nearby initiate sounds a deep gong. After a moment, Brother Horatius appears and welcomes the PCs into the vestibule.

Horatius questions the PCs in a friendly manner, nodding his head in agreement with each PC's story. Horatius employs this friendly tactic to learn incriminating facts for future blackmail. During the exchange, a huge black cat brushes up against the PCs' legs (see **The Abbey Cats** sidebar on page 173).

Once satisfied, Horatius asks the party to wait (5 minutes) while he consults with the abbot. If the PCs mentioned their dreams, Morr, the Undead, or the Shroud, Horatius ushers them through the cloister to Geistwächt's private chamber. On the walk, Horatius requests that no mention of rats be made in the abbot's presence. If the PCs said nothing of interest, Horatius conducts a brief tour of the abbey before seeing them off.

A Black Guard stands watch outside Geistwächt's room. Horatius stands nearby during the interview. The PCs are seated before the abbot, who scrutinises them closely from behind his desk.

Gossip in Siegfriedhof

Mannfred von Carstein is viewed as a saviour of the Empire by some men of the north who believe that Middenheim would have fallen without his intervention.

Vampires from every corner of the land are secretly forming an unholy alliance.

The Skaven are planning a second attack against Siegfriedhof. One of their relics was captured by the Order of Morr, and the Ratmen want it back.

A winged Zombie was shot down near Vanhaldenhof.

Avoid Templehof, for its residents have all become Ghouls. The Temple of Morr, which stood vacant for 400 years, is now being used as an abattoir.

The Rumanyik Strigany have begun serving Sylvanian lords after centuries of persecution by Stirland's nobility.

Handling Ahmed

The PCs' visit to Siegfriedhof could prove difficult if they previously rescued Ahmed from the Corpus Aeternum in Hermsdorf. News of Ahmed's kidnapping reached the abbot two weeks ago via dream magic from the Talabheim priests of Morr. A recently captured Strigany messenger with connections to the Corpus Aeternum has since revealed the boy's kidnappers are bound for Helfurt.

Agents of the Shroud in Siegfriedhof are on the lookout for a wayward Strigany boy. Unless Ahmed is disguised or stowed away, the party is apprehended by a group of Militiamen or Raven Knights without explanation. The PCs are manhandled, stripped of their possessions, and possibly tortured. Play through the **Audience with the Abbott**, but the PCs are locked in the Infirmary (**Location E**) during the exchange. Any reasonable story should convince Geistwächt of the PCs' innocence, after which he orders them released, and the adventure proceeds as normal.

Ahmed remains imprisoned in the Infirmary indefinitely unless the players can devise a clever rescue plan and execute it perfectly.

"These are troubled times for the Order of Morr—and for the Empire. The Undead are restless—not just in Sylvania—but also in the Reikland, Middenland, and Ostland. They recruit servants from the living on an unprecedented scale, foolish pawns who believe their foul masters will reward them in death."

The abbot pauses, awaiting the PCs' reaction. If asked questions about the Order's deployment, the dreamlands, Miragliano, Lanfranchi, or the Shroud, the abbot remains silent. General questions about the Undead or Siegfriedhof are answered if they seem relevant.

If characters volunteer any information about their dreams, the abbot is extremely interested and tells them they must see Elder Gerhard immediately. PCs proving they have fought against the Corpus Aeternum (showing a pendant of Nagash) are commended and invited to stay at the abbey.

If the Talabheim crime is mentioned, Horatius interrupts the abbot with a whispered exchange. The abbot thanks the PCs for the information and avoids the subject from then on. Geistwächt is aware of Karl's Crusade but knows nothing of his abduction. The abbot says nothing about the Vampire Prophecies at this time.

If the PCs are slow to reveal their business, Geistwächt leans forward, hands folded in front of him: *"Tell me truthfully, visitors, what exactly do you seek?"* If PCs remain vague, Geistwächt loses patience and dismisses them to the Widower's Comfort.

Mentioning any of the hot topics (Vampire Prophecies, Miragliano, Lanfranchi, the Dreamlands, or Undead) will earn the PCs a three night stay at the abbey.

The Abbot's Requirements

The position of grand abbot at Blessed Aethelbert is difficult, yet Geistwächt has done well mediating the ongoing doctrinal squabbles. He is educated on the Vampire Prophecies, but he only discusses them with trusted colleagues. The PCs must meet three conditions for Geistwächt to discuss the prophecies:

- Succeed at their ordeals
- Avoid embarrassing the abbot concerning his phobia of rats
- Remain on good terms with the priests of the abbey for the duration of their stay

If PCs succeed at these conditions by the time they are ready to depart, Geistwächt will answer general questions about the **Vampire Prophecies** (see page 4). He would very much like to study the young Scion of Nagash who was kidnapped from Talabheim and, therefore, opposes the Raven Knights' bid to kill Ahmed outright. The abbot doesn't know about the *Circle of Life* ritual or the magic leyline.

Furthermore, Geistwächt produces **Handout #25** from his desk and gravely appeals for the PCs to confirm Lydia's activities before he unleashes the Raven Knights on Helfurt. If Lydia is found to be a Vampire, she must be destroyed and her stolen Zandri Scrolls returned to the Order of Morr. Geistwächt has kept this letter secret for years and now fears that his indecision may have proven costly. Geistwächt prefers that a trusted group of outsiders resolves the situation, for his old friend Lord Voss would be obligated to call for the abbot's abdication if the date of the letter was known.

If PCs manage to capture or kill Rikki-tik the Skaven spy, Geistwächt reveals the Foul Pendant and permits them entry to the forbidden library.

Geistwächt projects authority; his solemn expression is a mask against those who would exploit his fears.

Reader of Dreams

Elder Gerhard is an ancient man who lives in a room adjacent to the abbot. Gerhard is blind and feeble. The old man never leaves his bed, so the PCs will not meet him unless they speak to Geistwächt about dreams or portents. If the PCs come directly from the interview with Geistwächt, they are escorted to Gerhard's room by the abbot and a Black Guardsman (Horatius waits outside). The PCs are seated on a mat while Gerhard is lifted from his bed by the guard. Gerhard then asks the PCs about their dreams. Gerhard's response varies according to their reply.

Thousand Staircases

A successful **Perception Test** notices the elder twitch slightly at the mention of the staircases. The staircase image directly or indirectly links the PCs to the prophecy of One Thousand Thrones, which Gerhard reveals to the grand abbot in private.

Mother Avatar

If a single PC describes the mother avatar, Gerhard suspects nothing. If multiple characters describe the mother, Gerhard recognizes a pattern indicating sorcery and says so. After the reading concludes, Geistwächt allows the affected PCs to prove they have not been tainted by sorcery through an Ordeal of Morr (**Location 4**). PCs refusing the ordeal are turned over to Lord Voss for judgment (see **Judgment of Lord Voss** page 170).

Children in the Pool

If Gerhard suspects sorcery (see previous entry **Mother Avatar**), he recognises this dilemma as a "dream trap;" otherwise, he suspects nothing.

Officials of the Abbey

Darius Geistwächt, Grand Abbot of Blessed Aethelbert

Male Human High Priest, ex-Anointed Priest, ex-Priest, ex-Initiate

Insanity Points: 3

Knives of Memory: Though Geistwächt was only a boy at the time, he vividly recalls the destruction of Old Siegfriedhof in 2464 IC. Since then, the abbot has been plagued nightly with horrible dreams of Skaven atrocities. At the sight of a rat, Geistwächt smashes it with his mace and orders the abbey to full alert. On certain days, the nightmares overwhelm him, and Geistwächt locks himself in his study.

Profane Persecutions: Geistwächt has inadvertently created a climate of fear and paranoia around Siegfriedhof. Geistwächt constantly warns against "them" coming, but nobody is exactly sure who "them" refers to. When asked directly about "them," Geistwächt reminds the questioner that "they" have ears everywhere.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
51	46	46 (4)	54 (5)	37	58	63	60

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Theology) (Int +20), Academic Knowledge (Necromancy) (Int +10), Academic Knowledge (Art, History, Philosophy) (Int), Channelling (WP +10), Charm (Fel), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int +20), Common Knowledge (Kislev, Tilea,) (Int), Gossip (Fel), Heal (Int), Intimidate (S), Magical Sense (Int +10), Perception (Int), Read/Write (Int +10), Ride (Ag), Speak Arcane Language (Magick) (Int +10), Speak Language (Classical, Reikspiel) (Int +10), Speak Language (Arabyan, Kislevarin, Nehekharan) (Int), Trade (Embalmer) (Int)

Talents: Divine Lore (Morr), Fast Hands, Lesser Magic (*magic alarm, magic lock*), Lightning Reflexes, Master Orator, Meditation, Petty Magic (Divine), Public Speaking, Savvy, Seasoned Traveller, Strike to Injure, Suave, Very Strong

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Fate Points:** 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 15
Magic: 3; Petty Magic (Divine), *magic alarm, magic lock,* Lore of Morr
Weapons: Hand Weapon (Mace) (1d10+4; CV+1)

Trappings

Darius wears long, hooded, black robes that conceal his hands and feet. A medallion of the Raven hangs about his neck, and he keeps a prayer book of Morr nearby. In his cell, he has 155 *gc* and 16*s*.

Horatius, Master of Novices

Male Human Priest, ex-Initiate

Horatius is an ambitious priest who earned his post by being everyone's friend. He has an uncanny gift for slandering people behind their backs, while swaying the listener to concur with his criticisms, even if they don't actually agree. Horatius has many of his brethren implicated in his gossip network, and he keeps a mental record of who's said what about whom, in case blackmail ever becomes necessary. Horatius is too naïve to realise these tactics may hurt him in the long run, but he's run enough errands for Geistwächt to secure his position for now. Horatius is a fat, weak man with one lazy eye.

Insanity Points: 2

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
39	33	25 (2)	38 (3)	33	46	47	48

Skills: Academic Knowledge (History, Necromancy, Theology) (Int), Charm (Fel), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int), Gossip (Fel +10), Heal (Int), Intimidate (S), Perception (Int), Read/Write (Int), Speak Arcane Language (Magick) (Int), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int +10), Speak Language (Classical) (Int)

Talents: Coolheaded, Hardy, Lightning Reflexes, Master Orator, Petty Magic (Divine), Public Speaking, Suave

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 14
Magic: 1; Petty Magic (Divine)
Weapons: Hand Weapon (Sword) (1d10+2)

Trappings

Horatius wears long black robes that gather in piles on the floor. Hanging around his neck is a medallion wrought to resemble a raven. He's never without his oversized book of Morrian prayers.

Mountain Cavern

Gerhard instantly recognises this as a dream trap. Gerhard announces that the affected PC is being influenced by an outside force. Geistwächt promptly demands an Ordeal of Morr at the Styrigen Mound. If the affected PC refuses, Geistwächt casts *sleep of death* and instructs the guard to subdue those who pass their **Will Power Tests**. This battle could become messy in such tight quarters.

Mutated Raven

Gerhard gasps in dismay at the mention of the mutated raven but says nothing. In private, he informs Geistwächt that the PCs' dream-selves have been visited by a false image of Morr. Gerhard suggests affected PCs be "purified" in a **Dreaming Ceremony** (see following).

If an Ordeal of Morr and the dreaming ceremony are required, resolve the dreaming ceremony first.

Rats in the Sarcophagus

If the PCs identify the rat-filled sarcophagus as being Lanfranchi's—from a dream or perhaps a good guess or a **Challenging (–10) Academic Knowledge (History) Test—**Geistwächt draws his mace and orders the abbey to prepare for a Skaven assault (see **Day Three** page 176). If the sarcophagus is not identified as Lanfranchi's, then Geistwächt simply takes a sharp breath and remains silent.

Dreaming Ceremony

One hour after visiting Elder Gerhard, PCs who witnessed the mutated raven are approached by Horatius and two Black Guardsmen. Horatius informs PCs they must be purified in a dreaming ceremony or else brought before Lord Voss for judgment (see **Judgment of Lord Voss** page 170).

The dreaming ceremony is conducted in the temple with Father Gregor. If the PCs submit to the ceremony, they are made to stand before the central dais. An incense burner is placed before the party, and pale blue smoke fills the air. In a low tone, Father Gregor instructs the PCs to ingest a bitter morsel of chewy matter.

> *You feel light-headed, and the floor falls away beneath your feet. A dark portal opens in your mind's eye. All around you, space expands and contracts. The portal envelops you in blackness.*

PCs who fail a **Will Power Test** remember nothing of the vision and take a –10 penalty on Weapon Skill, Ballistic Skill, and Agility Tests for the next 24 hours.

The Fellowship of the Shroud

The Fellowship of the Shroud exists as a secret order-within-an-order at Siegfriedhof (see **Priory of the Spear** page 158). Members of the Shroud believe the Undead threat must be eliminated at all costs, even if innocent lives are sacrificed. The ranks of the Fellowship include spies, witch hunters, and scholars, though few priests openly admit membership, as the Shroud's methods are considered questionable. Although the Shroud has existed for centuries, only a select few outsiders had heard of the order until recently, when present leadership began an Empire-wide recruitment campaign. The Shroud's headquarters is located in the Tilean city of Remas.

The militant arm of the Shroud is known as the Knights of the Raven. Headquartered at the abbey of Blessed Aethelbert, these warrior zealots have been known to raze entire villages to root out a single necromancer. The Knights of the Raven are led by Lord Voss, a grizzled veteran of hard campaigns against the Vampire Counts. Although Siegfriedhof has officially belonged to the Knights of the Raven since the Battle of Hel Fen in 2145, Lord Voss prefers to remain in the background while the Order of Morr governs Siegfriedhof day to day. Grand Abbot Geistwächt is on good terms with Lord Voss and attends secret Shroud meetings on occasion (see **Widower's Comfort** on page 174). Geistwächt defers to Lord Voss on doctrinal disputes involving lay folk. PCs may find themselves at Lord Voss' mercy during their stay at the abbey.

Previous events in the *Thousand Thrones* campaign and similar events throughout the Old World have resulted in a marked increase of reported Undead activity. Consequently, the Knights of the Raven are deployed abroad, only Lord Voss remaining at Blessed Aethelbert to oversee operations. For more information on the Fellowship of the Shroud, see the *Night's Dark Masters* page 14.

PCs who pass the test gain 1 Insanity Point and recall the following.

Beyond the portal is a vast, white field. Karl stands alone at the edge of a pool. A woman dressed entirely in black rises from the water and reaches out to Karl. The boy hesitates for a moment and turns to you for guidance. It's no longer Karl but another boy. You attempt to speak but cannot. The boy extends his hand to the woman, and upon making contact, his flesh crumbles away, leaving only a skeleton behind. A raven flies overhead, and the woman sinks back into the pool, which is now filled with blood. You awaken trembling in a cold sweat.

If the PCs had previously identified Ahmed in Hermsdorf, they recognise him as the boy in the dream. Otherwise, describe the boy as a timid, dark-skinned child.

PCs undergoing the purification are now protected from the Black Witch's influence. After the dreaming ceremony, PCs are taken directly to the Styrigen Mound or released to explore the abbey at their leisure. Characters permitted to stay at the abbey will be treated with healing poultices over the next few days as required.

The Judgment of Lord Voss

The Grand Master of the Knights of the Raven, Lord Voss is a veteran warrior bordering on geriatric. The rheumy-eyed grand master is no longer of sound mind. Clear headed and merciful one moment and cantankerous and unforgiving the next, Lord Voss is feared in Siegfriedhof for his unpredictable and often final judgments. Voss would have retired long ago, but he lacks faith in his cruel and ambitious lieutenant Sir Rolph van Loenen. Both Geistwächt and Lord Voss appreciate Sir Rolph's fervour in the field, but the man can't even read.

PCs disobeying canon law may be taken to Voss' chamber in the barracks for trial. PCs should not be granted an audience with Voss except to face legal judgment. Time is always precious in the war against the Undead, and the fate of thousands weighs heavily on Voss' every decision.

Two Black Guards flank the accused while Horatius announces them to Grand Master Voss, who is seated at a table. Lord Voss pauses a moment before acknowledging them. A thin wisp of pipe smoke is all that's visible behind a huge stack of documents.

"May Morr guide your souls. I must seal this marching order, and then I'll hear your case. There we are. Now Horatius, please present the facts."

Horatius describes the PCs' case in excruciating detail, beginning with their departure from Marienburg. Lord Voss only half-listens as he glances at seemingly random pages from his cluttered bench. Voss interrupts constantly with non-sequiturs and inappropriate anecdotes. PCs with **Academic Knowledge (History** or **Strategy & Tactics)** may realize that Voss' dates are completely mixed up. When the exasperated Horatius is finally able to conclude his report, he is thanked and dismissed.

Only the PCs, Lord Voss, and two Black Guards are left in the chamber. Voss asks the PCs to be seated. Then, Voss returns his attention to the papers on his desk. At this point, Voss completely forgets about the PCs, until they attract his attention again. When they do, he looks up blank-eyed and tries to place exactly who it is that stands before him. After a few shaky moments, his eyes light up and he says:

"So that cagey bastard Dirkschnieder finally got off his lazy hams, did he?! You're the best Marienburg has to offer, eh? Recruitment must be down. I'm sure Dirk drilled you on the operation, so I won't bother going over it again. You can stay at the Widower's Comfort. You know the sign, and the countersign is "the cock crows at dawn"—unless it's raining, in which case you know what to do. Sir Rolph returns tomorrow. Wear these pins at all times."

From a wooden box, Voss produces silver brooches of a raven clutching a spear.

Mistaken Identity

By now the players might realize that Lord Voss, in a moment of geriatric dementia, has mistaken them for a party of Marienburg Shroud agents. PCs have two options:

Play the role and avoid punishment

In this scenario, Voss instructs the PCs to show their pins at the Widower's Comfort, where they're provided free room and board. The PCs are joining Sir Rolph on a covert mission to locate and kill a Scion of Nagash, but they don't know it yet.

The priests of Blessed Aethelbert are surprised at the reversal of events, but they do not challenge the grand master's decision. PCs are allowed to remain at the abbey instead of the inn if they wish. Brother Horatius, however, suspects deception, and he keeps a very close eye on the visitors' quarters. Future **Charm** and **Gossip Tests** with Horatius are **Hard (-20)**.

Admit the truth and face punishment

Voss is visibly embarrassed, but he is also grateful for the PCs' honesty. He reduces their sentence from lynching to permanent banishment from Siegfriedhof. No further questions are asked.

Abbey of Blessed Aethelbert the Vigilant

The fortified abbey of granite and slate overlooks Siegfriedhof and Lake Svarsee below. A single road descends from the main entrance and branches into terraced streets crisscrossing through the town. Postern entrances to the abbey are not visible from Siegfriedhof; instead, these hidden doors open onto a network of tunnels and catacombs carved into the pinnacle.

A. Temple

The domed roof of this temple contains an oculus through which the souls of the dead may pass into Morr's realm. The exterior features fortified battlements decorated with skeletal gargoyle statues. The interior has no seating, only a raised platform upon which bodies are placed during funeral rites. Incense burners are lit during dreaming ceremonies.

B. Barracks & Armoury

The front portion of the abbey is designated as sleeping quarters for 14 Black Guardsmen housed on the ground floor, and 21 Raven Knights occupy the upper level (currently empty). Off-duty Black Guardsmen sleep here, meditate in the temple, or conduct weapon drills behind the abbey. Lord Voss pores over maps and reports in his private chamber that adjoins the main dormitory. The ground floor armoury contains 6 lances, 7 shields, 11 longbows, 550 arrows, 5 great axes, 5 suits of obsidian plate armour, and 75 assorted hand weapons, as well as sand and oil to maintain them. The sand and oil can also be combined in massive, heated cauldrons to deploy against invading forces. It's important to note that Temples of Morr do not typically have gates. In the event of a siege, a great stone slab is dropped across the open portal as a barricade. The cumbersome slab is very difficult to reset in the event of a false alarm, requiring the combined strength of 20 men and a crane.

C. Abbot's Quarters

Geistwächt spends half his time in his quarters reading, praying, and weeping. The room contains a bed, wardrobe, prayer mat, locked desk (containing **Handout #25**), two chairs, and a cushioned bench. The room is locked when Geistwächt is absent, requiring two **Pick Locks Tests** to open. The torch sconce in the south-east corner is actually a lever to access a stairway down to the forbidden library. The lever may be discovered with a **Challenging (–10) Search Test**.

D. Refectory & Kitchen

Six large tables provide seating for 120 people. The central table is reserved for priests, and at the head sits Geistwächt. The Knights of the Raven have their own table, as do the Black Guard. Visitors to the abbey are seated with the Black Guards, whose vow of silence makes for muted dinner conversation.

The adjoining kitchen is staffed by oblates from the village. The north wall is made of rough, natural stone into which the ovens and fire pits are hewn. Three chimney vents are carved into the rock.

E. Infirmary

One half of the infirmary is an open dormitory with cots for the sick and injured. The other half is partitioned into cells for insane, possessed, or terminal patients. This area can also be used as a temporary prison.

Occupying one cell is a Strigany vagabond from Mama Raluca's camp named Khalid. He was found to be conspiring with the Corpus Aeternum and is undergoing interrogation. If Khalid and the PCs share a moment alone, Khalid appeals to the PCs for help escaping the prison.

Khalid was caught near Siegfriedhof bearing Farouk's correspondence with Lydia. Interrogation has revealed that Khalid was also tasked with hiring a troupe of famous Wurtbad musicians to play at Lydia's wedding (see **Wedding Bells in Sylvania** page 178).

Khalid knows Lydia as a brilliant scholar and Farouk as a warrior of the Rumanyik clan. Khalid suspects both of them to be blood cultists, but he is ignorant of the Vampire Prophecies and Ahmed's involvement. So far, Khalid has not revealed Lydia's darker secrets, but a second round of torture is due. If the players help Khalid escape, he offers them safe haven at Mama Raluca's camp near Helfurt.

A staircase leads down to the morgue and torture chamber.

F. Visitors' Lodgings

The lodgings consist of a single, large room with seven beds designated for visitors to the abbey. The room is furnished with dressing screens, wash basins, and prayer books. If the PCs haven't completed the Ordeal of Morr (see **Reader of Dreams** page 168)—or if too many questions have been asked about Lanfranchi—then a Black Guard is posted outside the visitors' dormitory at night.

Sneaking about the Abbey

The Abbey of St. Aethelbert provides sneaky PCs with plenty of shadowy alcoves and winding staircases for concealment. You should describe the architecture to encourage players to snoop around. Initiates and priests attending prayer services in the temple leave most areas vacant, except for the abbey cats.

The Black Guardsmen keep watch at their static posts (see map on page 172) and take a –10 penalty on **Perception Tests** made to spot PCs moving beyond their field of vision. The Black Guardsmen's helms incur a –10 penalty when opposing **Silent Move Tests**.

Black Guards of Blessed Aethelbert

Male Human Black Guard, ex-Squire

Black Guardsmen have taken vows of silence prohibiting speech. The obsidian-armoured warriors of Morr are posted throughout the abbey as sentries. Trained with longbow and great axe, the Black Guard are versatile fighters. Most Black Guardsmen are former squires of the Raven Knights, but some were priests of exceptional combat prowess. You may adjust the profile below to account for alternate career paths (see *Night's Dark Masters* page 96 for more on the Black Guard).

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
54	42	38 (3)	41 (4)	29 (39)	35	41	33

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Genealogy/Heraldry, Necromancy, Theology) (Int), Animal Care (Int), Animal Training (Fel), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int), Dodge Blow (Ag), Gossip (Fel), Intimidate (S), Perception (Int), Ride (Ag), Secret Language (Battle Tongue) (Int), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int +10)

Talents: Etiquette, Hardy, Menacing, Specialist Weapon Group (Cavalry, Longbow, Two-handed), Sharpshooter, Stout-hearted, Strike Mighty Blow, Warrior Born

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 3; **Wounds:** 15

Armour (Heavy): Full Plate (Head 5, Arms 5, Body 5, Legs 5)

Weapons: Great Weapon (Two-handed Axe) (1d10+4; Impact, Slow), Longbow with 20 Arrows (1d10+3; Ranged 30/60; Reload Half; Armour-Piercing, Sharpshooter)

Trappings

The Black Guardsmen are nearly identical, being silent men encased in sinister black armour. Each wears a medallion depicting the raven and keeps a flask of blessed water at his side.

Abbey of Blessed Aethelbert
Key
A1 — Temple
A2 — Battlements
B — Armoury
B2 — Black Guards' Barracks
B3 — Raven Knights' Barracks
B4 — Lord Voss's Quarters
C — Abbot's Quarters
D1 — Refectory
D2 — Kitchens
E1 — Infirmary
E2 — Infirmary Cells
F — Visitors' Lodgings
G — Cloister
H — Novices' Dormitory
I — Priests' Quarters
J — Morgue
K — Library and Scriptorum
L — Forbidden Library
M1 — Stables
M2 — Workshop
N — Obsertavory
X — Black Guard Post
— Skave Position (Day 3)
STORAGE
STAIRS TO LOCATION L
BALCONY
BALCONY
BALCONY
LADDER TO LOCATION N (OUTLINE MARKED WITH DASHES)
STONE SLAB
SLAB RELEASE MECHANISM
Upper Floor
PATH TO THE CATACOMBS
PATH TO THE CATACOMBS
OPEN NARTHEX
DEFENSIVE WALKWAY ABOVE ARMOURY
Ground Floor
SIEGFRIEDHOF
0 2 4 6 8 10 12
Scale in Yards
All arrows point down staircases
Cellar

G. Cloister

The courtyard is a place of meditation for the priests of the abbey. Anyone making too much noise here receives angry looks. The cloister is also where the abbey cats spend most of their day, lounging under staircases or perched on balconies. Up to 40 of the critters can be found here at any given time. See **The Abbey Cats** sidebar for more information.

H. Novices' Dormitory

This large hall is the living space for the abbey's initiates, containing many rows of beds. At the foot of each bed is a small chest (**Pick Locks Test** to open) with personal belongings such as clothing, letters, books, and a few coins (1d10 *gc*). Many nobles send their sons and daughters to the abbey for education (10% of all initiates), and these initiates keep 1d10 *gc* more coin than those from common stock. There are 52 beds in total, of which 43 are presently taken.

I. Priests' Quarters

In addition to Grand Abbot Geistwächt, there are nine priests, two anointed priests, and Gerhard the Elder in residence (see the **Reader of Dreams** on page 168). Priests are given a modest room in which to store their worldly belongings (clothing, books, hand weapon, 1d10 *gc*). The priests are generally trusting of each other, so there is only a 25% chance that any door is locked (successful **Pick Locks Test** to open).

J. Morgue

Corpses are brought to the morgue for cleansing and embalming before being taken to the temple for funeral proceedings. All manner of knives, needles, threads, and embalming fluids can be found here. A secret door leads to the forbidden library, but it's cleverly concealed within a bas relief archway similar to the one at the temple. A **Hard (–20) Search Test** is needed in order to locate it. The morgue also functions as a torture chamber.

K. Library & Scriptorium

Spanning both floors of the abbey, the library is an open gallery with a balcony on the second floor. The stacks on the ground floor contain history, theology, and philosophy texts. The second floor contains scientific works on anatomy and embalming, as well as stacks of string-bound dream analysis journals and a smattering of literature. Ironically, very little material relating to Undead is available; however, PCs spending at least two hours digging for such material will discover Geistwächt's research note (see **Handout #27**) tucked into a lurid Vampire ballad. There are five reading and copying rooms extending from the second floor balcony, each equipped with parchment and writing kits. A hidden panel reveals a stairwell descending to the forbidden library. PCs must pass a **Hard (–20) Search Test** to find the panel.

L. Forbidden Library

Access to the forbidden library is only possible by one of three hidden entrances. The entrance from the morgue has been guarded by Geistwächt's *magic alarm* spell ever since he caught Sister Hildegarde browsing proscribed codices. Only Geistwächt, Gerhard, and the anointed priests are permitted into the forbidden library unsupervised. Non-Morrian trespassers will be tried for theft if they are lucky, Necromancy if they are not. The second-to-last step of the stairwell is a pressure plate that triggers a swinging pendulum trap. Victims failing a **Dodge Blow Test** sustain an impact hit dealing 1d10+4 damage. Characters without Dodge Blow are hit automatically. The following items are stacked on shelves.

- Four of Lanfranchi's vellum Zandri Scrolls, bound together with string. A folded piece of parchment (written in Bretonnian) is tucked into the package. See **Handout #28**.
- Five Styrigen Tablets with parchment (mix of archaic Tilean and Reikspiel) pinned underneath one of them. Archaic Tilean requires an **Easy (+20) Speak Language (Tilean) Test**. See **Handout #29**.
- A pitted, lead-lined box rests on a stone pedestal. If the PCs open the lid, a foul-smelling green smoke issues forth from inside it. Looking in the box, PCs discover a rat skull set into an iron chain. The *Foul Pendant* is the source of the green smoke and is kept in a lead box because it contains Warpstone. The *Foul Pendant* confers 2 armour points to every hit location, in addition to normal armour. The amulet was captured from a fallen Skaven champion during a battle (see *Children of the Horned Rat* page 83 for more on the *Foul Pendant*).

The Abbey Cats

In addition to its Human inhabitants, the abbey is populated by over 120 cats, bred by Brother Dagmar for the benefit of Geistwächt. The pride mother is a large, black, long-hair named Tanira, and the front vestibule of the abbey belongs exclusively to her. All rooms, including the temple, contain 1d10 cats. Use the standard Cat profile (*Old World Armoury* page 79). If Tanira is petted, a **Charm Animal Test** or a **Hard (–20) Animal Care Test** wins her over. Tanira may prove a useful ally in locating the hidden Skaven spy on Day Two.

The Priests of Blessed Aethelbert

Priests and anointed priests observe Vows of Stoicism, requiring them to remain serious at all times. The service of Morr is not to be taken lightly. Initiates are given an option of observing the vow, which many of them do.

- **Grand Abbot Darius Geistwächt (High Priest, Guardian of Souls):** see NPC profile on page 169.
- **Elder Gerhard (Reader of Dreams):** Gerhard is an augur of the Fellowship of the Shroud and has never been a priest.

Anointed Priests

- **Father Gregor (Master of Ceremonies):** Respected prayer leader; secret lover of Sister Maja.
- **Mother Alexia (Master of Arms):** Organises the abbey's defences; a tough and cunning woman.

Priests

- **Brother Horatius (Master of Novices):** See NPC profile on page 169.
- **Brother Dagmar (Master of Beasts):** Handles the animals of the abbey; finds the abbot tedious.
- **Brother Gottlieb (Master of Letters):** Head librarian; doesn't get along with Sister Tanja.
- **Brother Heinz (Master Carpenter):** Builds coffins, repairs furniture; an all-around handyman.
- **Brother Erich (Master of Stone):** Supervises catacomb expansions; suspects a Skaven plot.
- **Brother Winfried (Patron of Arms):** Ensures that weapons and armour are maintained; has a dry sense of humour.
- **Sister Hildegarde (Master Mortician):** Prepares dead for burial; has seen the forbidden library.
- **Sister Tanja (Master of the House):** Supervises domestic chores; antagonises Brother Gottlieb. Saw Geistwächt's letter (**Handout #25**) while cleaning; will mention to trusted PCs if befriended with a **Charm** or **Gossip Test**.
- **Sister Maja (Matron of Ceremonies):** Arranges ritual trappings; secret lover of Father Gregor.

- Excerpts from Nagash's memoirs (in Classical), transcribed by the Necromancer Kadon. You can decide what these excerpts detail, but Kadon was raving mad, and anyone reading the memoirs must pass a **Will Power Test** or gain 2 Insanity Points.
- A selection of banned books about Vampires and Undead, including *Perilous Beasts* by Odric of Wurtbad, *Vampires and Their Kin* by Maximillian Sommers, *Treatis Necris* by Gottlieb the Stern, and *Encyclopaedia of the Undead* by J. Gotthard Melber.
- Countless pages of testimonials, diaries, and trial records covering Vampiric and Necromantic activity in western Sylvania dating back a thousand years.

M. Stable & Workshop

The abbey's 3 riding horses, 2 draft horses, and 26 destriers are stabled here, along with tack, saddles, and barding. Currently, only 6 destriers are present. Connected to the stable is a workshop where coffins are assembled.

N. Observatory

This domed cupola is accessible by a ladder from the library. The interior is painted with planets and constellations, each meticulously labelled in Classical script. PCs may recognise the following Star Signs from paintings: the Witchling Star, Rhya's Cauldron, and Dragomas the Drake. A dozen separate observation hatches open to the firmament. Characters with **Academic Knowledge (Astronomy)** can see that Mannslieb is 3-6 days from harvest moon, about to enter Rhya's Cauldron. Mórrslieb glows a sickly yellow colour as it passes though Dragomas the Drake.

The observatory contains a quadrant and a simple telescope (30× magnification). The telescope is useful only for astronomy, its field of vision encompassing just one quarter of a moon's surface at any given time.

Other Locations around Siegfriedhof

Important Siegfriedhof locations are detailed below with numbers corresponding to the map. You may invent other locations, remembering that Siegfriedhof's primary exports are agriculture and timber. Most of the town's inhabitants are connected with the abbey—squires, weaponsmiths, dyers specialising in black cloth, and tailors to fashion vestments. In addition, 10 Knights of the Raven maintain ancestral estates in the town.

1. Chapel to Verena

This small, domed building contains a statue of the Goddess Verena seated with an open book and scales. Siegfriedhof residents tribute the wife of Morr on a regular basis. The attendant priest, Ulrik Wasser, advises the Order on complex legal matters and mediates cases falling outside the abbey's purview.

2. The Widower's Comfort

The Widower's Comfort is a shallow, three-story structure built into the rock face. "The Comfort," as it's known locally, is famous for its fruit nectars. The owner, Otto, is an ex-Knight of the Raven, disgraced for some mysterious crime. He never speaks of his past, but when deep in his cups, he may mention his cowardice. The staff and most regulars are Shroud agents, and the Fellowship often meets in the basement. PCs may recognise lay staff from the abbey, some of whom are undercover Shroud agents.

PCs displaying raven pins granted from Lord Voss receive free room and board. Sir Rolph arrives at the Widower's Comfort a day after the PCs and is referred to them by Otto (see **Leaving Blessed Aethelbert**, page 177).

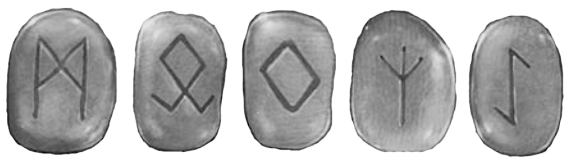
3. Styrigen Mound

When Lanfranchi built his outpost in Siegfriedhof a thousand years ago, a small congregation of druids lived in the nearby Hunger Wood. The druid ceremonies included a benign form of ritual sacrifice called the *Circle of Life*, wherein participants' commingled their blood to fertilise the earth. Upon receiving exaggerated reports of the *Circle of Life* ritual, Lanfranchi was appalled at the similarities with the sinister blood cults of Lahmia and dispatched the druids as if they were Vampires.

The infamous *Circle of Life* ritual was performed at a clearing in the Hunger Wood around a great Styrigen burial mound. PCs visiting the mound during the day find it still and peaceful. A circle of five stone obelisks surrounds the mound, culminating at a great megalith portal on the south-eastern face. The megalith is inscribed with runes matching those on the Styrigen Tablets in the abbey's forbidden library, plus many others. PCs with **Academic Knowledge (Runes)** may test at **Routine (+10)** to interpret the runes, revealing the information listed in **Old Faith** section on page 158. Passing this test by 3 or more degrees of success reveals the liturgical formula for the *Circle of Life* ritual.

If the PCs perform the *Circle of Life* ritual, the druidic ghosts are released from undeath and dispersed. Each participating PC gains 1 temporary Fortune Point that does not refresh after use.

At the peak of the tall burial mound sits a four-foot-high stone cairn. Replacing the Styrigen Tablets (**Handout #29**) in the correct sequence atop the cairn allows the Winds of Magic to once again flow freely through Hunger Wood. Proceeding clockwise from the megalith portal, the tablets must be arranged as follows: Man, Blood, Earth, Life, and Mother. The blood pattern (**Handout #22**) and Miragliano Puzzle Box may provide clues to discovering the correct sequence, but ultimately, PCs will need to either translate some of the runes using the Academic Knowledge (Runes) Skill, ask an NPC to translate them, or get very lucky. Here is the correct sequence of the tablets, proceeding clockwise from the portal:



See the *Dhar* Pool at Helfurt Castle for more about the effects of restoring the magic leyline.

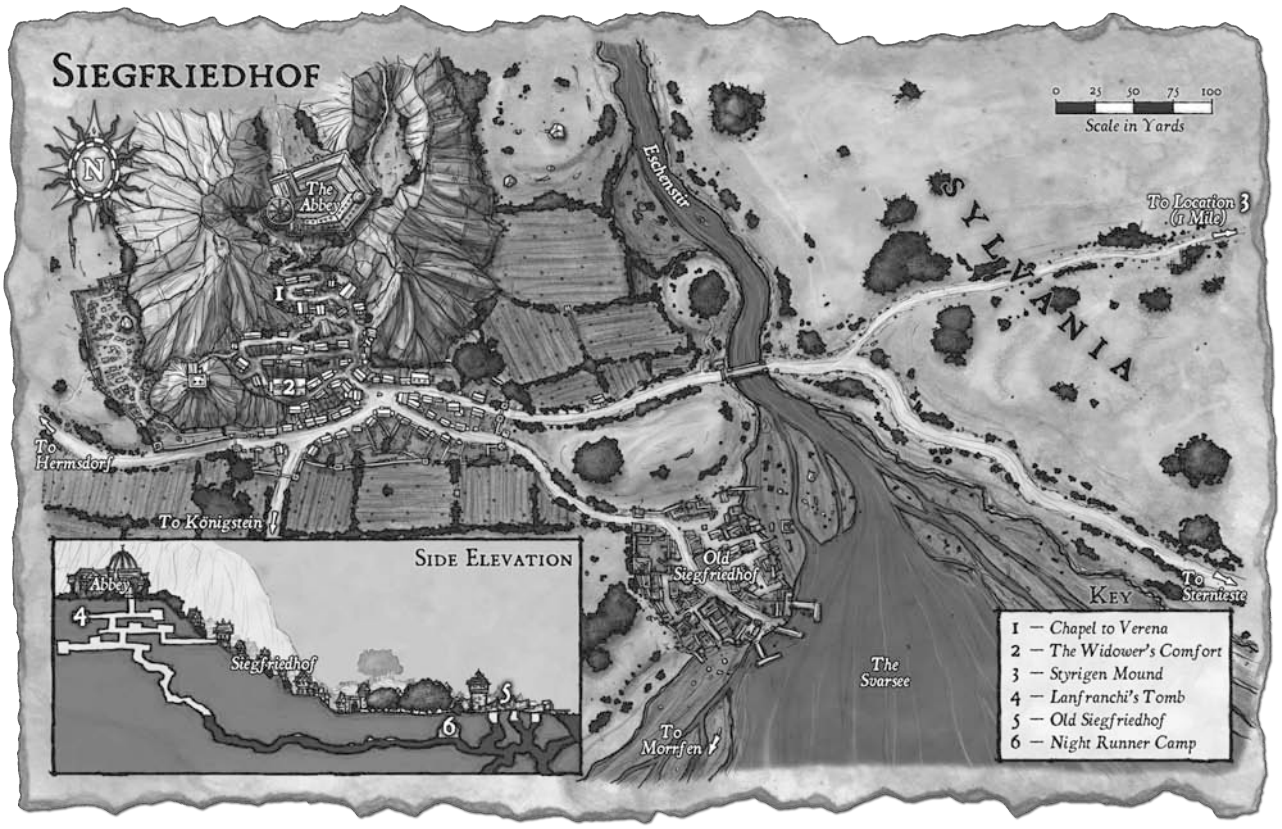
The Ordeal of Morr

PCs are escorted to the mound by Geistwächt, Horatius, and two mounted Black Guardsmen. Characters undergoing the ordeal (see the **Reader of Dreams** on page 168) are instructed to ascend the mound, touch the cairn, and return. Geistwächt explains the PC must face his ordeal alone. If any party members intervene, the guards restrain them and present them to Lord Voss for judgment (see **Judgment of Lord Voss** on page 170).

The instant a PC walks through the megalith archway, a ring of ghostly druids materialises outside the obelisks, blocking retreat. PCs attempting to rush through the ring of ghosts are attacked twice at WS 25; the attacks cause no damage but force a **Fear Test**. Passing within 2 yards of a ghost forces a **Fear Test**. Ghostly druids may not be affected by non-magical weapons and vanish if magic is used against them. For more on Ghosts, see *Old World Bestiary* page 109. PCs may attempt a **Perception Test** to notice the Ghosts' hands are lacerated.

Skeletal Challenge

Characters halve their movement (Hampered) ascending the steep mound. If a PC followed the mother avatar in the Black Witch's dream, skeletal hands burst from the earth, clawing at his legs. For every round the character remains on the mound, he must evade two Grapple attacks (WS



25). Characters grappled by the hands for 3 consecutive rounds are pulled into the earth and turned into skeletons.

Styrigen Challenge

If a PC followed "dream Karl" into the cavern and also failed the associated **Will Power Test**, he must face a Wight. The bronze-clad Styrigen champion is animated not by Necromancy but by the will of some ancient and forgotten Goddess. If killed, the Wight sinks back into the earth. Use the Wight statistics in *WFRP* page 231.

It's important to note the above challenges can happen together, separately, or not at all. It's quite possible that weak PCs will succumb to the ordeals and be forced to spend a Fate Point for survival. Do not feel guilty about letting the dice fall where they may—the Warhammer world isn't fair.

If the character reaches the cairn, he notices the stones have been disturbed (Lanfranchi originally plundered the Styrigen Tablets from here). The mound can be descended at normal movement rates.

4. Lanfranchi's Tomb

When PCs first see Lanfranchis' tomb, they should instantly recognise it from the portent of Morr. The sarcophagus lid can be moved by two people or a single person succeeding on a **Strength Test**. Within the sarcophagus is Lanfranchi's armoured skeleton. Lanfranchi's folded hands clutch the magical spear *Donnacanto* alongside the central panel of his famous triptych (**Handout #26**). PCs may examine the items without disturbing them, but neither can be removed without triggering Father Gregor's *magic alarm* and damaging Lanfranchi's remains.

Donnacanto

This weapon is a heavy spear with a rowan wood shaft fitted with a brilliant silver head. It functions as a demilance.

Academic Knowledge: Magic
Powers: When the wielder charges, *Donnacanto* sings like a divine choir, allowing allies within earshot to re-roll previously failed Fear Tests. This re-roll—and all subsequent Fear Tests—are made at +10 as long as *Donnacanto* can be heard. The spear continues singing until combat ends.
History: According to legend, the voice of Myrmidia is channelled through *Donnacanto*.

5. Old Siegfriedhof

All that remains of Castle Siegfried and the old town is overgrown rubble. The dockyard is the only section of the old town remaining in use. PCs straying into the rubble must pass an **Agility Test** if moving faster than half speed. The unstable ground is riddled with flooded Skaven holes.

There are four major tunnel lines beneath Old Siegfriedhof. The northernmost tunnel is flooded after 100 feet, and a **Hard (–20) Swim Test** is required to navigate the submerged tunnel and reach **Location 6**.

Catacombs of Blessed Aethelbert

The crypts within the catacombs of Blessed Aethelbert are well maintained and clearly identify their occupants. Brass plaques list names, dates, and often a short eulogy. Families are interred together in a common crypt, and most are easily accessible. Only after a family line terminates is their crypt permanently sealed.

The Sequestrium is a specially prepared crypt, built to store the charred remains of Vampires and necromancers. The Sequestrium is sealed with a stone slab and protected by Mother Alexia's *magic alarm* spell.

The Sequestrium and the oldest section of crypts are situated on the first level of the catacombs. New sections of crypts are excavated and expand progressively deeper into the rock. Anyone found guilty of tampering with the crypts is drawn and quartered in front of the abbey.

Blessed Anton Aethelbert's crypt is sealed but not alarmed.

6. Night Runner Camp

The flooded tunnel emerges into a shallow alcove where 8 Skaven Night Runners have made a small camp. Use the Skaven standard profile in *WFRP* page 230, but add the Dodge Blow Skill and the Fleet-footed Talent.

Events in Siegfriedhof

The following events begin the morning after the dreaming ceremony and mound ordeal. If the players decide to leave before Day Three, you may condense these events into a shorter timeframe.

Day One

The following events occur on the first day.

Morning

At the breakfast board, PCs discover a wheel of cheese has been gnawed upon. If a PC complains, Sister Tanja is summoned. If the players mention the word "rat," Tanja looks about nervously but is relieved to find Geistwächt absent. If a character mentions Geistwächt or his phobia, Tanja asks the PC to lower his voice and promises to investigate the matter (without disturbing the abbot). If the PCs press the issue, a frazzled Geistwächt becomes involved and orders the food stores searched immediately. When nothing is found, Tanja blames a random servant in a futile effort to allay the abbot's fears.

Afternoon

After the noon prayer, Brother Gottlieb approaches the party and invites them to browse the library. If the PCs involved Sister Tanja at breakfast, Brother Gottlieb wants "dirt" and steers the conversation that way. If the PCs mention the word "rat," Gottlieb reveals Brother Erich has suspected a Skaven plot for years.

PCs wishing to investigate the Skaven plot can find Brother Erich in the catacombs or at evening prayer. If the PCs encounter Brother Erich at evening prayer, he offers to take them on a tour of the catacombs on **Day Two**.

If the PCs encounter Erich in the catacombs and inquire about Skaven, he leads them to a newly excavated area and indicates large, rat-like tracks. A **Hard (–20) Follow Trail Test** leads the party to a narrow tunnel. Unarmoured PCs may enter the sloping tunnel, which terminates at a murky waterline. A **Hard (–20) Swim Test** is required to navigate the submerged tunnel and reach the Night Runner camp beyond (see **Location 6**). If the players report the Night Runner camp, Geistwächt orders the abbey to alert, and Mother Alexia organises an assault against the Skaven.

Day Two

The following events occur on the second day.

Afternoon

The PCs are summoned to the funeral of Sir Engelmann, a Knight of the Raven recently discovered near Templehof, half-eaten by Ghouls. The funeral may be the party's only chance to encounter Lord Voss, who is otherwise unavailable, unless the PCs are sent to him for judgment. Voss peeks under the fallen knight's closed visor, shudders, and delivers a brief eulogy. After the eulogy, Voss nods at a pair of nervous initiates to transfer the corpse from the altar to a wheeled casket. When the initiates raise the corpse aloft, Sir Engelmann comes apart at the middle with a great splash, leaving each initiate holding half a knight. Sister Hildegard races forward to help the initiates put the body in the casket, before packing handfuls of sawdust into the joints of the gory armour.

If approached afterwards, Hildegard is embarrassed and admits the Ghoul threat is getting worse. She is sure the Vampire Prophecies are coming to pass, but if pressed, Hildegard excuses herself and returns to the morgue.

Evening

Horatius asks if the PCs have been attended to. He mentions the Black Guardsmen will be holding a combat drill tomorrow (**Day Three**) behind the abbey. If any of the warrior characters would like to participate, they should speak with Mother Alexia.

If the PCs encountered Hildegarde at the funeral, Horatius mentions he overheard the exchange and advises the PCs to avoid the morgue.

Night

If a PC befriended Tanira (see **The Abbey Cats** sidebar on page 173), he'll find the black cat fast asleep in his bed. Later that night, Tanira awakens the character by meowing at the closed door. If the door is opened, Tanira races through the abbey to the balcony outside the Priests' Quarters (**Location I**) and scratches at the door. Tanira has detected Rikki-tik the Skaven spy, hiding in the rafters of the second floor hallway. The PCs may spot Rikki-tik if they enter the hallway and attempt a **Search Test** opposed by the Skaven's **Concealment**.

Day Three

The following events occur on the third day.

Morning

The PCs are awakened by a loud commotion in the cloister. Brother Erich was found murdered by a poisoned blow dart (see **Rikki-tik**), and a large group of initiates mill about trying to determine what happened. If the PCs encountered Erich on **Day Two**, they are questioned by Horatius. If any character fails a **Charm Test** by 30 or more, Horatius has the PC detained at the infirmary, (**Location E**) pending further investigation.

Rikki-tik waits for nightfall on the library roof before infiltrating the hidden library.

Night

At midnight, the PCs are awakened by a cacophony of meowing and hissing. Two Night Runners are staging a diversion, so Rikki-tik can slip by the cats and into the hidden library. Perched above the cloister, the Night Runners are armed with slings and pelt the cats from above. Two cats lie dead in the courtyard. Characters can locate the Night Runners by passing an **Opposed Perception Test** against the Skavens' **Concealment** (**40**). Characters without Night Vision take a **–20** penalty to **Perception** and **Ballistic Skill Tests**. The action unfolds as follows.

Round 1

A lantern-carrying Black Guardsman stands dumbfounded in the cloister as cats from all over scramble to reach the Night Runners.

Round 2

Half-dressed priests fill the balcony, whilst initiates gawk from the novices' dormitory. Two Black Guardsmen carrying longbows enter the cloister. Rikki-tik runs through the library to the secret stairwell. PCs in the hallway hear him with a **Hard (–20) Perception Test**.

Round 3

One of the Black Guardsmen spots a Night Runner and shouts "Ratmen!" as sling bullets pelt his armour. The other guard fires his longbow blindly at the roof in response. Rikki-tik descends into the forbidden library.

Round 4

Geistwächt enters fully dressed, wielding a mace. Three new Black Guardsmen enter armed with longbows, as Geistwächt barks orders to the swarming initiates. Rikki-tik locates the Foul Pendant.

Round 5

A great stone slab (see **Location B**) drops to block the abbey's main entrance. Three cats reach the roof and attack a Night Runner. The other Skaven is struck by an arrow and retreats towards the rock. Rikki-tik doubles back into the hidden stairwell.

Round 6

One Night Runner continues fighting off the cats, as armed initiates take their posts under Mother Alexia's calm supervision. Rikki-tik arrives in the library (he may once again be heard, as per **Round 2**).

Round 7-9

Geistwächt finally goes hoarse from yelling as the chaos continues. Rikki-tik rappels the library tower to join 6 Night Runners waiting below. Rikki-tik's warband attacks anyone exiting the library through the postern door to cover their master's retreat.

Round 10

The Skaven retreat into the catacombs.

Aftermath of the Raid

In his hasty retreat through the library, Rikki-tik left the secret door ajar, and PCs passing the door before dawn uncover this.

If Tanira was befriended by a PC, the cat reappears with a large rat's ear in her mouth and drops it at his feet. Tanira moves towards the library and leads any PC who follows her to the secret door. PCs wishing to explore the library may do so undisturbed until dawn, when Brother Gottlieb arrives. The abbey's residents are too busy watching for a second Skaven attack.

Observant PCs may notice Rikki-tik's rope still dangling from the window. A **Challenging (–10) Follow Trail Test** allows the party to track Rikki-tik's warband to **Location 6**. The warband spends the next day at **Location 6** before departing the following night under cover of darkness.

Leaving Blessed Aethelbert

Although *Death Do Us Part* follows a linear route, the PCs' actions may already have generated several plot twists as they depart Siegfriedhof. In fact, it's entirely possible the town was bypassed altogether. Furthermore, conflicting theories might have arisen concerning Karl's (or Ahmed's) role in the Vampire Prophecies. Before running Act 3, you should allow yourself extra preparation time to flesh out themes and NPCs of particular interest thus far.

- After a few days at the abbey, the PCs may have been recruited to investigate Helfurt by one of Blessed Aethelbert's senior men:
- The letter in Geistwächt's desk links Lydia von Carstein to Blessed Aethelbert. Geistwächt may have asked the PCs to investigate Helfurt if they earned his trust, in which case he assigns 2 Black Guards to escort them for protection on the journey.
- Lord Voss may mistake the PCs for overdue Shroud agents expected from Marienburg. The PCs are escorted to Helfurt by four Raven Knights and their captain, Sir Rolph. Rolph presumes the PCs are experienced agents and does not question them.
- If Lord Voss' and Geistwächt's offers were declined, the PCs may still reach the Helfurt finale independently:
- If Farouk's disciples were interrogated in Hermsdorf, they revealed Helfurt as Ahmed's destination, and the partially burned letter in their cave confirmed this.
- Farouk and his disciples might be spotted in their coal wagon on the road to or from Helfurt.
- The imprisoned vagabond at Blessed Aethelbert (see **Location E**) links Farouk to Helfurt.
- Sister Tanja might confess she found a troubling letter (**Handout #25**) while cleaning the grand abbot's study.

The Rat in the Abbey

Rikki-tik, Clan Eshin Spy

Male Skaven Master Assassin, ex-Night Runner, ex-Gutter Runner

"Black-hood man-things hide special charm under dusty-book. Now is time to sneak-steal it, when all fighty man-things not home. Nasty-bad cat-things smell us, but rat smarter than man-pet. You and you climb to high-top and stone-shoot the cats, then I quick-quick get the charm. Our steal-skill will be the pride of Eshin."

His combination of Skill Mastery, Talents, and Trappings gives Rikki-tik a +40 bonus to Scale Sheer Surface, +30 to Concealment, and +20 to Silent Move Tests. He is a master infiltrator.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
51	62	36 (3)	53 (5)	65	45	44	32

Skills: Common Knowledge (Skaven) (Int), Concealment (Ag +20), Disguise (Fel), Dodge Blow (Ag), Evaluate (Int), Lip Reading (Int), Navigation (Int), Outdoor Survival (Int), Perception (Int +10), Pick Locks (Ag), Prepare Poison (Int), Scale Sheer Surface (S +10), Search (Int), Shadowing (Ag), Silent Move (Ag +10), Sleight of Hand (Ag), Speak Language (Queekish) (Int), Swim (S)
Talents: Alley Cat, Excellent Vision, Fleet-footed, Orientation, Quick Draw, Rover, Specialist Weapon Group (Crossbow, Entangling, Throwing), Trapfinder, Tunnel Rat, Wall Runner*
*See following **Notes** section for description.
Traits: Natural Weapons (Claws), Night Vision

Combat

Attacks: 3; **Movement:** 6; **Wounds:** 15
Armour (Light): Leather Jack and Hood (Head 1, Arms 1, Body 1)
Weapons: Blowgun with 10 Darts (1d10; Range 8/16; Reload Half), Hand Weapon (Sword) (1d10+3), Net (—, Range 4/8; Reload Full; Snare), 4 Throwing Stars (1d10; Range 6/12; Reload Half)

Trappings

Rikki-tik's armour is stained black with his own urine. He keeps his silky grey fur free of pests. On each hand, he wears rat claws*, and in a pouch around his neck, he keeps three Warpstone Tokens. Rikki-tik also uses poison. He prefers Heartkill, of which he has three doses. Rikki-tik leads a warband of 8 Night Runners. Use the statistics for Skaven in *WFRP* page 230 but give them the Dodge Blow Skill and the Fleet-footed Talent.

Notes

Some of the abilities available to this Skaven are described in detail in *Children of the Horned Rat*. They are summarized here.

- **Wall Runner:** This talent confers a +20 bonus on Scale Sheer Surface Tests.
- **Special Trappings:** Rat Claws are worn on the hands for a +10 bonus to Scale Sheer Surface Tests, and they inflict 1d10 damage if used in combat. The blowgun can serve as a snorkel in the flooded tunnels.

— Wedding Bells in Sylvania —

The journey between Siegfriedhof and Helfurt takes 6 or 7 days by the main road, skirting the southern edge of Hunger Wood. Sylvania's fell creatures prey mostly on the weak, so PCs travelling with Raven Knights or Black Guards reach Helfurt without incident. The journey to Helfurt can be described very succinctly: pyres of Ghoul carcasses in the streets of Templehof, starved wretches cowering in Vanhaldenhof's alleyways, and the gothic towers of Vanhaldenschlosse casting shadows over the valley below.

PCs travelling without escorts may be attacked by Undead, Dire Wolves, or Giant Bats soon after departing Siegfriedhof. If the PCs wish to retain the Tunnelway coachmen, they must pay double fare for passage into dreaded Sylvania (14 *gc* per day for five days, half up front—*i.e.* 35 *gc* just to cross the border).

Troubadours Undercover

If Sir Rolph's knights are the PCs' escorts, they continue to within 5 miles of Helfurt before making camp in a copse of trees. Sir Rolph opens the supply wagon and presents the PCs with various musical instruments (lyres, violas, flutes, hand drums) and colourful troubadours' outfits sewn with bells. Rolph offers no explanation, but if asked, he gruffly reminds the PCs of their cover as musicians for Baroness Plicticos' wedding. Sir Rolph urges the PCs onward to the next stage of their mission and tells them to report back when they've gained access to Castle Helfurt.

Sir Rolph shares gossip with Brother Horatius at the abbey; his treatment of the PCs should be adjusted according to their reputation with the priest. PCs attempting to defect are hunted down mercilessly by Sir Rolph and his four knights.

Handling Ahmed

The finale in Helfurt should be adjusted according to Ahmed's present status. In most endgame scenarios, Ahmed has already arrived in Helfurt with Mama Raluca. The PCs' motives in this case are influenced by the NPC who sent them:

- **Geistwächt:** wants Ahmed returned alive for questioning but wants Lydia killed and her Zandri Scrolls recovered.
- **Sir Rolph:** intends to kill Ahmed, Lydia, her collaborators, and anyone else who defies him. However, the PCs have little knowledge of Rolph's intent when they enter Helfurt as spies on his behalf.
- **Independent PCs:** unless the PCs saw Ahmed in the Black Witch's last dream, they might believe they're still chasing Karl. PCs can only ascertain that Ahmed is a Scion of Nagash by visiting the Rumanyik camp (**Location 5**) and passing a **Gossip Test**.

In the unlikely event that Ahmed hasn't reached Helfurt by Act 3, the finale may require extensive modification:

- **Independent PCs:** If the PCs have brought Ahmed to Helfurt independently, Lydia attempts to negotiate for the boy's custody (see **Arriving in Helfurt**). In this scenario, PCs might even side with Lydia against Sir Rolph if the Vampire has kept her true nature hidden.
- **Ahmed imprisoned in Siegfriedhof:** Lydia is deeply concerned that Ahmed has not yet arrived. She wastes little time with visitors unless they know the boy's whereabouts. Lydia spends all of Act 3 in her castle preparing for the ritual, which never actually transpires. Sir Rolph delays his mission to kill Lydia for several weeks while Ahmed is interrogated, and therefore, he does not arrive in Helfurt as scripted.

Helfurt

Helfurt is situated on a low plateau beneath the ruined pre-Imperial fortress called Mistgarten and won't be found on any map. Higher still up the mountainside sits the comparatively modern Castle Helfurt from which the small barony is ruled. Over the past several years, Baroness Lydia von Carstein has used her dead husband's fortune to refurbish the castle and revitalise the village. However, freshly painted gables and flower boxes cannot mask the disturbing taint lurking beneath Helfurt's facade.

The focus of the reconstruction efforts are the ancient baths housed below the ruined fortress. Lydia has painstakingly restored the bathhouse to working order but with a sinister new purpose. Lydia hopes to enhance her magical powers by bathing in the blood and tallow of her brainwashed subjects, who actually vie for the "privilege."

Arriving in Helfurt

Soon after the PCs arrive, Lydia drives into Helfurt on her bell-festooned sleigh to greet them. Lydia introduces herself by her married name Plicticos, instead of the Von Carstein family name (she will *not* mention Von Carstein).). Lydia is courteous and charming, possibly even casting seductive glances at male PCs with **Fellowship** scores above 35. Lydia is not vulnerable to sunlight as many Vampires are, so the PCs may encounter her at any hour of the day.

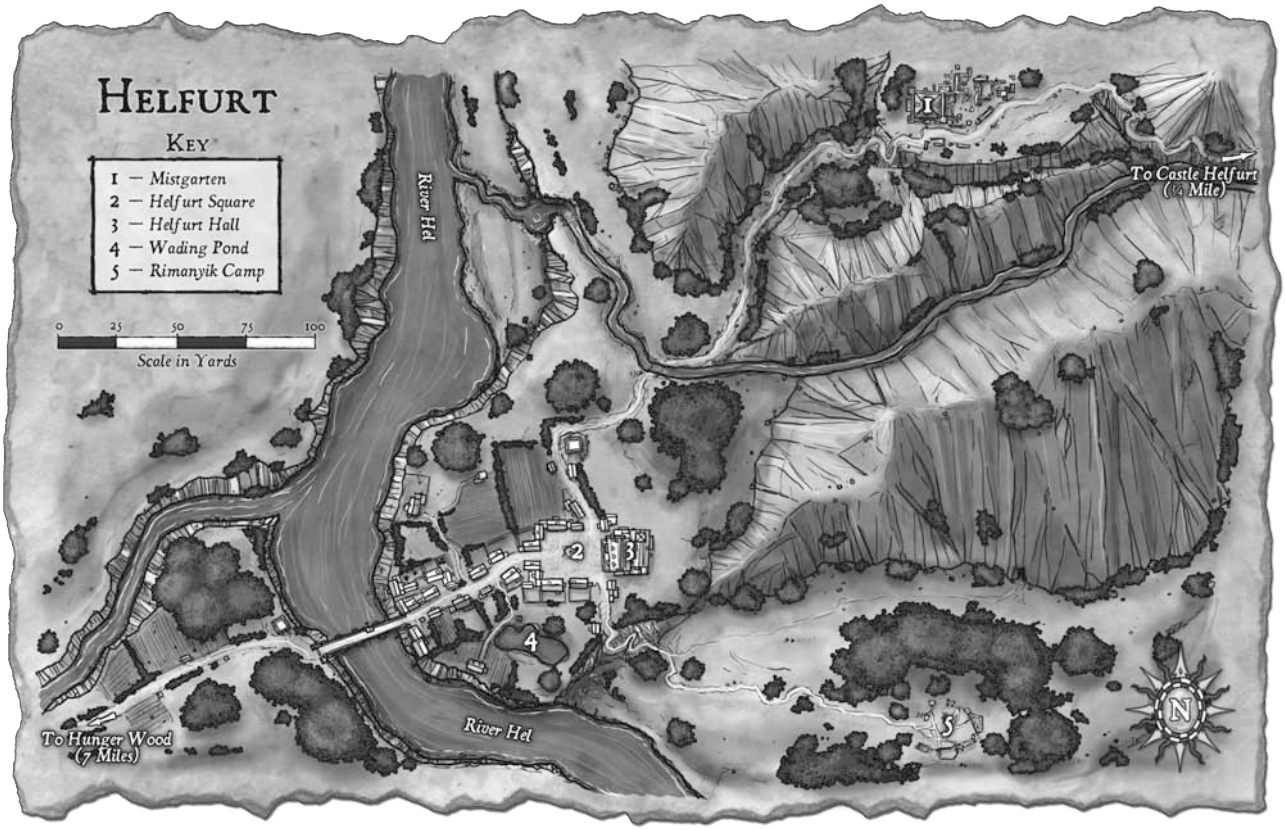
Lydia's primary concern is Ahmed. If the PCs bring Ahmed to Helfurt, they are greeted by both Lydia and Mama Raluca. Ahmed is overjoyed that Raluca knows his mother, and Raluca convinces the boy that Lydia can help the family to reunite. This exchange transpires in the PCs' presence with Raluca comforting Ahmed, while Lydia stands nearby looking harmless. The PCs have a few options:

- If the PCs willingly deliver Ahmed to Lydia, and she invites them to stay at her castle.
- If the PCs grudgingly surrender Ahmed to Lydia, they are provided free accommodations at Mistgarten.
- If the PCs refuse to part with Ahmed, see the **Confronting Lydia** sidebar on page 181.
- If Ahmed is already in Helfurt when the PCs arrive, you may assume Lydia plans to marry him the following day. The PCs are provided free accommodations at Mistgarten.
- If Ahmed is already in Helfurt when the PCs arrive, you may assume Lydia plans to marry him the following day. The PCs are provided free accommodations at the Mistgarten spa.
- If the PCs are disguised as travelling musicians, Lydia believes they are the ones she hired to play at her wedding and requests a song from the troupe. If two or more PCs pass **Performer (Musician) Tests**, Lydia invites the party to attend her masked ball at the castle later that evening, where they shall accompany her court musicians. Otherwise, PCs are provided free accommodations at the Mistgarten spa and politely advised to rehearse for tomorrow's ceremony.

Locations Around Helfurt

Geographically, Helfurt is situated on a wide mountain plateau overlooking the River Hel. The village features a single main street terminating at a snowy square and town hall. The living residents of Helfurt reside on the main street, and these buildings are well-kept houses. Those still awaiting Lydia's dark invitation live in the older dilapidated section.

Helfurt is in a heightened state of activity as the villagers prepare for Lydia's upcoming nuptials. Fragrant garlands of Edelweiss adorn every door



proclaiming a festive atmosphere. The towns' 50 or so "nobles" work busily amid the town's 100 or so commoners who are cooking, cleaning, building, and decorating for the event.

1. Mistgarten

The gothic edifice known as Mistgarten is the last remaining wing of a long destroyed pre-Empire fortress dating back to the Styrigen Kings. Built atop a network of natural hot springs, Mistgarten contains a magnificent spa and bathhouse that feature mosaic depictions of a Hart emblem. Forbidden to outsiders since its completion, Lydia has recently opened the doors of Mistgarten to visitors.

Structurally, the old west wing consisted of a spa, guardhouse, and stables. The spa section has been lovingly restored and is fully functional. The guardhouse and common room have been converted into a warmly appointed tavern. The stables are restored and fully functional.

Mistgarten is operated by a cranky innkeeper called Bärzil and his nagging wife Prunehilda, who rank among the "nobility" of Helfurt. Bärzil is a toad-like snob with a pathological desire to please Lydia. Bärzil believes no customers of Mistgarten are actually worthy to stay there. Prunehilda is quite the opposite, and she is grateful when rare guests happen by. Bärzil and Prunehilda bicker constantly but attempt to remain civil in the presence of PCs.

Tavern

The tavern was built from the common room of the old guardhouse and features two rows of oaken banquet tables and benches. The tavern is decorated in a hunting theme, and the walls are covered by trophy heads of an exotic assortment of animals and monsters. A poorly stuffed stag head, infested with moths, frequently falls from the wall, and the sharpened tines of its horns become stuck in the floor or in the hapless guest with the misfortune of standing below it.

Private Rooms

The private rooms were built from the old guards' barracks and house up to four guests apiece. The old bunks have been removed and replaced with large antique poster beds and other amenities acquired from Lydia's collection.

Private Spa

The door to the private spa is always kept locked (**Pick Lock Test** to open).

Characters gaining entry to the private baths may attempt a **Perception Test** to spot a hidden door concealed within a basin at the rear. The trapdoor is imperfectly sealed, and small bubbles periodically break the surface of a residual fatty liquid coating the tiles. The trapdoor opens to a rusty metal ladder leading into the pitch-dark escape tunnel below (**Location J**), which in turn connects to the dungeons of Lydia's castle. The largest private basin, stained rust-brown from Lydia's new moon baths, accommodates seven people. Another smaller basin is half-filled with used bathwater.

2. Helfurt Square

The Square at the centre of Helfurt is a small park featuring an old bandstand and the massive Helfurt Hall. The snow banks around Helfurt Square once provided a popular play area where children built snowmen and had snowball fights. In the snow banks, Lydia has buried 8 Skeletons (*WFRP* page 231), which may be raised with Necromantic magic.

3. Helfurt Hall

Helfurt Square is dominated by the massive stone structure called Helfurt Hall. Helfurt Hall is a multi-purpose structure that serves as a courthouse, public assembly area, and ceremonial hall. Currently, Helfurt Hall is undergoing last minute renovations before hosting the wedding ceremony.

4. Wading Pond and Graveyard

The pond once served as a popular recreation area for the now-conspicuously absent children of Helfurt. During the winter months, groups of children could be found skating on the ice and playing games, but now the ice is quiet.

5. Rumanyik Camp

A camp of Strigany wagons and tents are set up at the southern edge of Helfurt. Living in the camp are twenty-three men, women, and children of

Confronting Lydia

You should familiarise yourself with Lydia's profile before running the Helfurt encounter. Her strengths and weaknesses are different from a typical Vampire and even most Von Carsteins (see **Weaknesses** in *Night's Dark Masters* page 113 Lydia's response depends upon the nature of the challenge.

- **Vampirism or Necromancy:** Lydia breaks down in tears and begs for compassion. Lydia insists she is a benevolent Vampire, unlike the others (false), and her people enjoy a quality of life surpassing most Sylvanians (true). The Zombies were either slain by Lydia's late husband or died of natural causes (false). The villagers testify on Lydia's behalf, as they consider it a privilege to be selected as her blood thralls.
- **Ahmed:** Lydia does not reveal her plan to drain the boy's soul in a necromantic ritual (see **Union of Souls** sidebar on page 182). Instead, Lydia tells the PCs that her marriage to Ahmed was pre-arranged to foster relations between Stirland's nobility and the persecuted gypsy clans (false). Raluca naively corroborates this lie. Lydia vows Ahmed will not be turned into a Vampire (true). If the PCs bring Ahmed to Helfurt but refuse to hand him over, Lydia offers the PCs exotic goods (200 *gc* value) in exchange for the boy. If the PCs reject this offer, Lydia sighs and commands nearby villagers to apprehend Ahmed.
- **Combat!:** Lydia uses ranged magic to fight PCs who actively resist. She gains +1 casting die from the *Dhar* Pool beneath Mistgarten (unless the PCs restored the leyline at Siegfriedhof). Lydia always keeps at least four Zombie courtiers nearby to cover her retreat. If attacked, Lydia withdraws to her castle via the Mistgarten tunnel, as per **The Wedding Day** on page 182. Lydia is a weak combatant and prefers to mount a defensive fight from within her hidden study, animating Voislav's Stitch Slaves (**Location C**) to protect her, using the *call of Vanhel* spell to invigorate Stitch Slaves in combat. If cornered, Lydia activates her Ethereal Mist ability and flees north to Kislev.

the Rumanyik line, who trace their ancestors back to the original Qu'rashi nomads. The Rumanyik prefer not to mingle with the locals, knowing they will move on to a different town after Mama Raluca's business concludes. Ahmed and Farouk are both Rumanyik by birth.

Mama Raluca

Leading the camp is an old seer called Mama Raluca. Raluca originally hailed from a Strigany clan based around Marienburg and joined the Rumanyiks through an arranged marriage to their chieftain, Slava. When Slava died, Raluca assumed leadership of the clan.

One night, a baby girl was left on Raluca's doorstep with no identifying marks other than a stylised golden pin featuring an inset lapis skull. Raluca recognized the pin as a marker identifying the true Scions of Nagash's bloodline and took baby Suri in.

For years, Raluca kept the secret of Suri's heritage until the birth of Ahmed. Raluca recognised the significance of a male descendant, as the Curse of the Old Gods was common knowledge amongst the Rumanyik. When Raluca approached Lydia with the news, Lydia was dismissive at first, until she recalled a second, obscure clause stating the Chosen One must be born under the star sign Rhya's Cauldron—which Ahmed was!

Lydia feared what her husband Voislav would do if he discovered Ahmed's true identity. Voislav was loyal to Mannfred von Carstein and would betray the boy to the legendary Vampire. Lydia urged young Suri to spirit Ahmed away and hide him amongst Mama Raluca's ancestral clan in Marienburg.

After Voislav's death, Lydia began to enact her own plan, persuading Raluca that Ahmed would now be safe in Helfurt. Raluca agreed, sending her nephew Farouk to fetch the boy from Marienburg.

Castle Helfurt

After the death of her husband Voislav, Lydia spared no expense renovating Castle Helfurt. Windows were draped with colourful banners, the masonry scrubbed clean, and exotic furniture from across the Old World furnished the restored palace. Much like the revitalised village of Helfurt, Lydia's storybook castle is a marked contrast to grim Sylvania.

The current inhabitants of Castle Helfurt include 22 Zombie servants and 6 living servants, all of whom wear fancy uniforms. The main gate is tended by a pallid living servant who announces visitors to Lydia before admitting them.

A. Nursery

Formerly the banquet hall, this room was later converted into a nursery. The room is now littered with toys and mouldy sweets.

B. Master Bedroom

Lydia's loft-style bed overlooks this room. Two armoires hold Lydia's clothes; a third is home to a nest of moths and mouldering finery. Lydia's dresser (conspicuously lacking a mirror) is cluttered with perfume bottles and makeup. Voislav's ashes are stored in an urn by the window. Six suits of superior Arabyan finery (small sized) are displayed on racks.

C. Servants' Quarters

Only two of these rooms are in use. The others are filled haphazardly with Voislav's old junk, including clothing, furniture, and portraits. Piled in a corner are nine of Voislav's beloved Stitch Slaves: winged abominations sewn together from Human body parts. Stitch Slaves can be animated as Zombies that have the Flier Talent.

D. Grand Ballroom

A massive chandelier built from Human rib cages is suspended above the dance floor. Low, eerie music emanates from the walls, increasing in volume with the amount of activity in the room. Tormented faces appear on the walls in Lydia's presence, moving their lips with the music. These Ghosts are Voislav's former musicians, bound within the walls centuries ago for embarrassing the baron. PCs must pass a **Will Power Test** in order to stop dancing once they've begun. PCs attending the ball as musicians must play in time with the Ghosts, requiring an **Easy (+20) Performer (Musician) Test** to avoid mockery from the vindictive phantoms.

The floor is polished to a glassy sheen, making the absence of Lydia's reflection apparent on a **Routine (+10) Perception Test**. Moving faster than Standard rate requires an **Easy (+20) Agility Test** to avoid falling.

E. Portrait Hall

This long hallway contains a dozen or so portraits of unidentified subjects, but the faces are noticeably pale. The central and most recent portrait is obviously Lydia, looking quite miserable. There are four portraits conspicuously absent; including Voislav and three of his most boorish relatives. The missing portraits are currently stored in the servants' quarters (**Location C**).

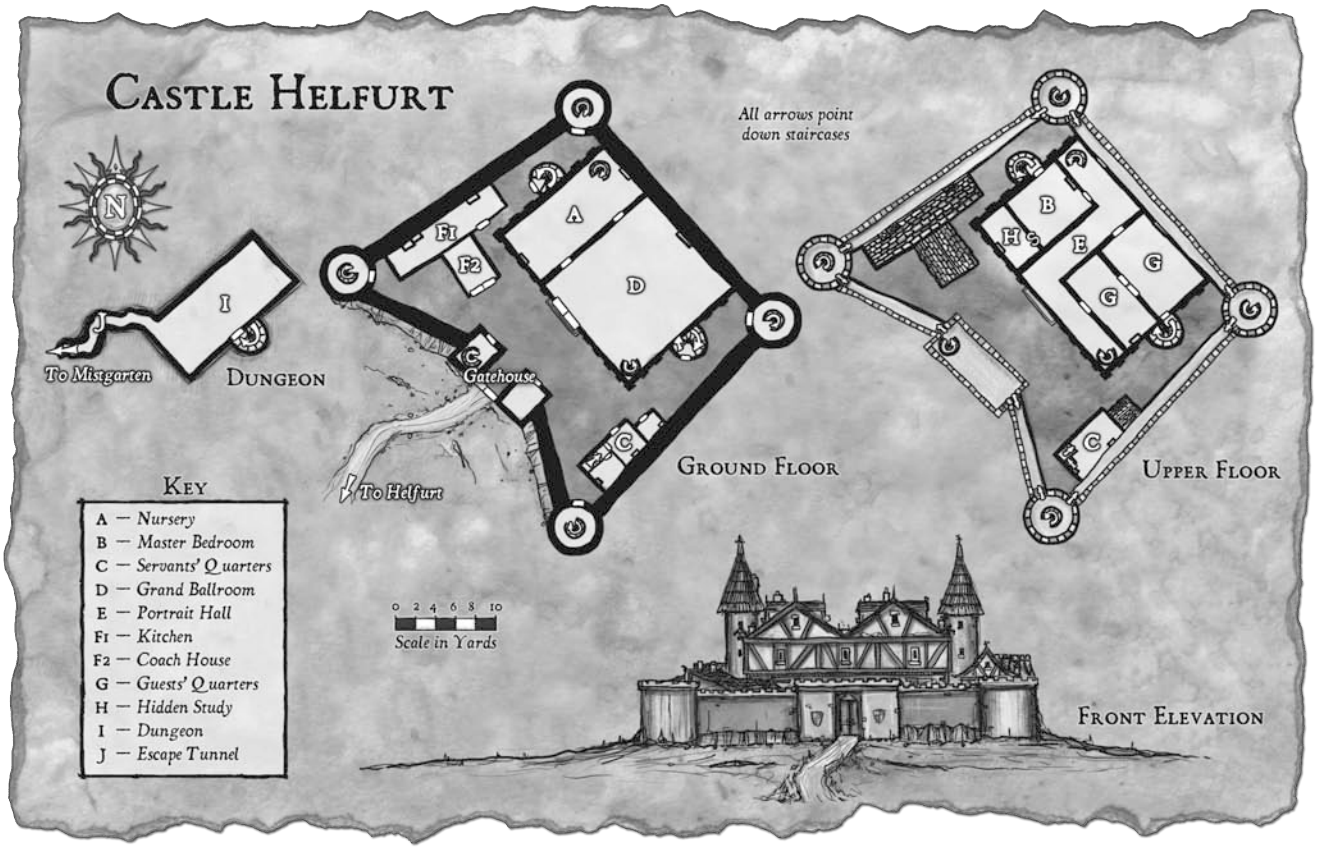
F. Kitchen & Coach House

Two servants busily prepare the wedding feast from exotic ingredients imported from Bretonnia and Araby. Some of the finer delicacies include: poached camel testicles with amaranth, pickled frogs in nutsedge brine, and the household favourite—caramelised eyeball kebobs flambé.

Lydia's carriage and two horses are kept in the attached coach house. The carriage is currently outfitted with skis for the winter.

G. Guests' Quarters

These well-appointed rooms are connected by a door that may be locked from either side. Voislav had the walls drilled with peepholes that Lydia



still uses for spying. A silk rope rings the servants' bell, which summons a Zombie bearing a decanter of water.

H. Hidden Study

The entrance is cleverly camouflaged, requiring a **Hard (–20) Search Test** to locate. Rows of bookshelves line the walls, and the desk is piled high with scrolls and ingredients. Wires dangle from the ceiling where Voislav's Stitch Slaves (**Location C**) were formerly displayed, but the dead Vampire's belongings have been removed. The following items may be found here:

- One of the *Nine Books of Nagash*. Written in High Nehekharan, this battered codex has lost more than half its pages but still explains the Blood Curse, Blood Kiss, and Blood Gifts in extensive detail. PCs managing to read it must pass a **Will Power Test** or gain an Insanity Point. Lydia has underlined encrypted words throughout, and the last page is annotated in Reikspiel (see **Handout #31**). Lydia's translations may provide clues about the power words encrypted on the triptych panels.
- The two missing Zandri Scrolls and Lydia's translation notes (see **Handout #32**). Together with the *Book of Nagash,* these notes should give the PCs enough information to unlock the power words of the Old Gods (page 185).
- Assorted stone tablets from Mistgarten, many of which are cracked or pieced together from fragments. The runes resemble those found at the Styrigen Mound near Siegfriedhof.
- Ancient hieroglyphic tablets from the Lahmian Temple of Blood, in surprisingly good condition. The hieroglyphs are High Nehekharan and detail the *Union of Souls* ritual.
- The Sigmar panel of Lanfranchi's triptych (unless previously recovered).

I. Dungeon

This dusty room was used by Voislav for torturing captives. Lydia has no qualms about torturing those she believes stand between her and Ahmed. Set into the floor of the dungeon is a prison cell accessed by a floor grate. The cell houses a starving Vampire thrall named Reingard and the desiccated remains of Sir Constantin. Long ago, the Vampire Hunter Reingard was defeated and given the Blood Kiss for Voislav's amusement. The imprisoned Reingard's only source of blood was an unlucky knight named Constantin, and now that Constantin is dead, Reingard must beg Lydia for blood.

Torture implements include: blood taps, assorted pliers for tooth and nail extraction, large cauldrons, and a crank-driven wheel upon which prisoners may be spun into a state of vertigo. Zombie torturers operate these devices at Lydia's command. Otherwise, they just shuffle about dumbly.

The secret escape tunnel can be blocked with an iron portcullis and leads to the bathhouse at Mistgarten (**Location 1**).

J. Escape Tunnel and *Dhar* Pool

The air in this damp tunnel is heavy with steam, and water collects in puddles on the floor. Characters unfamiliar with the tunnel's twists and turns must proceed cautiously. The tunnel connects Castle Helfurt's dungeon (Location I) with the Mistgarten spa (**Location 1**).

Near the western end of the tunnel, a narrow side branch slopes treacherously downward into blackness. Characters passing an **Easy (+20) Magical Sense Test** can detect the presence of arcane evil emanating from the murky depths. This test is reduced to **Hard (–20)** if the cairn at Siegfriedhof was repaired and the flow of magic through Hunger Wood restored.

This side branch opens into a small cavern after 20 yards. Dark magic (or *Dhar*) permeates the air so heavily in this cavern that non-magical light sources are completely useless. Spellcasters using the Lore of Necromancy gain +1 casting die within 100 yards of this *Dhar* source. Lydia has become attuned to the pool and, therefore, receives the casting bonus up to a half mile away.

For every 30 minutes the characters linger in this cavern, they must pass a **Toughness Test** or gain a random Side Effect (*WFRP* page 159). You should describe an unnatural withering sensation on the PCs' flesh before requiring players to roll, in case they have second thoughts about sticking around.

Eve of the Wedding

This night, a masked ball is held at Castle Helfurt. PCs without a mask and Superior Quality clothing are provided costumes at the gate. The village "nobles" are in attendance, including Bärzil, Prunehilda, and Mama Raluca. Ahmed is, of course, present and dressed in fine Arabyan silk. Most of the dances are called "carols," wherein the participants form two concentric circles. The two circles intermingle through a complex series of partner changes but always return to their original configuration by the end of the song. The ball concludes with a private dance between Ahmed and Lydia.

The Wedding Day

The following events occur on this day.

Daytime

Ahmed is kept at the Rumanyik camp (**Location 5**) until mid afternoon, at which time he's escorted by Mama Raluca to the servants' quarters at Castle Helfurt (**Location C**) and dressed for the wedding. Ahmed is content to play with the Rumanyik children. Lydia remains in her study preparing for the ritual until early afternoon, when she is joined in the master bedroom by two handmaidens who stand around dumbly as she dresses herself.

Evening

The wedding ceremony is conducted at Helfurt Hall, packed to capacity with both the living and the Undead. Lydia is the last to arrive, wearing a glorious dress of burgundy silk and white lace. Four Zombie servants carry her bridal train. PCs disguised as travelling musicians must pass a **Very Easy (+30) Performer (Musician) Test**, or Lydia ejects the offending musicians from Helfurt Hall before resuming her ceremony.

New Ritual: Union of Souls

Type: Arcane
Arcane Language: Magick
Magic: 2
XP: 300
Ingredients: The living body of a sentient being, three feet of twine braided from the hairs of both the caster's and the victim's families, and the ashes of a Vampire.
Conditions: At least one willing assistant to bind the participants' hands and sprinkle them with ashes must attend the ritual.
Consequences: If you fail your Casting Roll, a portion of the victim's soul is set adrift in the Realms of Chaos, and the victim becomes "half-dead" (see following **Description**). Until the soul fragment is recovered, your own soul languishes in stasis awaiting union. You may not gain any experience points.
Casting Number: 21
Casting Time: 2 hours
Description: This ritual divides the victim's soul into two fragments, transferring the half that feels hope and joy to you. You automatically cure 1 Insanity and gain an extended lifespan of 3d10 years. The victim enters a state of demi-mortis (or "half-death"), acquires the Insanity *Heart of Despair*, and permanently loses 15 from Will Power and Fellowship. When the victim's body dies, his remaining soul fragment either flees to Morr's realm as a Shade or remains on earth as a Wraithwisp (see *Night's Dark Masters*).
Special: *Union of Souls* has been linked with many different interpretations of the Vampire Prophecies. It is said that if the correct combination of souls is ever achieved, the age of a Thousand Thrones will commence with the caster ruling supreme over a thousand blood-soaked kingdoms!

Once the ceremony is underway, PCs with **Speak Arcane Language (Magick)** may realise Lydia is performing a ritual with Raluca's unwitting aid. You should allow the ritual to proceed until this discovery is made or until the hand-binding portion of the ceremony begins, whichever occurs first.

The Wedding Crashers

Suddenly, the proceedings are interrupted by the sound of galloping horses and shouting from outside Helfurt Hall. Sir Rolph has arrived with 4 Knights of the Raven and 2 Black Guardsmen to slay Lydia and those who stand in the way. Sir Rolph also intends to kill Ahmed. The following sequence should be modified according to the PCs' actions:

Round 1

Lydia grabs Ahmed and exits through the rear door, covered by her Zombie footmen. Lydia boards her waiting sleigh out back. Three dismounted Raven Knights (including Sir Rolph) chain the front door shut, whilst two others light the building on fire with torches. Two Black Guardsmen with longbows dismount and take up positions at the end of the main street.

Note: If the PCs delivered a detailed espionage report to Sir Rolph before the wedding, the back door of Helfurt Hall is also chained. Everyone present, including Lydia, Ahmed and possibly even the PCs, are trapped within the burning hall!

Round 2

Lydia's sleigh speeds around the town hall past the bowmen, who shoot at her. She begins casting *raise the dead*. Sir Rolph and two of his knights mount their horses to pursue, while the other two begin fighting Lydia's four Zombie servants on foot. Ahmed leaps out of Lydia's moving sleigh and runs to the PCs for protection.

Round 3

Lydia casts *raise the dead*, summoning up to 8 Skeletons from the snow banks. The bowmen begin sniping at villagers fleeing Helfurt Hall, which is now engulfed in flames. Sir Rolph dispatches two mounted knights to pursue Lydia's sleigh, while he remains behind to confront the PCs, shouting, *"Hand over the boy! I will slay this Scion of Nagash with mine own hand!"*

Round 4

Sir Rolph's detachment continues chasing, and Lydia casts a *magic dart* at her pursuers. The Black Guard bowmen continue shooting villagers. The two knights with torches are engaged by Skeletons and call for aid from nearby PCs. If the PCs did not hand over Ahmed to Sir Rolph, the enraged knight attacks them. Otherwise, Rolph snatches the boy and pursues Lydia on horseback.

Round 5

The bowmen switch to battle axes and rush to aid the embattled Raven Knights. Lydia casts *corpse flesh* on herself and prepares to make a dash from her sleigh to the Mistgarten spa.

Round 6

The melee in Helfurt continues. Lydia escapes with Ahmed into the tunnel in the private baths, using her speed advantage over the fully armoured Knights of the Raven.

Round 7 and Onward

Lydia retreats to her castle with Ahmed, dropping a heavy iron grate to block the entrance to the dungeon. She animates Voislav's flying Stitch Slaves (**Location C**) and locks herself in the hidden study (**Location H**) to defend against the coming siege.

Assaulting Castle Helfurt

Stitch Slaves can only attack targets in the open. If the castle is assaulted from below, Sir Rolph and the PCs need only face Lydia's 18 remaining Zombie servants. Unless PCs aided against the Undead rearguard in Helfurt, you can assume two Raven Knights were badly wounded, leaving fewer to attack the

castle. The final assault is a chaotic skirmish with Rolph's men going room to room smiting Zombies. You needn't resolve this battle in detail—simply allow the PCs to rummage through the castle, while Zombies are being systematically cut down around them. If the PCs haven't found Lydia's hidden study within 10 minutes, Sir Rolph's men discover it first. A cornered Lydia will fight until her Wounds fall below 10 or until a warrior of Morr arrives on the scene. At this point she activates her *Ethereal Mist* ability (see Night's Dark Masters page 106) and flees to Kislev. Sir Rolph impounds all evidence found in Lydia's study, unless the PCs pass **Sleight of Hand Tests** to palm some objects or devise a clever scheme.

Lydia von Carstein

The third daughter of a Kislevite noble, Lydia was schooled abroad at the Morrian Abbey of Blessed Aethelbert. Lydia was a brilliant student, and the grand abbot soon employed her linguistic talents to decipher previously impenetrable theological texts. At the abbey, Lydia stumbled upon forbidden scrolls and tablets concerning ancient prophecies and the Land of the Dead.

Upon learning of his pupil's unauthorized delving, the grand abbot hastily discharged Lydia from the abbey. However, instead of returning to Kislev, Lydia followed her trail of research eastward into the forbidding Sylvanian hinterland. Her translations indicated that a powerful source of *Dhar* was rumoured to exist in the foothills east of the Hunger Wood. Lydia's trail ended at the door of Voislav Plicticos, a Vampire of the Von Carstein bloodline. Plicticos was immediately smitten with Lydia, who recognized an opportunity when she saw one. On their wedding night, Voislav bestowed the Blood Kiss upon Lydia.

At first, Lydia was content to absorb the great wealth of arcane knowledge she had accumulated on her long journey. Many of her tomes and scrolls were written in the high Nehekharan language from which the modern Strigany tongue evolved. Lydia befriended Mama Raluca and spent many nights among the Rumanyik, learning their language and lore. When Ahmed was delivered to Raluca's protection, Lydia immediately recognized the corresponding signs identifying Ahmed as the Scion of Nagash.

Fearing that her weak-willed husband would deliver the boy to Mannfred von Carstein, Lydia sent Ahmed abroad until she could remove Voislav from the picture. To this end, Lydia manipulated a group of adventurers into destroying Voislav, so she could inherit his lands and titles. After Voislav's death, Ahmed could safely return to Helfurt and fulfil his part of the ritual, enabling Lydia's ascension as the new Queen of Darkness.

Lydia is a delicate, beautiful Vampire. She has become increasingly superstitious in undeath and has recently taken to bathing in the blood and gristle of mortals at lunar equinoxes.

Lydia von Carstein

Female Carstein Vampire Countess, ex-Thrall, ex-Scribe

Insanity Points: 3

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
44	28	53 (5)	59 (5)	68	54	61	57

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Genealogy/Heraldry, History, Necromancy, Theology) (Int), Channelling (WP), Charm (Fel +10), Command (Fel), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int +10), Common Knowledge (Araby, Kislev) (Int), Dodge Blow (Ag), Evaluate (Int), Gossip (Int +10), Heal (Int), Intimidate (S), Magical Sense (WP), Perception (Int +10), Read/Write (Int), Secret Language (Guild Tongue) (Int), Ride (Ag), Scale Sheer Surface (S), Search (Int), Shadowing (Ag), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Arcane Language (High Nehekharan, Magick, Old Faith) (Int), Speak Language (Breton, Classical, Kislevarin, Reikspiel, Tilean) (Int), Trade (Calligrapher) (Ag)

Talents: Dark Lore (Necromancy), Dark Magic, Disarm, Hardy, Linguistics, Master Orator, Petty Magic (Arcane), Public Speaking, Schemer, Sixth Sense, Specialist Weapon Group (Fencing, Parrying)

Traits: Blood Gifts (Blood Drain, Corrupted Innocence, Deathsight, Ethereal Mist, Natural Necromancer, Pass for Human, Transfixing Gaze, Vampires' Curse), Frightening, Keen Senses, Natural Weapons (Claws, Fangs), Night Vision, Undead, Unsettling

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 6; **Wounds:** 23

Magic: 3; Petty Magic (Arcane), Dark Lore (Necromancy). Lydia gains +1 casting die within a half mile of the *Dhar* Pool (**Location J**), as long as the leyline through Hunger Wood remains disrupted. She has ingredients for all Necromantic spells.

Weapons: Claws (1d10+5), Gromril Stiletto (1d10+2; as Dagger), Teeth (1d10+5)

Trappings

Lydia wears a beautiful, low-cut crimson dress trimmed with black lace. She owns Castle Helfurt and all its contents.

Vampire's Curse

In addition to requiring blood for survival, Lydia has the following weaknesses:

- *Sawdust:* Must take a Terror Test when in contact with sawdust or embalming fluids.
- *Daemonsroot and Witchbane:* Must pass a Will Power Test to come within 2 yards of these herbs.
- *Garlic:* Takes a –20 penalty to all tests made within 6 yards of garlic.
- *No Reflection:* Mirrors do not reflect Lydia's image.
- *Warpstone:* Must take a Fear Test if passing within 6 yards of Warpstone. Every hour of contact forces a re-roll of one Blood Gift and one Weakness (see *Night's Dark Masters* page 113 for details).

Raven Knights of the Shroud (5)

The Knights of the Raven are relentless foes of the Undead. Sir Rolph's company standard depicts a stylised raven wing over two crossed swords. You may adjust the profile below to account for alternate career paths (for more information, see **Knights of the Raven** in *Night's Dark Masters* page 99.

Ancient Scrolls, Sacred Stones and Dead Painters

Here is a condensed summary of the various clues encountered in this chapter, along with their relevance both historically and to the *Thousand Thrones* campaign in particular.

- **Zandri Scrolls:** Hidden in the forbidden library at Blessed Aethelbert (see **Forbidden Library** page 173), these scrolls were plundered from Nehekhara by Lanfranchi's army a thousand years ago during the Arabyan crusades. These scrolls were the first recorded mention of the Thousand Thrones prophecies and the mortal Scion of Nagash from whom Ahmed is descended.
- **Styrigen Tablets:** These stone tablets (**Handout #29**) stored in the forbidden library at Blessed Aethelbert (see **Forbidden Library** page 173) are part of the ancient magic leyline unwittingly desecrated by Lanfranchi a thousand years ago. When arranged in the correct sequence atop the Styrigen Mound near Siegfriedhof (see **Styrigen Mound** page 174), the flow of the Winds of Magic is restored, and the *Dhar* Pool in Helfurt is drained (see **Escape Tunnel and *Dhar* Pool** page 181). See the Miragliano Puzzle Box for more information.
- **Lanfranchi Triptych:** This 1,000 year old painting includes three panels depicting the apotheosis of Myrmidia, Nagash and Sigmar respectively. Each panel contains information about the Star Signs associated with these legendary figures and their relevance to the three-way struggle between an ancient Sun God, Earth Mother and Moon Goddess. They also contain evidence of Sigmar's taint by the Crown of Sorcery and hints about Nagash's fertility blood magic. Lastly, the triptych panels are each marked with three words encrypted as numeric sequences. The codes reveal sacred power words of the old Nehekharan gods which Nagash used to enslave the vampires aeons ago. Note that players may learn the power words without actually doing any math; they only need to find the relevant handouts and connect the clues.

  Lanfranchi's triptych has been separated over the centuries. The Myrmidia panel is lost, but a replica is painted on the dome of the temple in Wurtbad (see **Temple of Myrmidia** page 166). The Sigmar panel has changed owners many times, most recently belonging to Skulls' leader Ludwig Buchholz (see **The Skulls** page 159) before being stolen by Farouk the Nagash cultist for delivery to Lydia von Carstein. The Nagash panel is buried in Siegfriedhof with Lanfranchi. Clues relating to the triptych may be found in the Necrarch de Trois' journal (see **The Aftermath** page 155), the Talabheim temple murder scene (see **Temple of Morr** page 162), and Lydia's book of Nagash (see **Hidden Study** page 181).
- **Miragliano Puzzle Box:** Concealed at the Temple of Myrmidia in Wurtbad (see **Temple of Myrmidia** page 166) this box contains the secret to restoring the Styrigen Tablets (Handout #29) to the cairn on the mound near Siegfriedhof (see **Styrigen Mound** page 174). The cairn is part of an ancient leyline network built aeons ago by the Old Ones to siphon excess magic from the world before it stagnates and becomes dark magic, or *Dhar*. Repairing the cairn allows magic to once again flow freely through Hunger Wood. Although it takes many years for the saturation of *Dhar* in Hunger Wood to dissipate, the effect is immediately noticeable as far away as Helfurt, where Lydia's *Dhar* Pool (see **Escape Tunnel and *Dhar* Pool** page 181) is drained almost completely by the time the PCs arrive.

  The PCs receive clues about Miragliano's Puzzle Box and the cairn at the Temple of Morr in Talabheim. The murdered Morrian priest was a scholar of both Miragliano's work and the Vampire Prophecies. As the priest's lifeblood spilled onto the floor, he left clues that might lead someone else to investigate Lanfranchi's legacy, the Priory of the Spear, and the druids. The priest feared that the Knights of the Raven in Siegfriedhof would simply kill the Scion, Ahmed, without first understanding the true nature of the Vampire Prophecies.

Raven Knights of the Shroud (5)

Male Human Knight of the Raven, ex-Black Guard, ex-Squire

Insanity Points: 5

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
64	47	48 (4)	46 (4)	34 (44)	40	56	38

Notes: Sir Rolph van Loenen uses the above profile with +5 added to WS, S and Fel.

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Necromancy) (Int +10), Academic Knowledge (Genealogy/Heraldry, History, Theology, Strategy/Tactics) (Int), Animal Care (Int), Animal Training (Fel), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int), Dodge Blow (Ag), Follow Trail (Int), Gossip (Fel), Intimidate (S), Perception (Int), Read/Write (Int), Ride (Ag), Secret Language (Battle Tongue) (Int), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int +10)

Talents: Etiquette, Menacing, Specialist Weapon Group (Cavalry, Longbow, Two-handed), Seasoned Traveller, Sharpshooter, Stout-hearted, Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure, Strong-minded

Combat

Attacks: 3; **Movement:** 3; **Wounds:** 16

Armour (Heavy): Full Plate (Head 5, Arms 5, Body 5, Legs 5)

Weapons: Lance (1d10+6; CV+1; Fast, Impact, Tiring), Longbow with 20 Arrows (1d10+4; CV+1; Range 30/60; Reload Half; Armour Piercing), Shield (1d10+3; CV+1; Defensive, Special), Great Weapon (Two-handed Sword) (1d10+5; CV+1; Impact, Slow), Silvered Hand Weapon (Sword) (1d10+4; CV+1)

Trappings

The Raven Knights ride black-barded destriers, and each knight has a symbol of the raven embossed on his breastplate. As part of their typical gear, they carry phials of blessed water and four hawthorn stakes. In their saddle bags, they carry 1d5 days of rations and 1d5 water skins. Each knight has 2d10 *gc*.

Sir Rolph van Loenen

This particular company of Raven Knights is led by Sir Rolph van Loenen, a cunning and ruthless commander obsessed with becoming the next grand master of his order. Sir Rolph believes that Lord Voss has deliberately overstayed his appointment. Furthermore, Sir Rolph suspects Geistwächt is utilizing this tactic to locate a more pliant replacement and pass Sir Rolph over for the post. In this regard, Sir Rolph believes there is a complex web of conspiracies to keep him from his rightful destiny.

The truth is Sir Rolph is illiterate, which immediately disqualifies him from the post. Geistwächt and Voss have made this point clear on many occasions, but Sir Rolph believes he could learn to read quickly if they just gave him the chance. In the meantime, Rolph is satisfied to take out his frustrations on any nearby Undead and add to his fearsome reputation. His company had been investigating Ghoul sightings near Templehof, when a Shroud agent arrived with news of a Scion of Nagash active in Sylvania. It matters little to Sir Rolph that the purported Scion is a young boy.

Sir Rolph is a rangy and imposing man who wears long grey braids and walks with a slight limp.

Note: Sir Rolph van Loenen uses the preceding **Raven Knights of the Shroud** profile with +5 added to WS, S and Fel.

Special Note: While it is a requirement for membership to the Raven Knights, somehow Sir Rolph never learned to read or write.

The Righteous Hammers

As the dust settles in Helfurt, a trumpet blast echoes across the valley. Prelate Richter of the Righteous Hammers rides into the village, followed

by an entourage of 9 armed ruffians and 5 initiates bearing colourful banners. He approaches the PCs:

> *"Splendid work, my good friends. The foes of Sigmar will be dealt a crushing blow. Let the Child-worshippers freeze their ears off in Kislev. There is much work to be done in Altdorf reuniting the people of the Empire under their rightful Grand Theogonist, Volkmar."*

The PCs would be wise to hand over the triptych, for they are likely injured, and Richter's men will use force if necessary. If payment is requested, PCs are provided with fine accommodations in a nice inn outside of Sylvania, baths, new clothing, 100 *gc* to divide between them, horses to speed their travel north, and one needed item for each character to attain his next career.

If the Knights of the Raven were defeated but Lydia survived, Lydia gladly hands over the triptych to Richter, avoiding further trouble (she's already obtained the knowledge she sought). Richter turns a blind eye to any dead villagers, knights, or Zombies present. He simply pockets the painting and departs without further ado.

Conclusion

If playing this scenario as a one-shot, you may decide the outcome of Lydia's ritual. The Age of a Thousand Thrones will not bring instant changes to the natural order but rather a gradual ascendance of the Vampires and the subjugation of humanity over a few years. PCs notice roads and buildings becoming choked by plants, even in populated areas, and Vampires are increasingly promoted to positions of power. Vampire hunting will be outlawed by Imperial decree.

As a red herring in the *Thousand Thrones* campaign, Lydia's interpretation of the prophecies is flawed. Her Von Carstein blood could be too diluted, she may have neglected an important component of the ritual, or the actual ritual might call for a female Scion instead of a male one. For a surprise twist, Ahmed might turn out to be a girl, or Raluca could have been mistaken about Suri's ancestry.

In any event, Lydia hurries off to Kislev in her black carriage after the failed ritual, drawn partly by the will of the Black Witch but also because of her readings in the Books of Nagash. The PCs should learn of the baroness's sudden departure (possibly from a Rumanyik vagabond) soon after the Helfurt encounters. This reason gives them incentive to travel to Kislev to encounter the events of **Chapter VIII**.

Rewards

Each player should receive a base award of 75 XP per session, plus bonuses for roleplaying and achieving plot objectives. Unless specified as being an individual award, plot awards are given to the entire group

Action	XP
Being honest with Madame Yaga	5
Foiling the Black Witch's pool and cave dream traps (individual)	10
Rescuing Ahmed from the Corpus Aeternum	20
Each task completed at the Temple of Myrmidia (individual)	5
Opening the Miragliano Puzzle Box (individual)	10
Befriending the abbey cat Tanira (individual)	10
Discovering Lanfranchi's tomb and the Nagash triptych	25
Capturing or killing the Skaven spy	20
Discovering the forbidden library of Blessed Aethelbert	15
Returning the druidic tablets to the Styrigen Mound	50
Performing the blood ceremony at the Styrigen Mound	10
Discovering Lydia's hidden study before Sir Rolph	15
Saving Ahmed from the Raven Knights	15
Saving Ahmed from Lydia's ritual	25
Decoding the power words of the Old Gods	75 + 1 Fate Point

Power Words of the Old Gods

By analyzing clues found in **Chapters VI** and **VII**, the PCs may have uncovered a series of sacred power words originally pronounced by the Old Gods of Nehekhara to curse the vampires, and later subverted by Nagash to command them. For centuries, the Old Gods have lain dormant, but now as the Vampire Prophecies unfold, the Nehekharan gods stir. The magical potency of these words is much greater with the *Ring of Vashanesh,* but even used alone they can produce minor effects. These power words should only be used within the *Thousand Thrones* campaign.

The following four words are encoded on the Sigmar and Nagash panels of Lanfranchi's triptych. Power words of Ptra the Sun God, and a fertility goddess, are also known to have been connected with the Vampire Prophecies, but they are now lost and forgotten.

- **Taru:** This power word allows the speaker to briefly perceive an unholy radiance surrounding all nearby vampires who fail Opposed Tests (see Rules below). The Ring of Vashanesh once allowed Nagash to read the mind of its wearer using this power word. "Taru" was the curse of Phakth, the Hawk God.
- **Yxus:** This power word delays a vampire for 1 combat round. Nagash could repel an entire army of vampires using this word in proximity of the ring. Khsar, God of the Desert Wind first pronounced the curse of "Yxus".
- **Odet:** This attack word inflicts 1d10+2 damage hit against vampires who fail to resist. Using the power of the ring, Nagash once crippled disobedient vampires with a single phrase. "Odet" was the curse of Djaf, the Jackal-headed God.
- **Luna:** Perhaps the most potent of the known power words, "Luna" reverses the Blood Kiss if uttered within 1 minute of infection. Nagash used this word to revert newly created vampires of whom he disapproved. Asaph, Goddess of the Asp pronounced the curse of "Luna."

Rules

Nehekharan Power Words are considered Divine Magic, however they do not require a **Magic** score to use, and may be employed by characters of any career who utter them with conviction (requiring a Half Action).

Roll a **Fellowship Test**, opposed by the Vampire's **Willpower Test**. Both characters may modify their target numbers by **Magic × 10**. Use Degrees of Success to break ties.

Example: *a character with Fel 45 and Mag 1 could test against 55.*

If a Power Word is successful, see above for its effect. On a failed test, nothing happens. If doubles are rolled on a failed **Fellowship Test**, use the *Wrath of the Gods* table (*WFRP* page 144), subtracting 10 to account for the Old Gods' reduced potency.

Vampires are hypersensitive to these power words. Any character speaking them within 50 yards will be heard automatically, and even whispered power words—though ineffectual—may be overheard if the vampire passes a **Perception Test**.

Chapter VIII: The Black Witch

"If'n ya see a black dog, ye'd best ignore it. It may bark. It may yap. It might nip ya on da bum. But ignore it all da same. If'n you look in its eyes, yer surely ta find yer doom."

—Old Shuck

By Robert J. Schwalb and Robert Vaughn

After losing nearly a month of travel heading after the wrong Karl, the PCs discover—to their likely horror—that Karl has evaded them. Faced with letting the Crusade achieve whatever goals it has, the PCs must race back north to pick up the trail once more. If they fail, certain doom is bound to fall upon the Old World.

Adventure Background

As described in **Chapter VII**, young Karl experienced visions of a seer aiding him in finding his mother. Suspecting treachery, Karl used the confusion of the attack during the play to slip out of the encampment and head for Talagaad, where he would meet with the mystic and learn what he could of how to be reunited with his mother. Helmut, one of the only two men to whom Karl revealed his intention, asked the PCs to follow after the boy to ensure no harm befell him. Unfortunately, the PCs wound up following the wrong child, since Karl dallied with another family along the way. And so, while the PCs headed south, Karl met with the seer, learned what he needed, and headed back to join the Crusade.

Karl's sudden disappearance had unforeseen consequences. The Crusaders, who had just recovered the errant youth from nearly a month's absence panicked and rioted. They blamed everyone from each other, rival factions, the Grand Theogonist, to the inner circle. In the riots, the mob turned on itself, butchering each other with abandon. The fighting lasted two days, sorely diminishing their ranks and adding Helmut and the rest of the inner circle to the list of casualties. By the time Karl finally returned, most of the Crusade lies dead or had deserted in the aftermath. Saddened, Karl rallied those few who remained, explaining to them one final journey remained.

The tattered remains of the mob drifted north and east, crossing through the ravaged lands of the eastern Empire. Along the way, Karl's aura drew more desperate and wretched souls, replenishing his ranks to replace those who had perished in the ruins of Wolfenburg. These were no warriors—they were rabble, hardened men and women who had lost everything. Among them were Mutants, Chaos cultists, and common criminals swept along by Karl's aura. On and on they travelled, slowly crossing the oblast, losing more of their numbers to predators, monsters, and the deadly cold of Kislev's nights, until finally, they came to the Crags of Shargun.

The beleaguered masses crept up into the peaks and descended on the quiet village of Zhidovsk, where they settled in for the great revelation that would follow. Soon after, young Karl addressed the host, explaining he would head alone into the peaks to find the truth about himself and the purpose of his cause. He asked his people to wait for him in the village, promising he would return and lead them to glory. With that, he and a group of guards led by Old Shuck, a wrinkly hunter and guide, departed, disappearing into the thick forests that blanketed the slopes.

In the week that followed, black carriages and strange folk have gathered in the village, adding their numbers to the ragged cultists. These newest visitors are a cruel bunch, having nothing but disdain for the masses, and rumours swirl they are Vampires from all over the Old World gathered to witness the grand spectacle of Karl's revelation. An uneasy peace has descended on the place as the two groups consider each other warily, mindful of a queer sickness that has bloomed and the disappearances of random Crusaders in the depths of the night.

Adventure Summary

Chapter VIII: The Black Witch reveals the true villain in this long, hard-fought campaign. Having followed the wrong Karl, the PCs are far from the boy, stranded in a dark corner of the Empire. Despite their failure to protect or follow the lad, they have learned of a dire threat that looms over the Old World, and they may have learned that the boy is somehow connected to the ancient Vampire Prophecies. The need to catch Karl is greater than ever, but the PCs have lost weeks from their side-trek. Still, they must persevere, and so they take up the cold trail once more.

Their travels take them through deadly lands, near the cursed city of Mordheim, through the Dead Wood, and back onto the trail of ruin left by the mob. As they draw closer to Wolfenburg, they hear more and more reports of the Crusade having left the Empire, bound north for Kislev. Following the path left by the Crusade is not difficult, since they make no effort to hide their passing. Further, the mob's slow pace means the characters may be able to close the gap.

After a few strange encounters in the wilderness of Kislev, the PCs finally locate the remnants of the Crusade in the remote village of Zhidovsk. It's

immediately clear something is going on by the presence of the Crusaders, black carriages, and other refugees choking the streets and alleys of this tiny community. Held hostage by the unwelcome host, the locals suspect something terrible looms, a fact driven home by the appearance of an ugly black dog, the vanishing of honest men and women, and the whispers of something dreadful lurking in the shadows. It is against this backdrop the characters learn Karl is not dead and is in fact very near. The PCs must navigate the intrigues of Zhidovsk to uncover the corruption destroying the good peasants and locate the Black Witch's lair, where the blessed or accursed child is held.

— Getting There from Here —

The PCs may have gotten off the track, but Karl's destination should be evident. The PCs have likely spent a lot of time with Karl, travelling to Altdorf, or in rescuing him from Tobias. Any PC who lived in the camp for a time can recall with a successful **Intelligence Test** that Karl had spoken of Kislev often. If none of the characters remember this or fail the test, don't worry. As they head back to Wolfenburg, they're sure to hear rumours about where the Crusade went next.

Routes

This adventure assumes the PCs followed the events of the previous chapter to their conclusion and are now setting out from the haunted moors of Sylvania. This need not be the case. It's possible the PCs wised up early and are hot on the Crusade's heels, and if so, feel free to ignore all of the following information.

One component that should guide your transition between encounters is time. Karl needs to have a bit of a lead, slipping ahead of the Player Characters to ensure he can reach the Kislev town, settle the remaining cultists, and venture onto the Womb described in the final chapter. For this reason, you may need to stall the PCs, placing additional obstacles in their way, injecting a few more red herrings, or simply use the weather as a tool to reduce their pace to a crawl.

In any event, once the characters set out, there's a number of viable routes into Kislev. A whole host of established roads and waterways lead into the frozen northlands and the PCs merely have to follow them or book passage on a riverboat to reach Kislev without much trouble. This said, characters might become lost, might head in the wrong direction, or may even return to Wolfenburg if they do not yet realize that Kislev is the final destination. Wandering this part of the world is dangerous. The edges of the Worlds Edge Mountains are fraught with Orcs and Greenskins, while the Eerie Downs are infamous for the Undead prowling through the mist. The Ruins of Ostermark are infested with Chaos marauders and worse, while bandits and river pirates prey on traffic through the eastern edge of the Empire.

Clearly, such a journey is an adventure in itself, carrying the adventurers through some of the most perilous stretches in the Empire. Whilst these adventure possibilities are beyond the scope of this campaign, any of these places can expand your game in interesting and potentially deadly ways, giving you more obstacles, false leads, side adventurers, or even just time for your players to discuss what has transpired and reinforce the bonds that keep them together. If the PCs skipped previous encounters in the campaign, you might want to insert them here—modified, of course. Or, you can create a few side adventures based on the routes the characters might take to reach the Kislev border. Ultimately, the details of this trip are left to you to define.

Bechafen

Ostermark's beleaguered capital, Bechafen is a fortified town deep in the Marches. For centuries, Bechafen's primary trade has been supplying arms and armour to Ostermark's armies. The recent Chaos Incursion washed against their walls and left the community heavily scarred, but with its wealth and doughty citizens, it is well on the way to recovery. Bechafen's position near Kislev makes it a common stop for caravans bound north, into the forests or into Kisleve proper. PCs should here be able to secure passage, at least for a time.

Dead Wood

Forming the southern border of Ostermark is a reputedly haunted forest known as the Dead Wood. The reason for its sinister reputation is that somewhere in its depths lie the ruins of Mordheim, a city so corrupted, so foul, Sigmar shattered it on the anvil of the earth. The Dead Wood is completely uninhabitable, and nothing, not even the lowliest vermin can live here long. The trees are skeletal, dead leaves clinging to the dry branches. When the wind blows through the area, it sounds of rattling bones, and the rustling leaves hiss dry laughter. Whilst passing through or skirting the edges of the forest, the characters may hear faint screams coming from somewhere in its depths. Going to investigate can lead them into all sorts of trouble, for who can say what they will find? One thing is certain; mutation is the least of their problems.

Eerie Downs

It's possible for the PCs to enter the melancholy Eerie Downs. Scarcely populated and on the borders of Sylvania, this stretch of lowlands was the sight of a great battle between the Vampire Counts and the Empire. It was here the Vampires turned the tide, precipitating their invasion into Sigmar's Lands at the start of the Empire's twenty-first century. As the characters make their way through it, they should catch sight of marshlights, spirits, and other supernatural beings. Whether these entities pose a threat or not is up to you.

Karak Kadrin

The Worlds Edge Mountains rises to the east, forming a natural barrier to hold back the tide of the roaming hordes of Greenskins, armies of Chaos, and whatever else dwells in the Dark Lands. The mountains are not much safer. Scattered throughout the peaks are the remnants of the declining Dwarf Empire, and emptied halls of abandoned holdfasts harbour foul creatures and ancient secrets best left uncovered. Of the few settlements still in the area, Karak Kadrin stands strong, having never fallen, as the great shrine of Grimnir attracts slayers from all over the Old World.

Karak Kadrin's strength ensure the Peak Pass remains open for the veteran dwarves and slayers that come to pay homage at the shrine lend their strength to keeping the route to the Reikwald free of Orcs, Trolls, and other mountain-dwelling horrors. Thanks to the unusually high number of Troll and Giant Slayers, this region of the Worlds Edge Mountains is blessedly free from the more common fiends. The bones of dead Trolls, Orcs, and others litter the ways up to this fastness, testifying to the mettle and courage of its people.

Getting Back on Track

It's entirely possible the PCs, having been duped, feel like giving up, abandoning young Karl to whatever fate that awaits him in Kislev. In some ways, the players might be justified in feeling this way, and they are certainly within their rights to lay aside the responsibility thrust upon them to seek their fortunes elsewhere. Of course, such action is no fun for you, the GM, who has this chapter and the next yet to run before this story comes to an end.

Should the characters spend too much time worrying about what to do next, you can always nudge them in the right direction with a few extra encounters. Do note that such encounters are not to force the PCs back onto the proper course of the adventure but rather to give them the facts they need to make good decisions about what's best for their homeland. Encounters could be perceived as heavy-handed shepherding (the horror!), so tread carefully. If the players would rather spend their time twiddling their thumbs, let them.

Depending on the outcome of the previous chapter, the PCs may be looking for a place to hole up for a while to recover from their injuries, until they are ready to make the push for Kislev. Dwarfs in the party know with a Routine (+10) Common Knowledge (Dwarfs) Test the city is nearby, and it may offer the characters shelter for a time.

Other Adventures

At your option, this time can also serve as an excellent point to insert other adventures. Since the characters could pass through the Great Forest, they might head to Talabheim to restock their supplies. There, they could find themselves embroiled in the events described in *Terror in Talabheim,* squaring off against the hated Skaven in a desperate attempt to save the city and be cured of the plague, all in time to get back on the trail of the Crusade. But you should understand that the events in *Terror in Talabheim* occur over the span of a couple of months.

Other good adventures to slot in during the trip to Kislev could include *The Haunting Horror* or *Rough Night at the Three Feathers,* both of which can be found in *Plundered Vaults*. In particular, *Pretty Things,* found in the *Game Master's Pack,* is well-suited to serve as an interlude, since it takes place on the north bank of the River Stir, along the Stirland-Talabecland border. Since the PCs have to head this way to reach Kislev, why not give them something to do along the way?

Villages, Towns, and Communities

Along the way, the PCs are sure to pass through a number of tiny settlements. As they do, they can ask around to find out news of the Crusade. **Gossip Tests** begin at **Very Hard (–30)** but get one step easier for each week they draw closer to Kislev. Each degree of success grants one more rumour, beginning at the top and moving downwards. So, four weeks out of from Zhidovsk, the PCs make a **Gossip Test** and get the first rumour. A week later in another village, the PCs get two degrees of success, resulting in the second and the third rumour. This trend continues for each community through which the PCs travel.

"The Crusade? I ain't heard of no Crusade."

"Oh sure, the Crusade of the Child. I've heard of them. Troublesome lot I reckon, what with the Grand Theogonist calling for templars all over the Empire to stamp them out."

"Sure, I've heard of the Crusade of the Child. They were wiped out in Talabheim. Mutants and Beastmen I hear."

"I've heard of the Crusade of the Child. They were wiped out near Wolfenburg. The Grand Theogonist's men did the work. Killed them to the man."

"Nah, the Grand Theogonist had nothing to do with it. Oh, I'm sure old Volkmar would have loved to wipe 'em out, but he didn't. The way I heard it, they turned on each other, though I can't say why."

"They turned on each other 'cause the boy was killed."

"They turned on each other 'cause the boy ascended."

"They turned on each other 'cause the boy disappeared."

"Yeah, but he returned, he did. He took what was left… the faithful he called them… and headed for Kislev."

"I lost my son to that mob. He said he was heading for Kislev. Some place called the Crags of Shargun."

Armed with this information, a PC who succeeds on a **Challenging (–10) Common Knowledge (Kislev) Test** knows where the Crags lay. They are a line of low mountains that run east to west in the western corner of Kislev, not far from Troll Country. The best route is to follow the Erengrad River north towards its source in the mountains. Characters who don't have this skill or who fail the test have a chance of learning the location each time they enter a new community in Kislev by succeeding on a **Challenging (–10) Gossip Test**.

Drag this out as much as you like or speed through it to keep the action moving forward. Eventually, the PCs should learn the remnants of the Crusade headed into Kislev, toward the Crags of Shargun.

— Kislev —

North and east of the Empire lays the land of Kislev. It is a harsh country that forms the border between the Empire and the dreadful Chaos Wastes. For the most part, Kislev is famed for its chill climate; it endures the worst winters—rivalling the terrifying cold of Norsca—and yet, in spite of this, life persists. Kislev is rude, mostly uncivilised, and its people are as welcoming as the weather.

Much of Kislev's land is rolling hills and empty steppes marching up to the foothills of the Worlds Edge Mountains. These lands are crisscrossed with rivers that drain the mountains in the warmer seasons and form icy ribbons across the lands during the rest of the year. The few forests that exist lie scattered in small stands of firs and pines. The rest of the land is generally empty plains.

It might seem wild and empty of civilisation—perhaps resembling what the Empire looked like before humanity crossed through the Black Fire Pass; indeed, most of Kislev is unspoilt by Human hands, standing much as it did centuries ago, but there are pockets of people who cluster together to stand fast against the horrors that sometimes spill out of Troll Country or from farther north. Yet Kislev is not without its cities. Above the *stanitsas* (towns) stand three massive centres: Kislev, Praag, and the port city of Erengrad. Each rivals the size and splendour of any of the city-states of the Empire yet retains the character of Kislev's idiosyncratic cultural identity.

To outsiders, Kislev is one land with one people, but in truth, it is a nation that has descended from several tribes, each with their own customs, values, and outlooks. Kislev's history is one of conquerors and conquest, of tribal wars punctuated with terrifying Chaos Incursions as the thralls of the Ruinous Powers tumble out of the north to wage war on those of the south. Kislev is made up of two peoples, though the remnants of other long-lost tribes still survive amidst their conquerors.

The north is largely held by the Ungol tribes. A semi-nomadic people, they share much in common with the barbarous tribes of the Eastern Steppe, and the cultural resemblance between them and the Kurgan are quite pronounced, leading many to question their loyalties. In spite of this, the Ungols are a free people; they have little use for the pomp and majesty of their southern cousins, though should their lands fall under the pall of doom, the Ungols do stand alongside their countrymen.

The south—the more civilised regions of Kislev—is held by the Gospodars. They claimed their lands from the Ungols, who in turn scattered the Ropsmenn—an ancient tribe—during their flight north. The Gospodars erected the great city of Kislev, for which the land is named, and tempered the wilderness. In the years that followed, Kislev has made great strides in bringing the nation forward in terms of technology and culture, cementing pacts of peace and an alliance with the Empire. Whilst it is a young nation, at least when compared to the Empire, it is one that is fast growing in importance and influence in the Old World.

Kislev is described in detail in *Realm of the Ice Queen*.

Travelling through Kislev

Once the PCs cross the border and enter Kislev, little should distinguish it from Ostermark, except for a deep, bone-numbing cold blowing from

the north—even in the summer, the wind blows cold. The landscape is speckled with a few stands of trees, and tenacious snow still clings to the grass in clumps. There aren't really any roads, just hunting trails and the occasional rutted path that has witnessed countless carts and wagons making their way in and out of the countryside.

The characters ought to know the boy was headed towards the Northern Oblast, and they may have learned that he was heading specifically for the Crags of Shargun, but getting there is no easy task. The journey requires travelling through virtually empty plains, until they come upon the Erengrad River. From there, they should follow the river east and then north, until they come to its source. Characters succeeding on **Common Knowledge (Kislev) Tests** have a good idea where this location is, and for each degree of success, they grant other characters a +10 to **Navigation Tests** to avoid getting lost (maximum +30).

It is a rather direct route to reach the Crags of Shargun, but it is anything but easy. Along the way, the PCs come across others who walk the same road.

— Left Behind —

The Crusade has not trod lightly on the earth. In their wake are all manner of broken lives, shattered communities, and general destruction. Of course, such a passage comes nowhere close to that wrought by the recent Chaos Incursion, but the damage is still there, and it will take resources, time, and considerable expenditures of gold to restore the lives of the people affected. As the characters cross the path of Karl's following, emphasise the impact of the Crusade's passage. Fields are stripped bare, and homesteads ransacked and burned. The spread of disease and the ever-present problems of mutation seem more pronounced along the path.

In addition to the troubles caused by the mob, the witch hunters have been active as well. The characters spot hanged corpses swinging from branches, charred stakes with blackened corpses fused to the wood, and the presence of dark, brooding figures that watch passers-by with eyes narrowed with suspicion.

After Karl left the Crusade in the village of Zhidovsk, the effects of his aura waned, and many of the people he left behind grew frustrated and worried. Some left to seek their fortunes elsewhere, looking for a new life in a hostile world. In this short scenario, the PCs become involved with a group of ex-Crusaders. The band of ex-Crusaders flees from a witch hunter, Phineas Vanderhoff (see **Witch Hunter** page 190) who believes one of them is a Mutant, and he intends to cleanse them all with fire. The band, suspicious of their companion, flees all the same, since they realise if captured, they are doomed. The runaways had made it as far as Ostermark but now head back into Kislev to seek protection from the remnants of the mob and hopefully reunite with Karl.

You can run this scenario in one of two ways. In the first, the PCs come across the runaways. The characters must decide whether they will help the men make their way north or turn them into the witch hunter that follows. In the second, the witch hunter finds the PCs and press-gangs them into helping him track down the Mutants in Sigmar's good name.

Runaways

The ragtag band of runaways were, up until recently, members of the Crusade. Each came to Karl at different times, but their general unsavoury nature and low character made them natural allies. At Zhidovsk, after Karl left and the effects of his charm waned, the men were freed from the compulsion and realised they were rather far from home. Not wanting to be caught with the rest of the disintegrating mob, they left the encampment and struck out for Talabheim, where they believed they could vanish into the city. Unfortunately for them, they were woefully unprepared and quickly became turned around, wandering across the steppe, evading Beastmen, bandits, and worse in their flight.

Originally, there were six of them, but now there are just four. One tripped and fell whilst the group fled from a pack of wolves—his screams still haunt their dreams. The other caught a dreadful disease from a woman of low character, and he was left behind as the stink grew too foul to stomach. Now, it seems they are to lose one more. Ham has been acting strangely as of late.

All four dress in grossly stained brown robes. Most attract flies, and whenever they stand still for more than a moment, insects burrow into their clothing to feast on the filth of their unwashed bodies. Most of the vermin hang around Ham, who doesn't seem to notice or care.

Frank

Human Thief, ex-Protagonist

"'ello guv'nuh, spare a clank?"

The leader of this motley band is Frank. He's a big man with a bristling black beard and the eyes of a madman. He has thick arms and legs and a big, barrel chest. He has squinty piggish eyes and a bad lisp.

Insanity Points: 3

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
48	23	48 (4)	37 (3)	44	39	41	37

Skills: Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int), Concealment (Ag), Dodge Blow (Ag), Gossip (Fel), Haggle (Fel), Intimidate (S), Perception (Int), Ride (Ag), Search (Int), Secret Signs (Thief) (Int), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int)
Talents: Hardy, Menacing, Quick Draw, Street Fighting, Streetwise, Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure, Strike to Stun, Suave

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 15
Weapons: Hand Weapon (Cudgel) (1d10+4; CV+1)

Trappings

Frank wears filthy brown robes and carries a damp mouldy sack that once held his food. A leather packet holds a set of lock picks that he keeps tucked away in a sleeve.

Rolf and Wensley

Human Servants

"Hee hee hee" and "…"

Rolf is tall and thin and has slender fingers and a long nose. He has large, watery eyes and chuckles when nervous.

Wensley was a corpulent man, but he left behind his fat after a few weeks of running. His skin hangs in loose folds over an almost skeletal frame. He lips are chapped and blistered. He doesn't talk—his tongue was torn from his mouth—and he has never explained why, not that he could anyway.

Insanity Points: 4

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
33	34	32 (3)	36 (3)	52	26	29	29

Skills: Blather (Fel), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int), Dodge Blow (Ag), Evaluate (Int), Gossip (Fel +10), Perception (Int), Search (Int), Sleight of Hand (Ag), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int), Trade (Cook) (Int)
Talents: Excellent Vision, Flee!, Hardy, Lightning Reflexes, Very Resilient

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 15
Weapons: Dagger (1d10)

Trappings

Both men wear soiled brown robes. Wendell has a blue leather belt cinched around his waist. Lice infest their hair.

Ham

Mutant Scribe

"What are you looking at?"

Ham is the strangest of the group. Two days ago, he began acting oddly. He woke up in the middle of the night shouting and looking at himself under the light of the moon. When his companions came close to see what was the matter, Ham screamed at them and told them to "bugger off!" The group left him alone, but they've grown worried as his behaviour has become more and more erratic. Frank suspects old Ham has picked up a change, but he hasn't voiced his concerns yet. Ham's a tough warrior, and losing him because of a minor corruption might mean the group's end. Should Ham start acting really strange, Frank has resolved to kill him. Ham is a gaunt fellow with nervous eyes and a sagging mouth. He whimpers a lot.

Insanity Points: 4

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
35	26	25 (2)	27 (2)	31	39	34	38

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Theology) (Int), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int +10), Concealment (Ag), Perception (Int), Read/Write (Int), Secret Language (Guild Tongue) (Int), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int +10), Speak Language (Breton, Classical) (Int), Trade (Calligrapher) (Ag)
Talents: Flee!, Linguistics
Traits: Mutations

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 14
Weapons: Hand Weapon (Rusty Axe) (1d10+2)

Trappings

Ham wears vile brown robes spotted with disturbing green filth. He smells terrible, and those who follow him see maggots falling out from beneath his robes.

Mutations

Ham suffers from two mutations. The first is a weeping sphincter growing right above his navel. This mutation reeks of death and attracts flies. A daring individual that thinks to inspect this strange new orifice discovers a nest of rather angry maggots that claimed the ripened site as their new home.

The second mutation is Madness (see *Tome of Corruption* page 43). Ham picked up a few extra Insanity Points along the way. As a side effect of his growing delusions, he believes he, and he alone, is the only being in the world free of corruption, which he claims is because he has this special accessory on his stomach. He suspects his fellows aim to steal his treasured organ.

Encountering the Runaways

Encountering this group first could go a couple of different ways. Wounded, poorly equipped, or simply ragged adventurers look like easy pickings to the runaways. Frank holds up one hand in greeting while gripping his cudgel in the other. He explains, "*We're just a band of poor pilgrims who have lost our way. Spare a few clanks?"* The others hang back a yard or two to see what happens. When the first character draws close, say within two or three yards, Frank charges forward, intent on beating the PC to death and taking his food. Rolf and Wensley come forward to support their leader. Ham, on the other hand, may help his comrades, may stand dumbly, flee into the woods, or attack his own comrades. There's an equal chance of each occurring.

Everything changes if the PCs look the slightest bit competent. Frank thinks they are Vanderhoff's men, and he drops to his knees sobbing. Again, the rest hang back, big tears welling from their eyes. Ham digs in his nose. Frank pleads for mercy, "*We're innocent I tell you. We had nothing to do with that farmer's daughter. I swear on Sigmar's great sausage."* The PCs may be suspicious, but if they reveal that they aren't looking for bandits, them, or anyone else like them for that matter, Frank dries his tears and begs them for help, saying, "*Friends, there's a bad man after us. A bounty hunter, they sez, but I tells ya, he killed a girl back there. He's in league with the…"* he drops to a whisper, "*…them Dark 'Uns!"* Frank asks the PCs to escort them to the Crusade and protect them from the cruel sword of the villainous blackguard on their heels.

Allowing these men to accompany the PCs is dangerous. Not only are they unsavoury characters who will betray and murder the PCs at the first opportunity, but they also stand a good chance of recognising the PCs from their time spent with Karl, way back from their stint in Altdorf. Each day of the trip (which can last as long as you like), Frank gets to make a **Hard (–20) Intelligence Test**. If he succeeds, he recognises them and tucks the information away for later.

To make matters worse, Ham becomes more and more unstable. The flies grow worse around him, and the stench becomes unbearable. Frank confides he thinks something is wrong with his friend and is open to any course of action that will rid the group of this Mutant's presence. Of course, Ham suspects treachery, and each night there's a 20% chance for the Mutant to rise up in the night and attack whoever is on watch.

The travels with this group are rather uneventful, and after a few days, the group reaches the Erengrad River. From here, it's about a week's brisk walk to reach the Crags of Shargun, where the PCs will presumably catch up with the mob. After 1d5 days of this enjoyable journey, Vanderhoff and his cronies catch up with the band. If the PCs are still with them, proceed to **Confrontation** on page 192.

They Killed my Mutant!

After a few days of enduring Ham's stench, flies, and surly manner, the PCs are bound to get suspicious. Such a wretch has to be tainted! Do-gooders might think it's their responsibility to confront the Mutant, and if they do, he fights back. The characters probably make short work of Ham. Frank knows this and hangs back with his allies. Once the characters slay the corrupted one, Frank thanks them for saving him and his "boys." He explains, "*Ham—he held us prisoner. He told us if we said or did anything about his unfortunate condition, he'd steal our eyes! We're in yer debt. If'n you don't mind, we'd like to travel with yeh a bit further."*

There's plenty of reasons for the PCs to kick these men into the river and wash their hands of the bunch, but Frank plays up the desperate vagabond role, begging and pleading the mighty PCs for help. If the characters refuse, he nods, and he and the others head off on their own way. Unsurprisingly, Vanderhoff catches up with the trio. Desperate, Frank claims the PCs are all Mutants, cultists, and heretics of the worst sort. He supplies the witch hunter with their descriptions and offers to lead the man to the PCs. He does all of this once his companions have been strung up. So, when Vanderhoff finds the PCs, not only is he in the company of his brute squad, he has a shrill Frank with him, who hops and points at the characters, condemning them to the pyres.

That'll teach them…

The Witch Hunter

Hot on the runaways' heels is a witch hunter named Phineas Vanderhoff. He believes the men are responsible for a rash of assaults and murders in an Empire town (pick one or make one up). Based on the reports of the locals—of which some were acquired by force—Phineas is certain the entire quartet is denigrating into Mutants. The witch hunter keeps the company of four brutes to do much of his dirty work.

Phineas Vanderhoff

Male Human Witch Hunter, ex-Vampire Hunter, ex-Bounty Hunter

"Surrender and thy death shall be quick. Fight and slow death by fire awaits!"

Phineas is something of a freelancer. Not affiliated with the Cult of Sigmar, he began his private campaign about ten years ago, making his living capturing runaway criminals. Since many criminals were cultists of the Dark Gods, perverse wizards, and the usual sorts of scum choking the honourable cities of the Empire, he broadened his interests to deal with necromancers and similar creatures. He did a short stint as a Vampire hunter but abandoned that path to deal with real enemies. Although he doesn't work for a cult, per se, he has joined forces with the templars in the past and enjoys a great deal of latitude in his work, and he often claims to be a templar to frighten his quarry.

Standing just over six feet tall, Phineas dresses in dull black full plate embossed with painted symbols of Sigmar, Verena, and Myrmidia. His helmet is wrought to appear like a grinning, horned skull. To finish off his imposing appearance, he wears a black cloak lined with red Cathayan silk—an item taken from the last Vampire he killed.

Insanity Points: 5

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
62	56	47 (4)	57 (5)	47 (57)	55	55	36

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Magic, Necromancy, Theology) (Int), Charm (Fel), Command (Fel), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int +10), Concealment (Ag), Dodge Blow (Ag), Follow Trail (Int +10), Gossip (Fel +10), Intimidate (S +10), Outdoor Survival (Int), Perception (Int +20), Ride (Ag), Scale Sheer Surface (S), Search (Int +10), Shadowing (Ag), Silent Move (Ag +10), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int +10), Speak Language (Classical) (Int)

Talent: Acute Hearing, Lightning Parry, Lightning Reflexes, Marksman, Rapid Reload, Rover, Specialist Weapon Group (Crossbow, Entangling), Stout-hearted, Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure, Tunnel Rat, Very Resilient

Combat

Attacks: 3; **Fate Points:** 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 18

Armour (Heavy): Full Plate (Head 5, Arms 5, Body 5, Legs 5)

Weapons: Superior Hand Weapon (Sword) (WS 72; 1d10+5; CV+1), Crossbow Pistol with 10 Bolts (1d10+2; Range 8/16; Reload Half), Net (—; Range 4/8; Reload Half; Snare), 4 Throwing Knives (1d10+1; Range 6/12; Reload Free)

Trappings

The witch hunter rides a big black destrier armoured in plate barding. The steed is also equipped with a saddle, harness, and a couple of saddle bags that hold extra feed, rations, and wineskins. Ten yards of rope hang from the saddle horn, and sheathes for stakes hang from various straps and ropes. Vanderhoff has two sets of manacles hanging from his weapon belt, along with a phial of blessed water.

Brute Squad

Male Human Bodyguards, ex-Jailers

"Did I do good boss?"

These four brutes are hired muscle and nothing more. The witch hunter doesn't even know their names, nor does he care to, since to him they are disposable. The men are all uniformly ugly, dirty, and smell of sour milk. The only difference between them is the sound of their grunts and the stains on their mismatched clothing.

Insanity Points: 1

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
46	28	47 (4)	42 (4)	39	29	32	26

Skills: Command (Fel), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int), Consume Alcohol (T), Dodge Blow (Ag +10), Gossip (Fel), Heal (Int), Intimidate (S +10), Perception (Int), Search (Int), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int)

Talents: Fleet-footed, Lightning Reflexes, Quick Draw, Resistance to Disease, Resistance to Poison, Specialist Weapon Group (Entangling), Strike to Stun, Very Strong, Wrestling

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 5; **Wounds:** 15

Armour (Light): Leather Jack (Arms 1, Body 1)

Weapons: Hand Weapon (Club) (1d10+4), Net (—; Range 4/8; Reload Full), Buckler (1d10; Defensive, Pummelling), Knuckle-dusters (1d10+1; Pummelling), 2 Throwing Axes (1d10+2; Range 8/—; Reload Half)

Trappings

The brutes wear dirty clothing spotted with suspicious stains. Most have uncomfortable itches. They carry sacks that contain jars of tar, a bottle of common wine, and a tankard for drinking.

Encountering the Witch Hunter

If the PCs encounter the witch hunter first, it happens a few days after Vanderhoff drove off a band of vile Beastmen. The combat left all of his minions dead or dying. Vanderhoff has no time to delay, so he left those who couldn't travel behind to fend for themselves. He blames this setback on the runaways, too, and is angrier than ever.

Before the PCs catch sight of him, they hear him. They automatically notice the sounds of heavy armour clanking and the laboured breathing of a steed. It takes a few moments for the rider to come into view. Allow the PCs to dive behind bushes, hide behind trees, or cast a spell. If they wish, they can ambush the witch hunter, though such an act may reward them with even more trouble. Once ready, Vanderhoff and his steed come into view. He rides a big black stallion. The horse has rents in its flanks from the Beastmen, and foam flecks its lips. Its eyes roll with fear and pain. Vanderhoff is big and grim, which his grinning, horned skull helm accentuates. Parchments and purity seals flutter from his black armour, and a fine-looking sword with a skull pommel hangs in a scabbard from the saddle.

If the PCs are hiding, have them make opposed **Concealment Tests** against Vanderhoff's **Perception Test**. Any characters that don't beat the witch hunter's test are picked out by his keen eyes. He shouts, "*Varlets, show thyselves! Know not that thou faceth an anointed templar of Sigmar?"* He whips out his keen blade and waves it at the PCs, whilst scrutinising their features to see if any match the description of his quarry. Obviously, they should not, so whilst off the hook, Vanderhoff is still suspicious.

The characters may appeal to the man, claiming they are honest men (Elves withstanding), who live in fear of Sigmar or some such nonsense. So long as they make an effort to show their allegiance to mighty Sigmar, Vanderhoff relaxes. If they betray any sign of corruption, Vanderhoff looses a deep sigh and tramples the feckless PCs.

Otherwise, Vanderhoff pauses, sheathes his sword, and raises his visor. "*Men of the Empire,"* he says, ignoring any women present, *"today is the day of thy destiny. It is by no chance meeting that our paths cross. Nay. It is has been ordained."* His eyes drift upwards, and his face hangs slack. A pregnant minute passes, his eyes clear, and he takes in the PCs as if for the first time. "*Yes, I see it now. You will do nicely. Come! Heretics are afoot!"* With that, he draws his sword once more, shouts "*For Sigmar! For the Empire!"* and rides off in the direction of the runaways.

The PCs may follow, shrug, keep going in whatever direction they were headed, or sit down on the ground and scratch their heads for a bit. Give them a few minutes to bicker, debate, follow, or dig in their noses. When ready, have them make **Easy (+20) Perception Tests**. Those who succeed hear the sounds of combat coming from ahead—if in a forest, the fight takes place in a clearing out of view; if on a plain, it happens in a gulch that conceals the combatants. Should the PCs go to see what's happening, proceed with **Confrontation**.

Confrontation

When Vanderhoff and the runaways meet, all hell breaks loose. Convinced these fugitives are Mutants and criminals, Vanderhoff intends to bring them to justice. If they resist, he is happy to fill the role of judge, jury, and executioner. How the PCs figure into this depends on who they met first. If they face Vanderhoff whilst in the company of the runaways, then the witch hunter and his brute squad make no distinction between the adventurers and the refugees. On the other hand, if the PCs are with the witch hunter, Vanderhoff expects them to aid him in corralling the band.

In either case, Ham has no intention of cooking on the witch hunter's spit. Insane, he looses a horrible scream from the sphincter in his belly and charges the mounted warrior. This display is all it takes for Vanderhoff to hack at the man with his sword. While the warrior and the Mutant fight, Frank and his shrinking allies use this as their chance to slip away. Without pausing to say goodbye, all three dart off in different directions.

If the PCs are with the Runaways

Ham's attack and the refugees' flight leave the PCs to face the witch hunter and his brute squad. Good sense should tell the PCs to flee since they probably don't need to be associated with Chaos, and tangling with these foes will only slow them down. The PCs are likely to take one of three courses of action.

Should the PCs flee as a group, the brute squad pursues, flinging nets to slow them down. The brutes follow for 1d10 rounds before they give up. Vanderhoff defeats Ham after 1d5 rounds and sets off after the refugees. He eventually catches up with Frank, interrogates him, and if Frank successfully identified the PCs as those who were once in the company of the Crusade, he begs for his life, promising that he can lead the witch hunter to true champions of Chaos. Frank offers to lead Vanderhoff to the characters' destination, so he can bring them to justice, too. Thus, Vanderhoff and Frank reappear in Zhidovsk. In any event, once the characters get away or defeat the pursuing brutes, proceed with **Black Ice** under **Where the Wild Things Live** (see page 193).

Or, the PCs might take a cue from the refugees and split up, each member going in a separate direction. If so, the brute squad splits up to follow each PC. Again, the brutes follow for 1d10 rounds before they give up and head back to Vanderhoff. The witch hunter defeats Ham easily and then sets out to follow the refugees. Roll 1d10. On an odd number, he follows Frank, and on an even number, he follows one of the PCs. If he follows Frank, the outcome is the same as in the previous scenario. If he follows one of the PCs, he is relentless and is eventually joined by the surviving members of the brute squad. The witch hunter dogs the character's steps until he finally catches up with him. A character can conceal his trail by making a **Challenging (–10) Follow Trail Test** or a **Hard (–20) Outdoor Survival Test**. Should the character succeed, the witch hunter loses the trail and wanders around the area until he catches up with the PCs at Zhidovsk. Any PC not followed by the witch hunter should have one of the three encounters described under **Where the Wild Things Live** (see page 193).

Finally, the characters could just make a stand here and take on Vanderhoff. While a laudable effort, Phineas is no green warrior, and he is more than a match for most folks. Resolve this as a standard combat. Should two or more brutes fall, the rest flee. Phineas, however, fights to the death. Once the combat is finished, proceed with **Black Ice** under **Where the Wild Things Live** (see page 193).

If the PCs are with the Witch Hunter

If the characters are with the Vanderhoff, they *are* the brute squad, and it falls to them to deal with the refugees. Since Frank and company, sans Ham, split, then the characters may help Vanderhoff deal with the Mutant or they may pursue the fleeing men.

Should the characters stick around, they defeat Ham rather easily. Having dealt with the Mutant, Vanderhoff orders the PCs to follow the runaways, while he builds a pyre. Characters splitting up should have one encounter under **Where the Wild Things Live** (see below) while they follow their quarry. Tracking the refugees requires a **Follow Trail Test**. Rolf and Wensley immediately surrender if the characters catch them. Frank, however, tries to bargain.

Frank pleads with the characters, offering to take them to where Karl is—Zhidovsk. In this scenario, Frank actually knows where Karl is (maybe through a dream, or he may have even helped the boy for a time). Should the PCs agree, Frank leads the characters to Zhidovsk but not before the characters have an ominous meeting with **Black Ice** (see following entry). Vanderhoff eventually picks up the PCs' trail and confronts them and Frank in the village at the adventure's conclusion.

Characters taking the initiative to follow the refugees may split up or follow just one. Whilst scouring the countryside, each PC or group of PCs should have one encounter from those described under **Where the Wild Things Live**. Characters can track their prey in the same way by making a **Follow Trail Test**, and if they encounter Frank, he bargains as described in the preceding paragraph.

Where the Wild Things Live

The Kislev wilderness holds many strange things—secrets best left hidden and horrors that defy description. Characters prowling the wilderness may stumble upon one or more of these unusual inhabitants, but those going it alone—pursuing a fleeing refugee or fleeing from the witch hunter—are bound to find some strangeness.

Black Ice

Whether alone or in a group, before the PCs make it to Zhidovsk, they must encounter Black Ice. An ominous beast with a sinister reputation, Black Ice is a massive black dog with bright, fiery green eyes. The beast lurks in the wilds around Zhidovsk, where he stalks the marches of the Crags of Shargun. Locals believe this beast is a doom dog, and to lay eyes upon it portends the mortal will soon die horribly. While it is true that many who do see Black Ice find a horrible end, in truth, the reason is because he is so terrifying to behold that many panic and do something foolhardy in a mad effort to get away.

Black Ice is a supernatural creature, but it is no servant of Morr (or any other aspect of death for that matter). Instead, this beast serves the foul Black Witch of the Crags, who sends out her minion as her herald, signifying the time when Zhidovsk must give one of their daughters as a sacrifice. It is not that time, however, so Black Ice's appearance in these lands serves another purpose.

The Black Witch, who is close to getting Karl, wants to keep her captive, and as the other villainous agencies converge on the Zhidovsk, she believes the adventurers are her best chance at disrupting the Chaos sorcerer who would use the boy for his own nefarious ends. Thus, she dispatched the monster to lead the characters to the village in the hopes that they would manage to destroy the gathered hosts and give the Black Witch the time she needs to complete her ritual.

At some point, while one or more characters are prowling through the empty stretches, they hear a forlorn howl echo across the steppe. It seems to reverberate all around them, coming from all directions and none. A few minutes later, Black Ice appears.

A bank of frigid fog rolls across the ground, moving with alarming speed. Coils of vapour twist and writhe, blanketing the sun and making it appear as a pale silver disc in the sky. The temperature drops, and each exhalation adds to the thickening mist. And then you see it. There. A black cloud takes shape, and in the centre of its mass, two green fires burn with unholy light. It steps forward, revealing the nature of its awful form: a dog, more massive than any you have ever seen. It has a long shaggy black coat, matted with filthy ice. A massive maw filled with inwardly pointing teeth dominates the hound's wedge-like head. It snarls, fixing you with its fiery gaze.

All characters must immediately make **Terror Tests**. Black Ice regards the remaining PCs with a baleful stare and then turns away, heading back into the mists. It moves at a fair pace, fast enough for the PCs to work to keep up but not so fast they fall too far behind. If the characters lag, the hound sits and waits until they catch back up. This routine continues for several days, until the characters come upon Zhidovsk and the Crags looming beyond. Its mission complete, Black Ice races off into the mists at full speed, likely far outstripping the PCs. If a character has the means to keep up with the monster, it leads the character on a merry chase, until it eventually comes upon the black waters at the edge of the witch's lair. It looks at the character one final time and then dives into the pool. See **Chapter IX: Womb of the Black Witch** on page 216 for details on this adventure site.

PCs may be tempted to attack the beast, and if so, its statistics follow. The monster is not spoiling for a fight, but it defends itself if attacked. Every time a character hits the beast, it snaps back. Should the PCs pause at any point, Black Ice lopes off toward the north.

Black Ice

Black Ice is a massive hound of monstrous proportions and features. It has a shaggy, black coat and a large head dominated by its slavering maw. A pair of fiery green eyes stares out, sending a thrill of terror through all who behold them.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
51	0	43 (4)	46 (4)	42	22	38	15

Skills: Concealment (Ag +10), Dodge Blow (Ag +10), Follow Trail (Int), Perception (Int +20), Silent Move (Ag), Swim (S)
Talents: Flee!, Strike to Injure
Traits: Fearless, Frigid Breath, Keen Senses, Natural Weapons, Night Vision, Terrifying, Thick Hide

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 8; **Wounds:** 17
Armour: None (Head 1, Forelegs 1, Body 1, Hind Legs 1)
Weapons: Bite (1d10+4; CV+1)

Frigid Breath

Once every 4 rounds, Black Ice may loose a cone of frost as a full action. Use the cone template. All creatures under the cone take 1d10+4 damage that ignores armour points.

Thick Hide

The dense fur and frozen patches confer 1 armour point to all of Black Ice's hit locations.

The Shack of Shabrak

Much of Kislev's countryside consists of empty stretches of rolling plains dotted with a few stands of trees, weird rock formations, and the skeletal remains of those who become lost in the unforgiving wilds. Although one can see for miles, it is a place to get away from the judgmental eyes of the witch hunters, oppressive laws, and the expectations of society. Thus, scattered throughout some of the most desolate places are isolated communities, pockets of near-civilisation hosting forgotten people who would prefer to remain so. Most of these places consist of one or two families, but in the remotest places, they may only house one person. Such is the case of Shabrak the Witch.

Shabrak was not always a witch, and in fact, she was one of the most beautiful women of Zhidovsk. Like many young women, she had dreams of wedding a mighty Winged Lancer and escaping the drudgery of her tiny community. While she had many suitors in her village, she rebuffed them all because she knew one day, her champion would sweep her off her feet. But that day never came. Instead, Shabrak was selected as one of the village's sacrifices made every decade to appease the Black Witch.

The young woman knew her duty, though the loss of her life and dreams burned within her. She railed against her bad fortune and desperately sought some way to escape her fate. Before she could devise a plan, the men came for her, clapping her into manacles and fitting a blindfold over her face. She was helped onto a horse and led many miles up into the Crags. Shabrak had little concept of time, and the trip filled her mind with fear and hatred. Unbeknownst to her guides, she worked to free her hands from the irons that bound her, though it tore her flesh to do so. She then slipped her blindfold up and spied her surroundings.

She and her companions travelled through a forlorn region blanketed in dead trees with bark so white they seemed made of bone. The ground was soft and slippery with foul smelling mud, despite the wintry season. The Crags loomed above her. As she cast about for some way to escape, heavy snow flakes fell from the swollen clouds above, whilst a gale whipped them into their faces. Sensing this was a sign from the Gods, Shabrak slipped from her horse and fled, running as hard and as fast as she could. She heard the shouts from her escort, but by the time they dismounted—the ground was far too treacherous for fast riding—Shabrak was gone.

For the next forty years, Shabrak has somehow survived in the wilderness. Living off grubs and whatever berries and plants she could gather. She has become a wild creature, more feral beast than Human. During her exile, she claimed a strange old hut she came across in her travels. Perhaps the greatest thing she learned in her time alone was magic. Without formal training, she has dabbled in a variety of minor magical tricks, mostly to survive the harsh seasons. But what she never realized is that the magical energies were dangerous, and the effects of her experimentation have driven her mad and contaminated the lands around her hut. Her madness deepens, and she has begun to dream an imaginary Winged Lancer is coming to carry her away and shelter her from the various horrors she's endured. In her delusions, she has come to prey upon the lost and weary, luring them back to her filthy hut, where she keeps them in her thrall forever.

Encountering Shabrak

Shabrak only targets one or two characters at a time, so if the entire party is wandering the rolling countryside, then she may allow them to pass unmolested. If, however, the characters are lost or haven't learned of the Black Witch or Karl's location, she approaches.

A chill wind blows across the grasses, carrying the promise of ice and snow across the land. Moments later, you think you see a distant figure picking its way through the fields.

Characters that succeed on **Hard (–20) Perception Tests** can tell the figure appears feminine, based on the swaying of her hips. Her body language suggests that she's looking for something in the grass. Shabrak, the figure, is about 200 yards away, so it takes a bit to reach her. As the PCs draw closer, read on.

As you draw closer to the woman, you see that she's young, her long brown hair held back with a leather cord. Her dress is black, as if she were in mourning. She has a fine figure, regal features, but her eyes seem old. She carries a short, black walking stick, as she moves through the tall grass. As she turns to look upon you, you feel a queer sensation welling up inside of you.

Pick one character, Human and attractive and male. If there are no attractive Human males, she picks one at random. If there are no Human males, she nods curtly and wanders off without a word. Those who pursue her are led to her shack (see following). Otherwise, the character you select must succeed on a **Challenging (–10) Willpower Test**. A success means nothing more than a strange feeling, but a failure indicates the character is filled with romantic inclinations and feels a strong need to protect the woman. Convey this information to the player in secret.

Shabrak smiles at the characters, revealing a mouthful of black teeth and a bluish tongue. She invites the characters to join her for a meal and shelter, exclaiming that bad weather threatens from the north. Characters who agree are in for a short walk, and as they travel, the ground slopes downward, becoming a soggy morass of dead grass and mud. As well, Shabrak undergoes a slight transformation that may not be noticeable at first. As she moves,

Isolated PCs

Characters that encounter Shabrak alone are in trouble. Once they succumb to her charms, they cannot leave her side unless convinced by other characters. Don't worry too much. If the rest of the party reaches Zhidovsk without the lost character, Shabrak dispatches her love to help them defeat the Black Witch. At the end of **Chapter IX**, the character then returns to Shabrak to live out his days as her plaything. The rest of the party may object to this, but such outcomes are the subjects of future adventures.

her sleek black hair changes, one strand at a time, to an almost translucent bone white. As it does, her flesh wrinkles, her skin bubbles with unsightly moles and liver spots, and she begins to smell a bit like excrement. This transformation does not put off the character affected by her dweomer, but undoubtedly, other characters may begin to have second thoughts. Should the PCs want to leave, Shabrak lets them, but enchanted characters may be hesitant to leave her, "*Such a woman as she should not be left alone in this dangerous land!*" In fact, the only way for such a character to leave the witch is if his allies succeed on a **Challenging (–10) Charm** or **Intimidate Test**. If they succeed, Shabrak is disappointed but lets him go.

If the characters press on in the witch's company, about an hour later, they round a hill and come upon a small shack mounted on four poles. It's slanted, threatening to collapse at the slightest touch. Its roof is little more than a bundle of marsh reeds and grasses held together by cord made from sinew. Bones litter the ground, and a large Ogre's skull hangs over the door. To reach the hut, the PCs need to climb a rude ladder onto what passes for a porch. Shabrak climbs up with no trouble, and at the top, she pauses to beckon the PCs forward before she disappears into the cavernous maw that serves as the shack's door. PCs entering see the following.

> *What lies within the hut is impossible. It is a veritable palace, extending far beyond the limits of the exterior walls. The floors throughout are polished hardwoods, shining with a lustrous colour. Tapestries hang from the walls, whilst iron braziers issue sweet-smelling smoke and fill the air with a haze. Cushions lay scattered across the floor, and near each is a small table laden with platters of flesh, bread, and fruits. Decanters of amber-coloured wine bead with moisture.*

By now, the characters are likely worried they may have stepped into something wicked, something of Chaos. In a sense, they are correct, though Shabrak does not consider herself a servant of the Ruinous Powers. In addition, the characters may suspect everything they see and touch as being false. They are correct again, and a **Hard (–20) Intelligence Test** sees through the illusion to reveal the squalid contents of the hut. The cushions are the rotting remains of the witch's past victims. The food on the tables consists of clay jugs filled with muddy water, and trenchers are covered in writhing grubs with sucking maws. Assuming the characters retain their manners, Shabrak takes no action against them but flirts heavily with the charmed PC, running her leprous fingers through his hair and leaving brown stains on his face from her moist kisses.

While she has un-charmed guests, she queries them about their purpose in these lands, their adventures, and descriptions of the places they have seen. Likewise, she responds to questions. Examples of possible questions and answers follow.

Have you seen a young man pass through this area? Yes, I did. He was in the company of a mob, an unruly pack of fanatics, vagabonds, and scum. Strangely, a few days later, I spied a caravan of Strigany pass through this territory. They had a melancholy air and a sinister nature about them, so I let them pass.

We saw this terrifying dog. Do you know what it is? That's Black Ice. He means no harm, though he serves a dreadful mistress.

Oh? Who is this mistress? The Black Witch.

Who are you? I am Shabrak. I know I don't look it, but in truth I am a hermit, content to live among the natural things in the world. Can you believe that some call me a hag?

What is this place? Why, my home, silly. I found it ages ago and decided to live here until its rightful owner returned. So far, she hasn't.

Where did you get all of this food, this wine? From other travellers who have supped at my table and accepted my hospitality. They repaid me for this shelter with stores from their own larders.

How did you come to be here? I left my village when I was a young girl. My father refused to let me be with my true love and sought to wed me to some horror of the mountains to spare his wretched life. I fled and found my way here, where I have waited all these years for my one true love to return. (If a charmed PC is here, she adds, *"And it seems I have found him."*)

Where is this village? A few days north by foot.

Its name? Zhidovsk.

This horror… what is it? The Black Witch, don't you know? She cursed my village long before I was born.

Where is this Black Witch? North of here, north of my old village. She rests in the shadows of the Crags.

What do you want from us? Why, nothing more than your company. You are free to go whenever you wish.

I've seen through your falsehoods! You are a servant of Chaos! I am not. I swear it. It's true I've spun a few spells to enhance the nature of my home but only to accent its better features.

I'm afraid you must burn, woman. I am sad you feel this way. Leave at once. I do not tolerate rudeness in my home.

Shabrak does not volunteer any information about her true nature or what she has done with her past guests or the fact she does not intend to release the charmed PC, though the affected character is free to leave if his companions convince him to go. The PCs may suspect Shabrak of being the Black Witch and may—especially if they have peered through the illusion that conceals the place—attack her. This path is foolish, since Shabrak is anything but weak. She responds with force against any who intend her harm, using her dreadful spells to drive the PCs from her home.

Shabrak

Mutant Witch, ex-Hedge Wizard, ex-Vagabond

"My, you are a pretty one."

Shabrak is hideous but hides her true appearance behind a façade that can enchant men. In her true form, she is of modest height but has rolls of flab beneath her filthy black robes. The flesh of her face hangs from her bones, and festering sores pock the exposed parts of her flesh. There's not a tooth in her head—indeed she wove an illusion to bestow a few incisors—and her eyes are cloudy, though she can see perfectly well. She has long, brittle, white hair that breaks when touched. Where these broken hairs fall, they dissolve into a queerly aromatic fluid that intoxicates as if it were the finest brandy. She smells distinctly of cheese.

Insanity Points: 5

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
33	36	35 (3)	41 (4)	43	40	47	49

Skills: Channelling (WP), Charm (Fel +10), Common Knowledge (Kislev) (Int +10), Concealment (Ag), Haggle (Int), Heal (Int), Intimidate (S), Magical Sense (WP), Navigation (Int), Outdoor Survival (Int), Perception (Int +10), Search (Int), Secret Language (Ranger Tongue) (Int), Secret Signs (Ranger) (Int), Silent Move (Ag +10), Speak Language (Kislevarin) (Int), Swim (S), Trade (Apothecary) (Int)
Talents: Dark Magic, Fleet-footed, Flee!, Hedge Magic, Orientation, Petty Magic (Hedge), Seasoned Traveller, Witchcraft (*bewilder, curse of thorns, doppelganger, lightning bolt*)
Traits: Intoxicating Odour, Mutations, Terrifying

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Fate Points:** 1; **Movement:** 5; **Wounds:** 14
Magic: 2; Dark Magic, Hedge Magic, Petty Magic (Hedge), *bewilder, curse of thorns, doppelganger, lightning bolt*
Weapons: Dagger (1d10)

Trappings

Shabrak wears rotting robes that do little to protect her from the harsh environment.

New Talent: Witchcraft

Description: You have managed to survive the perils of hedge wizardry and teach yourself more powerful techniques of magic use. You now have access to spells beyond Petty Magic, but since you must figure out each spell on your own, your progress is slower than that of a magister. Witchcraft allows you to learn any spell from an Arcane Lore with a Casting Number of 15 or less, but you must pay 200 XP for each one. You can cast these spells without having the Speak Arcane Language Skill. However, you must roll an extra d10 when casting one of these spells. This die does not add to your Casting Roll, but it does count for the purposes of Tzeentch's Curse. Once you learn an Arcane Language and an Arcane Lore, you no longer have to roll the extra die.

Chaos Mutations

Shabrak has three mutations. Beneath her foul robes is a pair of scaly ostrich legs that end in two clawed toes, increasing her Movement (included). She is also awful to behold, giving her the Terrifying Trait (included), which means the PCs must start making Terror Tests upon seeing through her illusions. Finally, poor Shabrak is afflicted with an unsightly rash that covers the exposed portions of the skin. These ugly red bumps love fresh air, so when she covers them, they pick up and scamper someplace else so they can see.

Intoxicating Odour

As a full action, Shabrak can target a single male Human within 6 yards, and he must pass a **Challenging (–10) Will Power Test**. Should the character fail, he becomes enamoured by her, breathing in deeply her foetid odour. He cannot attack her or harm her in anyway, though he won't risk his life for her either—such is the way of love in the Old World. He is inclined to remain close to her but can be convinced to leave her with a **Challenging (–10) Charm** or **Intimidate Test**. There's no limit to the number of males she can charm—the more the merrier.

Teeth of Dzedven

The stretches between the isolated villages may seem empty, but they are anything but. Scattered throughout the rolling fields are the bones of the lost and unwary, abandoned villages, and old war machines dating back to the Great War against Chaos or earlier. Strange creatures claim these barren expanses that drift out from the Troll Country or, worse, from the blighted Shadowlands of the Chaos Wastes. Perhaps the strangest presences in the oblast are the weird rock formations that jut from the frozen ground like teeth. Old and weathered, these stone circles are believed to be sources of great power, similar to the ones found in the Empire and beyond. What purpose they serve, what power can be wrested from these ancient monoliths, few can say. Those that know say nothing.

If the PCs enter the wilderness—such as by fleeing the witch hunter, Shabrak, or something worse—they may happen to come upon one of these strange sites. As they wander across the grasslands, they notice the otherwise flat horizon broken by tall dark objects that lean and twist, reaching for the blue sky above. Distances can be deceiving in Kislev, and here is no different. It takes 1d10 hours to reach the stones, and when the characters get to the halfway point, they realize the objects are enormous grey stones. If they press on, the details become clearer.

Fifteen huge monoliths stand between nine and thirty feet tall. Their rough texture has been cracked and worn by the wind. In the crannies, birds have made nests, and their leavings stain the sides of the great stones. They are arranged in seemingly no order but are situated in such a way that one cannot see through to the other side. The air is a bit colder here, and whenever the wind blows, it carries a faint stench of rot.

The source of the stink is from a Chaos Troll that claimed the site. Drawn by the magical currents thrumming through here, it lives off of the birds it snatches. Since these creatures provide meagre fare, it's hungry for anything that can fill its stomach. It only dimly realises this place is one of power, and those who call upon the Winds of Magic find their technique greatly enhanced. All casters in the area of the stones add +1 die to their Casting Rolls.

Chaos Troll

A Chaos Troll is a great and awful thing. Driven by its ravenous hunger, it consumes whatever it can grab, regardless of its suitability as fare. It has the general shape and proportions of a Human but is twisted and grotesque and riddled with mutations.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
37	22	62 (6)	41 (4)	30	27	30	22

Skills: Intimidate (S), Perception (Int), Scale Sheer Surfaces (S), Speak Language (Dark Tongue, Goblin Tongue) (Int)
Talents: Specialist Weapon Group (Two-handed)
Traits: Fearless, Frightening, Mutations (Emaciated Appearance, Fur), Natural Weapons (Claws), Night Vision, Regeneration, Stoopid, Vomit

Combat

Attacks: 4; **Movement:** 6; **Wounds:** 26
Weapons: Poor Quality Great Weapon (Stone Club) (WS 27; 1d10+6; Impact, Slow)

Mutations

This disgusting Chaos Troll has two mutations. It has an emaciated appearance, reducing its Strength and Toughness by –1d10 (included in profile). To complete its unusual appearance, its body is covered in patches of matted green fur.

Regeneration

At the start of each of its turns, a Chaos Troll regenerates 1d10 Wounds. Wounds caused by fire cannot be regenerated. The Chaos Troll loses this trait if he dies.

Stoopid

Chaos Trolls are incredibly stupid, and they often forget what they're doing. Any time a Chaos Troll encounters something that might distract it, such as a fresh corpse to eat or a particularly ripe smell to investigate, it must make an **Intelligence Test** or stop whatever it was doing to engage with the new distraction (in the above examples, eat the corpse or investigate the smell). If the Chaos Troll is being attacked, the test is **Easy (+20)**.

Vomit

A Chaos Troll can vomit on a melee opponent as a full action, spraying corrosive and ill-smelling digestive juices whose foulness defies description. The vomit attack automatically deals 5 damage that ignores armour points. This attack may be dodged but not parried.

What Next?

Once the characters defeat the Chaos Troll, there's not much here that's interesting. Aside from a few slippery piles of foul-smelling Troll dung and the now-abandoned nests in the clefts of the rocks, there's little else. Characters that succeed on **Search Tests** discover a trail meandering from the south to the north. A character can attempt an **Easy (+20) Intelligence Test** to figure out that the trail was made by a wagon. This conclusion is confirmed about 50 yards north by a pile of horse dung. Characters who succeed on a **Follow Trail Test** can deduce the excrement is no older than

a day. If the characters decide to follow the tracks, they eventually come upon the following **Travelling Folk** encounter.

Finally, characters that succeed on a **Routine (+10) Search Test** find evidence of several cooking fires about a mile away. An examination of the site uncovers mounds of excrement, a few bodies, a dead horse, and a blue leather belt. A **Very Easy (+30) Follow Trail Test** detects the route the Crusade followed on their way toward the Crags. Following these tracks does not require tests, and along the way, the PCs find several frozen corpses of old Crusaders, some of whom they might remember from their time with the mob.

Travelling Folk

Everything converges on Zhidovsk. For the Vampires, it is the culmination of their ancient prophecy. For Chaos, it is the possibility of acquiring a potent weapon. For the Crusade of the Child, it is to learn of Karl's true purpose, and for the Black Witch, it is the fulfilment of all of her plans. As the characters draw closer to their destination, they likely spot all sorts of oddities as the various forces seek out the missing boy. Strange otherworldly birds fly north despite the chill season. Black clouds pour across the sky, blotting out the sun and racing towards some inexplicable goal, while lines of darkly clad warriors shelter in its shadow. Great winged things, black carriages, tremors in the ground, and all manner of queer sights can be encountered as the characters draw closer to the boy. The phenomena occur at a distance, visible because of the openness of the terrain, but the PCs are bound to cross paths with someone or something.

Whether the characters follow the trail they picked up at the Teeth of Dzedven or if they simply head north, following the river, they eventually come across a wagon pulled by a pair of doughty horses. Driving the vehicle are two Strigany—the travelling folk that wander the roads in the eastern corners of the Empire. They are the mortal servants of Szevelk, a Strigoi Vampire, and her ghoulish maidens.

The wagon is brightly painted in clashing colours, blending pastel greens, pinks, and blues in an unsettling pattern. The wagon is completely enclosed with a small windowless door at the back, and it's equipped with folding steps. The horses are large, black steeds. The entire outfit is travel-stained, a fact that becomes apparent when the characters close within 30 yards. Mud covers the wagon and the draft horses. The riders wear heavy woollen cloaks and wide-brimmed hats worn low to conceal their features. Atop the wagon are piles of baggage, including bedrolls, a rain barrel, coils of rope, and other items useful to travellers.

If the characters call out to the drivers, one looks over at the PCs, while the other focuses on managing the steeds. The characters see a hard man with swarthy skin, a thick moustache, and black eyes. His severe face is a mess of wrinkles; he looks none too friendly. Still, he touches the brim of his hat with a finger and turns back to the path ahead. This warning is the only one the PCs get. Should the PCs draw closer and try to speak with the drivers, the two men are happy to indulge them, having nothing to fear since they are honoured by the Vampire's presence.

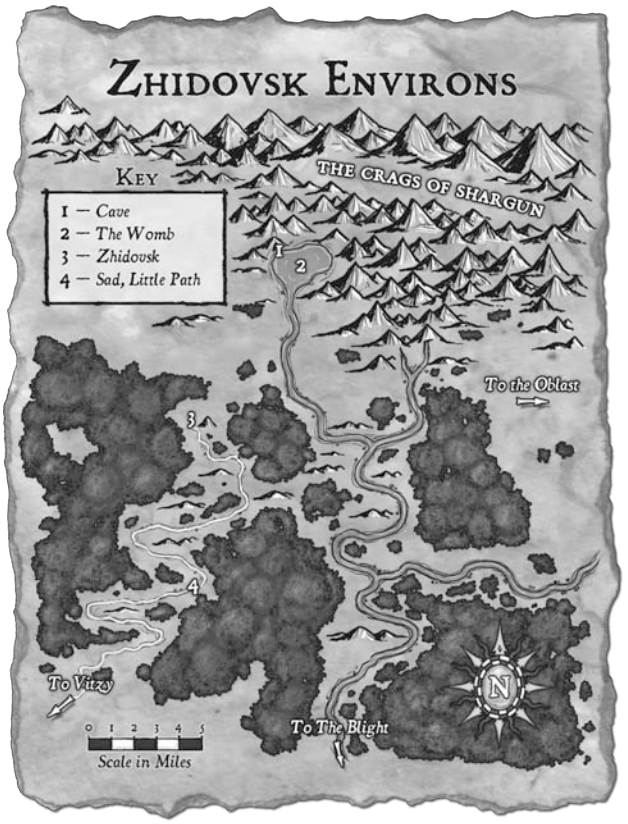
Chatting with the Drivers

Getting this close allows the characters to get a better look at the drivers. They could be twins. Beneath their cloaks, they have homespun shirts and breeches, and each wears a silver nail on a leather cord around their necks. They speak in Reikspiel heavily accented by their native tongue. Although they don't volunteer any information, they answer questions to the best of their ability. Some possible queries and appropriate answers follow.

Who are you? We Strigany. Travelling folk. I am Sven. This is Giorgi.

What are you doing in Kislev/Where are you headed? We are wanderers. We follow the currents of destiny. The trail led north, and so we follow.

What do you know about the Crags of Shargun? Little, though it's said they hold a great evil.



A great evil? Legend holds a Banshee haunts the peaks, emerging by night to drink the blood of the living.

Have you seen Karl? No.

Would you mind if we travel with you? By all means, you are welcome. Since we are heading in the same direction, it would be wise to gather strength, yes?

What's in the wagon? Why, our living quarters. Would you like to see?

Give us all your gold! Alas we have no gold. Thieve not from us, knaves. The Strigany are people not to be crossed.

Do you have anything for trade? The drivers have a few odds and ends they'll part with. They have 4 healing poultices, one luck charm, about 10 yards of rope, and 8 days of rations. The characters can buy these items outright, and if they have been pleasant and friendly, the Strigany sell these goods for half the list price. Otherwise, they sell the goods for 150% of the list price—a **Challenging (–10) Haggle Test** brings the price down to the normal list price. Characters can also trade goods. Use one-half of the item's list value for the purposes of swapping items.

So long as the PCs don't try to rob or hurt the drivers—and aren't foolish enough to look inside the wagon—they can go on their way unharmed. Szevelk does not need to feed and prefers not to be slowed down by a group of fools.

Travelling with the Strigany

As long as the characters do nothing to provoke the Vampire, they may accompany the wagon all the way to Zhidovsk. The drivers say little and keep mostly to themselves. They do not prevent the PCs from looking in the wagon, but doing so leads to **Doing Something Stupid**. Neither the Vampire nor the Ghouls exit the wagon at any point over the remaining days to the village. Characters listening at the door may make **Challenging (–10) Perception Tests** to hear a constant wet tearing noise and a faint chewing noise—a good deterrent if there ever was one.

Doing Something Stupid

Players are players, and undoubtedly a PC will look in the wagon or attack or try to rob the drivers. Such foolish action should be properly rewarded, and the Vampire is put off by the distraction but is willing to slaughter the PCs all the same.

Should the characters try to rob the Strigany, they warn them that doing so will have grave consequences. If they persist, one of the men bangs on the wagon, while the other draws a pistol. On the following round, the two maidens (Ghouls) exit the back of the wagon and move toward the PCs. If near sundown, Szevelk follows, and the slaughter begins.

PCs looking inside the wagon get a terrifying glimpse at what it holds. Inside, are the Ghoul maidens and the Vampire, but also, they see scores of hooks and chains that hold dismembered body parts. The maidens are chewing on the rotting meat, while the Vampire looks on in approval. Anyone looking inside must succeed on a **Will Power Test** or gain 1 Insanity Point. The wagon's inhabitants spill forth from inside, driven by the prospects of fresh meat.

The characters may, wisely, flee. If they do, let them. The Vampire does not follow. It's more important for her to reach the village than to waste time hunting down fools.

Sven and Giorgi

Strigany (Human) Smugglers, ex-Coachmen

Hard men, these two are sparing with their words, offering little in the way of conversation.

Insanity Points: 2

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
35	43	36 (3)	34 (3)	43	39	36	34

Skills: Animal Care (Int), Common Knowledge (Strigany) (Int), Drive (S +10), Gossip (Fel), Haggle (Fel), Navigation (Int), Perception (Int +10), Ride (Ag), Search (Int), Secret Language (Thieves' Tongue) (Int), Secret Signs (Ranger, Thief) (Int), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Language (Kislevarin, Strigany) (Int)
Talents: Dealmaker, Excellent Vision, Mimic, Seasoned Traveller, Specialist Weapon Group (Gunpowder)

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 12
Armour (Medium): Mail Shirt and Leather Jack (Arms 1, Body 3)
Weapons: Pistol (1d10+4, Range 8/16; Reload 2 Full; Impact, Unreliable), Hand Weapon (Sword) (1d10+3)

Trappings

Both coachmen wear clothing dyed in clashing colours. They carry coach horns, sacks, a couple of horses, and 8s. They own the wagon, the random goods on it, plus the draft horses that pull it.

Ghoul Maidens

These young women were once beautiful and alluring, but their capture and forced feeding of Human flesh has cursed them to a horrible transformation. They are emaciated, and weeping sores cover their purplish flesh. Their heads are cadaverous, lips pulled back to reveal mouths filled with jagged, brown teeth. They have stringy blonde hair and wear stained wedding dresses.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
32	0	37 (3)	45 (4)	34	18	31	5

Skills: Concealment (Ag), Outdoor Survival (Int), Perception (Int), Scale Sheer Surface (S), Search (Int), Shadowing (Ag), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int)
Talents: Rover
Traits: Fearless, Frightening, Natural Weapons (Claws), Night Vision

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 11
Weapons: Claws (1d10+3)

Trappings

The Ghoul Maidens wear bloodstained wedding dresses.

Szevelk

Strigoi Vampire

Descended from the ancient line of Ghoul Kings, Szevelk is an ambitious Vampire who goes to the village to represent her foul bloodline. It's possible, she admits, another Strigoi may be present, but Szevelk takes no chances, seeing this as an opportunity to establish her place in the dusk of the Human Empire and, indeed, the world.

Like other Strigoi, Szevelk is monstrous and terrifying. Her grotesquely muscled frame is covered in coarse black hair that sprouts patchily across her pale skin. Her face is bestial, accented by an open maw filled with sharp incisors perfect for tearing open throats.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
65	38	57 (5)	60 (6)	70	43	63	22

Skills: Command (Fel), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int), Concealment (Ag +10), Dodge Blow (Ag), Magical Sense (WP), Perception (Int +10), Search (Int), Speak Language (Kislevarin, Reikspiel) (Int), Torture (Fel)
Talents: Frenzy, Rover, Strike Mighty Blow
Traits: Blood Gift (Blood Drain, Natural Necromancer, Summon Ghouls, Vampires' Curse), Frightening, Keen Senses, Natural Weapons (Claws, Fangs), Night Vision, Undead

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 7; **Wounds:** 20
Weapons: Claws and Fangs (1d10+6)

Vampires' Curse

Szevelk is vulnerable to counting, Daemonsroot and Witchbane, gromril, religious symbols, running water, and Warpstone. She is not vulnerable to sunlight.

- **Counting:** Whenever confronted with a number of small objects, such as poppy seeds, coins, or pieces of string, Szevelk must succeed on a **Challenging (–10) Will Power Test** or count the objects—an act that usually takes 1d10 minutes. On a success, Szevelk takes a –10 penalty to all tests whilst the uncounted objects remain in view.
- **Daemonsroot and Witchbane:** Szevelk cannot come within 2 yards of these herbs unless she succeeds on a **Will Power Test**.
- **Gromril:** If Szevelk is injured by a gromril weapon, her Toughness Bonus is effectively 0 for the purposes of reducing the damage.
- **Religious Symbols:** Szevelk cannot come within 2 yards of religious symbols unless she succeeds on a **Will Power Test**. She may not enter a temple or grasp a religious object, unless she succeeds on a **Hard (–20) Will Power Test**.
- **Running Water:** Should Szevelk attempt to cross a body of water at least one yard wide, one foot deep, and with a current, she loses 1d10 Wounds per round, ignoring Toughness Bonus and armour. If reduced to 0 Wounds, use Sudden Death Critical Hit rules. Flying, jumping, riding, or using a vehicle or vessel to cross negates these penalties, as does using a bridge.
- **Warpstone:** If Szevelk comes within 6 yards of Warpstone, she must make a **Fear Test**. For each hour of contact with the substance, she loses a weakness and gains a new one. See **Weaknesses** in *Night's Dark Masters* page 113 for details.

Getting Back Together

The encounter with the witch hunter could split the player characters up, either singly or into small groups, which is good, very good. Resist the temptation to butcher them. Instead, they should feel alone, alienated, and perhaps a little afraid. Use the wilderness encounters to fill their time and possibly inject a few new ones involving Winged Lancers, Ice Magic, or some other appropriate encounter. See *Realm of the Ice Queen* for suggestions and other possibilities. Everything, though, should point the characters to the village in the shadow of the Crags. Let them wander, drifting northward, until their paths cross with each other, reuniting them for the village and beyond.

Crags of Shargun

As the PCs make their way towards the Crags, the ground rises. The sporadic trees gather into clumps, forming copses and eventually small woods. The mix of conifers makes the sweet smell of pine sap hang heavy in the air. Through the trees, the characters can see the grey stone of the Crags, stabbing up like spear tips at the leaden sky.

As they travel, they eventually come across a narrow trail cutting through the trees and wending its way toward the peaks. In addition, the PCs can smell wood smoke coming from the north, as well as the mouth-watering scent of cooking meat.

— Village of the Damned —

There's only one settlement of consequence in the shadows of the Crags of Shargun—Zhidovsk. Even though it is regarded as a major trade centre by folks living here, it is quite tiny by Empire standards, being home to about 50 souls. Under normal circumstances, Zhidovsk sees regular traffic from trappers and furriers, the occasional prospector, and rarely, travellers. But every decade, people in the area know to steer clear, for the villagers gather to throw a grand festival that always culminates in the gifting of one of their lucky daughters to the Black Witch of the Crags.

Is that Ham? No, not the Mutant. Ham!

Drawn by the promise of a hot meal and a warm bed, the characters come upon the village while searching the Crags. As they head up the road, or stumble out of the forest, they see a small community built up around the only road in these old mountains. Pine trees ring the village, blocking it from view, though tendrils of smoke rise from stone chimneys. The structures are all simple, wooden, and roofed with thatching. There are paths through the dozen or so houses and shops, but they are covered in snow, and where no snow is present, the paths are muddy from recent traffic.

This would be an otherwise sleepy village, but queerly, its road is choked with travellers. People from all over the Old World are here, huddled together for warmth, seated near the stone chimneys, finishing off the last of their stores. Walking through the crowds are bald men draped in vestments proclaiming their allegiance to the Child. They stop to offer words of encouragement, prayers to young Karl for his return, and offer what meagre food they have to share.

If this wasn't enough, at the far end of the village, where the road ends at a tiny hovel, nine black carriages stand in a perfect row. Black steeds, still in their harnesses, are frozen as if carved from obsidian. No steam issues from their nostrils, nothing to suggest these creatures are alive.

And finally, there are the villagers. They peer out from their doors, looking out into the crowds with wonder. A few shoo trespassers from their property, whilst others cart the dead into the woods for the wolves. The village positively hums with muttered conversation, wails of the suffering, and disturbing sounds of the dying. It is a vision of doom, true madness to behold.

What the PCs are seeing is the remnants of the Crusade of the Child. Drawn by his nature, they have no choice but to walk the path he has trod. Rather than coming as a group, people have been drifting to the village for weeks, months even. They come here and go no further, awaiting the blessed moment when Karl returns to them.

The Vampires, who are no fools, have come to believe this migration is tied to the Champion of Night, and thus, they too have come to this place to take part in his coronation. However, they will not wait for him; each bloodline has its own reasons for finding the Child, and their minions hunt the forests, scouring the land for any sign of their future leader.

Organs among Us!

The cultists and the Vampires are not the only ones to come upon this place. Lurking within the village is a creature of Chaos. When Tobias was slain in the Plague Temple (or elsewhere), the cancerous tumour growing inside him awoke and tore itself free from the dying flesh. Driven by some dark malfeasance to reunite with the sorcerer Ruprecht, the wretched thing has crawled across the Empire, crossed the oblast of Kislev, and climbed up the Crags. Exhausted and filled with wonder, it has settled in the village to await instructions. Unfortunately, its presence has begun to contaminate the water and air, spreading among the bodies of those gathered here.

An Opportunity

If the congregation of cultists, Undead, and the Chaos Organ were not enough, a queer beast has been making its rounds, terrifying the locals, and leading many to believe the time is once more upon them to give up one of their daughters to the Black Witch, which they know will call back the dreadful dog and spare the village from the doom they feel is upon them. In truth, the dog the locals have spotted is not the hell hound serving the Black Witch of the Crags. That dog is Black Ice, whom the PCs may have already met whilst travelling here. Instead, this poor beast is the hideous canine of Piotr Tomorov, a fat merchant who views this confusion an opportunity to snatch the prettiest girl in the village to be his wife.

Tomorov claims to have made his fortune pressing the oil out of geese, selling it to goose-oil addicts in Praag. Whether true or not—indeed, few believe his tale—Tomorov is very wealthy, having nine shiny Gold Crowns, which is nine more than anyone else in Zhidovsk. One would think such a man of consequence would have the daughters of villages from all around clamouring to be his wife. Yet, the sad truth is that none will have him because he's rather repellent.

Piotr also has impossibly high standards when it comes to the fairer gender. It is possible some blind, nose-less wench might have him, but the merchant has a taste for dainty women—he's never been the same after meeting a Bretonnian lady in Erengrad. Tomorov realises his time is running out; he will not be young and strapping forever. He must find a wife and one that meets his strict criteria.

Luckily, there's such a girl right here in Zhidovsk, a lovely flower named Anya. He's met with her father a dozen times so far, and whilst the man agrees it would be a good match, owed in no small part to the shiny coins the merchant has offered as a dowry, Anya has refused him each time. No matter how much Tomorov offers, the girl spurns him. A wiser man might look elsewhere—but not Tomorov. He will have her; it's just a matter of time.

And that time is evidently now. Tomorov has watched as his small village has become clogged with travellers. The arrival of the Sylvanian lords, the broken men from the Empire, and the few camp followers and hangers-on have sparked an idea.

Skipping the Village

Exploring the village is not necessary for the PCs to reach the campaign's conclusion, but it's likely the characters will go here to look for Karl first before they aimlessly wander the Crags in search of the boy. Likewise, the characters may be a bit beaten up and in need of some rest and recuperation before continuing their hunt. Finally, they may just be tired of being cold and hungry. They have crossed the Empire to get here—a night in a bed is better than a night on the frozen ground.

Still, the characters may wish to avoid going here since they may have the witch hunter—and possibly other enemies—on their heels. Should they deign not to go the path of comfort, events begin to unfold in the village. While the characters are scouring the Crags, events rapidly move toward the adventure's conclusion. In short, the Chaos Organ—that would be Tobias's Chaos Organ from **Chapter V—**spreads the sickness, and most of the Crusaders expire from the illness and the elements, as do half of the villagers. Believing the plague to be linked with the sightings of Black Ice, the villagers offer up Anya—a beautiful village girl—as their sacrifice. A few thin men lead her, blind-folded, to the Womb. Once there, Piotr—a fat and disgusting man that covets Anya—snatches the girl and runs off with his new bride. The Vampires and their minions spread through the area, searching for Karl, while the Wood Elves, having come a long way from Athel Loren search the Womb for the entrance.

While all this happens, there are plenty of opportunities for the PCs to encounter somebody who knows where Karl is. Piotr may have seen the boy slip into the dark waters of the womb, while stealing his future wife. A Vampire might have discovered the boy and had been following only to be ambushed by Ruprecht's foul minions. The characters might come upon the battle, pick a side, and learn where the Child was headed. There are bound to be other possibilities. Be creative. So long as the characters reach the Womb, all is well.

Tomorov knows every decade, the village offers up one of their daughters to the Black Witch, for if they do not, the hag will assuredly curse them all. When the Black Witch makes her demands, she sends her herald: an abominable beast known to the locals as Black Ice. Since the undesirable outsiders have come, things have not been going well. People fall sick, things and folks go missing, and there's a general pall hanging over everything. It almost seems as if the village were cursed, and of course, the only way to lift the curse is to appease the Black Witch.

Tomorov knows the Black Witch is not directly involved—she can't be, for the village gave up a lass three summer past, so the trouble must be from some other cause. Piotr has no intention of sticking around whilst such horror is likely being visited on his village, but he's not going to leave without lovely Anya. He came up with a way to get the girl and avoid the expense of a dowry: have the village to send her off to the Black Witch. Before Anya would arrive, Piotr would swoop in and spare her from her fate, and the two would run off and live happily ever after. To do this, he had to convince the people the Black Witch was unsatisfied with the last offering. What he needed was Black Ice.

Luckily for Tomorov, he just so happened to own an ugly dog. He dipped the beast in black paint, added an expensive dye to the fur on his head, and glued bits of glass to the fur to make it look like ice. Then he sent the dog out into the village to terrify the locals. The dog is none too pleased by the unfortunate downturn in its normally comfortable life and sees all of this as utter nonsense. It would go back to the warm fire and the friendly smells of the merchant's house, but it wonders what new horror the man will put it through. Instead, the dog prowls around the village, snooping for food and trying to get the people's attention.

The poor dog has had little luck, however. Since it is death to look upon Black Ice, or so the locals believe, the villagers steadfastly ignore the dog, even if it barks, pulls on their coats, or leaves them a gift on their stoops. They are aware of the dog, of course, but they just won't let him know it.

Now That We're Here...

Walking up the road or slipping out of the trees, the PCs are here, and no one cares or seems to notice them. It's not that they're ignored—a few more wanderers dropping in for a place to sit has become commonplace. They may get a few nods or grunts, but the lost Crusaders and gloomy Undead leave the characters alone to explore as they like.

While in Zhidovsk, the player characters can do what they want, talk to the locals, or do nothing at all. The next section describes the various places the PCs might wind up. Following that is a brief gazetteer of the most important people, and finally, the last bit covers the events as they unfold.

The characters are probably looking for Karl (one would hope!), and a little investigation turns up some clues about who might know where the lad headed—and the danger of his destination.

Lie of the Village

Zhidovsk sits at the end of the only road into the Crags of Shargun. Little more than a muddy path, it is just wide enough for two wagons to pass by one another. To the west looms a dense forest of pines, cedars, and firs, and the east ascends to a spur of dark rock the locals know as the Fist of Kurshod, named for an infamous giant said to be struck down by Tor himself in a titanic battle some thousand years ago. The Crags tower to the north, snow blanketing the peaks and harbouring who knows what.

As the road climbs toward the village, the rocks and occasional tree give way to small wooden houses with slate roofs. The smoke of burning pine issues from thin stone chimneys, shrouding the community with a blue haze. Further along, the houses are closer together, as if huddling together for warmth. At the end of the road are about a dozen buildings facing the road. There are a few paths between the structures, but they are choked with snow and ice.

As described earlier, the village is overrun with Vampires and Crusaders clogging the streets and alleys, leaving a bewildered populace to pick their way through the gathered masses. There's not much here worth mentioning. Most of the buildings are the abodes of rugged families hardened by scarce supplies and the oppressive chill.

1. Taal's Teat

Standing amidst the densest cluster of buildings at the centre of the village is Taal's Teat. It's irreverently named after a young priest of Taal who lost his way, got drunk, and was found in a compromising position best left unsaid at this very site. In honour of the kvas-swilling cleric, the locals erected a shrine.

Taal's Teat is a tavern of newer construction. Only a decade old, it scarcely shows any sign of age. Constructed from treated pine wood on a black stone foundation, it has a peaked roof covered in sod. A crooked chimney peeks over the roof from behind the structure. It smokes year round, sending up tendrils from the cook fires inside.

The main entrance to this place is through a single door over a stone slab that serves as a porch. A sign depicting a horned man with a wolf suckling on his breast hangs above the door. Around back is a small stable, where young Rencle (an utterly uninteresting NPC) tends the rare traveller's steed.

Just inside the door, one finds a wide hall with a high ceiling that towers overhead, except for an area toward the back that serves as Janz's abode—the owner. Tables and benches are arranged in rows, and the floor is a muddy mess of old hay, spilt fluid, and unidentifiable lumps. A hearth with a spit sits against the back wall, and a spit-boy can be found turning a pig, goat, or some other animal over the fire. Janz tends the bar, which is a pile of stones in front a stack of bunged casks tipped onto their sides.

Using Taal's Teat

Under normal circumstances, this tavern would cater to the locals and the few trappers who make their living in these peaks, and therefore, it would be sparsely populated. However, thanks to the squatters who have claimed this town as their tomb, or as the sign of their revelation, or as the staging ground for the great fulfilment of their prophecy, Taal's Teat is a bit busier than normal.

Janz and Rencle

Janz would normally welcome any of the town to his hearth, as he knows that even those who squat for warmth or shelter and cannot pay can still be of benefit to his business. Some, eyeing their peers with their watery ale or shanks of meat, break down and offer future coin with interest, or work, in lieu of immediate coin. Others pay their way with storytelling or by encouraging others to drink. But that is in normal times.

Now, with the illness of the Chaos Organ spreading like wildfire, and with creatures of the night occasionally venturing forth to seek groups of easy prey, Janz would like to be a bit stricter in his entrance policies. The problem is that he has neither the strength nor the courage to do so. Taal's Teat is therefore an excellent microcosm in which to represent the town as a whole and a perfect place to thrust together all of the town's various inhabitants, permanent and temporary.

Rencle represents a timid and flimsy first line of defence, who uses his pitchfork to prod away locals who appear to be ill or any Crusade members who are weak and malnourished enough to be discouraged without a fight. Anyone with weaponry or the appearance of coin, however, or who seems healthy, is let in by the lad with a sullen and fearful grunt.

Once within, Janz eyes characters greedily yet suspiciously. He demands coin before the characters can even sit, and hurriedly takes it behind the bar before returning with weak ale, stale bread, and strips of greasy flesh from the most recently spitted animal. He can be used to represent the paranoia of the average business owner of the town and also their willingness to collect money, so they can escape the hell that has become their home, if necessary.

Townsfolk

The less fortunate but still well off among the town can often be found here, seeking succour in what has become known as a place free of plague. From these few the characters can receive a general rundown of who's who in the village, learn everything about the upcoming festival—except its purpose and end result—receive icy stares when asked about Black Ice, and with a **Hard (–20) Gossip Test**, learn the following:

Rumours Before the Council Meeting

These rumours can be learned before the town has a meeting to deal with the appearance of "Black Ice."

Yep, they say it's dark times. Mebbe the last gift di'n take.

Dog? Naw, I ain't seen no dog. An' if'n I did, I wouldn' speak of it. Just like I wouldn' speak of the One We Do Not Speak Of.

My boy's a woodsman, an' he says 'ee's seen 'em dark folk wand'ring it, lookin' fer somethin'

I 'eer Tomorov's been pleadin' w' Anya's pa ta let 'er marry 'im. Too bad 'e's uglier 'n' crusty snot in a dead man's nose. She won't 'ave 'im, more'n like.

After the Council Meeting

These rumours can be learned after the town has a meeting to deal with the appearance of "Black Ice."

It was Tomorov, see. I heard it from my brudder, who's on da council, see? He was sayin' dat the last gift di'n take, which is wot I been sayin' all along. So dey gon' 'ave a new festival, now. Tomorrah, I guess it'll be.

I hear he said dat dis time, dey gotta really give a looker. I dunno, I dink that Gretchen was perty tasty. But dis time, it be Anya. Damn shame, dat. Anya is like a angel.

So, eh, the festival. It's, a, well, it's fer…luck, y'know. Yeah. G'luck. Ya dress up da girl, and ya walk tru da town, an' ya take 'er in the woods, and…uh, yeah, I gotta go.

Valin von Carstein

One of the Vampires, a Von Carstein named Valin, frequents the place solely because of the tavern's pseudo-religious founding. Being unable to enter shrines to the Old Gods, he finds it amusing to relax in the corner of an establishment named after Taal. He does not come here looking for victims, however, and is quite an engaging conversationalist, knowing much about history, philosophy, religion, and art. Should the characters

Valin the Vamp

The Vampires in General

A handful of each of the bloodlines was contacted and informed of the boy's existence, as well as the fact he would be coming to Kislev. None of us are sure who sent the messages; we assumed at first it was one of our own, but none have been found here. Nor is this meagre town civilized enough to boast a mortal who recognises our inherent superiority and might have the wherewithal to send for them. What? You don't know about the prophecy? Well, far be it from me to ruin that surprise for you, my dears.

Von Carsteins

I come simply because anything Lydia is so concerned with is worth investigating. I myself don't believe in the concept of "prophecies." It is truly a mortal phenomenon. When you live as long as I have, you realise vague words can never encompass or predict the complex truth of history. But that does not suggest that the rest of my kind feels this way. If I am able to acquire the boy, it shall be quite entertaining to see what my fellows are willing to give me in exchange for him.

Lahmians

Those whores undoubtedly believe they can seduce the boy into serving their winsome purposes. I have heard they have blundered along his trail already, wrapping a few weak-willed mortals around their fingers to get this far. From what I've seen, however, the boy will be more likely to seduce them. Their carriage is the one with the fancy silk curtains and the pretty young boys as coachmen.

Necrarch

One of their kind, based near Wolfenburg, I believe, was so enraptured by this prophecy he saw the boy as encroaching on his own destiny. I'm not sure if he survived and is still looking to kill the lad—or if another of his bloodline is here. You can recognise the Necrarch's carriage because it is little more than a hearse, and his attendees are obviously animated skeletons. Embarrassing, really. Those walking corpses have no sense of style.

The Strigoi

Such silly believers. They and their vagabond servants are ridiculously superstitious, you know. They have fallen so wholeheartedly for this prophecy nonsense they have gone so far as to kidnap, I hear, one of the Blood Dragons! Imagine, bringing one of those dangerous fellows all this way against his will, based on a few lines of bad poetry. Ridiculous. They have come in large numbers, like a plague; at least two or three of the carriages are theirs. They'll need that many to control the beast they have caged, I imagine. You can tell which by the humorous little "wall" they have built against the rest of us, circling the wagons, as it were.

mention Lydia to him, he admits he is from the same region, conveying an impression of his "fellow noble" as quite "banal" and "trumped up." If they claim to have defeated or thwarted her, he warms up to them a bit and sees no further reason to hide the fact he is a Vampire—they should be able to put two and two together, after all. Should any character further impress him with a **Very Hard (–30) Academic Knowledge Test** regarding one of the aforementioned topics, he becomes quite friendly to them and is willing to discuss the varying interests of the five Vampire bloodlines!

Valin knows the general belief of each bloodline regarding Karl and the prophecy and is not subtle regarding the Vampires' current locations, beliefs, forces, and the like (see the sidebar **Valin the Vamp**). Of course, the more he speaks to any given character, the more enamoured of that character he becomes, meaning the hapless conversationalist can expect a nocturnal visit from Valin in the next few days. The Vampire's intentions are, of course, to make the charming and knowledgeable character a permanent addition to his thralls.

Crusaders

Few of the Crusade are still well enough, nourished enough, or endowed with enough coin to make it past the flimsy defences of Rencle's pitchfork and Janz's scowl, but those few who were skilled tradesmen—or may have had some wealth before they joined the Crusade—can also be found here. These folks are the most hopeful of the cult that Karl will soon return to them. A **Challenging (–10) Charm Test** convinces folks like these that the characters are Crusaders as well, which allows them to glean everything they might otherwise learn in the village square (see **Area 3**). If the characters were ever uncovered or accused by the mob as going against Karl, they'll need a **Challenging (–10) Charm Test** as well. Either way, finding their answers here—rather than in the village square—means the PCs can avoid the worst of the illnesses caused by the Chaos Organ.

Characters that befriended any of the Crusade's inner circle may reunite with them here, if you like. This adventure assumes the leadership disintegrated soon after the play, and the various members all met terrible ends. This scenario doesn't have to be the case, but it's the most likely outcome for these deluded fools.

2. Old Cat Yevid

Across the street from the comparatively pleasant Taal's Teat is a sagging wooden building with a rotting roof. It squats on its crumbling foundation like an obese hag, all warts and brooding secrets. It is operated by Helga Yevid. Before the recent influx, the last customer that spent the night in this boarding house was Helga's ninth husband, Ferisu Shenk, and indeed, it was his last night ever. Local legend holds he passed on from fat Helga's cooking, though some speculate the crone's appetites are quite fierce and costly. In any event, most folk here know to cross the street rather than pass in the shadow of this gloomy place, and perhaps, the newcomers would follow suit if it weren't for the abominable cold.

In truth, Old Cat Yevid (the meaning of this name has long been forgotten) is as safe as any place in town. It is true that Shenk died here—he still haunts the attic where he hanged himself—though it wasn't from foul play, just good old fashioned suicide.

The building is in bad shape. The front door, which never closed t00 well, latches with a leather cord that Helga ties to a post. There's a short corridor that opens onto a tiny dining room and adjoining kitchen. A narrow staircase leads up to the rooms above, all of which face a central corridor where crude paintings by Helga recount the lives of her beloved husbands.

Helga lets 10 rooms, each for a reasonable rate (7p) that also includes breakfast. Those who pay for a week's lodging get a change of sheets (often one filthy set for another filthy set) and a bucket of hot water on holidays to honour the Gods.

The rooms would be cosy if it weren't for the stink of rot and old cheese. The corners of the rooms are all blackened with mould. An enterprising fool who decides to scratch the surface awakens such a ghastly odour that food will never taste the same again. Helga warns all guests not to look under the beds since now, in her 45th year, she is far too old to go snooping under there to fish out old filth. What treasure lays beneath the moist mattresses are up to your disturbed imagination, though we suggest a liberal amount of scatology with a touch of rotting bones, old rags, and a sinister-looking potato that has laid claim to the soft floor boards beneath it.

Using Old Cat Yevid

Whilst there are a great many visitors to Zhidovsk, there are few with the stamina to spend the night here—and fewer with the coin to spend on such extravagance. Helga feels a nagging in her conscience for not lowering her rates, especially when each morning produces another frozen corpse in an alley, but as her beloved fifth husband, Grouse, would say, "*There's no profit in charity!*"

Should the characters have the money to spend, they can claim the boarding house as their stronghold. It may not be comfortable, but it does provide a secure location they can surreptitiously barricade in the event of escalating trouble. Helga is so lazy she will not notice any minor alterations (like boards on the filmy windows), and she pretends not to notice major alterations (like a new interior bar to be laid across the front door), fearing that the "do-gooders" would charge her if she brought it up.

The boarding house is or will become the temporary home of any other foes still chasing the characters or Karl from previous chapters who A) survived, B) have any amount of funds, and C) have a penchant for Human lodgings (*i.e.,* not the Wood Elves). The most recent and immediate example of such a personality is the witch hunter Vanderhoff. Should Vanderhoff join forces with Frank and trail the characters to the village, this place is where he comes for a night's lodging. Perhaps the characters are on their way out the door when Vanderhoff knocks, or he runs into them in the hallway as Helga is showing him to his room. A desperate battle would immediately ensue in the cramped hallways, where Vanderhoff would have trouble manoeuvring with his bulky armour and large blade (–10 to all Weapon Skill Tests), but only one character will be able to face him at a time. If Frank is accompanying, he runs as soon as Vanderhoff engages the PCs and can be found later in the village square, lamenting that he is right back where he started.

3. Village Square

Between the boarding house and the village's only pub stands the square. Whilst nothing like a square, having never had four right angles, it is simply the empty space between buildings that surrounds a large well. There have been a few half-hearted efforts to cobble this area, and the few remaining stones peek up through the mud as testimony to the villagers' good intentions.

Normally, this place is empty, aside from the occasional matron going to the well to fetch a pail of water, but since people have begun to arrive, this place is easily the most crowded in the village. Nearly every square foot of this area holds a body, and narrow pathways choked with debris and filth weave through the huddled, suffering people. Moving amongst the people are the outspoken self-appointed leaders who invoke the will of the Crusade, preaching how Karl will return and that the moment of their salvation is upon them. Each day, though, more people succumb to the unforgiving cold, nagging hunger, and strange illnesses, despite the smoky fires and the meagre supplies portioned out to the masses. Corpses lay untended, left where they died, and there are whispers some desperate men have begun to harvest the flesh of the dead. Since the arrival, few locals come here, and if they do, they skirt the edge of the place to reach Taal's Teat. Most, though, don't think a mug of kvas is worth the trouble of the crowd.

Using the Village Square

This area is the easiest place for the PCs to find out what, exactly, is going on. No tests are required to get the following information, just a bit of kindness in the form of fresh water ("That stuff from the well tastes awful."), some food, or a blanket is enough to get as much information as the PCs wish. This place is also one of the most dangerous to gather clues; however, each piece of information gained by talking to a Crusader—if it involves physical contact—requires the character to make a **Toughness Test** or contract the Green Pox, Neiglish Rot, or Scurvy Madness (roll randomly to determine which). Strangely, PCs might have been speaking to a cultist who obviously suffered from the Green Pox but will end up contracting Neiglish Rot, instead.

Where is Karl? Ah dunno. He brought us all here a moon 'r three agoo, ah canna say, as mah memry is gettin' shakey. 'En 'ee up 'n' leffus. Ah dunno why. Ah…Ah…ACH! ISSA DEEMIN! ISSA DEEMIN! GETTIM AWEE! GETIM AWEE! GET… git…errr…ah, eh, feller. Wot wazza sayin'? Who're ya? Spare some nosh?

How long ago did Karl leave? Why, just a week past, my good sir. Yes, definitely a week past. Or was it two?

Which direction did he go? (The respondent attempts to hastily cover the green marks covering his face and hands.) I could not say. He seemed to be exploring something, saying his destiny was nearby. Our destiny, rather! Old Shuck was the one that guided him. That's the local huntsman. He sleeps behind the shrine. I do not know if Old Shuck has yet returned.

Did anyone go with them? Yep sir, a dozen of our best warriors! I'm a bettin' that no one could protect him better, inspired as they is with 'is divine greatness.

What is this "destiny?" Why are you all here? (The respondent scratches at boils and occasionally soils his trousers) Da young lord says 'at 'is maker has sent him dreams! It can only mean 'at up der in dem crags izza place dat da comet is gonn fall 'gain. Or did, mebbe, back in the day. When 'ee finds it, I reckon 'ee'll come back fer us all and take 'im up ta the comet inna sky with him!

The Source of Evil

PCs with previous experiences with disease in the Old World might follow up on the hint dropped by a Crusader about the well's water tasting terrible. Even if they don't think of it but begin asking about the possible source of the illnesses, characters that succeed at a **Challenging (–10) Heal Test** realise a contaminated well is a common manner of spreading disease. Finally, those who make a **Very Hard (–30) Perception Test** notice the Crusaders dwelling in the square seem to be much more subject to disease than any townsfolk or even those who can afford room and board elsewhere.

If PCs actually descend into the well, refer to the information in the section **The Well**.

4. The Well

Getting down into the narrow well should be a challenge. First of all, the rope is rotting, which is noticed with a **Challenging (–10) Perception Test**. Anyone heavier than an Elf or Halfling causes it to snap, and those in the bucket plummet downward, which of course brings 3d10 Crusaders (who depend on the water for their survival) to swarm those still topside and attack due to varying levels of grief, desperation, and madness (use the beggar statistics in *WFRP* on 233. Anyone who was riding the bucket when the rope snapped must make a **Very Hard (–30) Agility Test** to grab the lip of the well or the frame above it, followed by a **Challenging (–10) Strength Test** to hang on. Those who fail either test fall into the well; a Halfling plummets the full 12 yards to the bottom, taking half falling damage thanks to the water at the bottom. Anyone larger gets lodged into the well about 3 yards down, taking 3 points of bashing damage (some of which may be stopped by armour) and 3 points of wrenching damage (which ignores armour). The character must then pass an **Agility Test** to extract himself, taking a –1 penalty to the test for every pound he weighs over 120—or a bonus of +1 for every pound he is under 120.

Without a rope, descending down the well requires **Challenging (–10) Scale Sheer Surface Test** for every 3 yards travelled, with penalties or bonuses as described for extracting oneself from the well when stuck.

The Horror in the Well

Despite Ruprecht being the instigator of many of the mishaps and events over the past several months, the situation has rapidly spiralled out of his control with the death of his servant, Tobias. The Chaos Organ that emerged from his corpse did its best to return to its master, but its journey across the wastes caused it to deteriorate, becoming less and less like Tobias instead of more and more like him. Perhaps it was subjected to Warpstone, or it spent the night in a cursed glade, or it was damaged as it escaped from the PCs. Regardless, rather than growing into a new version of Tobias, as is normal for a Chaos Organ, the creature slowly degenerated into a barely humanoid mass of bone, tumours, and hair.

The creature now suffers great internal conflict. It remembers its host was supposed to merely follow the boy and ensure he reached Kislev, yet it senses something more was supposed to happen—perhaps it was supposed to acquire the boy once it was in Kislev and escort him to Ruprecht's tower? Barely understanding its Human memories and only vaguely recognising its current surroundings, the Chaos Organ managed to slither, crawl, eat, and drip its way across hundreds of miles to this tiny town, tracing Karl's trail all the way.

A mere few days before the PCs arrived, it slithered among the sleeping Crusaders in the dark of night, following Karl's scent to the well, where some of his bodyguards stopped to drink. At that same moment, off in the northern woods, Karl entered the lake and swam down toward the Womb. Of course, that same lake is what feeds the water table from which the well draws. The Chaos Organ, its cilia, and other primitive sensory organs specifically attuned to the lad's movements and scent, suddenly detected him as being very close! Impossibly close! In a flurry of lust, hunger, and joy, it slithered up over the well and plummeted down into its watery depths, thinking the boy must somehow be within. When it landed, it was trapped, unable to continue moving toward the boy's location, yet sensing him through the tiny seeping springs that feed the well. Thus, suffering what passes for dejection and despair, alternately too weak or disheartened to climb out once more, the poor creature merely presses its mass against the bottom of the well, striving to reach what it thinks is its purpose, simultaneously poisoning the water in which it rests. It's hard to be a Chaos Organ.

Chaos Organ

The Chaos Organ has a rudimentary intelligence regarding anything but Karl. If a PC descends into its chamber, it attempts to eat him because it is hungry. If that PC struck the killing blow against Tobias, it summons up a primal feeling somewhere between a thirst for a vengeance and an almost worshipful need to thank the PC for freeing it from Tobias's body. Regardless, the feelings translate into the Chaos Organ being even more excited to eat the PC, and it gains a +10 bonus on all attacks against him.

If no PCs venture down into the well, it emerges and causes anarchy during the festival (see **Event 6**: **Festival of Horrors** on page 210). This Chaos Organ has special characteristics, as presented here.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
52	0	54 (5)	63 (6)	12	12	32	4

Talents: Strike Mighty Blow
Traits: Daemonic Aura, Frightening, Natural Weapon (Disgusting Pseudopodia), Night Vision, Plague Bearer, Shifting Form, Shifting Weapons

Combat

Attacks: 3; **Movement:** 2; **Wounds:** 16
Weapons: Disgusting Pseudopodia (1d10+6; Fast *or* Impact *or* Slow *or* Snare *or* Unreliable)

Plague Bearer

The Chaos Organ carries evil within its body, and it manifests in the outside world in the form of pestilence and disease. Those who spend more than one day within 500 yards of the Chaos Organ must make a **Very Easy (+30) Toughness Test** or fall victim to a specific disease (though in some cases, such as with Chaos Daemons, that disease may change from day to day or moment to moment). Each day that a particular individual remains within the 500-yard radius, he must test again, with the difficulty of the test increasing by 10 with each passing day, to a maximum of a **Very Hard (–30) Test**. The radius of the disease can vary with prevailing wind conditions, openness of terrain, and so on.

Shifting Form

The Chaos Organ's form is mutable and not under its control, constantly growing new appendages and dissolving old ones. Each day (or more frequently if you like), it manifests 1d5 new mutations and loses 1d5 old ones. Roll on whatever mutations table you like, but if you have *Tome of Corruption,* use the **Nurgle Mutations Table** on page 39 instead.

Shifting Weapons

The Chaos Organ grows new pseudopodia and absorbs old ones with disgusting speed and randomness, and each one seems to lash about as if under its own volition. Each attack it makes gains a single random weapon quality, but these do not necessarily persist from round to round; one round, all of the attacks might have the snare quality, while the next, none of them do. Roll 1d10 to determine the weapon quality each time it attacks: On a 1–2: Fast; 3–4: Impact; 5–6: Slow; 7–8: Snare; and 9–10: Unreliable (on a roll of 96-100, rather than jamming as per the firearm quality, its Attacks Characteristic is lowered by 1 until the end of the current combat).

5. Tomorov's Supplies

Just south of the village square is a squat wooden building with a slate tile roof. The name "Tomorov's Supplies" arcs over top of a miner's pick, a wheel of cheese, a candle, and a coil of rope on a sign out front of Piotr Tomorov's general store. He runs the shop to keep busy when not taking shipments of goose oil to Praag.

Inside, the smell and the noise cannot be ignored. The place reeks of rancid fat and goose droppings, while the squawks of geese echo sound from behind a curtain in the back. The place is a mishmash of goods and supplies. There are three main aisles with shelves on either side that are laden with a slew of miscellaneous items. Just about anything from *WFRP* or *Old World Armoury* can be found here, though the items are all of Poor Quality. Prices here are quite reasonable (75% normal cost), having been subtly marked down by Tomorov, so he can liquidate most of his goods before he flees within the next few days.

Behind the shop, and larger than it, is a barn that houses Tomorov's most prized possessions, his two hardy draught horses. It is kept locked and barred at all times, especially now, when so many might see the horses as a means to escape town or appease hunger.

Since Tomorov spends a great deal of time on the road, he employs his nephew, Gregor, to run the business while he is away. While the characters are in town, Tomorov is, too. There's a 35% chance that the merchant is present in the shop. Otherwise, Gregor is here instead.

Piotr Tomorov

Male Ungol Merchant, ex-Burgher

Piotr is a wretched, fat, lump of flesh with few aesthetic assets. The vile stench of goose fat and onions hangs about him, and local girls whisper about the crops of prodigious warts that grow on his feet. In his round head, he has but one blackened tooth, and he's flatulent, whistling from his nether regions when least appropriate. He wears clothing cut in the Bretonnian fashion—though about a decade too late—that consists of a soiled vest, tights, octopus codpiece, and a stained pillow hat from which hangs a dejected-looking feather.

Insanity Points: 4

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
39	28	37 (3)	44 (4)	40	60	41	39

Skills: Animal Care (Int), Common Knowledge (Kislev) (Int +10), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int), Drive (S +10), Evaluate (Int +10), Gossip (Fel), Haggle (Int +10), Perception (Int), Read/Write (Int), Ride (Ag), Search (Int), Speak Language (Kislevarin) (Int +10), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int), Trade (Merchant) (Fel)
Talents: Dealmaker, Savvy, Suave, Super Numerate, Very Resilient

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 14
Weapons: Hand Weapon (Sword) (1d10+3)

Trappings

Piotr is quite wealthy, owning his shop and the contents within it. When travelling, he brings along an abacus, lantern, food, and wine for the trip. He owns a wagon and two horses, letting him transport his goose oil to the cities with ease. He also keeps a small pouch inside of his codpiece that holds nine slimy Gold Crowns.

Gregor Tomorov

Male Ungol Peasant

Gregor is none too bright and hasn't a head for figures. The only thing stopping the villagers from fleecing Gregor while Piotr is gone is the fear of Piotr's wrath upon his return. Gregor stands just shy of six feet tall, and his muscled body is buried beneath layers of fat. When not attending his uncle, he can be found behind the counter, exploring his left nostril with a probing digit.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
32	34	42 (4)	48 (4)	42	24	38	39

Skills: Animal Care (Int +10), Common Knowledge (Kislev) (Int), Concealment (Ag), Drive (S), Gamble (Int), Gossip (Fel), Outdoor Survival (Int +10), Ride (Ag), Row (S), Scale Sheer Surface (S), Speak Language (Kislevarin) (Int), Swim (S), Trade (Cook) (Int)
Talents: Flee!, Hardy, Mimic, Very Resilient

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 13
Weapons: Hand Weapon (Cudgel) (+4)

Trappings

Gregor wears typical peasant garb and a fur hat. He has a leather flask full of kvas.

Using Tomorov's

Exploring the village should eventually lead the PCs to Tomorov's. They are not likely to have questions for him until after the council meeting, during the party's second day in town. Should Tomorov not be there, Gregor might be an alternative—if more ridiculous—source of information.

Questions for Tomorov

(answers punctuated by loud farts and other disgusting habits):

You seem to do pretty well for yourself. Well, good work habits, you know! And connections!

Why are you so sure that the One You Do Not Speak Of is demanding another sacrifice? It's obvious! Those strange men and the black carriages. And the sickness. And cold! It's very cold, lately! It's usually a good bit warmer here, you know! Oh, and…umm…<with a whisper> the beast!

Oh yes, the dog. You know, we saw a creature that looked a lot like the poor mongrel that has been haunting this town. Only it was much larger, and scarier. Whatever the black dog is, it's not the Black Witch's beast. Um. It's ill luck to speak of it. I'd best not.

You mentioned that Anya was the most obvious choice. Well, of course. She's a beautiful lass—the flower of Kislev, don't you know! The One We Do Not Speak Of will only take the loveliest of lasses. And have you seen her? Anya, I mean. She's enough to make a grown man… well <accompanied by a smacking of lips and a wiggling of his tooth>, she's delightful.

Who is this One You Do Not Speak Of? Well. We do not speak of that one, you see.

We hear that you've met with her father to attempt to make her your own. Ahem. Ah. Well, yes. And making good progress, too. Alas, but the health of this, my cherished home, is of more import to me than my own happiness, of course. And as such, I fear I must give her up. But I am simply that sort of fellow. Magnanimous, you know!

Is that why all of your goods are so affordable? Because you're so magnanimous? Ah! Umm, yes. It is dire times, don't you know. Least I can do to help out my fellow townsfolk.

You even provided the rope to keep Anya tied up when she is delivered. Yes, well, good rope is hard to come by. Wouldn't want her to, umm, escape.

Can we purchase your horses <even if for some exorbitant amount>? No! They're my livelihood!

PCs that make a **Challenging (–10) Intelligence Test** with each answer can determine varying levels of shiftiness and falsehood on Piotr's part. If the PCs explore the shop after or during the festival, they find it closed, but strangely, the barn door is left wide open. Piotr's prize horses and his wagon are nowhere to be found. If the shop is broken into, the PCs find it almost completely cleaned out, with only the bulkiest and least valuable items left behind.

Questions for Gregor:

Who are you? Huh? Oh. Gregor.

What do you do here? Huh? Oh. Sell stuff.

Has Piotr Tomorov ever mentioned Anya? Huh? Oh. Yeah. He thinks she's purty.

Did Piotr Tomorov have a dog? Huh? Oh. Yeah.

Where is it now? Huh? Where's what?

The dog? Oh. Uh. I dunno.

6. The Shrine of the Merciful Lady

A few doors down from Tomorov's is the Shrine of the Merciful Lady, a small mission dedicated to Shallya. Founded by Hanna Reinholt, a missionary priestess from Wolfenburg, she came to this forlorn community to spread the good will of the Merciful One and carry her message of peace and hope to the frontiers of Kislev. Hanna had no intention of proselytising to the masses; rather, she came with honest intentions and the hopes of truly helping these people. But isolation coupled with strange customs and a people with whom she has never had success at building a rapport have combined to weaken her resolve and make her question her faith. To make matters worse, she learned a few months ago her homeland was devastated by the Chaos Incursion, and her city was razed to the ground. Believing nothing was left for her, she has cloistered herself away in her shrine, where she now wallows in her grief, swills kvas, and grows fat with self-indulgence.

The shrine is constructed from local wood donated by a leering Tomorov. The merchant had set his sights on Hanna, but he could not abide by all her talk of mercy and suffering. Since she has become so disheartened, she's let the place, and herself, go. The once-white walls are now peeling and stained, and even the stained red hearts on the front doors are a pale pink.

Hanna Reinholt

Female Human Friar, ex-Initiate

Hanna is a short, portly woman with thinning blonde hair and wide, plain features. She wears a shapeless white smock, but it's spotted with stains. The red heart patch has come free and hangs from a few threads. While talking to others, she unconsciously picks at the heart. Hanna stinks of kvas and grime.

Insanity Points: 1

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
30	40	35 (3)	37 (3)	36	41	43	46

Skills: Academic Knowledge (History, Theology) (Int), Charm (Fel), Common Knowledge (the Empire, Kislev) (Fel), Gossip (Fel), Heal (Int +20), Outdoor Survival (Int), Perception (Int), Read/Write (Int), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int +10), Speak Language (Classical, Kislevarin) (Int)
Talents: Excellent Vision, Lightning Reflexes, Public Speaking, Seasoned Traveller, Suave, Very Strong

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 13
Weapons: Hand Weapon (Club) (1d10+3)

Trappings

Hanna wears soiled vestments stained with vomit and food, and she reeks of alcohol. She has a healing draught somewhere in her shrine, probably where she left her icon of the Goddess. Her proudest possession is her drinking habit, which she indulges whenever she gets the chance.

Using the Shrine

Hanna keeps the doors locked and emerges only to buy kvas from Tomorov's. Should the PCs come calling, there's a 10% chance Hanna is out and about, and every 10 minutes thereafter, there's a cumulative 10% chance she'll return. Even if present, she doesn't answer the door no matter how hard a person pounds on it, unless she hears unaccented Reikspiel, to which she rushes to the doors to see her fellow countrymen.

Hanna is the PCs' best source of information regarding the timeline of the recent diseases, as well as regarding Piotr Tomorov and Anya. However, she is unlikely to speak to anyone, unless he is from Ostland or succeeds at an **Easy (+20) Intimidate Test** or **Routine (+10) Charm Test**.

What can you tell us about the sickness? I don't know. It is the work of the Dark Gods, I think—it must be. But how…how could Shallya allow such suffering? <She begins to quietly weep.> It began soon after those ridiculous Crusaders began to arrive.

Have you attempted to help anyone? I did, at first. It seems so strange, so… unpredictable. I fear it may be the work of the Dark Gods. As soon as I helped one of them get back on their feet, they fell victim to another sickness.

"Them"? Yes, the Crusaders. They mostly have it, but some townsfolk are catching it, too. Oh. Oh, my. You don't suppose… Perhaps it is Shallya's judgement on those poor deluded people for following that false child prophet instead of the true teachings? <A spark of hope appears in her eyes but is quickly extinguished.>

Does anyone still come to worship? Most are afraid to come out among the Crusaders and the other strangers. Tomorov used to come every day. He'd bring me nice things. He's a gentle soul. Too bad about his…well, his everything. <At this, she shudders in remembrance of the man's disgusting form.> Oh. And Anya.

Anya comes to see you? Well, she came more for guidance and to cry on my shoulder—the poor girl. She was afraid her father would make her marry against her will. She wouldn't tell me who. But she said she hated him. And then she'd cry some more and beg forgiveness for feeling hate. <At this, she chuckles darkly.> She reminds me of me, before I came to this hell.

Do you know anything about the One You Do Not Speak Of? The who? I'm sorry, I only came here a few years ago. These poor folk have so many strange superstitions; I cannot keep them all straight. A few months before I got here, I heard they held a festival like this one, I think. I don't know what it was all about, but people mentioned it—or rather, tried their best not to—strange, strange folk.

7. Olav's Curiosities

Back a bit from the main road and buried beneath a jumble of small homes stands a rather unimpressive building. No sign announces the place's purpose, though a Khazalid rune of an "O" darkens the heavy wooden door. Like many places in Zhidovsk, this building has a peaked roof covered in slate tiles. Small, leering, Daemonic faces stare out from shadowy places where the roof hangs over the exterior walls, and if one stares at the wooden slats of the walls, odd faces and whorls appear in the grains.

This place is Olav's Curiosities. A private man with a mysterious past, Olav came to Zhidovsk twenty years ago. He built his shop in just three months, and shortly after, wagons from Praag, laden with crates, boxes, and barrels arrived. Mute workers unloaded the cargo, gently carrying the goods inside. Two weeks later, the workers took the empty wagons and left town.

Since coming to town, Olav has more or less kept to himself. Those locals who have braved a visit found his shop full of odd bits of rubbish, remnants from battlefields, books, old weapons, pieces of armour, and a variety of other curiosities. Most people have enough junk in their own homes, so Olav has never done brisk business, but he doesn't seem to care.

Olav was a decorated kossar, having earned his fame and fortune in the last Chaos Incursion. But when the forces of the Ruinous Powers were driven north, Olav lost his taste for battle. He sold his medals, his horse, and wandered the oblast in search of some meaning. He stumbled onto an old battlefield and found many strange treasures. Drawn to seek out more troves, he traded some of his findings for a cart and began his new life as a collector of junk. He stored many of his goods in Praag, where he had family, but people began to complain about weird happenings near his warehouse. So, Olav left his city, hired porters, and drifted west, where he began a new life in Zhidovsk. At least, that's the story. For characters interested in junk, they can find their heart's fill of it here. Olav has all sorts of rubbish, mostly broken and worthless belongings (find the item you like the least in *Old World Armoury,* break it, and charge half the normal price).

The PCs are likely to first encounter Olav hovering outside the council meeting that Tomorov calls. Finding his home thereafter is fairly easy.

Olav Pendestäg

Male Gospodar Bone Picker, ex-Kossar

Olav is a large man, clearing six-and-a-half feet tall, and he weighs at least 300 pounds. He has a thick mane of black hair and craggy features mostly hidden behind a thick moustache and beard. He wears a thick woollen shirt and breeches, and when he ventures out, which is rare, he's not without a fur cap and a long fur coat. He's unfriendly and terse. He's quick to reply and does so with finality, his words laced with contempt. Few like Olav.

Insanity Points: 2

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
45	38	44 (4)	41 (4)	34	28	47	28

Skills: Charm (Fel), Common Knowledge (Kislev) (Int +10), Consume Alcohol (T +10), Dodge Blow (Ag), Drive (S), Evaluate (Int), Gamble (Int), Gossip (Fel), Haggle (Fel), Outdoor Survival (Int), Perception (Int +10), Search (Int +10), Speak Language (Kislevarin) (Int +10)
Talents: Acute Hearing, Coolheaded, Hardy, Luck, Specialist Weapon Group (Two-handed), Strike to Injure, Warrior Born

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 14
Armour (Medium): Mail Coat, Leather Jack and Leggings (Arms 1, Body 3, Legs 3)
Weapons: Bow with 10 Arrows (1d10+3; CV+1; Range 24/48; Reload Half), Great Weapon (Two-handed Axe) (1d10+4; CV+1; Impact, Slow)

Trappings

Olav owns the curiosity shop and all its contents and secrets. An old cart moulders out back, holding three empty sacks in its bed.

Using Olav

Olav did not settle here randomly. Nor is he merely a shopkeeper. He is an insane but useful ex-soldier who can answer a great many of the PCs' questions—if they think to ask him. For details, see **Event 5: The Coming of the Champions** on page 209.

8. Vampire Encampment

An unsettling quiet hangs in the air just north of the town, where a dozen or so wagons, carts, coaches, and carriages stand at the ready. Black tents stand pitched around the perimeter, and heavily cloaked guards stand mutely, watching out of the shadows that conceal their faces. This area is the Vampire Encampment; here, representatives of the five major bloodlines have gathered to welcome the Champion of Night and crown him as their leader.

Ordinarily, one would expect such a gathering to be brimming with violence, especially considering that most of the Vampires are vying against each other. What keeps the conflict in check is that the Vampires can sense reawakened powers from aeons past, and the legends of Nagash's deception haven't been forgotten. All have set aside their grudges and ambitions, for now, to watch and wait for the final signs and then make the final journey to the boy to usher in the new era spoken of so long ago. Despite their willingness to set aside their current conflicts, they clearly demarcate their private encampments, and should any of a rival bloodline cross, violence is soon to follow.

This place is unwelcome, and there are 1d5–1 (minimum of 1) Vampires of each bloodline, plus their entourages, which consists of Skeletons, Zombies, Ghouls, and an assortment of other hideous Undead creatures. In addition, any other Vampires presented in previous adventures that have survived their encounters with the PCs are here as well.

Using the Vampire Encampment

This area could be completely neutral toward the PCs or could be a death-trap, depending on their behaviour throughout the previous portions of the adventure. You should develop a list of the surviving Vampires (for a refresher, see the **Introduction**, **Chapters II**, **III**, **IV**, **V**, **VI**, and **VII**), their likely reactions and attitudes toward the PCs, and the resources the Vampires have to bring to bear against the PCs. Actions here could escalate later encounters with the Vampires and their minions within the Womb or in the woods on the way there, or actions could make later encounters much easier, if the PCs come out on top and weaken their Undead foes ahead of time. Most importantly, clever PCs might use the various bloodlines' disagreements to cause dissent and infighting among them, turning the camp into, quite literally, a bloodbath. Those who have caught the eye of the Von Carstein called Valin (likely found in **Area 1. Taal's Teat**) might have particular success manipulating the circumstances—and possibly even his aid if they play their cards right.

Finally, the PCs may have previously decoded sacred power words of the old Nehekharan gods in **Chapter VII**. Characters uttering these divine curses near the Vampire Encampment will be noticed, even if the words are only whispered.

Typical Blood Dragon

These Vampires are hulking warriors, hidden inside their magnificent crimson full plate.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
68	45	64 (6)	65 (6)	58 (68)	40	70	51

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Genealogy/Heraldry, History, Strategy/Tactics) (Int), Charm (Fel), Command (Fel +10), Common Knowledge (Bretonnia, the Empire, Kislev) (Int), Dodge Blow (Ag +10), Evaluate (Int), Gossip (Fel), Intimidate (S), Magical Sense (WP), Perception (Int), Ride (Ag +10), Scale Sheer Surface (S), Search (Int), Speak Language (Breton, Kislevarin, Reikspiel) (Int), Torture (Fel)
Talents: Disarm, Lightning Parry, Specialist Weapon Group (Cavalry, Two-handed), Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure, Strike to Stun
Traits: Blood Gift (Blademaster, Blood Drain, Natural Necromancer, Pass for Human, Vampires' Curse), Frightening, Keen Senses, Natural Weapons (Claws, Fangs), Night Vision, Undead

Combat

Attacks: 3; **Movement:** 5; **Wounds:** 22
Magic: 1
Armour (Heavy): Full Plate Armour (Head 5, Arms 5, Body 5, Legs 5)
Weapons: Fangs (1d10+7; CV+1), Claws (1d10+7; CV +1), Hand Weapon (1d10+7; CV +1), Lance if mounted (1d10+8; CV+1; Fast, Impact, Tiring), Shield (1d10+5; CV +1)

Typical Lahmian

Seductive and deadly, Lahmians are adept at infiltrating Human societies.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
61	40	60 (6)	60 (6)	69	48	70	69

Skills: Academic Knowledge (the Arts, Genealogy/Heraldry, History, Necromancy, Philosophy) (Int), Channelling (WP), Charm (Fel +20), Command (Fel), Common Knowledge (the Empire, Kislev, Tilea) (Int), Concealment (Ag), Disguise (Fel +20), Dodge Blow (Ag), Evaluate (Int +20), Gossip (Fel +20), Haggle (Int +20), Magical Sense (WP), Perception (Int +10), Performer (Dancer, Singer) (Fel), Prepare Poison (Int +10), Read/Write (Int), Ride (Ag), Search (Int), Shadowing (Ag), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Arcane Language (Magick) (Int), Speak Language (Kislevarin, Reikspiel, Tilean) (Int), Torture (Fel)
Talents: Dark Magic, Etiquette, Petty Magic (Arcane), Public Speaking, Quick Draw, Schemer, Specialist Weapon Group (Parrying)
Traits: Blood Gifts (Blood Drain, Domination, Natural Necromancer, Pass for Human, Vampires' Curse), Frightening, Keen Senses, Natural Weapons (Claws, Fangs), Undead

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 6; **Wounds:** 20
Magic: 1; Dark Magic, Petty Magic (Arcane)
Weapons: Fangs (1d10+6), Claws (1d10+6), Hand Weapon (Sword) (1d10+6), Main Gauche (1d10+3; Balanced, Defensive)

Typical Necrarch

These Vampires are reeking, skeletal beings, their bodies barely held together by ligaments but minds that remain evilly keen.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
51	41	61 (6)	65 (6)	62	58	75	15

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Astronomy, Magic, Necromancy) (Int +10), Academic Knowledge (Genealogy/Heraldry, History) (Int), Channelling (WP +10), Charm (Fel), Command (Fel), Common Knowledge (any three) (Int), Concealment (Ag), Dodge Blow (Ag), Evaluate (Int), Magical Sense (WP), Perception (Int), Prepare Poison (Int +10), Read/Write (Int +10), Ride (Ag), Search (Int), Shadowing (Ag), Silent Move (Ag), Sleight of Hand (Ag), Speak Arcane Language (Magick) (Int +10), Speak Language (any four) (Int), Torture (Fel)
Talents: Aethyric Attunement, Dark Lore (Necromancy), Dark Magic, Fast Hands, Lesser Magic (*dispel*, *magic lock*), Meditation, Petty Magic (Arcane)
Traits: Blood Gifts (Blood Drain, Master of the Black Arts, Natural Necromancer, Vampire's Curse), Keen Senses, Natural Weapons (Claws, Fangs), Night Vision, Terrifying, Undead

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 6; **Wounds:** 20
Magic: 2; Dark Lore (Necromancy), *dispel, magic lock,* Petty Magic (Arcane)
Weapons: Claws (1d10+6), Fangs (1d10+6)

Typical Strigoi

These Vampires are desperate creatures, hated by both the living and the dead. They lack any semblance to the Humans they once were.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
63	31	67 (6)	66 (6)	65	39	67	17

Skills: Command (Fel), Common Knowledge (any one) (Int), Concealment (Ag +10), Dodge Blow (Ag), Magical Sense (WP), Perception (Int +10), Search (Int), Shadowing (Ag +10), Silent Move (Ag +10), Speak Language (any two) (Int), Torture (Fel)
Talents: Rover, Strike Mighty Blow
Traits: Blood Gifts (Bat Form, Blood Drain, Natural Necromancer, Vampire's Curse), Frenzy, Frightening, Keen Senses, Natural Weapons (Claws, Fangs), Night Vision, Undead

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 6; **Wounds:** 24
Magic: 1
Weapons: Claws (1d10+7), Fangs (1d10+7)

Typical Von Carstein

These Vampires are arrogant, charismatic, and terribly dangerous.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
65	42	62 (6)	63 (6)	56 (66)	45	70	65

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Genealogy/Heraldry, History, Necromancy) (Int), Channelling (WP), Charm (Fel +10), Command (Fel +10), Common Knowledge (any three) (Int), Dodge Blow (Int), Evaluate (Int), Gossip (Fel +10), Intimidate (S), Magical Sense (WP), Perception (Int), Ride (Ag), Scale Sheer Surface (S), Search (Int), Shadowing (Ag), Speak Arcane Language (Magick) (Int), Speak Language (any three) (Int), Torture (Fel)
Talents: Dark Magic, Disarm, Master Orator, Petty Magic (Arcane), Public Speaking, Schemer, Specialist Weapon Group (Fencing, Parrying)
Traits: Blood Gift (Blood Drain, Natural Necromancer, Pass for Human, Transfixing Gaze, Vampire's Curse), Frightening, Keen Senses, Natural Weapons (Claws, Fangs), Night Vision, Undead

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 6; **Wounds:** 21
Magic: 1
Armour (Medium): Full Mail Armour (Head 3, Arms 3, Body 3, Legs 3)
Weapons: Claws (1d10+6), Fangs (1d10+6), Main Gauche (1d10+4; Defensive, Balanced), Rapier (1d10+6; Fast)

— Events in the Village —

Each of the locations described previously play a part in the puzzle that is the doom of Zhidovsk. Though the town's fate has been predetermined—and occurs regardless of the PCs' presence—the PCs actions can affect the number of lives lost. More importantly, however, before the village's destruction, it has something to offer the PCs: the location of Karl, some insight into his purpose here, and perhaps even a few weapons to use against those who would consume him. The events that occur in the village are presented in **Timeline: The Doom of Zhidovsk**; each numbered event in the timeline is described in more detail hereafter.

Event 1: False Ice

As the PCs wander into town, the first thing they see is a large, burly youth, with a vacuous look about him, carrying two sloshing buckets of water on a stick. He seems to hate this duty but not as much as he despises the horridly ugly dog that follows him. It is pitch black, seems incredibly dirty and sticky, and its hair is matted with something shiny—perhaps ice? Regardless, it trails the water-bearing youth with eager tenacity, running ahead of him, barking, jumping at the buckets, and trailing along behind again. Strangely, the youth does not yell at or knock away the dog, nor does he step out of its way. Rather, he keeps his eyes glued to the sky, as if pretending the dog is not there. Finally, as the PCs' and the youth's paths intersect, the dog makes a mighty leap, dislodging one of the buckets and forcing the youth to spin, about, loosing his load into a cascade of water that douses him, the dog, and perhaps any unlucky PCs.

Yet, even with this most egregious of offences, he does not utter a word or lift a hand against the dog. As it laps up the water now seeping into the mud of the dirt path, he merely sighs, lifts up the stick and buckets, and begins to retrace his steps back to the river.

The youth pointedly ignores the PCs if they ask about the dog or refer to it in any way. If the PCs ask where they might be able to find food or lodging, he merely grunts and nods toward the village square.

If the PCs pay any attention to the dog at all, it becomes enamoured with them and shadows their every move. The dog's adoration, of course, highlights the fact none of the villagers look at the dog, creating very strange circumstances whenever the PCs attempt to talk to, well, anyone. By their association with the creature, the PCs are assumed to be cursed with ill luck, messengers of the One They Do Not Speak Of, or both.

Characters succeeding on an **Easy (+20) Charm Animal Test** or a **Challenging (–10) Fellowship Test** can befriend the animal. Examining the dog reveals it is, indeed, very ugly, covered in black paint, and has bits of glass glued to its fur. Cleaning the animal up requires a few hours of scrubbing, careful use of a sharp knife, and tons of patience. Once cleaned up, the dog is the character's friend forever. Even with the dog being revealed as not being Black Ice, the damage is done, and the villagers proceed with their plans to sacrifice Anya to the Black Witch.

Event 2: Search Parties

This event takes place as the PCs rise from their first night of rest in Zhidovsk, probably as they emerge from the doorway of Old Cat Yevid. It consists of several mounted figures from the Vampire encampment thundering forth, as they do every day, to search for Karl. In addition to the more pompous display by the Von Carsteins, more subtle, robed figures (the other Vampire bloodlines, or their more Human-like minions) can be seen wandering forth on foot, as well as coming and going throughout the day.

Event 3: Council Meeting

This event should ideally occur while the PCs are questioning Crusaders in the village square or are seeking food or information at Taal's Teat. A handful of village elders and craftsmen make their way through the village square, heading toward the pitiable Shrine of Shallya, and causing quite a stir among the local populace. A few follow in anticipation, but most simply nod sagely, their faces set in a look of grim determination. Leading the town council toward their destination is Piotr Tomorov, a false look of concern pasted onto his face like a cheap mask, and following them, as if afraid to be seen, is the large and fairly obvious figure of Olav Pendestäg.

Though the meeting is private, local villagers quickly learn the gist of what occurred, and conversations in **Taal's Teat** (see page 200) can thereafter relay what occurred there.

Event 4: Hurried Festival Preparation

The day after the council meeting, what few toughs and brutes the village can muster are sent into the village square to begin encouraging the Crusaders to clear out. The particularly weak move along, clustering instead in the alleyways and fronts of buildings, where the building owners suffer them in terrified silence. The still healthy and robust stand their ground with the obstinacy only religious zealots can claim, leading to shouting matches and occasional tousles. After several hours of work, about half of the square is cleared of living occupants, and the toughs decide this will have to do. Of course, there are still the dozens of corpses to clear out. Meanwhile, village girls are sent to decorate the town and the trees along the trail heading north with coarsely woven ribbons stained with a pale urine-coloured yellow. Finally, the village's few remaining sheep and pigs are gathered up and sent to the slaughter.

Event 5: The Coming of the Champions

This event occurs if the PCs decide to follow up on the strange, six-and-a-half-foot tall, hulking figure that tailed the council members on the way to their meeting and hung about outside the shrine while it took place inside. Alternatively, this event may occur if the PCs wander the town and simply find his shop.

Olav knows nothing of the Crusade of the Child—being oblivious to anything not having to do with the Black Witch—even with hordes of newcomers in his town. He is bitter and hopeless, and he gives a chilly reception to any who come knocking. That attitude swiftly changes to a combination of obeisance, gratitude, hope, and childlike-yet-elderly enthusiasm when he realises the PCs are "The Ones Who Were Foretold." At that point, he summarises his true history, the details of which are presented below, and he introduces the PCs to the "relics" he has kept "in good faith" for their arrival. A few examples of Olav's attitude in response to various questions are listed here.

Questions regarding his presence outside the council meeting, the festival, or the "nomination" of Anya. He assumes the PCs are merely spies for the Black Witch, come to ferret out what he knows, and he answers all of their questions vaguely, continually jabbing a three-fingered hand sign at them as he speaks.

Questions that include: the phrase "Black Witch" rather than the "One We Do Not Speak Of," statements suggesting the PCs have braved many dangers to come here, or concern for Anya. Olav hesitates, making his three-fingered sign less emphatically as he speaks. He pursues these lines of conversation with faint hope, asking for more details from the PCs and answering any questions with more questions of his own.

Outright statements of hatred for the Black Witch or Black Ice, concern for Kislev or the Empire, or disgust for the villagers, preceded by the other listed questions. Olav gapes for a full minute before his manner and bearing changes from cold disdain or hesitant curiosity to one of comical delight. He immediately begins to grovel at the PCs' feet, regaling them with the tale of his hunt of the Black Witch over the past three decades. Once he has spouted all of the information he can muster, he drags them up a rickety ladder, where a single item sits in wait for each PC (in one of the strange coincidences that suggest the Gods truly do watch over the people, Olav's deranged mind guessed correctly at the number of "champions" who would arrive).

Requests that the PCs be led to the lake above the Womb. Olav cannot overcome his fear from the first time he saw proof of the Black Witch's existence 13 years ago, nor the shame of letting one of the village girls be sacrificed on that night. He refuses to guide the PCs to the lake but gives them directions: head east until they reach the river, then follow it upstream until they find the cave. *"Easy as pie,"* he says, sheepishly.

If the PCs discover and ask directions of Olav too early, you may have him insist they spend the night with him in fasting and meditation before he gives them the simple directions to the lake; thus, he releases them upon their journey just as the festival gets underway, and the PCs are sure to experience the chaos that ensues.

Timeline: The Doom of Zhidovsk

Time	Event
–500 years	The Black Witch flees to the Crags of Shargun and hides within the Womb.
–400 years	The Black Witch begins to exert her influence on the town of Zhidovsk.
–350 years	Black Ice first begins to roam the Crags, attacking townsfolk who stray too close to the Womb.
–300 years	The first maiden is sacrificed to the lake of the Womb.
–23 years	Olav Pendestäg arrives in Zhidovsk.
–13 years	Olav realizes the secret of the Black Witch.
–3 years	The last sacrifice to the Black Witch is made.
–2-1/2 years	Hanna establishes the Shrine to Shallya in Zhidovsk.
–1 month	Karl arrives in Zhidovsk and holes up there, staying with a new household each night.
–3 weeks	Karl's first followers catch up with him, and word spreads that he has been found.
–2 weeks	Karl's dreams grow stronger, and he begins to take his bodyguards into the woods to explore the area beneath the Crags; Karl's followers continue to filter into Zhidovsk. The first of the Vampires, those who do not wish him harm, enter Zhidovsk; the Chaos Organ orbits the town and begins to spread its sickness.
–1 week	Karl disappears beneath the waters of the lake, and his bodyguards are slaughtered by the creatures of the Black Witch. The corpses wash downstream to rot. The rest of the Vampires begin to arrive at the town and start their search for Karl; the Chaos Organ descends into the well.
–4 days	Tomorov, seeing his town descending into plague and paranoia, decides it is time to get out; he paints his dog up to look like Black Ice, sets it loose, and meets with Anya's father one last time to convince him to force her to marry him.
–2 days	The Wood Elves arrive and begin to search the woods for Karl.
0 day	PCs arrive in town (or pass it by on their way to the Crags).
	Event 1: False Ice
+1 day	**Event 2: Search Parties**
	Event 3: Council Meeting
+2 days	**Event 4: Hurried Festival Preparation**
	Event 5: The Coming of the Champions
+3 days	**Event 6: The Festival of Horrors**
	Event 7: The Unhinging of Hanna
	Event 8: The Cleansing

The Relics of the Champions

Of course, the "relics" are nothing more than random weapons, armour, tomes, lanterns, and other junk Olav picked up on his travels. Yet, each one should seem ideally suited to the PC to whom he bequeaths it: The Dwarf Troll slayer receives a Troll-tooth necklace, the devout Human priest is bequeathed a holy lantern with her Goddess's symbol on it, the Elven hunter is granted an arrow with fletching taken from the wings (supposedly) of a griffon, and so on. Each item is accompanied by a tale from Olav as to how it was found, what role it plays in the coming battle, and how it reflects (uncannily) the character's hidden fears, hopes, and history.

Do the items truly have any power? That is up to you. Perhaps each one grants a Fate Point, useful only at the conclusion of this adventure. Or each item might grant a clue to the mystery of the Womb. Or they might be exactly what the PCs imagine they are—worthless trinkets.

Olav's History

Olav began his retirement simply enough. After a few months of seeking out new troves of junk, he came across a case of old scrolls that told of a creature called the Black Witch. Having once hailed from Praag, he found her tale to be particularly disturbing and spent several seasons haranguing scholars and wandering the hills of Kislev, searching for monks and old folk who had heard of her. Finally, after much hardship, he stumbled upon a reference to the Crags of Shargun and a tale of an old wandering friar who told of a "*dark lady who slept beneath waters, which sleep beneath the Crags, which sleep beneath the skies.*"

He visited the town of Zhidovsk whilst searching for this place. His first visit was, coincidentally, upon the day of their great festival, and he watched as a pretty young lass was escorted out into the woods. Several days later, whilst wandering the woods at the base of the Crags, he came to the dark waters concealing the Womb of the Black Witch and saw a strange serpent emerge from the water, the girl's dress in its mouth.

Horrified but determined, he sent for his belongings and began to construct his home. He spent 10 years attempting to live undercover as a shopkeeper, all the while scouting out the Crags, the village, and the woods. The brave ex-warrior saw himself as an independent witch hunter, a saviour of Kislev. When the festival came again in the next decade, Olav concealed himself in the woods outside of town and followed the small party that escorted that festival's sacrifice toward the lake of the Womb. He saw her left behind, tied to the log at the other side of the lake, and he clutched his trusty axe, his fingers clenching and unclenching its haft, working up the courage to rush out upon the shore, paddle across, and rescue the fair maiden.

That courage never came. As Olav watched the piteously wailing girl, night came, and the waters of the lake of the Womb began to ripple. Slowly, horrifically, a fair woman emerged from the waters, striding forth, unclothed except in slick mud and with lakeweed woven throughout her hair. She walked forth to the manacled girl—whose shrieking had inexplicably stopped—and embraced her. Then, unlocking the manacles with a wave of her hand, the woman from the lake took the lass by the hand, turned, and led her into the waters. It was at that moment Olav's sanity left him, for the face of the lady from the lake was none other than the girl sacrificed 10 years ago. Neither the face nor the body of the girl had aged, yet both seemed somehow horrible, white, and wrinkled, as the fingers and toes of one who spent too long bathing. The other girl, the current sacrifice, followed her down into the water soundlessly.

Since that night 10 years ago, Olav has not left his home if he could help it, and he never ventures forth into the woods or toward the waters that hide the Womb. He has determined that the Black Witch must be the same creature that the villagers call the One We Do Not Speak Of and knows she is a dire danger to Kislev. He is certain all the villagers are under the Black Witch's control, and whenever speaking with others, he wards himself with a strange hand motion he believes fends off her gaze. He also believes Black Ice is always watching him from the forest, and he subsists on small game he traps in nearby glades, always rushing out to check them at the first light of dawn, when he believes Black Ice cannot venture forth.

In all this time, he has read and re-read the scrolls that first led him here. He has rooted through his junk, cleaning and researching it, finding amidst the piles of goods several things he is certain are true charms and relics. He has set aside these items and kept them in wait, holding them for the day the "Ones Who Were Foretold" would come knocking on his door. Such heroes are not spoken of in the stories or prophecies that first led Olav here, but his unhinged mind has convinced him such heroes do exist. Because he discovered he is not up to the task of defeating her, he has conjured up an image of heroes of old, like the adventuring parties of childhood tales, who he believes are destined to come to him for help in destroying her. This delusion puts him in the role of the old wise man, the elder advisor who guides the brave, young champions.

When the champions did not show up three years ago, to stop the next sacrifice, Olav began to lose hope. But now that the PCs are here, he is as a man (or madman) reborn.

Event 6: The Festival of Horrors

On the morning of the third day, the festival of the One We Do Not Speak Of begins. The town's populace gathers at the southern end of town; the girls and young women stand in the middle of the crowd, while the men surround them in a ring. The men bear baskets filled with clods of dirt and mud. They march forward in unison, the women chanting an ancient dirge of appeasement, while the men reach into the baskets at the end of each verse of the chant, casting the dirt about themselves, smearing it on the buildings they pass, and generally making a mess.

Once they reach the village square, the two genders separate into two lines and begin to spiral around the town well. The women walk clockwise, continuing to chant, while the men walk counter-clockwise, now flinging the dirt directly at the women. As each woman is struck with dirt, she walks forward, taking the basket of mud and grime from the man that hit her. As she does so, she ceases singing, and the man from whom she took the basket takes up the chant in her stead. Once all of the baskets have been exchanged, the council elders bring the sacrifice—often bound and gagged—out from one of the homes nearest the village square and into the middle of the crowd. She is walked once around the circle of men, then once around the circle of women, and finally taken once around the well, inside both circles. Finally, a bucket is raised from the well, and the sacrifice's head is forced into the full bucket for a few moments, signifying both a cleansing and her future drowning in the lake of the One We Do Not Speak Of.

After this strange episode of dirt and water, the genders of the town traditionally switch places, and the procession continues through the northern half of town, with the women on the outside flinging dirt, the men on the inside chanting, and furthest inside are the sacrifice and the village elders. Once the group reaches the northern edge of town, masked men (the village's strongest and most menacing young workers, armed with what few weapons the townsfolk possess) take charge of the young sacrifice and finish escorting her to the lake.

Of course, that's how it's supposed to happen. But this time, even stranger events occur. First of all, the Shrine to Shallya seems to have collapsed sometime in the early morning. Second, Piotr Tomorov, the council member who seemed so eager to initiate the festival, is nowhere to be found. Third,

the village square is speckled with a few fresh corpses that died after the cleanup of the day before and is surrounded by pathetic and desperate Crusaders who see the festival as perhaps encroaching on their right to worship the Child in the way they see most fit (in this case, laying about and slowly dying). They interrupt the procession by stepping in the way, calling out insults, forcefully pulling men and women out of the procession, and so on. Fourth, and most importantly, when the bucket is brought up to dunk the sacrifice, it is not empty. It bears the Chaos Organ that once resided in Tobias and that has been causing the illness plaguing this town. The creature, alarmed at its sudden emergence into the grey light of dawn and disturbed at being removed from what it thinks is proximity to Karl, lashes out in fury, killing a good portion of the council members who stand nearby. Worst of all, the face of Tobias occasionally emerges from the blob of flesh, his voice screaming in pain and confusion as the tumours that make up his body grow, burst, are consumed, and then reform.

The villagers react with all of the horror and confusion one might expect, trampling one another in alarm and being sure the end of times has come. Anya, the sacrifice, stumbles about, desperately seeking to escape her fate. When she catches sight of the PCs, she recognises them as sympathetic outsiders who might rescue her from the hateful villagers, as well as skilled warriors who might defend her from the Chaos Organ. Thus, she runs to their side—at the same moment the masked escorts come running from the northern end of the village to see what the trouble is.

The PCs are likely to attack the Chaos Organ for no other reason than parts of it look and sound like Tobias. If they do not attack it—and they are anywhere nearby—the Chaos Organ singles them out and oozes forward to the attack, assaulting any intervening villagers with its randomly emerging pseudopodia along the way. Meanwhile, the PCs, as armed outsiders who have likely clustered around Anya, are assumed by the approaching masked guards to be interfering with the festival. The crowds of people obscure the Chaos Organ from their sight, so they surge forward into the mob to attack the PCs and regain possession of Anya.

The festival is not performed in isolation, however. As the festival begins, the Vampires and the Wood Elves circle closer to the lake of the Womb, encroaching on the Black Witch's territory. Black Ice makes tentative attacks against both groups but is repelled, first by the Undead minions of the Vampires and then by the biting arrows of the Elven archers. Confused and compelled by his mistress to do something about the encroachment on her territory by outsiders, the beast does what he has traditionally done: he goes to the village and stalks its streets. Thus, as soon as the Chaos Organ emerges from the well and begins slaughtering girls and boys, a huge canine appears, its dark hair mottled with ice and its green eyes glowering. Ironically, the creature has Tomorov's dog in its huge maw, as if to say that here, at last, is the true evil the town should fear. It drops the dog's corpse and bounds forth into the mob, killing indiscriminately. Once it sees Anya, the flower-bedecked sacrifice, it instinctively zeroes in on her.

Thus, the PCs must deal with Black Ice, the Chaos Organ, more than 100 panicking villagers, several dozen confused, diseased, and insane cultists, and a few well-meaning but thick-headed masked guards. At the best, any combat rolls should take a –10 penalty due to the confusion, surging bodies, and recently flung mud. At worst, the PCs could be completely overwhelmed by enemy combatants all converging upon them at once.

Masked Escorts (4)

Woodsmen

These masked men are just following orders. They execute the task at hand with blind obedience.

Insanity Points: 2

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
36	27	49 (4)	41 (4)	32	29	22	32

Skills: Common Knowledge (Kislev) (Int), Concealment (Ag), Gossip (Fel), Perception (Int), Scale Sheer Surface (S), Secret Language (Ranger Tongue) (Int), Secret Signs (Ranger) (Int), Set Trap (Ag), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Language (Kislevarin) (Int)

To Sleep, Perchance to Dream...

If the PCs found Lanfranchi's triptych panels in **Chapter VII** but haven't yet discovered the Nehekharan power words, you may wish to give them one last hint before the final day of the campaign. During the night, one of the characters who sought out Madame Yaga in Talagaad is visited by a dream.

You find yourself in a dark place, but a strangely familiar one. It's the seer Madame Yaga's hut, which you visited in Talagaad. Yaga is shrouded in shadow, barely visible, but her creaky voice is unmistakable:

"You are close now. Understand that sometimes, you must be like your enemy to defeat her. Numbers hold great power. Do not forget the weapons you already have."

You may allow the dreamer to ask Yaga a few simple questions if the players are really struggling, but her answers should remain short and cryptic.

Talents: Resistance to Disease, Excellent Vision, Rover, Specialist Weapon Group (Two-Handed), Very Resilient

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 13
Armour (Light): Leather Jack (Arms 1, Body 1)
Weapons: Quarterstaff (1d10+3; Defensive, Pummelling)

Trappings

These fellows wear inscrutable masks.

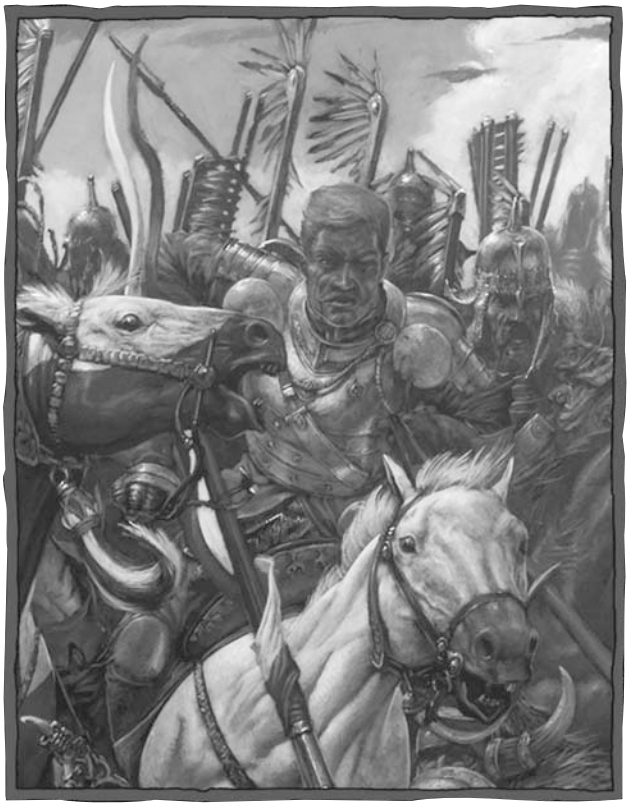
Event 7: The Unhinging of Hanna

In the midst of the festival, a **Challenging (–10) Perception Test** allows the PCs to notice the roof of the Shrine of Shallya seems to have caved, and the walls are sagging. This event is also an ideal episode to thrust upon any cowardly PCs who flee the confusion of the mob outside, as the festival degenerates into a melee of monsters and men. Regardless of how the PCs get here, any who investigate find the shrine in shambles. The roof has caved in, as if someone put too much weight on one of the support beams. Entering, they find a scene that is equal parts grisly and comic. Hanna—overwhelmed by sadness at the sacrifice of Anya to the Black Witch and feeling she failed the town—attempted to commit suicide. She stood upon the altar and knotted a sturdy rope (recognisable as one from Piotr Tomorov's shop) to the shrine's only horizontal beam. She apparently dangled for a few seconds before her weight and the flailing of her limbs caused the beam to loosen, which then brought the roof of the shrine sagging down. Hanna landed half on the altar, breaking one of her legs and causing massive internal bleeding. She died, painfully and alone, over the span of about 15 minutes, lying on the floor of the shrine. Her cries for help were drowned out by the chanting of the festival outside.

Most importantly, Hanna leaves a note (see **Handout #33**).

Event 9: The Cleansing

Regardless of whether or not anyone discovers Hanna's body and the note, destruction is on the way. The commander of the Winged Lancers in Praag received Hanna's message—she dispatched a message about the strange behaviour in the village weeks ago—and, seeing a chance to give his young, un-blooded troops a chance to swing their swords, decided the village needed to be cleansed—for the good of Kislev, of course. The headmistress of a small Shallyan Shrine in the city, who also received a copy of the note, pleaded with the commander to spare the villagers' lives but was jailed for



her trouble. The Winged Lancers have ridden for nearly a week and all the while have been regaled with tales of a village gone foul, wantonly serving a Chaos God and revelling in blood and corruption. Though the village may look normal and peaceful, they are told that they must nonetheless ignore their eyes and trust their hearts, putting every villager to the sword and every hovel to the torch.

What they find when they arrive allows them to trust their eyes just fine.

Corpses lie everywhere. Villagers and Crusaders run screaming. An enormous black dog, obviously bred from the depths of the Chaos Wastes, lies in the middle of the town square, its jaws around the throat of a beautiful young girl. A strange mass of flesh, bone, and hair, obviously a Daemon of Chaos, sags upon the ground. Strange, masked men lie bleeding here and there. And a motley assortment of warriors stands in the midst of it all.

Without hesitation, the Winged Lancers attack. They do not immediately pursue those who flee, focusing instead on destroying the village and trampling the many hapless Crusaders who cannot muster the energy to stand. Eventually, those Vampires still in the town hear the clamour and may send their minions into the fray, but given the time of attack, they are not likely to enter combat themselves. This fracas is the PCs' cue to get out and, assuming they have met with Olav, head toward the lake and get this horrid series of mishaps over with!

The Doom that Came to Zhidovsk

Male Gospodar Winged Lancers, ex-Outriders (30)

These grim riders have been ordered to destroy Zhidovsk and all who reside there.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
52	40	48 (4)	39 (3)	31 (41)	41	40	33

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Strategy/Tactics) (Int), Animal Care (Int), Common Knowledge (Kislev) (Int), Consume Alcohol (T +10), Dodge Blow (Ag), Gossip (Fel), Navigation (Int +10), Outdoor Survival (Int +10), Perception (Int +10), Ride (Ag +10), Search (Int), Secret Language (Battle Tongue) (Int), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Language (Kislevarin) (Int)

Talents: Coolheaded, Hardy, Orientation, Specialist Weapon Group (Cavalry, Entangling), Strike Mighty Blow

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 2; **Wounds:** 16

Armour (Heavy): Full Plate Armour (Head 5, Body 5, Arms 5, Legs 5)

Weapons: Hand Weapon (Scimitar) (1d10+5), Lance (+5; Fast, Impact, Tiring), Shield (1d10+3; Defensive, Special)

Trappings

The Winged Lancers wear heavy armour, and winged banners snap on their backs as they ride their Kislevite warhorses into the fray.

Aftermath

If after all this time, the PCs still do not know where Karl is, several clues can be presented to them. As the Chaos Organ dies, Tobias's face might emerge from its flesh, announcing *"The Child…the Child is in the water."* Alternatively, Olav may finally emerge from his hut, point toward the PCs, and announce, "*You, it is you at last, the champions! You must go north to the Crags and find the lake of the Womb. She is there! He suckles at her dark teat!"* He is then immediately ridden down and killed by a Winged Lancer. A wounded Black Ice might retreat toward the lake beneath the Crags, submerging as the PCs are hot on its trail. Finally, the Winged Lancers might actively pursue the PCs, corral them as they ride, and eventually chase them into the northern woods. Surrounded and hopeless, the PCs flee into the forest and stumble upon the lake just as the Wood Elves do.

Rewards

The player characters should gain about 250 or so experience points at the conclusion of this adventure, plus another 50 or so for good roleplaying.

Action	XP
Roleplaying interactions with villagers and the dog	10
Interviewing the cultists in the village square	10
Interviewing the townsfolk in Taal's Teat	10
Impressing Valin	15
Interrogating Tomorov	15
Tracking the source of the illness to the well	25
Interviewing Hanna	10
Accepting Olav's charge as the "champions"	40
Scouting the Vampire's encampment	20
Finding Hanna's body and note	10
Attempting to rescue Anya	50
Engaging the Chaos Organ, Black Ice, and the mob in battle	50 each
Getting the hell out of town	25

Chapter IX: Womb of the Black Witch

"A black lake! A woman in a black lake! B'ware! B'ware!"

—A Mad Woman in Altdorf

By Robert J. Schwalb

The end draws near. Having travelled across the breadth of the Empire, confronted awful Vampires, defeated foul Chaos abominations, and uncovered sinister plots and intrigues, the player characters are near the end of the long road to the *Thousand Thrones*. This final chapter carries the PCs to the conclusion of the adventure, where they confront the foul Black Witch in her watery redoubt.

Adventure Background

Throughout the many months, the Black Witch has orchestrated events, so she can complete the ritual to bind her essence into the body of her chosen vessel and free her spirit from the mouldering remains of her old decaying body. She's stalked young Karl's dreams, calling him to her from across the hundreds of miles, seducing him with promises of love, comfort, and a normal life. She has manipulated the prophecy of the Vampires, convincing these Undead the Time of a Thousand Thrones is upon them. Each player in her game has arrived, descended into the foetid waters of her "womb," and become lost in the cavernous tunnels of her lair. The Black Witch waits in the bowels of this place for Karl, who also wanders the corridors of madness, searching for the being he believes is his mother. Soon, he will find her, and when he does his personality will be destroyed utterly as the witch carves up his soul with the razors of her essence. Then, and only then, will the Black Witch permit the Vampires into the confines of her damp corridors, where she will drink their blood, becoming as a God.

Adventure Synopsis

This adventure is a dungeon crawl. The characters enter the lair of the Black Witch and contend with her minions and the other factions invested in the plot, whilst scouring the sodden tunnels for Karl. It begins with the characters approaching a pool of black water formed from the runoff from the peaks that tower overhead. The PCs see a small boat on the other side of the pool, tied off at the mouth of a narrow cleft that leads into darkness. Inside the cave are the Wood Elves who have come to kill Karl and put an end to the threat he poses, but they are stymied, unsure of where the entrance might lay.

The PCs may deal with the Elves or figure out the entrance is not so obvious, lying beneath the waters of the pool. Whether they forge a third, and perhaps final, alliance with the Wood Elves or not, the PCs eventually discover the way into the Womb and must brave the filthy waters and the horrid denizens protecting the entrance, to say nothing of the Nurglings swimming through the morass.

Eventually, the characters find the membrane that holds back the pool and push their way into the caverns of the Black Witch. Confronted with a veritable maze of twisting tunnels and rooms, the characters must search for the entrance to give them access to the inner sanctums, as well as find the keys to go through that entrance. Such explorations are not so easy, for these tunnels also hold searching Vampires, Ruprecht and his minions, the Black Witch's own creatures, and other gibbering terrors that crave the taste of warm, living flesh.

With luck or skill, the PCs may eventually reach the inner sanctum, where they confront the Black Witch and halt her evil plot. Here, they face her final guardians and must figure out how to destroy her essence, thus sparing the world from conquest at her hands.

Adventure Hooks

If the characters have come this far, they'll need little prompting to see this campaign to its end. They know what's at stake, and they should realise Karl must be prevented from reaching his "mother." Clues picked up from the events in Zhidovsk are the best way to transition the characters from **Chapter VIII** to **Chapter IX**. As most veteran GMs probably know, players can sometimes miss the obvious. Consider using any of the following hooks if the PCs are stumped.

If Anya lived through the Festival of Horrors, she volunteers to lead the characters to the Womb, knowing odd things happen there.

The characters can chase off a Ghoul who thought to make a meal from a struggling victim of the Festival of Horrors. He flees to the Womb, where he hopes, foolishly, that his master might save him from the righteous swords of the heroes.

Table 9–1: Timeline

Time	Event
9 hours left	The Winged Lancers sweep through Zhidovsk, butchering the Crusaders, Ghouls, and villagers in a spectacular display of violence.
8 hours left	Karl finds the Womb and slips into the brackish waters. Moments later, he climbs through the membrane and enters the tunnels.
8–7 hours left	The Vampires begin to arrive at the pool. Representatives of each of the five bloodlines scour the area and determine that the entrance must lie below the surface. They descend into the waters, find the membrane, and enter the tunnels.
7 hours left	Ruprecht and his Mutant allies find the place. After a few of his minions are destroyed by the eels, he summons a swarm of Nurglings to deal with the nuisances. He and his allies then enter the waters and then the caverns.
6 hours left	The Wood Elves find the cave.
5 hours left	The PCs presumably arrive.
4-1/2 hours left	Karl finds the inner sanctum.
4 hours left	The Black Witch possesses the boy.
3–1 hours left	The Vampires find their way to the inner sanctum every 30 minutes in the following order: the Strigoi and the Blood Dragon, Von Carsteins, Lahmians, and finally the Necrarchs.
1 hour left	Ruprecht collects the third and final key and heads on to witness the ritual.
0 hours left	The Black Witch completes the ritual, and the world begins its slow descent into death!

During the fight, one of the characters might spot a Wood Elf who withdraws, shaking his head, to the north. The Elf travels for a bit and is then ambushed by a pack of ravenous Ghouls who rip him to shreds at the shores of the pool.

Assuming the PCs can convince the Winged Lancers not to kill them (good luck!), one of the warriors is actually from this village. Though it pained him to kill old friends and family, he knows his duty. He tells the PCs about the dark pool, revealing that as a boy he saw Black Ice emerge from its waters. He gives the characters directions, but his courage, whilst impressive, is not enough for him to return to that accursed place.

A Race against Time

From the moment the Winged Lancers cleanse the village of Zhidovsk, the PCs have nine hours to leave the village, cross through the empty forest, find the Womb, make their way through the tunnels, and destroy the Black Witch. As the sands of the hourglass trickle down, certain events occur as listed on **Table 9-1**.

The Growing Taint

The Black Witch's Womb is rife with Chaos corruption, which only gets worse as she nears the completion of her ritual, in addition to Ruprecht's awful presence. The air is pregnant with change, and it has an insidious effect on any who linger here overlong. Topside, the stones around the pool have a tendency to scuttle about when not looked at directly, and the clouds overhead wheel and spin, forming eddies in the heavens. The black waters writhe with impossible hues, shifting ever so slightly in the light. It is a bastion of Chaos, and its malfeasance pollutes the lands around it.

Magical Sense

Characters who succeed on a **Magical Sense Test** perceive the area wriggling with neon green maggots topped with tiny Human faces. Unlike normal maggots, colour excepting, they crawl about on tiny Human hands that grip the gritty soil around the brackish waters. When trampled, they audibly pop, squirting ropes of bright blue guts in all directions.

Inside the womb, it's even worse. Each time a character tests Magical Sense, he must immediately succeed on a **Challenging (–10) Will Power Test** or gain 1 Insanity Point—such characters perceive the walls, ceiling, and floors to be made from dimpled flesh, infested with scuttling crustaceans armoured in green chitin. Pale hairs wave in the still air, while queer worms of leprous brown hue caper and tunnel through the meat. Every now and then, a deranged face presses against the "skin," shrieking silently, mouth open wide, tearing the epidermis and spraying ochre filth in all directions, before retreating into the depths of the walls.

Casting Rolls

Obviously, this area is suffused with *Dhar,* the energy of dark magic. All Casting Rolls made outside of the Womb, such as in the cave or on the shores of the pool, gain one Chaos Die. Recall, a Chaos Die is rolled with the Casting Roll, but it does not count toward the Casting Number. It counts only toward Tzeentch's Curse. Inside the womb, the effects of Chaos are far more pronounced. All Casting Rolls gain two Chaos Dice!

Mutations

So long as the characters do not ingest anything in or around the womb or have any open wounds, they are fine. However, the power of Chaos is insidious, and it worms its way into the characters by any means it can. Each hour the characters spend in the Womb, they must succeed on **Toughness Test**. On a failure, the character gains 1 mutation. Any time a character eats or drinks anything here or takes at least 1 Wound or Critical Hit, he must also pass a **Toughness Test** or pick up an unfriendly corruption. *WFRP* has a Chaos mutation table on page 229, and *Old World Bestiary* on page 79, but for maximum results and the most interesting options, check out *Tome of Corruption* pages 28-29. If you have *Tome of Corruption*, roll on the general tables, since all four Ruinous Powers watch the Womb with keen interest.

— Over the Hills & Through the Woods —

Provided the characters know which way to travel, the trip to the Womb is relatively uneventful and takes only about four solid hours of walking, say two and half if the characters run all the way—if the PCs do run all the way, they must succeed on **Toughness Tests** when they reach the pool, and on a failed test, the character takes a –10 penalty to all Weapon Skill, Ballistic Skill, Strength, Toughness, and Agility Tests (as well as all related skill tests) for 10 minutes. Horses are useless here since the trees become denser the further one goes, and the ground is too treacherous for steeds. Each hour or portion of an hour the characters travel, roll on **Table 9–2: Random Weirdness** to see what strangeness occurs. Re-roll or ignore duplicate results. If you're feeling cruel, make characters attempt **Will Power Tests** for the more odd results to avoid gaining 1 Insanity Point.

You might be tempted to seed the woods with all sorts of horrible creatures. While a fight with a few monsters might be fun, the characters need to be as fresh as possible before braving the depths of the pool. We advise you tuck away the impulse and save the extra combat encounters for the characters' long trip home.

Table 9–2: Random Weirdness

Roll	Result
01–10	*Smelly Dung!* The characters pass a heap of dung that defies all reason. Standing 20 feet tall, it is as if all the creatures for miles around had come to make donations here.
11–20	*Ominous Laughter:* A strange booming sound that resembles laughter echoes through the trees.
21–30	*Red Lightning:* A bolt of red, crackling electricity lances down from overhead and strikes a tree, causing it to explode in a shower of splinters. From the ruin of the stump, the PCs see it's wriggling with bloody maggots.
31–40	*Pig's Head:* Mounted on a pole is the rotting head of a pig. Its eyeballs leak from the ruin of flesh, and a stream of pale fluid drips from its stiff tongue.
41–50	*Tremors:* The ground lurches underfoot for a moment and then settles.
51–60	*Flashback:* The world freezes for a moment, and the characters disappear and reappear in a random direction 1d10 yards away. They do not appear in solid objects.
61–70	*Flashforward:* The world speeds up for a moment, and the characters move at double their movement for 1 minute. When the effect ends, they discover, to their horror, that they have all aged 1d10 years.
71–80	*Raining Frogs:* Thunder rolls down from the peaks, and 1d10+3 seconds later, frogs rain down from the grey clouds. The frogs explode on impact. There is no damage, but the effects are disgusting.
81–90	*Elf Parts:* Strewn about the ground are bloody chunks of Elf meat. The PCs know the remains are of an Elf because pointed ears have been left nailed to a nearby tree trunk.
91–00	*Nothing:* Nothing occurs. Use this time to smile at the players knowingly. Roll a few dice behind the screen. Then, ask a random player what his character's Fellowship score is. Regardless of his answer, be sure to chuckle and write *"Ham loves Gravy"* on a piece of paper and hand it to the player. Ignore all questions about what this cryptic phrase means.

At Evil's Door

Eventually, the PCs come to a place where the ground rises sharply. Huge rocks stained with droppings and smeared with moss jut out of the loose soil. The Crags rise above the characters, and travelling much further is impossible without climbing. A few steps later, the characters find a large pond covered by a skin of green algae and speckled with dead flies. Characters that succeed on an **Easy (+20) Perception Test** notice the skin is broken in places to reveal black waters beneath. Of far more interest, at least for now, is a dark cleft in the face of the rocks of the Crags that rise up on the other side. Tied off there, the PCs clearly see a small boat.

As the characters begin to snoop around the area, they can make **Perception Tests** to hear the sound of hushed voices issuing forth from the opening. Characters succeeding by two degrees or more can tell that the speakers are arguing and speaking in Eltharin, the Elven tongue. Any character that has five or more Insanity Points is certain the cave is talking to him. Such a character may act accordingly but can be convinced that the sounds are instead coming from people. A **Follow Trails Test** reveals the presence of footprints in the mud leading to obvious breaks in the algae. Finally, a **Search Test** of the shore uncovers a queer symbol drawn in faeces. Characters with **Academic Knowledge (Daemonology)** automatically identify the symbol as belonging to Nurgle.

Old Friends

The Wood Elves, who have encountered the PCs over the last several months on several occasions, are bound and determined to put a sword (or arrow) through poor Karl. The threat he poses is too severe, and they cannot be dissuaded. They came to the Womb shortly after Ruprecht. While they know they are in the right place—*"Can't you feel the corruption, Human?"*—they're not sure about the entrance. They followed the obvious course and headed into the cave. Feeling a bit sheepish, it's finally dawned on them that the entrance may be beneath their feet.

Each round the PCs loiter outside of the pool, allow the Wood Elves a **Perception Test** to notice the characters. When they do, they gather at the mouth of the cave and give the characters a long, hard look. If Lorinoc survived the conclusion of **Chapter VI: Heralds of a New Dawn**, he's here and none too pleased. Otherwise, there are just the four Kithband warriors.

By now, having lost Karl twice, Lorinoc is on the verge of a breakdown, exacerbated by the corrupting effects of this area. His Elven composure is at an end, and rightly or wrongly, he blames the PCs. Lorinoc is anything but polite, and unless the PCs start talking and/or succeed on a **Hard (–20) Charm Test**, Lorinoc commands his men to attack. Now, things get interesting. The Kithband warriors are not so keen to fight the player characters with whom they have no conflict. Whilst they admit the characters may have had a hand in preventing Karl's assassination, they recognise, at most, it has been accidental interference. Their failures have been the will of the Gods, and perhaps Karl will, in fact, serve some other purpose. As a result, Lorinoc must pass a **Command Test** to get the other warriors to attack the characters. If he fails, he shrieks in rage and attacks the PCs on his own, while the rest of the Wood Elves mutely climb into the boat and row back to the shore, where they disembark and melt into the forest.

However, if the PCs were quick in defusing the situation, Lorinoc controls his anger and is willing to talk. Lorinoc suspects the PCs are here for the same reasons as he and his allies, but he's not so trusting, believing the characters are still dupes for Karl. At this point, the PCs should relate why they're here and what they intend. In all cases, the characters must succeed on another **Charm Test**. The difficulty depends on their reason for being here, as follows.

Reason	Difficulty
The PCs are here to kill Karl	Easy (+20)
The PCs are here to defeat Ruprecht/Black Witch	Routine (+10)
The PCs are here to defeat the Vampires	Average (+0)
The PCs are here to save Karl	Challenging (–10)
The PCs are here for any other reason	Hard (–20)
The PCs are here to kill the Elves!	Impossible (go figure!)

Whether or not the PCs succeed on the **Charm Test**, Lorinoc permits them to continue. A character that succeeds by two degrees of success

or more—or a character that fails utterly—finds Lorinoc willing to accompany them on the final leg of their journey. In the case of a success, Lorinoc and the Wood Elves help them to the best of their ability, but with a failure, Lorinoc plans to murder the PCs when it's most advantageous to do so, specifically when the characters acquire all three keys. Otherwise, Lorinoc tells the characters, *"You have one hour. Should you fail to return, we will come in after you, and I swear by the swords of my ancestors, nothing shall live there when we are done!"*

Lorinoc

Male Wood Elf Veteran, ex-Kithband Warrior, ex-Hunter

Lorinoc has been described in previous chapters. His statistics, slightly modified to reflect his greater experience, are presented here for your convenience.

Insanity Points: 4

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
50	73	53 (5)	42 (4)	62	51	52	26

Skills: Common Knowledge (the Elves, the Empire) (Int), Concealment (Ag +10), Dodge Blow (Ag +10), Follow Trail (Int +10), Gossip (Fel), Heal (Int), Intimidate (S), Outdoor Survival (Int +10), Perception (Int +20), Scale Sheer Surface (S), Search (Int), Secret Language (Battle Tongue) (Int), Secret Signs (Ranger) (Int), Silent Move (Ag +10), Speak Language (Eltharin, Reikspiel) (Int), Swim (S)
Talents: Excellent Vision, Hardy, Lightning Reflexes, Marksman, Mighty Shot, Rover, Rapid Reload, Savvy, Specialist Weapon Group (Longbow), Very Strong, Warrior Born
Traits: Night Vision

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Fate Points:** 1; **Movement:** 5; **Wounds:** 17
Armour (Light): Full Leather and Helmet (Head 3, Arms 1, Body 1, Legs 1)
Weapons: Dagger (1d10+2), Elfbow with 10 Arrows (1d10+4; Range 36/72; Reload Free; Armour Piercing), Hand Weapon (Sword) (1d10+5)

Trappings

Lorinoc wears a leather jack dyed in greys and greens to blend in with his surroundings. A forest green cloak held fast by a silver clasp hangs about his shoulders. A small pouch on his waist contains an antitoxin kit.

Kithband Warriors (4)

Male Wood Elf Kithband Warriors

These quiet Wood Elves follow Lorinoc but are beginning to doubt his sanity.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
40	54	31 (3)	34 (3)	48	41	39	24

Skills: Common Knowledge (Elves) (Int), Concealment (Ag), Dodge Blow (Ag), Follow Trail (Int), Outdoor Survival (Int), Perception (Int), Scale Sheer Surface (S), Search (Int), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Language (Eltharin, Reikspiel) (Int)
Talents: Excellent Vision, Marksman, Night Vision, Rapid Reload, Savvy, Specialist Weapon Group (Longbow)

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 5; **Wounds:** 12
Armour (Light): Leather Jack (Arms 1, Body 1)
Weapons: Dagger (1d10+0), Elfbow with 10 Arrows (1d10+3; Range 36/72; Reload Half; Armour Piercing), Hand Weapon (Sword) (1d10+3),

Trappings

The Kithband warriors wear boiled leather jacks underneath their forest green cloaks. The have fine swords and daggers in sheathes hanging from their belts and quivers of arrows slung on their backs.

So...the Front Door?

Searching the cave on the opposite shore turns up nothing, aside from a pile of old bones and an impressive cave painting that stands at least seven feet tall. Painted in charcoal and smeared with blood, it depicts a shadowy woman with a pale face and black eyes; it's genuinely disturbing. Characters who touch the painting find their fingertips (or other extremity) covered in black dust that won't come off. While this has no immediate effect, during the encounter against the Black Witch, the character functions as if he has the Dodge Blow Skill. If he already has the skill, he gains a **+10 bonus** on **Dodge Blow Tests**. Decades ago, Zhidovsk's Hag Mother came to this cave to ward off the foul will of the Black Witch. The magic used has since faded, and all that remains is this black dust.

It should then be clear that the entrance lies somewhere in the filthy water. So, while not the best of propositions, if the adventurers are to see this thing to the end, they must go into the water. Reluctant characters are free to waste as much time as they like outside of the pool. Just be sure to keep track of how much time passes.

Into the Pool

Regardless of how the characters enter the water—dipping in a toe to test the temperature or boldly diving into the soup, it matters not, the effects are the same. The water is cold—really cold. Characters that come into contact with the fluid must succeed on **Challenging (–10) Toughness Test** or take a –10 penalty on all tests for the next 1d100 minutes from the bone-chilling cold. Characters that warm themselves with a nice cosy fire reduce this time by 10 minutes for every minute they spend in such generous heat. However, since characters are not likely to have the time to kick back, sip cider, and chat about ghost stories in front of a bonfire, they're probably stuck with the penalties for a bit.

Aside from the awful cold, there are things in the water. Bad things. The Black Witch protects her entrance with a knot of squirming water serpents that are more than happy to swim through the murk. These creatures have caused all sorts of problems for folks who thought to go for a dip, and their bones litter the floor of the pond. Things got a little trickier when Ruprecht came along. Offended by the One-Eyed Serpents, he conjured up a mess of Nurglings and sent them to keep the serpents busy, while he and his allies found the membrane that led inside. So when the characters slip into the murk, perhaps squealing from the chill, both the Nurglings and the One-Eyed Serpents perk up with the promise of fresh meat. Each character in the water has a 20% chance of gaining a Nurgling and a One-Eyed Serpent to fight. Once the PCs get rid of their attackers, they're free to search the bottom.

Before you start calling for initiative rolls, though, be aware that fighting underwater is a poor choice of battlefield. Characters underwater take a –20 penalty to Weapon Skill, Ballistic Skill, and Agility Tests. Characters can swim at their normal Movement and may attempt to pass a **Swim Test** to move 1 additional yard per degree of success. Characters can't charge or run while swimming. The Nurglings, being naughty creatures, are immune to the penalties but still cannot charge or run whilst swimming.

Characters can hold their breath for a number of rounds equal to their Toughness Bonus or, if they took a deep breath before jumping in, 1-1/2 times their TB. After this, the character must pass a **Toughness Test** each round or lose 1 Wound. Each round after the first, the character takes a cumulative –10 penalty. Once Wounds reach 0, the character passes out and dies in TB rounds unless rescued. These swimming rules replace those found in *WFRP*.

Nurglings

Nurglings are miniature manifestation of Nurgle's filthy will. They are quite small and have mischievous faces and rotund bodies equipped with disproportionate limbs.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
20	30	21 (2)	23 (2/4)	60	25	30	25

Skills: Concealment (Ag +10), Dodge Blow (Ag), Perception (Int), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Arcane Language (Daemonic) (Int), Speak Language (Dark Tongue) (Int), Swim (S)
Traits: Ambidextrous, Daemonic Aura, Fearless, Instability, Mutation (Cloud of Flies), Night Vision, Plague, Small, Unsettling

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 7
Weapons: Claws and Teeth (1d10)

Daemonic Aura

Against non-magical weapons, a Nurgling's effective Toughness Bonus increases to 4. A Nurgling's attacks count as magical, and they are immune to poison and suffocation.

Instability

On any round in which a Nurgling takes at least 1 Wound and fails to inflict any Wounds in return, it must succeed on a Will Power Test or become sucked back into the Realm of Chaos.

Mutation (Cloud of Flies)

Ordinarily, Nurglings are crawling with flies, and when attacked, these diminutive insects swarm about the Nurgling's foes, imposing a –10 penalty on Weapon Skill Tests. However, given the watery conditions, the flies have all drown, and they float on the pond's surface.

Plague

Any character that takes at least 1 Wound in combat with a Nurgling must immediately pass a **Toughness Test** or acquire a disease of your choice.

One-Eyed Serpents

The guardians of the pond, the One-Eyed Serpents are born from the Black Witch's deranged imagination. At a glance, these creatures might look like ordinary eels, but instead of a sucker-mouth, they have a big, red eyeball. The undersides of their bodies are lined with needle-like sharp teeth that inject a fearsome poison in their victims.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
20	0	31 (3)	28 (2)	33	12	21	4

Skills: Concealment (Ag), Dodge Blow (Ag), Magical Sense (WP +20), Perception (Int +20), Swim (S +20)
Talents: Excellent Vision
Traits: Aquatic, Fearless, Natural Weapons, Night Vision, Poisoned Teeth, Resistance to Chaos, Unsettling

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 8
Weapons: Teeth (1d10+3)

Aquatic

One-eyed Serpents live exclusively in water and require it survive. When taken outside of their environment, they take a –20 penalty to all tests, and their movement drops to 0. While in water, they may take normal actions, and their characteristics are unmodified whilst swimming.

Poisoned Teeth

Any character that takes at least 1 Wound from a One-Eyed Serpent's attack must immediately pass a Toughness Test or fall victim to its powerful toxin. The poison causes the character to absorb the water of the pond, swelling and bloating until his body bursts. Upon failing the test, that character takes a –10 penalty to all tests, and his movement is reduced by 1. Each round thereafter, on the character's turn, he must pass a Toughness Test again or else the penalties worsen by –10 and –1, respectively. Should

the characteristic penalty exceed the character's Toughness (–40 penalty and a 36 Toughness for example), he explodes and dies. Two consecutively successful tests indicate the character's body finally resists the toxins. Penalties fade after 1d10 minutes as the character violently expels the liquid through whatever disgusting ways you care to describe.

The Membrane

The pond is really a water-filled pit that's wider at the top than it is at the bottom. A pale slime covers the rocky walls, and about 5 yards below the surface below the cave mouth on the opposite shore is a strange spongy section of wall, about a yard wide and two yards tall. Characters can find this spot with a successful **Challenging (–10) Search Test** or a **Hard (–20) Perception Test**. The surface is elastic and gives to the touch. Putting any kind of pressure on the wall enables a character to push through it and enter the opposite side, thus entering the Lair of the Black Witch. As they pass through the membrane, it closes behind them, so when a character finally reaches the other side, a brief squirt of pond water accompanies him before the hole closes again.

Foolish characters might opt to hack their way through the membrane. This feat is quite easy, as any cutting weapon can tear through the delicate tissue. Three swings of a sword is all that's required to open a hole in the mass, but doing so drains the pond into the tunnels of the lair. Luckily, the area is large enough that the sudden intrusion of water does not flood them, but it does make moving a bit tougher. The water fills the tunnels to a depth of about 1 foot. The water makes charging impossible and reduces all movement by 1. Also, **Silent Move Tests** take a –10 penalty.

— The Black Witch's Lair —

Beyond the membrane in the bottom of the pond is a damp cave that snakes and branches off beneath the Crags of Shargun for hundreds, if not thousands, of feet. The PCs must find their way through these stinking tunnels to reach Karl before the Black Witch's plan is completed. Of course, the PCs are not alone. As mentioned, five groups of Vampires prowl the tunnels along with a Chaos sorcerer of some skill, to say nothing of the strange and unsettling abominations that make their home here. Each group looks for a way to open the doors to the inner sanctum and find their fate in the haunted chambers beyond.

This task is not simple. The caverns are positively labyrinthine, filled with obstacles, adversaries, and deadly traps, as well as weird magical phenomena. The doors do not open for those who happen to get there first. They are locked, barred to all but those whom the Black Witch invites and those who have the means to enter. The Black Witch's servants carry the keys needed to open the doors, and they wait in remote corners of this complex for the Vampires or any who have the wit to acquire them. This distraction gives the Black Witch the time she needs to perform the ritual of binding for the boy. Thus, even though it is her plan to draw the Vampires to her, she doesn't want them to arrive prematurely. The Black Witch is also aware of Ruprecht—who wants the boy for his own ends, the Wood Elves who want to kill the boy, and the PCs, whose reasons are their own. By positioning the keys in the hands of her servants, the Black Witch hopes the undesired factions will kill each other off.

It is into this quagmire of horror and violence the PCs are thrust if they intend to stop whatever it is that the Black Witch plans for poor, young Karl.

The Womb may appear to be a straightforward dungeon crawl, but in actuality, it is a dynamic environment that responds to the characters' actions. As the PCs navigate the tunnels, they are bound to encounter any number of their rivals, the denizens of the caverns, strange threats, and more. Furthermore, the Womb is alive. Although it may look like stone to the casual observer, the walls, ceiling, and floor pulse with ichors flowing through veins that carry nutrients the Womb draws from the lands around to sustain itself and adapt to intruders. Scary, isn't it? In any event, there are a few things to know before you start plumbing the depths of this otherworldly place.

Objectives

To breach the doors to the inner sanctum (**Rooms 75** and **76**), the characters need three keys. Each key is held by one of the Witch's thralls: the Mother (**Room 7**), the Maiden (**Room 48**), and the Crone (**Room 65**). Since the Black Witch wants the five groups of Vampires to join her, each thrall has five keys, one for each bloodline. However, the Blood Dragon, Wilhelm, is an unwilling participant, and he's the prisoner of the Strigoi; thus, there's one spare set of keys to get inside—a fact the Black Witch hadn't counted on. Although it was awfully considerate of the Black Witch to have a spare set of keys, the PCs aren't the only ones after it.

Ruprecht intends to get the keys before the PCs do, and if he succeeds, the characters have to catch him before he gets to the inner sanctum. Clever—and perhaps morally bankrupt PCs—might forge an alliance with the sorcerer. If they do, that's fine; although, Ruprecht makes sure he kills them before they get too close to the inner sanctum. As well, there's the problem with the Wood Elves. Assuming the PCs made nice with them up above, they may prove to be useful allies, but if they botched their attempt to assuage Lorinoc's feelings, the Wood Elves turn against them before they get a chance to get inside the moist chambers of the Black Witch's redoubt.

All of this is tricky to start with, but unless the PCs are clairvoyants or have cheated and read this chapter, they probably haven't a clue about keys. They might discover this fact based on how they handle the encounters in the Womb, or they might figure it out when they try (and fail) to open the doors to **Room 75**.

Finally, as a nasty and cruel jest, the Black Witch seeded the tunnels with false keys. A clever character should figure this ruse out when they just happen along an unattended key. A foolish character, hope brimming in his heart, makes the unfortunate discovery when he inserts the key into one of the three locks provided and gets an awful mutation for his trouble.

A PC who looks at the key and succeeds on a **Challenging (–10) Magical Sense Test** notices they are crawling with multicoloured worms marked with black spots.

True or False?

Distinguishing a real key from a false one is rather simple. All of the false keys are aligned with one of the four Ruinous Powers, and they exhibit unusual traits, sometimes to the benefit of the wielder and others to the detriment. Furthermore, keys of diametrically opposed Gods repel one another when brought together, similar to what happens with magnets. They cannot be carried in the same bag, pouch, or pocket, or one of the keys finds its way out the container, either slipping through an opening or by tearing a hole in the container and then crawling free. Like the servants of the Ruinous Powers, the keys of Chaos cannot abide the presence of their rivals.

The real keys are icy cold, as if dead three days in the grave. A person grasping the key experiences fleeting visions of a world covered in darkness, of marching armies of the Undead, and flocks of Vampires flitting through the serpentine mists that spill forth from the yawning mouths of the dead. For the player characters—and them only—an expenditure of a Fortune Point allows the character to get a sense of the fastest way to the next key. Don't mention this "cheat" unless the players are stumped.

Getting Greedy with Keys

The false keys all offer additional benefits whilst carried, and a few present some drawbacks. While all the benefits are cumulative, some keys don't do well with other keys. A character who carries both a key of two different Chaos Gods experiences a strange sensation—usually the objects squirming in his possession, seeing strange colours hanging in the airs, hearing bells, sweating blood. If this isn't enough to dissuade the character, he takes a –10 penalty to all tests. A character carrying keys of three different Chaos Gods takes a –20 penalty to all tests and must immediately pass a **Toughness Test** or gain a mutation, which happens just the first time. A character that carries keys of all four Chaos Gods is doomed! All false keys in their possession immediately come to life as Lesser Daemons (see *WFRP* page 229) who fight each other for the right to kill the character. After 1d5–1 rounds, they give up their struggle and turn on the character.

Oh, and one more thing. If PCs leave the Womb with a key in their possession, the key or keys pop and bathe the PC in Chaos energy. Such a character must make one **Challenging (–10) Toughness Test** for each key carried or gain a mutation.

Random Events

A stroll through the tunnels without having to contend with the PCs' rivals is bad enough. The tunnels have a tendency to manifest weird and unsettling effects, which hamper or harm those exploring these depths. These unusual happenings are random events. A random event occurs once every 1d10 x 1d10 minutes, whenever things seem to grow dull, whenever you feel the impulse, during a combat that lasts more than 3 rounds, or whenever the PCs do something particularly stupid (again, this occurrence is at your discretion). Roll or pick something from **Table 9–3: Random Events.**

Table 9–3: Random Events

Roll	Event
01–05	Noisome Expulsion
06–10	Sweep of Pustules
11–15	Unpleasant Aroma
16–20	Contracting Walls
21–25	Rippling Floor
26–30	The Veins!
31–35	Slippery Condensation
36–40	Sorrow
41–45	Joy
46–50	Hideous Carpet
51–55	Incomprehensible Infestation
56–60	A Pile of Dung
61–65	Shuddering Jelly
66–70	Mounds of Maggots
71–75	Chaos Spawn
76–80	Sudden Unpleasant Relocation
81–85	Tremendous Shout
86–90	A Little Vomit
91–95	The Bones
96–00	Mutations for Everyone!

Noisome Expulsion

A sphincter puckers up on the wall and squirts out a stream of brown filth at a random character (BS 40). A character struck must succeed on a **Toughness Test** or become nauseated, taking a –10 penalty to all tests for 1d5 rounds.

Sweep of Pustules

With a series of eerie pops, quivering blisters appear on the walls and floors. If touched, they burst and spray acid at the character that foolishly probed the strange growths. The acid deals 1d10+2 damage to the character, ignoring armour. If a weapon was used instead, the acid destroys it.

Unpleasant Aroma

A foetid wind blows through the tunnels. All characters must succeed on **Toughness Tests** or become nauseated, taking a –10 penalty to all tests for 1d10 rounds.

Contracting Walls

The walls shudder with convulsions and then suddenly contract. Randomly select one character. All creatures within 1d10 yards of this character are squeezed by the contracting walls, taking 1d10 plus 1d5 points of damage from the impact. The walls snap back to their original position immediately after contracting. Should this event occur inside a room, the floor and ceiling slam together instead, affecting all creatures inside the room.

Rippling Floor

The floor ripples with queer movement. Choose one character at random. That character and all creatures within 1d5 yards must pass **Agility Tests** or fall prone.

The Veins!

Use the large template. Great pulsing veins rise to the surface of the walls, floor, and ceiling in the area. Characters that run or charge through the area must succeed on an **Agility Test** or trip and fall prone. The veins sink below the surface after 1d5 rounds.

Slippery Condensation

Beads of slippery fluid condense on the surface of the walls, floor, and ceiling. Use the large template centred on a character chosen at random.

Chaos Slime

This puddle of light blue fluid slides across the ground. It searches for untainted creatures on which it can bestow an unpleasant mutation.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
36	0	33 (3)	56 (5)	13	18	26	5

Skills: Concealment (Ag +20)
Talents: Wrestling
Traits: Bestow Mutation, Creeping, Engulf, Fast, Formless, Natural Weapons (Pseudopodia), Resistant to Magic, Unsettling

Combat

Attacks: 3; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 18
Weapons: Pseudopodia (1d10+3)

Creeping

A Chaos Slime may not run.

Engulf

Upon successfully hitting a creature, the Chaos Slime engulfs it, smothering the creature so that it loses 1 Wound at the beginning of each round, regardless of Toughness Bonus or armour. Victims count as being grappled for the purpose of escaping, and while so engulfed, a victim can take no other action than to attempt to escape. Upon being grappled, the victim must succeed on a Will Power Test or gain 1 Insanity Point.

Fast

A Chaos Slime moves quickly, increasing its movement as described in its profile.

Formless

All hits on the Chaos Slime are Body hits. Resolve Critical Hits as Sudden Death Criticals.

Bestow Mutation

When the Chaos Slime successfully engulfs a target, that target must succeed on a Challenging (–10) Toughness Test each round or gain 1 mutation (roll on any mutation tables you have available). Should the victim gain six mutations, he becomes a Chaos Spawn (see Chaos Spawn, following). After bestowing a mutation, the Chaos Slime releases it victim and seeks out a new target.

Example Chaos Spawn

This horror struggles through the tunnels, wailing in agony from the weight of its corruptions. It has a roughly humanoid shape, but its body is fat in places and covered with patches of pink feathers. Its scaly flesh—where visible—is bright orange, and a mane of scraggly brown hair infests its wolf head and neck.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
16	0	41 (4)	55 (5)	34	0	0	0

Talents: Flee!
Traits: Fearless, Mindless, Mutations (Bestial Appearance, Bizarre Colouration, Feathered Hide, Mane of Hair, Suckers, Thorns), Natural Weapons (Fists), Terrifying

Combat

Attacks: 3; **Movement:** 7; **Wounds:** 23
Weapons: Fists (1d10+4)

Mindless

A Chaos Spawn cannot test Intelligence, Will Power, or Fellowship.

Mutations

This Chaos Spawn has four mutations.

- **Bestial Appearance:** Its head is that of a snarling wolf. It gains the Follow Trails Skill.
- **Bizarre Colouration:** Its flesh peeks through the feathers and hair, revealing a strange orange colour.
- **Feathered Hide:** The Spawn's body is covered with bright pink feathers.
- **Mane of Hair:** The Spawn has a thick mane of hair, preventing it from wearing a helmet.
- **Resilient (×2):** The Spawn is uncommonly tough, increasing its Toughness Characteristic by +13.
- **Suckers:** The Spawn's body is covered with small, quivering suckers, granting it a +20 bonus to Scale Sheer Surface Tests.
- **Thorns:** Small sharp thorns break through the Spawn's flesh. The Spawn may launch a thorn as a full action, testing Ballistic Skill against an opponent up to 10 yards away, dealing 1d10+1 damage.

All creatures must pass **Agility Tests** each round they remain in the area or fall prone. The condensation dries after 1d10 rounds.

Sorrow

Place the small template on a randomly selected creature. All characters in the area must pass **Will Power Tests** or gain 1 Insanity Point as they become overwhelmed with grief and take a –10 penalty to all tests for 1d5 rounds. Characters affected once by Sorrow gain a +10 bonus to tests made to resist future instances of this strange phenomenon.

Joy

Place the small template on a randomly selected creature. All characters in the area must pass **Will Power Tests** or gain 1 Insanity Point as they become overwhelmed with joy and gain a –10 bonus to all tests for 1d5 rounds from your giddy laughter. Characters affected once by Joy gain a +10 bonus to tests made to resist future instances of this odd phenomenon.

Hideous Carpet

The floor erupts with hundreds of small, wriggling, multicoloured worms that chirp and giggle as they wave back and forth. Use the large template and centre it on a randomly selected creature. All characters in the area take 1d10+2 damage as the Hideous Carpet burrows into their feet and legs. Creatures that take at least 1 Wound halve their movement until all damage taken from the carpet is repaired.

Incomprehensible Infestation

Use the large template, and place it wherever you like. All creatures within 10 yards of the template take a –20 penalty on **Perception Tests**, and all creatures under the template take a –30 penalty on **Perception Tests**. The cause is a strange pattern of slowly moving colours that paint the area in rainbow hues. Characters standing in these areas have the colours leeched from their bodies, leaving them a mess of greys. Their pallor is restored when they move beyond the area.

A Pile of Dung

A considerate creature left behind this heap of dung. It is completely ordinary, but characters playing with it or exploring it must succeed on a **Toughness Test** or gain 1 Insanity Point. Since only monkeys and madmen play with faeces—and the PCs are not monkeys—they must surely be mad, no?

At your option, this heap of excrement may be a statue dedicated to one of the Orc Gods, but the PCs should encounter no more than one of these random statues, since there's only one group of Orcs in these tunnels.

Shuddering Jelly

Oozing across the floor is a dreadful Chaos Slime. It begins 1d10 yards away from the PCs. See sidebar for statistics.

Mounds of Maggots

A pile of maggots makes short work of a dead Beastman. Aside from just being disgusting, there is no additional effect.

Chaos Spawn

A hideous Spawn of Chaos lumbers down the corridor, bent on killing and feasting. Since Chaos Spawn are utterly random things, the **Example Chaos Spawn** sidebar is just one possibility. If you have *Tome of Corruption,* you should generate a few more just in case you get this result more than once. Otherwise, substitute a Mutant from *WFRP* or the *Old World Bestiary*.

Sudden, Unpleasant, Relocation

A weird pulse of energy fills the area around the PCs. All characters must succeed on **Routine (+10) Will Power Tests** or be transported to a random location in the Womb. For those that fail, roll 1d100. If the die result corresponds with a room number, place the character there. If not, the character reappears in the cave above the complex. This event makes the adventure all the more challenging. Feel free to ignore this effect.

Tremendous Shout

A booming shout echoes throughout the place, deafening all characters who fail a **Toughness Test**. Their hearing returns after 1d10 minutes, but until then, they automatically fail all hearing-based tests and when rolling for initiative; they roll twice and take the worse result.

A Little Vomit

Sprayed on the wall or floor in a space adjacent to a randomly selected character is a bit of vomit. So long as the character doesn't touch the mess, he's fine. If he does, though, he must pass a **Toughness Test** or vomit all over himself, likely adding to the spot of spew.

The Bones

The PCs come upon a pile of bones. They are all cracked and sucked dry of marrow. Curiously, there are no skulls.

Mutations for Everyone!

A burst of violet energy occurs on a randomly selected character. Use the large template. All characters in the area must make a **Routine (+10) Toughness Test** or gain a mutation (roll on whatever tables you have available from *WFRP, Old World Bestiary,* or *Tome of Corruption*).

Timed Events

As noted on **Table 9–1: Timeline**, certain events happen at key times unless somehow prevented by the player characters. As a result, you need to manage the clock. One clever way to do this is to use a timer. Set it for four and a half hours (or more if the characters didn't waste time up above), and give it a start once the PCs enter the Womb. Whenever the PCs enter a combat, stop the timer and restart it once combat is through. If you don't have a timer, just wing it.

At four and a half hours, Karl has already found the inner sanctum. The following events occur at these time intervals.

- **Four Hours Remaining:** The Black Witch possesses the boy. Roll for a Random Event.
- **Three Hours Remaining:** The Strigoi and the Blood Dragon acquire the three keys and enter the inner sanctum. They can no longer be encountered in the Womb.
- **Two and a Half Hours Remaining:** Lydia von Carstein acquires the three keys and enters the inner sanctum. She can no longer be encountered in the Womb.
- **Two Hours Remaining:** The Lahmian Vampire acquires the three keys and enters the inner sanctum. She can no longer be encountered in the Womb. Unless the PCs beat him to it, Ruprecht collects the first key.
- **One and a Half Hours Remaining:** The Necrarch acquires the three keys and enters the inner sanctum. He can no longer be encountered in the Womb.
- **One Hour Remaining:** Ruprecht picks up the second key if the PCs don't have it yet.
- **Thirty Minutes Remaining:** Ruprecht snatches the third key!
- **Zero Hours Remaining:** The Black Witch finishes the ritual. All five Vampires are destroyed as is Karl's personality. The Black Witch transforms into a terrifying abomination, leaves the inner sanctum, and heads for the surface, where she will visit destruction and Chaos on the world.

Triggered Events

The final thing to keep in mind is triggered events. Whenever the characters achieve specific goals in the Womb, certain events occur as a result. These events are to simulate the dynamic environment and the efforts by other factions to reach the inner sanctum. You may use some, all, or none of these, depending on the general health and how much time is left before the Black Witch completes her ritual. Each triggered event occurs 1d10 minutes after the PCs locate an authentic key.

First Key

Soon after the characters recover the first key, a foul creature of Chaos becomes aware of the PCs and sets out to snare them with its horrid icy touch. The creature is a Soulstealer, a Daemonic entity that appears to be nothing more than an inky stain on the wall. However, characters who succeed on a **Challenging (–10) Perception Test** notice that the stain seems to move and crawl in their peripheral vision.

The Soulstealer is not interested in killing the PCs; rather, it wants to possess one of their numbers. It targets characters with mutations first but ultimately settles for any PC, though if a drooling twit is among their numbers, the fiend strikes him first.

Once the Soulstealer takes possession of the character, it remains in the PC's head for 1d10 days. At the end of this time, the PCs may attempt a new **Will Power Test** to force the entity out. If he fails this test, he gains 1 Insanity Point. Every 3 Insanity Points gained in this way grants the character a mutation. After gaining 12 Insanity Points, the PC's personality is utterly destroyed, and the Daemon takes control.

Although the Daemon can exert a fair bit of influence on the character, don't let this spoil the player's fun. Instead, send the PCs strange notes, have him make **Perception Tests** for no reason, and basically shower your cruel affections on the character. The Daemon is content to let the PC operate as he likes, except when the PCs finally enter the inner sanctum. The Daemon exerts its influence and fights to protect Karl and the Black Witch.

Soulstealer

A Soulstealer is a smoky and insubstantial being that looks like a shadow cast upon the wall. It moves with silent grace, blending in with the natural darkness, disappearing if it must. When it finds a suitable victim, it slips in through his nostrils and hides in the recesses of his mind, subtly guiding his host onto the path of damnation. Soulstealers target individuals who

are already at the brink of corruption, and Soulstealers uses their influence to give victims the proper nudge.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
41	0	36 (3)	46 (4)	66	39	45	41

Skills: Blather (Fel), Charm (Fel), Command (Fel), Concealment (Ag), Intimidate (S), Perception (Int +10), Performer (Acting) (Fel), Speak Arcane Language (Daemonic) (Int), Speak Language (Classical, Kislevarin, Norscan, Reikspiel, Tilean) (Int), Ventriloquism (Fel)
Talents: Linguistics, Mimic, Schemer, Will of Iron
Traits: Daemonic Aura, Ethereal, Flier, Icy Touch, Instability, Keen Senses, Mutation (invisible), Night Vision, Possession, Resistance to Magic

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 6 (fly 12); **Wounds:** 16
Weapons: Icy Touch (1d10+3; Ignores Armour)

Instability

On any round in which a Soulstealer is injured in melee combat but fails to inflict any Wound in return, it must succeed at a Will Power Test or be banished back to the Realm of Chaos.

Mutation

As a half action, a Soulstealer may become invisible. While in this state, it cannot be targeted by ranged attacks or *magic missiles*. Opponents may detect it if they succeed on a Hard (–20) Perception Test but only if it is within 4 yards. Even if they detect the creature's presence, Weapon Skill Tests are Very Hard (–30).

While invisible, the Soulstealer gains a +20 bonus to Weapon Skill Tests. Each round it remains invisible, it must succeed on a **Toughness Test** or take 1 Wound, bypassing Toughness and armour points.

Possession

The Soulstealer possesses any mortal creature it touches, unless that creature succeeds on a Challenging (–10) Will Power Test. The victim functions as if he had acquired the Host of Fiends Insanity.

The Second Key

When the PCs acquire the second key, roll for two random events on **Table 9–3: Random Events**. They occur 1d10 minutes later.

The Third and Final Key

Acquiring the Third Key means the PCs are ready to confront the Black Witch in the inner sanctum, provided they know where that is. Of course, it also means Ruprecht has not gathered any of the keys, and it's making him quite cross. Ruprecht seeks out the PCs and confronts them in a place of your choosing, either in front of the doors leading to the inner sanctum or elsewhere in the Womb.

Just because Ruprecht wants the keys and fully intends to get them one way or another doesn't mean this encounter has to resort to violence. Ruprecht is fully prepared to negotiate with the player characters, offering them a great deal in exchange for these items. He's even willing to make an alliance to help the PCs reach their goal. For you see, Ruprecht doesn't give a damn about the Black Witch, the Vampires, or much of anything else. He wants the boy. He will raise the lad up to be Emperor and cast down the fool Karl-Franz, ushering in a new Empire dedicated to Father Nurgle. Mind you, he doesn't say this. *"The Witch must be stopped, or it will be the doom of us all,"* and other such placating phrases slide out of his mouth.

It's possible Ruprecht's disgusting appearance and the company he keeps will be enough to force the characters' hands and impel them to do their duty in purging the Old World of such a monster. If so, that's fine, too. Let this proceed in a manner you like—just be sure to let the PCs make the hostile action first.

Ruprecht and Friends

Ruprecht and his entourage search for the keys to open the way to the inner sanctum, so they can claim the boy before the Black Witch can destroy his essence entirely. If the PCs are slow in collecting the keys, they might encounter the Chaos sorcerer as they explore the Womb. Should this happen, and if they defeat him, they can get all the keys he's collected (as described under the timeline) in one go.

Ruprecht Hahn, Chosen of Nurgle

Male Mutant Catalyst, ex-Soulflayer, ex-Doomweaver, ex-Maledictor, ex-Cult Magus, ex-Cult Acolyte, ex-Student

Ruprecht is a disgusting wretch. Nearly every trace of his humanity has vanished, replaced with the glistening bloated hide of a slug. In his smooth dripping face, though, are intelligent bright blue eyes, betraying his Human heritage.

Insanity Points: 12

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
38	44	38 (3)	67 (6)	48	76	81	26

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Daemonology, Law, Magic) (Int +20), Academic Knowledge (History) (Int +10), Channelling (WP +20), Charm (Fel), Command (Fel), Common Knowledge (the Empire, Kislev) (Int +20), Common Knowledge (the Wasteland) (Int), Concealment (Ag), Disguise (Fel), Heal (Int +10), Intimidate (S +20), Magical Sense (WP +20), Outdoor Survival (Int), Perception (Int +20), Prepare Poison (Int), Read/Write (Int +20), Search (Int), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Arcane Language (Daemonic, Magick) (Int +20), Speak Arcane Language (Arcane Elf) (Int), Speak Language (Classical, Reikspiel) (Int +10), Speak Language (Breton, Kislevarin) (Int), Swim (S), Torture (Fel), Ventriloquism (Fel)
Talents: Aethyric Attunement, Chosen of Chaos, Coolheaded, Dark Lore (Nurgle), Dark Magic, Etiquette, Fast Hands, Flee!, Inured to Chaos, Lesser Magic (*Aethyric armour, dispel, move*), Meditation, Menacing, Mighty Missile, Petty Magic (Chaos), Public Speaking, Resistance

Chalice of Shared Secrets

Academic Knowledge: Daemonology

Powers: When grasped, the wielder can whisper a message into the chalice, each word causing it to fill up with a thick green slime. The wielder may then speak a name of any servant of Nurgle and drink down the goo. The bearer of the name, regardless of his location, feels an overwhelming urge to vomit. He must pass a Hard (–20) Toughness Test or spew forth the slime consumed. When the hideous mess hits a surface, it coalesces into a cloud of flies that relates the message spoken by the holder of the chalice.

Description: The *Chalice of Shared Secrets* is a warped Skaven skull, dipped in brass and corroded, and it has a green and pitted appearance. The top of the skull is hollow and forms a bowl-like depression.

History: An ambitious Skaven Plague Priest fashioned this device from the skull of his master. Despising the dead Skaven, even in death, he whispered foul curses into the rotting head until the contagions in his breath caved in the top of the skull, and the brain matter oozed out of the dead Skaven's nostrils as if fleeing the awful words. The *Chalice of Shared Secrets* changed hands several times over the intervening years, but it eventually found its way to a Nurgle Cult in Marienburg. Ruprecht claimed the item, suspecting its awful powers.

The Foetid Wind

Academic Knowledge: Daemonology

Powers: Living creatures that lose 1 Wound from a successful hit by this weapon must pass a Toughness Test or die in a number of rounds equal to their Toughness Bonus. In addition, the wielder gains a +10 bonus to WS, S, and a +1 bonus to A when used against Elves.

Description: This sword has a bright green blade swirled with black. It exudes a faint odour of rot when drawn, which is noticeable up to 1 yard away. Its handle is maggot-white, stained dark from old grime. This weapon is not exceptionally sharp, but the dreadful wounds it leaves turn black with the weapon's venom.

History: A Chaos Dwarf forged this weapon with the souls of nine Elf maidens stolen from Athel Loren. Each stroke of his magical hammer shattered their spirits, sending them screaming through the Aethyr to echo terribly in the minds of the Asur. When the weapon was finished, the smith quenched the hot blade in a cauldron of venom drawn from a dozen toxic abominations. Ruprecht was gifted this Chaos weapon in return for his long and terrible service to the Dark Lord of Despair. It came to him in a pool of mucus that bubbled merrily in a well created by the corpses of one hundred innocents. Seeing the slender weapon in the green morass, he sank his dripping arm into the filth and drew forth his sinister reward.

Gangrenous Tooth

Academic Knowledge: Daemonology

Powers: When properly installed inside the user's mouth, this strange item burrows into the owner's brain, sending tendrils of power through the being. Any damage dealt by the wielder of the *Gangrenous Tooth* does not heal naturally until another character successfully passes a Heal Test to clean out the injury.

Description: The *Gangrenous Tooth* looks like a rotting green molar torn from the mouth of a decayed corpse. It is crusty with decay, and its smell defies description.

History: The *Gangrenous Tooth* is more a relic than a magic item, since it was once the tooth owned by a particularly vile Chaos warrior in the service of Father Nurgle. Filled with mad visions of conquest, this Knight of Nurgle led his screaming and wailing legions east to scale the Great Wall of Cathay and tear down the throne of the Celestial Emperor. The Chaos warrior failed, betrayed by the Tong who had similar ambitions. They cut off and mutilated his head, sending it over the wall to spread its corruption among the stalwart warriors of this fantastic land. The only thing that survived of the head was a single tooth. Its story is uncertain, but the odd relic made its way back into the Old World by way of the Silver Road. Legend claims it was lodged between the toes of an Ogre mercenary who inadvertently crushed the rotten head while defending the wall. There is at least some truth to this tale since Ruprecht found the tooth in the rotting remains of an Ogre a few days south of Nuln. He extracted the object and promptly inserted it into his mouth.

to Disease, Savvy, Seasoned Traveller, Stout-hearted, Strike to Injure, Strong-minded, Very Resilient

Traits: Fearless, Frightening, Mutations (Bestial Appearance, Extra Mouth, Malign Sorcerer, Running Sores, Trails of Slime), Reward of Chaos (Chaos Weapon, Foul Stench, Might of Chaos), Unsettling

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Fate Points:** 3; **Movement:** 2; **Wounds:** 17

Magic: 5; Petty Magic (Chaos), *Aethyric armour, dispel, move,* Dark Lore (Nurgle) If you don't have access to *Tome of Corruption,* replace Petty Magic (Chaos) with Petty Magic (Arcane) and Dark Lore (Nurgle) with Dark Lore (Chaos)

Weapons: Foetid Wind (1d10+3; 1d10+4 against Elves)

Trappings

Ruprecht travels lightly, wearing a snot-green robe over his bloated body. He is a carrier of a dozen disturbing diseases, and whenever he injures a living creature, his victim must pass a Toughness Test or contract an illness of your choosing. The only items Ruprecht is certain to have on his possessions are *The Foetid Wind, Chalice of Shared Secrets,* and the *Gangrenous Tooth* (see the **Chalice of Shared Secrets**, **The Foetid Wind**, and **Gangrenous Tooth** sidebars for details).

The remainder of his possessions lie within his tower hidden somewhere in Troll Country. Whether the characters can reach this forlorn place and what they find there is up to you to decide.

Mutations

Ruprecht has five mutations as follow.

- *Bestial Appearance:* Ruprecht's head has been replaced with that of a brown, spotted slug. It glistens with slime.
- *Extra Mouth:* Ruprecht has a spare mouth on the back of his neck.
- *Foul Stench:* Ruprecht's body produces a profound stench. Any character that can smell him takes a –5 penalty to Weapon Skill Tests when standing within 2 yards.
- *Malign Sorcerer:* Ruprecht is blessed with Nurgle's affection, increasing his Magic Characteristic by +1 (included).
- *Running Sores:* Oozing wounds cover Ruprecht's body, making him extremely unpleasant to look upon.
- *Trails of Slime:* Ruprecht's body matches his head, resembling that of a massive slug. Wherever he goes, he leaves behind a slippery trail of slime.

Anssad

Bubo Daemonic Familiar

Anssad is a malevolent horror sent by Nurgle to keep an eye on the Chaos sorcerer. Anssad has come to believe Ruprecht is becoming too powerful and secretly works to attract a Daemon to possess his master, thus creating a new Exalted Daemon. As a Bubo, Anssad looks like a tiny green Nurgling covered in dimples that spill forth a rank yellow wetness.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
28	26	25 (2)	36 (3/5)	55	31	31	45

Skills: Channelling (WP), Charm (Fel +20), Concealment (Ag +10), Dodge Blow (Ag +10), Gossip (Fel), Intimidate (S), Search (Int), Speak Arcane Language (Daemonic) (Int), Speak Language (Kislevarin, Reikspiel) (Int), Swim (S), Torture (Fel)
Talents: Ambidextrous, Dark Magic, Lesser Magic (Dispel), Mutation (Levitate), Petty Magic (Chaos), Schemer
Traits: Bubo, Daemonic Aura, Fearless, Hoverer, Instability, Keen Senses, Leech, Natural Weapons (Teeth), Night Vision, Unsettling

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 5; **Wounds:** 5
Magic: 1; Petty Magic (Chaos), *dispel*
Weapons: Teeth (1d10+2)

Bubo

Creatures damage by Anssad's Natural Weapons acquire a random disease.

Daemonic Aura

As a Daemon, Anssad is immune to poison and suffocation. His Natural Weapons count as magical, and when Anssad is attacked by a non-magical weapon, his TB increases by 2.

Instability

If Anssad takes damage in a round and fails to inflict at least 1 Wound in return, he must pass a Will Power Test or return to the Realm of Chaos.

Leech

Any living creature within 4 yards must succeed on a Will Power Test or permanently reduce their Fellowship Characteristic by –1d10. A character can be affected by this ability just once per day.

Mutation

Levitation: Anssad gains the Hoverer trait.

Boil, Fester, Rue, and Tumour

Plaguebearers

Ruprecht summoned and bound these Daemons to serve him. They are foul and wretched, having a humanoid shape savaged by sickness and hunger. Their abdomens are grossly distended and rent in places, revealing gushing organs that wriggle with maggots.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
45	0	41 (4)	47 (4/6)	40	30	44	11

Skills: Dodge Blow (Ag), Perception (Int), Speak Arcane Language (Daemonic) (Int), Speak Language (Dark Tongue) (Int)
Talents: Ambidextrous, Strike to Injure, Will of Iron (Immune to Fear, Intimidate, and Unsettling)
Traits: Daemonic Aura, Frightening, Instability, Mutations (Cloud of Flies), Natural Weapons (Claws), Night Vision, Plague, Stream of Corruption

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 12
Weapons: Claws (1d10+4; CV +1)

Daemonic Aura

Plaguebearers are immune to poison and suffocation. Their Natural Weapons count as magical, and when attacked by a non-magical weapon, their TB increases by 2.

Instability

If a Plaguebearer takes damage in a round and fails to inflict at least 1 Wound in return, it must succeed on a Will Power Test or return to the Realm of Chaos.

Mutation

Cloud of Flies: A Plaguebearer is surrounding by a Cloud of Flies. When attacked, these diminutive insects swarm about their foes, imposing a –10 penalty on Weapon Skill Tests.

Plague

Opponents that take 1 or more Wounds from a Plaguebearer must pass a Toughness Test at the end of the combat or contract a disease of the GM's choice.

Stream of Corruption

Once every other round, a Plaguebearer can vomit a mixture of entrails, maggots, bile, and filth. Use the cone template. All creatures within the cone of vomit take 1d10+3 damage. This attack can be dodged but not parried. Anyone injured by this attack must succeed on a Toughness Test or gain a disease of the GM's choice.

The Vampires

Four groups of Vampires search the tunnels of the Womb for the entrance to the inner sanctum. If any of these Vampires were slain earlier in the campaign, feel free to use the same statistics, but change their names. See **Chapter VIII** for generic Vampire statistics. The following characters have appeared previously but are collected here for your convenience.

Wilhelm Hollenbach

Blood Dragon Vampire

Insanity Points: 1

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
68	39	60 (6)	66 (6)	47 (57)	40	69	45

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Genealogy/Heraldry, History, Strategy/Tactics) (Int), Charm (Fel), Command (Fel +10), Common Knowledge (Bretonnia, the Empire, Vampires) (Int), Dodge Blow (Ag +10), Evaluate (Int), Gossip (Fel), Intimidate (S), Magical Sense (WP), Perception (Int), Ride (Ag +10), Scale Sheer Surface (S), Search (Int), Speak Language (Breton, Reikspiel, Tilean) (Int), Torture (Fel)
Talents: Disarm, Lightning Parry, Specialist Weapon Group (Cavalry, Two-handed), Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure, Strike to Stun
Traits: Blood Gifts (Blood Drain, Iron Sinews, Natural Necromancer, Pass for Human, Vampires' Curse), Frightening, Keen Senses, Natural Weapons (Claws, Fangs), Night Vision, Undead, Unstoppable Blows*
*A creature with this trait is so large and strong that its attacks are incredibly difficult to parry. Opponents take a –30 penalty to parry attempts.

Combat

Attacks: 3; **Fate Points:** 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 22
Magic: 1
Armour (Heavy): Damaged Full Plate (Head 3, Arms 4, Body 3, Legs 4)
Weapons: Claws (1d10+7; CV +1), Fangs (1d10+7; CV +1); Unstoppable Blows

Trappings

Aside from his battered ancient armour and rotting clothing, Wilhelm has no trappings.

Mad Orlock

Male Strigoi Vampire

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
59	28	59 (5)	63 (6)	63	43	62	25

Skills: Command (Fel), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int), Concealment (Ag +10), Dodge Blow (Ag), Magical Sense (WP), Perception (Int +10), Search (Int), Speak Language (Reikspiel, Strigany) (Int), Torture (Fel)
Talents: Frenzy, Rover, Strike Mighty Blow
Traits: Blood Gift (Bat Form, Blood Drain, Natural Necromancer, Vampires' Curse), Frightening, Keen Senses, Natural Weapons (Claws, Fangs), Night Vision, and Undead

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 6; **Wounds:** 24
Magic: 1
Weapons: Claws (1d10+6), Fangs (1d10+6)

Trappings

The Strigoi Vampires have nothing but their furry hides.

Bat Form

In bat form, Mad Orlock uses these statistics.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
33	0	31 (3)	30 (3)	34	43	62	25

Skills: Dodge Blow (Ag), Perception (Int +20)
Talents: Strike Mighty Blow
Traits: Enhanced Senses*, Flier, Frightening, Keen Senses, Natural Weapons, Undead
*Vampire Bats can "see" in complete darkness, up to a range of 30 yards. This process is not silent; any character within range of the echolocation may make a Perception Test to hear its high-pitched squeaks.
Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 3 (fly 8); **Wounds:** 24
Magic: 1
Armour: None
Weapons: Teeth (1d10+4)

Baroness Theodora Margrave

Female Lahmian Vampire Countess, ex-Thrall, ex-Noble Lord, ex-Courtier, ex-Noble

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
61	50	61 (6)	74 (7)	66	58	67	84

Skills: Academic Knowledge (the Arts) (Int +20), Academic Knowledge (Genealogy/Heraldry, Necromancy) (Int +10), Academic Knowledge (History, Philosophy, Strategy/Tactics) (Int), Blather (Fel), Channelling (WP), Charm (Fel +20), Command (Fel +20), Common Knowledge (the Empire, Tilea) (Int +20), Common Knowledge (Kislev) (Int), Concealment (Ag +10), Disguise (Fel), Dodge Blow (Ag +10), Evaluate (Int +20), Gossip (Fel +20), Haggle (Fel), Intimidate (S +10), Magical Sense (WP), Perception (Int +20), Performer (Musician) (Fel +20), Performer (Singer) (Int), Prepare Poison (Int), Read/Write (Int +20), Ride (Ag +10), Scale Sheer Surface (S +10), Search (Int +10), Secret Language (Thieves' Tongue) (Int), Shadowing (Ag +10), Silent Move (Ag +20), Speak Arcane Language (Magick) (Int), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int +20), Speak Language (Classical) (Int +10), Speak Language (Kislevarin, Tilean) (Int), Torture (Fel +10)
Talents: Aethyric Attunement, Dark Lore (Necromancy), Dark Magic, Dealmaker, Etiquette, Master Orator, Menacing, Petty Magic (Arcane), Public Speaking, Quick Draw, Savvy, Schemer, Seasoned Traveller, Specialist Weapon Group (Fencing, Parrying), Suave, Unsettling
Traits: Blood Gift (Aethyric Cipher, Blood Drain, Dark Majesty, Defy the Dawn, Natural Necromancer, Pass for Human, Vampires' Curse), Keen Senses, Frightening, Natural Weapons (Claws, Fangs), Night Vision, Undead

Combat

Attacks: 4; **Movement:** 8; **Wounds:** 24
Magic: 2; Petty Magic (Arcane), Dark Lore (Necromancy)
Weapons: Superior Rapier (WS 71; 1d10+5; Fast), Superior Main Gauche (WS 71; 1d10+3; Parrying)

Lord de Trois

Necrarch Vampire

Insanity Points: 6

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
51	48	65 (6)	59 (5)	58	54	72	20

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Astronomy) (Int +10), Academic Knowledge (Genealogy/Heraldry, Necromancy, Numerology, Philosophy) (Int), Channelling (WP), Charm (Fel +20), Command (Fel), Common Knowledge (Tilea, the Empire) (Int), Concealment (Ag), Dodge Blow (Ag), Evaluate (Int), Gossip (Fel), Intimidate (S), Magic Sense (WP), Perception (Int), Prepare Poison (Int +10), Read/Write (Int +10), Ride (Ag), Search (Int), Shadowing (Ag), Silent Move (Ag), Sleight of Hand (Ag), Speak Arcane Language (Magick) (Int +10), Speak Language (Reikspiel, Tilean) (Int +10), Speak Language (Eltharin, Khazalid) (Int), Torture (Fel)
Talents: Aethyric Attunement, Dark Lore (Necromancy), Dark Magic, Fast Hands, Lesser Magic (*dispel*, *magic lock*), Meditation, Petty Magic (Arcane)
Traits: Blood Gift (Blood Drain, Master of the Black Arts, Natural Necromancer, Vampire's Curse), Keen Senses, Natural Weapons (Claws, Fangs), Night Vision, Terrifying, Undead

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 5; **Wounds:** 24
Armour (Light): Costume (Head 1, Arms 1, Body 1, Legs 1)
Magic: 3; Petty Magic (Arcane), *dispel, magic lock,* Dark Lore (Necromancy)
Weapons: Claws or Fangs (1d10+6)

Lydia von Carstein

Female Von Carstein Vampire Countess, ex-Thrall, ex-Scribe

Insanity Points: 3

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
44	28	53 (5)	59 (5)	68	54	61	57

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Genealogy/Heraldry, History, Necromancy, Theology) (Int), Channelling (WP), Charm (Fel +10), Command (Fel), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int +10), Common Knowledge (Araby, Kislev) (Int), Dodge Blow (Ag), Evaluate (Int), Gossip (Fel +10), Heal (Int), Intimidate (S), Magical Sense (WP), Perception (Int +10), Read/Write (Int), Secret Language (Guild Tongue) (Int), Ride (Ag), Scale Sheer Surface (S), Search (Int), Shadowing (Ag), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Arcane Language (High Nehekharan, Magick, Old Faith) (Int), Speak Language (Classical, Breton, Kislevarin, Reikspiel, Tilean) (Int), Trade (Calligrapher) (Ag)
Talents: Dark Lore (Necromancy), Dark Magic, Disarm, Hardy, Linguistics, Master Orator, Petty Magic (Arcane), Public Speaking, Schemer, Sixth Sense, Specialist Weapon Group (Fencing, Parrying)
Traits: Blood Gifts (Blood Drain, Corrupted Innocence, Dark Majesty, Deathsight, Natural Necromancer, Pass for Human, Transfixing Gaze, Vampires' Curse), Frightening, Keen Senses, Natural Weapons (Claws, Fangs), Night Vision, Undead, Unsettling

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 6; **Wounds:** 23
Magic: 3; Petty Magic (Arcane), Dark Lore (Necromancy),
Weapons: Claws (1d10+5), Gromril Stiletto (1d10+2; as Dagger), Teeth (1d10+5)

Trappings

Lydia wears a beautiful, low-cut crimson dress, trimmed with black lace.

— Key Locations —

All of the following locations correspond with the map on page 229. Unless otherwise mentioned, all locations are dark. However, the descriptions assume the PCs have some sort of light source. It would be wise of PCs to be able to see in the dark, yes?

1. Entrance

Passing through the membrane lands the PCs here.

It's humid, and there's a disgusting stench here—an uncanny blend of rubbish, excrement, and decay. The walls, floor, and ceiling are a dull grey colour, slick with condensation. A closer look reveals they are riddled with tiny blue, red, and brown striations. Hanging from the ceiling in places are spongy orange tendrils, sort of like roots but more fleshy. Black oily water collects in puddles here and there, and things move in them, sending ripples across the surface.

There's nothing of interest here. Characters searching the floor don't find any tracks—the living nature of this place erases such markings, as well as any markings on the wall. Pick a character at random and call for a **Challenging (–10) Perception Test**. If he succeeds, nod sagely and say nothing. If he fails, shake your head, roll your dice twice. Shake your head again, and then let the characters act as they wish.

2. Cavern of Teeth

This slender cavern comes to an abrupt end after about 14 yards.

As you make your way down the tunnel you notice an occasional strange growth emerging from the wall. These tooth-like formations jut from the pale stone all around. Peering ahead, they seem to grow more numerous until they cover the walls and ceiling completely.

A close inspection of these nodules reveals they are canine teeth growing out of fleshy tumours on the walls. The tumours are bloody and oozing. A tooth can be extracted with a **Strength Test—**Easy (+10) if the character uses pliers or a dagger—but doing so makes the whole cave shudder and everyone inside must succeed on an **Agility Test** or fall down. Characters who are not wearing armour and attempt to extract teeth take 1d5 damage as the teeth nip the tender flesh.

3. Ambush

Lurking behind the column of stone is a Flamer. It springs out from behind the column as soon as the first character passes by.

Flamer

A Flamer is an odd Daemon that possesses a strange tubular body melded with gnashing faces and grinning maws. Its trunk ends in an odd fleshy skirt. Its two long blue arms end in dripping orifices that spray liquid flame.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
27	45	41 (4)	46 (4/6)	44	0	0	0

Traits: Daemonic Aura, Flamers, Frightening, Hoverer, Mindless, Natural Weapons (Bite)

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 4; Fly 6; **Wounds:** 11
Weapons: Bite (1d10+4)

Flamers

As a full action, a Flamer can release a stream of fire out to a range of 6 yards. All creatures in its path take 1d10+4 damage. Creatures that lose at least 1 Wound must also succeed on Agility Tests or catch fire.

Tactics

The Flamer is mindless. It uses its Flamers each round, even if directly engaged. It fights to the death.

4. Pool of Joy

This strange chamber has an unusual effect on those who enter.

The stench fades the further into the room you go, replaced with a cloying sweetness not unlike honey. As your light fills the chamber, you notice the floor gives way to a sloping shore of fine sand, and beyond that is a pool of pale yellow fluid. As you watch, the fluid swells, releasing a bubble that floats upward and then pops, releasing a fresh dose of that pleasing aroma.

Any character that lingers here for 1 round or longer must pass a **Challenging (–10) Will Power Test** or fall into a deep slumber. Those who pass the test can awaken their fallen comrades by slapping them or making a loud noise (which may trigger a random event). Characters that come out of the sleep are groggy for 1d10×20 minutes, taking a –10 penalty to all tests. A sleeping character is entitled to a new **Will Power Test** for each hour that passes. Should he wake on his own, he feels refreshed, and all of his Wounds are miraculously healed.

Climbing into the pool is not wise. The twit who does takes 1d10+4 damage that ignores armour and dissolves all of his equipment and gear. Should this damage reduce the character's Wounds to 0, the victim is pulled under. A moment later, a new bubble appears, but when it bursts, it showers the room with blood and the sound of a gurgling scream. Anyone witnessing this gruesome scene must succeed on a **Will Power Test** or collect yet another Insanity Point.

Dipping a finger results in the loss of that finger—the only warning the PCs will get. One more thing, some folks might think it clever to fill their containers with this stuff. Anything dipped into the pool dissolves automatically, even glass.

5. Genuine Oddness

Characters moving down this corridor are entitled to a **Challenging (–10) Perception Test**. Those who succeed notice the walls tremble slightly. Characters reaching the midpoint between the opening and exit of the tunnel trigger the trap. Air suddenly expels toward the characters, rushing past them and potentially blowing them down. Call for **Hard (–20) Strength Tests**. Those who succeed keep their feet. Those who fail are blown 1d10 yards back the way they came. They take 1d10 damage plus 1 additional point for every 2 yards travelled. But that's not all! As the rushing air slows (1 round), the walls contract, squeezing everyone still inside the tunnel and dealing 1d10+2 damage. While so squeezed, the hapless adventurers cannot move. On the round following, the tunnel widens back to normal, but air now blows from behind them, throwing them forward 2d10 yards unless they succeed on a **Very Hard (–30) Strength Test**. Characters who fail take 1d10 damage plus 1 additional point for every 2 yards thrown. Those who passed every test are rewarded for their incredible luck with a liberal coating of green and harmless slime coughed by the passage.

6. Suspicious Jar

This chamber contains one of the many false keys. The Black Witch has her minions seed these keys throughout, but it wouldn't do if they were just

lying about unprotected. Therefore, this friendly little key enjoys a mild protection that is not too maiming or lethal.

Hanging from a thick chain in the ceiling is a glass and silver container. Inside is a translucent purple slime. From a crack in the bottom, a noxious fluid drips to the floor, sizzling when it hits.

A character that succeeds on a **Perception Test** notices a dark object floating in the container, and a character that succeeds by 10 or more discerns it has a vague key-like shape. The characters can get to the mixture inside by lifting the lid, but plucking the object out of the floating mass is not as simple as wriggling one's fingers into the goo. Doing so forces the character to make a **Hard (–20) Toughness Test** or find their hand and arm are completely numb and useless for 1d10 minutes. Persistent characters add an extra 1d10 minutes each time they place their wandering and useless digits into the goo.

The jelly, however, does not affect inorganic matter. So a character can use a hand weapon or some other object to push the key out of the gunk. Once freed, the PCs can huddle around and give it a good look. The key is odd, crafted from some strange bit of purplish metal. One end is a mess of strange, bent spikes, while the other features a bright purple amethyst. The key might be worth a dozen Gold Crowns to a collector, but so long as a character carries the object, he gains a +10 bonus to Will Power Tests. Do note, however, that inserting the key into the doors at the end of **Room 75** has dreadful results in the form of a fun, new mutation!

7. The Mother

This room is one of three that holds a real key. Guarding these coveted items is one of the Black Witch's servants, a Zhidovsk woman sacrificed to the Black Witch many years ago.

The walls of this chamber are a pale pink and covered with white blisters. At the end of the room you see a woman in her middle years, imprisoned in the wall. Periodically, a hand emerges from the fleshy substance and grasps at the air before sliding back inside only to be followed by a long tongue that scrapes across her exposed flesh. She looks at you with dead eyes. A sticky wad of bright green mucus quivers on the floor in the centre of the room.

Have the characters make **Will Power Tests**. Those that fail may enjoy the new Insanity Point they've just acquired.

The woman is the Mother, and the Black Witch charged her with guarding one of the sets of keys needed to open the doors to the inner sanctum. When the PCs enter this room, she looks up, a mixture of pride and fear filling her face. She's a bit mad, but she's lucid enough to recognise the characters are not a part of Womb nor are they Vampires. Upon seeing them, she says, *"The first foe you see is not the true enemy. Look beyond and into the blackness to defeat the evil one."* After this, she looks around and whispers something. A character that succeeds on a **Challenging (–10) Perception Test** hears her say *"Kill me and be free."* A character may get a further clue toward what he needs to do by succeeding on a **Routine (+10) Perception Test** to notice a small tattoo on her forehead.

One merciful stroke is enough to free her from the horror of her predicament. The tongues and hands are disgusting but harmless. They are quite strong (S 66) and hold the woman fast. Characters examining the room and succeeding on a **Challenging (–10) Search Test** discover beneath her feet is a pool of blood marred with tongue-prints.

Upon giving her mercy, a stream of liquid metal pours out of the wound and coagulates in the shape of a key on the floor. This key is real, and grasping it fills the character with the sensation described in **True or False?** on page 219. Mother's body shudders back to life, and the tongues hold her in place.

Upon giving up the final key, she returns to life, and the wall releases her. She travels to **Room 74** to await instructions from the Black Witch. If the PCs survive their eventual encounter with the Black Witch and defeat her, the Mother wails piteously as she collapses with a great splash into a pile of brackish fluid and rotten meat.

False Key

The mucus hides a false key. A character that succeeds on a **Perception Test** sees a dark object suspended in the slime, and with one degree of success, the character sees it has the shape of a key. Cleaning away the mucus is impossible. As soon as it's wiped away, new slime wells up from the key. The only way to free the false key from the mess is to eat it straight from the key. Now be aware, few players will be inclined to have their character greedily clean mucus from a key by licking it clean, so to help them along, have all the PCs test their Insanity. For every Insanity Point they've acquired, they have a 10% chance of coming up with the idea to eat the filth. Don't rush to make them test their Insanity; let them experiment with the key a bit first. The character that cleans the key must pass a **Toughness Test** or vomit up the awfulness, causing the key to regain its slimy sheath. It takes four successful tests to free the key.

This work is really disgusting, and those watching the unfortunate character at his meal must pass a **Routine (+10) Will Power Test** or gain a new Insanity Point. Naturally, the mucus carries a noxious disease, and a character who finishes the meal automatically gains the Galloping Trots.

Once cleaned away, the key appears to be a corroded iron key. In the pits marring its surface are tiny green faces that ooze green slime. So long as it's held, the character gains a +10 bonus to Toughness Tests. This key is affiliated with Nurgle.

8. Brass Box

This room holds one of the many false keys.

A small brass box stands in the centre of this otherwise empty room. Out of the corner of your eye, you think you see horned skulls staring out the walls, but when you look, there's nothing there.

The box appears to be fashioned from a solid piece of brass. It has no markings and no obvious means of opening it. Warm to the touch, if it is sniffed, it gives off a faint coppery smell.

To open the box, the PCs must spill blood on it, which might only be revealed if the character carrying it is injured, so make sure you keep track of the box's location if it's picked up. Once exposed to blood, the box spins and reassembles itself, taking the shape of an eight-pointed star. A character that succeeds on a **Routine (+10) Perception Test** identifies that this new object has moving parts. If the character can move the parts in the proper pattern, succeeding on a **Challenging (–10) Intelligence Test** or an **Average Academic Knowledge (Engineering) Test**, they manage to reform the device into a box that opens to reveal a gently throbbing key of solid bronze. The turning end holds a ball of sticky blood, while the business end is a sharp blade. Once the key reveals itself, it bestows the Frenzy Talent on the character carrying it. This key is affiliated with Khorne.

9. Colourful Curtain

This chamber holds another false key.

Bisecting this slightly wider corridor is a shimmering curtain of light that slowly changes colours, moving from one startling hue to another. Pastel pinks fold into dung browns only to change to deep emerald. The curtain is transparent, and you can see the tunnel continuing on the other side.

The key floats in the curtain. The curtain changes to a new colour each round. If the colour result is the same as the previous one, the curtain fades, revealing a strange, writhing key fluttering about on sparrow's wings. The PCs have to snatch the key out of the air, requiring a **Weapon Skill Test**, before the curtain changes colour again. To determine the curtain's

Table 9–4: Curtain Colour

Roll	Colour	Difficulty
01–10	Skull White	No mutation
11–20	Blood Red	Very Easy (+30)
21–30	Fiery Orange	Easy (+20)
31–40	Bad Moon Yellow	Routine (+10)
41–50	Snot Green	Average (+0)
51–60	Enchanted Blue	Challenging (–10)
61–70	Warlock Purple	Hard (–20)
71–80	Tentacle Pink	Very Hard (–30)
81–90	Bestial Brown	Impossible—Automatic Mutation
91–00	Roll twice, mix the colours, and add the difficulties together.	

colours, roll on **Table 9–4: Curtain Colour**. If the PCs touch the curtain or move through it while it shines a colour, they must make a **Toughness Test** against the listed difficulty or gain a new mutation. Roll on any available mutation table. If using *Tome of Corruption,* use the **Tzeentch Mutation Table** on page 55.

The character who acquires and carries the false key gains a +1 bonus to his Magic Characteristic. This key is aligned with Tzeentch.

10. Nexus of Tragedy

This area branches off into four tunnels and holds a vicious trap.

In the centre of this area, you see a column of fuzzy green filth that nearly reaches the ceiling and is surrounded by a puddle of green ooze. The place smells faintly of ammonia.

So long as the characters stay at least 2 yards from the mound, they are in no more danger than usual. However, as soon as a character approaches the column, a slippery tendril shoots forth (BS 50) at the character. It can shoot several tendrils at once and with no penalty. Should the tendril strike the character in a location that's not protected by armour, it punches through the flesh and unfolds a number of talons that burrow near the exit wound. This strike deals 3 Wounds if it hits an arm, 5 Wounds if a leg, 10 Wounds if the body, and is instantaneously lethal if it strikes head. A character is entitled to an **Agility Test** or **Dodge Blow Test** to negate the attack. Once installed in the flesh, the tendril pumps its vile seed into the victim, forcing the character to pass a **Toughness Test** or die in a number of rounds equal to his Toughness Bonus. A character that hacks through the tendril in one round (it has 1 Wound), cuts off the supply of ooze and, thus, prevents the character from having to make the Toughness Test. A character that dies comes to resemble a new mound of filth after 1d5 rounds.

The fuzzy mound is particularly susceptible to fire. It goes up in flames as soon as it comes into contact with fire, filling the area and all adjacent rooms with terrible smoke. All characters that fail a **Toughness Test** take a –20 penalty to all **Perception Tests** involving the sense of smell for 1d5 hours.

11. Chatty Walls

This room is mostly harmless.

The walls are puckered with grinning mouths. You suspect they are glad to see you since, in unison, they sing a friendly little song about you. At first, the song seems quite nice, describing your exploits and successes, but soon, it turns dark, describing in exquisite detail the manner and time of your death.

Walls sprouting singing mouths are not normal. All characters witnessing such oddness must pass **Will Power Tests** or collect an Insanity Point. The mouths clam up if the PCs back off to a space at least 4 yards away. Allowing the mouths to continue singing is grounds for a random event if you like. The mouths aren't interested in conversation, so they don't respond to questions. If you're feeling creative, feel free to whip up a nasty little ditty about the PCs, being sure to add some sort of disgusting element.

12. Fleshy Pile

This large intersection holds another false key.

In the centre of this intersection is a quivering pile of glistening flesh. It shudders as you draw near. The smell of ham is quite strong here.

This pile is exactly what it seems to be: a mound of pink flesh veined in streaks of purple. Inside the tumour is a false key. Acquiring the key is simple. A character needs only to pour a measure of alcohol on the flesh, and an orifice opens wide, revealing a bloody hole. Characters are entitled to a clue toward this procedure if they succeed on a **Routine (+10) Perception Test** to notice a flaccid wineskin lying on the floor. Once "tipsy," it shudders and coughs itself inside out, splashing the place with wetness. Its new form shrinks rapidly, until it appears to be an ordinary key made of pink metal. This key is aligned with Slaanesh.

Impatient PCs might hack the thing apart. Doing so destroys the key and causes it to squeal like a pig, possibly attracting attention, making for a good time to roll a random event.

The character holding the key gains a +10 bonus to all Fellowship Tests.

13. Sad Saul

Hiding in this chamber is Sad Saul, a rejected servant of the Black Witch. In his adolescence, he dreamed of her, envisioning a seductive, sultry vixen that wanted to love him. The dreams were powerful and encouraged him to leave behind everything to find the object of his lust. He crossed hundreds of miles, finally coming to the pond. He dove in, found the membrane, and entered, but it was a trap. The Black Witch had called many mortals to their doom, luring them with the promise of pleasure, riches, or knowledge, and as soon as they appeared, the Womb ripped them apart, making them anew. Most victims recall nothing of their former lives, but Sad Saul does. Despite his grotesque new form, he pines for the Black Witch, hoping she'll ease his hurts and restore him to his former self.

Sad Saul hides in one of the side passages, whimpering. Characters within 10 yards should make **Perception Tests** to hear the sounds of his sobbing. If they investigate the sounds, they find Sad Saul is very hungry.

Sad Saul is a big, bloated, purple maggot equipped with small fluttering dove's wings all along the length of his body. From his mouth issues a torrent of noxious brown slime that cause him to retch up his meals. He has the hardest time keeping down food.

Insanity Points: 8

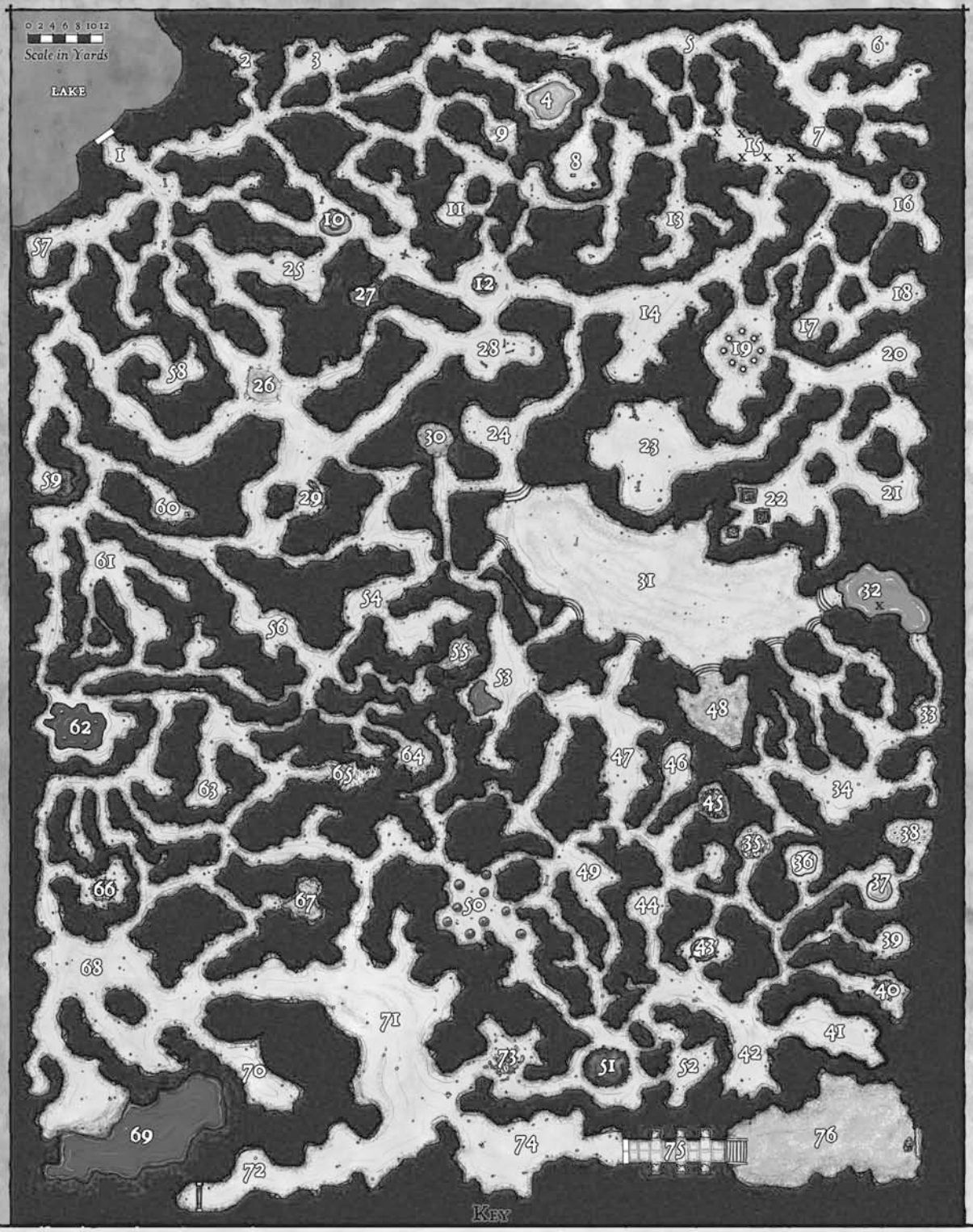
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
46	41	43 (4)	52 (5/7)	50	28	38	14

Skills: Blather (Fel), Dodge Blow (Ag), Intimidate (S), Perception (Int), Speak Arcane Language (Daemonic) (Int), Speak Language (Dark Tongue, Reikspiel) (Int), Swim (S)
Talents: Ambidextrous, Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure
Traits: Daemonic Aura, Frightening, Mutations (Agile [×2], Spores), Natural Weapons (Nasty, Gooey Bite), Night Vision, Will of Iron

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 5; **Wounds:** 15
Weapons: Nasty Gooey Bite (1d10+5; CV+1)

The Womb



Key

1 — Entrance
2 — Cavern of Teeth
3 — Ambush
4 — Pool of Joy
5 — Genuine Oddness
6 — Suspicious Jar
7 — The Mother
8 — Brass Box
9 — Colourful Curtain
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14 — Surrurating Ulcer
15 — Hall of Wounds
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20 — Room of Eyes
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23 — The Pleasure Palace
24 — Raining Blood
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26 — Fleshy Ribbons
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28 — Ghastly Ghouls
29 — Sorrow Swarms
30 — The Green Room
31 — Gallery of War
32 — Dreadful Slime
33 — Sharp Pain
34 — Empty Chamber
35 — Old Papers
36 — Gelatinous Heap 1
37 — Gelatinous Heap 2
38 — Filth Mace
39 — Potted Plant
40 — Butcher Shop
41 — Quiet Chamber
42 — Random Entertainment
43 — Golden Pig
44 — Grabby Hands
45 — Bodies, Bodies Everywhere
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49 — Dancing Heads
50 — Evil Sacks of Flesh
51 — Mound of Dung
52 — Lost Black Orcs
53 — Puddle of Blood
54 — Unwholesome Rain
55 — What's This?
56 — Wide Corridor
57 — Sick Stain
58 — Guardians
59 — Hungry, Hungry Cyst
60 — Empty Room
61 — Vampire Brawl
62 — Mud Puddle
63 — Old Friend
64 — Forsaken Father
65 — The Crone
66 — Octogram
67 — Hatchery
68 — Vampires or Chaos
69 — Cooling Waters
70 — Empty Passage
71 — Mutant Host
72 — Eye of Chaos
73 — Heap of Bones
74 — The Doors of Doom!
75 — Corridor of Doom
76 — Inner Sanctim

Mutations

Sad Saul has two mutations.

- *Agile:* Saul is quick despite his great size and unwieldy form. Since he gained this mutation twice, he increased his Agility Characteristic by 10.
- *Spores:* Hidden within the folds of his flab are small puffballs. Whenever he moves, he gives off plumes of spores. It's far worse when Sad Saul is struck in combat. A hit creates a cloud of choking spores, forcing the target that hit him to pass a **Toughness Test** or lose his next turn as he struggles to get air. Creatures that don't breathe (mobile stones, Undead, and statues) are immune to the spores.

14. Suppurating Ulcer

This large room holds another false key.

This chamber seems empty at first, but then you notice a string of pale blue slime oozing from the ceiling. Looking up, you see an angry red ulcer that shudders in the rock. Just inside the wound is a bright green dagger.

Retrieving the key (the dagger) is awfully simple and for good reason—it's particularly deadly. A character need only reach up, stick his hand in the ulcer, and pluck the offending object. Doing so rewards the character with a slobbering kiss from the wound, which—while disturbing—is utterly harmless.

The key however is a different story entirely. So long as the key is held, the character automatically fails all tests made to resist gaining a new disease. In exchange, the character's Toughness Bonus increases by 1. The key can function as a Superior Dagger (+10 to Weapon Skill Tests) and is aligned with Nurgle.

15. Hall of Wounds

This hall carries a deadly, disgusting trap that's not immediately apparent. It appears to be another stretch of corridor, empty except for a bit of seepage from orange cracks in the walls. Characters moving into spaces indicated on the map are abruptly sucked into the floor and spit out in a random location. (If you're not using a map, each character has a 25% chance of finding a sphincter per round they linger in the Hall of Wounds.) Roll 1d100. On a result of 01 to 74, the character is spewed out of a sphincter along with a torrent of appalling filth in the corresponding chamber. The sphincter seals shut after the character exits. A result of 75 to 90 indicates the character is shunted out into the pool beyond the entrance, and a result of 91 to 00 means the character appears in the cave outside that overlooks the pool.

The fluids that accompany a transported character are noxious but have no effect until a character has to make a test to avoid gaining a mutation. The fluids, which seep into every crack and crevice in the character's body, impose a –10 penalty to tests to avoid mutations. The potency of the slime fades after 1d10 minutes.

16. Fountain of Blood

This room holds another false key!

This otherwise-empty chamber holds a large round pool of bubbling blood. Floating on the surface is a bone key.

Plucking the key from the blood is the easy part. The character that does so, however, must immediately succeed on a **Challenging (–10) Will Power Test** or explode with rage, attacking all of his allies for 1d10 rounds. While affected, the character gains a +10 bonus to **Strength** and **Will Power Tests**, and his Strength Bonus increases by 1. He takes a –10 penalty to **Weapon Skill** and **Intelligence Tests**. The character must attack the nearest enemy each round, pausing only long enough to draw a suitable weapon. A character in this state cannot cast spells. This key is aligned with Khorne.

17. Chamber of Whispers

This strange chamber may grant the PCs important clues about what they need to do here.

This small room is dark.

When the PCs enter this area, have them all make **Perception Tests**. Those that succeed hear a faint whisper, and those who fail don't hear anything and never will. Each round a character remains, they gain one bit of information drawn from any of the following. However, each round they remain here forces characters to succeed on a **Will Power Test** or gain 1 Insanity Point. Characters that failed their **Perception Test** are not at risk of going crazy in this room.

- *"The keys fools, the keys! They are the answer!"*
- *"Seek out the Maiden, the Mother, and the Crone. They offer the true path!"*
- *"Orcs are funnnnnggguuussss… fuuuunnnnggguuuuusssssss!"*
- *"She seeks to join herself with the Child, to restore her place as Mistress of the Beasts!"*
- *"Beware the Halflings' pies!"*
- *"The soiled heir covets the boy, for he shall ascend to the heights of Man!"*
- *"The Child is not the Champion of Night! He is the Doom of Us All!"*
- *"The Ratmen are too common for Old Worlders to deny their existence!"*
- *"Where are the animals, the boars, the birds? Where, where, where!"*
- *"Her remains… destroy her remains…"*
- *"Eat not the yellow snow!"*

And so on.

18. Keys of Destiny

When the PCs come within 6 yards of this room, have them all make **Routine (+10) Perception Tests**. Those that succeed hear the sounds of fighting coming from this chamber. The following text assumes the PCs approach quietly. Modify the text appropriately for oblivious or foolish PCs.

Two massive, bull-headed men circle each other. Burned into their foreheads are writhing symbols that give off an acrid pink and blue smoke. They grip nasty-looking axes, and every now and then, one takes a swing at the other. Between them, on the floor, are two small bloody masses of tissue studded with eyeballs that mimic the movements of the larger abominations. The sounds of booming laughter fill the air.

The two creatures are Minotaurs. The marks on the Minotaurs' heads are respectively of Slaanesh and Tzeentch. The blobs of animated oozing meat are false keys. One is of Slaanesh and the other of Tzeentch. Killing a Minotaur causes the corresponding mound of flesh to slough off and reveal a key. Clever PCs might direct their attacks at the wads of flesh, but any hit kills the flesh and destroys the key, causing it to erupt in a bright flash of light. All creatures within 4 yards must pass **Toughness Tests** or take a –10 penalty to all tests for 1d5 rounds.

If the PCs manage to slay both Minotaurs, the blobs, as described, assume characteristics more in keeping with their true key-like nature. The key of Slaanesh is pink and moist, and so long as it's carried, the character's Toughness Bonus counts as 1 higher. The key of Tzeentch is sharp and spiky and a little capricious about its blessings. Whenever a character casts a spell while carrying the key, roll 1d5. On a 1, the character gains a Chaos Die. On a 2–4, the character gains the result as a bonus on his Casting Roll. On a 5, the character gains two Chaos Dice.

Minotaurs

Each Minotaur serves a Ruinous Power—Slaanesh and Tzeentch. They hate each other, but they are prevented from killing the other, for the Dark Gods keep them fighting for their amusement. Should they notice any other creature nearby, they attack, bellowing with hate.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
42	25	48 (4)	46 (4)	38	18	24	16

Skills: Follow Trail (Int), Intimidate (S +20), Outdoor Survival (Int), Perception (Int), Speak Language (Dark Tongue) (Int)
Talents: Specialist Weapon Group (Two-handed), Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure
Traits: Bloodgreed, Frightening, Keen Senses, Mutations (Animalistic Legs, Bestial Appearance, Large Horns)

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 6; **Wounds:** 26
Armour (Light): Leather Jack (Arms 1, Body 1)
Weapons: Great Weapon (Two-handed Axe) (1d10+5; Impact, Slow; CV+1) and Large Horns (1d10+5; CV+1)

Bloodgreed

If a Minotaur slays a creature and isn't engaged with another creature, it must make a **Routine (+10) Will Power Test** or sit down and gorge itself on the kill. Each turn thereafter, the Minotaur may test again. Should the Minotaur be attacked whilst feasting, it snaps out of its gluttony and acts normally.

Mutations

The Minotaurs have common mutations, the effects of which are already included in their statistics.

19. Pillars, Fighting, and Stuff

This chamber holds eight white pillars that grow right out of the floor. They are uncommonly smooth and free of damage. A character that perceives these pillars using Magical Sense notices they shine with *Dhar*. Any Casting Roll made in this room gains a Chaos Die.

This room would a prime location to find a Vampire. See **Wandering Vampires** on page 232 for tips.

20. Room of Eyes

This room is harmless, though disturbing.

> *Scores of blood red eyes stare out from the walls, each blinking separately.*

Poking an eye causes it to close and then blink a dozen times as green tears spill forth. Stabbing an eye with a sharp stick, sword, or sharp nail, kills it and causes all the other eyes to blink angrily.

21. Dripping Slime

This room holds… a FALSE KEY!

Buried beneath buckets of mucus is a single pearl about the size of a thimble. Finding the pearl requires 10 minutes of looking around and feeling blindly in the snot, as well as requiring a successful **Very Hard (–30) Search Test**. A character who fails the test can try again, but each time roll for a Random Event—to be cruel, see? A character who finds the pearl and succeeds on an **Evaluate Test** thinks it may be worth 25 *gc*. An enterprising character that eats it—in the unlikely event that the character decides to conceal his finding—suddenly grows a blood-filled blister on his face. After a few seconds, it bursts, and a black key falls out of the wound. So long as the key—not the pearl—is carried, the character gains a +10 bonus to all tests made to resist Chaos spells—including any spell found in the Lore of Chaos, Lore of Nurgle, Lore of Slaanesh, and Lore of Tzeentch.

If you really want the PCs to figure out the trick to getting this key, have them test their madness to see who comes up with the idea. For each Insanity Point, a character has a 5% chance of formulating the idea to eat the pearl. Characters have a 10% greater chance of coming to this conclusion if they've already eaten something else unpleasant in this dungeon.

22. Pits

This room holds three pits, each about 3 yards deep and filled to the brim with maggots. A character that climbs inside finds the experience thrilling (and maddening, bestow 1 Insanity Point for fun if you wish—you're near the end of the campaign, so relax) and curative. Each hour the PCs remain in the maggot-filled pits, they each recover 1d5–2 Wounds. Certainly, it's unlikely it would strike any player that reclining in a pool of maggots is a good idea. You could have the PCs test their madness, as in **Room 21**, or laugh evilly as they pass up this opportunity to recover from their injuries.

23. The Pleasure Palace of Slaanesh

This room is quite odd and is the lair of a Daemonette spawned from the Black Witch's meddling. The Daemonette poses as the Maiden and offers a character that enters many delights—and much suffering.

Count up the number of players around the table. Pull all the odd players out of the room and read or paraphrase the following text.

> *Inside this pale blue chamber stands a voluptuous maiden. She is scantily clad, wearing a brass brassier and matching bottoms. A chain extends from her neck to the wall. In her hand, she offers a black iron key.*

Once you've finished this description, pull half the players out of the room and read or paraphrase this text.

> *Inside this pale blue chamber stands a horrifying abomination. It has a bald head, saucer eyes, and two pincer claws in place of its hands. Twin rows of oozing breasts quiver as the beast smiles wickedly. A chain extends from her neck to the wall. Hanging from its neck is an iron key.*

This creature is a Daemonette, and whenever any character approaches, it dances and writhes suggestively, offering mysterious delights and pleasures beyond compare. Once a character moves within range, the Daemonette lashes out with a Pincer Claw, thrusts the appendage deep into the flesh of her opponent, and works it around a bit, causing the victim to scream with equal amounts of ecstasy and agony.

The key is a worthless chunk of metal. And the Daemonette can snap the chain as a free action.

Daemonette

A Daemonette is a seductive Daemon born from Slaanesh's diseased imagination.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
44	0	40 (4)	37 (3/5)	52	31	40	64

Skills: Charm (Fel +20), Dodge Blow (Ag), Gossip (Fel +20), Perception (Int), Performer (Dancer) (Fel), Speak Arcane Language (Daemonic) (Int), Speak Language (Dark Tongue, Kislevarin, Reikspiel) (Int), Torture (Fel)
Talents: Ambidextrous

Traits: Aura of Slaanesh, Daemonic Aura, Frightening, Instability, Mutations (Animalistic Legs, Pincer Hand), Natural Weapon (Pincer Hand), Night Vision, Will of Iron

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 6; **Wounds:** 12
Weapons: Pincer Hand (1d10+4; Precise)

Aura of Slaanesh

All living opponents within 4 yards of a Daemonette take a –10 penalty to all Weapon Skill and Will Power Tests.

Instability

On any round in which a Daemonette takes at least 1 Wound and fails to inflict any Wounds in return, it must succeed on a Will Power Test or be sucked back into the Realm of Chaos.

Mutations

This Daemonette has three mutations, the effects of each are included in its statistics.

- *Alluring:* This Daemonette is particularly alluring, gaining a +5 bonus to Charm Tests.
- *Animalistic Legs:* The Daemonette has strange chitin-covered legs, increasing her Movement by 1.
- *Pincer Hand:* The Daemonette's left hand is a pincer that grants her the Natural Weapon Trait. It has the Precise Quality.

24. Raining Blood

You're not surprised to find another false key here are you?

Blood droplets rain from the ceiling. When they hit the floor, they flash with strange red light. In the centre of the floor is a bronze key with a horned skull at one end.

This chamber is raining blood. Characters may enter the room safely and explore it to their hearts' content. Make note of the characters that enter. During their next combat, they must successfully pass a **Will Power Test** or attack their closest ally in melee, charging if they have to.

The character that carries the key deals 1 additional point of damage on all of his melee attacks. This key is attuned to Khorne.

25. Worms of Green Light

Characters moving through this area experience an odd sensation as they become impregnated with a Nurgling.

The walls here shine with worms composed of eerie green light.

The worms move toward the first character who steps into this chamber. A character is entitled to an **Agility Test** to avoid being touched. Should he fail the test, a Nurgling grows inside of him. See the **Reflecting Pool** section in **Chapter V: Villa Hahn** page 115 for details on this unwelcome experience.

26. Fleshy Ribbons

This strange nexus connects several passages.

Ribbons of pink flesh coated in a thick layer of fat clutter the floor here. Tunnels branch off in all directions.

The ribbons of flesh are exactly what they seem. Eating this material is possible, but it offers no nourishment.

This is a good place for the PCs to encounter one of the Vampires. See the **Wandering Vampires** sidebar for tips on using this room.

27. Flooded Chamber

This is the last false key, we promise!

The floor gives way to a pool of dark water. The air smells faintly of spoiled meat.

Characters peering into the water see their reflections staring back at them. Behind the wavering image, they see—with a successful **Challenging (–10) Perception Test—**a cage suspended in the fluid. A degree of success reveals a dark object suspended inside the cage.

A character reaching into the water to touch the cage is instead pulled inside it, and the key—the dark object—is spat out in the character's place. An entrapped character is not in danger of suffocation, doesn't need food, water, or anything else to sustain him. He's fully aware of his surroundings, and aside from boredom, he's just fine. Should a heroic character dip his fingers to touch the cage, that character swaps places with the imprisoned character. This cycle continues each time the cage is touched. Clever (or annoying) players might have their characters touch the cage simultaneously and if so, just one gets sucked inside—the one who came up with the smart idea would be proper. Finally, tying a rope to a character or gripping the character for dear life does nothing to thwart the cage's transporting qualities.

A character can only be freed if another character touches the cage with another key, at which point the key swaps location with the trapped character and floats there indefinitely. The cage does not stop functioning and continues its irritating procedure of snatching unwitting explorers. Alternatively, if the PCs are a bit cavalier and have managed to do well in this complex, you could replace the key inside of the bubble with something particularly naughty such as a Vampire, Mutant, or Daemon.

The key, once freed, is rather small and disappointing. It looks like an ordinary key. While carried, the character casts all spells as if he had the Dark Magic Talent. Should the character already have this talent, he may roll twice on Tzeentch's Curse, taking the better of the two results.

As for the spoiled meat? A thorough **Challenging (–10) Search Test** reveals a bit of flesh tucked away in a crevice in the wall. A wandering Mutant stuffed his lunch here for safe keeping and forgot about it.

28. Ghastly Ghouls

These vile Ghouls were left here by their Strigoi master to kill any non-Vampires they encountered. Tantalised by the prospects of fresh meat, the Ghouls skulk about, picking at their skin with their jagged nails. There's one Ghoul for every two PCs and one Ghoul for each NPC. A character who's quick with his words or shoves a comrade into the waiting claws

Wandering Vampires

At various points in their explorations, the PCs may come upon an empty chamber, and if any Vampires are still active, the PCs should encounter one (or two if you're really cruel) here. Should the PCs manage to destroy the Vampire, they may throw the Black Witch's plans into disarray. Note which keys the Vampire has acquired, and the PCs can collect these keys if they think to do so. Throughout the rest of their exploration, generic versions of the killed Vampire (using typical stats presented in **Chapter VIII**), except the Blood Dragon, may hunt the PCs to reclaim the keys as you like. Such encounters should feature just one Vampire at a time, and they attack when the PCs are least able to defend themselves. The Vampire is not interested in killing all of the PCs, just reclaiming the keys. If they do not succeed in regaining the key, the PCs manage to block a major component of the Black Witch's plan. See **Outcomes** on page 245 for details.

of the Ghouls buys the party a round or two for chatting. A **Hard (–20) Charm Test** convinces the Ghouls to set aside their ravenous hunger long enough to answer a few questions.

The Ghouls have no idea about what's going on, though one leans forward, belching that all the Vampires go to join the Champion of the Night. Who or what that is, the Ghouls don't know or care, and with a strange giggle, they fling themselves at the PCs.

Ghoul Brutes

These are tough veteran Ghouls who are accustomed to eating the flesh of the living, stripping it right from the bones. They are implacable killers, pursuing their prey through any obstacle.

Insanity Points: 6

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
52	0	52 (5)	60 (6)	49	18	46	15

Skills: Concealment (Ag), Dodge Blow (Ag), Intimidate (S), Outdoor Survival (Int), Perception (Int +10), Scale Sheer Surface (S), Search (Int +10), Shadowing (Ag), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int)
Talents: Rover, Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure
Traits: Fearless, Frightening, Natural Weapons (Claws), Night Vision, Poisoned Attacks

Combat

Attacks: 3; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 17
Weapons: Claws (1d10+6; CV+1)

Poisoned Attacks

A living creature injured by a Ghoul's claw attack must succeed on a **Challenging (–10) Toughness Test** or lose an additional 2 Wounds.

29. Sorrow Swarms

Characters moving into this area are entitled to **Perception Tests** to notice the fluttering movements of purple butterflies. Those who get at least one degree of success also notice an eyeless Human corpse lying on the floor. Upon seeing a Sorrow Swarm, a character must pass a **Will Power Test** or become overwhelmed with grief and weep openly.

The butterflies are terrible creatures of Chaos, born from the Lord of Change's horrid imagination. They are Sorrow Swarms. There are four swarms in this area. On the round after the PCs enter, the Sorrow Swarms notice the characters and attack.

Sorrow Swarm

Individually fragile, when a swarm of these creatures descend on their opponent, they suck the tears, flesh, and eyes from their victims' head, savouring each droplet of blood and salty water.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
28	0	14 (1)	21 (2)	46	12	27	15

Skills: Dodge Blow (Ag), Perception (Int +20), Silent Move (Ag)
Traits: Evoke Sorrow, Flier, Frenzy of Tears, Keen Senses, Swarm

Combat

Attacks: 3; **Movement:** fly 4; **Wounds:** 10
Weapons: Claws (1d10)

Evoke Sorrow

Upon first seeing a Sorrow Swarm, a living creature must successfully pass a **Will Power Test** or begin to weep.

Frenzy of Tears

A Sorrow Swarm within 4 yards of a weeping creature gains the benefits of the Frenzy Talent.

Swarm

A Sorrow Swarm that successfully deals damage to its opponent completely envelops it. Each round thereafter, the Sorrow Swarm gains a +20 bonus to Weapon Skill Tests against the covered opponent and the opponent takes a –20 penalty to all tests while covered. A Sorrow Swarm reduced to 0 Wounds is dispersed, and the individual creatures flutter off in all directions.

30. The Green Room

This chamber is relatively safe, and characters seeking a place to recuperate can do so here.

The tunnel extends into a thick morass of spongy green material.

Characters testing the spongy surface find it gives way easily, similar to the membrane. A PC that pushes inside can move about slowly. The membrane closes shut behind him. In effect, the character hangs in the weird substance like a piece of fruit in gelatine. While so suspended, the character can breathe normally and is in no danger of being attacked or molested by the minions of the Black Witch.

31. Gallery of War

Two war bands wage war here. Each hour that passes from the time the PCs entered the Womb reduces the number of combatants here. You should modify the descriptive text as needed.

As the characters draw near this massive room, they automatically hear the clash of weapons, grunts, and the wet slapping noise of entrails hitting the stones.

The sounds of battle clearly emanate from this massive chamber. Gathered on the floor of this place are two large groups of warriors mingling in the middle, butchering one another with relish. The dead and dying litter the floor, and the dying are moaning and screaming in pain. Here and there you see prone men vomiting blood, hastily stuffing their guts back into their opened abdomens, or pressing their fists into severed stumps of meat to staunch the spray of blood and gore. Several corridors open onto this room, offering steps down to the killing floor.

This fight is large and vicious. Characters that jump into the middle of it probably deserve to die but can at least have fun doing so. The combatants are skilled, and the confrontation lasts about five hours in total. In the end, everyone here dies.

There are two "armies." The first is led by Vignar, a vicious Norse Champion of Khorne. The second is commanded by Gronk, a brutal Minotaur that serves the Changer of Ways. The number of creatures here depends on what time the PCs come upon the chamber.

Hours	Vignar
Five	Vignar, 50 Chaos Marauders, 10 Flesh Hounds
Four	Vignar, 35 Chaos Marauders, 7 Flesh Hounds
Three	Vignar, 25 Chaos Marauders, 5 Flesh Hounds
Two	Vignar, 15 Chaos Marauders, 3 Flesh Hounds
One	Vignar, 10 Chaos Marauders, 1 Flesh Hound
None	Corpses
Hours	**Gronk**
Five	Gronk, 10 Bestigors, 30 Gors, 10 Ungors, 15 Warhounds
Four	Gronk, 8 Bestigors, 20 Gors, 5 Ungors, 10 Warhounds
Three	Gronk, 5 Bestigors, 15 Gors, 3 Ungors, 8 Warhounds
Two	Gronk, 3 Bestigors, 10 Gors, 2 Ungors, 4 Warhounds
One	Gronk, 2 Bestigors, 7 Gors, 2 Warhounds
None	Corpses

Vignar

Male Norse Mutant Aspiring Champion, ex-Chaos Knight, ex-Chaos Warrior, ex-Marauder

Vignar was a powerful warrior of the Aeslings tribe of Norsca. He rose to prominence, having led a foray against the hold of Kraka Drak, butchered countless Baersonlings, and led several raids into the Troll Country. When the Blood God saw fit to bestow unto him a boon, he severed his ties with his people and ventured into the Chaos Wastes to join Archaon Everchosen in his war against the Empire. With the close of the Incursion, Vignar made his way to fight in the Shadowlands, when he was lured by the Black Witch to enter her Womb. Leading his band of Chaos Marauders, Vignar believes it is his duty to purge the tunnels of all but those who serve Khorne. Unfortunately, Gronk, his dire enemy, has other plans.

Vignar, whilst changed, retains much of his Human form. His musculature is swollen and massive, appearing huge and imposing. His head vaguely resembles that of a lion but is twisted and Daemonic. He has a mane of black hair, and whorls and patterns tattoo his body.

Insanity Points: 8

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
69	48	67 (6)	63 (6)	49	44	56	21

Skills: Animal Care (Int), Command (Fel +20), Common Knowledge (Chaos Wastes, Norsca) (Int +10), Common Knowledge (the Empire), Consume Alcohol (T +10), Dodge Blow (Ag +10), Follow Trail (Int), Intimidate (S +10), Navigation (Int), Outdoor Survival (Int +10), Perception (Int +10), Ride (Ag +10), Sail (Ag), Search (Int), Speak Arcane Language (Daemonic) (Int), Speak Language (Dark Tongue, Norscan, Kurgan, Reikspiel) (Int)
Talents: Chosen of Chaos, Coolheaded, Frightening, Hardy, Inured to Chaos, Menacing, Orientation, Seasoned Traveller, Specialist Weapon Group (Flail, Two-handed), Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure, Warrior Born
Traits: Mutations (Bestial Appearance, Lion's Face, Strong), Rewards of Chaos (Aggression Bonus, Chaos Armour, Chaos Weapon)

Combat

Attacks: 3; **Fate Points:** 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 21
Armour (Heavy): Chaos Armour (Head 5, Arms 5, Body 5, Legs 5)
Weapons: *Ire of the Blood God* (Two-handed Sword) (WS 79; 1d10+7; CV+1; Impact, Slow; on a Swift Attack, Attack 4), Hand Weapon (Sword) (1d10+7; CV+1), Shield (1d10+5; CV+1; Defensive, special)

Trappings

Vignar is never without his Chaos armour, a full suit of black plate embossed with the symbol of Khorne on the shoulder plates and the Chaos octogram on his chest. The helmet reflects his leonine features, resembling a snarling, horned lion.

Ire of the Blood God

Vignar fights with a dreadful weapon of Chaos. A superior two-handed sword, the blade is blood red and oozes with pus. Sharp thorns grow out of the blade, each capped with crusty blood. When Vignar fights with this weapon and uses the Swift Attack action, his Attacks Characteristic increases by +1.

Chaos Marauders

Male Norse Mutant Chaos Marauders, ex-Berserkers

These warriors are bloodthirsty savages who live to fight and kill. They are ruthless, without compassion, and willing to die.

Insanity Points: 4

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
46	27	45 (4)	47 (4)	42	24	49	16

Skills: Animal Care (Int), Common Knowledge (Norsca) (Int +10), Consume Alcohol (T +20), Follow Trail (Int), Intimidate (S), Navigation (Int), Outdoor Survival (Int), Perception (Int), Performer (Storyteller) (Fel), Ride (Ag), Sail (Ag), Search (Int), Speak Language (Norscan) (Int +10), Swim (S)
Talents: Frenzy, Hardy, Inured to Chaos, Menacing, Orientation, Quick Draw, Specialist Weapon Group (Flail, Two-handed), Strike to Injure, Unsettling
Traits: Mutation (Bestial Appearance)

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 15
Armour (Light): Helmet, Leather Jerkin, and Leggings (Head 2, Body 1, Legs 1)
Weapons: Great Weapon (Two-handed Sword) (1d10+4; CV+1; Impact, Slow), 2 Javelins (1d10+3; CV+1; Range 8/16; Reload Half), Flail (1d10+5; CV+1; Impact, Tiring)

Trappings

These Marauders all carry bottles of spirits, and they are all infested with lice.

Flesh Hounds

Flesh Hounds are ravenous Daemons of Khorne. Little more than beasts, they fling themselves into every combat, slaughtering for the love of spilling blood.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
54	0	46 (4)	38 (3/5)	48	14	66	5

Skills: Follow Trail (Int +20), Perception (Int +10), Scale Sheer Surface (S), Silent Move (Ag), Swim (S)
Talents: Frenzy, Rover
Traits: Daemonic Aura, Fearless, Frightening, Keen Senses, Mutations (Claws, Poisonous Bite), Natural Weapons (Claws), Night Vision

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 7; **Wounds:** 14
Weapons: Bite (1d10+2; Precise; plus see following **Mutations** section), Claws (1d10+4)

Trappings

All Flesh Hounds wear Collars of Khorne, granting them a +30 bonus on Will Power Tests made to resist spells.

Mutations

Claws and *Poisonous Bite*: A creature that loses at least 1 Wound from its bite must pass a Toughness Test. On a failed test, the victim loses an additional 1d5 Wounds, ignoring armour and Toughness. The Flesh Hound must wait 1d10 rounds before using its bite again.

Gronk

Male Doombull Chaos Warrior

Gronk's service to Tzeentch was written the moment he tore his way out of his screaming mother's womb, if indeed he was born. Savaged by other Beastmen, he endured unspeakable torments, the scars of which still crisscross his muscled torso. As he came of age, he broke with his tribe's traditions and vowed service to Tchar, the Lord of Change, and ever since, he has feasted on the power granted to him by his doting master. Gronk has entered the Womb of the Black Witch not out of his own volition; rather, he followed the currents of fate and believed his master desired it. Gronk leads a tribe of Beastmen against the arrogant berserkers of Khorne and believes that by slaughtering them all, he will advance in his master's esteem.

Gronk has brightly patterned skin and wreathes of twisting horns; he glows with an aura of crackling Chaos energy.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
57	24	61 (6)	57 (5)	46	30	39	14

Skills: Animal Care (Int), Command (Fel), Common Knowledge (Chaos Wastes) (Int), Follow Trail (Int +10), Intimidate (S +10), Navigation (Int), Outdoor Survival (Int +10), Perception (Int +10), Ride (Ag), Search (Int), Speak Language (Dark Tongue, Kurgan) (Int)
Talents: Orientation, Specialist Weapon Group (Two-handed), Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure
Traits: Bloodgreed, Frightening, Keen Senses, Mutations (Animalistic Legs, Bestial Appearance, Horns ×2, Limned with Fire)

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 6; **Wounds:** 38
Armour (Heavy): Full Plate (Head 5, Arms 5, Body 5, Legs 5)
Weapons: Great Weapon (Two-handed Axe) (1d10+6; CV+1; Impact, Slow) or Horns (1d10+6; CV+1)

Limned with Fire

Whenever Gronk enters combat, pink flames lick his flesh. These tongues of fire deal no damage to him, but any creature that strikes the Doombull with a melee weapon must succeed on an Agility Test or take 2 points of damage that ignores Toughness and armour. Should this damage reduce an opponent's Wounds to 0, that opponent explodes in a shower of harmless purple fluid.

Bestigors

These tough and experienced Beastmen are better disciplined and more dangerous than other Beastmen.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
45	25	41 (4)	47 (4)	37	25	35	27

Skills: Command (Fel), Concealment (Ag), Dodge Blow (Ag), Follow Trail (Int), Intimidate (S +10), Outdoor Survival (Int), Perception (Int), Shadowing (Ag), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Language (Dark Tongue) (Int)
Talents: Menacing, Rover, Specialist Weapon Group (Two-handed), Strike Mighty Blow
Traits: Keen Senses, Mutations (Animalistic Legs, Bestial Appearance, Horns ×2), Silent as the Beasts of the Woods

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 5; **Wounds:** 14
Armour (Medium): Full Mail Armour (Head 3, Arms 3, Body 3, Legs 3)
Weapons: Great Weapon (Two-handed Axe) (1d10+5; Impact, Slow), Hand Weapon (Sword) (1d10+5), Horns (1d10+5)

Silent as the Beasts of the Woods

Beastmen gain a +10 bonus on Concealment Tests and a +20 bonus on Silent Move Tests.

Gors

Gors are the most common of Beastmen. They have large frames and the heads of goats, bulls, or rams.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
40	25	35 (3)	44 (4)	35	26	25	25

Skills: Consume Alcohol (T), Follow Trail (Int), Intimidate (S), Outdoor Survival (Int), Perception (Int), Shadowing (Ag), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Language (Dark Tongue) (Int)
Talents: Menacing, Rover
Traits: Keen Senses, Mutations (Animalistic Legs, Bestial Appearance, Horns)

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 5; **Wounds:** 12
Armour (Light): Leather Jack (Arms 1, Body 1)

Weapons: Hand Weapon (Axe) (1d10+3), Shield (1d10+1; Special)

Ungors

Ungors are "not-quite-right" Beastmen. They have smaller horns and are endlessly mocked as being worthless and weak.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
30	21	31 (3)	35 (3)	30	24	24	20

Skills: Concealment (Ag), Follow Trail (Int), Outdoor Survival (Int), Perception (Int), Shadowing (Ag), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Language (Dark Tongue) (Int)
Talents: Rover
Traits: Keen Senses, Mutations (Animalistic Legs, Bestial Appearance), Silent as the Beasts of the Woods

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 5; **Wounds:** 10
Weapons: Hand Weapon (Axe) (1d10+3)

Warhounds

These snarling beasts have grey fur and grow spikes out of their spines. They have vicious and ugly features.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
44	0	34 (3)	38 (3)	47	18	34	5

Skills: Follow Trail (Int +10), Perception (Int +10), Silent Move (Ag), Swim (S)
Talents: Frenzy
Traits: Keen Senses, Mutation (Blood Lust), Natural Weapons (Bite), Unsettling

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 7; **Wounds:** 12
Weapons: Bite (1d10+3)

Blood Lust

Whenever a Warhound enters Frenzy, it may not exit Frenzy unless it succeeds on a Challenging (–10) Will Power Test.

32. Dreadful Slime

Noxious olive green slime covers the floor of this passage. Moving through the area is easy enough, but a character who appears in this room from a random event or from another transporting chamber automatically touches the goo with a bit of exposed flesh. Contact with the slime deals 1d10+2 damage. It also chews through leather armour, destroying it after 1 round. The slime can be scraped clean with a metal object as a half action. If not removed, the slime deals 1d10 damage each round thereafter. Treat all Critical Hits as Sudden Death. Should death result, the character is dissolved into a bloody mess of ooze.

Any character entering the square marked with an "X" triggers a secondary trap (or if you're not using a map, each character has a 25% chance of entering such a space). A sphincter opens in the ceiling, spraying the character with the Dreadful Slime with the same effects. Detecting this trap requires a **Challenging (–10) Search Test**. It cannot be disabled.

33. Sharp Pain

The walls of this chamber bristle with sharp needles that glisten with yellow moisture. A character can detect the needles with a **Challenging (–10) Perception Test**. If at anytime there are three or more living creatures in this chamber, the walls fire a barrage of needles. All characters are struck by 1d5 needles. A successful **Agility Test** reduces the number of needles by one. Each degree of success reduces them by one further. A struck character takes 1d10 damage plus 1 additional point of damage per needle. In addition, the character must succeed on a **Toughness Test** to resist the toxins. The difficulty depends on the number of needles that hit the character: 1—Routine (+10), 2—Average (+0), 3—Challenging (–10), 4—Hard (–20), or 5—Very Hard (–30). On a failed test, the character experiences strange hallucinations after 1d5 minutes. Outside of combat, the hallucinations cause the character to see weird colours, expanding and contracting walls, strange expressions on their allies' faces, and other mild and bizarre things. In combat, an affected character must pass a **Will Power Test** or gain 1 Insanity Point, and 50% of the time, he flees in a random direction, and the other 50%, he goes into Frenzy (except the character doesn't distinguish between friend or foe).

34. Empty Chamber

This chamber is, indeed, empty. See **Wandering Vampires** on page 232 for tips on using this room.

35. Old Papers

This room contains little that's hazardous or interesting.

Bloody papers litter the floor of this room.

Inspecting the papers reveals they are inventory lists for all sorts of mundane items. Each has scribbled notes and comments. Characters reading through them learn nothing of interest, but they must succeed on a **Very Easy (+30) Will Power Test** or gain 1 Insanity Point.

36. Gelatinous Heap Part One

This chamber contains a huge pile of yellow gelatinous material. Touching it causes it to quiver but nothing else. A **Routine (+10) Perception Test** reveals there are gold coins floating in the mess. There are 35 gold coins in all. Breaking the skin of the gelatine causes it to deflate as thick syrupy ooze squirts out. If the character broke the skin with a handheld weapon, he's now coated in the slime. Any other character standing behind him must make a **Challenging (–10) Agility Test** or be equally coated. Now is a good time to chuckle evilly. The slime does nothing bad to the PCs; in fact, it's quite helpful. For the next 1d5 hours, the slime confers a +10 bonus to tests made to resist gaining Insanity Points or mutations. You don't have to reveal this to the players. You wouldn't want to reward them for greed, would you?

Once the skin is broken, all the coins can be recovered normally. Any slime not covering a character swiftly evaporates leaving behind a foul yellow stain.

37. Gelatinous Heap Part Two

This chamber contains a huge pile of brown gelatinous material. Touching it causes it to quiver but nothing else. A **Routine (+10) Perception Test** reveals there are coins floating in the mess. There are 35 coins in all. Breaking the skin of the gelatine causes it to deflate as thick syrupy ooze squirts out. If the character broke the skin with a handheld weapon, he's coated in the slime. Any other character standing behind him must make a **Challenging (–10) Agility Test** or be equally coated. Now is a good time to chuckle evilly and with good reason. After 1d5 rounds, coated characters become nauseated and vomit uncontrollably for 5 minutes. Afflicted characters can take no action while spewing, and the noise of their vomit causes one random event to occur for each character affected.

The coins are wooden.

38. Filth Mace

Here's an item for a PC with the brass to take it.

Brown seepage bubbles up from dimples in the floor. The chamber smells awful—an unwholesome blend of sweat and decay. In the centre of the floor is a heavy mace. From the pitted metal oozes pus and brown slime.

A character that succeeds on a **Challenging (–10) Perception Test** notices a writhing face peering out from the metal. It's quite animated. A **Lip Reading Test** reveals the entity begs the characters to leave the weapon alone. Any PC who plucks the weapon up, immediately gains a mutation—roll on whatever mutations you like, but if you have the *Tome of Corruption,* use the Nurgle table.

The weapon is the *Filth Mace,* a dreadful weapon of Chaos. Whenever it successfully injures an opponent, the victim must succeed on a **Toughness Test** or die after a number of rounds equal to his Toughness Bonus. Anything that removes poison on the afflicted victim can save him. Should the poison kill the victim, the weapon's wielder gains the Terrifying Trait for the remainder of the encounter. Undead are not affected by the *Filth Mace*.

The *Filth Mace* is believed to swallow up the souls of anyone it kills, causing the victim's likeness to appear in the metal.

39. Potted Plant

Sitting on the floor is a lonely potted plant. How it has survived down here, who can say? In any event, it has yellow flowers and gives off a fine aroma. A character who picks up the plant gains an extra Fortune Point, but when he spends it, the pot breaks and the plant dies—tragic, to be sure. Don't tell the player he gets the extra Fortune Point. Spring it on him when he next spends one.

40. Butcher Shop

As the characters approach this room, they hear wet sounds of tearing flesh and slobbering noises of something thoroughly enjoying its meal. When the PCs round the corner, they spy eight Ghouls (use **Ghoul Brute** statistics from **Room 28** on page 232) feasting on a corpse of a fat man they kidnapped from Zhidovsk. It's not clear if he's alive or dead, for he flops around from their vigorous attack. Characters stumbling

onto this room automatically gain surprise. The Ghouls fight to the death and have no interest in chatting. Characters that opt not to fight the Ghouls may always wonder if they consigned some poor wretch to an unspeakable fate.

41. Quiet Chamber

This room has dark walls covered in a thick tarry substance. Whilst the characters remain here, they take a –30 penalty to all tests involving hearing.

42. Random Entertainment

PCs who walk into this room trigger a random event.

43. Golden Pig

This room contains a huge gold statue of a pig. It stands on a mound of petrified excrement. A successful **Evaluate Test** puts the object's worth to be on par with Karl-Franz's crown, which is to say a lot. Obviously, it's a trap and a darn nasty one too. It's nastier than such a trap probably deserves, but since it's so obvious, let's have a bit of fun, shall we?

The first person to touch the statue must succeed on a **Hard (–20) Toughness Test** or have his head replaced with that of a pig. There's no benefit, except the character's Fellowship drops by –2d10, and the PC gains the Unsettling Trait if he doesn't already have it. A character so affected sees the Golden Pig for what it really is: a pile of glowing excrement. A character that succeeds on **Magical Sense Test** perceives it truly as well.

44. Grabby Hands

Characters moving through this otherwise bare room discover to their dismay that the floor comes to life with grasping hands. Each round a character lingers in this room, have the grabby hands make a **Weapon Skill Test** (30). On a success, the grabby hand ensnares the PC. It won't let go unless the character gives the hand a false key, at which point the hand releases the PC, makes a happy gesture, and sinks back into the floor.

A character can attack a hand. The hand has a TB 8 and 20 Wounds. Any missed attack at the hand has a 50% chance of striking the PC instead. Treat all hits on PCs as leg hits.

45. Bodies, Bodies, Everywhere

Heaps of corpses, all in various states of decay fill this chamber. Tiny white crabs scuttle across the rotting meat, making a meal of the flesh. Any character who goes rooting around in the bodies finds they all have a face in some grotesque expression of absolute suffering. This rummaging is probably worth a **Will Power Test** to avoid gaining an Insanity Point. Persevering characters do find a queer amulet at the very bottom. It seems to move and reshape itself, forming into religious symbols, profane images, and so on. A character who wears the amulet must succeed on a **Hard (–20) Toughness Test** or acquire a mutation—roll on any mutation table from *WFRP* or *Tome of Corruption*. Furthermore, the character must test again each week or collect a new mutation. When such a character gains more mutations than his Toughness Bonus, he collapses into a Chaos Spawn—see *Tome of Corruption* for the gory details.

46. Cave Paintings

The walls of this chamber are covered with strange cave paintings. They depict a bewildering array of unusual monsters and men, ranging from small Halfling creatures, to perverse amalgamations of Daemons and men. It is an odd assortment of forgotten and abandoned monsters, but there is nothing else of interest here.

47. Large Passage

Use this room to feature a combat with one or more of the Vampires still active in the tunnels. See **Wandering Vampires** on page 232 for details. If none are still active, Ruprecht and his posse should be here instead.

48. The Maiden

This oddly shaped chamber contains the Maiden, the protector of the second key. As the characters draw closer to this room, they catch the faint hint of wild flowers, but as they move closer, the pleasant stench turns foul and sickening until they enter the chamber.

> *The nauseating reek intensifies as you enter the room. At one end of the chamber sits what's clearly a beautiful maiden seated before a rippling surface of water that is somehow suspended like a mirror on the wall. Queer ochre flowers carpet the floor. The young woman brushes her long black hair that cascades over her pretty dress. She smiles in the reflection of the water.*

The Maiden faces away from the entrance and never turns from the wall of water, and through it all she brushes her long hair, smiling. If the PCs come close to her, she murmurs, "*All begins and ends in the pool's image. Through it we shall all be freed."* Any character that walks up to her to look her in the face and not the reflection sees an appalling site. Her face is ancient, rotting, with empty oozing eye sockets crowded with writhing maggots. She does not turn to face the PC but whimpers helplessly. Have the character make a **Will Power Test** to avoid gaining an Insanity Point.

The young woman is the Maiden. As with her matronly counterpart, the Mother, she's gone mad from her brief time in the Womb. Should the PCs desire, they can kill her easily. One successful **Weapon Skill** or **Ballistic Skill Test** is sufficient. But killing her merely causes her to fall flat and then, after a few rounds, stir back to life. Taking the Maiden from the room causes her incredible pain, and she shrieks in agony louder each round until returned. Roll for a random event each round the "rescuers" keep her from her lair.

The only way to get the key is to shatter the mirror of water. A single blow from a weapon causes it to collapse to the floor; the droplets run toward the centre of the room and wash away the flowers until it all coalesces into an iron key. Grasping the key confirms its authenticity as the character experiences the visions described in **True or False?** on page 219. Once the key is gained, water spills down from the ceiling, at which point the Maiden resumes her brushing and says, "*The black eye consumes all, destroys all, saves all.*"

Upon giving up the final key, she is freed from the watery mirror and regains her true features. She travels to **Room 74** to await instructions from the Black Witch. If the PCs survive their eventual encounter with the Black Witch and defeat her, the Maiden de-evolves into a quivering heap of semi-sentient flesh and ooze. If the characters do not dispatch this mess, what remains of the Maiden attempts to crawl up the leg of the character with the highest Fellowship, gurgling, "*Pretty…me pretty. Looove me*." The Maiden blob has 1 Wound and can take no actions.

49. Dancing Heads

This otherwise-empty and unusual chamber has little of interest, aside from the swarm of severed heads that pull themselves about with their calloused tongues. A quick flick of a hand weapon is enough to destroy a head. There are hundreds here, of all shapes and sizes, culled from women, men, children, Elves, and so on. The heads are harmless. There's a 10% chance that any given head inspected is someone the PCs know. There's a 1% chance that a head once belonged to a PC's sibling, valet, or former comrade.

Characters bent on destroying all the heads waste an hour doing so.

50. Evil Sacks of Flesh

This room could prove fatal for characters eager for combat.

> *The corridor widens into a misshapen chamber. Floating in the air here are nine bloated bags of flesh. They sway gently but don't move from their general locations. Through the translucent walls of this skin, you see beautiful women pounding on the walls of their prisons. They seem to be screaming, though they make no sound.*

Inside the bubbles are Chaos Furies. The bubbles mask their true horrid forms with that of sensual young ladies terribly imprisoned. Simply touching a bubble is all it takes to release the contents. Once free, a Chaos Fury immediately moves to free another (who does the same) before turning its wicked attentions on the PCs.

Chaos Furies (9)

These are savage, winged Chaos Daemons that have no particular association with any of the Ruinous Powers. They have wicked claws and fangs, which they use to rip apart their victims

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
35	0	41 (4)	36 (3/5)	44	30	42	15

Skills: Dodge Blow (Ag), Perception (Int), Speak Arcane Language (Daemonic) (Int), Speak Language (Dark Tongue) (Int)
Talents: Ambidextrous
Traits: Daemonic Aura, Flier, Frightening, Natural Weapons (Claws), Night Vision, Will of Iron

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; Fly 6; **Wounds:** 12
Weapons: Claws (1d10+4)

51. Mound of Dung

This chamber reeks of dung.

> *Heaped in the middle of this chamber is a nine-foot tall mound of excrement. Crawling with finger-length black roaches, it seems to writhe before your eyes. On closer inspection, it appears to have been shaped into the form of a brutish head.*

Characters who succeed on a **Routine (+10) Common Knowledge (Greenskins) Test** realise they're looking upon an altar of Mork, one of the two Orc Gods. Characters can break apart the mound with seven successful **Weapon Skill Tests**, but each time they attack it, there's a 10% chance for the Orcs in **Room 52** to come investigate.

52. Lost Black Orcs

A band of 12 Black Orcs lost their way and wound up down here. They have survived by killing anyone or anything that comes too close to them. Despite the danger posed to them, they brazenly attack anyone they encounter.

Black Orcs (12)

Black Orcs are big, nasty things that often have the dubious honour of leading lesser Greenskins.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
42	30	44 (4)	45 (4)	26	26	40	25

Skills: Command (Fel +20), Common Knowledge (Greenskins) (Int +10), Intimidate (S +10), Outdoor Survival (Int), Perception (Int +10), Ride (Ag), Scale Sheer Surface (S), Speak Language (Goblin Tongue) (Int), Swim (S), Torture (Fel)
Talents: Menacing, Specialist Weapon Group (Two-handed), Street Fighting, Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure, Strike to Stun
Traits: Night Vision, Quell Animosity

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 13
Armour (Heavy): Breastplate over Full Mail (Head 3, Arms 3, Body 5, Legs 3)
Weapons: Choppa (1d10+6/1d10+5; CV +1)

Trappings

The Black Orcs are covered in bits of dung that they gathered to build their mound. In their warren, they keep a few choice morsels harvested, including wriggling tentacles, nine eyestalks, and 14 livers—all taken from the same Mutant.

53. Puddle of Blood

The only thing of immediate interest here is a giant pool of bubbling blood. This location would be a good place to encounter a Vampire. See **Wandering Vampires** on page 232 for tips.

Characters that come within 4 yards of the pool are entitled to an **Easy (+20) Perception Test** to notice a large blot of darkness just below the surface of the liquid. A character succeeding by two degrees or more sees that the blob has a Human-like shape. Fishing out the body is a bad idea; it's not a body but a Vampire who is gorging on fresh blood. If it's touched, it explodes out of the pool and madly attacks the closest opponent. PCs that wisely back away 4 yards or more watch the Vampire dive back into the blood to drink its fill.

Mad Vampire

Male Von Carstein Vampire

The Vampire is a feral child with wide eyes and impossibly long fangs.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
55	42	52 (5)	53 (5)	56	35	60	55

Skills: Charm (Fel), Dodge Blow (Ag), Evaluate (Int), Gossip (Fel +10), Intimidate (S), Perception (Int), Search (Int), Shadowing (Ag), Speak Language (Reikspiel, Strigany) (Int)
Talents: Dark Magic, Disarm, Master Orator, Petty Magic (Arcane), Public Speaking, Schemer
Traits: Blood Gifts (Blood Drain, Natural Necromancer, Pass for Human, Transfixing Gaze, Vampires' Curse), Keen Senses, Natural Weapons (Claws, Fangs), Night Vision, Undead

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 5; **Wounds:** 19
Magic: 1; Petty Magic (Arcane)
Weapons: Claws or Fangs (1d10+5)

Trappings

The Vampire has nothing but the blood-drenched clothes it wears.

54. Unwholesome Rain

Oily black droplets fall from the ceiling in this area. Characters moving through the area are struck by 1d5 droplets. A successful **Agility Test** negates one droplet and negates an additional droplet with each degree of success. Characters that take some precaution, such as raising a shield over their heads or covering themselves with a tarp, are fully protected and reduce the droplets taken by 3 (minimum 0).

After 1d5 minutes, any character struck by at least one droplet must pass a **Toughness Test** with a difficulty determined by how many droplets hit them: Routine (+10) for one droplet, Average (+0) for two, Challenging (–10) for three, Hard (–20) for four, and Very Hard (–30) for five or more. Those who fail the test feel sick, and mucus fills their nostrils, throat, and chest, making it hard to breathe. An affected character takes a –10 penalty per droplet to all tests and reduces his Toughness Bonus by 1 per droplet. If this would reduce the character's Toughness Bonus to 0, the character chokes to death on his own phlegm. The penalties remain for 1d10 rounds, after which the character can cough up the slime and spit it out. Once it hits the ground, it slithers off for a few inches and then hardens into dark stone.

55. What's This?

There's something useful here.

An old, mouldering robe crawling with yellow centipedes with bright red legs quivers at the back of this small room.

Characters examining the crumpled robe discover a small blue orb. It glows with cerulean light. This orb is the only surviving possession of this dead magister—a power stone. Even his corpse has been picked clean, and only bones remain. Any character that succeeds on an **Academic Knowledge (Magic) Test** identifies the item for what it is. When casting a spell, a caster may employ the power stone to roll up to two extra Casting Dice above what his Magic Characteristic would normally allow. Once used, the stone burns out, becoming a fine powder.

56. Wide Corridor

Use this room to feature a combat with one or more of the Vampires still active in the tunnels. See **Wandering Vampires** on page 232 for tips. If none are, Ruprecht and his posse should be here instead.

57. Sick Stain

There's little of interest here, aside from the disturbing pattern of viscera left on the wall.

At the end of this alcove, you see quivering organs protruding from the stone. They glisten with a purple slime.

These organs are genuine. Ropes of entrails, the bulging mass of a stomach, and the slippery brown of a healthy liver are all featured here. Poking the organs causes the entire mass to shudder. Stabbing the organs or "killing" them showers a character with blood. The organs have 1 Wound. When slain, roll for a random event.

58. Guardians

Lurking on either side of the passage are two Patchwork Men. They ambush and destroy all who enter the room.

Patchwork Men (2)

These creatures are spawned by dark magic, assembled from parts harvested from the dead and infused with terrible energy.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
30	12	55 (5)	55 (5)	15	10	10	—

Skills: Intimidate (S), Perception (Int +10)
Talents: Menacing, Street Fighting, Strike Mighty Blow, Wrestling
Traits: Frightening, Natural Weapons (Fists), Undead

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 24
Weapons: Fists (40; 1d10+6)

59. Hungry, Hungry Cyst

The eastern wall of this chamber harbours a strange and unnatural growth. It looks like a pulsing sheet of strawberry jam but stinks of sweaty flesh. Erupting from its surface are long, thin hair-like tendrils that taste the air. They are nearly invisible, and a character must succeed on a **Hard (–20) Perception Test** to notice them. If not noticed (or if noticed and ignored), the first character that walks into the room tickles the cilia and causes the sheet to spring forth from the wall and wrap itself around the hapless PC. A character that succeeds on a **Dodge Blow Test** or a **Hard (–20) Agility Test** can get the heck out of the way; otherwise, the character is wrapped up snugly.

An entrapped character loses 1 Wound each round. His allies, if they can stop laughing long enough, can assist. The thing has 20 Wounds and a TB5. Half the damage it takes applies to the wrapped up character, after the reduction from TB. Note the PC can also reduce this damage with armour and TB as normal. If slain, the growth drops to the floor with a wet slap. If it kills the character, it spits out any metal objects and retreats to the wall from which it sprung.

60. Empty Room

If the PCs have had an easy go so far, roll for a random event. Otherwise, this room is empty except for a few harmless blue mushrooms.

61. Vampire Brawl

A Von Carstein and two Strigoi (use stats for both from **Chapter VIII**) fight each other here. They are absorbed with their melee, but each round the PCs watch, have the Vampires make **Perception Tests** (against the PCs **Concealment Tests** if they're smart). Should the Vampires notice the PCs, they set aside their differences and turn on the fresh meat. If the PCs remain hidden and wait for the battle to conclude, you can play it out normally, or just assume the Von Carstein kills both Strigoi after 5 rounds.

62. Mud Puddle

This chamber has a depression in the floor filled with stinking mud. Stalactites hang overhead, dripping black water from their jagged points.

Characters that approach the pool cause it to stir and bubble. A character that remains within 2 yards of the liquid for longer than a few seconds sees a feminine form made entirely of mud break the surface. She takes no hostile action but sways and dances, moving in a hypnotic pattern. Those witnessing this spectacle must succeed on **Will Power Tests** or become transfixed by the show. Every 10 minutes, they are entitled to a new test to break free. Allies can drag them free, but doing so is unsettling and leaves the character befuddled, as the *bewilder* spell (see *WFRP* page 158) for 1d10 rounds.

Attacking the mud effigy with a handheld weapon isn't possible unless the character enters the pool, which is not wise. First, the bottom of the pool is some 9 yards down, and swimming through the mess requires a **Hard (–20) Swim Test** to break the surface to get air. Note the **Suffocation** rules in *WFRP* page 136.

A single hit from a ranged weapon is enough to splatter the mud and end the effect.

63. Old Friend

If Vanderhoff (see **Chapter VIII**) still lives, he's here with Frank (if still alive). He's currently chopping up a Mutant, hacking him into small pieces and splattering the walls, floor, and ceiling with gore. Frank looks on, whimpering at the show. Depending on how the PCs ended their relationship with Vanderhoff, he might accompany them through the rest of the Womb. Or, he might turn from his grisly task and attack the PCs.

64. Forsaken Father

This room seems empty at a glance, but a **Routine (+10) Perception Test** reveals blood dripping from the ceiling. Characters that look up see old Father Johannes (see **Chapter III**) nailed to the relatively smooth ceiling. A thick cord around his neck chokes him, and large iron spikes driven into his hands, feet, and through the folds of his fat keep him in place. He's near death.

Getting him down, should the PCs choose too, is no small feat. It requires three **Challenging (–10) Strength Tests** along with three **Challenging (–10) Heal Tests**. Failure on either test has a 50% chance of killing him outright. If the characters somehow manage to free him, he thanks them breathlessly, coughing up thick bloody phlegm. After a few minutes, he relates his story.

"As you know, from the moment my eyes beheld young Karl, I knew him to be truly the Scion of Sigmar, and through him lay the path to mine own greatness. I admit, I was ambitious and foolish, but Sigmar has revealed my errors. I remained with the Child for the long journey, staying with him through all the trials, remaining true to him even when he was lost to us for a time after Altdorf. I even stayed through the trials of Wolfenburg, following him to this horrid land.

When Karl told us he would be going away once more, I could not in good conscious allow him to shoulder more unnecessary burdens, and in the quiet of the night, I followed him to the accursed pond. I hung back, watching as he slipped into the waters. I watched, Sigmar forgive me, as that horrid black beast set upon his guards, rending them limb from limb. And I even watched when the monster followed my lord. Somehow, I found my courage and dove into the pool. I know not how I evaded the strange serpents or how I found the curious entrance, but in no short time, I found my way into these tunnels.

There was no sign of the boy. So I wandered. I searched for him, suffering unspeakably as I did, but I never found him. He was lost to me. I fear it is too late for him, and I suppose, for us all. They found me. The Daemons. They did this to me."

(If the characters befriended Karl, he adds the following.)

"Friends, we were fools. All of us. Misled and deceived by the Ruinous Powers. No Son of Sigmar would come here, for this is a place of evil, a filthy hell conceived by the mad minds of Chaos. You must find Karl and kill him before he achieves whatever he seeks."

(If the characters tried to kill Karl, he instead says the following.)

"You were wrong about him. He truly is the Son of Sigmar, but he's been used badly by all of us. We have been the unwitting tools of Chaos, leading to this filthy hell. You must rescue Karl. Save him before it's too late."

Father Johannes is in no condition to travel, and he begs off any attempts to heal him. He simply asks the PCs to think kindly of him. Dragging him along is a huge burden, since he can't walk, can't wield a weapon, and can barely breathe. Leaving him behind is a death sentence, but it's one the priest is willing to face. He believes he deserves whatever fate has in store for him. Indeed, ten minutes after the PCs leave the priest, a Mutant happens along and gobbles him up, starting with his feet and working its way to his fat head. Persistent characters might transport him to one of the rooms that restore Wounds, and if so—and if they leave him—a Mutant eats him anyway.

65. The Crone

This chamber holds the third true key. Wisps of webbing cling to the walls near the mouth of the tunnel, thickening deeper down the tunnel until sheets of the sticky stuff obscure nearly all vision. A character standing at the entrance is entitled to a **Challenging (–10) Perception Test** to notice a Human-like shape hanging in the thickest webs several yards inside.

The webbing can be cut or torn with a weapon, but every two yards cleared imposes a –1 penalty on the weapon's damage until the accumulated webbing is cleaned from the weapon—alcohol or fire work the best. Characters just pushing through the webs may do so; however, every space they move into the webbing coats them in the stuff, imposing a cumulative –10 penalty for every 2 yards moved (maximum –30). Once the penalty reaches –30, the character must pass a **Strength Test** to continue moving forward. A failed test means no forward progress, and a failed test by 20 or more indicates the character is stuck and can only be freed if an ally succeeds on a **Strength Test** to pull him free. Do note that any such square a character moves through is considered clear for those following behind him.

The best option for clearing the corridor is to use fire, though this delays the PCs from getting the key. Exposing a torch or similarly sized fire burns away the webbing in a 2-yard square and has a 50% chance of burning away the webs in all adjacent squares. This burning continues for each webbed square that touches a square containing flaming webs, until there are no webs left or none of the remaining squares caught. Living creatures caught inside the webbing automatically catch fire (see **Fire** in *WFRP* page 136). Should the flaming webs reach the Crone at the end of the tunnel, it ignites her body and destroys her. Characters should automatically find the stinking charred remains of a Human corpse on the floor, its face blackened and lips pulled back as if screaming in agony.

If the characters burn the webbing and, thus, lose access to the key, all is not lost. Tiny white spiders bud from the walls and begin spinning their webs about a minute after the conflagration. Each minute thereafter, one 2-yard square fills with webbing. When the corridor is filled once more, the Crone reappears where indicated.

Regardless of how they reach the Crone—the figure at the end of this tunnel—they may gain the key she holds by cutting the thick cords that hold her off the floor. Once they do so, the webs that suspend her form fall away, unravelling until all that remains is an iron key. Grasping the key fills the character's head with the same visions as described in **True or False?** on page 219.

The Crone has been a thrall of the Black Witch long enough to do her mistress's bidding without question. If the characters make their way into the webbing by cutting or pushing themselves through, she begins to whisper to them, realising the characters are not Vampires. While insane, she latches onto the dim hope that the characters will give her the means to escape this hell. *"Free me, and thrust Her bones into the blackness! You must! It is the only way!"* She repeats this over and over again, until she gives the characters the key.

As with before, the spiders emerge once more and rebuild the Crone. Performing the same action to the Crone has no additional effect, as she can bestow just one key to one group. Upon giving up the final key, she is freed from the webs and regains her true form—that of a wizened hag. She travels to **Room 74** to await instructions from the Black Witch. If the PCs survive their eventual encounter with the Black Witch and defeat her, the Crone explodes into a cloud of dust and bone fragments, coating all PCs within 2 yards from head to toe.

66. Octogram

Inscribed on the floor is a pulsing green star of Chaos. Swirls of steam rise from its awful form. Characters with the Sixth Sense Talent feel uneasy. Characters who succeed on a **Routine (+10) Magical Sense Test** perceive a swirling vortex sucking the Winds of Magic into the octogram.

Any character that steps onto the octogram vanishes. Roll d100. On a result of 01–76, the character appears in the room with the corresponding number. On a 77–90, the character appears in the black waters outside the Womb. On a 91–98, the character appears in the cave above the black lake. On a 99, the character appears in Praag, effectively removed from the remainder of the adventure but far safer than his fellows. On a 00, the character is sucked into the Realm of Chaos, where his mind implodes under the weight of what it witnesses, and his body is rent by 1,000 Daemons who clamour for a taste of mortal flesh.

Characters lost in this way can be replaced with any surviving Wood Elf Kithband warriors, Nils, or any other NPCs that remain with the PCs. At your option, you might replace fallen characters with Vampires. These Undead may be opposed to the Black Witch, seeing through her ruse or believing the Age of the Thousand Thrones is not upon them. It doesn't matter what you do, but try to give players something to do in the final stages of this campaign.

67. Hatchery

This moist, warm chamber holds one thousand fist-sized eggs. Their shells run the gamut of colours, ranging from pearly white to black. Clever characters will back up the way they came, leaving this room alone, but those who handle or inspect the eggs, or even break one open are in for a terrible surprise. Each egg holds a vile spider-like creature. Once broken open, the beast is freed. The Black Witch intends to use these horrors as foot soldiers in her bid to conquer the Empire. Unless the creature is destroyed, it starts breaking open the shells of its brothers, each releasing a new spider each round for 11 rounds until all 1,000 are freed. Through the entire process, the walls, floor, and ceiling of the room expand and contract, shuddering as if with pleasure (all movement is considered hampered due to the unsure footing).

At this point, they spill out of their nursery and move to slaughter everything in the Womb. They spread out into the tunnels, devouring and killing everything in their path, gradually eliminating everything else in this place. The exact route they take is up to you, but as a good rule of thumb, assume the PCs have a 30% chance of encountering 1d5 of these things every 10 minutes they explore the tunnels. After an hour, replace all combat encounters with an equal number of Abomination Spiders. After two hours, the infestation finds the membrane and they tear through, destroying the membrane as described under the **Membrane** on page 218.

The Abomination Spiders crawl out of the lake and spread out from the Crags of Shargun. They march, killing and eating along the way, toward the Empire. Periodically, they halt to lay a new pile of eggs, which hatch after 1d5 days, spawning 1,000 more Abomination Spiders. The result of this plague is up to you, but the consequences should be disastrous.

Abomination Spider

Abomination Spiders are the product of the Black Witch's madness. Essentially, they are mutated Giant Spiders, infused with Chaos. They are ravenous and destructive, killing and devouring everything in their path, and they reproduce quickly. For every 100, there's one female that can lay 1,000 eggs, which hatch rapidly. And when they do, they join the rest of the host in their campaign to devour the world.

There's no typical Abomination Spider. They have a myriad of shapes and sizes and come in a variety of colours. Nearly all have eight legs, but an extra Human appendage is not unknown. Their bodies bristle with thousands of eyes, and all have at least one set of poisonous fangs.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
38	0	41 (4)	44 (4)	60	15	35	5

Skills: Concealment (Ag +10), Perception (Int +10), Silent Move (Ag +10), Swim (S +10)
Talents: Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure
Traits: Armoured Skin, Frightening, Keen Senses, Mutations (Bizarre Colouration, Regeneration), Natural Weapon (Mandibles), Night Vision, Poisonous Bite, Wall Climbing

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 6; **Wounds:** 25
Armour: Armoured Skin (Head 2, Legs 2, Body 2)
Weapons: Mandibles (1d10+5; CV)

Armoured Skin

An Abomination Spider gains +2 armour points t0 all locations.

Mutations

All Abomination Spiders have strangely coloured carapaces. In addition, each round as a free action, an Abomination Spider may attempt to pass a **Toughness Test** to recover 1 Wound. This regenerative ability ceases to function once the spider is dead.

Poisonous Bite

An Abomination Spider's bite is poisonous. A target that takes at least 1 Wound from the Abomination Spider's mandibles must succeed on a **Toughness Test** or take 5 Wounds and be paralysed for 1d10 rounds. A paralysed character can take no actions and is helpless. Each round, a paralysed character can attempt a Hard (–20) Toughness Test to overcome the paralysis as a full action.

Wall Climbing

Giant Spiders can clamber up and down walls at their normal movement rate.

68. Vampires or Chaos Oh My!

This room is intended for you to use to have the PCs encounter one of the remaining Vampires still in the complex—or Ruprecht (if still alive). See **Wandering Vampires** on page 232 for details.

69. Cooling Waters

By this point, unless the characters have been extremely careful or lucky, they may be in bad shape. This room is intended to give them a fighting chance to complete the campaign. So whilst it may seem strange to have something like this here, do understand that unless the PCs feel like they have a shot, they might just give up. If you'd rather not introduce this merciful location, simply remove the pool's beneficial effects.

For the first time since entering this place, the air smells clean, and you hear the sound of lapping water. About halfway across the room, you see a shore of gravel that leads into a deep pool of clear water.

Characters that succeed on a **Routine (+10) Magical Sense Test** perceive the waters as being infused with *Ghyran,* the green Wind of Magic. This pool reflects what is left of the Black Witch's innocence and humanity. She has tried to pollute and destroy the waters but to no avail. Even characters without Witchsight get a sense of peace and tranquillity the closer they come to the water's shores. Any character that drinks from the pool is immediately cured of all hurts, all Wounds are restored, all diseases are removed, and all effects of poison are cured (this room is the exception to eating and drinking in the Womb). The pool also removes 1d5–1 Insanity Points, but it does nothing to remove mutations. Finally, for 1d10 rounds thereafter, the affected character gains a +10 bonus to all tests. A character can benefit from drinking of the pool just once. Attempts to bottle the fluid fail, as the water evaporates with incredible speed. After all characters have sampled the healing fluid, the pool dries up, and brown sludge

bubbles up from cracks in its bed. Drinking the sludge bestows Neiglish Rot on the unlucky character.

70. Empty Passage

This passage is empty and free of debris. As long as the characters remain here, there is no chance for a random event or encounter, unless the PCs unleashed the Abomination Spiders, in which case there's no place safe.

71. Mutant Host

This massive chamber is filled with Mutants. There are easily hundreds of these wretches, forming a sea of misshapen and monstrous forms, writhing in the agony of their corruption. Who these people were or where they came from is a mystery. Perhaps the Black Witch's presence alone is enough to lure the changed, to draw them into her Womb to serve her. Maybe these creatures are her scions, abominations bred from the Womb itself. Only the Black Witch knows.

The first time the PCs look upon the host, they must pass a **Will Power Test** or gain 2 Insanity Points, since this appalling horde is composed of the most heavily corrupted creatures. They range from bloated heads scuttling about on spider legs, to rabbit-headed masses of tentacles that squirt ink into the air, to the bent and broken, to those saddled with a thousand digits wiggling all over their bodies, to countless other awful forms.

So long as the characters take no hostile actions, they can move through the crowd without trouble. The Mutants are too consumed with their own agony to care. However, PCs spoiling for a fight can find one here, though there are 319 Mutants in all. Rather than rolling up stats for all of these folks, just use the Mutant statistics in *WFRP* page 230. Characters who jump in swinging face 8 Mutants each round, until they are all slain or until the PCs are all dead.

72. Eye of Chaos

This area holds the key to the Black Witch's destruction. PCs who manage to gather her remains from **Room 76** and fling them through this gate utterly destroy the Witch.

> *At the end of this long passage you find a large bronze ring hanging in the air. The interior of the ring is a sheet of utter darkness, impenetrable. It gobbles up all light.*

This unholy thing is an Eye of Chaos, a hole in reality that connects to the Realm of Chaos. Characters entering the blackness see for the briefest instance all possibilities contained within this unspeakable place. If a character ties a rope around his middle and has the PCs pull him back out, he comes back forever altered, and for each round he remains inside the Eye, he gains 1 Insanity Point (upon achieving 10, the character's head explodes). Also, there's a 66% chance each round for the character to be ripped to bloody gobbets by Daemons. Feel free to offer whatever descriptions you can think of for those peering into this place. Or don't. This gate opens to the Realm of Chaos; words cannot do justice to what lies in the Yawning Abyss of the Dark Gods.

Characters that resist the impulse to see what this thing is all about are better off. A **Very Easy (+30) Magical Sense Test** allows characters to see inky black tendrils worming around the bronze ring. An **Academic Knowledge (Magick) Test** in conjunction with the previous test confirms that this is a gateway to the Realm of Chaos.

Anyone casting spells of any kind in a space adjacent to the portal gains 2 Chaos Dice and 2 extra Casting Dice. Any result of Tzeentch's Curse requires the caster to roll three times and take the worst result.

Each minute the PCs linger here, they must all make **Very Hard (–30) Toughness Test** and **Very Hard (–30) Will Power Tests**. A failed **Toughness Test** indicates the character acquires a mutation. A failed **Will Power Test** indicates the character gains 1 Insanity Point. Characters that gain 10 Insanity Points or more from the gate are helplessly compelled to throw themselves through it.

73. Heap of Bones

This oddly shaped room contains the bones of past sacrifices from Zhidovsk. There are bits of mouldering fabric, dresses, scarves, clumps of hair, and even a few ripe corpses. Aside from the detritus, there's nothing else of interest here.

74. The Doors of Doom!

You're here! Very close now.

> *The passage widens into a large chamber. The walls here are bright pink and bubble with green mucus. Pools of yellow slime reflect any light throughout. At the far end of the chamber is a massive circular plug made of blue metal. Set in its centre is a second circular portal, divided into what seems like two doors. There are three small holes set around the portal, each spaced equidistantly.*

The small holes are key holes. Inserting a proper key causes a deep rumbling to sound from within. Inserting an improper key causes the key to explode and the character to gain a mutation. Once all three keys are inserted, they melt into the metal ring, and the doors swing open.

75. Corridor of Doom!

The portal opens onto a long corridor, about 12-feet wide and 40-feet long. Three alcoves on either side hold columns of flickering violet flames. Teal tiles cover the floor, and as the characters walk over them, they see images of a beautiful young woman wearing black robes leading a horde of Chaos Warriors and Mutants against a city. Any character that succeeds on a **Common Knowledge (Kislev) Test** identifies the city as Praag. Each step has a chance of causing more scenes, revealing more of the Black Witch's life—covering everything from past loves, disappointments, and achievements, in no particular order. After a few moments, the images re-focus on Praag and reveal her demise, pierced with a hundred arrows. It shows her crawling across the oblast, leaving a crimson trail from her injuries. Impossibly, she comes to the pool above. Somehow, she has the strength to slip inside and vanish.

At the very end of the corridor stands a single staircase. It descends into a purple mist. Characters can descend without risk, but as they go down the stairs, they see phantom images of themselves, people they have met, and dreams they have experienced. After a dozen yards or so, the mists break, revealing an impossible sight. The stairs they are on are just one of a thousand dropping from a cloud bank in the sky and descending through a vast void. On each staircase, the PCs see copies of themselves mimicking their movements. Flying through the emptiness are curtains of colour, shifting forms of flesh and sinew, and disembodied organs writhing in exquisite agony. Such a sight requires another **Will Power Test** to avoid gaining 2 Insanity Points. Should the PCs wish to turn around and flee, they may. Otherwise, they may keep going down.

After what seems like an eternity, the characters take the final step and enter the inner sanctum.

76. Inner Sanctum

Having descended the staircase through countless realities, the PCs have reached the lair of the Black Witch.

> *After a bone-chilling descent, you appear in a large chamber. Behind you are three rough stone steps climbing back to the corridor containing the lavender flames and the portal beyond. The gallery you stand in has bright pink walls marbled with grey, yellow, and white ripples. The floor is soft and spongy, having a queer consistency. At the very far end of the chamber is a curtain of shimmering light, shining with all the colours of the rainbow. At the base of the curtain, you see a mound of black rags and bones.*

If the PCs reach this place before Karl, there's nothing else to describe yet. Should Karl show up behind them, he is frightened by the PCs. Proceed with **Outcomes** on page 245.

If the PCs reach this place after Karl—but before all the Vampires have arrived—read the following text. Note the characters likely have to test against Karl's aura. Be sure to describe each Vampire present.

> *You see Karl kneeling on the floor and at once the feelings of love and protectiveness wash over you. A black cloud seems to hang about him, and as he breathes, tendrils of darkness enter his nostrils and mouth. Although a beatific expression paints his face, he grows paler with each inhale. Standing around him and at rigid attention are a number of Vampires, all of whom are in their true and awful forms.*

If the PCs reach this place after Karl and after all the Vampires have arrived—but not before the Black Witch completes the ritual—read the following.

> *You see Karl kneeling on the floor and at once the feelings of love and protectiveness wash over you. He's pale and breathes shallow breaths. His features seem to be twisting, transforming into something new, his eyes afire with unholy light. Five Vampires stand at rigid attention around him, all of whom are in their true and awful forms. Their expressions reveal terror, and tears of blood course down their cheeks.*

If the PCs reach this place after Karl and after all the Vampires have arrived, and after the Black Witch completes the ritual, read the following.

> *Karl is nowhere to be found. Instead, there's a beautiful nude woman with long black hair and pale skin. A trickle of blood leaks from her mouth. Her eyes smoulder with awful energies. Five piles of dust stand arranged around her. She smiles, revealing black teeth and whispers, "Love me."*

The Black Witch has called Karl from across the Old World so she can use him as her vessel. She called the Vampires, manipulating them through their prophecy, so she could drink their blood and bind her spirit to the boy permanently using powerful magic of Nagash. If she succeeds in this, it's bad news for the world, since she has every intention of leaving her prison and leading her armies to crush the Empire and become the Queen of Chaos.

The ritual has two main components. The first is the infusion of her essence into the boy. The second is drinking the blood of the Vampires. Once this is complete, Karl's body assumes the appearance of the Black Witch's former living form, and she's free to leave the Womb.

What's here depends on how long it took the PCs to arrive as shown in the preceding descriptions. Once here, there are a few options left for the PCs.

Attacking the Vampires

Attacking the Vampires frees them from their reverie, and the Vampires fight back with every intent of killing the characters. See the Vampire's stats earlier in the chapter. This approach is reasonable, though suicidal, since if any of the five Vampires are slain, the Black Witch cannot complete the ritual and remains contained inside the Womb. However, this is a temporary fix, as the Black Witch will work to lure a replacement Vampire.

Attacking Karl

Characters that make any attempt at attacking Karl immediately release all five (or however many there are) Vampires from their reverie, and they move to defend the boy. Again, killing at least one Vampire means the Black Witch remains trapped in the Womb, until she can lure a replacement Vampire. At best, this is a temporary fix. If the PCs manage to kill Karl, the entire ritual unravels, and the Vampires halt their attacks. Having no reason to remain, they leave the inner sanctum at once and return to their lands. The Black Witch is not destroyed and could return some day to plague the world in the future.

The Vampire Prophecies

The Vampires' beliefs concerning the Age of a Thousand Thrones are deliberately left vague and contradictory in this campaign, giving you several options for resolving the final scene.

False Prophecy

In the adventure text provided, none of the competing Campires have interpreted the legends correctly. The Black Witch simply uses the prophecies as bait, bringing the Campires to Kislev for her own dark purpose. Power words of the Old Gods are ineffective.

Partial Fulfilment

One of the Vampires has interpreted the prophecy correctly, but requires aid from the PCs to satisfy its conditions. The Vampire may offer an alliance in combat, or even a promise of glorious undeath in the kingdom of a Thousand Thrones. Power words function at normal levels as the weakened gods of Nehekhara cast their eyes upon Kislev.

Fourth Return of Nagash

The Great Necromancer has manipulated the unsuspecting Black Witch to enact his Fourth Return. As the Black Witch begins her ritual, she invokes Nagash's name and a dreadful black spirit attacks her in psychic combat. During the struggle, a nearby Vampire rushes to place a ring on Karl's finger. The Vampire is an agent of the Great Necromancer and the ring is crafted by Nagash to mimic the power given to Vashanesh millennia ago. Controlling the ring bearer, Nagash can wield immense power and PCs are unlikely to survive the encounter unless they flee immediately.

If Karl is fitted with the ring, Nagash may use Power Words at their enhanced levels, bringing all vampires immediately under his control. Otherwise, Power Words function at normal levels. Everyone may ignore *Wrath of the Gods* results for Nehekharan power words during this encounter; Nagash has foiled the Old Gods once again.

Attacking the Black Witch

This course of action can only be taken if the Black Witch has completed the ritual. She fights the PCs and likely destroys them between her compulsion effect, magic, and her powerful combat abilities. This brutal, bloody end to the campaign is the least desirable of the outcomes.

The Pile of Robes and Bones

This course of action is the absolute safest and best way to resolve this scenario. The Black Witch has one weakness: her remains. A character that gathers up the bones and rags causes the rainbow of light to flicker and vanish. The character should take the bones to **Room 72** and fling them through the portal. However, each round the character carries the bones, he takes 1 Wound. Resolve all Critical results as Sudden Death, and if death occurs, the character is blasted into bloody chunks of meat. In addition, each round, you should roll for a random event as the Womb reacts with fear.

If the PCs can't figure this out on their own but have seen the Eye of Chaos, allow them **Intelligence Tests** to work it out. Otherwise, they are on their own. If Ruprecht is present, he can come up with the same idea, but you should give the characters a chance first. The remains can be shattered, pulverised, set on fire, and so on, but none of those methods will damage the essence of the Black Witch. Only by removing them from this plane can she be destroyed.

Talking to Karl

Perhaps the best way to resolve this scenario is to speak to Karl directly. Karl is utterly convinced the Black Witch is his mother. A lonely boy, all he ever wanted was family. He can't see he's been a tool for this ancient evil and that he will be destroyed unless he resists her. This solution requires roleplaying. Allow the players to make impassioned speeches, to plead with Karl and so on. When they've said their peace, have them make **Very Hard (–30) Charm Tests**. The quality of the plea should grant a bonus of +10 to +30. A character that genuinely befriended Karl in the past gains a +20 bonus. A character that tried to kill Karl takes a –20 penalty. Should they succeed, Karl sees through the lies and tells his "mother" to stop. He uses his compelling aura against her. She is forced to reveal herself, appearing as a hideous, shadowy crone. Karl tells his mother to go away, and with that, the Black Witch flees, vanishing into the Aethyr and is effectively destroyed.

The Black Witch

A fully realised Black Witch is no easy foe. She's more than a match for the PCs alone, and if accompanied by her Abomination Spiders, she could very well destroy the world.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
88	88	88 (8)	88 (8)	88	88	88	88

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Daemonology, History, Magic, Necromancy, Strategy/Tactics) (Int), Channelling (WP), Charm (Fel), Command (Fel), Common Knowledge (Kislev) (Int), Dodge Blow (Ag), Hypnotism (WP), Intimidate (S), Magical Sense (WP), Perception (Int), Search (Int), Speak Arcane Language (Daemonic) (Int), Speak Language (Dark Tongue, Kislevarin, Reikspiel) (Int), Swim (S)

Talents: Dark Lore (Chaos), Dark Magic, Lesser Magic (*dispel, move*), Master Orator, Meditation, Natural Weapons (Claws), Public Speaking, Resistance to Magic, Sixth Sense, Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure

Traits: Fearless, Mutations (Compelling Aura, Deflection Field, Malign Sorcerer, Regeneration), Night Vision, Quasi-Undead, Terrifying

Combat

Attacks: 3; **Movement:** 8; **Wounds:** 32
Magic: 5; Dark Lore (Chaos), *dispel, move*
Armour: Deflection Field (Head 5, Arms 5, Body 5, Legs 5)
Weapons: Claws (1d10+10; CV+1)

Compelling Aura

The Black Witch gains and amplifies Karl's aura. Whenever a mortal looks upon her and is within 100 yards, he must succeed on a **Very Hard (–30) Will Power Test**. Those who fail do whatever she asks. A dangerous or

morally troubling request grants the character another **Very Hard (–30) Will Power Test** to refuse the request. Likewise, a clearly suicidal test allows the character to attempt a **Hard (–20) Will Power Test** to refuse the action. Passing a test breaks her hold over the character until re-exposure. If a character fails his test, the effect of the aura lasts nine days, but any re-exposure resets the clock, and re-exposure whilst still under her influence is not re-tested.

Deflection Field

The Black Witch is surrounded by a field of energy that deflects incoming attacks and grants 5 armour points to all locations.

Malign Sorcerer

The Black Witch increases her Magic Characteristic by 1 (included).

Regeneration

At the start of each of the Black Witch's turns, she may make a **Toughness Test** to regain 1 Wound. She loses this ability if killed.

Quasi-Undead

The Black Witch is immune to stunning, poison, disease, and all spells that involve the manipulation of emotions or the mind.

Karl

Karl is a pleasant young man with blond hair and kind features. He is the picture of innocence.

Insanity Points: 6

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
24	26	23 (2)	24 (2)	32	35	33	40

Skills: Academic Knowledge (History, Theology) (Int), Charm (Fel +10), Command (Fel), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int), Concealment (Ag), Disguise (Fel), Dodge Blow (Ag), Gossip (Fel), Perception (Int +10), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int)

Talents: Flee!, Master Orator, Public Speaking, Seasoned Traveller, Strong-minded

Traits: Fearless, Mutation (Compelling Aura)

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Fate Points:** 1; **Movement:** 3; **Wounds:** 6
Weapons: Unarmed (1d10–2; Special)

Trappings

Karl wears a stained set of noble's garb.

Compelling Aura

Whenever a mortal looks upon Karl and is within 20 yards, he must succeed on a **Very Hard (–30) Will Power Test** for Humans and a **Routine (+10) Test** for Dwarfs or **Easy (+20) Test** for Elves. Those who fail do whatever he asks. A dangerous or morally troubling request grants the character another **Hard (–20) Will Power Test** to refuse the request. Likewise, a clearly suicidal test allows the character to attempt a **Challenging (–10) Will Power Test** to refuse the action. Passing a test breaks Karl's hold over the character until re-exposure. If a character fails his test, the effects of the aura last four days, but any re-exposure resets the clock, and re-exposure whilst still under her influence is not re-tested.

— Outcomes —

What happens from here depends on the PCs and what they do in the final confrontation. If they all die, well, that's that.

Destroying any of the Vampires prevents the Black Witch from completing the ritual. But eventually, unless she's stopped, she'll lure the necessary Vampire to finish what she has started.

The Black Witch—if she survives—emerges from her watery grave at the head of her army of Mutants and Abomination Spiders and begins a campaign to destroy the Empire. She might succeed, she might not. That's up to you. Any characters that managed to make it out alive may participate in the last defence of the Empire, fighting for their homeland. Or they might flee, seeking refuge in some foreign land.

Characters who manage to thwart the Black Witch's plans but don't figure out how to destroy her are free to leave—likely insane and sporting a few mutations. The Black Witch simmers with hate, her uncanny mind hatching new plots to get her revenge.

The surviving Vampires leave and resume their un-lives in the Old World, never speaking of the events they witnessed. It's possible one or more may take an interest in the PCs, and if so, the Vampire could be a sponsor for the PC or may even try to give a character the Blood Kiss as a reward.

Of course, if the PCs survived and destroyed the Black Witch, they are truly heroes; although, they probably have no proof of what they've done, so no one believes their tales. They may be Mutants, mad, or both, and if so, they should feel the psychic tug to venture into the Chaos Wastes to find their final fates. Otherwise, they can return to the Empire as free men and women, to live their lives with the knowledge they have turned the tide—if but for a time.

Then there's the question of Karl. If he lives, the PCs will have to decide what to do with him. Is he the Son of Sigmar, or is he a Mutant with a special power? Should the characters put him to the sword and end the threat to the Empire—and, indeed, the whole world—or should they support and protect him into the uncertain future? What happens next is your tale to tell, and one that will surely change the lives of all involved.

Rewards

Quite simply, each character that survives this adventure earns 500 XP—more based on the quality of their roleplaying. If the PCs thwarted the Black Witch's plans, they gain an extra 100 XP. Destroying the Black Witch nets an extra 200 XP and two Fate Points.

Appendix I: Traits

Thousand Thrones follows the lead set by *Night's Dark Masters* and *Realm of the Ice Queen* by breaking out certain talents into traits to better distinguish between talents that can be acquired by advancing through careers and those that express a feature or aspect of a race or creature type. Common traits that appear in this campaign follow.

Aethyric Cipher

Your natural mastery over the Winds of Magic allows you to cloak and dissipate the Aethyric distortions around you. Those observing you with Witchsight must make an opposed Will Power Test and win with at least one degree of success in order to detect anything unusual about you. You are also immune to Daemonsroot, Witchbane, and any other similar wards.

Bat Form

You can transform into a Vampire Bat as a half action. Your stats become those of a Vampire Bat (see *Old World Bestiary*, page 113), though you retain your own Intelligence and Wounds. You can remain in bat form as long as you like and change back as a half action.

Blademaster

At the start of your turn each round, you may reduce the Attacks Characteristic of one opponent you are engaged with by 1 for 1 round as a free action.

Blood Drain

You may drain blood with fangs. If you inflicts at least 1 Wound on an enemy whilst grappling, the victim also loses 1d10 from his Strength Characteristic. If the victim survives the encounter, he regains 1 point of Strength each hour.

Corrupted Innocence

You are delicately beautiful. Gain the Unsettling Trait.

Dark Majesty

You are such a powerful figure that you can command mighty armies of the Undead. You may control a number of creatures with the Undead Trait at any one time equal to your Will Power Characteristic plus 30.

Daemonic Aura

You are made of the very stuff of magic, and as such, any time a non-magical weapon strikes you, your Toughness Bonus counts as 2 higher. Your attacks count as magical, and you are immune to poison and suffocation.

Deathsight

You can perceive invisible Undead.

Defy the Dawn

Your will is so strong, you can overcome even the terrible power of the sun. If you make a Will Power Test, you can walk in the sun without taking any damage or penalties. You must make another test after each hour of exposure, at a cumulative –10 penalty per hour spent in the sun. Failure indicates your characteristics halve, and you begin to take damage for every minute of exposure, as normal. If this power is rolled or chosen a second time, you obtain complete immunity to damage from the sun, and you may walk in it without any consequence.

Domination

You may attempt to control a living creature within 6 yards as a full action. This test is opposed by pitting your Fellowship against your target's Will Power. If you win, you gain complete control over the target, and you can compel him to do as you wish. After 1d10 rounds, the target may attempt to break free by making another opposed test. You can free the target at any time as a free action.

Ethereal

You are insubstantial and weightless. You can pass through solid objects, though you have no special ability to see through solid objects. When partially hidden inside an object, you gain a +30 bonus on Concealment Tests. At will, you can become completely silent without needing to pass a Silent Move Test. You are immune to normal weapons. Daemons, spells, other creatures with the Ethereal Trait, and opponents armed with magic weapons can injure you normally. You cannot affect the mortal world, and thus, you cannot damage opponents that do not have this trait.

Iron Sinews

You gain the Unstoppable Blows Talent, which imposes a –30 on opponents' attempts to parry your attacks.

Master of the Black Arts

When you cast a spell from the Lore of Necromancy, you gain a +3 bonus on the Casting Roll.

Mindless

You cannot take or fail tests based on Intelligence, Will Power, or Fellowship.

Natural Necromancer

You may control the Undead just as necromancers do.

Pass for Human

You can retract your claws and fangs and soften your features, enabling you to appear Human. In this form, you lose the Frightening Trait. Switching back and forth between appearing Human is a free action.

Summon Ghouls

Once per day, as a full action, you may summon Ghouls to attack your enemies. Roll 1d10. On a 1–3, you get 3 Ghouls in 2 rounds; on a 4–6, you get 4 Ghouls in 3 rounds; on a 7–9, you get 5 Ghouls in 4 rounds; on a 10, you get 6 Ghouls in 5 rounds. When the Ghouls appear, they act on your Initiative, and they obey all of your commands. The Ghouls wander off after a number of hours equal to your Magic Characteristic (minimum 1 hour). This power assumes there are Ghouls nearby. If it is impossible for Ghouls to be anywhere in the vicinity, then you may not use this Blood Gift.

Transfixing Gaze

You may immobilise an opponent within 6 yards who fails a Will Power Test. The gaze requires a half action, and you can maintain it by spending a half action every subsequent round. No Will Power Tests are allowed after the first failed test.

Will of Iron

You are immune to Fear, Terror, the effects of the Intimidate Skill, and the Unsettling Trait.

Vampires' Curse

You suffer from a number of curses. You never cast a reflection. When in the presence of Daemonsroot or Witchbane, you must succeed on a Will Power Test to approach within 2 yards. You must also pass a Will Power Test to approach within 2 yards of a religious symbol and must succeed on a **Hard (–20) Will Power Test** to enter a temple or grasp a religious symbol. If you attempt to cross running water by moving through it, you lose 1d10 Wounds, ignoring armour and Toughness Bonus, and if reduced to 0 Wounds, you resolve Critical Hits as if they were Sudden Death. If you lose at least 1 Wound from a silvered weapon, you lose an additional 3 Wounds. When in direct sunlight, your characteristics are all halved, and you lose 1 Wound per minute of exposure, ignoring armour and Toughness Bonus. If reduced to 0 Wounds, you resolve Critical Hits using Sudden Death rules. Finally, each round you're exposed, you must pass a **Challenging (–10) Toughness Test** or catch fire. For variant curses, be sure to check out *Night's Dark Masters*.

Appendix II: Player Handouts

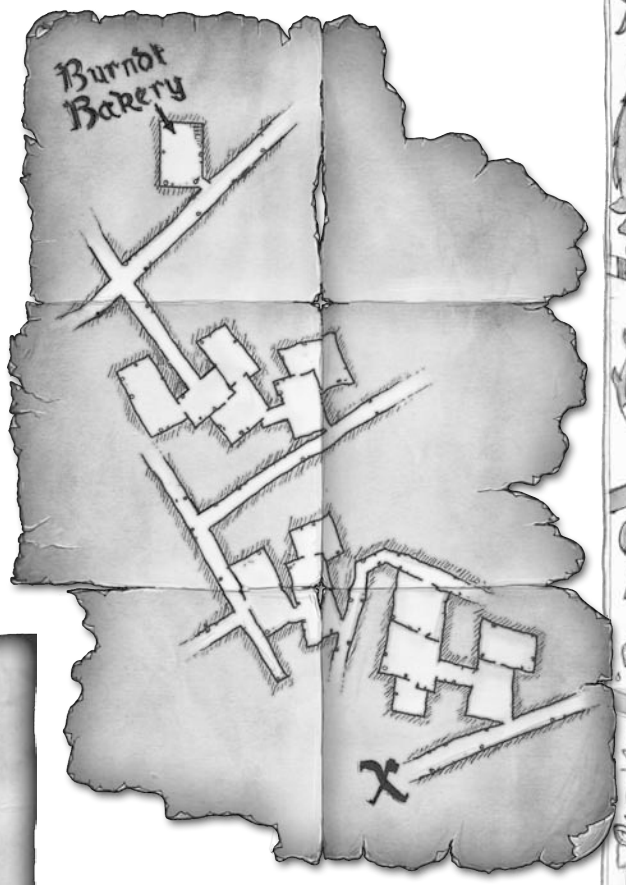
Throughout this campaign, the player characters may find and collect many useful bits of information that help them along. Permission is granted to photocopy all of these handouts for personal use.

Handout 1

Lutzen is a fool who lies to you and to herself. You must speak to the True Abbess, outside the old Temple of Sigmar in Templewijk, while she yet lives. The boy is dangerous.

-One Who is Still Loyal

Handout 2



Handout 3

Jurgen,

Your aid has been invaluable in these times, but as our lord does teach, all things must wither and decay, and the time of our presence in Marienburg is at an end. We have a new purpose now, to guide the child to our Master's sweet embrace. May his name be cried out seven times and borne on the wings of the corpse flies!

I leave for Altdorf immediately with the child, and as such, the Three Moons exist no more. Remain here, do not forget your tenants, celebrate what beauty you can find and share with it the blessings of the Lord of Pestilence. When our plan is complete, and the Master embraces the boy, then we shall return at the head of a tide of glorious filth. The lands of men shall rot, and the chosen of Nurgle shall dance in the fields.

I have one last task for you to undertake. The prophet Ruben has outlived his usefulness in the eyes of the Great Corrupter. It is entrusted to you to end his life.

Glory to Nurgle! Glory to the King of Maggots!

Handout 4

Lord Frederick,

I hope this letter finds you well! You may be wondering why I have sent a group of men—criminals no less!—to your abode. Though they may have committed crimes in the past, they are good men who have performed a great service to us here. You will have undoubtedly heard news of the cult following the Child they believe is a resurrection of our lord Sigmar. The crusade originated in my city and is moving to Altdorf. Whether it will have arrived by the time you read this I cannot tell.

As I have said, these men have performed a great service to me, uncovering the secrets behind this cult. Have them relate to you all that they know. You may then decide how to proceed. Use what influence you have upon the court to have these men pardoned, as unfortunately, I am unable to offer this myself.

I apologise for any burden I have placed upon you, but I know you enjoy this sort of thing!

May Sigmar guide your actions,

Viggo von Skarlden 999

Imperial Ambassador
Imperial Embassy
Marienburg

To Whomever May Read This.

By order of the Imperial Ambassador of Marienburg this document entitles the bearers passage on the roads from Marienburg to Altdorf, travelling in the direction of Altdorf. Whilst it is understood that the bearers of this document are criminals in the eyes of Imperial and Marienburg law, this document grants them pardon only when travelling the prescribed roads. Upon entering the city of Altdorf, the bearers must proceed to meet Lord Frederick of Altdorf. The bearers must report to Lord Frederick and will be under his protection.

Please find enclosed the seal of the Imperial Embassy of Marienburg.

Handout 5

Handout 6

And A Child Shall Lead Them

Know Ye, oh men of the Empire,
that Sigmar is Born Again
in the Guise of a Child
with the Strength of a Man
and the Beauty of a God
who doth bear the Mark of
Sigmar's Might
Emblazoned on his Breast

From the West comes he, to bring
Justice, Peace, and Prosperity
once again to Sigmar's Land,
to Banish the Evils that Beset us, and to
Set Right all Wrongs

Look upon him, ye benighted,
and know his divinity.
Follow his Brave Standard to Altdorf
and reclaim what is yours by right,
Justice, Peace, and Prosperity for all!

Handout 7

Dearest Casper,

I have spoken to Lennhardt as you requested and he agreed to allow you three hours in the library for the purpose of Heraldic Research only. In the event that you should find what it is you seek, Lennhardt would consider it a personal favour if you would share such information with him at your soonest convenience.

Sincerely,

Wendell Ott

Hollenbach

Handout 8

Surefire Herbal Remedies
11 East Ostrasse Way
Marienburg

Kleinfeldt's Sleeping Tonic,
1 bottle _____ 3 Gold Crowns

Paid this Marketday

Signed,
Clause Reisher,
Owner and Proprietor

Handout 9

- The Hollenbach Family -

The Hollenbach family once boasted of several prominent members having the direct ear of the Elector Count of Nordland, but their fortunes were not to last. Peasents began disappearing in great numbers along the roads leading to to and from the Hollenbach estates, and it was not long before several less-prominent noble families accused them of trafficing in such things as Vampirism and Sorcery.

Witch hunters descended on their lands on Hexenstag in 2066 and burned the entire family en masse for "consorting with malevolent forces." However, some beleive the Hollenbachs did not rest quietly. Indeed, although Nordland's Elector Count was assured that the entire noble family had been put to flame, peasents continued to vanish for another nine years. It is notable that when a "Hollenbach Scare" revived on the disappearence of peasents some thirty years later, many of the noble family's corpses were exhumed by order of the Count. Each Hollenbach skeleton still had a stake embedded within its chest.

Handout 10

Ansel in Altdorf
Ask Estlemann
Necklace for Ceremony

Handout 11

Helmut von Eulenhaus
Gilgar Brantner
Johannes Wunderlich
Karl Hochstetter
Sigimund Keppler
Dieric Kinsfeldt
Erasmus Lang
Diepolt von Raug
Greta Weydchardt
Bartolomous Teschitz
Oswalt Bosch
Heinrich von Schtuck
Johannes Sundler
Severin Falkensteiner
Torsten Altdorfer
Horst Osiander
Jerimais Sachs
Malthus Dortinger
Dieter Wilke
Elspeth von Waldek
Adelheid Drurer
Grigor Vladek
Lettilin Pirkenheimer
Franz Schmidt
Ansel Vorman
Lorenz Scheurl
Hanskarl Friedank

Handout 12

They are coming. My gills are filled with Tobias's reek. Ruprecht wants the chain for the boy, so only he will be able to control him. And if he succeeds, can his conquest of the Empire be far behind? I must hide my old notes, or he will discover its location. But where? Where can I place them beyond his reach? If only I had the courage to burn them, but I cannot allow myself to forget my transgressions. I must read them constantly to know the evil of my former self. Perhaps I could tell the temple of Tobias's coming. No. Not until Sigmar sees fit to cure me of these abominable transformations. The risk of exposure is too great, and my work is not yet done. Blessed Lord Sigmar, have I not slain a hundred tainted in your name? Can you still withhold your mercy? Ah! I have it! Prayer has inspired me! I know the very place. Ruprecht's minions would not dare search there.

Helmgart's First Blood

Handout 13

Blood on the Reik (3rd ed.) - 6 10 head brown
Blood on the Reik (2nd ed.) - 9 L2 3 knees green
Blood on the Reik (4th revised) - 3 4 hands brown

Handout 15

Take some of your best men and wait at the Voermay place, for I believe I am being followed. We must perform the ceremony for Master Kahy and cannot afford any interruptions. I will be instructing the high priest on what needs done. When you have disposed of the problem, return to the Plague Temple and help us prepare.

Handout 14

The ritual must be performed in the house of one's family, for its purpose is to tie the subject not just to one's self, but to one's blood and kin. It inspires in the subject the love of a child for its mother and father, an unbreakable chain of filial piety. This act poses some difficulty for me, since I was born in Keck but raised by my grandparents in Ruhrhoff when my parents died. I believe I will choose my grandparent's house, as it is both my house and my father's and grandfather's. Also, Shoenstrase is only a mile from Ermaline's house. It will certainly be easier to transport her there than it would to Keck. I don't know if I could keep her subdued for so long.

All is lost. I am lost. The ritual failed. Ermaline is dead, may the Gods preserve her soul. I killed her. I do not know what went wrong. No, that is a lie. What was wrong was attempting the ritual in first place, attempting to use foul magic to force Ermaline to love me when she clearly despised me. The ritual seemed to do exactly the opposite of what it was meant to. When I placed the chain around Ermaline's neck and made the sacrifices and spoke the words, she grew enraged instead of enraptured. She howled like a banshee and snapped her bonds like they were so many threads, her veins swelling and twisting like snakes under her skin. I fell back, frightened, and she leapt at me, swinging the chain, which glowed a hellish red. It struck me across the forehead, and I fell, searing pain burning my flesh and horrible whisperings tearing at my mind. I watched from the floor in horror as Ermaline's rage became a frothing frenzy. Her veins grew thicker and thicker, and then...would that I could erase the memory from my mind...she burst. I was bathed in her blood and then knew no more.

When again I woke, I fled that foul cellar, leaving the chain where it lay amongst the crimson ruins of Ermaline's viscera. Now I am lost. I know not what to do, except that I am forever done with the seductive lies of the Ruinous Powers. What life I have left I will dedicate to Sigmar. I will do my best to win back his good graces. How, I know not. Never has a wretch had so long a road to travel back to redemption.

Handout 16

Herr Hahn,

I'm sorry to report that I caught Master Ruprecht around the delicate merchandise in the warehouse again. I warned him that you would be angry, and he became terribly defiant. I have even received reports from some of the men that they have been threatened by your son. I hope that you can rectify the situation to ensure operations are not compromised at the warehouse and can continue to run smoothly.

Frederick Geisten
Head Dock Manager

Handout 17

Day One: I do not know what Ruprecht is doing, but the blasphemy must stop. He is now keeping us prisoner in our own home. He has thugs all over the grounds keeping us from leaving or getting help. I shall kill him with my own hands if need be.

Day Two: I confronted Ruprecht today about where our parents were and what was going on. He gave me an evil grin and then blew a foul dust into my face. I doubled over in a coughing fit, unable to move. My lungs burned, and my eyes felt as if they were going to explode from my head. I believe it was Camille that eventually dragged me back to our bed.

Day Three: I know the dust Ruprecht blew in my face has infected me with a horrible disease. I am covered in sweat but shake as if I were cold. My flesh is covered in boils and sores...and the vomiting, by the Gods, the vomiting... Surely there is nothing left inside of me, but yet substance still pours from my mouth as my stomach convulses. I pray for a surgeon to help.

Day Four: My dear Camille has been infected also. I cannot even get close to Ruprecht with all the hooligans he has protecting him. They keep us trapped in this house while they do their nefarious deeds. I have heard a lot of noises, some surely unnatural, coming from the hedge maze.

Day Five: The horrible disease, whatever it is, is ravishing Camille at a much faster rate than it did me. She lies in bed all day with seeping sores, and those bastards will not let me get help for her. They will all pay.

Day Six: By Sigmar, I have infected my own daughter. I swear to everything holy it was an accident...I tried my best to keep her away, knowing the disease was contagious, but she is a scared little girl in a big house of monsters. All she wanted was comfort, and I have surely brought her death.

Day Seven: It is becoming increasing difficult to write in this journal. My skin is turning as hard as oak, and I find my joints do not move the way they used to. I believe Camille has lapsed into a coma. I shall lay with her one last time, for I do not believe either one of us shall see the sunlight again. I pray for Genevieve.

Handout 18

I have been commissioned by the Gods themselves! My abilities have been noticed, and I am promised power of an even greater degree. I begin this journal as a testament of my achievements. I must prepare the grounds, for guests will arrive soon.

I have had to keep my family from leaving the mansion. They will attempt to get help and stop the temple from being built. Many followers of my master have shown up and make welcome guards to keep my family in line.

Some of the "helpers" that have been sent to aid me are more repulsive than anything that I could have believed, but I must remain steady. The end result will outweigh any difficulties I have to deal with now.

I infected my brother Erich with one of the gifts my master gave me. It will be amusing to see the effects it has on him. One of my more powerful servants "took over" father yesterday; it was quite a sight to see...and the least of what the bastard deserved.

The construction of the temple is slow but steady. I have ensorcelled the hedge maze to conceal the entrance. The only way through the maze is with the sigil I made. I need to make more right away, but it is very draining.

I have been told that an invasion is coming, and my temple will be a waypoint for troops! The construction must be completed soon. I have figured out a way to infuse the magic of the Sigil of Flies directly onto one's flesh. From what I understand it is very painful, but it will be less of a burden to me.

I have heard rumours that the war is taking a turn for the worst. I must flee north before more of those blasted witch hunters come looking for their comrades. I am leaving some of my more trusted minions behind to protect the temple in case I have need of it in the future.

Handout 19

Father refuses to let me go to study at the Colleges of Magic. He says that no son of his will be touted as a freak. I tried to explain it wasn't evil like the commoners believed and that the Colleges were respected, but my pleas fell on deaf ears. I showed him my abilities by creating a blue flame in the palm of my hand, and he struck me with the back of his hand. I have never seen him so angry.

I continue to practise without father knowing. I know he would be angry, but I will improve my power and eventually make him proud of me. Who knows, maybe I will eventually be able to save lives with my gift.

My powers are growing. I am now able to easily move objects around with but a thought. I can feel the Winds blowing through me, but I am unable to progress at a decent rate without further knowledge. Any of the books with real knowledge are unattainable by me. I must try to get a hold of one in the city, but how?

A curious thing happened today. I dropped a crate, and it broke open, spilling several trinkets onto the ground. I quickly began to gather them up, fearing I would be punished, and they felt hot in my hands. The power flowing through them was amazing! Herr Geisten saw me and sent me away, saying he would take care of it. I wonder what they were?

My father is a hypocrite! Preaching to me the evils of magic, and all along he has been dealing with such objects! I wondered if my previous find was a fluke, so I searched the other crates in the warehouse, and I found more! They don't stay long in the warehouse, but these special items are constantly coming and going. I must get a hold of some of these in hopes of learning more.

I found a book today. The secrets it reveals! Even though Herr Geisten has warned me to stay away, I knew my persistence would pay off! I am unable to read the title, and most of the text inside is unintelligible to me, but I feel I will eventually be able to decipher it. Even without the text, this book is incredible! I flipped through it quickly and saw illustrations of things and places I could have never dreamed of in a hundred lifetimes. I will begin to study it more closely tonight.

I have become dreadfully ill, but from the studying I have done with the grimoire I think I can cure myself using its magic. I will attempt the ritual tonight after everyone has retired. I am sure this will make me better, and I will be able to look for more relics in my father's warehouse soon.

Handout 20

HELDENHAMMER!

A PASSION PLAY PERFORMED IN EIGHT ACTS
FOR YOUR ENJOYMENT
WRITTEN BY

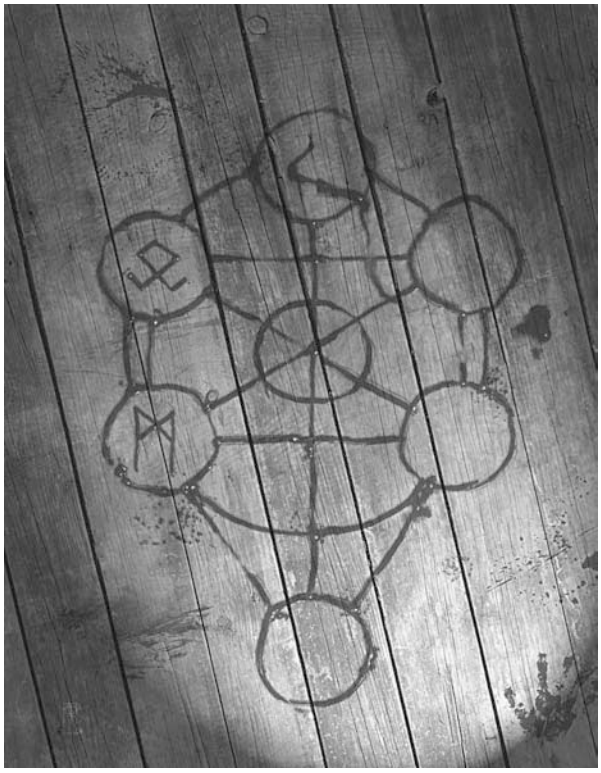
WILHELM SCHUMACHER

AUTHOR OF OTHER CLASSIC TALES SUCH AS
THE BARBER-SURGEON OF BILBALI
AND
THE ICE PRINCESS AND THE SEVEN DWARFEN WARRIORS

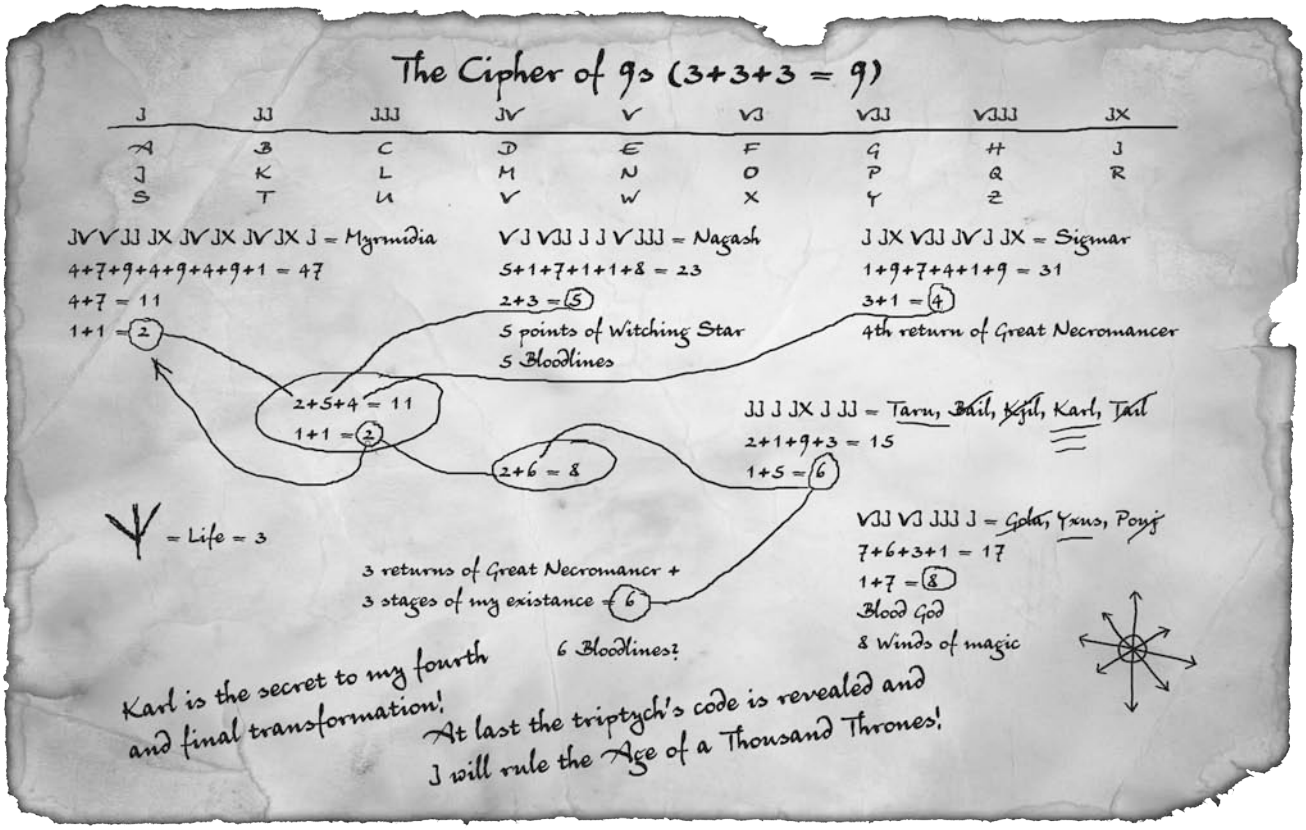
SEE THE TALE OF OUR LORD SIGMAR
AS IT HAS NEVER BEEN SEEN BEFORE.
SEE A TALE OF LIFE, DEATH,
AND REBIRTH.
MARVEL AT THE HEROISM
GASP AT THE FEARSOME ORC WARLORD
GRIMGUT BONECRUSHER
CHEER AS KING IRONBEARD IS SAVED
FROM CERTAIN DEATH
WEEP AT THE LOSSES
GOGGLE AT THE ELABORATE COSTUMES
WINCE AT THE TIGHT TROUSERS
PERFORMANCES NIGHTLY

SOON TO BE PERFORMED FOR KARL HIMSELF!

Handout 22



Handout 21



Handout 23

Handout 24

slight and I can help you.
fourth return of the Great ask your help
in finding a boy Ahmed, and he travels
with Once you have located the boy, keep
him hidden. Mama Raluca Helfurt.
If you are able to retrieve Sigmarite
Cult called the Skulls regards and ma
the Great your cult.
Lydia

Handout 25

21 Erntejeit, 2522

Esteemed Abbot Geistwacht,

I wrote you with distressing news. On a recent mission to Vanhaldenhof, Shroud agents visited the village of Helfurt and discovered that the Undead walk casually amongst the living! It appears that Lydia Plecticos, widow of the late Veislav Plecticos and now baroness of the small fiefdom, has been practicing Necromancy.

Furthermore, temple records reveal that Lydia was once a scribe at Blessed Aethelbert, tasked with translating texts of the Vampire Prophecies. More ominously, these records are dated within a year of two Dandré scrolls being reported missing. If my genealogical research is accurate, the aforementioned events transpired two hundred and fifty years ago.

I leave this matter in your capable hands.

Respectfully Yours,

Father Tomas

Master of Letters at Essen

Handout 26

Handout 27

- connection between Curse of the Old Gods, Vampires' Blood Curse, and Age of a Thousand Thrones?
- triptych: Nagash = Rhya's Cauldron, Myrmidia = Grungni's Baldric Dragomas the Drake, Sigmar = ???
- male scions: Araby, Strigany, Sylvania? / female scions: Bretonnia, ???, Kislev?
- Jaeger's poem = factual?

also:

- place ward on morgue entrance to library
- order more rat poison for Erich
- have Tanja inspect towers for signs of Them

Handout 28

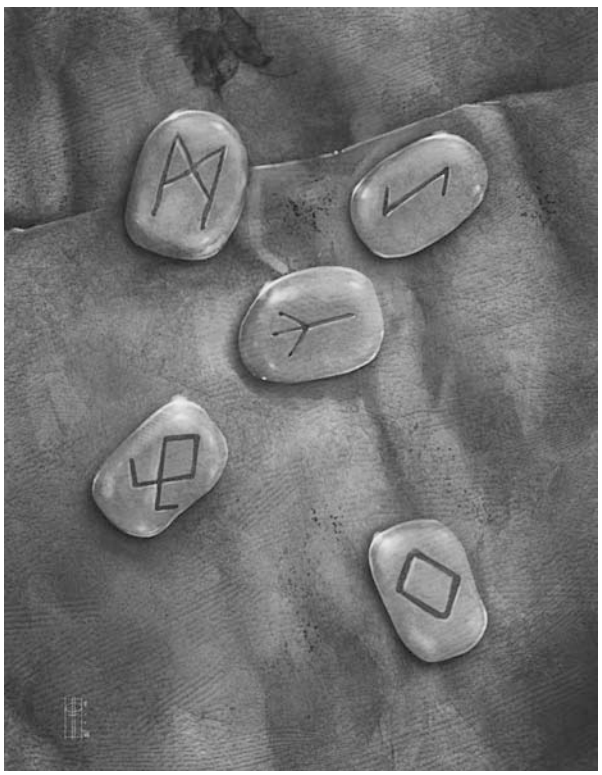
...deep within the Temple of Blood is a [Statue? Shrine?] of the Great Necromancer. The Lahmians hitherto worshipped him as a God, and only by the grace of Ptra [Sun God?] has his power been diminished

...and it was written that he who lifts the [Curse? Spell?] shall rule the Age of a Thousand Thrones, and the sky will grow dark

...but the Great Necromancer defied the gods and turned their curses to his favour. With the [sacred? magical?] words he drove the hosts of Lahmia to their defeat, and they fled north

...the Priesthood implores King Alcadizzar: hunt the progeny of Nagash to the end of the seas, that the fated [Child? Boy? gender unclear] remains forever unborn

Handout 29



These tablets must be guarded closely after I have passed. They were held sacred by the Druids, who upon them performed blood tributes to the Vampires. Hunger Wood should be watched, in case any of the Blood Cultists evaded capture.

GL

Upon further examination, these tablets appear to be linked with Ishernos the Earth Mother, a primitive aspect of Rhya. The runic sequence might be relevant a creation narrative perhaps? The runes suggest that man is somehow linked with the return of Ishernos. More translation needed of the megalith portal.

Handout 30

Handout 31

"...and thus I laughed at the Gods and spoke their own tongue. The children of Lahmia fell under my power, unable to resist my gift..."

"...in defiance of the Jackal I spoke "Odet" in /Earth goddess?/ name, and the night brood screamed against me. Unmoved by their pleas I spoke "Luna" under the new moon, and Asaph raged at my insolence while the pretenders' servants left them."

"My bloodline will yet return. Not from the halls of Nagashizzar, but from the frozen north of Kislev. This I was promised at the Tree of Hope, and so it shall unfold."

"In my place a Woman stand, born beneath the Witchling Star. And she in turn allied with Man, born under the Sign of /Earth goddess?/."

Handout 32

"...and the Curse of the Old Gods would remain while Ptra ruled the sky. But the /Earth or Moon?/ Goddess looked upon these beings of night with love, and secretly promised that if Man should ever falter, they would take his place..."

"...this curse remains in Nagash's bloodline until a union of souls between the fated Scion and the Favoured of the /Earth or Moon?/. Then the Age of Man will end, and a thousand of Her chosen will rule under the Favoured One..."

"... /Earth or Moon goddess?/ was pleased with Her blessing, and sowed the seed of her return in the frozen fields of Kislev until the day when Man would fall."

"...the gods have granted us wisdom: their curses protect us from the Masters of Night. King Mcadixxar, these sacred words must not be lost! Use the Code of Nines to understand them."

Handout 33

To those whom I have failed,

I was not brave enough to care for you, or to speak out for Anya, or to confront the dark riders in their carriages. I have fallen in the eyes of Shallya and let the town, my charge, fall into darkness. We are all of us corrupted, and even now I have come to realize that the forces of Chaos have come unto us. We are beyond redemption. I sent a warning to Winged Lancers nearly a moon ago, and I fear that they have decided to cleanse this town of its taint. I have granted this town its weeks of pain, and now I have subjected it to complete destruction. They are coming. The riders are coming. None shall be spared. I am sorry.

Hanna, she who once was of Shallya

Behold the Warhammer Campaign!

It is a dark time in the Empire of mankind. The troubles of the Chaos Incursion left the north a smoking ruin, a bleak land infested with roving bands of Beastmen, a wellspring for the Chaos cults and their efforts to turn honest men and women into gibbering slaves of darkness. Such horrors breed sorrow and fear and common folk huddle in the shadows cast by the far-flung north, searching for salvation from the gods, heroes or from anyone with the courage to reclaim their devastated land. A hero has come, but little did people expect he would be a young man from the Wasteland.

The Thousand Thrones is a campaign for *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay*, promising to take adventurers from the stinking canals of Marienburg to the western fringes of Kislev. When a boy with a burning twin-tailed comet on his chest single-handedly kills a pair of cultists, he is proclaimed to be Sigmar reborn. Supported by a legion of fanatical followers, the player characters are drawn into a dangerous and sinister story involving ancient evil, the cults of Chaos, the lords of night and a veritable army of other deadly foes.

Inside this adventure sourcebook, you'll find the following nine adventures:

- *The Call of Chaos*: The adventurers scour the streets and waterways of Marienburg to uncover the secret history of this divine child.
- *An Unquiet Peace*: Hot on the trail of the young man, the player characters find themselves embroiled in the strange happenings of a small town on the edges of the Empire.
- *The Crusade of the Child*: The plot thickens as the various players and conspirators reveal themselves in this dire tale.
- *Written in Blood*: When the Crusade reaches Altdorf to negotiate with the Grand Theogonist, everything unravels as a hidden enemy makes his move and new foes work to exploit the young man for themselves.
- *Metamorphosis of Villa Hahn*: With their principal enemy revealed, the adventurers brave the perils of the Drakwald to rescue the missing boy before their enemy's plan can be enacted.
- *Heralds of a New Dawn*: Foul plots are hatched as the beleaguered Crusade stalls outside of Wolfenburg.
- *Death Do Us Part*: A side-trek into Sylvania reveals much of the dark events swirling about this blessed child.
- *The Black Witch*: The adventurers press into Kislev to follow the young man up the slopes of the Crags of Shargun. There, old enemies return and a far more dangerous new foe is revealed.
- *The Womb of the Black Witch*: The grand conclusion of this epic campaign, the adventurers must enter the heart of Chaos, battle her minions, and defeat her terrifying servants if they would stop the Black Witch from her mad agenda.

Whether used as stand-alone adventures or as a complete campaign, *The Thousand Thrones* promises months of exciting action and investigation, loaded with compelling characters, strange environments, and deadly secrets that are certain to take the heroes over the brink of madness and beyond!

An Epic Adventure Awaits!

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Designed & Developed by Green Ronin Publishing, LLC

Black Industries

BL PUBLISHING

Printed in the EU

www.blackindustries.com
www.greenronin.com

Product Code: 60040283029

ISBN-13: 978-1-84416-434-9
ISBN-10: 1-84416-434-9

9 781844 164349 54499