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# FANTASY ROLEPLAY™



## BLACK FIRE PASS™

A GUIDE TO ADVENTURES ON THE FRINGE OF THE EMPIRE



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## CHAPTER ONE

# A HISTORY OF BLOODSHED



*Black Fire Pass has seen the best of us and it has seen the worst as well. Its history is written in the blood of our people, and though it makes us rich I still hold that we have paid a heavy price for our proximity to that bleak and terrible place.*

*Ludwig von Hoss, A History of the Province of Averland, Volume XIX.*



The Empire has often been likened to a castle. Surrounded on three sides by vast mountain ranges, its formidable natural defences make a direct assault almost impossible. An invading army is funnelled into one of two passes that cut through the mountains: Peak Pass, which runs past Karak Kadrin into Ostermark, and Black Fire Pass, which bisects the Black Mountains along the old Dwarf Road. Of the two, Black Fire Pass has the more storied history, for its narrow confines offer an invading army the quickest route into the Empire.

However, simply making it through the Pass is no small task, for its glassy black walls form a perfect choke point. Narrow enough that the weight of numbers counts for nothing, a well trained force can hold the Pass against superior numbers. Mindful of the ever present threat, Averland maintains a permanent detachment of soldiers, charged with watching and guarding Black Fire Pass. Many times have they driven off small skirmishing parties attempting to harry the southeastern Provinces of the Empire or held the Pass against a larger force until reinforcements could arrive. Among their ranks are hunters and trappers raised in the mountains, lightly armoured skirmishing troops who form the eyes and ears of the mountain guard.







From Sigmar's decisive battle against the greenskins to Karl Franz's great victory against the Orcs in 2520, the story of Black Fire Pass is, in many ways, a history of bloodshed and of the Empire itself.

**The following is taken from 'A Primer in Military Tactics Simple Lessons on the Path to Strategic Mastery', by Rikkart Fell.**

Let us conclude our tactical examination of the significance of Black Fire Pass with an analysis of three battles that the reader will doubtless find educational. Each aptly demonstrates the application of a specific tactic discussed in the previous chapter, and each should be mastered comprehensively before the student seeks to progress.

The crushing defeat of Waaagh! Red Klaw some three thousand years ago at the hands of a significantly smaller force of dwarf warriors highlights two important aspects that frequently limit greenskin military efforts even to this day. Firstly, the battle demonstrates their reliance upon frontal infantry assault even against a defended position. Secondly, we will note the unruly nature of their troops who are plagued by a latent animosity toward their fellows. Engaging the army of Thane Stonebeard deep in the Pass at almost its widest point, the orcs quickly closed the lines, eager to avoid bombardment from the dwarf war machines. The orcs hurled themselves at the dwarfs who stood behind rows of sharpened stakes driven into the ground. Seemingly heedless of their casualties, the orcs pressed the attack despite the advantages conferred by the heavy armour of their opponents and the cover afforded them by the palisades. The greenskins had begun to make progress through sheer weight of numbers when a fight broke out between rival clans, stalling the orc advance. Thane Stonebeard wasted no time in exploiting the opening with a counter charge lead by a small unit of Longbeards, and his decisiveness won the day.

Remember, in battle one should never underestimate the orc's desire to fight his neighbour, for it is a powerful weapon and one we must be ever ready to exploit.

Tarlen da Foeburna's goblin invasion follows a similar, though crucially different, structure to that of the previous example. Unlike their orc brethren, goblins tend towards a certain low cunning, bringing both war machines and foul creatures to fight at their side. Giants, trolls, spiders, and deranged lunatics we call fanatics wielding man sized ball and chains fill out the ranks of their armies. Despite the parade of horrors assailing them on this day, the men of the Empire stood firm, using the narrow confines of the Pass to channel the goblins closer together. It was ill discipline that proved to be the greenskins undoing. Suffering catastrophic losses at the hands of the Empire's mortars, all of whom were trained on a single area for maximum psychological effect, the greenskin left flank broke and ran, and panic spread throughout their lines until the vile creatures fled back to their mountain strongholds. Always bear in mind the timid nature of the goblin who becomes convinced a fight is not going his way. It is a weakness that should be exploited at every opportunity.

For our final example, we examine the undead. The word can sow dread in the heart of any general, but this fear must be conquered lest victory be lost. Lord Sossentheim provided an excellent example of the necessary tactics in defeating a small contingent of Khemri that had made its way north from the Land of the Dead. Discipline was key, as Sossentheim knew, for the dead do not tire, nor flee, and the fallen often rise to join their cause. Is there anything more unsettling to a soldier than seeing his friend, newly lost to him, rise up to join the enemy in death? Unlike the previous example, where ill discipline was exploited, here high discipline was demanded. Sossentheim's warrior priests walked the lines, giving rousing speeches, singing hymns to Sigmar, and purifying the dead. Large pike formations blunted the effectiveness of the Khemri chariots, and Sossentheim was able to meet the opposing commander in single combat. As the Liche fell, so did the undead, and the army crumbled into dust. Against the undead discipline must be maintained at all costs. Their weak spot is their leader; should he be defeated, the force will fall. Master the examples I have outlined in this chapter and you are well on the way to mastering basic tactics.

## SIGMAR'S STORY

**Every citizen of the Empire knows the story of Sigmar's climactic battle against the orcs in Black Fire Pass by heart and yet still we turn to the poets for their grace in the telling. It is hard to improve upon the elegance of Kleisserman's celebrated account. Despite his dated style and his notorious preference for drama over fact, the rendition has yet to be bettered.**

The setting sun sprawled across the horizon like a bruise, bright and livid against a slate grey sky, and peace was all across the land. But there was no rest for Mighty Sigmar, no rest for the King. Tomorrow he would lead the armies of men into Black Fire Pass. With him marched the dwarfs and the hopes of their two peoples rested upon his broad shoulders. What doubt was there in this man who would become a God? How could he doubt, how could he not believe? Yet Brave Sigmar was human then and doubt ever gnawed at his heart. Did he have the strength, the courage, the lives, to win? Or had he sacrificed all on the altar of ambition?



The morning came with rosy fingers and an ashen sky stitched through with a steady driving rain. Forward the armies of men marched, forward into history, and the steady thump of a hundred thousand pairs of feet shook the earth beneath them. Proud Sigmar looked back across his battle lines and saw the strength of men and dwarfs laid out before him. All about him the Pass rose like great city walls in unbroken spires of glossy black. Here he would find their victory, or death for all mankind.

War drums greeted them, drew them in, a rolling wave of primitive fury forming a savage counterpoint to the howling chorus of the greenskins. Heroic Sigmar deployed his men and moved among his commanders, whispering words of comfort and of love, knowing their hearts. Friends they were all, and he would have gladly given his life that any of them might live safely through this day. They did not have long to wait.

A mighty battle it was, brutal and bloody. Never has the Empire seen its like again. The crush of bodies within the narrow confines of that rocky corridor pressed man against man so tightly that when one died his body had no room to fall but stood, lifeless, held in place by those on either side of him. It was like the crushing grip of two enormous hands, each one squeezing with all its strength, trying to break the other. Thousands of the greenskins fell but ever were there more to take their place. They came howling forward, heedless of risk or fear, gripped with bloodlust and rage, bellowing their savage war cries under the watchful eye of their terrible leader.

Back and forth momentum swung. Back and forth went Anxious Sigmar's hopes as morning became afternoon and afternoon slipped into evening. The orcs were greater in number and Worried Sigmar watched as his lines began to falter. This was not the time for personal safety, for thoughts of life or love. This was the time for wrath, for ruin, for a man to become a God. Bold Sigmar charged them then, into the thick of them, alone. An example to all, the shout went up across the lines: "Sigmar! Our King! Look, our King!" Men watched in astonishment as he carved through the orc lines, their blows seeming to touch him not.

All about him was ruin and was blood, his mighty hammer blasting through those orcs who dared to face him. On and on he went, relentless, Furious Sigmar with the wrath of a race driving him forward. The best they had, the bravest, the most deadly, he killed them all. Behind him his men took up the cry: "For Sigmar! For Sigmar!" Quickly they crossed the open ground, pressing home the advantage their leader had won.

The orcs felt fear for the first time, and it chilled them. Who was this man, this force of nature? Who was this man that would not die? But there was no answer from Implacable Sigmar. On and on he came. One man against an army, he came. Through blood and fire he came until before him stood death itself, the mighty orc warboss. There, atop a pile of bodies a hundred orcs deep, Invincible Sigmar and the terrible orc warboss duelled.. Sparks flew and blow followed blow faster than the eye could see as the two titans of the World clashed. But Sigmar would not be denied, not now. He swung his hammer and with a mighty blow smote the ruin of the warlord upon the ground. Terrible was his countenance and he turned upon the Orcs in fury, eyes blazing with the fire of victory. None are there alive who would have faced him then. Victorious Sigmar had broken them, and the orcs did flee for their very lives. Thus was Sigmar triumphant. Thus a man became a God. Thus an Empire was forged in the crucible of battle.

## EACH MOMENT, ONLY ONCE

For Commander Klessburg of Averland.

Commander. What follows is my report of an engagement in the Pass, dated 2520 by the Imperial Calendar. Recommendations for commendations, both posthumous and current, are attached separately.

I had positioned my men in a small rocky escarpment some four hundred feet above the floor of the Pass. Jagged shards of volcanic glass gave excellent cover, but we were hard pushed to prevent the greenskins from using the path to flank our artillery deployed below us. We had little prospect of reinforcement and only a hundred men. Despite heavy cover, higher ground, and a superior knowledge of the terrain, we had taken heavy losses. The greenskins came in endless waves and there was no stopping them; the beasts simply do not feel pain. One brute, skewered with six arrows and a spear still came on. He sent six men off the edge of the precipice before we could bring him down. Enraged, we set his severed head on a stake beside the path as a warning to the rest, but still they came. I think the more we killed the more they came to see us as a challenge, worthy of their best effort.

We saw Deathclaw, his flight slow and majestic, making for Widow's crag and it lifted our spirits. The Emperor himself was with us. Below us our artillery opened up once more. We could hear the throaty roar of our cannons and the deep percussive thump of the mortars. Nothing but screams came from the path and I took advantage of the reprieve to fortify our position with sharpened stakes cut from nearby trees.







That was when the black orcs came. Clad from head to toe in thick armour daubed with white war paint and carrying great two handed axes the size of a man, they were the warrior elite of the green skins. In other circumstances I would have fallen back. I dearly wished to fall back. This was not a fight we could win, however brave. The Averlanders were skirmishers, not front line infantry, but retreat was not an option. If they overran our position, the black orcs would be free to flank our artillery and the battle would likely have been lost. I gathered my men. From over a hundred, some thirty remained. I whispered a prayer. All knew the hopelessness of our cause, as I did, but not one man spoke up, not one man wavered in his duty. I have never been more proud. "For Sigmar!" I cried. "For Averland! For the honour of the Bergjaegar!"

I do not know how we survived, only that four of us, bloodied and broken but still standing, did. As the last of them fell, we observed the Reiksguard's glorious charge and the Emperor's desperate duel with the orc warboss. Our hopes and prayers went with him for all seemed lost to my eyes. Our battle lines were crumbling, our positions overrun. Matthias, the best pair of eyes on any Trapper I have ever know, swears that at his lowest, when defeat loomed the Emperor became Sigmar himself, and rose again clad in furs bellowing 'Unberogen!' as his war cry. I saw it not, heard it not, but I saw our victory and heard the cheer go up. The price was high, but we paid it gladly.

On my honour.

Sergeant Wilhelm von Luck, commanding.

## DA GHOSTZ

It has been well over two thousand years since Sigmar threw back the greenskins and united the human tribes. In that time we have built an Empire, the fervent product of our ceaseless industry. We

have changed, adapted, and hauled ourselves forward through the centuries with progress and imagination. We assumed that the orcs had not, that they were wild and savage, a symbol of everything we had left behind. We believed that they were content simply to bicker, squabble, and hurl themselves against our gates, learning nothing from their defeats. What I saw today convinced me that we were wrong. My name is Ulbrecht Sturm, and this is the story of how I died.

I was travelling to Nuln, attached to the 33rd Averland Foot as official Regimental Historian. What a storied Regiment, and I had been employed to write a book that would celebrate their exploits. It was my first commission. I was so proud, so full of joy and expectation my feet scarcely seemed to touch the ground. With them at my back I dared to dream of all that I might one day become. But that man is gone now, and I am all that remains.

The 33rd were re entering the Empire by way of Black Fire Pass. I had never seen the Pass so still. It was night, and we moved through a limited world, a heavy, driving snow obscuring everything but a small circle of visibility. A long line of shapes ghosted through the landscape, the small fires of their torches sputtering and flaring in the night as the snow tumbled onto the flames, sending small seething tendrils of steam writhing up into the air. Occasionally progress would halt as a torch winked off, blown out by the howling wind or smothered by the thick blanket of snow that rained down from the heavens, and, after a muttered curse, it would be relit and the column would move forwards once again.

We were late, else we would have been safe in our beds waiting for the dawn, for better weather. We were late, but the 33rd does not miss an opportunity to parade, to show the people their quality. How could they refuse, when the Emperor himself would be watching? Perhaps if they had, things might have been different.

The attack came without warning. Not even the scouts saw them. A score of boar riders came at us from out the darkness like ghosts behind an orc of prodigious size. The gritty wind sent small waves of fur rippling through the snowy white wolf hide he wore across his broad shoulders, howling almost beyond the range of hearing as it whipped through the jagged, shapeless hunks of metal bolted to his muscular frame. He sat atop a shaggy black boar, the slab of an animal all muscle and sinew as it stamped and snorted in the rising cold. A shock of spiky black hair jutted up from the creature's head like spines but the rest of its patchy, mangled fur was covered in rough rusting metal plates, crudely daubed with red paint and primitive white war glyphs. The sight chilled me to the bone.

The Commander wasted no time. He ordered the charge. There were no more than twenty of them, against fully three hundred foot, and he thought to massacre them. It was a mistake. The orcs broke off, their leader howling some guttural curse, and they vanished into the night. We had never seen the like before and the men froze, unsure of themselves. Had they fled? Was it to be that easy? Was it over? It was then that scores of goblins emerged from tunnels gouged into the rock. The entrances had been covered in piles of dead undergrowth dusted with snow. Suddenly there was confusion and panic on the men's faces. The goblins were everywhere and there was no time to set our ranks. Our rifles and our halberds counted for nothing. The goblins unleashed their cave beasts, great bouncing orange sacks of gas, fungus, and teeth. If you have never seen what a squig can do to a man, you are fortunate indeed. They bounce around like a child's toy, leaving only bodies and blood to stain the snow behind them.



We could hear the whimpering of the dead and the dying some where in the darkness along with the throaty chuckles of the waiting orcs. Then, from the crags above us, archers rained their arrows down upon us. The twisted black shafts hissed out of the gloom like serpents. All around me, soldiers fell limply to the ground, black shafted arrows protruding at all angles from their broken bodies. The sickening crunch of arrows biting into skin was quickly drowned out by the titanic roar of lurid green firebolts exploding in the darkness as their shamans worked their unpredictable magiks. Huge funnel shaped explosions lit up the gloom as plumes of men and horses were tossed into the air like leaves on the wind to tumble, broken, to the ground.

We staggered back, trying to reform as Officers battled to set the lines. That was when the orcs charged us from the rear. They had rubbed coal dust onto their faces, their bodies, and into the fur of their mounts to mask their approach and we did not see them. They attacked as one, moving with singular purpose. They did not charge at us in a disorganized mob, screaming the names of their primitive Gods to test themselves against us directly in the field of battle, as is their custom. They waited for the perfect moment and then destroyed us: quietly, surgically, and without mercy. They chose victory over strength; tactics over savagery.

I do not know what troubles me more: The loss of such a storied regiment or what the manner of our defeat might mean for the future? It was hardly the work of military genius, and yet if these creatures possess the capacity to learn, to develop advanced strategy, to overcome their animosity and their rage as we have done, then Sigmar preserve us all.

I watched my friends die, one by one, helpless, waiting for the blow that would finish me. It never came. The greenskin leader hauled me to my feet, pressed a quill into my hand and bellowed, 'Da Ghostz. Victoree. Youze Write!' They have not told me his name. The others refer to him as Draig, though whether this be a title or a name, I cannot say. I have little choice but to comply. He wants the Empire to know what happened here, but I doubt I will survive the telling. I can only hope that these words fall under the eyes of some one empowered to act. Someone who is able to put an end to this Warboss Draig and Da Ghostz at his back, before it is too late.

## THE BATTLE OF FOUR ARMIES

**Most engagements in Black Fire Pass involve a foreign army battling to get into the Empire. Most, that is, but not all. The Battle of Four Armies saw four separate races fighting within the Pass and, most unusually, involved a dwarf army attacked from the Averland side. The only existing record is by one Dieter Kaumphgraut, a minor scholar of military history, and it begins with the account of Snorri Hammerhand one of the few dwarf survivors.**

Aye, youngling, I still remember that day like it was only three hundred years ago. Young I was, nothing more than a fresh faced warrior, unblooded and eager to prove myself in battle. There were two hundred of us, as I recall. An honour guard for our Thane travelling the overground from Karak Norn to Karaz a Karak through Haz Drazh Kadrin, Black Fire Pass, I believe you humans call it, to bring a runic artefact to the Everpeak. No, no, youngling, Drazh with a zed. Yes, zed. Ahhh, never mind.

Like I said, we were moving overground. There was no rush and the artifact was mighty cumbersome, so progress was slow. We sang marching songs to pass the time, sagas of the ancestors that roused our spirits. We loved to sing. I can still hear their voices sometimes when I close my eyes. We thought nothing would dare to challenge such mighty warriors. We were wrong.

They came out of tunnels we had not even seen. Skaven. Skaven, youngling! What do you mean you have not heard of them? Ances tors! How have you lived this long? Harumph. Where was I? Oh, yes. One moment there was nothing and the next, the cowardly creatures unleashed slaves upon us. Waves of them, driven forward with lash and prod. Hunched, chittering things, their pitiful mewling setting your teeth on edge as they surged forward, they were dressed in filthy rags and clutched nothing but gnarled sticks in their claws. They died in droves, but for every dwarf that fell, pulled down by sheer weight of numbers beneath the verminous horde, our job grew harder and victory seemed farther away. But we did what any would have done in our place: we closed the line, took up a song in memory of our ancestors, and readied ourselves.

When their slaves were vanquished, the filth blasted us with lightning called from clear skies. Don't look at me like that, youngling! I saw it with my own eyes. The air begins to crackle; you feel it in your gut and on the back of your neck like a presence standing behind you, just out of reach. Your beard bristles right before the strike, writhing of its own free will. Then it hits. Vivid green bolts arcing through the air so slow you can almost see them move. It's loud, too. A creaking, cracking noise like the bones of the world breaking that seems to tear the air apart before it strikes and a deep percussive thump as it hits the ground. Plumes of livid green light erupt upward like mortar shells and bodies charred and broken beyond recognition crash, bonelessly, to the ground. They brought





fire too; lurid, sickly stuff gouted forth in hot, rolling waves that danced and sped across the ground. The machine did not last long before detonating in a great green fireball, but it was a terrible thing to watch friends melt inside their armour. To see a face that you loved run like water and slide, gurgling, to the ground. Not a one of them screamed. I remember that, aye, I remember it well, for it gave me courage.

That was when they unleashed their infernal contraptions: giant wheels that roll forward like chariots and huge, seething, roiling, abominable sacks of rat flesh tall as a house. Cowardly tools of a fearful race that knew they had not the skill to best us with honour. We rallied round the artefact, barely a third of our number left standing but all determined to give their lives bravely in service to their Thane. That was when we heard the horn. Low and deep like the turning of the earth it shook us to the bones. Ancestors, I cannot tell you what a welcome sound that was, youngling. So very welcome.

**At this point, Dieter interviews one Geraff Grimm, former drummer boy of a company from Averland, who was found begging on the streets of Nuln.**

Oh, yes, sir, I remember it. Day I lost me leg it was. You don't forget a day like that. We'd seen crows circling low over the pass, great billowing waves of them like a black sea. The Captain took us in to investigate. Five hundred men as I recall, all foot with the woods men scouting the way. We found them a few hours before nightfall, I can't remember exactly when. A circle of dwarfs in glittering armour surrounded by creatures the like of which I had never seen. It fair turned my stomach, I don't mind admitting. Beastmen, the Captain said, but they looked more like rats to me. No horns to be seen and teeth like you wouldn't believe.

We fell on them from behind. The Captain ordered the rifles front and centre and we laid into them with a fury before they could regroup. They weren't expecting us, I can tell you that. We carved through them, cutting our way right to the dwarfs and, together, saw the twisted things back into their tunnels. Never have I seen dwarfs so glad to make the acquaintance of humans. They cheered and praised us and passed round a dark beer that weakened the legs and set a fire in the belly.

That was when we heard the drums. Slow and steady, echoing off the walls of the Pass like the beating of an enormous heart. What's that? Why did they come? That I can't say, who knows why the greenskins do anything? Maybe they saw the crows too, like us, and were spoiling for a fight. Maybe it was coincidence. All I know is that they came, roaring and screaming like animals. The Captain set us to face them, and the dwarfs stood at our side. The thing I remember most is the singing. Every one of the dwarfs, singing. Fighting, dying, struggling for their lives, they sang. Who to or why I can't say, but it was mournful and deep, almost unbearably sad, and it gave me strength.

I woke in camp three days later, without my leg. I was told we saw off the orcs at heavy cost and that the dwarfs had gone back to their mountain home. There were maybe fifty of us still alive, but I could find no one willing to talk of what we had seen. Perhaps some things are best left unsaid.

*It is worth stating that Dieter notes, several times, that the accuracy of his source may well be called into question due to the apparent absurdity of his claims, but that despite the seeming madness of his testimony, three separate survivors claimed to have fought gigantic rat men in the Pass and provided corroborating stories in support of their claims. He observes with some dismay and suspicion that there are no official military records of the encounter at all. Nor was he able to obtain a statement in support of his interviews from any ranking officer. Enquiries to Karaz a Karak were met only with silence.*







## CHAPTER TWO

# GEOGRAPHY OF THE PASS

### GEOGRAPHY OF THE PASS

Black Fire Pass, or Haz Drazh Kadrin as it is known in Khazalid, lies in the southeast of the Empire in the Province of Averland. Formed long ago when violent eruptions tore the Black Mountains in two, the Pass is a gaping chasm of contorted lava flanked by steep black cliffs of polished volcanic glass. Eerie wisps of black vapour gush from vents at the base of the crags to form surging shapes against the darkened rock. Through Black Fire Pass, one can trace the path of the Old Dwarf Road out into the forests of the Border Princes and past the gates of the great dwarf fortress of Karaz a Karak. There the Old Dwarf Road becomes the Silver Road and cuts through the World's Edge Mountains, emerging from Dead rock Gap at the foot of Mt. Silverspear in the Dark Lands.

The geographical importance of the Pass cannot be overstated; it is one of only two ways through the imposing ring of Mountains that protects the Empire's eastern borders. The other route, the Peak Pass to the North, which emerges in Ostermark above Karak Kadrin, or Slayer Keep, is both lengthy and remote. Black Fire Pass has ever been a double edged sword because of this scarcity of accessible routes through the Mountains. It is at once a chink in the

armour of the Empire, a favoured path for invading armies, and also a vital lifeline, an essential trade route connecting the Empire with the remaining dwarf karaks, Tilea, and the wild Border Princes.

Black Fire Pass stands at the centre of a triangle, its points roughly signified by three great Dwarf Karaks. To the North, hewn out of the cliffs that overlook Black Water, lies Karak Varn, the Crag Mere. The mountains around the karak are rich with gromril, a meteoric iron highly prized by the dwarfs, and Karak Varn grew wealthy as a result. The prosperity of the Crag Mere did not endure, however. Some fifteen hundred years before the crowing of Sigmar, savage earthquakes shook the Worlds Edge Mountains and the Black Water burst, flooding the lower levels of the Karak. Like wild dogs sensing weakness, a mighty host of skaven invaded the city from their underground tunnels while a vast horde of greenskins attacked from above, each determined to take advantage of the tragedy to claim the karak as their own. The depleted dwarfs did not have the numbers to resist and the city was lost, never to be reclaimed.

To the Southeast lies Karaz a Karak, the Everpeak, ancient capital of the once mighty Dwarf Empire. The Lord of the Everpeak is High King of all the Dwarfs, and the noble clans of the fortress city trace their ancestry back to the dwarf ancestor gods themselves.



The Great Book of Grudges and the Book of Remembering, mighty heirlooms of the dwarf people, rest within the fortress. It is said that Karaz a Karak has never fallen, and when one lays eyes on its formidable defences it is easy to believe the stories, for dwarfs do not often make empty boasts.

Finally, to the Southwest lies Karak Hirn, the Horn Hold. Named for the terrifying blast of sound caused by winds blowing through a huge cavern at the heart of the karak, the dwarfs use this peculiar natural phenomenon to summon warriors and warn other settlements of incoming danger. Over the years, the occupiers of the Horn Hold have constructed sounding chambers and massive doors to change the pitch and duration of the sound and have even learned to light fires in the depths of the city to start the note at will.

In the wake of Sigmar's final victory over the greenskin tribes, the Empire of men established itself as a great power and the Pass acquired increasing economic, as well as military, significance. Black Fire Pass became a link between the Empire and her neighbours, especially with Tilea to the southwest, and over time men and goods began to flow freely between the two nations. The Pass is also the Empire's only connection to the sparsely populated Border Princes, wild and savage lands heavily disputed and under constant attack from marauding orc and goblin tribes. Trade there depends greatly upon the rise and fall of numerous miniature kingdoms and city states, but it is in the Empire's best interests that the Border Princes stand strong, for should they fall the Empire may find itself under siege. Averland has prospered as a result of its proximity to the Pass, growing rich off the back of trade that flows through the mountains. Goods are taken to Averheim and then by river to Nuln. Yet this prosperity is ever tainted by the knowledge that Averland, and the Empire itself, will always be vulnerable to attack because of Black Fire Pass.

## GAZETTEER

*Kristoff Haamar was born in 2478, the illegitimate son of Dieter Ebersbacher, head of one of Averland's least wealthy noble families. Dieter relocated Kristoff to Altdorf at an early age, doubtless to avoid accusations of impropriety regarding the succession of his inheritance. A clever boy, Kristoff hoped to make his fortune as a historian and poet. Sometime in early 2521 he was engaged by an unknown patron to write the definitive history of Black Fire Pass. The receipt shows that the text was to include descriptions of prominent features both geographical and sociological, along with a series of twenty five wood cut illustrations. Kristoff set out in the company of a band of Mercenary Soldiers under the command of one Captain Gerhard Olenbay of Wissenland. On the fifth day of Kaldezeit, a merchant named Ubrecht Fell discovered Kristoff's body in Black Fire Pass and brought the poet historian's journal to Altdorf for publication.*

*Some scholars have accused Fell of fabricating Haamar and his death both for publicity and to hide his own controversial views behind the facade of a dead man. But despite these accusations (or perhaps because of them), the book has proved remarkably popular in Altdorf's noble circles of late. Perhaps the truth will never be known, but what follows are extracts from The Journal of Kristoff Haamar. The reader can make up his own mind regarding its authenticity from the evidence presented.*

*Black Fire. The very name describes the impossible, the magical. How appropriate, given all that happened there, that impossible words should stand as a symbol of our Empire and its impossible dream. My name is Kristoff Haamar, and this is the story of Black Fire Pass. It is an old story and a familiar one, for we all first hear the legend at an early age. There, in the crucible of battle, an Empire was forged. There, few stood against many, and triumphed. There, we rose out of the darkness, together, as a man became a God. How do you tell a story that everyone knows? What grace I have, with pen, and brush, and the tongue of men, let it be heard. Oh, let it be heard. Sigmar, give me the words to tell this story, and I will craft something that the ages will not willingly forget.*

*Kristoff Haamar. Historian.  
Cartographer. Poet.  
Gentleman of the Empire.*

## BATTLEGROUND

Today we reached the site of Karl Franz's victory against the greenskins, only one short year ago. The field is narrower than you would expect, no more than four hundred paces at times. The black cliffs tower overhead, rising in almost unnaturally straight lines. The smooth, glassy rock of the Pass is everywhere pocked and scarred by rents and tears caused by the detonation of cannon and mortar rounds. Shards of volcanic glass as long as a man's arm, torn loose by explosions and hurled across the field, stand like javelins in the earth. The soil here is thin and black, and often I saw broken and discarded arms or armour half covered by sparse vegetation, or simply left to rust.

Rude graves formed of the black stone of the Pass are piled in simple cairns off to the sides of the battlefield, most unmarked and undecorated. Likely they contain the remains of those too poor to be transported home, or simply too disfigured to be identified. No one knows what these men did in life, but in death they are magnificent. They give me hope. They are a link to our shared past, to the founding dream of Sigmar, and they show that we have not grown weak, that we are stronger together than apart. I think, perhaps, I know them at their best.

In the southern corner, under a weeping willow that sags low to the ground as though it bears the weight of the Empire itself, is a less simple memorial. A replica sword carved from finely grained beech wood is affixed to the trunk of the tree, unmistakably a Runefang.



# Haz-Drazh-Kadrin



To the  
Empire

watch  
tower

Booming  
Peak

Grenzstadt

Shrine to  
Sigmar

merchant  
camp

Ruins

Mine

Cave

Kristoff  
Haamar





Here, Marius Leitdorf, Elector Count of Averland, fell in single combat against the orc warlord. Someone has scattered wild flowers around the base of the tree and they have taken root with wild abandon, bursting forth in a riot of shape and colour. It is a fitting tribute to the Count's memory.

## SHRINE TO SIGMAR

The Pass narrows to a jagged corridor of twisted rock. All is gloomy and dark. The sunlight barely penetrates and tendrils of black vapour slither from vents in the rock to writhe and dance at our feet. Dead greenskins hang rotting from the stunted trees that line our path, serving as a warning to their kind. Yet most unnerving of all was the body of an old man strung up by fraying ropes lashed to a wasted tree. His tongue was unnaturally long; the sickly organ sagged from his open mouth, bloated and distended, covered with weeping sores and pustules. His chest was branded with a single word, carved roughly into his flesh with a jagged blade: Chaos.

I was not long troubled by the sight, for we rounded a bend in the path and came upon a Shrine to Sigmar. It was a simple thing, but no less inspiring for the lack of ostentation. A frame of weathered oak had been fitted carefully into a small cleft in the rock no more than three or four paces high. In this manner it was sheltered from the worst of the elements. The dark wood had been intricately tooled with scenes from the first great battle of the Pass, and though most of the detail had been worn smooth by the ministration of time, I could clearly identify Sigmar's furious final charge. Perhaps it is right that scene, above all others, should endure. The frame had been further decorated with scores of ruby red seals bearing parchment prayers that fluttered joyously in the breeze, whispering their paeon to the sky. In the centre of the Shrine was a carving of Ghal Maraz, the mighty Warhammer coated in flaking gold leaf

that had clearly seen better days. Beside it stood a collection tin, stamped with Sigmar's cross and roughly cut from a single piece of tin. Rows of candles fronted the Shrine, standing on simple iron racks that dropped down to the ground in small steps of flickering golden light. I found myself moved to tears as I lit a candle and whispered my prayer to the sky. We had passed countless Shrines on our journey, but none seemed to me to encapsulate with such simple dignity, all that this place, and with it the man who gave us an Empire, means to us.

## GREENSKIN IDOL

As night fell we came across a group of goblin outriders picking over the remains of a merchant's caravan. The creatures were smaller than I expected. Wiry and angular, they had great aquiline noses jutting out beneath a pair of beady red eyes and rode giant wolves the size of small ponies. I am not ashamed to say I lost myself to fear, for all around them was devastation. The merchant and his guards were long dead, and the vile greenskins eagerly defaced anything that could not be carried off or torn apart for scrap.

Captain Olenbay and his men saw them off, yet despite my brush with death I find that neither the flotsam of the attack nor my freshly enforced mortality is nearly so disturbing to me as that which was left behind. It is an idol, of sorts. I have never seen anything quite like it. It is of prodigious size and would tower over a small outhouse. Built around a rocky outcrop, it resembles nothing so much as a crude orc head, though its features are wildly exaggerated. The brow is small and sharp and the jaw massive, filled with sticks and jagged hunks of rock. Whether these objects are meant to crudely represent teeth or are designed to simply anchor the whole sodden mass together, I cannot say. Embedded in the depths of its mouth, burning torches flicker eerily in the night air, casting surging molten shadows across the structure. Judging by the prodigious smell it was carved from dung, and the substance had begun to crack and separate in the heat. It is festooned with graffiti; the misspelled words a vile mockery of our noble tongue. Broken weapons, bodies, and offerings to the savage Greenskin gods are heaped all around the base. I saw feathers, trinkets, an Averland trooper uniform, even a child's doll gazing vacantly into the sky.

We wasted little time before destroying the foul thing but I cannot drive the image from my mind. There was something unsettling about it, something deeply primitive. It was all that we are not, and yet perhaps all that we once were: wild, and simple, and full of rage. It spans the history enshrined in this Pass, reminding us of a time when we were not so different from the savage greenskin as we are today. It reminds me of all that Sigmar has given us. Culture. Empire. Future. I wonder what its makers would think of that?

## THE KING'S ROCK

A driving rain has dogged our steps for two days now, but even the rain could not dampen my enthusiasm as we passed the Black Rock. I have read about this titanic hunk of volcanic basalt many times, but nothing prepared me for the reality. It is enormous. Fully three hundred feet high it looms out of the side of the Pass like a colossus glistening glossy black in the rain. It is striated, shot through with spidery veins of silver mica that twinkle in the sparse and heavy light.

Strictly speaking it is a natural formation, eroded over the centuries by wind and by rain, twisted and shaped by the unfathomable force of the mountains themselves, yet as many have noted it quite clearly resembles a Dwarf warrior. Ice running down from the high



peaks has carved great furrows in the rock similar to a beard that runs in straight lines almost to the ground like a great fan of stone. It has no arms, but if you crane your neck and gaze up into the sky, the cap is not at all unlike a Dwarf's features and, perched on high, a jagged outcrop that seems for all the world to resemble a kingly crown. As I watched rain pooled in the hollows of what would be his great stone eyes, filling them up before tumbling down to patter on the ground so that the rock appears for all the world to be weeping. I do not know if I find this to be a comfort or not.

Around the base someone has carved a series of murals depicting Kurgan's part in the First Battle of the Pass. The detail is extraordinary and still sharp as they day it was carved. Somehow it seems to have resisted the erosion that has weathered the rest of Black Rock. You can clearly see Kurgan's shieldwall standing firm, the doughty Dwarf King proudly positioned in the center of his line. Beneath the images is a simple inscription in Khazalid which my Dwarf Guide was able to translate.

*Age shall not weary him, nor tales his glory diminish.  
Immortal he is, as the stone from which he is wrought.*

The Dwarfs had left tokens and offerings at the base of the rock. Stone tablets, some tankards, a keg or two of ale, and various messages in their Runic script. I do not think it is a shrine, not in the strictest sense, but perhaps their need to remember is even greater than ours, given all that they have lost.

## HOWLING CAVES

The Pass has become a place of terror. Our every step is now accompanied by a mournful, animal howling sound. The tortured, anguished litany swells and dies but never quite fades into silence. As if to accompany the dreadful wailing, strange mists drift off the mountaintops like escaping breath, writhing into fantastic shapes that dance and cavort above the dusky backs of the sleeping giants that surround us. One of my guides related to me the legend of the Howling Caves. Apparently, the dragon ogre shaggoth, a creature of the Mountain as ancient as creation itself, once made a pact with the Ruinous Powers, for his heart was black and he desired immortality above all things. The fickle and capricious Dark Gods answered his prayer and turned his body to stone to guard the high peaks until the end of time. He remains there still, watching, waiting. Trapped within the mountains, he has gone mad with time and howls his anger into the sky, waiting for a storm large enough to free him from his rocky prison.

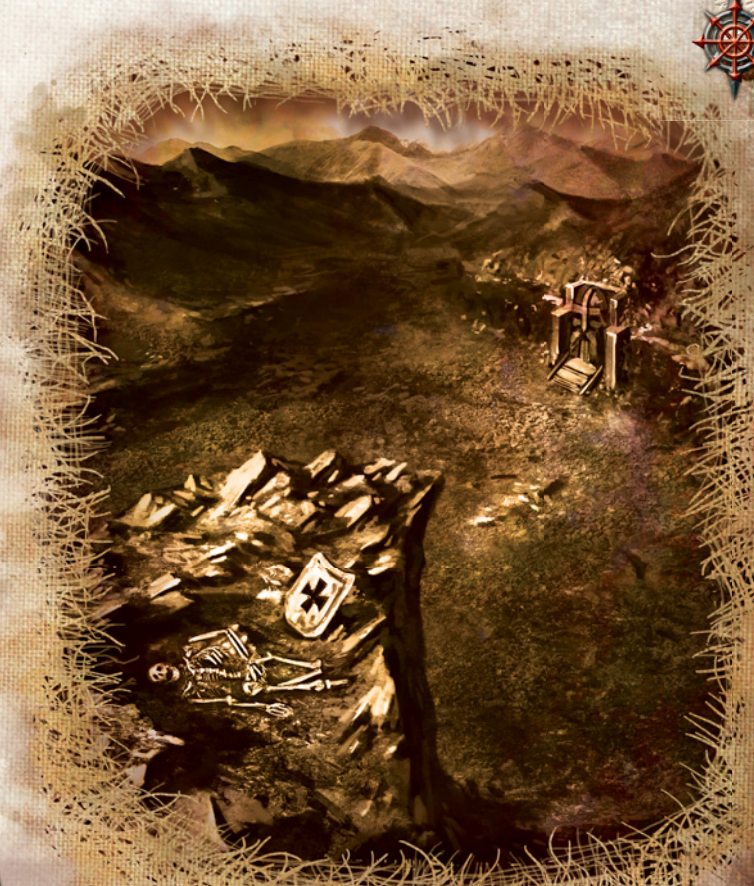
I can see the entrance to the cave, high above us like a great black eye. Rows of stalactites and stalagmites, slimy and wet with water jut out of the rock around the mouth of the cavern. It is an intensely eerie place and I feel no desire to ascend to see it clearly. For those who wish to brave the brutal climb there is a small stair cut into the cliffs, carved by the dwarfs countless centuries ago. Each step is decorated with runes and elaborate knotwork and the sheer scale of the endeavour boggles the mind. It rises almost vertically, winding around a vast basalt crag to the base of the cave. Presumably, it was filled with ore, or something of interest to the dwarfs, but I find I have not the stomach for it. Perhaps the guttural howling is nothing more than the wind moving restlessly through toothy outcrops of contorted stone, yet despite the best efforts of my rational mind I was strangely uneasy until we left the wailing far behind us. Whatever the truth of the Howling Caves, the story of the cursed dragon ogre serves as a constant reminder that it is no quiet thing, to fall to Chaos.

## DWARF TEMPLE

We have found something extraordinary! Quite by chance I stumbled upon a tunnel entrance, half concealed beneath a mound of dead foliage. Scratched into the rock at the entrance was an inverted pyramid formed from three lines. I have not seen its like before. Perhaps it was left by treasure hunters, marking areas they have combed for valuables. The air within was vile and the shadows seemed to press in upon us, but we were not to be deterred. A winding tunnel led us down into the bowls of the Pass, barely high enough to allow a man to stand. Droppings were quite prevalent. Perhaps some species of underground mammal lives down there, though I cannot think why there would be so many of them.

Before long we came into a great cavern, filled with hundreds of pillars perhaps ten paces round. Some few still stood, but most had crumbled away, and without them the roof sagged. Rubble was scattered about and the southeast corner had collapsed entirely. I could only describe it as a temple, perhaps a thousand paces long and barely a hundred wide. At one end there stood a dais or altar of some kind. Dwarf runes could be found everywhere, though they were too worn to read with any degree of accuracy. Lining the walls were statues of dwarfs, all arrayed in full battle dress. Twice as high as a man, only half remained recognizable. Most were crumbling or fallen entirely into dust. They seemed to be arranged chronologically, for the complexity of the armour and the magnificence of their weapons diminished the farther you moved from the dais. Taken one way, this sequence could represent the decline of the dwarfs, or viewed in the opposite direction, the rise.

Surrounding the dais we found thirteen piles of black soot, and a twisted lump of crudely worked iron marked with an irregular hole that I took to be a setting for a jewel or other fixture. It did not





appear to be of dwarf make. It was empty, but something as large as a man's hand had once sat within it. All around the setting were scorch marks, streaks of soot that stained the rock a lurid black green colour, and it tingled, warm to the touch. Captain Olenbay advised us to continue on lest bad weather overtook us, and I reluctantly agreed. The mystery of the ruins will have to wait.

## WATCHTOWER

The histories tell us that Black Fire Pass was once lined with a series of Watchtowers called the Sentinels. Topped with beacons and manned with a small garrison they were a first line of defence for the ancient karaks. Now but one remains, for time and war have claimed its brothers. Dok a dum they call it, the Watcher in the Dark. It is manned not by dwarfs but by soldiers of Averland.

The Watcher is carved from huge blocks of volcanic rock the size of houses joined seamlessly into a semi circle that backs onto a sheer cliff face half way up the side of the Pass. The thick stone walls, heavily scarred by wind and rain, stand almost ten feet thick at their widest and have been buttressed into the cliffs on both sides. Each buttress has been carved into the shape of a dwarf deity, his head raised aloft as if in song. The imposing outer wall is broken only by a single door the height of two men and the width of five, reinforced with great brass hinges stained by dirty green verdigris. It is accessible only by means of a path that winds through the crags to the floor of the Pass, so narrow that two men could hold it against an army.

The Tower is formed of four levels, each with five rooms, though its semi circular design makes for some curiously shaped spaces. The first two floors comprise the barracks with bunks for fifty men and five officers. The third floor houses the kitchen and several small storage rooms where supplies for the winter are laid aside. Salted meat, grain, and fruits form the bulk of it, though cattle from Averland are a welcome addition on occasion. The top floor is largely storage and recreational space. At the height of the Sentinels power, two Bolt Throwers were mounted on a rotating floor that commanded a fine firing position of the Pass through a wide, short slit window in the outer wall, but these wonders of engineering have long since been removed. Atop the tower, carved from a marvellous blue tinged stone in the shape of a horn, is the beacon. It is said that the flickering lights of the Sentinel's beacons rising above the Black Mountains gave rise to the Averland expression 'a western sun', meaning a portent of impending doom and danger.

## VOSSHEIM

It is easy to describe Vossheim, but hard to truly capture its spirit. The transient city is like a strange mountain flower. Exotic and radiant it opens in the spring, then dies away when winter snows blanket the Pass and make travel too dangerous for all but the desperate. Part gypsy encampment and part Merchant's Quarter, tents of all shapes and sizes are pitched around a small, dusty crossroads. At any one time forty or fifty merchants might be present, each identified by large banners arrayed in a riot of colour that assails the eye. The merchants compete with one another for the largest, gaudiest, and most ostentatious banner in a bid to attract customers and the city resembles nothing so much as an army, marching to war beneath its standards. Here you can buy anything your heart desires: goods, services (both legal and illegal), soldiers, weapons, songs, and relics. Hawkers cry their wares as you move between the tents, but beware, for they are ruthless scoundrels all of them, willing to sell their own mothers for a profit. Had I bought all of the

'genuine' strands of Sigmar's hair, or 'authentic' shards of Ghal Maraz, I would have barely been able to clamber atop my heap of spoils.

There are birds and beasts here the likes of which I had never seen before. A large cat, with yellow fur and black spots, rumbled a low throaty growl that shook my tired bones. There was also a great bear, white as the driven snow, that gazed mournfully at me with sad black eyes. I saw less fearsome creatures as well, like the tiny green bird, its feathers awash with sheets of metallic green light, that sang to me in full throated ease as it hovered, perfectly still, in mid air. I saw silks from Cathay and spices from Araby. There were a hundred colours, a thousand smells, so many I could not hope to count them. I noticed a fortune teller, a palm reader, a psychic. I counted six tobacco sellers, three weapon dealers, five mercenary companies, fourteen horse traders, and a myriad other people whose exact purpose I could not identify. It is said that Vossheim even has a purveyor of magical artefacts, if you know where and who to ask.

Then, of course, there is *The Pit*. A tavern inside a tent serving only one drink, *The Pit* is packed with raconteurs and has become famous for its storytellers and their tall tales. Anyone can stand up to speak at *The Pit*, and all must listen. Captivating tales are weaved there, for the city is a meeting point for travellers from so many distant lands. It was there, ale in hand and lost in tales of faraway places, that I finally fell asleep.

*I sure want to know what route this "explorer" Kristoff Hamaar took through Black Fire Pass. I've gone the length of the pass many times, and what I saw was lots of goblins and not much else. Maybe it's just a jaded old caravan guard's cynicism talking, but the only thing of interest in the Pass is the people moving through it.*

*Oh, and that "King's Rock" nonsense ain't 'nt real. It's just a lumpy rock, don't look like nothin' special.*

*One-Eye Bram  
Retired caravan guard*





## CHAPTER THREE

# ADVENTURES IN THE PASS

Episode templates were first introduced in *The Game Master's Toolkit*. The episode template structure for encounters provides the GM with flexibility, and a means to introduce a variety of different scenes for his players in an easy to manage format. *Black Fire Pass* includes a number of these detailed episode templates specific to encounters in the Pass. Armed with these templates, a GM will always be ready for action.

The episode templates feature a consistent structure that allows a GM to quickly scan over the information, and adapt it for his own purposes and stories. Each template begins with a brief overview of the encounter being presented, then the entry provides the following information:

- ✦ **Act 1:** The events and action that form Act 1 of the episode. This may include the “setup,” or activity that occurs before the episode proper begins.
- ✦ **Act 2:** The events and action that form Act 2 of the episode. This may feature details of how to construct or use a progress tracker to help resolve the events during this act.
- ✦ **Act 3:** The events and action that form the third and final act of the episode. Details the conclusion of the episode, including multiple possible endings where appropriate.

- ✦ **Possible Complications:** The episodes presented here are serve as models or starting points. This section details a number of ideas for interesting variations to the proposed episode.

The rally step between each act provides the GM with a chance to consider how the character's actions from the previous act will influence the following act, as well as gives the PCs (and the players) an opportunity to take a quick step back and evaluate the situation.

The Basic Episode, on the following page, serves as the simplest example of a three act episode and is intended to serve as a primer for the three act concept. The episodes following are variations on the basic story structure, showing the breadth and flexibility of three act storytelling.

The *Black Fire Pass* episodes presented herein can serve as models for single encounters presented entirely in encounter mode or even for a series of linked encounters; the needs of the plot and pacing of each individual game may differ in that regard.

Alternatively, the GM may decide to develop an entire campaign story arc based on these episode templates, selecting location cards to help flesh out the scenes. By changing a few details here and there—such as enemies encountered or the environment in which the episode takes place—these episode templates can be used again and again.



# THE BASIC EPISODE

**Overview:** Three act storytelling follows some basic rules of structure, and three act episodes in *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* are no exception. This basic episode is included to serve as a model for any three act story element you choose to include in your game.

For our model episode, the PCs need the assistance of the Dwarfs of Karak Azgaraz, but they require a service on the part of the PCs before they are willing to help them.

## ACT 1: THE SETUP

The most important goal for Act 1 is to communicate to the PCs what their goal is and how to achieve it. Act 1 sets the stakes for the episode and outlines both the consequences of failure and the benefits of success.

Even in highly structured encounters, Act 1 may often play out in story mode. Act 1 ends when the goals are identified and the PCs set out to accomplish them (or when the bad guys kick in the door and the PCs have no choice but to accomplish them!).

In our model episode, Act 1 details the initial meeting with the Dwarfs, which may be dangerous in its own right if there is a High Elf in the party (the War of the Vengeance is not easily forgotten). It ends when the dwarfs have outlined the task they require the PCs to do (recover the shield of a fallen thane from the greenskins who stole it during a battle in Black Fire Pass) and the PCs set off to accomplish it.

## ACT 2: RISING ACTION

Often the bulk of the action occurs during this act. During Act 2, the PCs overcome various obstacles between them and their goal. In a dangerous and violent world such as the Old World, these obstacles often take the form of deadly foes or other hazards.

This act often provides a good opportunity to use a progress tracker, to monitor how close the PCs are to achieving their goal.

Gauging the length and complexity of Act 2 is not always easy. If Act 2 is too long, the story feels flat, and probably should have been broken into more acts. If Act 2 is too short, the climax feels abrupt. However, so long as the story has momentum and energy, and continues to build towards Act 3 in an exciting manner, you're probably doing it right. Act 2 ends when the goal is in sight, with just one final most challenging yet obstacle. Alternately, Act 2 can end when the goal is achieved.

In our model episode, Act 2 details the PCs locating and infiltrating a goblin camp. They sneak past the first group of (sleeping) guards, then fight a brief skirmish with a patrol of wolf riders, and finally enter the area where the shield is stored to find themselves facing a powerful goblin shaman!

## ACT 3: THE CLIMAX

This may be the shortest act, but it should also be the most exciting. The climax is the most intense challenge yet, the final obstacle, the big finish. The rising action of Act 2 has been leading to this the entire time. Often, this is the "boss fight."

In our model episode, this climax could be the final showdown with the goblin warboss who stole the shield and his oversized squig pet.

## POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

Sometimes the payoff to Act 3 is not just a long expected show down. Sometimes the excitement and intensity revolves around the unexpected. This unexpected twist can be a supposed ally turning on the PCs, the desired goal having the opposite effect of what was expected, or a hidden threat not seen until too late. The very best twists could be predicted based on information presented earlier in the story, but weren't. Twists that are too far out of left field may be unexpected, but they can also feel arbitrary. Use them sparingly.

With the twist, Act 2 generally ends when the goal is apparently achieved. The PCs have a moment to bask in success...and then gasp at the sudden, shocking twist!

In our model episode, the twist comes when the PCs recover the shield, just as a massive warband returns from a battle! In that case, Act 3 is a desperate flight from the goblin camp.

## WRAPPING UP

After the climactic Act 3, there's usually some clean up that needs to happen in the story. The PCs may have recovered the shield, but they still have to deliver it to the dwarfs and receive their reward. This "downtime" lets the characters (and the players) recover from the intensity of the previous action and also lets you advance the story in a natural way. The consequences of the success or failure of the PCs in previous acts is explored during this time.

And when you're ready, a new Act 1 can begin...

## ENCOUNTERS WITHIN ENCOUNTERS

The Basic Episode is a good overarching structure that can encompass numerous other episodes. The same three act story structure that works for an encounter can also work for an adventure or even a campaign.

Any given act of this basic format can encapsulate a distinct three act episode or even an entire adventure. It's also possible to add additional acts, either with slowly escalating rising action, or multiple "peaks and valleys" of climaxes, falling action, and rising action.

Here is an example combining other elements from other episode templates in this book:

- ✦ Act 1: The party hears rumours about a group of bandits in Black Fire Pass that kidnaps travelers for ransom. The PCs enter the Pass and begin to search for clues.
- ✦ Act 2: Upon further investigation, the PCs discover that the bandits operate out of an abandoned mine and they need to clear it out and rescue any kidnapped travellers they can find (such as *Reclaiming a Mine* on page 19).
- ✦ Act 3: While escorting the wounded travellers back to safety, the group is attacked by greenskins and must fight them off while protecting as many travellers as possible (such as *Ambush* on page 18).



# SKAVEN SCHEMING

**Overview:** A human merchant caravan is travelling through the Pass on its way to the Border Princes. It stops along the way to trade with nearby dwarf outposts. A band of skaven try to trick the humans and dwarfs into fighting with each other, giving the ratmen an opportunity to attack a dwarf mine while the miners are distracted. The characters must find out who is really responsible while keeping the two sides from killing each other.

## ACT 1: MURDER MOST FOUL

A party of dwarfs who were on their way to trade with the merchants is found dead. Evidence has been left behind to throw suspicion on the humans. The victims' friends and kinfolk at the nearby mine call for vengeance, but cooler heads prevail for now. The dwarfs want answers, as does the leader of the merchant caravan. The PCs may be asked to investigate by one side or the other, or they may simply wish to sate their own curiosity.

## ACT 2: SHOT IN THE DARK:

Some of the merchant guards are attacked during the night, shot at with crossbows from the darkness surrounding the encampment. The next morning, a search of the surrounding area uncovers some abandoned crossbow bolts of dwarf manufacture (both the bolts and the crossbows were looted from the dead dwarfs in Act 1). Again, PCs may find some clues (both real and planted) left behind by the skaven and can ask the dwarfs about the crossbows. They will also need to try to calm the humans and convince them the miners weren't responsible.

The skaven continue trying to anger both sides. They can make sneak attacks, poison food supplies, and sabotage the merchants' wagons or the dwarfs' mine.

Create a 5 piece progress tracer, with event markers at the third and final pieces. Use tokens to represent the anger of the dwarfs and the merchants. Each successful attempt by the skaven to frame someone moves a token up one space. The PCs can try to calm both factions, moving a token back with each successful attempt. Every time they uncover evidence that someone else was responsible for the attacks they can also move a token back a space. The first time a token reaches the first event marker a mob gathers to attack the other faction. The PCs must try to convince them to disperse. If either event token reaches the final space, then both sides will muster for war and no amount of pleading from the PCs will turn them aside.

## ACT 3: RATS IN THE WALLS

Depending on how well the PCs have done, the two sides may either be working together or at each other's throats when the skaven attack. In either case, the PCs must rally the defenders to drive out the ratmen. If the two sides are actively fighting each other, the skaven will launch a surprise attack upon the flanks of both groups, throwing them into confusion. Otherwise, the skaven will concentrate their attack on whichever group is farther along the progress tracer, sneaking up on them while their attention is focused elsewhere. The PCs will have to warn them and/or try to convince the other faction to come to their aid.

## POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

One of the dwarfs bears a grudge against the leader of the merchants; one of the caravan guards is secretly a worshipper of Khorne and wants to start a fight; one side distrusts the PCs (likely if the characters are all dwarfs or if there are no dwarfs at all in the party); the PCs stumble across a small goblin raiding party while tracking some skaven; the skaven realise the PCs are on to them and decide to silence them.

## ALTERNATE USES

The PCs seek to start a conflict between two factions while a neutral party tries to expose them. In this scenario, the PCs are trying to move the tokens up the chart, while sabotaging the efforts of their opponents to resolve things peacefully.





## AMBUSH

**Overview:** A minor orc boss has devised a “cunnin’ plan” to ambush people coming through the Pass. Unfortunately, implementing his plan requires timing, patience, and skill—not traits generally held by greenskins. As the ambush begins, the PCs must their way through swarms of greenskins, bouncing squigs, hails of arrows and packs of angry wolves.

### ACT 1: ATTACK!

Some of the goblins are hiding in shallow trenches just off the trail, others are armed with bows and are on the heights above. The plan was for the arrier boyz to attack first and then the spear ladz to charge from their hiding places. Unfortunately, some of the spear ladz are too enthusiastic and attack first, exposing themselves to friendly fire.

Roll a ■ for every mob of boyz firing into an engagement. For every ✕ rolled, a goblin is attacked. For every ● rolled, a PC is attacked. Roll to hit and calculate damage as normal. If a blank is rolled, the attack misses the engagement completely.

Some of the goblins will panic and flee while others turn to charge the arrier boyz for revenge. The PCs can then regroup and find a better defensive position.



## ACT 2: SQUIG ASSAULT

The second part of the plan called for a number of captured squigs to be pointed towards the PCs and released, followed by a group of orcs to finish off any survivors. Once again, the timing is ruined when the orcs charge first. The squigs bounce about randomly, attacking both greenskins and the PCs.

To determine the target of each squig attack, use the method outlined in Act 1. If a blank is rolled, then the squig bounces away from the combat (though it may bounce back the following turn). If a squig ever moves to medium range from the nearest engagement then it will bounce its way to freedom, leaving the combat entirely.

### ACT 3: “ENUFF OF DIS!”

The orc boss decides to step in and fix the mess his ladz have made of his cunnin’ plan. He rallies the surviving orcs and goblins and charges the PCs. If they can kill him, the rest of the greenskins will break and flee.

Unfortunately for the boss, he’s forgotten the final element of his plan. Worried that some of his intended victims might flee back down the pass and escape, he sent a pack of wolf riders to flank the PCs and cut them off. When the wolf boyz hear him blow his horn to signal the charge they decide to join the fight. Rushing up the pass at full speed, they crash into the fighting orcs and PCs, indiscriminately attacking both. Roll a ◆ for each wolf rider. If ✕ is rolled, then the wolf attacks an orc; if ✕✕ is rolled, then both the wolf and the rider attack an orc. If a ● is rolled, then the wolf attacks a PC; if ●● is rolled, then both wolf and rider attack a PC. If a ☆ is rolled, then the wolf attacks an orc and the goblin attacks a PC. If a blank is rolled, then both wolf and rider avoid the engagement entirely, charging past the melee and on up the pass. After the first round of combat, the remaining wolf boyz will do the same, disengaging and fleeing as quickly as possible, leaving the incompetent boss to his fate.

### POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

The PCs are accompanying or protecting someone as they travel up the pass; the PCs are in a hurry and need to fight their way past the greenskins before time runs out; the PCs are trying to assassinate the boss and need to lure him into attacking them directly so they can finish him off; the boss has a shaman “helping” him; the PCs have an “ally” just as incompetent as the greenskins.

### ALTERNATE USES

The attackers could be skaven, a chaos warband, or even a poorly organised band of human outlaws—any antagonist known for being poorly organised and trained will suffice. The PCs are the attackers, trying to mobilise and coordinate a halfling militia, a ridiculous and effete group of fops, or other hilariously incompetent fighting force.



# RECLAIMING A MINE

**Overview:** A mob of night goblins has been raiding settlements and merchants moving through the Pass. Some local dwarfs suspect they may be living in an old mine that was abandoned years ago. The PCs will be rewarded if they can kill or drive off the goblins, but the mine itself may also be of value. If they can clear it out, they may be able to bring it into operation again, perhaps selling the usage rights to a nearby mining clan.

## ACT 1: FINDING THE ENTRANCE

The goblins have cunningly hidden the entrance by “accidentally on purpose” bringing a landslide down upon it (killing 13 greenskins in the process... but nobody liked ‘em anyway). The PCs may be able to find it with successful Nature Lore test to figure out its likely location or an Observation check to follow the goblins’ tracks. Alternatively, they could try to find a group of goblins and follow them back to the mine, but as the greenskins only come out at night, doing so would be difficult.

The PCs can use Observation when searching for goblin tracks to gain a rough idea as to their numbers and whether they have any unusual ‘pets’ accompanying them.

## ACT 2: TIGHT QUARTERS

The PCs must kill the goblins, snotlings, and squigs that infest the mine. This is made more difficult by the confined space and poor condition of the mine.

Create a 12 space progress tracker, with an event marker at the third, sixth, ninth, and final spaces. If any attack scores three or more banes, move the tracking token up a space. Whenever an event space is reached, there is a cave in, possibly harming the PCs (and probably crushing a few goblins). Once the final event marker is reached, the entire mine begins to collapse. The PCs will have to move fast if they want to get out alive!

## ACT 3: UH OH!

The goblin leader turns up and he’s a shaman. His wild spellcasting threatens to bring down the whole complex. The PCs need to defeat him before he collapses the roof. Move the progress tracker up one space every time the shaman rolls a ✱ when casting a spell.

## POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

Pockets of fungal gas are spread throughout the mine and ignite when exposed to an open flame or if a Bright Wizard spell or a blackpowder weapon is used (burning the user and moving the progress tracker up two spaces); tight confines add misfortune dice to anyone using large weapons; the goblins have a troll; the goblins have set up a number of traps (which they fall prey to as often as the PCs); the goblins aren’t the only inhabitants of the mine – an escaped rat ogre is hiding in the lower levels, living on stray goblins, and the sounds of battle above draw it near, where it stalks both the PCs and the greenskins.

Other complications may follow after they’ve cleared out the mine – the original dwarf owners may want it back and won’t be too pleased with characters who make a claim to it.

## ALTERNATE USES

Goblin raiders have captured some locals and the PCs need to rescue them while trying to avoid collapsing the entire mine; the PCs find an abandoned mine just before a band of goblins decides to move in and they must defend it from the less than careful greenskins whose antics threaten to destroy the entire complex. This template can also be adapted to almost any fragile structure, such as an old house or ruined tower.





# GREENSKIN ASSAULT

**Overview:** A large orc Waaagh! is pouring into the Pass. A dwarf army is mustering to oppose them. Thankfully the horde lost much of its cohesion when it reached the Pass as several mobs split off to attack targets of opportunity. The orc warboss is trying to get everyone moving again, but for the moment several elements of the Waaagh! are vulnerable to attack.

Create a 5 space progress tracker. Use one token to track how much damage the PCs manage to do to the orc horde. This will determine the difficulty of the final act. Use another token to track how quickly the warboss manages to get the Waaagh! moving again. Once the warboss's token reaches the final space, Act 3 begins.

## ACT 1: MAN THE DEFENCES!

As the orc host approaches, the PCs find themselves at a local settlement. A large mob of goblins breaks off from the main horde to attack them. The PCs must help drive off the assault. If they manage to defeat the goblins without the defenders suffering too many casualties, move the PCs' progress token up a space.

## ACT 2: HIT AND RUN

The PCs find that the orcs are scattered throughout the Pass. A little careful scouting reveals some opportunities to disrupt the Waaagh!.

Accomplishing each of the following will move the PCs' token one space up the progress tracker. Failing an attempt will move it back one space. After each attempt, the warboss's token will also move up one space, unless the PCs take some action to disrupt his plans.

- ✦ Destroy artillery pieces that a mob of goblins is dragging through the Pass.
- ✦ Kill a giant that has stopped to drink the casks of ale from an abandoned wagon in the middle of the Pass.
- ✦ Save a band of dwarf miners from an orc ambush.
- ✦ A mob of orc boar riders has decided to take a break so they can stretch their legs and get some grub (read: eat the nearest goblin). They've corralled their boars in a nearby gully. The PCs can free the boars and get them to stampede.
- ✦ Trick two mobs of greenskins into attacking each other.
- ✦ Kill an orc shaman and his bodyguards before they rejoin the main horde.

## ACT 3: THE BIG BASH

A dwarf army has mustered to oppose the greenskins. The PCs can join with them to finally break the orc horde. This act concludes with the orc warboss and his retinue charging the PCs' position.

The warboss is accompanied by 6 nobz, but subtract one for every space the PCs' token has moved up the progress tracker. In addition, if the characters failed to accomplish any of the goals in Act 2, some of the following may occur:

- ✦ Goblin artillery is firing goblins fitted with crude wings into the dwarf army. These doom divers smash into the lines, bowling over the sturdy dwarfs and leaving a nasty green mess everywhere. One of the goblins smashes into the PCs.
- ✦ The giant stumbles past the PCs, lashing out with his club. He'll make one attack before moving on.
- ✦ The orc shaman casts a spell on the PCs, hoping to crush them beneath the foot of Gork (or is it Mork?).

If the PCs defeat the warboss, the rest of the Waaagh! will collapse into chaos, breaking up and fleeing down the Pass.

## POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

The warboss realises that someone is disrupting his plans and sends a pack of wolf riders to find them; a massive horde of greenskins suddenly comes upon the characters' position and forces them to hide or flee; the PCs spot a group of goblins that have found a mountain trail that will allow them to flank the dwarf army.

Any of the above complications may cause the PCs' progress token to fall back a step.

## ALTERNATE USES

This basic structure can apply to practically any attempt to thwart an enemy's plans in the lead up to a major confrontation: a skaven warlord attempting to enact a master plan, a rival crime boss preparing for a coup of a city's underworld, or even discrediting witnesses and hiding or destroying evidence before a trial





# THE FIXER-UPPER

**Overview:** The characters have been granted title to a small watch tower that overlooks an important mountain trail. However, it is in very poor condition. They need to repair it, but someone doesn't want them to succeed. A band of skaven has been using the trail to enter the Pass unmolested.

## ACT 1: CAN WE FIX IT?

The characters must explore the tower and catalogue its problems, which include missing doors, some structurally unsound walls, murder holes that have turned into one big hole, a mostly rotten and rusted ballista, and a bad snotling infestation in the basement. A lot of work will be required to render the tower habitable.

## ACT 2: YES, WE CAN! PROBABLY.

The PCs need to find ways to repair the tower. They can negotiate with nearby dwarf settlements for tools, supplies, and help. They'll also need to get rid of the snotlings and perhaps replace the ballista.

The repairs are noted on a progress tracker. Construct a five piece tracker, with an event at the third space. A token is used to track the progress of the repairs. Each time the PCs finish a repair (replacing the doors, driving out the snotlings), the token moves up one space.

When the token reaches the event marker, the skaven begin to sabotage the repair efforts. They will sneak in at night and attempt to steal vital tools or undo any work done the previous day. If no one notices and stops the skaven, the progress tracker will move down one space.

The next day, they launch their second attack. One group of skaven snipes at the PCs from a distance while a band of gutter runners sneaks up to sabotage the tower. If their plan succeeds, then the progress token will move down another step.

The third raid comes that night. By now, the PCs should be expecting the skaven, especially since the ratmen assume the characters are idiots and use the exact same plan from the night before ("Yes yes! It is the last thing the pink skins will think we will do do!"). Should the skaven succeed, the repair token will move another space down the tracker.

## ACT 3: A MAN'S HOME IS HIS CASTLE

The skaven leader decides that his minions can't be trusted to defeat the characters and so leads his forces into battle personally. Of course, he'll need to lead from the rear, where he can better command his useless minions. And he'll need to gather as many of his troops as he can, so as to better carry out his amazing strategy. And said strategy will take some time to develop...

The PCs have another day to finish their repairs while the skaven gather their forces. Once the attack begins, skaven rush down the trail and crash against the walls of the tower. The PCs now get to see how well their new repairs hold out.

For each space the repair token has moved up the progress tracker, add one ■ to any skaven attempts to attack the PCs. If they've repaired the ballista or replaced it with another war machine, they can use it to make attacks against the oncoming horde. However, the skaven attempt to break down the tower's defences. Clanrats charge the doors with a battering ram, a rat ogre tries to smash down walls, and gutter runners climb the tower. Each successful attack reduces the tower's defences by one, removing one ■ from the skaven's attacks. However, each failed attack demoralises the skaven. If more than three attacks fail, they break and flee.

Each wave consists predominantly of skaven henchmen, with a number of clanrats or gutter runners equal to the number of PCs. The skaven leader, a powerful warrior or sorcerer, leads the last wave.

## POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

There is a not so secret secret entrance to the tower leading to the basement that will have to be either hidden or filled; some of the skaven have weapons that allow them to ignore the tower's defences (such as poison wind globes, warfire throwers or certain spells); a small band of dwarf mercenaries is willing to help the PCs defend the tower... for a price.

## ALTERNATE USES

While scouting ahead of an army the PCs come across their opponents hastily trying to fortify their position. The PCs need to sabotage their efforts as much as possible before the army arrives.





# GOOD NEIGHBOURS

**Overview:** A group of human bandits has been driven from the Border Princes into the mountains near the Pass. So far they haven't been much trouble, but they are worrying travellers and nearby settlements. The PCs must find their encampment and discover their plans.

## ACT 1: MEET THE NEIGHBOURS

The PCs find the camp fairly quickly. It is not a normal bandit camp but a refugee camp, packed with women, children, and the infirm. They are the surviving residents of Catinari, a small principality that was overrun by orcs. 'Prince' Catinari the First (and probably the last) still leads them. He and his men are the 'bandits.' They have scoured the area for food and continue to search for a potential sanctuary. Though little more than a thug, Catinari really does care for his people and wants to find them a new home. He asks the PCs to go to the other inhabitants of the Pass for aid. If they can't find shelter before winter, they will have to turn to banditry to survive.

## ACT 2: TOUGH NEIGHBOURHOOD

The PCs can go to nearby settlements and try to convince them to help. Catinari and his men could easily gain work as scouts for the dwarfs, keeping an eye on the territories south of the Pass. His people can also work as labourers and include a number of skilled craftsmen. However, the PCs encounter opposition from an unexpected quarter. Gunther Rassistmann, a mendicant priest visiting the shrine to Sigmar in the centre of the pass, hates the thought of so many "stinking Tilean scum" living so close to such a holy place. He and his band of fanatical pilgrims move throughout the Pass, claiming that the refugees are spies and thieves.

The PCs' attempts to negotiate with the dwarfs can mostly be run in story mode, with a few social tests thrown in. As the characters move from settlement to settlement, they will find it increasingly difficult to convince the dwarfs to help them, as Rassistmann's followers turn more people against the refugees. To win the dwarfs' cooperation the PCs will have to counter the Sigmarites' claims, perform small favours for some of the communities, or even resort to bribery and intimidation. Any contacts the PCs have made while in the Pass could be helpful.

While visiting a mine, the PCs encounter some Sigmarites maligning the refugees. If the PCs can eloquently argue against Rassistmann's lies, or can taunt the Sigmarites into attacking them, the dwarfs will be more likely to help. If the PCs can't contradict the Sigmarites' allegations or if they lose their tempers and attack, word of their failure will spread and it will be harder to convince anyone to help the refugees.

Once the PCs have convinced five settlements to help, move on to Act 3.

## ACT 3: FACE TO FACE TALKS

A meeting of community leaders will be held in Kazad Haz Drazh Kadrin to decide what to do about the refugees. Catinari, the PCs, and the Sigmarites are all invited. The PCs can try once more to convince the locals to help the refugees, opposed by Rassistmann.

Make a 5 space progress tracker with an event marker in the middle. Place a token for the PCs and another for Rassistmann at the start of the track, moving the tokens as the negotiations progress. When Rassistmann's token reaches the event marker Catinari will lose his temper and the PCs will have to stop him from attacking the Sigmarites and ruining their chances of winning the negotiations. When the PCs' token reaches the event marker the Sigmarite fanatics will start shouting angrily. Rassistmann will try to calm his followers, but the PCs may be able to taunt them into rioting, causing the dwarfs to side with the characters.

If neither side loses control, the first party to move its token to the last space on the progress tracker secures the most favourable terms.

## POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

There are actual bandits in the area whose raids are being blamed on the refugees; some of Rassistmann's followers try to silence the PCs before they get to the meeting; plague strikes the refugees and the PCs must find a Shallyan who can cure them.

## ALTERNATE USES

A refugee clan of dwarfs wants to establish a new mine near the Pass but another clan bears an ancient grudge against them; the settlers are actually devout Sigmarites but of a heretical sect; the refugees are Strygani and have a dark secret hidden within their camp.





# A GLORIOUS DEATH

**Overview:** The party comes across, and accidentally rescues, a member of the Slayer Cult in search of his glorious death. Now they must help the dwarf to find the death he seeks, but there is a problem: the things that threaten to kill him are not in the slightest glorious, and anything that promises a good death seems to mysteriously die messily!

## ACT 1: AN UNLOOKED-FOR RESCUE

The party come across a dwarf set upon by orcs in Black Fire Pass. Naturally, they leap to his rescue and the orcs are swiftly dispatched...much to the dismay of the dwarf, who is revealed as one Varnak Balriksson, a Troll Slayer from Karak Azgaraz. The six-to-one odds, Varnak reasoned, were sufficiently glorious to expunge his shame.

Angry at the PCs for denying him his glorious death, Varnak attaches himself to them and follows them about their business, whether or not they want him. As far as Varnak is concerned, they owe him a glorious death battling against a great enemy of the dwarfs.

## ACT 2: THAT AIN'T NO GLORY

Over the days or weeks that follow, Varnak will likely have many opportunities to meet his death...but none sufficiently glorious for his needs. Denied the death he wanted, Varnak finds that all the others offered to him as the PCs go about their adventures are wanting. Goblins? Bah! Who ever heard of a Slayer dying to goblins? Troll? Too common. Beastmen? Those are a manling problem! Varnak continually daydreams about his perfect death, and really takes a shine to any PC who indulges his fantasies. In a reversal of Act I, Varnak may find himself in life-threatening situations where he actually wants a rescue - after all, he doesn't want to be remembered as "that Slayer who got bushwhacked by a bunch of weedy goblin runts" or "the dwarf who died in a barroom brawl."

As annoying as he is, Varnak should also be sufficiently useful in a tight spot that the PCs don't mind keeping him around. Some may even befriend him, and learn the circumstances under which he took the Slayer Oath: Varnak watched his friends sacrifice themselves to save him from a rampaging monster (the exact type of which can be determined based on the circumstances of the PCs' adventures - ideally it should be a monster that they stand a good chance of meeting soon). Frozen with fear, he did nothing. Eventually, either through fate or the planning of a thoughtful PC, Varnak will be presented with his chance to expunge his shame, when the group is plunged into combat with just such a monster!

## ACT 3: REMEMBER ME!

Finally, Varnak is presented with the opportunity he's always wanted - a monster of the type that brought about his shame, possibly even the selfsame beast! It all lines up as a mirror of that fateful day, and flashing back to his earlier fear, Varnak may freeze up. The PCs may have to coax him back into the battle, or, if Varnak has taken a liking to them, their own imminent danger will snap him back to himself. With a roar, Varnak rushes into the fray to defend his new friends and sell his life dearly.

## DEATH AND THE DYING

The *Warhammer* world is a grim and perilous place, where death threatens from every quarter. However, it's entirely possible that the PCs have gone through much danger and had quite long careers without any of them dying! This can give the players an unwonted sense of invulnerability and erode the tension of adventurous roleplaying.

Killing off a favoured NPC, like Varnak, is one way to remind the PCs of their own mortality. Death is an important part of many stories, and it can just as easily be part of yours.

Remember not to let the mechanics get in the way of a good death scene! If someone should die but doesn't have quite enough critical wounds, don't let that stop you. And by the same token, of course no one dies before he's had his chance to say a few final words and exchange a heartfelt good-bye.

Whether Varnak lives or dies in the battle is immaterial. If he dies, he lingers on long enough to exchange a few parting words with the PCs, asking them to remember him to his hold and clan. If he lives, he thanks the PCs for their help. Now that he's faced his greatest fear and overcome it, he's confident that his death will be a glorious one and that his honour will be restored. Either way, he and the PCs part ways.

## POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

The troll slayer is not just picky, but also not much of a warrior. He needs constant rescuing. The troll slayer keeps running afoul of pure bad luck, catching his beard on fire, falling off steep cliffs, etc. - he might die with no battle whatsoever!

## ALTERNATE USES

A young pistolier is trying to "earn his spurs." The PCs themselves must seek redemption. An old soldier suffers from night terrors and other fears due to the traumas of his past.





## CHAPTER FOUR

# HARROWER OF THANES

This is an adventure for experienced characters that have a couple of adventures under their belt and have moved into rank 2 or 3. If you are planning on playing the adventure, **please do not read any further.**

### ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

- + **In Episode One – From Karak Azgaraz to Grenzstadt**, the PCs discover the convoluted history of a rune-inscribed war-hammer at a dwarf hold and undertake a mission to return it to its rightful resting place. The PCs travel to the fortress town of Grenzstadt, where they come across some intriguing characters.
- + **In Episode Two – The Company of Strangers**, the PCs are directed to a man named Hans who can guide them to their destination. Additional travellers join them as they journey to Karag Dronar, and the PCs find themselves in the company of a dangerous band of robbers.
- + **In Episode Three – The Harrower of Thanes**, the PCs encounter the forlorn goblin followers of a mute shaman. The goblins have come to Karag Dronar with the theory that yelling real loud is how magic is done, so perhaps at the Booming Peak they can yell loud enough to restore the shaman's magic. The

PCs discover that Karag Dronar is a far older site than they were led to believe and that the noise of the goblins have roused a creature that provides a greater threat than mere marauding orcs.

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF KARAG DRONAR

The holds of the Black Mountains were founded many millennia ago, yet they are still regarded as recent compared to the Worlds Edge Mountains holds such as Karaz-a-Karak. These settlements provide places where the men of the Empire, Tilea, and the Border Princes can easily meet with dwarfs.

The greatest of these holds is Karak Hirn, the Horn Hold, ruled in recent decades by Alrik Ranulfsson, a reactionary king even by the standards of the dwarfs. In times past, however, the hold was the site of innovative engineers who crafted the architectural marvel that lends the hold its name. Karak Hirn is, in part, the known world's largest musical instrument. A system of furnaces and sounding chambers directs air to produce fearsome blasts that are used to send signals and frighten off wandering beasts.



The best dwarf engineers are peerless, but even they would not undertake such a project without precedent. To the northeast of Karak Hirn, not far from Black Fire Pass, there is a mountain of similar dimensions where the engineers constructed a modest version of the system they planned for Karak Hirn. This early test site was a success and the mountain was named Karag Dronar, the Booming Peak.

For a time, a small community of dwarfs inhabited the area and plans were put in place to construct a network of these signalling devices across the Everlasting Realm. But following the treachery of the elves and the subsequent war against the goblins, the community of Karag Dronar was scattered. The survivors who made it back to the safety of the remaining holds recounted tales of a beast that slunk from the depths and wrought bloody havoc upon the dwarfs.

Karag Dronar was forgotten. In subsequent millennia it has played host to many greenskin tribes, and its amplifying qualities are well known to the orcs and goblins who infest the Black Mountains. From time to time, they come to the mountain to scream and shout for inscrutable reasons of their own (or possibly no reason at all, being greenskins) but they seldom linger, for they too share stories of a dangerous beast that dwells there. Only a desperate goblin would consider making a home of the Booming Peak.

Zurgash da Noiz-less is a desperate goblin.

Once Zurgash was shaman of the Bloody Spear night goblins. He and his tribe plagued the Old Dwarf Silver Road, preying upon the few foolhardy prospectors who journey there and warring against neighbouring orc tribes. However, Zurgash suffered a fall from grace when he suddenly found his voice reduced to a whisper.

Whether Zurgash was forsaken in the sight of Mork or suffered a throat infection from too much raucous chanting whilst bladdered on fermented poisonous fungi is not known, but he was left unable to beseech the greenskin gods with the requisite enthusiasm and found it increasingly difficult to work magic. Compromised in such a manner, he found his position in the tribe tenuous.

Zurgash has applied his powerful (for a goblin) mind to the problem and deduced that clearly, his magic has deserted him because he is no longer able to yell loud enough for Mork (or perhaps Gork) to hear. He concludes that if he were able to yell loud enough for long enough, Gork (or possibly Mork) will hear him again, and so his magic will be restored. Recruiting his few remaining loyal (for goblins) lads, he set off for the Booming Peak in the hopes that a good bout of yellin' and shoutin', amplified by the peak's acoustics, will do the trick.

Zurgash's goblins are not the only greenskins active in the area of Black Fire Pass. After years of campaigning in the Border Princes, the infamous Black Mountain Boyz have returned to their lair at Blood Peak and have begun to send bands of raiders to loot the trading posts and farmsteads of the Empire and the Black Mountain Dwarf holds. A bounty has been levied on greenskins in the town of Grenzstadt in response to these depredations.

## THE HAMMER

This adventure centres upon a dwarf hammer of superior craftsmanship with a storied past. The PCs might happen upon this hammer in any number of ways and it may have a different name depending on how it is encountered (Korden's Hammer, Hammer

of the Lost Clan, etc.). For the purposes of this adventure, each of these hammers are one and the same, and bringing any one of them to Karak Azgaraz kicks off the adventure below.

PCs who have played *An Eye for an Eye* may well be in possession of Korden's Hammer. If they haven't already spoken with her, Sister Sonja from Grunewald Lodge explains that the hammer is an important family heirloom of the now raving mad Korden Kurgansson (if he still lives), and asks the PCs to return the hammer to his clan in Karak Azgaraz. If they do, these dwarfs may well consider the PCs worthy candidates for the mission described.

For groups that have not played *An Eye for an Eye*, the following optional prelude encounter can be used to get the PCs in possession of the hammer and set them on the path to Karak Azgaraz. This encounter can occur in nearly any part of the Old World.

## OPTIONAL PRELUDE — GREENSKIN ASSAULT

The PCs come across a dwarf in dire straits - he is beset by goblins and dying from his wounds. This dwarf's name is Throinn Tholfs-son, and he is cursed. A merchant, Throinn heard of the ill-fortune of his kinsman Korden Kurgansson and went to visit to see if he could help. He found that Korden was raving mad, a broken shell of a dwarf. Throinn took Korden's runehammer, intending to return it to Karak Azgaraz...but he has been plagued by disaster and ill luck ever since.

Where, when, and how the PCs encounter Throinn is up to the GM and the context of the campaign. Perhaps they are on the road to Ubersreik, near the Grey Mountains, and find the dwarf struggling to reach a nearby stream for a last drink of water. In any case, Throinn is beset by goblins equal in number to the PCs. Several more goblins lie dead at his feet and his hammer is red with blood. If the PCs move to intervene, roll for initiative normally, but do not roll for Throinn - he acts last, at the end of every round, and all he does is strike the closest goblin for 1 wound (no need to roll dice).

Depending on how quickly the PCs drive the goblins off, Throinn may actually survive the encounter, but he is badly wounded and in no fit state to travel. Throinn will have a request for any dwarf in the party or, failing that, an obvious follower of Sigmar, or anyone at all if there are no other options. Read or paraphrase the following aloud:

As the last goblin is disposed of, the dwarf slumps to the ground, clutching his leg. "Please," he croaks, "the hammer. I swore an oath to take it to Karak Azgaraz." His hand trembling, the dwarf holds forward a masterfully crafted warhammer, spattered with goblin blood and engraved with dwarf runes. "I cannot go on. You must...<cough>...you will be rewarded!" With that, the dwarf coughs blood onto his beard and closes his eyes.

If the PCs were prompt with their rescue, Throinn has only passed out. If the PCs tend to his wounds he will come to and answer any questions they might have about Karak Azgaraz (where he was born and raised). He won't mention his fears that the hammer might be cursed, as he doesn't want the PCs to be shy about taking it. Even if restored with divine healing, Throinn's leg is a loss and he won't be travelling anywhere for months.





The Hammer of the Lost Clan (or Korden's Hammer if the PCs have acquired it) is represented by its own special item card. When the party acquires the hammer, give them the corresponding item card, or provide them with the following information:

**Damage Rating:** 5

**Critical Rating:** 3

**Group:** Ordinary

**Encumbrance:** 4

The Hammer of the Lost Clan is of superior craftsmanship; its wielder adds ■ to the dice pool of all attacks made while wielding it.

Against Daemons, the hammer inflicts +2 damage for each fortune point spent to enhance the attack's dice pool.

## OTHER LINKS TO, AND POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF, PREVIOUS ADVENTURES

Some suggestions are made below for how events of earlier adventures the PCs have undertaken might influence this scenario.

*An Eye for an Eye*, *Horror of Hugeldal*, or *Edge of Night*: While the competing nobles of Ubersreik provide plenty of opportunity for intrigue, they are a mere microcosm of the situation in Averland, where an electoral seat is available for the taking. Any one of the

various noble factions may have an interest in providing assistance to Theodosius von Tuchtenhagen, the noble left in charge of the town of Grenzstadt.

If the PCs have undertaken *Edge of Night*, they may well have uncovered existence of the skaven. As a result, the ratmen will surely have a vested interest in silencing the party. This could be used as an additional motive behind the actions of Hans Blichter if the GM likes to consider that he is a skaven agent (or bought by skaven agents) prepared to slay their enemies.

*Gathering Storm* or *Winds of Magic*: Characters who are Celestial Wizards, or who have made touch with a Celestial Wizard, may receive a premonition about events occurring near Black Fire Pass.

*Journey to Black Fire Pass*: PCs who undertook this adventure will almost certainly have either impressed or indebted themselves to important dwarfs such as the rulers of Karak Azgaraz, the High King Thorgrim Grudgebearer, or King Khazador of Karak Azul.

## EPISODE ONE — FROM KARAK AZGARAZ TO GRENZSTADT

Whether the party has journeyed to Karak Azgaraz to return Korden's Hammer after the events of *An Eye for an Eye*, acquired the Hammer of the Lost Clan in the optional prelude to this adventure on page 25, or happened upon the hammer in some other way, the PCs (even non-dwarfs) are met with respect and gratitude from the dwarfs of Karak Azgaraz and are invited into the hold as honoured guests, although they are kept under close supervision.

### AN HEIRLOOM UNCOVERED

The dwarfs of Karak Azgaraz are in a state of general excitement regarding the discovery of an old heirloom that was passed from father to son down a bloodline that has now ended. The heirloom is a mighty warhammer of ancient origin, inscribed with runes that make it particularly effective against daemonic creatures.

#### "WHERE'S OUR REWARD?"

The dwarfs of Karak Azgaraz see the return of the hammer as the expected and honourable thing to do, especially if there is a dwarf in the party, and do not offer a reward for its return short of hospitality and an ample amount of fine food and drink (and a fortune point for the party sheet).

If the PCs were promised a reward for returning the hammer to Karak Azgaraz, perhaps by the dying dwarf in the optional prelude, they are free to inquire about such. Thane Gronmir may gift them with one superior quality item, either weapon or armour, for their trouble. The exact item is left to the GM. Thane Gronmir is sufficiently experienced dealing with manlings to tactfully explain the restrictions of the Rule of Pride (see page 39 of the *Book of Grudges*) and propose an exchange of gifts if the PCs are reluctant to turn over the runehammer.



Because the clan who owned the hammer is no more, the loremasters of the hold have opened up the hall of records to research its origin and decide what should be done with it. Any PC who can read Khazalid, has an academic background, or experience finding things in libraries will be asked by Loremaster Hagar Greybeard to assist him in his researches. Should a PC agree to help, he should make a Hard (3d) Education test to see what information they uncover.

✦ Apparently, the hammer was first brought to Karak Azgaraz by descendants of Drumin Dumwinson, named in some records as the thane of Karag Dronar ("Booming Peak" in Khazalid). His resting place is said to be within the mountain itself. \*

✦✦ Drumin's line can be traced back to the time of Sigmar, give or take a century or two, during which the first known bearer of the hammer, a dwarf named Stronnomin, was slain by treachery. His body also lies within Karag Dronar.

✦✦✦ Most recorded bearers of the hammer have come to an unfortunate end. For example, Drumin left the fortress of Karaz Lumbar after a siege in which his father was slain. Drumin's own fate is unknown.

✦ While the exact location of Karag Dronar seems to have passed from memory, a few ancient records mention it being an architectural marvel within easy reach of the northern end of Black Fire Pass. \*

➤ A passage about the hammer's runes indicates that it once held another rune. Loremaster Hagar brings the passage and the hammer to one of the skilled runesmiths of Karak Azgaraz, who quickly uncovers the hidden rune. Choose a *Weapon* rune from amongst those available and add it to the hammer.

☠ The runes on the hammer are effective against all followers of Chaos and Greenskins.

☠☠ The hammer may have been made by Alaric the Mad, the creator of the Runefangs of the manling Elector Counts.

✧ Judging by the decorative elements along the pommel, the hammer was likely crafted several centuries after the time of Sigmar.

\* Should the PCs prove unable to help Loremaster Hagar or refuse to share discoveries with him, he gathers this information himself.

If a PC learns the details about Stronnomin, he may recall some other pertinent information if he passes an Average (2d) **Folklore test**. Dwarfs and followers of Sigmar may add ■ to the test. Those who pass the test recall the following story:

### The Legend of the Storm Riders

"In the reign of King Bregan Firebeard - or perhaps it was Bregan Runefinder - the tribes of men were often allies to the dwarfs, fighting alongside the dwarf warriors against the greenskin hordes. It was after one such battle that a chieftain of men, named Uathach if the stories are to be believed, turned upon his allies. He set upon Thane Stronnomin and his clan and slaughtered them to a dwarf. Triumphant, he returned to his human king bearing the head of Stronnomin, and proclaimed that humans, and not dwarfs, would reign forever over the mountains and vales. His king was greatly angered, for he much valued the friendship of the dwarfs. The king cursed Uathach and drove him and his men from the hall, bidding them to ride forever in search of war, and never again to set foot upon the land they sought to claim. To this day, rumours persist of the Storm Riders, spectral horsemen who descend from the stormy sky in search of blood and death."

Once the research has been gathered, Loremaster Hagar is keen for the party to share any pertinent information with him. He takes a short time to consider the source material himself before calling a meeting to decide what should be done about the hammer. The following three dwarfs join the meeting and the PCs are encouraged to attend or send a representative. Each NPC has two priorities, listed after their character descriptions, that they want to assert during the meeting.

### THANE GRONMIR DORISSON

Gronmir is a large and broad dwarf, standing five feet tall. He is a fierce war chief, known throughout the hold as "the boar" (though this may refer more to the thick black hairs of his beard, which stick out from his face at all angles) and is married to the sister of one of the cousins of the last member of the hammer's clan, which makes the hammer HIS problem. He habitually wears studded leather clothes and an ornate gromril helmet. Gronmir exemplifies a dwarven ideal, being fierce and uncompromising during conflict but a good-humoured character with a hearty appetite for feasting and bestowing largesse when at peace. He is a natural mediator, though he adopts a gruff demeanour when he feels it is appropriate for a dwarf of his station. When frustrated with others, he has a habit of rolling his eyes and muttering, "Grungni's mattocks, what a bunch of wattocks!"

✦ Uphold and improve the reputation of Karak Azgaraz and his clan.

✦ See that "the honourable thing" is done regarding the hammer.





## LOREMASTER HAGAR GREYBEARD

Hagar is one of Karak Azgaraz's loremasters, responsible for cataloguing all the information held in the hold's Hall of Records. Hagar wears his greying beard and thinning hair very long. He habitually dresses in a long robe of rough spun wool. He is one of the wisest and most elderly dwarfs of the hold and is afforded great respect as a result.

- + Maintain reputation as a wise and knowledgeable dwarf.
- + Consider pros and cons of any proposal and offer appropriate advice.

## APPRENTICE LOREMASTER GROM BROKKSON

Grom is the youngest of the dwarfs assigned to work in the Hall of Records. He is short but burly with a pointed red beard and thin hooked nose. Grom is rash and opinionated and, as such, it was deemed that he research and update the hold's Book of Grudges. This decision, whilst making good use of Grom's youthful passion, has hardened him and made seeking vengeance against the enemies of the dwarfs his top priority. This is not in itself problematic, except that Grom appears to have broadened the definition of "enemy of the dwarfs" to include any race, people, creed, or class that warrants even the mildest entry in the Book of Grudges - which is essentially everyone.

- + Refuse to be cowed by authority figures.
- + Keep the hammer with the hold to use against enemies of the dwarfs.

## HOW THE MEETING UNFOLDS

Providing the PCs do not complicate matters too much, the meeting unfolds as described. As GM, get a good idea about what each of the NPCs wishes to achieve in the meeting, and how it would flow without PC interruption. If the PCs do interrupt, the dwarfs accommodate them provided the PCs are respectful. However, ultimately the meeting ends with the following events having taken place and the decision made to find Karag Dronar and return the hammer.

Because this outcome is predetermined, it may seem that there is little point in the PCs being there at all. However, there are three pieces of information that the PCs may possess which, if aired at the meeting, will have consequences later in the adventure.

- + If the PCs have not discovered and revealed that the earliest recorded bearer of the hammer was Stronnomir, then the dwarfs assume Drumin was the original bearer. As such, they seek to have the hammer taken to Drumin's tomb rather than Stronnomir's.
- + If the PCs mention the legend of the Storm Riders, Grom becomes angry and demands retribution for the death of Stronnomir.
- + If the PCs ascribe more magical properties to the hammer than its acknowledged ability to mete out particular harm to daemons, Grom becomes even more desperate to see it used to kill the enemies of the dwarfs.



Gronmir starts the discussion by making sure everyone is introduced. He then states that they are to decide what should be done with the warhammer and asks Loremaster Hagar to summarise its history and properties.

Loremaster Hagar provides what information he has been able to discover, and asks the PCs to elaborate on details and thoughts they may have. He scoffs at the idea that the hammer was forged by Alaric the Mad, but does think it might prove particularly deadly to greenskins and followers of Chaos.

If the PCs mention the tale of Stronnomir to the dwarfs, it causes the council to ponder for a moment. Loremaster Hagar asserts that he was aware of the tale, but credits the PCs for making a connection he had overlooked. On the subject of Stronnomir's fate, Grom angrily says, "Empire folk should be thankful for the restraint of the dwarfs in letting such a grudge go unsettled!" Other dwarfs generally disagree and voice gratitude towards the Empire for its assistance down the years. However, should a human PC deny the truth of the legend, it does not go down well, and Gronmir mutters something about "the conveniently short memories of manlings" before moving on.

Gronmir now addresses what should be done with the hammer. Hagar believes that it should be returned to Karag Dronar to rest with the dwarf who first wielded it (believed to be either Drumin or Stronnomir depending on how well the research went). Gronmir is reluctant to risk any of his own dwarfs on such a mission, but would certainly like to secure more information about Karag Dronar to increase his clan's status both within Karak Azgaraz and with Karak Hirn. Hagar suggests an expedition, consisting of the PCs. Grom believes the hammer is best employed as a weapon against their enemies and he scoffs at the idea of it being ill-omened or that it would be dishonourable not to return it.



The PCs are asked for their opinion. Gronmir will listen respectfully but rule in favour of Hagar's plan. Grom becomes angry and leaves the meeting in a perfunctory manner most unbecoming of an apprentice loremaster. What becomes of him depends on whether or not the PCs told him of the legend of the Storm Riders and whether or not they ascribed extra magical properties to the hammer. If they did not do these things, then Grom heads to his quarters and brood for a while before calming down and returning to his duties.

If they did tell him of such things, he becomes even angrier and harbours a hard grievance against the men of the Empire. He packs for a journey and leaves the hold in the direction of Ubersreik. The PCs may have to deal with the consequences of his anger in Episode 3.

## THE MISSION

Gronmir approaches the PCs. He explains that they might be the best people to return the hammer and says the dwarfs of Karak Azgaraz will be indebted to them if they do so.

PCs may try to hold out for a more tangible reward. Gronmir initially offers to fund the expedition by providing expenses for a month's travel and the rights to keep anything they can salvage from Karag Dronar. If the PCs hold out for more, he agrees on a reward of ten gold crowns each upon completion of the quest.

He also suggests that they travel to the town of Grenzstadt and contact a ranger named Zarak Zurnisson. Zarak is an old friend of Gronmir's, and thethane assures the PCs that no one has a better knowledge of the mountains around Black Fire Pass. He says that Zarak is a regular drinker at Dawr Urbaz, a drinking hall found in the dwarf quarter of Grenzstadt.

At this point, the hammer is entrusted into the care of the PCs once again and the Hammer of the Lost Clan card should be given to the chosen bearer.

## EFFECTS OF THE HAMMER UPON THE WIELDER

During the journey, it becomes clear to the bearer of the hammer that he is attracting a measure of bad luck. Things simply do not go his way and a number of times he is bedevilled by frustrating coincidences and trifling accidents.

At this point, the GM should give the bearer of the hammer the Ill Fortuned Condition. The condition stays with the hammer bearer as long as he possesses the hammer. It will only leave him should he give the hammer to someone else or place it in its rightful location.

A character who passes a **Hard (3d) Magical Sight** check whilst examining the hammer will be able to perceive that it has a slight tendency to attract dark magic, though the cause of this effect is not apparent. The runes upon the hammer seem well made and there is no trace of warpstone or corrupt material in its construction.

## THE WAY TO GRENZSTADT

The simplest way to get to Grenzstadt from Karak Azgaraz is to travel down the mountainside to Ubersreik, take a barge from there to Averheim, and then catch a Red Arrow coach (or just walk) along the Old Dwarf Road.

GMs may prefer to describe the journey in the broadest terms, simply saying to the PCs that they arrive at their destination after a few weeks of preparation and travel. It should be made clear to the party that if the two towns they visit, Ubersreik and Averheim, are representative of the Empire, then the realm is in political tumult. In Ubersreik, rumours are rampant regarding the waning influence afforded to the ruling von Jungfreud family, whilst in Averheim, debates over who should represent the province still rage after the death of Marius Lietdorf, the elector of Averland.

Should GMs wish to elaborate on the journey they may well find some helpful information about Ubersreik in *Edge of Night: The Journey to Black Fire Pass* adventure, available to download for free from the Fantasy Flight Games website ([www.FantasyFlightGames.com](http://www.FantasyFlightGames.com)) gives details on journeying on the Old Dwarf Road.

## THE MAD PROPHET

Either in Grenzstadt, or on the road there, the PCs stumble across a wild-eyed madman, a wandering prophet. Festooned with icons of every major religion in the Empire and with a fringe of wild dirty-grey hair, the man staggers up to a random PC, grips him by the shoulders, and pronounces his prophecy.

"The hammer strikes on the anvil of the storm. Thunder! Thunder in the mountains! An ancient evil stirs. Doom! DOOM upon us all!"

The madman then staggers away, muttering to himself. Nearby, a raven croaks and takes wing. Depending on how the PCs take this pronouncement, this might be a good opportunity to increase party tension. If there are any devout followers of Morr or wizards of the Celestial Order in the party and they respond to the prophecy with appropriate consideration, reward them with a fortune point to the party sheet. Hopefully, the prophecy will cause the PCs to think back on the legend of Stronnomir, and help them to make the right choice when disposing of the hammer. It may also make them worried about possibly running into the Storm Riders!

## GRENZSTADT

Grenzstadt is a fortress town that guards the western end of Black Fire Pass. As it is the first settlement an army invading the Empire from the south would likely have to conquer or bypass, a great deal of money and effort has been invested in its defences. Great ram-parts of stone encircle the town and soldiers in the black and yellow uniform of the state of Averland patrol the walls and peer from tower windows. Dozens of black iron cannons are also deployed along the walls.

At the gate of the town is a toll booth manned by five spearmen of the Averland army. The gate is decorated with parchments and seals proclaiming tales of the sacrifices the men of Grenzstadt have made and reminding the reader of the costs of maintaining this important bulwark. A notice (see page 30) is also pinned in a prominent location.

Entry to the town costs a shilling and a penny per leg, which is often cause for dispute with the guards at the gate.

## THE PENNY TAX

The penny tax is simple but punitive. For every silver shilling a merchant takes for any item or service in Grenzstadt, he must also collect a brass penny. Army patrols can be seen escorting bailiffs



through the town in order to collect the taxes and carry out spot stock and accounts checks on anyone they suspect might be cheating them.

People in the town are very annoyed by the tax, but they are also frightened of the Black Mountain orcs. It seems everyone knows someone who has been killed, hurt, made homeless, or otherwise affected by the orc raids, so even if they hate having to pay the taxes they concede something has to be done.

All prices in excess of 1s in Grenzstadt are increased by about 4%.

## DAWR URBAZ

This large drinking hall is built in the traditional dwarf style and dominates the dwarf quarter. Its name translates roughly as "even though this place of trade isn't very old, it is suitable for dwarfs and therefore admirable." A plaque on the wall gives its establishment as 1467 IC. A number of fine ales and tasty dishes, such as spiced goat meat, can be purchased for a few shillings (plus a few pennies of tax, of course).

Zarak Zurnisson is not in attendance. Apparently, he was hired to accompany a delegation from Karak Kadrin through Black Fire Pass and then west to Karak Izor and isn't expected to be back for at least a month. No other dwarfs at Dawr Urbaz are willing to journey into the pass. Furthermore, they explain that most dwarfs with experience of the Pass have been employed to accompany bands of bounty hunters in their search for orcs and, if not already dead, are still travelling in the mountains.

## GOSSIP IN DAWR URBAZ

The regulars of Dawr Urbaz are usually merchant folk from the holds of the Worlds Edge Mountains, and they are open and gregarious by dwarf standards. If the PCs ask them about matters concerning their mission, they uncover the following bits of (mostly true) information.

# Wanted Dead

**Greenskin savages dare to plague our lands!**

**Men of the Empire!** Raiding Orcs bring fire and death to our innocent citizens in the name of their heinous gods. From lairs in the Black Mountains their warlords gather their strength to assail the fertile lands of the Aver.

In his wisdom Noble Lord von Tuchtenhagen has levied the Penny Tax to fund a generous bounty on all greenskins until the threat is diminished. To apply for a licence to hunt Orcs within the Black Mountains visit Lord von Tuchtenhagen at his Town House on the Kometstrasse between the hours of noon and six.

Our noble lord ensures our well-being - remember to pay the Penny Tax and defy the Orc menace!

The Penny Tax ensures your protection -

**So Pay The Penny Tax!**



## DO YOU KNOW OF KARAG DRONAR?

"Yes, I know of it by name; some sort of outpost of Karak Hirn, I believe. A marvel of old dwarf engineering if the tales are true, a whole mountain carved into a huge signalling device of some sort. It should be pretty distinctive – maybe one of the bounty hunters at the Last Rest knows of an odd-looking mountain? You should ask them."

## AN OUTPOST OF KARAK HIRN?

"So it is said, though we are talking millennia back. King Alrik Ranulfsson of Karak Hirn is as obsessed with settling grudges as any dwarf king should be. If Karag Dronar really is an old outpost of his hold, Old King Alrik would probably look kindly on anyone who can verify its location."

## CAN YOU RECOMMEND ANY GUIDE IN PARTICULAR?

(Calls over to another dwarf merchant on a nearby table). "Hey Dori – who was that scout you said got you into the Borderlands along those goat paths that time, the one with no teeth? Hans, you say? Try this man called Hans, he knows the Black Mountains around the pass as well as any dwarf ranger. Saw Dori and his caravan through the pass without losing a single dwarf to orc raids, which is impressive seeing as the mountains are crawling with the beasts these days."

## HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF A THANE CALLED DRUMIN DUMWINSON?

"I've never heard of such a dwarf. One named Dumwin Stoutbelly was eaten by a giant at the siege of Karaz Lumbur, though, but what remains of his line is a mystery. So perhaps this Drumin is his son? Assuming he had a son, that line has been cursed since the Battle of Black Fire Pass."

## WHAT SORT OF CURSE?

"Ah, thereby hangs a tale ... (goes on to tell of the Legend of the Storm Riders as written on page 27)."

## HAS GROM BROKKSON BEEN HERE?

"Who? No."

## THEODOSIUS VON TUCHTENHAGEN

The current ruler of Grenzstadt is a thoroughly reprehensible noble. Agitators in the Empire find much to complain about in the nobility and are sometimes unfair in the degree to which they pillory the aristocratic class. But in Theodosius' case, the criticisms ring true, for the man is a pig. He is among the greediest and most feckless of Averland's nobles, which is no small feat considering that the province has more than its fair share of greedy, feckless nobles at the best of times. He is tall and lean, with fiery red hair that he wears in long braids. He wears sumptuous robes with a veritable hoard of jewels, most of which are worthless facsimiles, sewn into them. He speaks with a distinct lisp because he believes that is the sort of thing that nobles do, and he often breaks into irritating gales of high-pitched laughter at the sight of something he finds funny.

His idea of humour includes sights such as heavily-laden peddlers slipping in puddles of ordure or overworked labourers tumbling from unfinished fortifications and breaking their necks.

The von Tuchtenhagens were elevated to the status of nobility a short century ago by Emperor Matthias IV and strive to obscure the memory of their mercantile origins. When his elder brother Volker was slain in a duel, Theodosius' mother died from grief and the young nobleman suddenly found himself the head of the family. Theo is insecure of his position, yet has an unshakable sense of entitlement and plenty of resulting paranoia. He seeks to impress his peers and subjects by indulging in a binge of conspicuous consumption and subjecting them to a number of opulent and tasteless commissions, parties, and projects, none of which have had any lasting value other than to empty the town's treasury.

So, inspired by the recent increase in orc raids, Theo has hatched a plan. He has levied a bounty on greenskins, an apparently generous one, and is using it to justify the imposition of new taxes and swingeing cuts to public spending in Grenzstadt.

When Theo is in Grenzstadt, he holds court in a heavily fortified townhouse not far from the dwarf quarter. Theo's household is about as decadent as one can get without attracting the attention of the Witch Hunters. A drooling imbecile in motley is his idea of a jester, thuggish guards prowl about looking for an excuse to break someone's teeth, and Theo's advisor, Gunther Hemmelmann, is ever at the nobleman's side. Gunther is a leering, corpulent man dressed in gaudy jewellery and dazzling robes woven from golden thread. Disturbingly, he claims to be a wizard of the Gold Order.

If the PCs visit Theo's townhouse to apply for a licence to hunt orcs, a snot-nosed butler meets them at the door and admits them to a waiting room. A bevy of serving girls, employed for their at-





tractive looks rather than any ability or experience, attends to the PCs. After a short while, they are taken to an upstairs office where the noble and his pet wizard give them a short interview (occasionally enlivened by their loud laughter every time his jester throws a fit).

Theo primarily wants to know about the PCs previous adventures, their contacts, and their experience fighting orcs. His lisping unctuousness and patronising manner may irritate the PCs, but unless they insult him he will issue a licence made out in their names. The licence states that for every intact, fresh, left greenskin ear the bounty hunters bring to the townhouse gate on an Angestag morning they will be paid six schillings. The ears are bored through with an awl during this inspection so that their bounty cannot be collected more than once. Once the sheet is signed, Theo adds his seal to the deed and shares a shot of fine Bretonnian brandy with the PCs.

If asked about other bounty hunters or guides, Theo suggests that the PCs visit the Last Rest inn. He says the bounty hunters of Grenzstadt tend to congregate there.

## THE LAST REST INN

The Last Rest is a large and busy inn on the town square. Within the bar are a number of Grenzstadt residents enjoying drink and gossip. Most of the talk revolves around the tax and regular heated arguments erupt between those who find it an unfair imposition and those who feel it is necessary for the security of the area.

Food and drink here is cheap and basic – aimed at the brass economic tier. However, the bill of fair will be kept and tax added as appropriate should any particular person spend more than a schilling at the bar.

A few of the people at the bar are bounty hunters searching for orcs in the vicinity of Black Fire Pass. It is the local fashion amongst bounty hunters to wear a string of orc ears about their necks as proof of their prowess and the gratitude the local folk should show them. A few of these men prop up the bar and they regularly have drinks bought for them by the locals.

If questioned, the bounty hunters say there are plenty of orcs in the Pass. They are generally pleased with the money they receive from Theodosius, but lament that often enough the orcs mutilate or pierce their own ears, so the system is not as profitable as it should be.

None of the bounty hunters at the bar know about Karag Dronar, and they have all recently been out to the Pass and would sooner stay at the inn to enjoy the fruits of their labours than return for a while. However, there is one man at the inn willing to take the PCs, and the other bounty hunters point them in his direction if they ask about a guide. If not, Hans walks over and introduces himself after a couple of minutes.

## HANS BLICHTER

Hans is a grizzled and slightly built man in his late twenties. He dresses in the tough and practical garb of a wilderness ranger: long green coat of heavy material and a broad-brimmed hat to keep the rain off. There is a string of six orc ears about his neck. He speaks with as pronounced a lisp as Theodosius, though in his case it is more to do with having lost his front incisors rather than as an affectation.

Hans is a local scout of some repute, but he is also secretly the head of a gang of organised criminals. He takes travellers through the pass to the Borderlands, but on occasion he and his gang will arrange to waylay the same people he has been hired to guide. Hans is careful to undertake such operations in moderation and to target out-of-towners who are unlikely to be missed ... like the PCs.

If the PCs approach Hans in order to guide them to Karag Dronar, he claims to know the location of a mountain with that name (he has a dwarf associate who has helped him gather information about the local area). He stresses that it will be a dangerous journey, taking most of a day's travel, and wants to know what is in it for him. In reality he is desperate for a 'commission', so will accept almost any payment, and will even suggest he comes along for the chance to hunt orcs if the PCs refuse to pay him.

## HANS' GANG AND THEIR DASTARDLY PLAN

Hans' gang of bandits consists of the following:

- + **Frederick Muller** - Frederick masquerades as the son of a merchant and waits for his boss by the gates of Grenzstadt.
- + **Gottri "Madaxe"** - A rare example of a dwarf who has abandoned his honour and clan and taken up life as a bandit. Gottri pretends to be a vengeance-seeking dwarf, out to hunt orcs at the entrance of Back Fire Pass.
- + **Ralf and Berni Schneider** - A pair of young bandit brothers. They wait for Hans some way into the mountains near the Pass. At a series of cairns, they are pretend to be bounty hunters burying a slain comrade.

## HANS UNCOVERED

Hans and his bandit gang are practised professionals who do not leave clues lightly. However, this is a part of the adventure that you should be prepared to alter based on the degree to which the PCs trust their guide. A number of clues can be found to give the PCs the idea that their companions are not what they seem. The sooner the PCs realise that their companions are out to waylay, the better for them, but it may leave the GM wondering what to do.

If the PCs blithely ignore the fact that they are gathering suspicious travelling companions, Hans will eventually signal an attack. His gang are clever and fierce, though they aren't seasoned warriors. Despite the fact that the PCs might be better combatants, the gang will position themselves so as to take best advantage of their numbers - such as ganging up on the toughest PC first or engaging a wizard in close combat as quickly as possible.

At the other extreme, the PCs may well decide to neutralise Hans early on - perhaps they have wheedled the truth out of him with Verenan blessings (or less savoury methods). This is fine and proactive PCs who deal with Hans quickly should be rewarded by circumnavigating some of the problems that arise later. If the PCs do kill or disable Hans, they will be able to find a map to the site amongst his belongings. Also, his gang will disperse rather than face the party without leadership. On the other hand, if they do not discover Hans' map, the PCs may become lost in the mountains and come across more orcs.



✦ **Belinda Schultz and Johan Proust** - The last two bandits set out to meet Hans near Karag Dronar. However, they are captured by the night goblins and imprisoned.

Hans and his gang have a particular method of operation. Each gang member has a cover story that provides a convenient excuse to join groups of travellers. The bandits join the travelling party bit by bit and, when fully assembled, choose an opportune moment to kill and rob their companions.

Pickings have been slim for Hans and his gang recently. While plenty of travellers passed through Grenzstadt, they have largely been heavily armed groups of seasoned fighters looking for bounty and travelling into dangerous territory. As such, the PCs are the most likely victims Hans has come across in a long while.

If the PCs commission Hans (and there really is no one else in town who knows the route they wish to take), he suggests they get some rest in order to be ready for an early start the following morning. "Let's say we meet in the bar here in the Last Rest one hour after daybreak? Good. Gentlemen, I bid you good night!"

He leaves the Last Rest after a couple of drinks and head to the poor quarter of town.

Characters may wish to shadow Hans. He expects this and will keep an eye out for followers, so to follow him without being spotted a PC will have to pass a **Hard (3d) Skullduggery test**. If the test does not succeed, Hans will hail the PC shadowing him and give them a sharp talking to about how they need to show a bit more trust and respect if they want to take advantage of his services.

If the test is passed the PC follows Hans to a run-down tavern called The Comet Inn. Hans orders a beer and sits at a corner table to have a conversation with a blonde-haired girl. They seem flirtatious, but after a few minutes she gets up and leaves. If a PC wishes to sneak closer to overhear their conversation another **Daunting (4d) Skullduggery test** must be passed. If the test succeeds, the PC hears Hans tell her about the journey he plans to take to Karag Dronar – seemingly trying to impress her with his tale of bold adventures to come. If the test is failed, Hans spots the PC and gives him the same telling off as before, but relents and suggests the PC "join me and my girl Belinda for a drink".

The girl is Belinda Schultz. After talking to Hans, she will head to her home in Grenzstadt - an unwholesome dive she shares with the rest of the gang. She will tell them of the route Hans plans to travel the next day so that they can perfect their cover stories and make for the Pass early in the morning.

## EPISODE TWO – THE COMPANY OF STRANGERS

The next morning, Hans arrives at the Last Rest nearly an hour and a half after sunrise. He engages in some small talk and checks that the PCs are equipped for a journey into the wilds. If they do not have items such as trail rations, warm cloaks, tinderboxes, and the like, he admonishes them and makes sure they purchase such things before setting off. There are a number of merchants in town catering to travellers of all economic tiers, but are careful to charge the penny tax.

Even at Grenzstadt's inflated prices, the PCs can purchase gear that Hans finds satisfactory for 4s per person.

As the party passes through the town gates, they meet an odd-looking individual: a flamboyant young man with a long waxed black moustache, brightly coloured billowing silk shirt and breeches, and a large, plumed felt hat. This is Frederick Muller, an odd bandit with a taste for theatrical gesture. He loudly hails one of the PCs and gives a very hammy speech:

"Good day to you, fine sirs! I own to being one Frederick Muller, of the company of Mullers of Nuln. I deem you to be intent on travelling in the direction of Black Fire Pass, is this so?"

If no one else speaks, Hans replies they are and Frederick continues:

"Sirs, I pray you take some small pity on me. I am but a simple merchant's son, and shamed to admit to greater prowess with clerk's quill than this rapier I bear. Nevertheless, I am determined to explore the Pass. Near two months have passed since my father journeyed to the Princedom of Zaragoz in the Borderlands beyond, for there to sell our wares. I fear the foul orcs have waylaid his caravan within the Pass. If you are heading that way, I am sure our mutual companionship will pay a rich dividend in heightened security."

If the PCs rebuff Frederick, he produces a small purse of coins (25 schillings) and says they can divide the money amongst themselves should they allow him to accompany them. He is a gregarious, and somewhat pretentious, companion, often seeking to talk to PCs about culture and the arts. Hans will be taciturn in his company, and it seems to all who observe that the two men have taken something of a dislike to one another. This is, of course, just part of the cover.





## AT THE ENTRANCE OF THE PASS

Hans leads the party from the gates of Grenzstadt and explains that they must walk into the Pass a short way before veering east into the Black Mountains. As the mountainsides begin to rise steeply to each side of them, the party enters the Pass proper.

A short while later, they come across a grisly totem. Five fire-sharpened wooden spears have been planted into the earth with about twenty decapitated human heads impaled upon their points. A crude diagram, drawn in blood, covers a nearby boulder. It depicts a number of tall and bulky figures with pointed ears dismembering smaller figures with apparent gusto.

As the PCs examine the scene, a dwarf emerges from behind the boulder while fastening his breeches. He kicks an orc head ahead of him as he walks.

“Hey ho, Dwarf and manlings both. I am Gottri the Madaxe, come to the pass hunting orcs for reasons of mine own. If you are like to meet any, perhaps I could join you?”

Gottri is a dwarf hailing from Zhufbar, though he has turned his back on hold and clan. Embittered and without honour, he has sunk so low as to resort to banditry to satisfy his lust for gold. He claims he merely wants to kill orcs to satisfy a personal grudge, and even generously offers to provide the PCs with the ears of any orcs he kills, as he says he has no interest in the bounty.

**Clue!** If the PCs study the orc head carried by Gottri, they notice it already has its ears cut off. If the party ask about this, he claims it is a tribal custom of the orcs of Blood Peak to clip their own ears off, which is nonsense.

## WRECKED WAGON

Shortly after the meeting with Gottri, the party come across the site of a wrecked wagon. The vehicle has been thoroughly smashed and looted of all valuable cargo. There is no sign of any crew or draft animals.

This is Frederick’s cue to reinforce his role, and he dashes to the site of the wreck, flings himself to the ground, tears at his clothing, and gives the following impassioned speech:

*“Oh Shallya! Wherefore your tender mercy within dire calamity?  
The mark of your sweet presence in light of such sour calumny?  
Can you not work compassionate fingers to unthread and reweave  
this ugliest of designs upon the tapestries of fate?  
Oh! Oh! My father! By my oath I will avenge you!”*

He then bursts into loud sobs.

**Clue!** PCs who express any interest in Frederick’s speech, or who suggest he is being somewhat over the top, realise on a **Daunting (4d) Education test** that he is paraphrasing lines from the famous play *The Desolate Prisoner of Karak Kadrin* by Jacopo Tarradasch. The first four lines are similar to a speech given by the leading character, Baron Tristifer, as he is led to the hold’s dungeon.

PCs with a talent for pedantry may also feel that Frederick’s reference to “calumny” is irrelevant: after all, although his father seems to have been killed, no one has actually slandered anyone, have they?

In fact, the wagon was actually wrecked some time ago and Frederick simply decided that a few crocodile tears at this point might serve to make his story more convincing. However, the orcs who wrecked the wagon still patrol the area and Frederick’s shouts have alerted them.

## THE BLACK MOUNTAIN BOYZ ATTACK

The Black Mountain Boyz of Blood Peak are hardened veterans of a number of bloody campaigns throughout the nearby Borderlands. They are disciplined and tactical by orc standards and often like to soften up their opponents with a rain of arrows before indulging in their lust for hand to hand carnage.

At the time Frederick gives his speech, there is a scouting party of Black Mountain Boyz resting in a cave at extreme range from the party. Disturbed by the noise, they send one of their number to investigate.

PCs on the lookout for danger notice the orc on a **Daunting (4d) Observation test**. If so, they have the chance to shoot at him and raise the alarm as he moves from extreme to long range. If not, he





moves to a rocky outcrop (put the Rocky Outcrop location card into play) at long range, spots the party, and bellows the Black Mountain Boyz warcry of “Pulp the Stunties!” over and over again.

All of the Black Mountain Boyz use this warcry, even though few of them know any other words of Reikspeil and regardless of whether or not their opponents are actually dwarfs (though to be fair, they often are).

The rest of the orcs quickly assemble at the outcrop and shoot arrows at the party. The orc group is fairly small, numbering two less than the party (so if the party consists of three PCs, Hans, Frederick, and Gottri there will be four orcs).

The orcs continue to shoot arrows from the outcrop and only move to engage in melee if a member of the party moves within close range. The orcs fight bravely until two of them become casualties. At this point, any remaining orcs try to escape.

If the PCs give chase, make a competitive **Athletics (St) check** for the orcs and the PCs as they scramble over the rocks. Any PCs who beat the orcs in this check catch up - combat resumes with the PCs at medium range from the orcs, who now fight to the death. PCs who failed to beat the orcs can join the battle after 1 round. If the orcs win, they escape.

The Black Mountain Boyz are armoured with a round shield and a mail shirt, and they carry a bow and six arrows in addition to their jagged weapons (which they refer to “Dwarf Ticklers”). The orcs shields bear individual devices in the form of crude pictures of Dwarf or human heads bearing horrible injuries – it is the custom of the Black Mountain Boyz to recall noteworthy victims in such a manner.

**Clue!** Hans, Frederick, and Gottri will do what they can to aid the PCs against the orcs - they must protect their investment as well as save themselves after all. A PC who studies them whilst combat ensues notes that Frederick fights well for the son of a merchant and that while Gottri fights efficiently, he does so with a little less gusto than one might expect from a vengeance-fuelled dwarf.

## CAIRNS

Shortly after encountering the Black Mountain Boyz, Hans leads the party up a narrow goat track that veers from the main track and climbs into the Black Mountains to the east. Hans then leads the party in a southerly direction. The path becomes a narrow file and the mountains to either side grow steep and tightly packed. Strong winds funnel down the valley.

The party crests a rise and the path widens out. A number of cairns have been constructed in this area, and the latest is still being worked on by a pair of young men solemnly piling rocks over a dead body.

The two brothers, Ralf and Berni Schneider, are bandit minions of Hans. Ralf and Berni claim to be survivors of a group of bounty hunters who were attacked by orcs. They say orcs slew their companions Rudi and Helga (in fact, the bandits murdered them a week ago). Ralf and Berni dress in leather armour and both wear strings of orc ears about their necks. The brothers are both about five and a half feet tall, with mousey hair and light builds.

Ralf and Berni hail the PCs and explain that their own party was attacked by orcs. They have already erected one cairn and are in the process of finishing a second. They ask to accompany the PCs for the rest of journey, claiming that there are more orcs about and they are frightened of being picked off.

**Clue!** Ralf and Berni are both pretty inexperienced and young bandits. They do not look tough enough to be seasoned bounty hunters. If a PC joins them in finishing the cairn over their companion, he notices on an **Average (2d) Observation test** that the body they are burying is showing early signs of decomposition, discoloured and stinking. It is not a fresh corpse. If the PCs draw attention to this, perhaps wondering if the brothers' story could be true, the brothers stammer over each other in an attempt to explain: “Oh, well y’see...;” “Sure, but it was some time ago we was attacked...;” “Right and run off, too, I don’t mind saying so...;” “And with one thing and another we’re just now getting back to bury our friends....”

If the PCs are already suspicious and keeping an eye on the new members of the party, allow them to make a **Hard (3d) Intuition check** to realise that Berni calls Gottri by name, despite not having been introduced, and that the dwarf shuts him up with a warning look.

## MONUMENT TO DRUMIN DUMWINSON

A large oblong tablet of dark granite stands a short distance from the cairns. A poem is written in Khazalid upon the stone, and it is clearly of some vintage as the runes have been obscured here and there through weathering and the smeared excrement of passing orcs. It is still mostly legible to those who can read Khazalid (if he is there, Gottri can translate the message).





In memory of brave Drumin, our honourable thane  
 Who did depart Karaz Lumbar in his father's name.  
 At his side marched his throng, clansfolk beyond counting  
 To build new hearth and home beneath Booming Mountain.  
 "Brothers" said the thane "our travails have been long,  
 And I do so yearn for celebration and song."  
 So Runners got legless and Hammerers got hammered  
 And the drummers and pipers they bashed and clamoured  
 And they woke from deep slumbers a dolorous beast  
 Who hated their songs and resented their feast.  
 Early next morning, when Drumin cried "To bed!"  
 A monster crept through his hall and crushed Duri's head  
 And snacked on Finar's heart and ripped out Grum's guts.  
 Its cruel claws raked poor Borir, right in the (illegible).  
 "Fell creature depart! Away with ye! Bog off!"  
 Cried valiant Drumin, holding rune hammer aloft.  
 "Let my clansfolk be, or I will do unto ye harm!"  
 The creature reached forth and tore off his arm.  
 So passed Drumin Dumwinson, courageous lord  
 His people leave this place, for foul fiends are abroad.  
 The prowler in the deepness, Grungni curse his name,  
 Fell-handed Mydthroth, the Harrower of Thanés.

## AT THE FOOT OF KARAG DRONAR

Travelling south, the pathway widens and opens up into a large valley headed by an unusual looking mountain. This is Karag Dronar. The side of the mountain facing the party has two unusual features. A wide and tall set of steps is carved into the foot of the mountain and leads up to an entrance carved into the likeness of a bellowing dwarf. The steps have mostly eroded away and getting into Karag Dronar requires an **Average (2d) Climb check**. Above the dwarf head are five caves arranged in a circle. These caves are oddly regular, funnelling outward from the interior of the mountain. They are designed to trap the wind and direct it to Karag Dronar's sounding chambers.

At the foot of the mountain is an area of shrub and mosses. The loamy soil makes fertile ground for a crop of edible boletus mushrooms (very tasty if cooked, though the larger ones are infested with small white gnat larvae). A couple of spears have been driven into the ground within the fungus patch, each one daubed with gore. A successful **Easy (1d) Education test** identifies them as likely greenskin territorial markers.

## THE BANDITS ATTACK

Hans makes sure that it is growing dark when the group arrives at the foot of Karag Dronar and he calls for the party to make camp since climbing in the dark is highly inadvisable. He spends some time looking about the area hoping to meet with Belinda and Johan, but he soon concludes that they are elsewhere and probably dead.

Hans suggests that everyone else get some sleep while he takes first watch. The other bandits agree with him aside from Frederick, who briefly insists that he take first watch instead before conceding to Hans (all part of the cover). Hans takes watch, but rouses the other bandits after about 45 minutes. They try to dispose of the PCs weapons and then attack them while they sleep.

If the PCs are foolish enough to go along with Hans' plan they might be woken as the bandits take their weapons. Each sleeping PC should make a **Hard (3d) Observation test** and if they succeed they wake as a bandit rifles through their belongings.

PCs who do not wake suffer from the following disadvantages:

- ✦ **Disarmed** – The PCs weapons have been piled up in a location at medium distance from the camp. Improvised weapons such as stones can be gathered from the ground easily enough. Also, the goblin spears can be snatched up easily – they are at Close range. However, they are ill-made and confer a ■ on any attack.
- ✦ **Entangled** – The PCs are encumbered by bedclothes and tents and the like, and so lose their free manoeuvre for first round of the combat.
- ✦ **Lost the Initiative** – The bandits have the drop on the PCs. All PCs start at the bottom of the initiative track.

PCs who were woken by the bandits have still Lost the Initiative, but suffer no further ill-effects.

If the PCs want to take first watch themselves, Hans and his gang wait until the rest of the PCs are asleep before attacking, doing their best to stealthily entangle and disarm the sleeping PCs before the alarm is sounded.

If the PCs do not go along with Hans' plan, wishing to press on with the climb immediately, he simply cries out "the time is now!" and he and his bandits attack as per the normal combat rules.

## THE BOOMING PEAK

The battle with Hans and his men is fierce and brief. As soon as the battle reaches its crisis point - when the first PC drops, when Hans falls, or when Hans loses two of his men - an unearthly roar will shatter the air. This triggers a rally step as everyone looks around for the source of the noise. They find nothing, of course, because it is Karag Dronar itself - the Booming Peak - that is roaring, as the goblins begin their ritual.

Unless Hans can keep order, the bandits lose their nerve and run, with cries of "A troll!" "No, a giant!" and similar. Only Gottri Madaxe hesitates, some last shred of his dwarf honour clamouring for attention; he remains for another round before legging it for the hills. The bandits snatch anything of value they can grab as they run, which might mean the PCs have to chase them down (especially if they grab the hammer!). If the PCs give chase, use a competitive check similar to the one detailed in The Black Mountain Boyz Attack on page 34.

Provided the PCs vanquish the bandits they can now proceed to explore Karag Dronar, which continues to roar and boom for the immediate future.

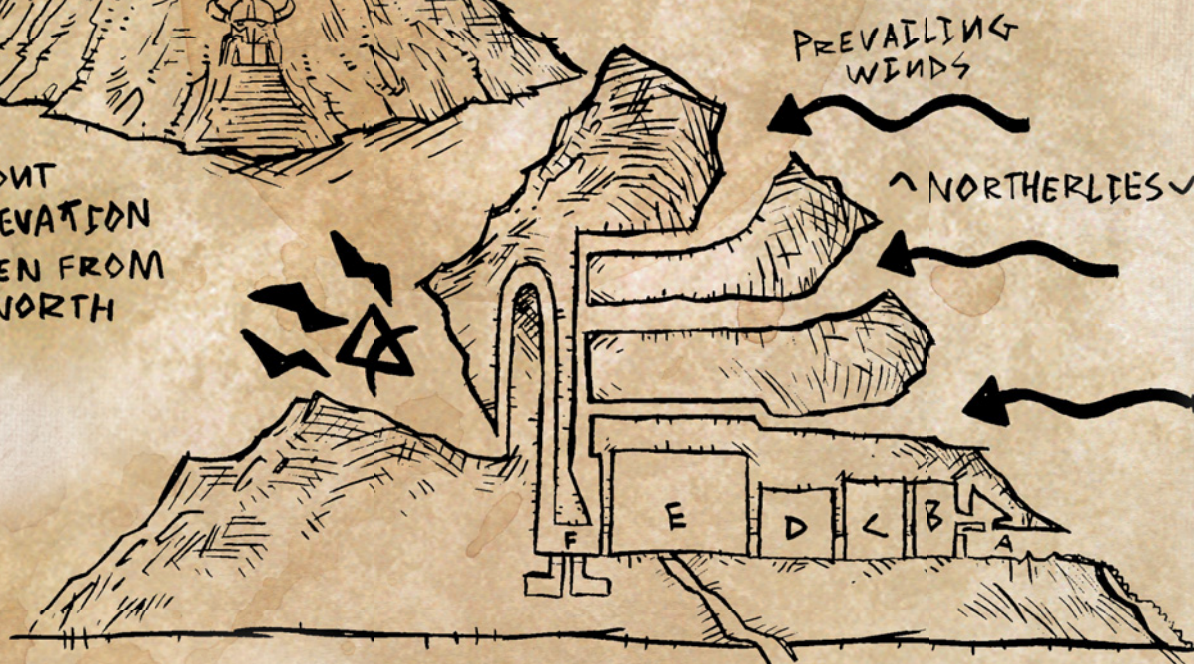




- FRONT  
ELEVATION  
SEEN FROM  
NORTH

# KARAG DROMAR

~ THE BOOMING PEAK ~



SIDE CUT-AWAY

- A = GATEHOUSE   B = BARRACKS   < = SHRINE   D = FORGE  
E = HALL   F = SOUNDING CHAMBER



*As Commissioned by  
Thane Dimzad the Delver*



# EPISODE THREE — THE HARROWER OF THANES

There is a small group of greenskins within Karag Dronar, the remaining followers of Zurgash da Noiz-less. They amount to the shaman himself, eight night goblin guards, five snotling servants, and a maggoty squig. At the time the PCs begin to explore Karag Dronar, the goblins are mostly engaged in shouting, hoping to attract the favour of Mork and/or Gork and restore Zurgash's voice.

## YELLIN' & SHOUTIN'

Assemble a progress tracker 9 spaces long with event markers on space 1, 7 and 9. Place a tracking token on the first space to represent time until Zurgash's voice is restored.

As the PCs enter Karag Dronar, the goblins' excitement is building to a climax. Whether their bawling reaches its conclusion and whether or not it has the effect of restoring Zurgash's powers, depends upon the actions of the PCs.

**The Time Tracker** – The PCs could make their way quickly to the Sounding Chamber where the bulk of the goblins are or they could spend a long time exploring every nook and cranny of Karag Dronar. Move the tracking token representing time up one space for each of the following:

- + Every time a delay symbol is rolled.
- + Every time the PCs enter a new location.
- + Any other time the GM feels the PCs are lingering longer than necessary within a particular location.

**Time Tracker Event Space 7:** Zurgash concludes that they need an audience. At this point, four night goblins armed with spears and shields leave the Sounding Chambers and travel to the Workshop. They collect Belinda Schultz and Johan Proust, who are held captive there, and take them back to the Sounding Chambers.

**Time Tracker Event Space 9:** Overcome with excitement, the night goblins kill Belinda and Johan, if they are in the Sounding Chambers, while shouting "Waaagh! Waaagh! Waaagh!" At this point, Zurgash bellows aloud, his voice and his magic restored!

The greenskins will be done with their bout of yellin' and shoutin' when the time tracker reaches 9, or whenever the PCs reach the sounding chamber. If the PCs interrupt them, Zurgash croaks hoarsely as they arrive, his magic only partially restored. How many spells he gains is based on how far the time tracker has progressed.

**At space 1:** Zurgash has failed to regain his voice. He has access to no spells.

**Above space 1, below space 5:** Zurgash can access a single spell.

**At or above space 5, but below space 9:** Zurgash can access two spells.

**At space 9:** Zurgash can access three spells.

## LOCATION A — THE GATEHOUSE

A set of wide steps leads up the mountainside to the entrance, which is framed by a large sculpture of a dwarf's head; he wears a horned helmet and is opening his mouth as if to bellow or sing. Within the mouth, there is a small, square room with a large, heavy door left ajar at the opposite end. There are squat, stone benches on either side of the door, provided for guards to rest upon.

Zurgash has posted a pair of guards here: night goblins armed with spears and shields. Demonstrating a typical goblin lack of fastidiousness, they have fallen asleep at their posts. If the PCs approach without making any loud noises, they can sneak up on the guards if they pass an **Average (2d) Stealth check**. If the goblins are disturbed, they fight to defend themselves as they retreat to the Sounding Chambers. As they flee, the goblins shriek, "Don't lettem stop the boss from yellin'!" at one another in an attempt to make any subsequent calamity someone else's fault.

There is nothing else in the room, though characters that pass a **Hard (3d) Observation check** will notice a small square hole in the roof. This is a murder hole that can be accessed from the armoury room in the Barracks.

The large heavy door opens into the Barracks location.

## LOCATION B — BARRACKS

There is no light source here; PCs without Night Vision find it very hard to navigate unless they have torches.

The barracks served the dwarfs of Karag Dronar as sleeping quarters and an armoury. To either side of room (which is more a wide corridor, really), the walls are lined with squat doorways leading into modest cells. There are twelve cells on each side of the room. Numbered 1-22 in runic script, they provided personal spaces for the dwarfs who lived here. The last two cells are marked with the "Az" (Axe) and "Azul" (Treasure) runes.

In the Az room are two large racks made from ancient mountain oak. The racks are designed to hold numerous makes of weapon and the goblins have stored a number of spare spears here. If the PCs look behind the racks, they find a small door hidden behind the one to the right side of the room. Through the door is a narrow stairway that leads to a very small room above the murder hole in the ceiling of the Gatehouse. Some timber lies in a corner and a fireplace in the centre of the room. A heavily corroded wrought iron cooking pot half filled with old congealed pitch hangs above the fireplace. The murder hole is a couple of feet from the fireplace, covered by a rusted iron grid.

None of the other rooms, including the promising sounding "Azul" room contain anything apart from old broken furniture, piles of manky straw bedding, and worthless bits and bobs left by visiting greenskins. However, some of the rooms are inhabited.

A PC who wishes to listen at the door of a room should make a **Hard (3d) Observation test** to see if he hears anything from within.

- + **Room Three:** A pair of snotlings playing a "hide and seek" game in a pile of mouldy old bedding. A listener at the door can hear them frolicking about and giggling manically. If disturbed, they attempt to flee, fighting only in self-defence.



✦ **Room Eight:** “Nakka”, an aged and worm-infested squig, has been left here. A listener at the door can hear his laboured breathing. Nakka used to be a loyal pet of Zurgash but has been infested with the same fungus gnat larvae that feed on the nearby field of boletus. Some of the maggots have bored their way into what passes for the squig’s brain and he has become erratic as a result. The goblins have tethered him to a post at the far side of the cell, where he paces around. He cannot reach people near the door, but he attacks anyone that approaches him.

✦ **Room Sixteen:** A snotling tends a carpet of glistening white mould here. Any PC who enters the room sends up a billowing cloud of spores, and must pass a **Daunting (4d) Resilience test** or suffer from the Intoxicated Condition.

At the end of the corridor, there is another large and heavy door leading to the Shrine.

**Noize!** – In addition to any information they gather at the doors of the cells, any character that takes time to listen can hear a faint droning noise coming from the interior of the mountain.

## LOCATION C – SHRINE TO THE DWARF ANCESTORS

This room is an old shrine dedicated to the main dwarf deities. There are three marble statues, each about five feet in height, designed to stand in alcoves along the left side of the room. The statues, representing Grungni, Grimnir, and Valaya, have been daubed with blood or worse stuff to be made “Morky.” The proud dwarf faces have had greenskin-style tusks and grimaces painted on them, and various other desecrations. A little spit and elbow grease can clean this up quite easily, but will count as a delay and advance the time tracker. If dwarfs or Sigmarites take the time to clean these statues, reward them with a fortune point for the party sheet.



On the wall opposite the three alcoves, there are twenty large, rectangular slots arranged in four rows of five. Five of these slots contain sturdy granite sarcophagi and one the skull of a giant. This is where the dwarfs of Karag Dronar placed the bodies of their thanes. Inscriptions in Khazalid are carved above six of the slots:

- ✦ *Thane Dimzad the Delver – The Thane-Engineer and Founder of Karag Dronar. Slain in a rockfall.* (In front of the sarcophagus is a small depression in which rests an old corroded miner’s pick).
- ✦ *Thane Hargin Dimzadson – Defiant in the face of elven treachery. Slain by an arrow.* (In front of the sarcophagus is a small depression in which rests an elf arrowhead, forged from ithilmar and as good as new).
- ✦ *Thane Kettri the Indomitable – Taker of eighty-seven goblin heads. Perished of a surfeit of ale.* (In front of the sarcophagus is a small depression - the golden goblet that rested here once is long gone).
- ✦ *Thane Thingol Kettrisson – Merely a callow beardlessling when cut down by orcs.* (In front of the sarcophagus is a small depression in which rest the remains of an orc’s skull).
- ✦ *Thane Stronnomir the Friend of Men – Bearer of the Hammer of Daemons. Slain by Uathach, accursed traitor.* (In front of the sarcophagus is an empty depression).
- ✦ *In the memory of Dumwin Stoutbelly – Slain by a giant at the Siege of Karaz Lumbar.* (There is no sarcophagus here, but the leering skull of a giant has been placed in the slot instead).

PCs recognize on a **Hard (3d) Observation test** or **Easy (1d) Tradecraft (Masonry) test** that the first five inscriptions are significantly older than the last.

The rest of the slots are empty, presumably ready to receive the bodies of subsequent thanes. The hold was abandoned shortly after Stronnomir’s death as a result of Mydthroth. When Drumin Dumwinson returned here after the siege of Karaz Lumbar, he placed the giant’s skull to mark his father’s passing and the restoration of this practice. Unfortunately for him, Mydthroth effectively ended it again by slaying him and most of his followers, leaving their remains in an unceremonious pile in the hall. At this time, the magical warhammer was taken by a desperate dwarf who sought to fight off Mydthroth. Its rightful place is in the depression in front of Stronnomir’s sarcophagus.

A door leads from the Shrine to the Workshop.

**Noize!** – It is also important to let the PCs know at this point that a distant roar can be heard. It is coming from the rooms ahead and is a constant deep throbbing sound, gathering in intensity.

## LOCATION D – WORKSHOP

This room was once the centre of the various engineering and mining projects performed within Karag Dronar. All manner of old equipment, tools, and workbenches are scattered about the room; aside from one exception, nothing is in working order.

To one side of the workshop is an old mechanical hammer used by dwarfs in times past to crush boulders into smaller rocks. The hammer consists of a large (eight feet square) metal base to which is attached a sturdy iron scaffold, about ten feet in height. The controls, a lever to release the hammer and a winch to raise it up again,



are at the top of the scaffold. The lever is very stiff and requires a **Hard (3d) Strength test** to pull. The hammer then plummets onto the metal base with a loud crash – inflicting 10 wounds (ignoring Toughness and armour) on anything placed there. The winch is easier to operate, but time consuming. Someone on the scaffold can take 5 manoeuvres to raise the hammer using the winch.

The entire rig is old and rusted. It has been used and abused by greenskins and doesn't have much life left in it. PCs using the rig should be aware they are using a rickety piece of equipment since the metal parts scream loudly as the mechanisms are worked. If the PCs insist on using the hammer, the whole device collapses on the fourth attempt to work it.

The goblins have tied up two captives in the workshop. They were found in the fungus field a few hours ago, overpowered, and dragged here. Zurgash hasn't decided what to do with them yet, but they will certainly meet a grisly end if not rescued (in fact, he will have them dragged to the sounding chamber as an "audience," then they'll be killed by over-excited goblins if the PCs don't stop it).

The two captives are Belinda Schultz and Johan Proust, associates of Hans Blichter. Belinda (who the PCs may recognise from Grenzstadt) is a young woman with long blonde hair worn in braids. Johan is a man in his forties with short balding hair and a close-cropped black beard. Both are dressed in tough travelling clothes. They have been subjected to some mistreatment by the goblins and have a number of shallow wounds in their legs where they were poked with spears. Furthermore, they have a number of scratches and bruises where goblins have hit them and one of Johan's ears has been bitten off. They are crudely but effectively lashed to an old worktable with a long length of rope, their hands tied behind their backs. Understandably, the bandits are both miserable and desperate. Johan, largely resigned to his fate, has become insular and catatonic. Belinda is somewhat more spirited and still has her wits about her.

As soon as the PCs enter the forge, Belinda begs them to free her. She claims they are simple travellers who were looking for an alternative route to the Border Princes when they were set upon by goblins.

The bandits are desperate and are genuinely thankful to the PCs if they are freed. Their weapons have been taken by the goblins, but they try to assist the PCs in taking on the rest of the tribe. They say there are not too many goblins within the mountain; they have only seen about six different goblins all in all.

If accused of being bandits, they persist with their cover story. If the PCs refuse to accept their tale, they confess and promise to turn over a new leaf. However, they are as afraid of justice as they are goblins and will seek to escape Karag Dronar at the earliest opportunity and head towards the Border Princes if they are freed.

A doorway leads from the Workshop to the Hall.

**Noize!** – A deep roaring emanates from behind the door that leads into the room ahead. It sounds as if a number of individuals are repeatedly shouting, "Waaaaaaaagh! Mork! Mork! Mork!"



## LOCATION E – HALL

This large room was once used by the dwarfs of Karag Dronar for social occasions. Between the massive pillars that support the vaulted roof are the remains of long trestle tables built from thick planks of mountain oak. They are long since overturned and smashed.

Two night goblins armed with spears and shields guard the door at the far end of the hall. The door leads to the Sounding Chambers. Unless the PCs are especially stealthy, the goblins see them, flee into the Sounding Chamber to raise the alarm, and shut the doors. They have nothing to bar them shut and so even though the doors are heavy, they are more a nuisance than a hindrance for the PCs.

A couple of snotlings attend the roaring fire in the centre of the hall, feeding the flames with bits of wood and bone they have scavenged from the floor of the hall. A crude metal sculpture of a snarling orc face sits in the fire, glowing red-hot. If the goblins shut the doors to the Sounding Chamber before the snotlings make it through, they are at the mercy of the PCs as they are not strong enough to open the heavy doors themselves.

There is a pile of dwarf skeletons in one corner of the hall. An **Easy (1d) Medicine test** or **Hard (3d) Education test** will reveal that the remains are centuries old and died incredibly violent deaths. The PCs may guess that this is the scene of Drumin's death, and they would be correct, though discerning which of the remains belong to the dwarf thane is impossible, as they have all been thoroughly looted and abused by goblins since their deaths.

**Noize!** – Very loud roaring emanates from behind the door that leads into the room ahead. A deep chant of "Waaagh! Mork! Mork! Mork!" repeats over and over again.



## LOCATION F — THE SOUNDING CHAMBERS

The next room is another large chamber featuring some very strange architecture. A number of holes are cut into the roof, funnelling air from the wind-swept north face of the mountain and out through a winding funnel-shaped tunnel to the south.

Beneath the floor of this chamber, accessed by heavy metal grates set within trapdoors, are a number of small cellars. Each of these cellars has space for a fire to be lit, and this can be done to help speed up the flow of air through the system on days when the wind is low or absent.

Zurgash is in this room with the last four of his night goblin followers. They are the source of the noise sounding throughout the mountain: amplified by the weird architecture of Karag Dronar, the goblins' chanting and Zurgash's wheezy whispers are causing a massive roar.

If the PCs have interrupted the goblins before Zurgash's power is fully restored, then Zurgash will be focused primarily on fleeing. If his powers are restored, then, excited by all the yelling and the rush of Mork-y (or Gork-y) power, Zurgash may stick around for a while to roast some stunts with his long-lost magic. But he's still a goblin and will scarper if things look the slightest bit dodgy.

## THE SHAGGOTH AWAKES

Zurgash and his goblins are not the only threat at large within the Booming Peak. Mydthroth, the Harrower of Thanos, is an ancient and irascible dragon ogre. He inhabits a system of caves beneath the mountain and has been disturbed by the increasing clamour of Zurgash's rite.

Mydthroth appears in the Hall, moving aside one of the great stone slabs that covers the floor. Although he naturally inhabits the caves in heart of the mountain, he regards the chambers and rooms built by the dwarfs as his territory and will seek to expel any intruders from the area, whether they are night goblins or PCs.

It is left up to the GM to determine the best time for Mydthroth to arrive. The most dramatic option may be to have the PCs deal with the night goblins themselves and then enjoy momentary respite before they are confronted with the arrival of the dragon ogre. On the other hand, if the PCs have somehow made a mess of things, it may be better to have Mydthroth arrive while Zurgash and his goblins are still at large. The dragon ogre can then deal with the greenskins and provide the PCs with a minute or two to gather their strength before figuring out what to do next.

## MYDTHROTH

Mydthroth and his kind once wandered openly in the wild places of the Old World, fighting dragons within the forests, and bathing in the lightning storms that lashed the tallest peaks of the Worlds Edge Mountains. Mydthroth was a mighty champion of his people who dwelt in a cave deep beneath the mountain now known as Karag Dronar. But when the legions of Chaos swept down from the north, the dragon ogres bent their knees to the ruinous powers to save themselves, swearing servitude in return for immortality. Mydthroth joined the armies of daemons and mortals in the eternal battle on the top of the world and relished his newfound life of con-

test and carnage. However, he was wounded by a daemon's blade and sought a short rest before resuming the fight once more. And so he crept along the Worlds Edge Mountains back to his cave.

When he reached his home, Mydthroth was enraged to find that a number of small hairy creatures had moved in and carved a number of extra caverns into his lair. Mydthroth slew the interlopers, crawled into the heart of the mountain, and settled down to sleep.

Mydthroth is dying. The daemon's accursed blade slowly drains the life force from its victim and only the dragon ogre's great reserves of strength have kept him alive this long; within another short millennia, Mydthroth will surely breathe his last. In the meantime, the sleep Mydthroth desperately yearns for does not refresh him as it should, and the irregular visits to the mountain by groups of dwarfs or greenskins amount to a constant interruption of his rest, even if decades pass between them in reality.

### USING FEATURES OF KARAG DRONAR AGAINST MYDTHROTH

Canny PCs might attempt to coax Mydthroth into traps or other tricky situations using parts of Karag Dronar itself. Here are some examples of things they might try:

**Fighting in the Cells:** Mydthroth is too large to fit comfortably in any of the cells. While in a cell, he suffers from the Exposed condition and may not use stance dice. Furthermore, he might become Intoxicated if he enters cell sixteen and is too large to stay out of Nakka's reach in cell eight.

**Using the Murder Hole:** Mydthroth cannot make his way through the tight stairway to the murder hole room, but heating the pitch to boiling point takes at least fifteen minutes unless magic or some other trick is used. However, dropping a lit torch into the pitch sets it afire, creating a dangerous projectile in an instant.





Coaxing Mydthroth into the Gatehouse might be difficult; it is technically outside the mountain and as such he does not regard it as his territory. However, if a PC in the Gatehouse does something to irritate the dragon ogre (making a lot of noise, for example) and passes a **Guile test** opposed to Mydthroth's Intelligence of 3, he will succeed in drawing the dragon ogre out.

The PC with the cauldron must then make a Ballistic Skill test opposed to Mydthroth's Agility of 2 in order to hit the dragon ogre through the murder hole. If the attack succeeds, work out the damage inflicted according to the state of the contents of the cauldron.

**Boiling Pitch:** The boiling pitch inflicts 6 wounds on Mydthroth. Any character within close range of the dragon ogre (such as the PC who drew Mydthroth into the Gatehouse) must pass a **Hard (3d) Agility test** or be splashed with boiling oil and suffer 3 wounds.

**Burning Pitch:** The burning pitch is not as damaging as the boiling pitch, but is it more viscous and may continue to damage Mydthroth in subsequent turns. If the pitch hits Mydthroth, he suffers 4 wounds. On each subsequent turn, he may make an **Average (2d) Agility test**. If he succeeds, he wipes away the burning pitch and takes no further damage. If he does not succeed or does not make the test, he suffers a wound for the next four turns as the pitch burns itself out.

**Using the Mechanical Hammer:** Mydthroth is no fool: he is well aware that standing under the giant hammer in the workshop is likely to result in a painful injury. If he has become Intoxicated somehow, he will not be so careful. One PC, acting as a decoy, could run across the floor of the workshop while a second PC releases the hammer when the dragon ogre passes beneath. If the decoy passes a Guile test opposed to Mydthroth's Intelligence of 3, the plan succeeds.

### A SERENDIPITOUS OCCURRENCE

If the PCs have a hard time against Mydthroth but their actions have pleased the dwarf gods, they may be blessed with a little good fortune. In order for this event to occur, the following criteria must be met:

- ✦ The PCs must have moved through the Shrine with Mydthroth in pursuit.
- ✦ The PCs must have left the magical warhammer with Stronnomir.
- ✦ The PCs must have cleansed the statues of the ancestor gods.

If these criteria are met, read the following text as Mydthroth passes in front of the statue of Grungni.

"There is a loud scrape as one of the dragon ogre's claws catches under a loose flagstone on the floor of the shrine. He topples over and as he does so he grabs out at the statue of Grungni in order to steady himself. However, the heavy marble statue pitches over and strikes the creature's back, crunching into its horned spine with a nasty cracking sound."

As a result of this event, Mydthroth suffers two Critical Wounds (Wrenched Back and Broken Rib) and must pass a **Hard (3d) Strength test** to push the statue off his back. He may not make any other manoeuvres until the statue is moved.

### ANOTHER OPTION

Perhaps the best solution to dealing with Mydthroth is also the most obvious: run away. All the shaggoth wants is to be left to sleep in peace. Due to his Sluggish Condition, he will not put up more than a perfunctory chase once the PCs leave his territory.

However, it is likely that the monster has emerged between the PCs and the only exit from Karag Dronar. Getting by the creature is a challenge worthy of quick-thinking PCs.

## A SLIGHT RETURN TO GRENZSTADT

If the PCs have investigated Karag Dronar, they have discovered the proper resting place of the magical warhammer and prevailed against the various threats within (and without) the Booming Mountain. No doubt the PCs will be keen to return to Karak Azgazar, but a couple of untidy loose ends might turn up to trouble the PCs as they pass through the town of Grenzstadt once again. The course of these events is determined by the information the PCs revealed to Grom Brokkson during the council meeting at the start of the adventure.

If the PCs told Grom of the Legend of the Storm Riders and let him know that they thought the hammer had powerful magical properties, then refer to **Optional Encounter: An Interview with Theodosius von Tuchtenhagen**.

## OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER: AN INTERVIEW WITH THEODOSIUS VON TUCHTENHAGEN

If Grom Brokkson was keen to retrieve the magical warhammer and angered by stories of human treachery at the Battle of Black Fire Pass, he makes his way to Grenzstadt, arriving in the town a short while after the PCs left. While the PCs were exploring Karag Dronar, Grom approached Theodosius von Tuchtenhagen. He hoped to intimidate the noble by threatening him with settling "the Stronnomir Grudge" unless Theodosius helped Grom reclaim the hammer. Negotiations broke down and the hot-headed Dwarf soon became embroiled in an increasingly bitter argument with the nobleman. In panic, Theo rashly ordered his guards to run Grom through with their halberds and dispose of the body. He now regrets this, as the dwarf mentioned a sort of secret location and Theo is certain there must be treasure there, or at least a magical warhammer. If he were to acquire such valuables, he could clear his debts easily.

Upon consideration, Theo recalls that the PCs were heading into Black Fire Pass in search for something and that they had a warhammer on them. He puts the word out to the soldiers guarding Grenzstadt that if anyone matching the PCs' description enters the town, they should be sent to him.

The PCs may gather a clue as to what is going on during their return to Grenzstadt. As they arrive at the entrance to Black Fire Pass, marked by the boulder where they met Gottri Madaxe on their outward journey, they must make a **Hard (3d) Observation**



**check.** Those who pass the check notice that there is the corpse hidden behind the boulder. If the PCs investigate further, they find that it is the body of Grom Brokkson. Theo's bodyguards dumped him there after they pushed some orc arrows into his wounds to make it look as if he was slain by Black Mountain orcs. They have not done a very good job; any PC who passes an **Easy (1d) Medicine** or a **Daunting (4d) First Aid check** observes that the wounds were created with a blade rather than an arrow.

When the PCs arrive at the gates of Grenzstadt, the soldiers there first charge them entry to the town (see page 29) and then ask if they are going to Theo's townhouse to collect any bounty that might be owed to them. If the PCs say they are, they are trusted to make their own way to Theo and left alone. If not, a group of six soldiers gathers and escorts the PCs to Theo's house. They are polite but not above strong-arming the PCs should they prove recalcitrant.

Theo meets the PCs as described earlier on page 31. Once again, he plies them with Bretonnian Brandy and is initially unctuous. He asks them the following questions about their time in Black Fire Pass:

"So, what were you doing in Black Fire Pass?"

See many orcs?

Where did you go?"

Throughout this interview, Theo's primary goal is to find the location of Karag Dronar. However, he makes as if he merely wants to know more about the area surrounding the Pass for the sake of Grenzstadt's security.

If the PCs disclose the location of Karag Dronar, Theo produces a map of the area and asks them to mark their journey along with the approximate location of the mountain and any other landmarks they can recall. If they refuse, he asks the following question:

"I am aware that when you went into the Pass you bore a particular weapon, a warhammer. Can you tell me what became of it?"

If the PCs lie to Theo, they must pass two **Guile checks**, one opposed to Theo's Intelligence (3) and one opposed to the Intelligence of Gunther, his pet wizard (4 ☐). If they successfully lie about the location of the hammer, Theo asks one final question:

"I am told of a peculiar mountain that lies somewhere in the Pass. Did you come across any such strange mountain or see any odd-looking peaks during your journey?"

Again, PCs must pass two **Guile checks** to deceive Theo. If they succeed, the noble dismisses them and put the issue from his mind.

If the PCs answer Theo's questions honestly, he presses them for more information about Karag Dronar. He dares not attack any more dwarfs or their friends for the time being, so he does not threaten or cajole the PCs too much. He then dismisses them and plans an expedition to Karag Dronar to loot the mountain and steal the hammer.

He also honours any bounty money owed to the PCs for slaying orcs.

If the PCs are caught lying to Theo, accuse him of killing Grom, or otherwise make him angry, they may make a lot of trouble for themselves. Theo may even order his guards to attack the PCs and force them to return to Karag Dronar alongside his expedition if they do not cooperate. He also refuses to pay any bounty money to people who have offended him.

## RETURN TO KARAK AZGARAZ

The rest of the return journey to Karak Azgaraz passes without incident. Once the PCs arrive back at the hold, arrangements are quickly made for them to meet with Thane Gronmir and Loremaster Hagar. They interview the PCs about their journey, asking much the same questions as Theo asked above (though they will be much more respectful about it). Loremaster Hagar takes careful note of anything the PCs discovered and is very grateful for additional information they can provide. Gronmir, of course, provides any payment owed to the PCs.

## LOOSE ENDS AND CONSEQUENCES

The adventure is over, but depending on their performance, the PCs may have earned themselves a reputation, made enemies or allies, and might just suffer from a lingering curse.

If the PCs gathered good information, returned the hammer to Stronnomir's tomb, and defeated the various creatures inhabiting Karag Dronar, they have done a very good deed in the eyes of the dwarfs. In time, word of the lost outpost reaches Karak Hirn, and King Alrik Ranulfsson dispatches a band of intrepid dwarfs to





resettle the Booming Mountain. They make good report of what they find and a bond of friendship between Karak Hirn and Karak Azgaraz will develop. The PCs may even be summoned before the king, in which case many honours and awards are bestowed upon them.

On the other hand, if the PCs were careless, perhaps leading Theodosius von Tuchtenhagen to Karag Dronar or allowing Mydthroth to live, they might damage the reputation of Karak Azgaraz and soured its relations with Karak Hirn. In time, as word of their failure spreads, they may find themselves no longer welcome in many dwarf holds. If they have been particularly negligent, they might even find their names entered into a record of grudges, and forced to perform some other favour for the dwarfs in order to settle the matter.

Theodosius von Tuchtenhagen might also become a further thorn in the side of the PCs if he later learns they lied to him or omitted some salient details regarding their journey (for example, he could send an expedition to Karag Dronar and learn that there is still a dragon ogre at large within the mountain). Theo is only a minor noble but he still holds sway over the area of Grenzstadt. If the adventurers need to journey to Black Fire Pass again in the future, he might well take it upon himself to exact retribution.

Any surviving members of Hans' gang also have reason to resent the PCs and would happily take revenge given the opportunity to do so.

Finally, there is the matter of the hammer. If the PCs did not leave it with Stronnomir, they are dogged with bad luck until the hammer is properly replaced. The degree of bad luck they suffer depends on the extent to which they have failed to honour the dead dwarf. See table below:

| DEGREE OF DISHONOUR | EXAMPLE   | EFFECT  |
|---------------------|---|---|
| Minor               | Cleared Karag Dronar, but left the hammer with Drumin rather than Stronnomir. | PCs collectively suffer from the Ill Fortuned Condition during the first day of each month. |
| Moderate            | Gave Theodosius the information he needed to retrieve the hammer.             | PCs collectively suffer from the Ill Fortuned Condition during the first day of each week.  |
| Severe              | Retained the hammer.  | Bearer suffers from Ill Fortuned Condition whilst in possession of hammer.                  |

## NOTABLE ADVERSARIES

The following section details all of the NPCs and creatures that the PCs will encounter over the course of the adventure.

Some of these adversaries have Creature Cards included (see page 45 for a description of Creature Cards).

### THEODOSIUS VON TUCHTENHAGEN AND HIS HOUSEHOLD

The NPCs in *Black Fire Pass* use the rules for NPCs as described in "The Bestiary" chapter of the Core Product.

- ✦ Theo uses the **Noble** rules.
- ✦ Gunther Hemmelmann uses the **Wizard** rules (though GMs with *Winds of Magic* may like to give him the Channel action and two *Gold Order* spells as they see fit).
- ✦ A total of ten guards patrol the townhouse grounds; they are all **Soldiers**.
- ✦ Theo's bevy of serving girls and his imbecilic jester are **Townfolk**.

### HANS BLICHTER

Hans has lived within the area of Grenzstadt his whole life. Since childhood, he has helped scouting parties find their way through Black Fire Pass and the surrounding wilderness. Few people have a better knowledge of the area.

However, Hans has grown greedy and vicious. He still guides travellers through the pass, but he and his gang of violent thugs quickly turn on his charges if he deems something they carry worth stealing (such as magical hammers).

### HANS' GANG

The gang members use the profiles and abilities of soldiers, as described in "The Bestiary" chapter of the Core Product. Gottri is an exception, as he has a Toughness and Willpower of 4 rather than 3. Also, Belinda and Johan are reduced to 5 wounds as a result of the attentions of their goblin captors.

### BLACK MOUNTAIN BOYZ — ORC ARCHERS

Since time immemorial, the Black Mountains have been plagued by orcs raiding from their lairs in the nearby Badlands and the stronghold of Blood Peak. They are equipped with armour and weapons looted from travellers, including bows and heavy iron hooked cleavers called Dwarf Ticklers.

The Boyz are orcs and use the abilities listed in the Core Product. In addition, they have Ballistic Skill trained.



## ANATOMY OF A CREATURE CARD

Creature cards put all the information a GM needs to manage creatures during an encounter right at his fingertips. The important statistics and game information are organised on one side, with art the GM can show the players on the other side.

In addition to the convenience of managing creatures during a session, the card format makes it easier for GMs to prepare between sessions. The creature cards can be combined with action cards to create a limitless variety of encounters to challenge the players.

Some creatures have icons appearing on the side of their card indicating a number of action cards, by type, that the GM can select to help customise the creature, making these opponents more diverse and challenging.

The GM can select any action cards of the appropriate type for which the creature meets the requirements listed on the card. This is in addition to the basic actions to which all NPCs and creatures have access, so long as they meet the card's specific requirements.



Melee

Ranged

Support



Spell

Blessing



**1 Threat Rating.** The creature's threat rating.

**2 Creature Name.** Name of the creature shown on the card

**3 Category.** The NPC/Adversary group it belongs to.

**4 Wound Threshold.** The creature's wound threshold. Once it has suffered more wounds than its threshold, the creature is defeated.

**5 Characteristics.** The creature's six characteristics, including any fortune dice associated with its characteristics.

**6 Stance.** The creature's default stance, which the GM can adjust, if desired, by spending dice from the creature's Cunning budget.

**7 A/C/E Budget.** The Aggression, Cunning, and Expertise dice budget for the creature.

**8 Damage Rating.** The damage of the creature's attacks, reflecting its innate or default capacity for carnage. This value may be swapped with a different rating if the creature is equipped with specific weapons or effects.

**9 Soak Value.** The Soak Value of the creature, reflecting its innate or default resistance to damage. This value may be swapped with a different rating if the creature is equipped with specific armour or effects.

**10 Defence Value.** The Defence Value of the creature, reflecting its innate or default ability to avoid or deflect attacks. This value may be swapped with a different rating if the creature is equipped with specific armour or effects.

**11 Action Card Options.** The number and type of actions the creature may be supplemented with by the GM in addition to their standard abilities.

**12 Special Rule Summary.** A brief list of the creature's special abilities or rules. Refer to the specific creature entry for full details.

**13 Set Icon.** Each card is marked with a set icon to quickly identify which product the card is from.



## ZURGASH DA NOIZ-LESS — NIGHT GOBLIN SHAMAN

Once a powerful shaman of the Bloody Spear night goblins, Zurgash currently suffers from the loss of his voice. Whether the reason for his hoarseness is spiritual, physical, or psychological Zurgash, hopes to restore his voice by beseeching the greenskin god Mork from within the amplifying chambers of Karag Dronar.

## NIGHT GOBLIN GUARDS

Zurgash's last few followers amount to eight night goblins armed with spears and shields.

**Night Eyes:** Night goblins ignore ■ dice added to their dice pools from non-magical darkness effects. They have incredibly sharp night vision, but night goblins are miserable in bright light. They add at least one ■ die to all Observation and Ballistic Skill checks during daylight and may add more if subjected to unusually bright light.

**Elves is Creepy:** Whenever a group of night goblins is outnumbered by elves in an engagement, they suffer ■ to all checks. If the goblins are outnumbered by more than two to one by elves they suffer ♦ to checks instead.

## NAKKA — MAGGOT-INFESTED SQUIG

Nakka is a large and irascible cave squig, a strange, hybrid creature that is part fungus, part flesh. He has a tough, red, ball-shaped body with long, raking claws and a gaping, fanged maw. Nakka's night goblin handlers have neglected him, and his body (and what passes

for his mind) is riddled with scores of tiny, white, fungus gnat larvae. As a result of this infestation, Nakka is violently unstable, even by the standards of a regular squig.

**Bouncin' Ball of Death:** If Nakka performs a move manoeuvre during his turn, he receives +2 defence until his next action.

**Infested:** Nakka's body is so badly eaten by maggots that he is literally falling apart. Every time Nakka rolls an ▲, he suffers 1 wound in addition to any other effects.

## MYDTHROTH — WOUNDED SHAGGOTH

Mydthroth is an ancient dragon ogre shaggoth who has made his lair under the mountain of Karag Dronar for thousands of years. When the dwarfs built the sounding chambers of Karag Dronar, Mydthroth was journeying the northern wastes, fighting alongside marauder tribes. In one such battle, a Chaos weapon inflicted a lingering wound that has gradually leached much of his prodigious strength. Despite his wasting injury, Mydthroth is still very much a force to be reckoned with.

**Storm Rage:** Mydthroth ignores wounds and criticals caused by lightning-based attacks. Instead, he recovers a number of normal wounds equal to the damage the attack would have caused. Also, for the rest of the encounter, Mydthroth's Melee Attacks deal extra damage equal to his depth in the Reckless stance, but his Defence is reduced to 0.

**Terrifying:** Mydthroth causes Terror 3.

**Languishing:** Mydthroth is slowly dying from his wound. This accounts for his Strength and Toughness being slightly weaker than that of a standard shaggoth. He also cannot use the Master of the Tempest ability and he suffers from the Sluggish Condition.

**Suggested Action:** Throw into the Wall

| CREATURE/NPC   | ST      | TO      | AG      | INT   | WP  | FEL | A/C/E | WOUNDS | STANCE |
|----------------|---------|---------|---------|-------|-----|-----|-------|--------|--------|
| HANS BLICHTER  | 3 ■ (5) | 4 (2)   | 4 (0)   | 3     | 4   | 4   | 4/4/4 | 15     | R1     |
| BLACK MTN BOYZ | 5 ■ (5) | 5 ■ (2) | 3 (1)   | 2     | 3 ■ | 2   | 6/1/2 | 14     | R2     |
| ZURGASH        | 3 (3)   | 3 (1)   | 3 (1)   | 4 ■ ■ | 4   | 4   | 3/5/2 | 12     | R3/C1  |
| NIGHT GOBLINS  | 3 (5)   | 3 (1)   | 3 (1)   | 3 ■   | 2   | 3   | 3/2/1 | 10     | C1     |
| NAKKA          | 4 (5)   | 4 ■ (0) | 5 (0/2) | 1     | 1   | 1   | 6/0/0 | 13     | R3     |
| MYDTHROTH      | 7 ■ (7) | 7 (2)   | 2 (1)   | 3     | 6   | 2   | 5/3/3 | 32     | R2     |





Hraddi,

It is good to hear from you, and I enjoy hearing of the goings-on at Karak Azgaraz. Here in Black Fire Pass, however, it has been a difficult year. Next time you see the Grudgekeeper, send him to my outpost, for we have many grudges to record against the greenskins. More than a few of our doughty warriors have fallen in battle, most slain by a massive Orc chieftain who wears their beards in his belt. I and all my Ironbreakers have sworn to cut him down when next we meet in battle.

My axe has taken heads from twenty-six of the Orc brutes, although I have lost count of the goblins I have slain... no one at my outpost considers a goblin worth counting!

One of the warriors at my outpost spoke of rumours he had heard of the Engineers' guild of a far-off hold building some kind of airship. What nonsense! I agree with the sentiments of my Thane; dwarfs were not meant to fly. You'll find none of those new-fangled gyrocopters at my outpost, by Grungni!

You should know I met a brewmaster who claimed to be headed to your hold. He had many casks of fine ale and had disturbing news of trouble building in the Dark Lands. His rumours were mostly wild stories about manling marauders and monster-sized beastmen. I feel these tales are not to be easily dismissed, and you would do well to pass this on to your Thane.

*Bandrek Stonecath*





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