

“Back for more, eh? Cemeteries and walking corpses not scary enough for you boy? Well, you’ve explored the Temple Quarter are you prepared for the Rich Quarter? There’s more than just a few Zombies here, I can tell you. Once this place shone like a gemstone, rich and opulent. Once it was the seat of Mordheim’s power of old for here was where the Count held court. Some say that Count Steinhardt, or whatever has become of him, still holds court in this black place. So, be careful boy, or be dead.”

This is the third installment of the City of the Damned series of articles exploring the cursed city of Mordheim. This issue our intrepid scribe, Space McQuirk explores the history of the opulent palaces and exotic gardens of the once noble north-west quarter.

In the decades before the infamous comet struck Mordheim, the city had prospered to the extent that of all the cities in the Empire it was second in wealth and influence only to capital of Altdorf. The nobles had grown rich on the toils of the farmers and workers, and the rich quarter of Mordheim was renown for being the most extravagant region in the entire realm. Such was the extent of the city’s wealth the palace courtyard of its ruler, the extravagant Count Steinhardt, was quite literally paved with gold. In 1979, the Empire was deeply embroiled in a bitter civil war. The Grand Theogonist refused to acknowledge Lady Magritta’s claim to the throne and the land rapidly descended into anarchy and war. During this turmoil, Count Steinhardt refused to commit his forces to any of the three warring factions. He realised that by remaining neutral he would be able to make a veritable fortune in bribes and gifts, but more importantly he didn’t want to see the bright clean livery of the soldiers of Mordheim sullied with the mud and bloody stains of battle. As the Empire went to war, expending valuable resources on arms and soldiers Mordheim grew rich selling arms and supplies at extortionate prices to any side.

The Count used the wealth that was generated from the lands to sell valuable resources such as food, ores and wood to whatever faction bid the highest. In his treasury, the coffers overflowed with the gold of the warring Elector Counts and soon the Count had acquired more wealth than any single individual in the entire land. The Count was an extremely vain man and relished being the centre of attention. With more money than he could ever possibly spend Count Steinhardt used his newly found wealth to fund extraordinary lavish parties. He would buy extravagant gifts and bestow them upon his guests. Once he gifted one of his many mistresses with a beautiful diamond ring. Upon seeing the ring she complained that she had nothing to wear with it, so the Count had a dress made from rare Cathayan silk and heavily embroidered with gold twine that would bankrupt most Elector Counts. Hundreds would attend the masquerade balls and fill themselves on the sumptuous banquets where the Count would serve such delicacies as roast eagles and rump of griffon. It is even rumoured that the Count was responsible for the extinction of the lesser firedrake after he acquired a taste for their spicy eggs. During this time the poor suffered miserably. The Count and his nobles would sell their best produce to the warring factions, leaving only the rotten scraps for his commoners to fight over. The town’s guard became increasingly corrupt and law and order was soon all but forgotten. The Count, locked behind the walls of his elegant palace had little concern for the affairs of state. The Count ordered his men remove the statue of Count Gotthard, the founder of Mordheim and a hero to the people, and have it replaced with an image of himself. This self-indulgent vanity was finally too much for the downtrodden citizens, who took arms and finally rebelled. They attacked the guards of the Raven Barracks and the West Gatehouse where the city guards sat drunk, playing dice. The guards were so complacent that they had not even set up a watch. Quickly over coming the surprised

defenders of the north-west quarter, the angry mob rampaged through the streets of Mordheim. It was said that when the first riots broke out, the Count watched from his balcony and thought it was splendid entertainment. Over a short period of time anarchy descended upon Mordheim, but the rich merchants and nobles of the North-west quarter had hired many mercenaries, paying for the upkeep of elite household guards. The ruthless approach used by the soldiers in dealing with the rioters quickly calmed the situation and order was restored. These small bands of heavily armed warriors were no better than vigilantes and hired thugs, who patrolled the streets ensuring that the fine alleys and streets of the North-west Quarter remained free from the filth and squalor that infested the rest of the city. Now the area was ruled with a tight fist. Anyone deemed to be a vagrant was humiliated in the stocks before being put onto a barge and removed from the city. With the riots quashed there was little real work to keep the household guards occupied and they quickly grew bored. Often these soldiers would seek entertainment by fighting the guards of other another noble's house in pre-arranged duels. The Count officially banned such activity, but in reality encouraged the scuffles between the noble houses as they added to the extravagant spirit that he so relished. The status of a particular house was dictated by the strength of its soldiers and the nobles would squander their fortunes hiring expert fighters to join their house guard. When the great disaster struck the Count was in the midst of hosting the most extravagant party he had ever held. Over two thousand guests in costumes were in attendance and the finest musicians in the Empire played for them. The palace was left relatively unscathed by the cataclysm, but the partygoers fared less well. Their minds were particularly susceptible to the mutating effects of Chaos and as the wyrdstone rained down upon the city, its nobility was picked out for a particularly chilling fate. It is said that few at first noticed the changes that overcame the powdered fops. Most thought the gross mutations that sprouted from each other's bodies and limbs were simply parts of their elaborate costumes, and even the count ordered the band to continue playing. masks gruesomely melted into the wearer's faces and became twisted images of hatred and menace. As the terrible power of Chaos filled the possessed nobles' minds with horrifying visions they fell upon those around them in an orgy of violence. The luxurious ballroom became a blood bath as wholesale slaughter began. It is said that the Count himself soon succumbed to the warping effects of Chaos and his already sumptuous belly swelled to enormous size. Poxes and boils burst all over him, and he was soon so obese that he was unable to move. Huge tendrils sprouted where once his arms had been and these writhing limbs reached out, grasping at the screaming guests. He then dragged them towards him and consumed them whole. As the small bright green, glowing shards continued to rain down from the dust and debris filled skies all over the North-west Quarter, the wyrdstone began to have other strange and deadly mutating effects. A great many of the greedy inhabitants thought these stones were precious gems and began to hoard wyrdstone in vast quantities. And so the great design of the dreaded Shadowlord came to fruition. The taint of Chaos issued from the wyrdstone was at its purest and those who hoarded the shards soon went the way of the Count's guests. Horrible mutants began to stalk the streets hungry for the flesh of mortals. Even stranger were the effects that the Wyrdstone had on the Count's famous Memorial Gardens. In an extravagant display of how to squander a fortune, the Count imported all manner of strange plants from far away lands such as mythical Lustria and had the most fabulous gardens seen anywhere in the Empire. Many lovers would gather in the central park of the exotic gardens to welcome in the New Year amongst its beautiful surroundings. As shards

of wyrdstone fell like hailstones from the sky, the plants soon developed a malevolent life of their own and roots and vines grasped at the poor couples ensnaring them tightly before dragging them deep down into the soil where the roots drank deeply from their blood. Other plants spat out poisonous barbs at any unfortunates who strayed too near. The water in the fountain at the centre of the gardens glowed bright green and tales tell of the cherubs howling terrible curses of doom and despair. The Great Oak that once stood near the ornate gates of the garden uprooted itself and began a rampage of death and destruction. A huge one hundred foot tall monster, it smashed through the perimeter wall of the gardens and began to make its way to the West Gatehouse where crowds had gathered in a desperate attempt to flee the disaster. It wasn't long before the terrified townsfolk, believing the Count and his nobles had brought this curse upon them attacked the rich quarter looting and pillaging everything they could find. The palace was attacked and witnessing the terrible beasts that emerged from the hall, the people of Mordheim set fire to the building. The flames quickly spread and soon the entire quarter was ablaze. Records tell of the orange glow of the inferno being visible from as far away as Bechafen. As the fire spread, the people attempted to leave the city en-mass. The few remaining guards of the Raven Barracks tried to restore order at the West gatehouse, but the crowd turned upon them. Hundreds were crushed underfoot in the panic and soon the terrible Oak beast reached the gates. With evil eyes glowing red, the instrument of the Shadowlord stomped through the crowd sending broken bodies hurtling through the air as its huge branches lashed out at the throng. Few managed to escape the north-western quarter of the city during the disaster, as the monster had rooted itself at the gateway, slaughtering all that dared to pass...

Nowadays, the whole area is a nightmarish parody of its former elegance. The once magnificent buildings now lie in charred ruins. Most items of value that survived the fire have long since disappeared, plundered over the years by desperate scavengers. Every so often a warband will emerge from this quarter with treasures found deep within the cellars of an old house. This alone is enough to keep a would-be adventurer's interest. The burnt-out shell of the Count's palace is an eerie sight, and tales tell that the count and many of his guests survived the all-consuming fire. In murmured whispers it is said that he dwells there still, within those once luxurious halls. Unable to move due to his enormous bulk he sends his minions out into the streets to bring him back victims to feast upon. Some say that in the dead of night the musicians can still be heard, violins and horns sounding warped and twisted versions of the compositions they once played so elegantly. The West gatehouse remains guarded by the dark treebeast, and to enter the city from this direction, adventurers must first brave passing by this monstrosity. Skeletons hang from its branches and who knows how many skulls are entwined within its blackened roots. Only the most foolhardy dare enter the old Memorial Gardens in search of wyrdstone and few ever return. Those who do, tell of huge piles of wyrdstone shards watched over by ravenous plants touched by Chaos. Remarkably though, the statue of Count Gottard still looks over the remains of the once splendid city that he founded, now an ugly scar upon the landscape. Some say that tears of blood flow down the cheeks of the statue as if the long dead Count weeps for his proud city, now known as the City of the Damned. Your warband has heard the fantastic stories about the old Memorial Gardens in the north-west corner of the city. However, even if your warriors believed the tales about enormous carnivorous plants, the other stories spread about the Gardens — the stories about piles of wyrdstone lying unguarded on the ground, and secret basement vaults filled with treasures

beyond measure were enough to draw your band to this place, heedless of the risk. So you find yourselves here, walking slowly through the gate, peering into the tangled depths and wondering just which stories are true. Then you notice that you are not the only figures brave enough to ignore the warnings...

Terrain: Each player takes it in turn to place a piece of terrain, either a small building, set of hedges or walls, set of trees, small clump of bushes, or similar item or terrain appropriate to Mordheim. At least half of the pieces of terrain should be some form of plant life. The end result should be an overgrown area broken by small paths, walls, and buildings.

Set-up: All players roll a D6 to see who deploys first, with the player rolling highest choosing a table edge and setting up first. If there are two players, then the next player sets up on the opposite board edge. If there are more than two players, the remaining players choose sides and set up their warbands based on the order of their dice rolls, highest to lowest. A player must set up his warband within 8" of his table edge, but not within 4" of a side edge, and not within 10" of another player's warband. Keep in mind that more than four players should be accommodated with a larger battlefield than normal (see the 'Chaos in the Streets' article on multi-player games in the Best of Town Cryer, page 30).

Starting the Game: Players each roll a D6 to determine who goes first. Play proceeds clockwise around the table (based on where players placed their warbands) from there.

Special Rules: It turns out that all the stories told about the Memorial Gardens are true! This is represented in the scenario by the following special rules:

1. The plants in the Garden will attack any warriors who come within range. At the end of each player's Movement phase, check to see if any of his warriors are attacked. Each warrior of that player's warband who ended his move within 2" of a tree receives D3-1 automatic hits at Strength 3; each warrior of that player's warband who ended his move within 2" of a smaller plant (hedge, bush, etc) receives D6-2 automatic hits at Strength 1. A warrior who does not end his move within 2" of a plant has moved too quickly for the hate-filled creatures to reach him. However, note that the attacks will occur even if the warrior is in close combat or didn't move at all that Movement phase (if he's stupid enough to stay near that tree, well...).
2. At the end of the game, each player receives one additional dice for Exploration. In addition, after he rolls, each player has the option of re-rolling all of his Exploration dice. If this option is taken, the player must re-roll ALL the dice rolled for Exploration... he may not choose to keep some dice and re-roll others!

Ending the Game

The game ends when all warbands but one have failed their Rout test. Warbands which rout automatically lose. If two or more warbands have allied when the other warbands have all routed, they may choose to share the victory and end the game, or they may continue the game until one warband is victorious (ie, break the alliance and fight it out!).

Experience

- +1 Survives. If a Hero or Henchman group survives the battle they gain +1 Experience.
- +1 Winning Leader. The leader of the winning warband(s) gains +1 Experience.
- +1 Per Enemy Out of Action. Any Hero earns +1 Experience for each enemy he puts Out of Action.
- +1 Attacked by Plants. Any Hero who gets hit at least once by an attack from a plant gains +1 Experience.