

WARHAMMER®

FANTASY ROLEPLAY™



THE GATHERING STORM™
A CAMPAIGN FOR WARHAMMER FANTASY ROLEPLAY

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THE GATHERING STORM

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USING THE MATERIALS INCLUDED IN THIS CAMPAIGN

In addition to this book, *The Gathering Storm* includes a variety of new cards, sheets, and components for the Game Master and his players. Some of these resources supplement the content found in the *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* Core Set. Adding the new cards and components from *The Gathering Storm* to your existing *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* game is easy.

The talent cards and condition cards can simply be added to the other cards of that type. The new talents provide players with more options when spending character advances. The condition cards introduce several new complications and debilitations that may affect the characters.

The new wound cards should be shuffled into the existing wound deck. They feature several new critical wound effects that may occur during play. The new insanity and miscast cards should also be shuffled into their respective decks.

The punchboard components should be carefully removed from the frames. New tracking tokens with lightning bolts are included, letting the players track events and effects from *The Gathering Storm* with ease.

The different pieces can be added to your existing supply of tokens from *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay*.



ITEM CARDS

There are several new item cards, which provide a handy reference to the GM when the players encounter these items. The GM should read over these item cards and place them nearby, so he can bring them into play when they are encountered in the story.



LOCATION CARDS

The Gathering Storm also features a dozen new location cards, featuring some of the interesting places where the story may take the characters over the course of the campaign. The GM can add these location cards to the cards from the Core Set, or can keep these on hand to help set the scenes for the campaign.



STORM TRACKING SHEETS

Among the new components introduced in this campaign are a set of Storm Tracking Sheets. These reference sheets allow the GM to quickly track the progress of the storm that threatens the region.

The GM should place a tracking token on the first space of the track on Storm Tracking Sheet 1, and follow the instructions on the sheet to advance the token. When the token reaches the final space on one sheet, the token is placed on the first space on the next consecutive Storm Tracking Sheet.



MAPS

Several maps are included on double-sided sheets. On many of the maps, one side has locations labelled for GM reference, while the other side shows the map features without labels, so the GM can share the map with his players without spoiling any information.



SET ICON

The cards and sheets from *The Gathering Storm* are noted with a special set icon. This allows you to quickly identify the supplement materials when adding or removing certain cards from your game experience.





INTRODUCTION

STORM ON THE HORIZON

In a rain-lashed corner of the Reikland, near the backwater town of Stromdorf, an ancient secret lies dormant, pregnant with devastation. Its accidental rediscovery unleashes three deadly foes against the people of Stromdorf, but these only herald the ultimate destruction threatening the region – which could potentially deliver hundreds of innocent souls to the cold clutches of Morr. However, even in utter darkness there is the glimmer of hope, as fate has guided a party of unsuspecting heroes to Stromdorf. Only their actions stand in the path of total catastrophe.

The Gathering Storm is a campaign for *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay*. Designed for parties with only a couple of adventures under their belts, *The Gathering Storm* offers three key scenarios linked by an overarching story, and details the town of Stromdorf and its environs.

This book contains all the key information a GM needs to run *The Gathering Storm*. Needless to say, the many secrets within are for the GM's eyes only, so if you are intending on experiencing this adventure as a player, do not read any further, or you'll spoil the fun.

In addition to this book, you will want to become familiar with the cards, sheets, and tokens provided with this campaign set. The cards provide rules for special locations, equipment, and conditions, and the reference sheets will help to track the progress of the

terrible storms that plague Stromdorf and the effects caused by the weather. The tokens help both players and the GM to keep track of information in the game. You can re-use these in scenarios of your own design, as they are useful GM resources.

So gather your band of lowly heroes, and set them journeying towards Stromdorf. Beset by enemies on all sides, they will have to use all their skill and ingenuity to overcome the challenges they face. Rainproof hats and cloaks will also be useful.

A BRIEF HISTORY

This section describes the events which have influenced the crisis facing Stromdorf. Much of this information is unknown even by the majority of NPCs, although the PCs may uncover some of it over the course of the campaign. For now, the GM should keep the information secret until it needs to come up during play.

THE NEXUS

Millennia ago, high elves from Ulthuan colonised the Old World. In a remote region, explorers discovered a maelstrom of *Azyr* wind erupting from a nexus point – a 'hole' in reality through which the winds of magic leak. The elves capped the nexus with an arcane obelisk to safely vent the power, and built a temple on an overlook-

ing hilltop, so their gods would stand vigil over this waystone. As a warning to future generations, the waystone's location was recorded on the marble floor of the temple, which was inscribed with runes imbued with *Azyr* magic to strengthen the map-stone's bond with the nexus.

A disastrous war with the dwarfs soon saw the high elves returning to Ulthuan. With them, some argue, went their gods. Earthquakes ruined the temple and changed the course of a nearby river, so that it washed over the nexus. For centuries, the water eroded the waystone, and *Azyr* magic leaked back into reality, inflicting powerful storms across the region. Men, greenskins, and beastmen fought each other over this territory, ignorant of its history.

One night, thunderbolt after thunderbolt smashed into the temple, as though the gods were bent on tearing it apart. A tornado engulfed the remains, wrenched the map-stone from the floor, shattered it, and scattered the pieces far and wide.

One piece flew east into the marshlands, where it was found by lurking beastmen. They placed it atop their herdstone, revering it as a gift from their dark gods, and named it the lightning-stone, for it called down the anger of the sky upon it. The smallest chunk was hurled into the southern hills, where it lay undiscovered at the mouth of a cave. Another flew west, splashing into the River Tranig. It lay partially submerged in the sandbank, smoothed by the flowing water. The largest piece was thrown northwards, where the rivers Teufel and Ober met.

HUMAN SETTLEMENT

Centuries before the founding of the Empire, a human tribe found this last stone. They erected it as a menhir, honouring it as a chip from the tooth of Verena, their seer-goddess, for whoever slept near the stone gained flashes of foresight (the Wind of *Azyr* governs not only the sky and storms, but also stars and portents). Despite the unrelenting weather, traders and hucksters settled around the 'seer-stone' to profit from the flow of pilgrims who came to glimpse the future. Over the years, the trading post grew into a town – Stromdorf, the place of storms.

Two and a half thousand years ago, Stromdorf became part of the Empire. After Sigmar's apotheosis, the zealous authorities took a dim view of 'barbaric' superstitions which smacked to some of Chaos worship. Proselytising Sigmarites toppled the seer-stone and built a temple of Sigmar over it. Pilgrims ceased to visit the town, and its fortunes dwindled. The area became famous only as the rainiest place in the Empire.

Many centuries passed. The town found brief fame in 2051, during the Wars of the Vampire Counts, when a remnant of von Carstein's defeated undead army, retreating south from Altdorf, reached Stromdorf. After the vampire commanding them was slain by the town's militia captain, Olaus Stichelm, the attacking force literally crumbled. Stichelm, however, had suffered a mortal wound. He fell at the banks of Frothing Ford, near a marble slab decorated with ancient markings. His followers decreed it a fitting grave memorial for their saviour. Unknown to them, this slab was part of the elven map-stone.

Stromdorf was threatened again a century ago, when Grom the Paunch's greenskin tribes cut a bloody swathe across the Empire. Although Stromdorf was in his path, Grom inexplicably turned north. Local legend has it that his armies were routed by a spectral

host led by the ghost of Stichelm. A tribe of goblins, the Crooked Noses, defected from Grom's army and settled in the Blitzfelsen Hills, driving out human farmers and proving quite the nuisance.

THE FAILED ACOLYTE

Stromdorf continues to eke out an existence from the soggy land between the three rivers. Its ancient history is long forgotten, except by one man. Niklas Schulmann, an incompetent acolyte of the Celestial Order, fears that if he fails to impress his superiors, he faces a bleak future as a lowly College servant rather than the powerful wizard he dreams of becoming.

While tidying a neglected corner of his master's study, Schulmann discovered ancient elven manuscripts. His only expertise was reading arcane elvish, and from the crumbling documents he learned about the nexus and the map-stone which located it. Schulmann realised that if he could tap the power of the nexus, he would become a mighty astromancer. He badgered his master for leave, and, following clues in the manuscripts, journeyed to the temple ruins, but was distraught to find the map-stone gone.

While toiling in the College library, Schulmann had learned a ritual used to pinpoint missing manuscript pages – *Hindemith's Ritual of Rediscovery*. Cast on an object associated with the lost items, the magic would disperse and be attracted to those items, allowing the caster to sense their location. Arrogantly believing that he could adapt the ritual to find the map-stone, Schulmann performed it among the ruins. *Azyr* magic consumed him in a burst of crackling blue electricity, and he succeeded only in overloading the distant

THE HISTORY OF THE ELVEN MAP-STONES

Originally, the map-stone was a circular slab of white marble, about four feet in diameter, and three inches thick. Its top face was smooth, and etched with delicate silver elven runes revealing the whereabouts of the nexus and warning of its powers. The text spiralled out from a beautiful representation of the moon in the centre. The edge of the map-stone was carved with an intricate interweaving wave pattern.

Now the map-stone has been split into four roughly equal shards, each triangular in shape, about two feet high, three to four feet at the base. The longer edge is smoothed into a curve, the other two edges are cracked and broken. To characters with magical sight, a vivid blue snake of light caresses each piece. Even to those without this gift, the shards seem to shimmer and spark with faint blue electricity. The elvish text is worn with age.

The map-stone shards were imbued with *Azyr* magic by the elves, so that they would have a sympathetic connection to the *Azyr* nexus. This magical energy has been reawakened by Schulmann's miscast ritual. The stones have begun to attract heavy, localised rain and lightning storms.

THE MAP STONES



Over the course of the campaign, the characters will locate and recover parts of the shattered map stone. The different fragments are represented by their own unique item cards.

Once the characters have recovered all the different pieces of the map stone puzzle, they can re-assemble them to reveal the complete map stone. The completed map stone is also represented by its own item card, as show above.

stones with magical energy. Wracked by pain and humiliation, Schulmann returned to his lodgings in Stromdorf, wondering how to proceed next.

EFFECTS OF THE RITUAL

The magical surge from the botched ritual energised the latent Azyr magic within the map-stones, making them glow with blue witch-fire and turning Stromdorf's naturally rainy climate into a continuous and ever-worsening storm.

In the marshlands, the sky rolls with the thunderous fury of the dark gods. Izka, leader of the Madteeth beastmen, questions the herd's bray shaman, Foaddeath, to interpret the ethereal sheen surrounding the lightning stone. For too long, Izka has restrained his instinct to expand his herd's territory and to destroy Stromdorf and the men who inhabit it. Now perhaps the forces of Chaos are sending him the sign that the time for action is at hand.

Meanwhile, the clouds above Stromdorf's Garden of Morr blacken and unleash a barrage of thunderbolts. Magical energy from Stichelm's memorial stone surges into the grave soil, awakening evil magic bound within a black gem buried in a nearby grave. The

gem rests on the corpse of Madriga Brenner, recently deceased wife of the innkeeper Sebastian Brenner, and secret lover of Stromdorf's burgomeister, Phillip Adler.

A series of tragic events led to her possession of this cursed artefact, which holds the spirit of one Lazarus Mourn, a miscreant executed for necromancy about a year ago at Adler's behest. Now, through the power of the gem, Mourn's spirit occupies Madriga's putrefying body, and he plots to reduce Stromdorf into a town of the living dead to sate his undying revenge.

In the nearby hills, Gobspite, megalomaniacal shaman of the Crooked Nose goblin tribe, has discovered the cave where the smallest chunk of map-stone lies. The 'glowy stone' captivates him and through it he becomes 'dead cleva,' communing with the greenskin gods. Inspired by fungus-induced delirium, he cooks up a plan to usurp the boss of his tribe, the Stabeye, whose rule rests on his pet troll which he uses to terrorise his opponents into submission. Gobspite figures that without the troll, the boss's authority will collapse, allowing him to seize control.

Gobspite's warband steals the troll, then captures an 'umie farm in the Blitzfelsen Hills to use as a hiding place – the last place the Stabeye will look for them. However, the goblins have to raid other farms to satisfy the troll's tremendous gut. If these depredations continue, Stromdorf faces starvation, as the storms have ruined the granaries, and flooded the rivers, wrecking the bridges and cutting off easy access to the outside world.

Just before the rivers surge and threaten to collapse the bridges leading into Stomdorf, a group of adventurers arrives. The local Sigmarite priest foresaw their coming. As the powers of the seer-stone reawaken, he has begun to have prophetic dreams foretelling apocalyptic doom that he construes as warnings from Sigmar. However, he can only wonder: can this ragtag band really hold the key to the town's salvation?

THE ADVENTURERS

The GM and players will likely want to develop a plausible reason for the adventurers to visit such a miserable backwater as Stromdorf. One primary motivation for characters could be the search for the missing merchant, Florian Weschler, and his signet ring, which is valuable as proof of membership to his merchant's guild. Further motivations and complications are also suggested below, tailored to the party's theme or circumstances. Modify any incentives according to the PCs' needs and desires.

A MISSING MERCHANT

A few weeks ago, Florian Wechsler set off with his wagon loaded with coal, bound for Stromdorf to broker some business. After all, in Stromdorf's wet climate, coal is a much sought-after commodity. Initial inquiries indicate the merchant arrived in Stromdorf and sold his coal, but after that, the man, his wagon, and his pony seem to have vanished.

His brethren in the merchant's guild are concerned for his safety and hope to find his whereabouts. As importantly, they wish to recover his signet ring, indicating his membership in the guild. The ring (unless known to be a fake) provides a wide variety of privileges from other members of the guild, including extensive discounts on goods, short-term loans at reduced interest, food and lodging, and more. The merchant's guild maintains this elite status for its members by fiercely protecting access to these rings.

In fact, Wechsler has fallen victim to the machinations of Keila Cobblepot, a halfling innkeeper in town. Keila assisted the Holtz clan in kidnapping Florian for their vile sacrifices. *Chapter Two: The Lesser Evil* describes these events in greater detail.

GETTING THE HEROES INVOLVED

The GM should consider the characters' relationships with each other and the backstory of their particular party. The traits listed on the party sheet can help provide some insights into the type of story hooks and incentives that may motivate the party. Some examples are provided, based on possible party traits. Alternatively, the GM may wish to invent his own introduction to Stromdorf. Ultimately, the GM will use a hook that best fits the interests and motivations of the characters and their party.

ADVENTURERS, IDEALISTIC

An ex-resident of Stromdorf befriends the party and tells them about an ancient treasure buried among ruins south of the town. Is the stranger talking about the ruins atop Tempest Knap? Is the rumour even true?

Alternatively, belligerent PCs could learn that there are monsters to slay in the wilderness around Stromdorf: greenskins in the hills and beastmen in the swamps.

CRIMINAL, INFAMOUS

If characters are from somewhat shadier environs, they may be approached by any number of unsavoury figures or organisations eager to secure the ring for their own purposes.

Or maybe a shadowy individual wants the gang to travel to Stromdorf to settle a score on behalf of his 'organisation.' The target could be Fridrik Ulfsson (page 23) – were the jewels and gold he used to buy the mill stolen from a big-city criminal gang, who have ordered a revenge killing? The adventurers are being used because their employers either cannot or are unwilling to do the dirty work themselves.

ADVENTURERS, REPUTABLE

The party may be approached by the guild and offered a reward to find Wechsler, or at the least, for the ring's safe return, or perhaps they are contacted by a cartographer who wants them to chart the unmapped Oberslecht and Blitzfelsen Hills.

The PCs could be approached by the family of a dying nobleman. His disease confounds his physicians, but a humble herbalist, brought in as a last resort, claims that the only cure is a rare plant that grows only in the Oberslecht. The party is hired to seek that herb. Perhaps the dying man is a relative of one of the party members, or he possesses information vital to them.

MERCENARY, INFAMOUS

The party learns rumours of a witch hiding in the town. The subject of these rumours is Hildette Krass (page 22), who is not actually a witch. However, to zealots, healing should be the prerogative of priests, learned doctors, and (perhaps) sanctioned wizards, not simple peasant women. Her miraculous healing skills are proof (to them) that she must be manipulating dark powers.

As an alternative, the party finds out about the bounty on Doctor Schneider (page 21). The PCs get a lucky break which points to him hiding in Stromdorf, and go there to bring him to justice.

REPUTABLE, SOCIAL

A merchant from the town or city the PCs are currently in needs to ship important cargo to Stromdorf. He advertises for guards to protect himself and his wares.

Or perhaps the party is summoned by Initiate Fromm (page 24), sent by his master, Lector Gottschalk, who fears that his visions of doom may come true and seeks a band of sell-swords to help strengthen Stromdorf's defences.

AN EYE FOR AN EYE

If the party has just finished the scenario in the *Tome of Adventure*, they could be pursuing a Chaos cultist who escaped justice. The cultist thinks that no one will come looking for him in a backwater like Stromdorf. The PCs track down their quarry and try to locate him in the town.

THE JOURNEY TO STROMDORF

The party's journey should be as detailed or as brief as you want. Boat travellers may encounter other people on the riverways, or even be subjected to a pirate attack. Those going overland may face danger along lonely stretches of road between inns and towns.

The GM can bring the journey to life with a few evocative sentences. Describe the gloominess of travel through the Reikwald, or the fertile farmland dotting the open hill country. Mention the glowering peaks dominating the horizon to the south, or the green wall of forest stretching into the distance northwards. Point out landmarks the PCs might be able to see, such as the high walls of the Garden of Morr, or the lonely outcrop of Tempest Knap, both locations lashed by lightning.

The weather should be a key factor in the descriptions. Have the journey begin with blue skies. As the party draws closer to Stromdorf, clouds gather and rain begins to fall. After another few miles, thunder rolls, lightning cracks, and the skies unleash an unrelenting torrent, a gale howling all around. The ground underfoot becomes a quagmire, and the river starts to lap up and over its banks.

THE COLLAPSING BRIDGE

The recent, relentless downpour is more than the rivers can bear. The rivers around Stromdorf have flooded and become turbulent during the storm. When the party reaches one of the town's bridges, enter encounter mode, and place the *Deep River* location card into play. Refer to the rules on that card should any PCs fall into the river. Because of the turbulent water lapping over onto the bridge, characters add one misfortune ■ die to checks made in the river. The incident plays out differently depending on whether the party is travelling by boat or by road.

BY BOAT

If the party is travelling by boat, once they draw near to the bridge, read the following aloud:



A wooden bridge looms ahead through the sheet of rain. It is in ruins, great beams of wood swirling in the violent swell of the river. The boat lurches as a beam smashes into its side, and the captain falls into the water with a scream, and is swept away. The other crew members are rigid with fear.

The tiller is now unmanned, and the rigging is being blown erratically by the gusting wind. A PC who reaches the tiller can attempt an **Average (2d) Athletics check** to try to control the boat. If he succeeds, he manages to guide the boat to the east bank, and everyone can disembark safely. Otherwise, the boat keels and tips everyone into the water, and the PCs must swim to safety.

Swimming to the shore requires a **Hard (3d) Athletics check**. The GM should provide fortune dice bonuses to characters who use quick thinking to grab a piece of flotsam or come up with creative ways to navigate to the shore.

The unfortunate crew all drown, unless the characters can concoct a scheme to rescue them. Their bodies will be caught up in the eel nets downriver (see *Overcome by the Current*).

BY ROAD

If the party is travelling overland along the road, once they draw near to the bridge, read the following aloud:

Ahead, a wide, rickety wooden bridge spans a churning river. The water has breached the banks, and the bridge sways alarmingly. The bridge is the only means you can see of getting into Stromdorf.

Each PC rolls one challenge **die** as he moves across the bridge. On a bane **die** result, the bridge groans as the violent river pounds it. The PC must pass an **Easy (1d) Athletics** or **Coordination check** to avoid being swept into the river.

On the first a Chaos Star **die** result, the bridge begins to break up with the crack of snapping timbers. On a second Chaos Star **die** result, the bridge collapses – each PC who has not yet crossed the bridge must pass an **Average (2d) Athletics** or **Coordination check** to run or leap across before it collapses. Anyone failing this check is hurled into the river and must try to swim to safety.

Swimming to the shore requires a **Hard (3d) Athletics check**. The GM should provide fortune dice bonuses to characters who use quick thinking to grab a piece of flotsam or come up with creative ways to navigate to the shore.

OVERCOME BY THE CURRENT

Any PC who falls unconscious in the water, or is swept away to extreme range is caught in the eel nets set up by the mill where the Ober and Teufel meet. They are dragged to safety by Fridrik Ulfsson (see page 23), Stromdorf's miller. Fridrik revives them and helps them recover by the blazing hearth of his mill.

STRANDED?

Whatever the result, the collapsed bridge cannot be repaired until the storm abates, although the other bridge on the opposite side of town is still standing. The PCs may feel stranded here for the foreseeable future. Almost immediately after the bridge collapses, however, folk turn to repairing it – though the raging storms and strong winds make the repair efforts more challenging. If pressed on the progress of the repairs, townsfolk reply with the following:

Patience. It'll take but a day or two until she's all fixed. Otherwise, it's yer own neck yer risking.

The rivers rise even more, and become so turbulent that no boatmen are willing to risk a crossing until the raging waters subside. Swimming becomes far more dangerous, as well. The difficulty to do so increases to a **Daunting (4d) Athletics check**. Not to mention that the storm has riled up the ferocious Reik eels...

ENTERING STROMDORF

When the PCs reach town, they are met by a crowd of excited Stromdorfers, eager for news from the rest of the Empire. The GM should make it clear that Stromdorf is not visited often. The PCs' first task is to find lodgings – anyone they ask will point them in the direction of the Thunderwater Inn. Once settled in, they can begin their mission.



CHAPTER ONE

STROMDORF

Stromdorf is a small market town in the southern part of the Reikland, about one hundred and fifty miles from Altdorf as the raven flies. It is located near the confluence of three rivers, the Ober, Tranig, and Teufel, each flowing from the distant Grey Mountains into the shadows of the nearby Reikwald Forest. The area of marshy lowland and stony hills south of this confluence is known as the Fleuchtschussel, a wet land infamous and avoided as the stormiest place in Reikland; even in midsummer, grey clouds smother the sun in a sky angry with rain and lightning.

The town's population numbers fewer than seven hundred people. Neighbouring folk are puzzled that the entire population has not moved on to less damp climes before now, but there has been a settlement here before even Sigmar's time, and the people of Stromdorf have a profound sense of history and are proud of their town. They regard it as a mark of their tenacity that they survive in such an intemperate climate; however, other Reiklanders mock this outlook as proof of the townsfolks' inbred imbecility.

Stromdorf's inclement weather ensures few travellers tarry in the town, and hardly anyone settles there from elsewhere unless they have to. Thus, Stromdorf remains a backwater; it is an impoverished place when compared to the thriving settlements in the rest of the Reikland. It is no surprise that, like the sky that thunders above their heads, Stromdorfers are a stormy lot, quick to anger and

difficult to placate. They complain bitterly about the smallest grievance, finding fault in everything except, oddly, the weather, which they habitually shrug off with heroic stoicism: "Come now, it's only a bit of rain!"

One thing that visitors to Stromdorf may notice is that there are plenty of taverns for such a small town, and they are always brimming with folk. Also, children are almost always playing in the muddy streets, even though the constant drizzle means there is little to amuse most other locals outdoors. The high birth rate offsets the fact that many Stromdorfers end up early in Morr's Garden, victims of consumptive diseases caused by the wet climate. It is little wonder that outsiders tend to avoid the place.

ADMINISTRATION

Burgomeister Phillip Adler has been the administrative head of Stromdorf for nearly a decade. Adler was appointed to the position by the von Jungfreuds, the prominent aristocrats in the region, hoping new blood would invigorate Stromdorf's negligible economy. Adler is a self-made man, who made a fortune in the textile business in his native Ubersreik, and married a distant relative of the von Jungfreud noble family. From the start, the town council, a

collection of older, gruff white beards, disapproved of an outsider managing their affairs – by tradition the burgomeister had always been one of their own.

Initially Adler proved popular, encouraging trade between Stromdorf and other parts of the Reikland. At the beginning of his tenure, revenue increased, but so did the taxes, now that the von Jungfreuds had their own man in charge.

However, Adler has become reclusive in recent months. He has shut himself away, barred visitors to the town hall, and has even dismissed his servants, living there alone. He conducts his affairs from behind closed doors, using the watch captain, Arno Kessler, as his intermediary. Kessler is a man of war, lacking the verbal finesse needed for politics, and his brusque manner has angered some of the locals he has to deal with. Recent events have made Adler unpopular – a few folk openly call for his replacement, arguing that his behavior is hurting business.

According to local gossip, Adler is in mourning for his wife, Else, who died shortly after he became burgomeister. Further enquiry reveals that this happened two years ago, long before he decided to shut himself away.

The town council has not been called to session for many weeks, and several council members secretly plot Adler's deposition. His most vocal opponent in town is Hanko Mücke, a trader who resented the increased tariffs imposed on Stromdorf since Adler's accession. He publicly rails against the 'hiding tyrant,' and he has been thrown in the stocks several times by Captain Kessler, on account of his open demands for revolt. This punishment has failed to shut him up and actually garnered him more sympathy.

THE WORSENING WEATHER

The power of the Azyr Wind leaking from the nexus has always attracted storms to the region, bringing rain, winds, thunder, and lightning on a regular basis. Since Niklas Schulmann's ritual just a short while ago, however, the effects have grown more pronounced. Recently, Stromdorf seems to always be under stormy skies and hit with quick, violent bursts of torrential rainfall.

Locals have always been used to dreary, overcast skies and frequent rainfall. But even they'll admit (perhaps over a tankard of Thunderwater Ale) that the weather has certainly taken a turn for the worse lately.

While characters are in Stromdorf or any of its outlying regions, GMs should use a token to track the current weather on the storm tracking sheets provided with *The Gathering Storm*. Certain events or movement to or from certain locations will move the token forward or backward on the tracking sheet.

Some spaces on the tracking sheet will trigger specific game effects once the tracking token reaches them. For most of the sheets, reaching the end of the track will indicate that the GM should replace the current storm tracking sheet with another to track the weather's progress through even harsher storms.

ECONOMY

The River Teufel is Stromdorf's lifeline to the Ubersreik in the west and the Reik to the north, yet the town fails to capitalise on the river traffic that bypasses it. Travellers prefer to hurry past, eager to escape the drenching rain. It doesn't help that Stromdorf does not produce many goods to trade. Its low-lying farms eke out subsistent crops from the sodden fields, and the wool and meat from the hardy sheep pastured in the hills is of poor quality. Just enough produce is generated each month to keep the town from starving. Stromdorf used to rely heavily on its upland flocks for revenue, but a hundred years ago, goblin tribes drove most farmers from the hills.

However, the marshy climate and muddy waters of the rivers are an ideal breeding ground for the Reik eel, a large, voracious snakelike fish with razor sharp teeth. Its sleek body is muscular, and the flesh is flavourful. Many Stromdorfers fish for the eels, dredging the river with large nets. The eels are skinned, smoked, and barrelled, comprising one of the few regular exports of the town.

A BRIEF RESURGENCE

Stromdorf experienced a brief renaissance during the first few years of Burgomeister Adler's tenure, as he used his influence with Ubersreik's Mercer's Guild to encourage more trade between the two towns. However, since he retired from public view, most outside merchants have lost interest in these ventures. It seems the only remaining profitable enterprise for distant traders and merchants is the import of dry timber and coal for fuel to Stromdorf, commodities which the sodden climate ensures are scarce in this locality.

Despite the challenges faced, the local tannery is an example of one business that continues to thrive. The tannery is operated by Marcel Gerber, Stromdorf's wealthiest burgher after Adler. Tanning is a filthy industry, and in many towns, tanneries are relegated to the outskirts. Not so in Stromdorf, whose people are eager for any employment, however noisome. The constant rain helps mitigate some of the stink produced by tanning procedures, but a foul aroma subtly pervades the town.

The town's one true luxury export, and the one thing it is known for apart from its wet weather, is its Thunderwater Ale, brewed by the Brenner family for generations, and sold to connoisseurs Empire-wide. Even dwarfs have been known to make the pilgrimage to Stromdorf to tap a keg of the stuff, a potent brew with a distinctive peaty aftertaste.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The most important of Stromdorf's locations are described on the following pages. The GM should feel free to elaborate on the town as he sees fit, creating establishments of his own to bring Stromdorf to life in his campaign.

MARKET SQUARE

The hub of Stromdorf is its market square, a large, open area, entirely raised on wooden planks to avoid the mud below. Rows of covered stalls sell all manner of goods here, traders barking out their wares to passers-by.

Surrounding the square are impressive buildings of stone, brick, or half-timber, with grandly ostentatious facades. These are the homes of the merchants who comprise the town council, and include the offices of Brenner Exports. Dominating the square is

the town hall. Close up, however, each of these buildings shows signs of dilapidation – crumbling brick or stone, rotten beams, and cracked windows.

In front of the town hall, on a granite plinth, stands a tall statue, its bronze pitted and covered with a thick green patina, depicting a muscular man in heroic posture, his greatsword held aloft. His plate armour is decorated with a dragon motif. A plaque on the plinth reads: *Olaus Stichelm, Saviour Of Our Town*. Any local proudly relates the selfless sacrifice of this hero against the armies of undeath, and the town's salvation from goblin hordes.

Almost swamped by the grandeur of the private houses, a modest temple to Sigmar stands at the corner of the market square and Sumpfstrasse. Where the Marschestrasse meets the square, there is a sizeable inn. Its sign depicts a thundercloud pouring rain into a tankard: *The Thunderwater*. Adjoining the inn is a collection of substantial wooden buildings, including a tall brick chimney – the Brenner brewery.

The market is almost always busy, but even more so on the last Marktag of every month, when farmers bring in produce. At that time, the streets are jammed with sheep being herded to the stockyards, and pack animals loaded with sacks of hops, grain, and barley. Insults and fists fly freely in the jostling crowds. Farmers pack the inns that evening, guzzling away their spare coin, and the watch is kept at its busiest.

If an encounter takes place at the square on the last Marktag of the month, put the *Marketstrasse* location card into play. Wandering the market, the PCs may find themselves on the receiving end of one of Hanko Mücke's rants, or they may see Waltrout Glöckinger scooping up dung into a filthy sack with his hands.

THE WELL

The centre of the square is covered by a warped wooden roof held up by oak pillars. Within this area is the town well. Its water is clean and refreshing.

However, observant PCs notice that no one uses the well, although its windlass is in perfect working condition. A PC attempting to draw water from it will elicit gasps of horror from passers-by. PCs who nevertheless drink from the well will from now on be treated as though they have leprosy by the common folk of the town – to the extent that they must add one misfortune ■ die to all social skill checks with the superstitious townsfolk.

The PCs may discover the reason for this from any local they befriend – several months ago, the brewer's wife, Madriga Brenner, committed suicide by drowning in the well. The water has been considered cursed ever since. The locals now draw their water from a muddy stream that runs through the south-east quarter of the town, or gather rainwater in barrels. For some reason, the resultant inconvenience caused by the loss of the only clean water supply, is blamed squarely on Adler.

SHALLYA'S SHRINE

To one side of the well is a small shrine to Shallya, a marble figurine of the goddess placed in a shallow alcove. The figurine's features have been worn away, due to passers-by briefly stopping to rub it for luck. If a PC who has not killed another person in the past month rubs the statue while muttering a heartfelt prayer to Shallya, roll a fortune die. On a boon, he has been blessed with Shallya's grace. Add 2 fortune dice to his next Charm, First Aid, or Medicine

check. Do not tell the player the source of this bonus, and keep it secret until it activates. Shallya only grants this blessing once each month.

THE TOWN HALL

The Town Hall is a large, three-storey, half-timbered mansion dominating the south side of the market square. A grand flight of colonnaded marble stairs sweeps up to a heavy oak door, decorated with a gold, lion-headed knocker. Hanging above the door is a large blue shield sporting a rearing stag, the crest of the von Jungfreud family. A watchman guards the entrance, leaning on his halberd. He refuses entry to anyone not personally accompanied by Captain Kessler. The windows of the mansion are shuttered day and night, and have been for two months, and no one visits the building except, rarely, Kessler.

The watchman tells PCs wanting to talk to the burgomeister to see Captain Kessler at his office near the barracks, but warns them they are wasting their time. Kessler is a very busy man now that he is the burgomeister's steward.

TRADE & BARTER

When the PCs want to buy equipment in Stromdorf, use the rules on pages 73 of the *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* rulebook.

Because Stromdorf is a small town, it is impossible to find exotic items there, and the difficulty to find rare items is increased to **Daunting** (d4).

However, because Stromdorf is a centre for tanning, the difficulty for finding leather goods (other than exotic leather goods) is reduced by 1 increment.



TEMPLE CEREMONIES

Whenever the PCs enter the temple during the day, roll a ■ fortune die and refer to the table below. At night, the temple is empty, apart from the initiate snoozing behind the altar and the priest resting in his quarters.

Blank: There is no service and the temple is empty save for a few individuals whispering private prayers, and the initiates preparing for the next ceremony. The priest will be in the crypt, studying or praying.

✦ A ceremony is taking place, and the congregation is reciting war-hymns in concert with the fierce old bald-headed priest in full battle-dress who is leading the worship at the altar.

✦ The priest is booming out a sermon, haranguing the enemies of the Empire, and inspiring the worshippers to fits of religious passion – some of them are ecstatically beating their heads against their heavy prayer books in time with their chanting. A human PC who worships Sigmar and who stays for the duration of the sermon (about an hour), gains the Inspired condition during his next combat encounter against greenskins, Chaos worshippers, or undead.

Inside the town hall, the reception area is opulently furnished, with ornate tapestries, old portraits, and hunting trophies on the oak-panelled walls. A layer of dust covers everything, including the floor, broken only by footprints leading up and down the grand staircase. The most important rooms in the building are the gallery of justice, where important trials are held, the council chamber, where the town elders used to meet, and the banquet hall. All these rooms are downstairs. Upstairs is devoted to the burgomeister's private quarters, including his office, where Adler spends all his time alone with his thoughts.

THE TEMPLE OF SIGMAR

Baroque crenellations, decorated with eagle and warhammer motifs, marks this modestly-sized building as a holy temple of Sigmar. Its stained glass windows depict scenes from Sigmar's life. An ornate tower juts from the roof, housing a massive golden bell.

A set of heavy double doors stand permanently ajar, allowing worshippers entry into the shadowy, candlelit sanctum within.

Inside, tattered battle-standards hang from the high, vaulted ceiling, which magnifies the slightest whisper. A double column of stone pillars, carved with scenes of orcs being slaughtered by human warriors, leads to an altar decorated with the symbol of the twin-tailed comet. The altar is flanked by twin granite statues of the muscular hero-god Sigmar gripping his warhammer.

A young initiate, with red robes and a shaved head, attends the altar at all times. There are no seats in the temple – the congregation stands through the long ceremonies.

Heavy black curtains at the rear of the altar hide two doors. One leads to the priest's living cell, the other to a set of stone steps that spiral down into the crypt. The old priest never leaves the confines of the temple, so these doors are never locked.

THE CRYPT

The crypt is closed to the public, and the initiate tries to stop anyone attempting to go down the spiral stairs. The crypt is shadowy, flickering torches in wall-sconces providing meagre light. Carefully stored in open cabinets are the temple's treasures – golden chalices and icon-boxes containing saintly relics. Sometimes these are brought out for ceremonial use. A heavy, leather-bound sacred text lies open on a lectern.

Anyone who steals any of these treasures will be cursed, and must pass a **Daunting (4d) Discipline check** or acquires an insanity card with the *Supernatural* trait. The insanity is permanent until treated, or until any stolen items are returned.

THE SEER-STONE'S INFLUENCE

The seer-stone lies hidden beneath the stone floor tiles and two feet of damp earth. No one knows of its existence. At the end of each scene resolved here, roll one fortune □ die. On a boon, one of the PCs has been influenced by the stone's resurgent power, and catches a glimpse of a potential future – grant him a subtle vision of a possible challenge he might soon have to face.

THE SON OF SIGMAR

The local priest is Lector Gottschalk (see page 24). He is very busy, and his initiate will do his best to prevent anyone from bothering him. If the characters do gain his attention, however, the lector recognizes them from his dreams and insists on speaking with them. Refer to page 22 for more details on his dreams.

THUNDERWATER INN & BREWERY

Stromdorf has a number of taverns, but the most popular by far is the Thunderwater Inn. The Brenner family has run the inn and adjoining brewery for generations (see page 21 for details).

SIGNS OF FAITH AT THE TEMPLE

A thick brass rod trails from the tower's spire, down the side of the building, and into the ground. Whenever a storm rages above Stromdorf, lightning always seems to strike the temple, the energy coursing harmlessly down the rod. The lightning is attracted by the Azyr-charged seer-stone buried in the temple's crypt.

In the midst of a storm, the temple resounds with the clatter of lightning hitting the roof. During a ceremony, the congregation is not unnerved by this – they consider it a manifestation of Sigmar's favour.

THE THUNDERWATER INN

The inn is a large, half-timbered building, with an entrance on market square. From the Marschestrasse, a passage for coaches leads to an enclosed yard, coach house, and stables. There is an old weather-beaten coach here, and, judging by the lack of fresh mud it looks like it hasn't been driven for days, if not weeks.

The building is divided into sleeping quarters upstairs, the taproom and drinking booths downstairs, and private quarters for Brenner's family and staff in back. The taproom is lit by lanterns fixed to the walls. The windows are bolted shut, and the tables and chairs are fixed to the wooden floor. Fights are common, and Brenner prefers to avoid expensive breakages. Behind the bar are jugs of ale and bottles of liquor, and a blunderbuss hangs on the wall.

When the PCs are at the Thunderwater Inn, put the *Small Town Inn* location card into play. There is always plenty of room at the inn, except on the last Marktag of the month when town is full of farmers, and the only available beds are in the common room.

The place reeks of stale beer and sweat, and a fog of tobacco smoke hangs heavy in the air. The inn is packed every evening as locals seek shelter here from the rain, but one chair by the fire sits empty most nights. If asked, townsfolk will claim the chair belongs to Franz Bieber. Most people are chatting or laughing with friends. A few tables are devoted to serious games of cards. The bar is manned by Sebastien Brenner, the proprietor, and his youngest sons, Hans and Freidrich, helped by a variety of pretty serving girls.

Regulars include Lukas Kaltenbach, Franz Bieber (when he is in town), and Gert Dreigo after work. Eduardo Rodrigues spins his yarns when he has money for drink, and Reinhard the Rooster may be performing before an enthusiastically booing crowd. Niklas Schulmann has rented a room in the inn, but does not socialise downstairs. See pages 21-23 for details on these NPCs.

A HARMLESS PRANK

Brenner's lads enjoy playing a prank on newcomers. One of the ales they serve is called Marshwater, and the lads claim that a live Reik eel is used in the brewing process to add 'body' to the drink. If a customer asks for a stein of this brew, they are warned off: "This ale's a bit strong for out-of-towners. Sure you're ready for it?"

If the customer persists, the barmen secretly drop a live tadpole into the brew. The customer's reaction to the turgid, churning brew is a constant source of amusement for regulars.

THUNDERWATER ALE

The Brenners' signature beer is exported throughout the Reikland. Even dwarfs, notoriously condescending towards human beer, don't find much to grumble about with this potent stuff. A sip (or a swig for a dwarf) is like a mule kick to the head, and it has a distinctive peaty aftertaste. Humans can only manage a pint or two, but dwarfs down it by the keful.

Thunderwater Ale sells at 5 brass a half-pint, or 15 brass a keg (4 pints). Drinking more than a pint (or a keg in the case dwarfs) will result in the character becoming intoxicated for several hours. A character may try to avoid this by making an **Easy (1d) Resilience check**. After each additional pint (or keg for dwarfs) make another Resilience check, increasing the challenge level by one. While a

THE ROADS

The three main roads in Stromdorf all lead from the market square. Schumtzigstrasse ends at the Reikland Gate in the west, Sumpfstasse winds north to the Altdorf Gate, and Marschestrasse leads to the eastern Wissenland Gate. Buildings in the town are well spaced out, unlike cramped cities such as Altdorf, so the roads are quite wide. Overall, the town has a spacious, airy feel to it.

An unusual feature is that raised planks of wood have been laid along each of these streets, so that folk will not get stuck in the churning mud of the road's surface. The entire market square is also raised on planks. Away from these areas, the smaller streets and back-alleys of Stromdorf are a mire of sucking mud, and characters add one misfortune ■ die to all checks involving movement along them.

Because the roads outside Stromdorf are often in poor condition due to the frequent rain, the use of carts and wagons has historically been more challenging than in drier climes. Pack animals, such as mules or oxen, tend to be more reliable for transporting goods than wheeled vehicles.

The recent unyielding storms, however, have made the roads particularly difficult for large wheeled vehicles such as coaches or two-axle wagons to navigate through the muck and mire.

character is intoxicated, all of his skill checks add 2 misfortune ■ dice and 1 fortune □ die. Elves tend to think it tastes like acrid pond water.

THE BREWERY

Next to the inn is the Brenner Brewery, surrounded by a tall, ivy-covered wall. Through the gate is a cobbled yard, dominated by a wooden, three-storey brewhouse with a tall brick chimney. A water tank collects rain from the roof. There is always a packhorse or two being loaded with casks of beer, and the place is a hive of activity. The brewmaster is Klaus Brenner, Sebastien's elder son. He is too busy to see anyone without an appointment.

BRENNER EXPORTS

Sebastien's brother Maxo deals with the business of export from the firm's premises off the market square. He markets Brenner brews across the Reikland and beyond. He is also a very busy individual, with little time or patience for unimportant visitors.

KESSLER'S HOUSE

Captain Kessler lives in an imposing, two-storey black and white townhouse with a high-pointed roof decorated with grotesque gargoyles. His office is on the ground floor, his living quarters are on the first floor, and his servants dwell in the attic rooms. Anyone seeking an audience with Kessler must first enter a reception room, sparsely furnished save for a manuscript-strewn desk, at which sits the captain's secretary, an officious buffoon called Myer. A portrait of Emperor Karl Franz hangs on the wall behind him, the noble features lit by daylight streaming from a large window opposite. Kes-

sler's office is through a door to Myer's left. This is always locked when he is away, secured with high quality locks. Anyone waiting for an interview with Kessler must patiently stand.

Kessler's office is large, but cluttered. Shelves of books, scrolls, and boxes line the walls, and the large, chestnut desk is swamped with paperwork. A candelabra lights the room from one corner. A deep red curtain behind the desk hides a door which opens onto stairs leading to Kessler's private rooms. If present, Kessler listens to his petitioners, lounging in a high-backed, leather seat, carved with crowned griffons. For details on the captain, see page 21.

THE DEFENDERS OF STROMDORF

A small force defends the town. Refer to *Tome of Adventure* page 67 for rules on these NPCs.

WATCHMEN

These fifteen soldiers wear the uniform of Reikland: a white jerkin and hose slashed to reveal crimson underneath. Red plumes wave from their pot-helmets, and they wear the von Jungfreud badge, a stag rampant on a blue shield. They carry halberds, with swords scabbarded at their belts.

SCREAMING GERTIE & SILENT MEG

These great cannons were donated to Stromdorf in 2424 by the Gunnery School of Nuln. One of the cannons quickly became useless due to the rain, earning it the moniker Silent Meg. It stands rusting on the tower above the Reikland Gate. The other, Screaming Gertie, is still in use, mounted on the parapets above the Wissenland Gate, protected from the rain by a stout wooden shelter.

Gertie is crewed by six elderly veterans of the Imperial Gunnery School. Stromdorf is essentially a retirement posting for them.

MILITIA

Each Aubentag, thirty volunteers practise weapon training at the Field of Verena outside the Reikland gate. Captain Kessler has honed them into quite a formidable force. They carry hand weapons and wear light armour over their everyday clothes. The militia take it in turns to patrol the walls and gate-towers day and night. Treat them as Townsfolk NPCs, but their Soak Value is 2, and their stance is C1 due to their training.

AN AUDIENCE WITH THE CAPTAIN

Kessler always has a string of petitioners waiting to see him, and he must juggle his responsibilities as de facto steward of Stromdorf with his duties as commander of the watch. He gives the latter precedence, which angers those waiting to see him. The captain has been given a lot of freedom by the burgomeister to manage Stromdorf's affairs on his own, and so rarely refers matters back to Adler.

PCs may find it difficult to gain an audience with the captain. Unless the PCs have made an appointment to see him (and the secretary will smugly inform them that the captain has a week's worth of appointments waiting), roll one fortune die to see if Kessler is present. On a blank, he is elsewhere around town or in the barracks. Every Aubertag, he is training the militia at the Field of Verena. On a success, he is in his office, but has a meeting with someone else, and is unwilling to talk to the PCs (if they persist, he may have them thrown in gaol for impertinence). On a boon, he is in his office available for a quick meeting.

If they get an interview with Captain Kessler, it had better be about something important – he gives short shrift to people who waste his valuable time.

DEFENCES

Stromdorf is ringed by a crenellated stone wall, nearly ten feet tall, constructed about a thousand years ago during the Time of Three Emperors, when civil strife racked the Empire. Two bastions guard the main entrances to Stromdorf: the western Reikland Gate, leading to the Ubersreik road, and the eastern Wissenland Gate, leading to the Nuln road. On the parapets of each gatehouse is mounted an impressive-looking great cannon, the one above the Wissenland Gate protected from the elements by a stout wooden shelter.

Jutting from each bastion is a round watchtower with a conical, red-tiled roof. The black eagle motif of Reikland is emblazoned on a white flag sagging on each turret. There is a smaller entrance on the north wall, called the Altdorf Gate, allowing access to the Ulfsson mill, the wharf, and the ferry across the Ober. Visitors to each gate are met by a white-liveried representative of the town watch armed with a halberd. He checks credentials and collects tithes if needed.

Wheeled traffic and beasts of burden passing through the gates into town have to pay a toll of 2 brass, though the money is evidently not spent on maintaining the wall's upkeep – many stretches of the wall are crumbling, and in some places the stone has been replaced by nothing more than a rotting wooden palisade. The townsfolk feel secure enough not to worry about this disrepair.

Stromdorf maintains a militia to man the defences. Day and night, one militia guard patrols each section of the wall, and one keeps watch in each tower. Each sentry is armed with a crossbow. If Stromdorf comes under attack, those in the towers will ring the alarm bells to summon help.

BARRACKS

The barracks are a collection of dour, brick buildings near the Reikland Gate. A tall stone wall surrounds them, and a watchman stands sentry at the only entrance, halberd at attention. He does not allow anyone entry unless they are accompanied by Captain Kessler. The barracks consist of a cramped courtyard surrounded by a long two-storey mess hall and sleeping quarters, a squat, thick-walled armoury, and a small prison.

The watchmen rotate day and night shifts. During the day, five of them are snoring in the sleeping quarters and five either lounging off-duty in the mess hall, eating and gambling, or practising their fighting skills in the courtyard. This leaves five men on duty at all hours, guarding the gatehouses, the town hall, and the entrance to the barracks. At night, all ten off-duty watchmen sleep.

The watchmen are ready to rush into action when summoned, and keep their weapons close by. While awake, their armour is strapped on. It takes the watch a few minutes to reach market square, unless they need to strap on armour. In an emergency, un-armoured watchmen will only bother to stick a helmet on their heads before running to answer a call to arms.

ARMOURY

The armoury has no windows and is guarded by a thick, securely locked iron portal. Only Kessler, Adler, and Kessler's lieutenant, Balthar, have a key. A **Daunting (4d) Skulduggery check** must be made to pick the lock, which has been manufactured by a master Altdorf locksmith.

Within, there are about two dozen spears and as many swords – enough to arm Stromdorf's militia. There are also a few spare helmets, mail shirts, and halberds, and plenty of barrels of black-powder for the cannon, though the powder is as old as the cannon themselves, and is of poor craftsmanship. Anyone using the old blackpowder adds one misfortune ■ die to any relevant checks.

THE GAOL HOUSE

This cold, dark gaol, with barred slits for windows, houses six cells which flood with heavy rain. Prisoners often have to stand in six inches of filthy water swarming with leeches. Inmates are guarded by Spitz the gaoler (see page 23), who enjoys discussing abstract philosophy with his wards – punishment enough in itself! A **Daunting (4d) Skulduggery check** must be made to pick the locks of the cell doors.

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

Stromdorf isn't plagued by much crime, being too poor to attract organised criminals. However, Stromdorfers spend much of their free time in the town's many taverns, due to the driving rain, and there are frequent bar room brawls. The watch tends to ignore petty brawlers, though the worst offenders face a day in the pillory, near the Gerber tannery. Apprentice tanners pelt those in the stocks with ordure, but the stench from the tannery makes a stay in the pillory horrible.

There are six small oubliettes below the barracks at the Reikland Gate, waiting for those who have committed serious offences: theft or grievous assault. Major criminals are held in the oubliettes to await judgement from the burgomeister, or in his absence, the captain of the watch. Major trials are meant to be held in the town hall before the assembled jury of of the town council, but petty crime is judged there and then by Kessler at the barracks. Sentences include banishment, branding, or whipping. Murderers and persistent felons are hung from gallows in the Field of Verena outside the town walls. Currently the corpses of two sheep rustlers hang from the gibbets there, carrion for the crows.

A FINAL JUDGEMENT

The town still talks about the sensational trial of the scholar Lazarus Mourn, a resident of the town who, a year ago, was revealed to be a practising necromancer. He was dragged before the

ARE YOU LOCAL?

Most Stromdorfers are an insular and traditional breed, who like things as they are and don't like outsiders coming into their town upsetting things.

PCs not born in Stromdorf add one misfortune ■ die to all *Social* actions targeting NPCs in Stromdorf, except those specifically listed as non-locals in their descriptions. This penalty ceases to apply as soon as the PCs win the townsfolk over – for example, by actively helping to defend the town against the beastmen in Chapter 1.

Stromdorfers have a particular disdain for those who are evidently 'not from these parts.' Non-human PCs, or humans who hail from outside Reikland, are counted as outsiders for the purposes of buying goods (see page 73 of the *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* rulebook). They fear elves and wizards, for these types rarely visit the town, and a room will quickly empty if an elf or wizard makes his appearance, unless they have won the Stromdorfers' respect.

burgomeister, who sentenced him to death by burning on a pyre erected on the Field of Verena. It is said that the rain ceased on the day of the execution – no doubt the gods wanted this nefarious criminal to suffer. A charred circle remains where the bonfire was, and no grass has grown there since the burning.

THE GERBER TANNERY

You can smell the tannery long before you see it. The faint stench of ordure hangs over Stromdorf, getting stronger the closer one gets to the Altdorf Gate. The constant rain dampens the worst of the stink, but it is always there, lurking in the air. It takes a while to get used to the stench – characters add one misfortune ■ die to Observation checks based on the sense of smell. Once per day, a character may attempt to pass an **Easy (1d) Resilience check** to acclimate to the smell. If successful the character no longer suffers the penalty. However, within the tannery itself, all PCs suffer this penalty.

The tannery is protected by a low wall, and beyond its gates lie rows upon rows of pits, containing hides curing in solutions of dung, urine, and animal brains. It is the unpleasant job of the tanners to treat these hides until they have produced the finest leather. Children earn a few pennies collecting animal dung off the streets, and collecting the contents of chamber-pots from houses.

Marcel Gerber, the owner, rarely visits (for obvious reasons) and manages affairs from his comfortable offices on market square. The master tanner, Gert Dreigo, directs the work at the tannery itself.

THE STOCKS

Outside the tannery gates stand the stocks, where transgressors are shackled to face the ire of the townsfolk. They are usually empty unless Hanco Mücke has been agitating, or a serious brawl erupted earlier.

STOCKYARDS & GRANARIES

Near the Wissenland Gate are the stockyards, a vast array of animal pens where sheep are brought to be auctioned on the last Marktag every month. On that day, the area is a sea of wool. Above the bleat-

ing can be heard the staccato rhythm of auctioneers directing sales. Ringing the stockyards are abattoirs, where livestock destined for the pot meet a bloody end.

Nearby are the granaries, like giant bee-hives raised on stilts to keep vermin at bay. This is where the grain is stored after it is brought in from the fields at harvest time, before it is turned to flour at the mill. The granaries are well-maintained, as it is vital that the harvest is not spoiled by the rain or vermin, which could mean starvation for the town's population.

THE STEWPOT HOSTELRY

This hostelry, off the Schumtzigstrasse, used to cater to the out-of-town merchants who came to visit town. Since Stromdorf has fallen into decline, so have the fortunes of Keila Cobblepot, its halfling proprietress (see page 22). Yet she maintains the business, despite its lack of custom. She is rumoured to have earned her fortune in the kitchens of the Imperial Palace in Altdorf, though she remains tight-lipped about how she manages to keep the tavern afloat.

The Stewpot is a homely place to drink, and the many mouth-watering dishes on the menu are testament to Keila's skill in the kitchen. There is always a fire in the hearth to warm your boots, and the place is kept clean and comfortable.

However, most Stromdorfers find the Stewpot staid and boring. Keila runs the place with quiet efficiency. Of late, her only regulars have been watchmen from the nearby barracks – another reason why locals avoid the place. The halfling offers a cut-price menu for these lawmen, to maintain their custom so as to keep out undesirables.

Every Marktag afternoon, Reiner Holtz (see page 30) has a meal at the Stewpot. His rustic dress looks incongruous in this dainty establishment. After eating, he leaves at dusk to pursue his evil motives. His motivations and link to Keila Cobblepot are explained starting on page 27.

OTHER BUILDINGS

The majority of buildings in Stromdorf are nondescript dwellings and shops, ranging from dilapidated wooden huts to modest, half-timbered buildings, one or two storeys high. Roofs have a steep pitch, to allow the rain to quickly roll off, making the buildings look taller than they are. The buildings are spaced out, and have enough room for a small garden to grow vegetables or keep chickens or pigs.

SURROUNDING LANDS

North of Stromdorf lies the Reikwald, a wall of forest on the horizon. To the south lies the Fleuchtschussel, where farmers scratch a living from waterlogged lowlands and bleak hills, the Grey Mountains glowering in the distance. The closest towns are Ubersreik, forty miles west, and Auerswald, twenty five miles north, which can both be reached by road or along the River Teufel. Nuln lies about a hundred and forty miles east along a dangerous overland route.

RIVERS

Stromdorf lies near the confluence of three rivers, the wide Teufel, the angry Ober, and the lazy Tranig.

Some say the Teufel's reddish tint is caused by blood flowing from a never-ending battle between dwarfs and goblins, fought at its source in the mountains near Ubersreik. It flows north passing Auerswald and Grunburg, until it hits the Reik at Castle Reikguard a little more than 100 miles from Stromdorf.

A rickety bridge spans the river about a mile west of Stromdorf. A half mile to the south, the Tranig meets the Teufel near Stromdorf's Garden of Morr. The Tranig winds lazily from the foothills of the Grey Mountains. No fish live in its black depths, and it is known as Morr's Stream. Its only crossing point is at a cascade known as Frothing Ford, where boulders behind the waterfall provide stepping stones. Here Stichelm won his famous victory.

The Ober roars from a lake high in the Grey Mountains. It disappears into swampland before re-emerging as a gushing torrent a few miles east of Stromdorf, where an old wooden bridge crosses it.

Most journeys from Ubersreik are done by river, and inns dot every dozen miles or so along the Teufel. Roadwardens patrol the banks, guarding against bandits.

ROADS

The road from Ubersreik follows the Teufel north to Auerswald and beyond, bypassing Stormdorf. Given the unreliability of the roads, no coaching lines have regularly scheduled runs to Stromdorf. There is little traffic eastwards; the lonely road to Nuln skirts the Reikwald, stretching through the haunts of bandits, beastmen, and goblins. Few roadwardens patrol this road. South of Stromdorf, farmers are sometimes forced to use pack animals to carry their produce into market rather than wagons when the rains have turned the dirt roads to little more than muddy strips.

OUTLYING AREAS

Within Stromdorf's immediate vicinity are the mill and wharfs, the Stromdorf ferry, and the town's cemetery.

THE STROMDORF FERRY

On the west bank of the churning Ober, just north of Stromdorf, a large raft is tethered to a wooden quay, an iron bell hanging from a post nearby. Another quay and bell are on the opposite bank. An empty ramshackle hut stands on the west bank, a rook squatting on a perch by the door, appraising visitors with beady eyes.

The ferryman, Lukas Kaltenbach (see page 22) is usually at the Thunderwater Inn. If anyone rings the bell, the rook gives a deep squawk and flies off to alert him. Lukas arrives within ten minutes, red-faced and stinking of drink, the rook on his shoulder.

He can expertly navigate the raft across the turbulent river. Anyone else trying must pass a **Hard (3d) Athletics check** to reach the other bank, or the raft sinks. The ferry toll is 1 brass per person, or 5 brass for a small cart or draft animal. Use the *Ferry Station* and *Deep River* location cards if an encounter takes place here.

THE MILL & WHARF

The mill is situated a mile north of Stromdorf, where the Ober meets the Teufel. A waterwheel turns lazily alongside an old thatched building of wood and plaster. Nearby is a stable for the mill's donkeys and a barn to store flour sacks. Eel nets hang in the water. Fridrik Ulfson is the miller (page 23).

Near the mill is a rundown wharf. If the PCs arrived here by barge, it is tethered here. There are no other barges at the wharf, which is rarely used.

THE GARDEN OF MORR

Stromdorf's cemetery, surrounded by a tall, forbidding wall, can be found where Morr's Stream meets the Teufel. It is situated far from town so that should the dead be stirred by dark magic – as it did nearly five centuries ago – the townsfolk will be safe from them.

From the Reikland Gate, a narrow coffin track leads to the Garden of Morr, cutting across fields until it reaches the Tranig, which must be crossed by a small wherry. Stromdorf's dead make their last journey along this path.

The cemetery attracts ferocious tempests. Local legend claims that the rain has never stopped falling over the Garden since the time of Stichelm's burial there. It is said that the gods weep inconsolably over the grave of this brave hero. The resident priest is Father Theoderic Grabbe (see page 24).

If any encounter takes place here, put the *Garden of Morr* location card into play. For a more detailed description of this location, see pages 43-45.

LOWLANDS

To the south of Stromdorf, a large, low-lying flood plain nestles between the Teufel and the Ober, with the Tranig flowing slowly in-between. During the winter, the rivers regularly burst their banks, covering this plain in rich, peaty sediment. As a consequence, farmers take advantage of fertile soil throughout the rest of the year. Farmsteads dot this heavily cultivated region. East of the Tranig are fields of vegetables and cereal crops, as well as hops destined for the Brenner Brewery.

Much of the land around the Ober is unfarmable – an eerie landscape of sucking slough and twisted trees known as the Oberslecht. To the west of the Tranig, cattle graze in watermeadows, a hardy, short-horned breed inured to the wet summers and biting winters.

The land rises dramatically to form the Blitzfelsen Hills, but before then, the only piece of high ground is Tempest Knap, a high mound topped by ancient ruins.

THE OBERSLECHT

A great, brown morass of sharp rushes and peat moss extends for many miles southeast of Stromdorf. Clumps of stunted trees and twisted thickets rise from the swampland. The clouds gather blackly over the marshes, rain spattering the mud and lightning splitting the sky.

In those rare moments when the storms abate, it is eerily quiet – no birdsong; only the low drone of the ravenous midges that swarm over the quagmire. Sometimes, at night, the silence is broken by the bark of a mysterious creature, and maybe an answering howl. There are stories of a race of wild half-men living deep in the marsh, but no one dares enter the Oberslecht to corroborate the tales.

The fringes of the Oberslecht provide those living nearby with a few meagre opportunities. Peat is cut from the bog and used as fertiliser and fuel for fires. Some impoverished folk search the edge of the mire for meagre lumps of bog iron which bring in a few extra pennies at Stromdorf market. A brave few head into the Oberslecht

to collect eels and other animals that live in the bog, such as frogs, snails, crayfish, and catfish, or to harvest cloudberry. Thunderwater ale includes these delicious berries in its brewing process.

However, even traipsing around the fringes of the Oberslecht is not without its dangers. Areas of deep mud have sucked victims to their doom, and the mire is home to many wild animals and poisonous plants. If a person goes inexplicably missing in Stromdorf, he or she is said to have 'Married Mistress Oberslecht.'

Clouds of vicious midges plague the marshes. Increase the Party Tension by 1 each time the PCs venture into the Oberslecht. Also, unless they take precautions to protect themselves from the insects, each PC sleeping outside in the Oberslecht recovers one less fatigue, stress, and wound from that night's rest due to biting midges.

THE HOLTZ FARMSTEAD

The most remote farm in the area is that run by the insular Holtz clan, hugging the edge of the northern reaches of the Oberslecht. This family plays a prominent part in the events of *A Gathering Storm*. More about the Holtz family and their farm appears in *Chapter 2: The Lesser Evil*.

THE NEXUS

This is the spot where the elves capped the magic leaking into the world so many millennia ago. The winding River Tranig now flows over the nexus point, and the way-stone has partially collapsed and its wards eroded by the movement of the water. Because of the untamed Azyr energy spilling into this area, the wildest storms rake this bend in the river, lightning crashing down to strike the water amidst a sheet of rain. The magic plays havoc with mortal minds, warping reality and causing madness and intense visions.

If an encounter takes place near the nexus, put the *Arcane Nexus* location card into play. The Azyr Wind of Magic is very strong here. However, this exact location of the nexus can only be discovered once the PCs have all four map-stone pieces in their possession. It plays a major part in the grand finale (see page 66).

TEMPEST KNAP

This lonely hill dominates the flat landscape all around it. About 150 feet high, crumbling stone walls and a broken pillar crown its summit. The hill seems to be a frequent target of lightning, and the hillside is slick and muddy from the unrelenting rain.

Local lore speaks of the anger of the gods destroying the once-proud tower that stood on the hill, divine vengeance for the hubris of the evil sorcerer who once dwelt there. It is said that the gods still vent their fury on the ruins, hence the constant storms. The ruins have a haunted reputation, and no one dares explore them. If the PCs make their intentions to explore the ruins known to the locals, they will be warned away with tales of the terrible, life-sucking ghost that inhabits the place.

THE RUINS

These are the remains of the ancient temple of Hoeth, though the only person who knows their true heritage is Schulmann, and he will not divulge this fact to the PCs.

Up close, the ruined walls and pillar are constructed from white marble, pitted with age and badly weathered. The remains delineate a square building which must originally have been about

twenty feet across. A high elf PC can immediately recognise the architecture as being of high elf origin. Anyone else must pass a **Hard (3d) Education check** to arrive at this conclusion.

If an encounter takes place at the ruins, put the *Ancient Elf Shrine* location card into play.

Anyone excavating the ground of the ruins uncovers the remains of a marble floor, less than a foot under the wet soil. Clearing this area yields the circular space from which the map-stone pieces were torn out. Fragments of map-stone remain, which PCs can spot on a successful **Average (2d) Observation check**. The carvings on these fist-sized pieces match those on the stones the PCs may have already discovered. A character with magical sight discerns a lingering trace of *Azyr* magic imbued in these fragments.

THE GHOST

The ruins are indeed haunted, but not by a malevolent spirit. The shade of the last elven priest of the temple, who perished here during a dwarf raid in the War of the Beard, flits among the stones. His mournful whispers unnerve anyone spending too long here. Characters at this location must make an **Average (2d) Observation check** to hear the incoherent whispers, which cause Fear 1 (*Supernatural*). If some PCs hear the whispers while others don't, increase Party Tension by 1.

A PC who passes a **Daunting (4d) Education check** realises that the whispered mutterings are ancient elvish, though any meaning is incomprehensible. High elf PCs only need to pass an **Average (2d) Education check** to discern this.

A pious elf may attempt to perform a ritual to lay the ghost to rest by making an **Average (2d) Piety check**. If he passes the check, the shade passes to the afterlife with a spectral 'Blessings be!' The elf performing the ritual gains the Invigorated condition for the remainder of the day.

SCHULMANN AND THE RUINS

A week before the PCs' arrival at Stromdorf, Schulmann performed a ritual at the ruins which inadvertently triggered the disasters now facing the town. On that night, farmers living nearby noticed shimmering blue winds swirling around the hill for several hours after midnight. They were too frightened to investigate. The PCs may learn about this if they talk to the Ackerlands (see pages 49).

If they ask the Brenners about the whereabouts of Schulmann that night, they may learn that he had gone out of town. If the PCs score any **#** boons while making any necessary social skill checks, the Brenners remember that Schulmann returned the following morning, but stayed in his room for the next few days (he was recovering from his injuries).

When Schulmann returned to Stromdorf in the early hours, he went to Hildette Krass's hut to beg for help. She was frightened that the wizard might turn her into a newt, so she concocted a healing draught for him to alleviate his dreadful injuries.

Schulmann denies any knowledge of events at the hill on that night. If pressed, he lies that he visited the Oberslecht to pick cloudberrries, a vital ingredient for his experiments. There he claims he was attacked by a Reik eel, hence his injuries.

UPLANDS

The flood plain rises several miles south of Stromdorf, where it meets the Blitzfelsen Hills. A few farmers eke out a sorry living at the edges of this rocky terrain. The Blitzfelsen Hills are lashed by unrelenting rain and lightning. The sheep are a small, hardy breed, as are the farmers, whose temperament is as stony as the ground. Deeper into the hills there is only desolate moorland, interspersed with the burnt-out ruins of hamlets, and other evidence of goblins.

The uplands continue for several leagues until the jagged peaks of the Grey Mountains stab the sky. These highlands demarcate the south-western border of the Empire. Even from Stromdorf, the mountains dominate the distant horizon to the south.

STROMDORF'S CITIZENS

This section details Stromdorf's inhabitants. They are presented based on which economic tier of society they belong to. Unless noted, all NPCs detailed here are human Townsfolk. See *Tome of Adventure*, pages 66-69, for details on Townsfolk and other NPCs. A few key NPCs who play a prominent role in the scenario are detailed at the end of this book, as noted in their description.

GOLD TIER NPCs

Only the burgomeister is of sufficient social standing to be considered a member of the gold tier.



BURGOMEISTER ADLER

Phillip Adler is in his late 40s, but looks older. His height is diminished by slouched shoulders, and his fine clothes hang untidily from his thin frame. Red-rimmed eyes peer from under receding grey hair. His gaunt, unsmiling face bears an unkempt beard, and a whiff of unwashed odor lingers about him. See page 11 for details on Adler's background.

Secrets: Several months ago, Adler had a passionate affair with Madriga, the wife of Sebastien Brenner. A few months into their affair, Madriga committed suicide. This shattered Adler. Since then, he has locked himself in the town hall composing tortuous poems to his lost love, ignoring his duties. He is apathetic and wallows in his misery. He has appointed Kessler as steward, the only man he trusts.

Special Rules: Adler is a Noble NPC with the *Catatonia* and *Lethargy* insanities. He is non-local.

SILVER TIER NPCs

These people are Stromdorf's richest inhabitants or those with political power, influence, or clout.

CAPTAIN ARNO KESSLER

Kessler has a thin, humourless face and a long waxed moustache. A black leather eye-patch covers his right eye. His good eye has a piercing stare. He sports a black wide-brimmed flat hat set at a rakish angle, and wears a breastplate over his black jerkin and close-fitting hose, both fashionably slashed. His left arm ends in a stump. A splendid sword of superior craftsmanship dangles at his belt.

Kessler was a sergeant in an Altdorf regiment until he lost his hand and eye fighting greenskins ten years ago. Handicapped, he was lucky to land a job as Stromdorf's watch captain – a post left empty for years. He has since shaped the watch and militia into a credible force. He despises fools and timewasters, and folk fear his barbed tongue. Utterly loyal to Adler, his blunt, undiplomatic method of stewardship bristles the town elders.

Special Rules: Kessler is a Soldier NPC, with 3 expertise dice, Defence 1, Soak 4. He has a *Ringling Skull* critical, reflecting his debilitations. He is non-local.

TOWN ELDERS

Stromdorf's wealthiest and most venerable merchants sit at the town council. They rarely do anything other than condemn Adler for ruining the town. Dressed in expensive finery, their arrogance matches their ostentation.

Special Rules: Treat Marcel Gerber and the other town elders as Noble NPCs (although they do not have aristocratic blood). Due to their old age, any checks based on their physical characteristics suffer one misfortune ■ die.

MARCEL GERBER

The most influential elder is Marcel Gerber, master of Stromdorf's Tanners' Guild. His balding pate is compensated by his magnificent snowy beard, and he wears a cloak of black velvet, trimmed with sable. He despises Adler as a glorified tax collector for the 'ava-

ricious' von Jungfreuds. Since the burgomeister's erratic behaviour, Gerber has been plotting his removal. He is furious that a common soldier like Kessler now controls affairs in Stromdorf.

SEBASTIEN BRENNER

A stocky man in late middle age, Sebastien has a shock of auburn hair, mean eyes, and a permanent scowl. Wearing practical workaday clothes, he owns the brewery and Thunderwater Inn. His persona is cold and distant. His wife, Madriga, died two months ago, but he seems to be bearing this loss with admirable stoicism, and not a hint of grief.

Secrets: Sebastien suspected his younger wife Madriga of having an affair. It is common knowledge that they argued violently during their last few months of marriage. What nobody realises is that the jealous Sebastien poisoned his wife, then dumped her in the town well, where it was rumoured she drowned herself. He plans a worse fate for whoever slept with Madriga.

Should Sebastien's family learn of the murder, they will ostracise him. Madriga was well-loved and is sorely missed by all of them.

Special Rules: Sebastien keeps a loaded blunderbuss above the bar of his inn. He can use the **Thundering Shot** action card.

THE BRENNER FAMILY

At 27, Klaus is Sebastien's oldest son, a jocular fellow with a head as bald as an egg and a well-rounded girth. He is brewmaster at the Brenner Brewery. His ribaldry masks his grief for his mother.

Cousin Maxo manages the export of Thunderwater Ale from his offices on market square. He wears pince-nez spectacles atop his long nose. His oiled hair and clerkish clothes are always immaculate.

Sebastian's younger sons, Freidrich and Hans, manage the bar at the Thunderwater Inn. Freidrich, with a blond crew-cut, is 20, and hopes to inherit the inn. Long-haired Hans, still in his teens, is a dreamer, lapping up tales of adventure from well-travelled customers.

HIERONYMUS KÖPFCHEN

The octogenarian professor has a long wispy beard and a pronounced stoop. He wears a baggy purple gown and floppy hat. His huge spectacles give his rheumy eyes a permanently startled expression. His house off Sumpfstasse is stacked from floor to ceiling with books. Upon his retirement from Altdorf University, Hieronymus settled in Stromdorf to continue his studies in peace, away from the bustle of the city. He becomes extremely irritable if disturbed at his home.

Special Rules: Köpfchen is a Specialist NPC, specialising in Education (history and linguistics) with Expertise 4. Due to his great age, any checks based on his physical characteristics suffer two misfortune ■■ dice instead of one. He is non-local.

DR. HARTLIEB SCHNEIDER

This physician tends to the ailments of wealthy townsfolk at his offices off the market square, for the steep fee of 20 silver. Buoyant blond hair cascades down his shoulders, and he sneers down an aquiline nose at anyone below his station. Dressed in a long black coat and starched white shirt, he carries a leather doctor's bag.

Secrets: For two years, Schneider has been hiding from Elector Countess Emmanuelle von Liebwitz of Nuln. The tincture he prescribed her failed to settle her bowels. Instead it gave her chronic flatulence, which almost caused a diplomatic incident during talks with a Tilean ambassador. The good doctor now has a price of 2,000 silver coins on his head. He hopes bounty hunters won't come snooping in this forgotten backwater.

Special Rules: Dr. Schneider is a Specialist NPC, 'specialising' in Medicine. His stance is R2, and he has Expertise 1. He is non-local.

NIKLAS SCHULMANN

Dressed in flamboyant midnight-blue robes, this young man's high cowl, skullcap, and flowing cloak are decorated with esoteric golden sigils. A small telescope, an elegant dagger, and several scrolls hang at his belt, and his staff is topped by a clockwork representation of moons and planets orbiting a golden sun.

Schulmann has a handsome face with a forked black beard. His deep brown eyes have a haughty stare. He portrays himself with smug self-assurance as an eminent wizard, a prodigy of the Celestial College.

He arrived in Stromdorf a few weeks ago, and lodges at the Thunderwater Inn. He says he is on sabbatical from the Colleges of Magic, having come to Stromdorf to study its bizarre meteorological conditions – the subject of a thesis he claims to be writing.

The locals were extremely wary of him at first, but he has won them over by helping illiterate townsfolk draft letters and read documents. Every Wellentag, he teaches local children their letters, in the common room of the Thunderwater Inn.

Secrets: In truth, Schulmann's philanthropy is just a ruse to ameliorate the townsfolk. He is actually an incompetent acolyte, who thinks he has discovered a means of getting powerful quickly. He learned of the nexus from ancient elven manuscripts and came to Stromdorf seeking the map-stones that mark its location. A week ago he explored the old elven ruins, where he botched a ritual to locate the stones. The backlash scarred him terribly. He has spent the last week desperately trying to plan another way to find the stones.

Cantrip: Each morning, Schulmann casts a cantrip to disguise his injuries. It fades as he sleeps, revealing his hideous scars. Anyone meeting Schulmann who passes a **Hard (3d) Magical Sight check** notices this cantrip. Anyone passing an **Average (2d) Spellcraft check** – reduced to **Easy (1d)** for Celestial Wizards – sees through the cantrip's disguise. At this, Schulmann tries to bluff his way out of any confrontation, or downplay the significance of the injury.

BRASS TIER NPCs

These are several of the townspeople of Stromdorf who are a cut above or more interesting than the nameless masses.

FRANZ BIEBER (POTENTIAL ALLY)

For complete stats, see page 70.

This small, slight man is dressed in rugged outdoor clothes of greens and browns. He is much tougher than he looks, honed by years spent hunting in the wilderness. Clean-shaven, with close-cropped fair hair, his blue eyes dart suspiciously everywhere. Tight-lipped, he uses words sparingly, and his movement and mannerisms

are always precise. He never parts with his strong, yew bow. A large hunting knife is sheathed at his side, a quarrel of arrows slung over one shoulder, and a tough leather backpack over the other.

Bieber is the best hunter around, and easily the best shot in Stromdorf. He has encyclopaedic knowledge of the Oberslecht, often penetrating deep into the marshes to bag game: geese for flesh, mink for fur, and giant beaver for its musk and tail – a delicacy among the nobility. He disappears for weeks at a time, and when he emerges from the swamplands, his hunting spoils are piled high on a makeshift sledge. He never talks about his experiences there.

Bieber has few friends, except Sebastien Brenner, for whom he provides meat for the pot in return for free ale whenever he is in town. He spends all his spare time at the Thunderwater Inn, drinking alone in the chair closest the fire. This is always kept empty for him, even when he is away. The locals warn off anyone from sitting there – woe betide a stranger stealing Bieber's seat!

Should anyone be vocal about entering the Oberslecht, they will be directed to Bieber. He will guide a party of adventurers through the swamp for the right price – 5 silver a day, double that for anyone he dislikes. He dislikes most folk – especially elves. But he respects honesty, courage, and forthrightness. In the Oberslecht he is in his element, but should he encounter any sign of the beastmen who dwell there, he abandons everything to pursue them. His family, lowland farmers, were ambushed by beastmen as they foraged in the marsh and he has undying hatred for these vile creatures.

KEILA COBBLEPOT

Proprietress of the Stewpot Tavern, this halfling is three feet high and rather plump. Her sweet smile greets every customer. She waddles around the Stewpot in a cheerful, yellow dress, her mousy hair tied in a bun. Her pies and tarts are delicious – some say she was head cook for the Emperor himself, a rumour she dismisses with a wave of a ladle.

Secrets: For years, Keila has been in league with the Holtz clan (pages 26-28). From time to time, she drugs a guest who will not be missed and alerts the Holtzes, who kidnap the victim. She neither knows nor cares what happens to these victims, but greedily pilfers their valuables.

Special Rules: Keila is a Specialist NPC, specialising in cooking. She has St 2, To 2, Ag 4, Fel 4. She is non-local.

GERT DREIGO

The master tanner is a large man, with a bristling black beard, meaty hands, and fierce eyes. His balding pate reveals his middle-age. At work, he is spattered in the filth of his trade, but the stink follows him even after he cleans up to relax in the Thunderwater. He uses his booming voice to good effect, voicing his opposition to Burgomeister Adler.

WALTROUT GLÖCKNER

Waltrout lives in an abandoned cellar near the Reikland Gate. Dressed in stinking rags, his hair matted with dirt, his eyes bulge and his mouth flaps like a dying fish. This simpleton scrapes a living collecting dung for the tannery. Children chase him away with stones when they see him. He often visits Brother Grabbe at the cemetery to help him assemble his sculptures of bone. His only other 'friend' was Lazarus Mourn, burnt on a pyre now two years ago. He misses the fun experiments he helped prepare, using corpses he 'borrowed' during his visits to Morr's Garden.

LUKAS KALTENBACH

A weathered, grizzled old man, the ferryman enjoys his ale too much, frequenting the Thunderwater Inn more often than his ferryshack. Although a good source of local information, he blathers tittle-tattle if allowed. He can navigate his ferry across the Ober even when worse for wear, and in all but the fiercest gale.

HILDETTE KRASS

This shy spinster, always cocooned in rags, uses her knowledge of local curatives and midwifery to help Stromdorf's poor and womenfolk. Her tumbledown shack near the Wissenland Gate is heady with the aroma of drying herbs. She ministers to women and the destitute, bidding anyone else to visit the barber-surgeon. She is mistrusted by the men, who whisper of witchcraft. She goes alone into the Oberslecht to pick herbs, and has many dark stories.

Special Rules: Hildette is a Specialist NPC, specialising in First Aid. For only 10 brass, she is willing to concoct a healing draught for someone in dire need – she just needs to grab ingredients from the Oberslecht.

ROLF MESSER

The barber-surgeon has a bushy moustache and muttonchops, a hearty laugh, and a bloody apron. His shop, off Sumpfstrasse, is marked with a red and white pole. He trims beards and hair at the front of his salon, while at the back he pulls teeth, lances boils, or, in direst circumstances, amputates limbs.

Rolf charges 1 brass for his services as a barber, and 5-10 brass for surgeon work, depending on the nature. Mainly menfolk visit him. Women prefer the more sympathetic Hildette Krass, whereas the rich see Dr. Schneider. When he has a patient, Rolf sometimes employs Reinhard the Rooster to caterwaul outside his shop and drown out the screams.

Special Rules: The barber-surgeon is a Specialist NPC, specialising in First Aid.

HANKO MÜCKE

Rather than blame his poor business acumen, this failed merchant blames his troubles on the taxes instigated by Burgomeister Adler. Mücke wears a faded crimson jacket and moth-eaten red breeches – the height of fashion a decade ago.

Violently vocal about Burgomeister Adler's shortcomings, he often stands in front of the statue of Stichlem in the market square, raving about the 'hiding tyrant.' This frequently earns him a trip to the stocks courtesy of Captain Kessler. To Kessler's annoyance, Mücke emerges completely unsoiled from this punishment – a subtle show of solidarity by the sympathetic townsfolk.

Secrets: Mücke's antics are secretly encouraged by Marcel Gerber, who uses him as a pawn to undermine Adler's authority. Mücke has the silent support of most of Gerber's workers, and if push comes to shove, he can rely on several dozen tanners to come to his aid.

KASPAR MYER

This weasely man, with receding grey curls, wears the long black robes of a scribe. He guards Captain Kessler's office, quill in hand. A stickler for procedure, he infuriates petitioners with his overly meticulous manner. He is rude to those who cross him, but is perfectly polite to those who display patience and respect the rules.

EDUARDO CASTILLO RODRIGUES (POTENTIAL ALLY)

For complete stats, see page 70.

Eduardo hails from the city of Magritta in far away Estalia. His voice is deep and rich, but often slurred with alcohol. He sports a finely waxed moustache and pointed beard, but his once-white loose-fitting shirt and tight leather trousers are torn, and the soles of his boots flap when he walks. Whenever a lady passes by, he theatrically tips his wide-brimmed, feathered Estalian hat. His prized possession is his finely crafted sword – a legacy, he says, from his father. He has dark handsome features and his hair is a mass of black curls. His wit is sharp even when the rest of him is dulled by beer.

He sleeps in Stromdorf's alleyways, but when he has begged enough money, he can be found drinking at the Thunderwater, regaling tales of his adventures in the jungles of Lustria. He claims he discovered a lost city of gold, but was chased away by angry lizard people. His homebound ship was attacked by the privateer *The Unicorn*. Its captain, Janine de Belleville, a golden-haired beauty known as the Lioness of Lyonesse, forced him to walk the plank, and he had to swim ten leagues to shore, pursued by a giant shark with a head shaped like a hammer. The fiery Estalian challenges anyone calling him a liar to a duel.

Secrets: Eduardo's early life was as a simple watchman in Magritta, but eager for adventure, he deserted his post, slipping aboard a frigate bound for the New World. He spent several years as a sellsword, accompanying brave explorers into the jungle. His story is true, except for one detail – he fell in love with Janine, but she spurned his advances and he threw himself overboard with a broken heart. Fate carried him safely to the shores of Bordeleaux, where he narrowly escaped being eaten by sharks. Wandering distraught through Bretonnia, he discovered that wine clouded his memories of his beloved pirate queen. His drunken travels through the Old World took him to Stromdorf three years ago, where he has remained thanks to the stupefying effects of Thunderwater Ale.

REINHARD THE ROOSTER

Minstrel, musician, and poet, Reinhard thinks he earned his moniker due to his slickly combed bright red hair and goatee. However, it is only when he sings that he resembles a cockerel. Regardless of his dubious talent, he provides decent enough entertainment for the boorish townsfolk, if only as the butt of their cruel jokes.

In his grey cloak trimmed with chicken feathers, he earns his crust yodelling bawdy ballads and twanging his lute at the Thunderwater Inn, and is sometimes hired by Rolf Messer to drown out the screams of his patients. He has pretensions to perform in Altdorf or Nuln, and will follow any outsider resembling a big-city aristocrat, singing loudly in the slim hope of a commission.

HUGO SPITZ

A gangly young man with a hangdog face and greasy black hair, Spitz wears ill-fitting leathers. A huge ring of keys jangles at his belt. His ambitious parents saved all they could to send him to Nuln university. He graduated, despite his low-born status, but failed to find employment in Nuln so returned home. Here, nobody appreciates his intellect. He took on a job as gaoler to survive, but at least he has a captive audience for his 'illuminating' monologues on philosophy.

SERGEANT BALTHUS THALBERG

At more than six feet tall, Watch-Sergeant Thalberg towers over almost everyone. This youthful 25 year old has a mane of light brown hair, deep brown eyes, and a heroic chin. He is armed, armoured and uniformed as a watchman. Stromdorf's girls like to swing from his muscular arms, and he obliges them – he has a soft spot for the ladies when Captain Kessler's eye is not on him.

Special Rules: Thalberg is a Soldier NPC with St 4 and To 4.

FRIDRIK ULFSSON

The town miller is a bear of a man from up north. He has flowing blond hair and drooping moustaches. His eyes are like ice. He dresses outlandishly in coarse linen tabards adorned with curling threadwork. Ulfsson speaks in a deep, bass drawl, rolling his 'r's. Some say he has ogre blood. He arrived in Stromdorf a few years ago, buying the watermill from its previous owner, apparently with a fortune in dazzling sapphires and oddly shaped gold coins.

Each Marktag, his young assistants, Jarek and Benni, load their mule up with sacks of flour to sell in town. The other townsfolk always suspect him of mixing the flour with chalk, though they dare not accuse this giant to his face. Especially since he keeps an enormous greatsword – affectionately named Frigga – mounted above the Mill's doorway. Ulfsson is non-local.

Special Rules: Fridrik is a Townsfolk NPC with St 5 and To 4.

PRIESTLY NPCs

Stromdorf has two temples, presided by holy men. They are more amenable to outsiders, and do not treat them with the hostility or superstition that other Stromdorfers tend toward.

LECTOR MAGNUS GOTTSCHALK (POTENTIAL ALLY)

For complete stats, see page 70.

This veteran warrior priest has managed Stromdorf's temple of Sigmar for more than twenty years. The townsfolk flock to hear his stirring sermons, which inspire them with hope in these dark times.

After hearing him preach, many a young man or woman has left to join the Emperor's armies, stirred by his zeal to take the good fight to the Empire's enemies. In this way, Gottschalk continues serving the realm, although he has long retired from the battlefield. In his youth, he fought countless battles against greenskin hordes, skelletal legions, and, in the frozen Kislev winter of 2480, fell regiments of Chaos Warriors.

Bull-necked and with muscles of steel, he wears an iron circlet about his bald head, fashioned with sigils of Sigmar. His eyes burn with pious rage beneath his beetled brow, and the great silver ring through his broken nose furthers his semblance to an angry ox. His face is crisscrossed with old battle scars, and the twin-tailed comet of Sigmar is branded into his forehead.

Gottschalk is always clad from neck to waist in a heavy steel breastplate, emblazoned with the cross of the Reikland, his crimson robes swishing about his legs. From his belt hang sacred relics – the bones of ancient heroes encased in gold, and a vial containing (or so he claims) the blood of Magnus the Pious, his namesake. He carries a massive double-headed warhammer, engraved with holy runes of battle that imbue it with divine alacrity.

In the last week, Lector Gottschalk's prayers have been disturbed by flashes of insight. He has seen men with the heads and hooves of wild beasts burning Stromdorf to ashes, the dead clawing from the ground, and a great, ever-hungry maw surrounded by dancing green devils consuming screaming innocents. He has seen the town sunk beneath a fathomless lake. He has also dreamed of heroes arriving from afar, bringing hope amongst the turmoil.

Gottschalk fears that Sigmar is granting him a warning, yet excitement stirs in his old heart – perhaps there approaches a final chance to wield his warhammer in the service of his god.

BROTHER THEODERIC GRABBE

Some say that this ancient priest gambled Morr at knucklebones and won immortality. He has resided at the Garden of Morr for well over sixty years. Time has been kind to Grabbe. He is straight-backed, with long white hair spilling over the plain black robes of his order, a high cowl framing his face, his skin stretched taught over his noble skull. His eyes glitter with intelligence, and his lips curl subtly into a placid smile.

Brother Grabbe performs the rituals to secure the souls of the departed a place in Morr's kingdom, and protects the cemetery from foul necromancy and flesh-hungry ghouls.

To honour Morr, Grabbe has decorated the ossuary at the Garden with the bones of the deceased, fashioning breathtaking sculptures out of bone – emblematic that even in death there is beauty. Only two people ever visit him regularly: the simpleton, Waltrout Glöckner, of whom Grabbe is very fond, and Burgomeister Adler, who used to frequently share his worries with the old priest. Grabbe never leaves the Garden, and is unaware of Adler's breakdown.

CHLODWIG FROMM

This young initiate, barely in his teens, tends to the altar of Sigmar, lighting candles, scrubbing the floor, or dusting the relics. He has a shaved head and dresses in red robes. He is a sullen lad, indignant that he has to perform such menial tasks when he should be out clubbing heretics and monsters to death with a hammer of his own.

FACELESS MUNDANE TOWNSFOLK

Most people in Stromdorf are common folk trying to earn a few crusts. Because of the weather, they always seem to be in a hurry, rushing here and there, huddled under long cloaks. They are known for black moods, and are quick to take offence. Suspicious of strangers, they respect outsiders who possess 'Stromdorf mettle.'

Many of the townsfolk are traders and craftsmen, but the largest employer is the tannery, with more than a hundred workers. Women are slightly less visible, tending to stay at home, bringing up their families – except on market days, when they brave the weather to flit from stall to stall. Children play in the streets, oblivious to the rain. Many earn a few pennies collecting dung for the tannery.

The farmers in the lowland areas are a dour breed, dressed in muddy garments, with rain-capes and wide-brimmed hats to keep themselves dry. Most plod stoically through life. The herdsmen of the uplands are physically tougher, ever watchful for goblin raiders. It is they who cause most trouble in town on market days, usually picking fights with the lowlanders, who they regard as both soft in body and in head.

All unnamed Stromdorfers count as Townsfolk NPCs, as outlined in the *Tome of Adventures* (p. 66).



CHAPTER TWO

THE LESSER EVIL

BACKGROUND

For generations, the Eigel family and the Holtz family have lived and farmed near the Oberslecht, beyond the view of most Stormdorf citizens. Separated from the rest of Stormdorf by both geography and habit, the Holtz and Eigel clans rarely emerge to visit the town, and even more rarely receive visitors. Over the years, the inbreeding resulting from this insular nature has become increasingly visible, particularly in the Holtz family, and the people of Stormdorf tend to attribute any odd behaviour to this “condition.”

And there is some very odd behaviour, indeed. Being so close to the Oberslecht, these farm families know that a herd of beastmen, the Madteeth, dwell within those wilds, a nightmare that could, with the proper motivation and leadership, wipe out all vestiges of civilisation in the region. To prevent this devastation, the families have maintained a tradition of lascivious festivals in which they sacrifice meat and ale to the herd – and consort with the beastmen in an unsavoury manner.

Occasionally, they offer up an unlucky traveller, secured with the unwitting aid of Keila Cobblepot, to the beastmen at the hag-tree near the edge of the Oberslecht. Occasionally, they offer up one of their own number to satisfy the beastmen’s carnal needs.

The beastmen are pleased by the depravity of the Holtz and Eigel families, and even more pleased by the quality of the Thunderwater Ale they bring, and suffer their farms to stand and their children to live. For now.

Occasionally, the beastmen raid their livestock and murder and cannibalise stray family members caught outside after dark. Even when their bloodlust overcomes them, they pass the first two farms by and move on to other isolated farmsteads or into the foothills to hunt goblins and sheep.

It is largely thanks to the Madteeth’s bray-shaman Foaldeath that the humans survive. Foaldeath was born to an in-bred, although human mother, Marie Holtz, and was surrendered to and raised by the beastmen tribe. Now a powerful and influential shaman, Foaldeath is a tortured being who looks with envious eyes at the peace and happiness the humans live in, hating and loving his human family and human mother in equal measure.

The most recent leader of the Madteeth, Izka, has proven far more cunning and aggressive than any of his predecessors. He is unimpressed with the sacrifices and rituals provided by the farm families, but he holds Foaldeath’s opinion in esteem, and has restrained his natural inclination to sweep through the human lands, destroying everything. But all that is about to change...

RECENT EVENTS

Florian Wechsler, an influential member of the Merchant's Guild of Ubersreik (or another town more suitable to your purposes), recently disappeared in Stormdorf, as if the city had swallowed him, his wagon, and his horses whole. In fact, Keila Cobblepot, the halfling proprietress of the Stewpot Inn, delivered him to the Holtzes, who sacrificed him. The Eigel family has been less involved since the head of their family died. The remaining sons are less willing to give up the time and livestock to appease the beastmen than past generations, and even display some moral ambiguity on the subject.

In addition to all of the other factors, Niklas Schulmann's recent ritual surrounding the high elf temple caused the Madteeth's herdstone to glow. Izka took it as a sign to push forward with raids. In light of this sign from beyond, Foaldeath could only sway Izka's bloodthirst so much. The Holtzes would be spared. The Eigns would not. Foaldeath knew a raid on the Holtzes was eventually inevitable, however, and had devised a plan to do the unthinkable: desecrate the herdstone. While the majority of the beastmen raid the Eigel farm, the Holtz family would use the merchant's wagon to steal the lightning stone. Then, with Izka weakened, Foaldeath will kill him.

But when the raid on the Eigel farm took place, only one of the surviving brothers was there. All too quickly, he was killed and the farm burnt to cinders. The Holtzes did not have enough time to even reach the herdstone and had to abandon the wagon at the edge the Oberslecht lest their schemes be discovered by Izka.

Now strangers have come to town asking after the merchant. They've been hired by the Merchant's Guild to find the man or find his signet ring, identifying him as a guild member. And every day, the weather seems to grow worse.

USING THIS CHAPTER

The adventure is presented in a linear fashion, but adventurers are wily and unpredictable sorts! The bulk of this chapter's action happens on the edge of the Oberslecht, at the Holtz family farm and in the swamp beyond, so the GM will need to find a way to entice the PCs to travel there. Clues to the missing merchant should direct them eastward, but failing that, consider a small-scale beastman raid (perhaps sniffing around the temple of Sigmar in search of another "lightning stone") to help direct them toward the Holtz farm.

EPISODE 1: THE MISSING MERCHANT

A little more than two weeks ago, Florian Wechsler, a merchant from Ubersreik, went missing in Stormdorf. His wagon, goods, and signet ring are gone. Based on their initial motivations, a party of *Mercenary* PCs may have been commissioned by the Ubersreik merchant guild to find Wechsler. *Idealistic* parties may have responded to Wechsler's wife's heartfelt plea for aid and meagre offer of payment. For *Infamous* parties, perhaps Wechsler was heavily in debt to an unsavoury "associate" in Ubersreik...

In any case, after the collapse of the bridge, the PCs have some time to investigate things in Stormdorf. There's probably no need for formal or structured encounters during this time, unless the PCs start putting the squeeze on Keila Cobblepot.

UNCOVERING CLUES

There are a number of clues to uncover that may point the PCs in the right direction. The GM should read over the following clues and decide what information to share when the PCs start to piece things together. Successful social encounters or use of Charm, Guile, Intimidate, or Leadership may help reveal the following:

- ✦ Wechsler spent the night at the Stewpot with his two bodyguards, Krantz and Olaf. Keila Cobblepot claims that he checked out very early the next morning, leaving his men behind. *"He had to wake me up to settle his bill! And I always wake up early to bake fresh bread. Would you like some?"*
- ✦ The town drunk, Eduardo Castillo Rodrigues, passed out the night in question, just across the street from the Stewpot. He saw the two bodyguards leaving the next morning, headed for the ferry wharf where the river barges normally stop. He didn't see Wechsler leave, but he did hear someone go by with a cart some time after midnight.
- ✦ Wechsler's cart went missing overnight. Cobblepot suggests that he took it with him when he left – which was, as she notes, unusually early.
- ✦ Wechsler's cart was drawn by a handsome white pony. The poor beast looked dejected in the rain, all that mud spattered over his coat.
- ✦ Reiner Holtz was in town drinking at the Stewpot that night. No one remembers seeing him leave – he must have been the last one to go home, but Keila denies seeing him at all.
- ✦ Reiner Holtz comes to town periodically, usually with a mule laden with bags of hops or a small chain of livestock to sell. He didn't have a mule this time, just his own two feet.
- ✦ Reiner Holtz bought two kegs of Brenner's best ale from the Thunderwater on his way out of town. He put them in a cart drawn by a sad-looking white pony.
- ✦ The guards on the Wissenland gate recall Reiner Holtz leaving town past midnight on the night the merchant went missing. They didn't think too much of it – Holtz often drinks in the Stewpot or Thunderwater until late, but hardly ever spends the night in town – except that they didn't recognise the white pony drawing his cart.

OTHER TIDBITS

Keila Cobblepot maintains a small herb garden behind the Stewpot, although it's been fairly well drowned in the heavy rain. A **Daunting (4d) Medicine check** or a **Hard (3d) Nature Lore check** is needed to recognise one of the bedraggled plants as an ingredient in the making of *schlaf*. If the characters have completed the introductory adventure *An Eye for An Eye* from the core set, in which this plant and the drug it makes feature heavily, the GM should provide bonus fortune dice on the check.

The incessant rain distorts tracks in the mud. Tracking the wagon is likely to be impossible. Fortunately, the location of the Holtz farm is common knowledge and any towns person can give directions that are easy to follow...and if the PCs don't ask for directions, the burning Eigel farm will serve as an excellent beacon.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED...

About two weeks ago, Florian Wechsler came to town with his bodyguards Krantz and Olaf. He bore several loads of coal into town on his cart, delivering one load to the barracks, one load to the Thunderwater Inn, and one load to Marcel Gerber. The deliveries took him most of the day and for which he collected a tidy sum of gold and silver. Having done this, he took a private room for himself at the Stewpot and put his men up in the common room.

As a wealthy out-of-towner, Wechsler was an attractive target for Keila Cobblepot. She drugged his wine with *schlaf* (see *An Eye for An Eye*), which caused him to retire early and collapse into a stupor. After the Stewpot closed for the evening, Keila crept into Wechsler's room and took everything of value – his purse, his signet ring, and his personal effects, which consisted of a fine change of clothes and a letter from his wife, but nothing else of interest. Ordinarily, she would have kept the pony and cart, too, but decided that a pure white pony was too distinctive to escape suspicion, so she sold it to Reiner Holtz for a bargain price of a few silver schillings.

Reiner Holtz, lingering behind after the last guests left, carried Wechsler's drugged body out to the stables, loaded him onto the cart, bound and gagged him, and wrapped him in the waterproof oilcloth that Wechsler had used to cover his loads of coal. Stopping by the Thunderwater to acquire two kegs of ale, Reiner headed back to his farm.

Once back at the farm, the Holtzes took Wechsler to the hag tree and chained him up. They slaughtered his pony (having already killed most of their own livestock) and offered it and the kegs of ale as sacrifices to the beastmen. It was a fine sacrifice and should have bought them peace and quiet for at least a month...but the beastmen are restless and the Holtzes are getting desperate again.

A HOT LEAD

When the characters have enough information to cast some suspicion on the Holtz's, or once they decide to head out towards the Holtz farm – or even if they seem stumped and are unsure what to do next, read the following to them:

To the east, the sullen rain clouds are streaked with red light. At first you think it might be a break in the rain at last, but then the wind shifts and a whiff of smoke reaches your nose. Something is burning in the distance.

EPISODE 2: FAMILY FEUD

Once the PCs have had time to investigate, piece together a few clues, and start to show an interest in the Holtz family and their farm, it's a good time to transition to the next act.

ACT 1: HOME SWEET HOME

If the PCs travel to the source of the smoke, they'll find the still burning remnants of the Eigel farmstead. Every building – the barn, the farmhouse, the grain silo, and two small outbuildings – has been set ablaze, and the sullen rain has managed only to make the ruins a steaming, smoky mess. The carnage is fresh enough that an **Easy (1d) Observation check** reveals distinct cloven-hoofed footprints in the mud leading into the nearby Oberslecht. It's clear the Madtooth Beastmen took no steps to conceal themselves.

The farmhouse's chimney stack is still standing (barely), and amongst the soot and ash on those grey stones is an eight-pointed star daubed in blood and dung. Trampled into the mud by the stockyard gate is a cracked wooden sign that reads: "Eigel."

There are no corpses – human, animal, or otherwise – as the beastmen have taken everything back into the Oberslecht to eat or sacrifice to their Dark Gods.

Visible on a low hill to the north is the Holtz family farm, still standing. An **Easy (1d) Intuition check** leads a PC to assume any survivors from the Eigel farmstead went there for assistance...

The Holtz farm is not that far away, but with the constant rain, the ground has become a soupy mess of mud, manure and mouldering vegetation. The GM can reinforce the murky environment by describing the squelching footsteps, nauseating odours, and slippery muck that permeates the land.

RALLY STEP

When the PC's arrive at the Holtz farm, they find two farmers in the barnyard engaged in a heated argument that is quickly reaching a boiling point. They have a brief moment to collect themselves during the rally step before the confrontation starts to escalate.

ACT 2: I HATE YOU AND I WANT YOU TO DIE!

Tristan Eigel, the only survivor of the Eigel family, is engaged in a shouting match with Fritz Holtz. Eigel's tattered clothes and soot-and-blood smeared face make it appear that he's come from the Eigel farmstead, which can still be seen dimly smouldering some distance to the south.

Eigel did not come straight to the Holtz farm, however. He and his brother Franz were away from the farm when the beastmen attacked. By the time they got back it was too late.

In desperation, Tristan and Franz trekked into the Oberslecht by themselves, to search for survivors and foolishly thinking they could exact a measure of revenge against the beastmen – a brash idea that cost Franz Eigel his life. Tristan barely escaped. Now, terrified and mad with grief, Tristan has stormed his way to the Holtz farm to rage at, plead with, and blame the Holtz family for all the evils that have befallen the Eigels.

In addition to Tristan and Fritz in the midst of their escalating argument, there are several other spectators. Otto, Marie, Reiner, and Little Otto are also in the barnyard. The other Holtzes are scattered around the farm, pretending to do their chores while they eavesdrop on the argument.

Read the following aloud as the PCs approach:

Standing in the rain in the middle of the muddy barnyard, two young men are screaming at one another. One of them is tall and gangly, with too-long, limp blonde hair and a pug nose. His clothes are torn and he is smeared with soot, mud, and blood. The other is shorter and darker, with close-set eyes and a weak chin.

"It's all your fault," screams the tall one. "They're dead because of you!"

"My fault?" roars the short one. "I told you not to stop, Tristan! I warned you! But you never listen!"

If the PCs just watch, Tristan and Fritz scream at each other for a while. Tristan is angry, and thinks that something the Holtzes did caused the beastmen to attack. Fritz believes that the Eigel's failure

to offer proper sacrifices is responsible. Phrases like "What did you think would happen?" and "Did you think they'd just go away?" and "Why my family and not yours?" are yelled back and forth.

ESCALATING TENSION

Eventually, Tristan draws a knife and stabs Fritz. Otto and Reiner leap to overpower Tristan. The PCs need to decide – quickly – if they are going to get involved.

RALLY STEP

When Tristan is dealt with one way or the other, Otto and Marie Holtz politely welcome the PCs to their home while the rest of the family stares in trepidation and awe – especially if some of the PCs are exotic-looking, such as elves or dwarfs!

ACT 3: SOMETHING ROTTEN IN THE OBERSLECHT

Once the initial excitement dies down, the PCs will likely have some questions – possibly awkward questions – for the Holtz clan. Otto will do his best to answer them, calling on Marie when he finds himself at a loss.

The Holtzes are in the complicated position of knowing that they're guilty of the terrible crimes the PCs are investigating, but also believing that what they do is for the greater good. However, they're well aware that outsiders won't view it that way – after all, the Eigels had been making the proper sacrifices for years, but they changed their minds. The best the Holtzes can hope for if their activities are discovered is to be hanged. But what the beastmen will do if they stop is far, far worse.

Their initial strategy – and Otto's automatic response – is to deny everything. Reiner was in town that night, but he didn't see anything out of the ordinary. Reiner didn't have the white pony. No one knows what happened to the Eigel farm – maybe Tristan Eigel did it before he went mad?

THE CONFRONTATION

If the PCs attempt to calm things down, create a six-space progress tracker with an event piece for the third and sixth spaces. Place a red tracking token to track the situation's Violence on the second space of the track. Place a white tracking token representing the efforts to resolve this Peacefully on the first space.

The PCs may use various social skills and actions to influence Tristan and Fritz in order to advance the Peace token. Charm is an obvious choice, but others may work, as well. Tristan, at least, is vulnerable to a Piety-based religious appeal, and Fritz could be intimidated into backing down. A Chaos Star ✱ on any failed checks advances the Violence token. Also, the Violence token advances after each PC has had a chance to help out as Fritz and Tristan scream at one another.

When the Violence token reaches the first event space, Tristan draws his knife. When it reaches the final space, Tristan attacks Fritz or whichever PC is trying to bar his way.

If the Peace token reaches the final space first, Tristan drops his knife and meekly submits to the tender ministrations of Marie Holtz and Cousin Klaus. They take him into the barn, give him a drink of strong wine, then tie him up and prepare to sacrifice him to the beastmen later.

The Holtz Family

The Holtz family are central characters for this chapter. Superstitious, insular, inbred, and deranged, the Holtzes are the worst possible examples of Empire commonfolk. With close-set eyes and weak chins, the Holtzes all share a certain vacant look, and they are neither well educated nor handsome. They are not, however, stupid, and in their every interaction with the PCs, they are trying to determine whether or not there are Witch Hunters in their midst. If the PCs give them cause for concern, the Holtzes will be making another sacrifice to the beastmen...

The Holtzes use the statistics and rules for Townsfolk NPCs from page 66 of the Tome of Adventure except as noted here, where relevant.

Otto Holtz is the clan patriarch. A thick-necked, strong-armed man with greying hair and a slight limp, Otto truly believes that what his family does is for the good of all of Stromdorf. He's suspicious of outsiders and doesn't talk much if he can help it. (St 4, To 4, Mighty Blow action card)

Marie Holtz is the true heart and soul of the clan. She is Otto's wife, and an Eigel by birth. Her dark hair has streaks of grey and her face is lined with grief and worry. She will do anything – anything – to keep her family safe, and that includes her bestial offspring, Foaldeath. (Int 4, WP 5, Fel 4, First Aid trained)

Fritz Holtz is Otto and Marie's eldest son. He has inherited his father's sombre nature but none of his bulk. Fritz used to be good friends with Tristan Eigel, but since Tristan's father died the two have quarreled more often than not – mostly over their relationship with the beastmen. Fritz is a competent hunter. (Ag 4, Longbow, Ballistic Skill trained)

Imelda Holtz is Otto and Marie's only daughter. She has close-set eyes, a squat, pig-like nose, and a soft, doughy face. No one is likely to call her lovely. She will fixate on the PC with the lowest Fellowship score – the one "most like her" – with a ridiculous infatuation, sure to be uncomfortable for all.

Cousin Klaus is a simpleton, but a monstrous simpleton. He's the one who carries the sacrifices to the hag tree, a fact which he'll happily confess if asked. He doesn't understand why they do it, or that the people who go there die, only that they "go away." (St 5, To 5, woodsman's axe great weapon, Conservative 2)

Reiner Holtz is Otto's brother. Smaller but harder than Otto, he has dark hair and grim eyes. He tends to the Holtz family business in town, transporting the hops and barley grown on the Holtz farmstead to market and returning with kegs of ale, necessary supplies, and the occasional drugged, bound, and gagged traveler courtesy of Keila Cobblepot.

Little Otto is in his teens. All he does, all day, is sit on the porch and play the mandolin. He's freakishly good, but he neither speaks nor moves from that spot for anything but a meal or a sacrifice. His jangling, disturbing playing can be heard well into the night – in fact, when it stops the silence is eerie in its own right.

Hans, Ludwig, Erich, and Johann Holtz are a confusion of shockingly similar cousins and brothers. Each with red-brown hair plastered to their heads by the incessant rain, gangly limbs, and the close-set eyes and weak chins of the Holtz clan. They are farmhands. They differ only in their derangements. Hans prefers his meat raw. Ludwig tortures small animals to death and keeps their skulls on a shelf in the barn. Erich drinks himself into a stupor every night, and if he doesn't he sobs in his sleep. Johann howls at the full moon. (Reckless 2)

Tristan Eigel is not a Holtz at all, but part of the neighbouring family. The Eigels have historically offered sacrifices to the beastmen as well as the Holtzes, but since the death of Tristan's father Bernard, they have elected not to continue the tradition. Tristan is tall, gangly, and pug-nosed, with overlong blondish hair that hangs limply even when it's not plastered to his skull by rain.

FOALDEATH

Foaldeath is a complex and troubled character, and he is central to the plot of this chapter of the Gathering Storm. Understanding his motivations is essential for the GM and may be important to the players as well, if they care to hear him speak.

It is not entirely unheard of for mutant or beastman children to be born to human parents, particularly a family as inbred and corrupt as the Holtzes. However, even degenerates such as Otto Holtz know better than to attempt to raise a mutant as one of their own – even if the creature’s Chaos-tainted nature could be kept at bay, having such a monster in their home would be an open invitation for any Witch Hunter to kill them all. Taking the child into the woods and leaving him to die is customary in these circumstances, but the Holtzes went a step further: they offered the cloven-hoofed, squalling infant up to the beastmen as a sacrifice at the hag tree in the nearby woods.

The night of the sacrifice, lightning crackled in a cloudless sky, striking the lightning stone over and over again. The beastmen, taking this as a sign from their Dark Gods, adopted the child as one of their own, naming him Foaldeath.

Foaldeath has become a respected and influential bray-shaman, gifted by the Dark Gods with cunning and magical might. He is also tortured and plagued by his origins. He loves and hates his human family in equal measure, envious of their warmth and affection and disdainful of their weakness and for abandoning him. For their part, the Holtzes don’t recognise Foaldeath as the infant they surrendered, with the exception of Marie Holtz.

With Izka and the rest of the herd incensed and frenzied by the lightning strikes, Foaldeath seeks to protect his dysfunctional family, the Holtzes, but is unable to control the beastmen’s bloodlust. His first attempt to blunt their assault has failed.

Foaldeath is growing desperate. Desperate enough to contemplate the unthinkable: approaching the PCs for help.

If the Madteeth ever understood the depth of Foaldeath’s commitment to the Holtz clan, they would tear him apart and feast on his flesh. This makes using an intermediary such as the PCs to enact his scheme more desirable. The time may yet come when Foaldeath must sacrifice his own life to preserve that of his human mother...but would he? Even Foaldeath is not certain.

Portraying Foaldeath: The GM can play up Foaldeath’s conflicted nature by having him talk and act in a halting, contemplative manner. His voice is deep and raspy, with a hollow ring to it – as if someone was speaking into the empty skull of some large animal.

When confronted with evidence that undermines their stories, the Holtzes change their tune. Wechsler sold Reiner the pony and the cart for a bargain price, provided Reiner took the pony out of town and didn’t tell anyone about it. He must have been planning to disappear. The beastmen in the swamp burned the Eigel farm, but it’s nothing to worry about. The Holtzes are more numerous and stronger than the Eigels; they can fight off any beastman attack (this is patently false, of course).

Succeeding at an **opposed Intuition versus Guile check**, pitting a PC against Otto Holtz is sufficient to penetrate his layers of lies. What happens next depends on Marie Holtz’s opinion of the party.

If Marie thinks that the party is dependable and open-minded, she’ll tell them an edited version of the real story: the Eigels have been making sacrifices to the beastmen for years. They know it’s wrong, but they have to keep the town safe. The sacrifices that the Holtzes have unwillingly participated in have been all that keep the Madteeth Beastmen from destroying everything from one river to the next. Since the head of the Eigel family died, things have been harder, and the Holtzes want out – ever since the storm began, the beastmen have been completely out of control.

Fortunately, they have a plan. Marie tells the PCs:

There’s someone I want you to meet. Please come with me.

A successful **Intuition check opposed by Marie’s Guile (Fel 4)** reveals that she’s not telling the party everything. If a character rolls any boons on the check, he understands that she’s filtering the truth to make herself look better, but genuinely wants their help and means them no harm. Then she will lead the party to the hag tree to meet with Foaldeath, which begins Episode 3.

RALLY STEP

There’s a slight, awkward pause as both sides evaluate the trustworthiness of the others.

If Marie has no reason to believe that the party will listen to her, or if they react very poorly to her ‘confession,’ she signals Otto and the Holtzes to attack, doing their best to knock the PCs out to serve as sacrifices for the beastmen’s insatiable bloodlust.

EPISODE 3: A STRANGE ALLY

This Episode serves as the transition to the finale of the adventure. If things have gone according to plan, the PCs will meet with Foaldeath by the hag tree. He explains his plan to steal the lightning stone and rob Izka of his influence and power.

A successful **Average (2d) Intuition (Int) check** reveals that, unbelievably, Foaldeath is trustworthy. Boons scored on the roll suggest his motivations are complex, but that he is somehow devoted to the Holtzes. Banes suggest his motivations are purely selfish – with Izka defeated, Foaldeath can take his place as the leader of the herd.

The rest of this section is based on the assumption that Marie Holtz leads the party to meet Foaldeath. The GM should adapt the story as necessary if events resolved differently. If Marie is guiding the PCs to a meeting with Foaldeath, read the following aloud:

Marie Holtz takes a lantern from its hook outside the farmhouse and leads you past the fields, to the edge of the Oberslecht, shadowed by the hulking form of her husband, still glowering suspiciously at you. As the twisted, stunted trees loom overhead, the misty rain conspires to sink the haunted marsh in perpetual twilight. You are glad of the lantern's feeble light as you climb onto a small hillock, a rise above the boggy ground. A small cart rests on the edge of the clearing, but what catches your eye is the massive, squat, brooding tree to the north.

Leafless, the tree's evil-looking branches are festooned with fetishes and charms, the pelts of animals, collections of feathers and bones. The knotty trunk is stained here and there with what looks to be old blood, and you realise you're walking over a collection of old bones; a cow's skull, a horse's leg, and other, more recent – and more disturbing – remains.

The PCs may have some choice things to say to the Holtzes. They may even fear they're being led into a trap. Marie tries to assuage them. "Please stay calm," she'll say. "You'll frighten him off."

Otto looms protectively over his wife. An **Easy (1d) Intuition (Int) check** reveals that Marie is frightened of what the PCs will do, but still means them no immediate harm. A **Hard (3d) Observation (Int) check** assures PCs they are not being lured into an ambush.

Once the PCs calm down enough for Marie's satisfaction, read the following text aloud to the players:

THINGS GO HORRIBLY WRONG

It's possible the PCs engage the Holtzes in combat. The Holtzes will be terrified and desperate if their secrets are revealed, and stop at nothing to prevent the PCs from escaping to Stromdorf and ruining their family. Otto, Klaus, and Fritz are competent fighters in their own right and fight with the fury of men protecting their family. The rest of the Holtzes are less effective but no less enthusiastic.

Should things turn against the Holtzes, they retreat into the Oberslecht, led by Marie. If the PCs pursue, the beastmen set upon them, massacring Holtz and PC alike in an orgy of slaughter, until Foaldeath intervenes to save his mother (and possibly the PCs). This could warrant a transition to Episode 3.

If the Holtzes are victorious, they take the PCs (alive or dead) to the hag tree and tie them up as a sacrifice, then leave them there. Foaldeath creeps up to them and offers to free the PCs in exchange for doing him a service, one which he swears by his mother's life will help preserve Stromdorf. If the PCs refuse, he offers to free them in exchange for their promise to hear him out. Transition to Episode 3.

In any case, this can turn into an opportunity for the PCs to interact with Foaldeath on something resembling friendly terms – a tricky proposition, since a beastman shaman is obviously an enemy to mankind.

"Are you there?" Marie calls into the forest around you. "I've brought friends. They can help us." There is silence, then a flash of lightning and crash of thunder overhead. The lightning has struck somewhere to the east of you, deeper into the Oberslecht. "Please," Marie calls. "We don't have much time!"

Crackling out of undergrowth, a figure looms in the twilight. He is hunched, and leaning on a wooden staff capped with an animal skull and festooned with feathers, teeth, and semi-precious stones. The figure's torn robes are similarly decorated, with a leather mantle worked with animal bones. His arms are muscular, his fingers ending in grubby, claw-like nails. When the figure speaks, it's in a voice that rasps and crackles, as if unused to speaking at all.

"I hope you can help us. She is correct; time is running out. This very night Izka the Madtooth comes to destroy the works of Man. He will not stop until no stone stands on another, until all the gods of Man are cast down and destroyed. You must take the source of his power and strip from him the favour of the Dark Gods. You must steal the lightning stone."

FOALDEATH AS AN ENEMY

It's possible that Foaldeath will not be an ally for the PCs. If the PCs harm Marie Holtz or elect to attack him, Foaldeath fights bitterly. His brays and screams contain much of the same information that his reasoned speech would have, although couched in angrier tones. Things like *"I was going to help you! Now I'll kill you, instead, and let Izka Madtooth feast upon your city!"* Or *"Who do you think has kept the herd at bay all these years? I tried to steal the lightning stone from them, tried to keep your pathetic people safe!"*

If the fight turns against him, Foaldeath flees into the Oberslecht and lead the PCs into a beastman ambush if they attempt to pursue him.

Foaldeath does his best to conceal his true nature from the PCs. If they mistake him for an Amber wizard or a priest of Taal, he does not attempt to correct them, although he won't offer those as explanations. It takes a **Hard (3d) Observation (Int) check** to notice his cloven hooves beneath his robes or other evidence of his true nature.

If revealed as a beastman, Foaldeath makes no attempt to deny it.

"You do not trust me. You think I must be leading you into a trap. If I wanted you dead, this would be the trap, here, and now. The Cloven Ones are many, and they would need less than a word to descend upon you, tear you apart, and eat your flesh. If they knew I was here, speaking with you, they would do the same to me. So worry less about whether you can trust me, and listen to what I have to say."

THE WEATHER

Over the course of their journey into the Oberslecht, the storm grows worse and worse. In fact, the closer the PCs get to the lightning stone, the more thunder and lightning and whipping rain and howling winds they experience. Finding the lightning stone is easy: each bolt of lightning arcs directly towards it.

Play the storm up for dramatic effect. Punctuate important revelations with a crash of thunder. Illuminate frightening sights with bolts of lightning.

Characters with magical sight may realise that the storm, if not precisely supernatural in nature, is heavily influenced by uncontrolled Azyr leaking into the sky. They may suspect something of the true nature of the lightning stone. Encourage this line of thought – it's important to the plot of later adventures.

Foaldeath's plan is fairly simple: fight to the herdstone, steal the lightning stone, and escape the Oberslecht. He believes that once the lightning stone is beyond the forest, he can turn the herd against Izka for his failure to protect it. If the PCs manage to kill Izka Madtooth, even better – at that point the beastmen will be too busy fighting for dominance of the herd to bother pursuing them.

The last time Foaldeath tried this plan, the bulk of the herd was off burning the Eigel farm. Unfortunately, only one of the Eigel brothers was home at the time and the herd returned from their slaughter much sooner than anticipated. The Holtzes were forced to abandon their attempt to steal the herdstone and flee back to their farm, leaving the cart behind near the hag tree.

EPISODE 4: RIDE THE LIGHTNING

Over the course of this episode, the PCs infiltrate the Oberslecht, retrieve the lightning stone, and escape. At least, that's the theory. This is the climactic finale to the chapter, so keep the pacing quick and the action tense.

The PCs might have a clever idea to distract the beastmen and give themselves an easier approach to the stone. Beastmen are not subtle creatures, and the idea of humans actually attacking them at the herdstone is inconceivable, so they shouldn't be too hard to fool at least initially. If the PCs have a clever idea to lure beastmen away, give them an easier time early in the encounter. For the final act, however, all bets are off as every beast in the forest stampedes towards them, braying to their Dark Gods.

ACT 1: TO THE STONE

First, the PCs must make their way to the lightning stone. Finding the way isn't difficult, as the constant barrage of thunderbolts overhead make it clear exactly where they're going. However, navigating the treacherous Oberslecht (particularly if they've elected to bring the cart) is more difficult.

USING A PROGRESS TRACKER

If the PCs are attempting to be stealthy, use a progress tracker to track their approach to the lightning stone and the awareness of the beastmen. Make the tracker six spaces long with event spaces on the third and sixth space. Place a Party token and a Beastman token on the first space.

Advance the Party token when the PCs make successful **Stealth (Ag) checks** (to sneak), **Nature Lore (Int) checks** (to find a safe trail), **Athletics (St) checks** (to wrestle the cart through the mud), or use other skills or ideas that you deem appropriate to the situation. The difficulty for most of these checks should be Easy (1d) or Average (2d) – after all, the GM wants to PCs to make it to the lightning stone... perhaps just a bit later, or more fatigued, than they were expecting.

Advance the Beastman token whenever the PCs fail a key check and after each PC has had a chance to act to advance towards their goal. This token represents the general level of alertness of the beastmen herd.

If the Party token reaches the first event space before the Beastman token, the PCs see their goal through the trees and receive one fortune ☐ die on all future skill checks during this act. If the Beastmen token reaches the first event space before the Party token, the beastmen pick up their scent and become more attentive. The difficulty of all the party's checks to sneak up on the camp increases by 1.

If the Party token reaches the final event space first, they have successfully snuck up to the edge of the lightning stone clearing without the Madteeth noticing. Act 2 begins.

If the Beastmen token reaches the final event space first, or if the party makes no attempt towards stealth, they are ambushed by 4 Ungors and 1 Gor. These beastmen, still fresh off the slaughter at the Eigel farm, are overconfident and won't bother to attempt to alert the others until the beastmen are outnumbered by the PCs. At that point they break and run, leading the PCs straight to the lightning stone. Act 2 begins.

THE RALLY STEP

During the rally step, Izka Madtooth looms before the lightning stone, bellowing his rage at the sky. Lightning strikes the stone, bringing Izka to his knees in supplication before the Dark Gods. The beastmen slowly rouse themselves, noticing the intruders in their midst. A fight is brewing!

ACT 2: TAME THE LIGHTNING

The lightning stone clearing is scattered with beastmen. Use the lightning stone location card for this act and make sure that its location is clear to all the PCs – unless they did unusually well in the previous act, they begin at long range from the stone. Izka Madtooth is engaged with the stone, and scattered around the clearing are 2 standard Gors and 3 Ungor henchmen per PC present.

During this encounter, any time a ✧ Chaos Star is rolled on a check, lightning strikes the lightning stone. Anyone engaged with the stone takes 1 wound, ignoring soak and Toughness. The beastmen bray and beat their chests, and gain 1 fortune die to all checks until the end of the current round.

The herdstone is a little taller than a human, so reaching the lightning stone lashed on its top should be easy enough. Removing the stone requires either a **Hard (3d) Athletics check** to break the ropes, or 3 actions spent cutting or untying the ropes to get it free.

A BRIEF RESPITE

Once the PCs manage to either kill Izka Madtooth or retrieve the stone, there is a temporary lull in the action. During the rally step, a PC carrying the stone can place it in the cart. The beastmen bellow and reinforcements (2 Ungor henchmen and 1 standard Gor per conscious PC) emerge from the trees, starting at long range from the herdstone.

ACT 3: ESCAPE THE OBERSLECHT

Once the PCs have the stone, they must escape the raging beastman herd!

USING A PROGRESS TRACKER

Use a ten space progress tracker, with an event space at the 5th and 10th space on the track. Place an Escape token on the first space. Each turn that the PCs make progress towards the edge of the Oberslecht, advance the Escape token one space. When the Escape token reaches the first event marker, a new wave of 2 Ungor henchmen and 1 standard Gor per PC appear at long range, closing fast.



When the Escape token reaches the final event space, the PCs have reached the edge of the Oberslecht and the beastmen give up the chase – Izka has failed and they must choose a new leader. If Foaldeath and Izka are still alive, the shaman strikes down the Wargor and brings the rest of the herd back to the herdstone.

THINNING THE HERD

If the PCs have slain Izka, the Gors immediately begin braying challenges to one another. From this point on, Gors charge and attack either PCs or other Gors – whichever is closer. When the PCs escape with the stone (using the progress tracker noted above), only Ungors pursue them. However, at the first event marker instead of a new wave of Gors and Ungors, the GM may wish to have Foaldeath attack the PCs in order to keep the Holtzes' secret safe.

IZKA MADTOOTH

Izka Madtooth is a Wargor, the powerful leader of the Madteeth beastman herd. He believes the lightning that strikes the herdstone is a sign from the Dark Gods to go forth and wreak havoc, and that as long as he has the favour of the Dark Gods he and the Madteeth herd are invincible.

Like most of his kind (in fact, all of the Madteeth but Foaldeath), Izka desires nothing more than to tear down the works of Man and feast on meat until the world ends in fire and blood. Izka Madtooth is not a complicated foe, but he is very dangerous.

THE CART



The adventure includes a Cart location card. Along with standups for the PCs and any enemies they face, using the Cart location card can help the players keep track of where they are in relation to the cart and any beastmen in the area.

When they reach the lightning stone, they may wish to place it in the cart for easier portage. In this case the GM can place the Lightning Stone item card below the Cart location card in a way so the name of the item card is still visible.

The PCs may have the “bright idea” to stay behind and finish off the victorious Gors to destroy the beastman herd. This is extremely unwise, as every beastman in the Oberslecht has taken up the call of challenge and is en-route to the herdstone. Within a half hour, several dozen Gors arrive to prove their worth.

As more beastmen arrive, they form a ring around the Gors battling near the stone. When a victor is determined, one of the recently-arrived beastmen steps up to challenge him, and so on until no one else steps forward. The beastmen waiting their turn to challenge will certainly kill and eat the PCs, as theatre-goers eat meat pies.

During this act, lightning strikes where the lightning stone has recently been. In game terms, a lightning strike lands where the lightning stone was the previous game round, its presence gradually guiding lightning to its location. If the PCs keep it moving they should be safe from the lightning. Clever PCs might be able to use this to discourage beastman pursuit – let them.

DENOUEMENT

When the PCs emerge from the Oberslecht, the Holtzes (if any have survived) are eagerly awaiting them. They have no interest in the lightning stone – indeed, they’d be happiest if the PCs took it far away from them, in case the beastmen come looking for it. They want to know if the beastmen have been defeated and if the family is finally safe from their depredations.

Marie Holtz asks after Foaldeath and whether he’s alive or dead. If the answer is “dead,” she excuses herself and goes to cry in the barn. This is as close as she’ll get to admitting that he is her son.

If the PCs intend to turn the Holtzes over to the authorities, they’ll have to do some creative thinking (possibly aided with some Guile, Charm, or Intimidate checks) to prevent another outbreak of hostilities. Otherwise, the Holtzes thank them for their help and swear that their days of offering sacrifices are done.

As the lightning stone leaves the Oberslecht, the storm quiets significantly. The stone needs to remain in one place for nearly a day to excite the lightning into a similar frenzy – which will likely happen back in Stromdorf.

BACK IN STROMDORF

Nicolai Kessler is curious to know what the PCs discovered in the ashes of the Eigel farm and whether he should be expecting an attack from the Oberslecht.

If the PCs tell him what they’ve learned about the Holtzes, he rounds up a troop of guards and marches out to the farm to arrest them. They’ll stand trial, be found guilty, and condemned to hang from their necks until dead. Marie Holtz won’t be found, however, having vanished into the Oberslecht to die or return when least expected, as best suits your needs.

As an added wrinkle, any Holtzes killed in this manner may end up returning as zombies during Chapter Two!

THE WIZARD’S CURIOSITY

Niklas Schulmann is very interested in the strange stone the PCs have brought back with them. He seeks the party out and asks to see the stone, sharing with them his fable about his mission for the Celestial College. This is explored in more detail in the Interlude following this chapter.

VOUCHING FOR THE PARTY

In the unlikely even that Tristan Eigel has survived this ordeal, he will give a faithful report of the PCs’ heroism, which should go a long way towards making them feel welcome in Stromdorf.

THE SCATTERED HERD

So long as their herdstone remains intact, the beastmen remain a lurking threat in the Oberslecht. If Foaldeath is dead but Izka lives, Izka Madtooth plots to recover the missing lightning stone and may well deduce that there are others like it. If so, he stops at nothing to reassemble the entire stone, believing it will bring him great favour from the Dark Gods.

If Izka is dead but Foaldeath lives, the bray shaman attempts to return the herd to its former status, accepting sacrifices from the Holtzes and leaving them relatively unmolested. If both Izka and Foaldeath are dead, only the GM can tell what will happen next.

MORE OR FEWER PCs?

For most of this adventure, the number of PCs in the party hasn’t been terribly important. However, this episode features a number of fights. The battles presented here are balanced to provide a healthy challenge to a party of 3 characters, at least one of whom is a good fighter.

Feel free to adjust your battles upwards by adding additional Gors, Tuskors (use Boar stats for these Chaos-tainted boar-like beasts) or Chaos Warhounds (use Wolf stats). To make the fights easier, treat the Ungors or even the Gors as henchmen, or reduce the number of enemies.

INTERLUDE

A CURIOUS WIZARD

If the adventurers have been successful, they return from the Oberslecht with the lightning stone, and the Holtz clan has been dealt with – possibly taken in chains to Stromdorf to join Keila Cobblepot in the cells.

When the PCs enter Stromdorf, they attract a great crowd, eager to hear their exploits. Captain Kessler meets them to find out what has transpired, and possibly congratulate them. If arrests have been made, he informs the PCs that they are to be key witnesses at the trial of the miscreants the following day at town hall.

It is up to the GM to decide exactly when the trial is held. It is suggested the GM give the PCs a few hours to recover from their adventure – and ensure an opportunity to meet Schulmann again.

ACADEMIC INTEREST

Schulmann is attracted by the crowd surrounding the adventurers. If they have the lightning stone, his magical sight alerts him to the fact that it is one of the map-stone shards he is searching for. He greets the adventurers and expresses great interest in the stone. After a cursory examination, he tells the PCs that he is an expert in ancient elvish, and can translate the text. He just needs a day or two to decipher the script.

Schulmann tells the PCs that he has been sent here by his masters at the Celestial College to find these stones, which together form a map pinpointing a source of magical power which his superiors want to investigate. He says the Colleges of Magic will reward the PCs well if they discover all of these stones.

If he cannot persuade the PCs to lend him the stone, he bides his time and attempts to steal the shards when they have acquired all of them (see *Chapter 6: Schulmann's Gambit*).

SCHULMANN & THE STONES

Schulmann stores any map stones he acquires in his lodgings, and constructs a massive brass contraption of pipes and wires that sticks out of his window and is buried into the ground below. This prevents any lightning attracted by the stones from destroying the Thunderwater Inn. This 'ungodly contraption' serves to cement Schulmann's growing reputation as someone 'odd in his head' among the townsfolk.

If he takes possession of any stones, Schulmann gradually becomes more and more haggard looking as his sleep is ravaged by prophetic nightmares. However, his dreams grant him insights into the location of the other stones. These are detailed in subsequent chapters of this adventure.

THE MAP STONES

The Azyr magic leaking from the stones pervades peoples' dreams. A character sleeping within close range of a shard must make an **Average (2d) Discipline check**. If he fails, his dreams are disturbed by vivid visions, and he has a subtle and confusing glimpse of a near-future event. He also recovers one less stress, fatigue, and wound when he wakes up. If the check generates any bane effects, he recovers no stress, fatigue, or wounds as the nightmares keep him awake.

The script is in ancient high elf runes. A character can attempt to read it if he passes a **Daunting (4d) Education check** (add one misfortune ■ die due to the worn lettering). It will take four hours to decipher one map-stone shard (you can adjust this according to banes or boons scored). Give a PC who translates the text the appropriate Map Stone Shard handout.

LIGHTNING STRIKES TWICE

As hinted at earlier, the stones attract lightning, and when lightning strikes, it strikes near one of the map stone shards. Anyone engaged with a map stone shard when lightning strikes suffers 1 wound ignoring Toughness and armour, as described on page 30.

Anyone struck *directly* by lightning must roll 3 misfortune dice ■■■. The unfortunate soul suffers 1 wound for each challenge ✕ rolled, and 1 critical wound for each bane ☠ rolled. Any wounds inflicted by a lightning strike ignore Toughness and soak.

NO SUSPECTS? NO STONES?

If nobody is arrested for their involvement in the scheme to kidnap and sacrifice passersby, the GM can simply skip the trial. If this is the case, then only two zombies are awoken during the night in Chapter 3 – the rustlers hanging in the Field of Verena.

If the PCs fail to return with the lightning stone, the GM may wish to postpone the encounter with Schulmann until they finally acquire a map stone, or possibly have him provide insights (through his prophetic, haunting dreams and visions) to help guide the characters.

At this point, if played properly, Schulmann comes across as an eccentric, odd, but generally helpful NPC, and a potential source of information to ancient history, old languages, and other scholarly knowledge some groups of characters may otherwise not have access to.



CHAPTER THREE

A TIME TO MOURN

The necromancer, Lazarus Mourn, burned to death on a pyre in the Field of Verena a year ago, has risen again.

Before his arrest, Mourn had time to perform a ritual that allowed his spirit to be captured by the *Pendant of Nectanubis*. During Mourn's travels many years ago, he had purchased this treasure from a blind beggar in an Arabyan bazaar. He learned of its dreadful powers by researching forbidden lore.

Burgomeister Adler accompanied Captain Kessler and his men when they raided Mourn's house. They found the limp body of the necromancer on the floor. Unbeknownst to them, Mourn's spirit was already gone, yet his bereft body remained alive. The watchmen found grisly evidence of Mourn's necromantic experiments in the cellar, and his body was dragged to the gaol.

During the search, Adler succumbed to temptation and pocketed the necklace he found next to the necromancer's body.

Mourn's body remained unconscious, despite Dr. Schneider's ministrations. A perfunctory trial was held, the comatose necromancer held up by two guards. Adler pronounced a sentence of death, and Mourn's body was immediately carried to the pyre in the Field of Verena. The entire town assembled to jeer as Mourn and his necromantic paraphernalia burned, but everyone felt cheated that the prisoner did not utter a single scream. A miracle occurred during the execution that is still talked about – the clouds parted, and the rain ceased to fall until the necromancer was reduced to ashes. Evidently, the gods themselves wanted this heretic dead.

After the execution, Adler gifted the necklace he had found to his young lover Madriga – the burgomeister was having a torrid affair with Sebastian Brenner's fetching wife! She accepted it with pleasure; the beautiful jewellery was entrancing.

In the following months Madriga Brenner began to have terrible nightmares. Then she experienced unstoppable screaming fits, and would pull at her hair and scratch at her face until bloodied. Sometimes she would attack people she knew, insanity burning in her eyes, until Madriga had to be subdued by the servants. She became paranoid and delusional, certain someone was trying to kill her. She fought violently with her husband, Sebastian Brenner, who resorted to medicines from Doctor Schneider to calm her. He was considering sending her to stay with the Sisters of Shallya...but before he could, Madriga drowned herself in the town well. Or so everyone thought.

In reality, Mourn's spirit was trying to control Madriga, so Lazarus could murder Adler by the hands of his own lover – thereby both exposing his shameful secret and exacting revenge. Brenner took her erratic behavior as proof of her infidelity, coming to the correct conclusion for the wrong reasons. He poisoned her, dumping her body down the well and inadvertently spoiling Mourn's plot. She was buried a few days later. On the night before Madriga's funeral, Adler secretly crept to her coffin to gaze on his lover's face one last time, and slipped over her neck the pendant she had so loved to wear as a symbol of his devotion.

The death of Madriga unhinged the burgomeister. Since his lover's funeral, Adler has shut himself away from society, and has been wallowing in grief behind the closed doors of his private rooms in the town hall.

LAZARUS RISING

So Madriga was laid to rest in the Garden of Morr, the pendant of Nectanubis around her neck. Its necromantic powers were dulled by the holy sigils of Morr that warded the cemetery. However, two weeks ago, the energy from Schulmann's failed ritual backlashed into the map-stone that stands as the tombstone of the hero Olaus Stichelm. Magic coursed through the grave-soil, awakening the powers of the pendant.

Mourn's spirit came to life once more, possessing Madriga's rotting corpse. For days, the necromancer lay still, gathering his strength and learning to use his new body. Then, he clawed his way out of the woman's grave, and sought out the resident priest of Morr, Theoderic Grabbe. Mourn surprised Grabbe as he slept, the very night the PCs journeyed into the Oberslecht. He then bound the priest with an enchantment that kept him comatose – the necromancer needed the essence of a living person to power his spells. Soon, Mourn will raise the dead to guard him as he prepares a ritual of horrific power.

While alive, Mourn had researched a ritual called *Marche Funebre* – the March of Death. The ritual would place an entire army of the living dead at his command – enough to destroy Stromdorf. The grimoire containing the ritual had been burned in the pyre, but Mourn had luckily made a copy; he had scarred the text into the flesh of his idiot servant, Waltrout Glöckinger, who used to steal bodies from the cemetery for the necromancer's morbid experiments. No one suspected that the simpleton had been in league with the necromancer, and he escaped conviction. Mourn has psychically summoned Waltrout to come to the cemetery, and is awaiting his arrival.

EPISODE 1: THE TRIAL

A trial of Keila Cobblepot, the Holtz clan, or any others found responsible for the disappearance of Florian Wechsler, kidnapping, consorting with Chaos – or other abominable offences occurring so far in the campaign – takes place in the afternoon in the sombre atmosphere of the gallery of justice.

The entire town seems to have converged on the town hall, with people spilling into the street outside, braving the rain. There is hardly room to move in the public area, with people standing on the rows of seating to get a better view of the dock, where the accused stand in chains, heads bowed. Five watchmen stand guard over the prisoners. The town elders reside, acting as judge and jury, all in fawn white Reikland robes. Chief among them is Marcel Gerber (see page 19), who sits on the judgement seat. Behind him, a statue of blind Verena raises aloft her sword. Captain Kessler stands sternly facing the jurors, as chief prosecutor. Burgomeister Adler is nowhere to be seen.

The trial begins with Kessler summarising the charges against the accused: kidnap, theft, murder, consorting with creatures of Chaos, blasphemy, perverting the course of the Emperor's justice, and so forth, as relevant. He describes their crimes in great detail (a good time for the GM to summarise events for his players). The more shocking parts of his speech elicit gasps of horror from the crowd.

The trial can be as involved an encounter as you wish. Kessler may ask the PCs to testify against the accused, which may require Charm, Guile, or Folklore tests to convince the jury. Otto Holtz may request a trial by combat, meeting a champion from the party on the Field of Verena outside of town.

However, the outcome isn't really in doubt. The townsfolk of Stromdorf are on edge and looking for someone to blame. The Holtz clan aren't well liked, and Keila is an outsider. This is a show trial, a formality that must be observed before the accused can be executed. The difference between justice and a lynch mob is seldom great in the Empire, and this trial has elements of both.

After the trial, the guilty parties are marched outside of town to the Field of Verena and hung from the gibbet-tree there, by the corpses of two sheep rustlers strung up last week. Most of the town turns out to watch, then marches back to the Thunderwater Inn to drink and gossip.

EPISODE 2: A RESTLESS NIGHT

The effects of Mourn's spell to raise the dead are felt far beyond the confines of the Garden of Morr...

AN ILL WIND

That evening, shortly before midnight, PCs passing an **Easy (1d) Insight check** have the sensation of a chill wind passing through their bones – even if otherwise in a warm or comfortable locale. PCs with Magical Sight or Piety trained experiencing this feel sick to their stomach. Those townsfolk who sense this phenomenon nervously make the sign of Sigmar's hammer to ward away evil.

DEAD MEN WALKING

At midnight, the corpses hanging on the gibbet-tree tear themselves loose from the ropes suspending them, and fall to the ground, still wearing the nooses. They lurch towards Stromdorf's Reikland Gate. The Holtzes and Keila retain a vestigial hatred of the adventurers and seek revenge. The two rustlers simply want to eat brains.

The night is very dark, allowing the zombies to reach the gate unchallenged. The watchman on duty mistakes them for harmless peasants. He is about to ask them their business when the closest

THE HOLTZ CLAN SLAIN?

If the entire Holtz clan has been slain, run off, or otherwise dealt with and no arrests made, the trial can still take place. In this case, it will most likely focus on Keila Cobblepot.

If there's no one left to try for crimes against humanity, then there will be no trial and the zombies animated by Mourn's spell will have no reason to seek out the PCs. The rustlers from the Field of Verena will still attack the town, but the PCs might not even find out about it until the next morning. On the other hand, as each person the zombies slay rises up to fight alongside them, the PCs may still have an eventful night...

zombie lunges and tears out his throat before he can scream. The militiaman in the tower above the gate hears nothing, and the zombies pause to feast on the slain watchman until he too rises up to join them. Together they shamle into Stromdorf.

LATE NIGHT REVELLERS?

Between the heavy rain and late hour, the streets and market square are deserted and the zombies go unnoticed. They pause to sniff out the adventurers, and follow their preternatural senses to the Thunderwater Inn (or wherever the PCs have holed up). The front door is bolted shut, and so the undead begin to batter it down with their fists. This signals a shift into encounter mode.

- ✦ **Round 1.** The zombies attack the door, waking Brenner. Awake PCs also hear the noise. If one of the PCs has a dog, it wakes everyone up with angry barking.
- ✦ **Round 2.** Brenner assumes that drunken yobs are trying to break in for a late-night drink. He leans out of his bedroom window, loudly cursing the louts. Sleeping PCs passing an **Average (2d) Observation check** are woken up.
- ✦ **Round 3.** Under the zombies' relentless assault, the door's timbers crack and the bolt snaps free. Brenner and his boys rush downstairs to confront the intruders.
- ✦ **Round 4.** The zombies lurch into the taproom, empty save for Lukas Kaltenbach drunk under his table. The Brenner lads freeze with fear before the undead, but Sebastien grabs his blunderbuss and fires, blowing off the zombie watchman's head, waking the rest of the inn.
- ✦ **Round 5.** Combat ensues. Any PC who woke up during round 4 adds one misfortune ■ die to determine initiative. The Brenners will gladly retreat and let the PCs handle the zombies, Sebastien dispatching any that shamle up the stairs with his blunderbuss.

THE PENDANT OF NECTANUBIS

This ancient artefact from the Land of the Dead is a silver pendant of intricate design, which houses a large black gem. The gem is almost impossibly black – it seems to absorb all the light around it.

Anyone passing a **Hard (3d) Observation check** while looking at the gem at close range or closer notices a wispy white shadow flitting within it – glimpses of the trapped soul of Lazarus Mourn. Anyone peering at the gem close up feels icy dread creep into the inner recesses of their mind. This effect causes Terror 1.

The necklace cannot be destroyed by normal means; it is immune to fire and can withstand even the most powerful physical blows. Characters coming into possession of the dread pendant will need to come up with a clever means to rid the world of this profane relic.

FAMILIAR FACES

When the PCs enter the taproom, they see the Brenners confronting some familiar figures, stumbling through the remains of the front door with a slow, shambling gait, moaning softly. Keila and the Holtzes each have a tight noose around their chafed necks, tongues bulging from slack jaws, and staring, sightless eyes. Two strangers accompany them, clothed in weathered rags, their flesh badly decomposed. A watchman lies headless and twitching on the floor near the smashed door, the wall behind him splashed in bright red blood and gore.

This horrific scene – blood, gore, and the recently hanged criminals back to life – has a Fear 2 rating. Treat Keila and the Holtzes as standard zombies (*Tome of Adventure* pages 64-65), and the rustlers as zombie henchmen.

OTHER NPCs' REACTIONS

Other guests have woken up by now, and run downstairs to see what all the commotion is about. They run back upstairs screaming when they see the zombies. Schulmann doesn't emerge from his room, and will claim to have been absorbed in his studies.

Keep track of the number of rounds of combat with a progress tracker. The commotion wakes up neighbouring townsfolk, who yell for the watch when they see the zombies. Five watchmen arrive at the beginning of the 12th round.

DANCING BONES

Once the zombies are dispatched, the PCs hear more yells coming from outside. A purple-robed old man is hobbling towards the group from the direction of Sumpfstrasse, a look of terror on his ancient, wrinkled face. "*It's alive! It's alive!*" he splutters.

If anyone calms him down, he tells them that the skeleton in his study has come to life. If the PCs follow the old man to his house, and enter his study, crammed with books from floor to ceiling, they see suspended from the ceiling an articulated skeleton, such as one might find in a medical student's room. It is flailing about madly, its grinning teeth chattering. A few well-aimed blows will pulverise the bones. The old gentleman thanks them profusely. He introduces himself as Professor Köpfchen (see page 19), and will henceforth be indebted to the PCs. He offers them a mug of steaming herbal tea as a reward, which will allow any PC imbibing it to recover two stress and two fatigue.

NOTHING TO SEE HERE

A small, worried crowd, mostly in night attire, has gathered outside the Thunderwater Inn. Captain Kessler, arrives and tries to calm the crowd down. "*Nothing to see here, go to your homes.*" Slowly the townsfolk disperse, encouraged by the watch.

Kessler's men dispose of the corpses and clean up the mess in the taproom, carting the bodies to the barracks to be cremated on a bonfire. Kessler is aghast that the criminals came to life, and furious that one of his own men succumbed to the curse of undeath. He assumes that necromancy is at work here, but other than manning the walls with all available militia and watchmen throughout the night, nothing more can be done.

The rest of the night passes peacefully, but because of their disturbed sleep, the PCs need to pass an **Average (2d) Resilience check**. Each PC failing this check recovers two fewer fatigue, stress, and wounds from resting for the night.

EPISODE 3: DEATH & THE MAIDEN

When her body was possessed by Mourn, Madriga Brenner's spirit was wrenched from the underworld. It roams this reality in despair at the sacrilege performed against her mortal remains.

At midnight, Adler wakes from a tormented sleep. He dreamed of Madriga, her flesh sunken and eaten by grave-rot, her maggotty lips moving as she begged him to save her. He curls into a ball and weeps, rocking to and fro for the rest of the night.

AN AUDIENCE WITH ADLER

Early the next morning, the PCs are awoken by Sebastien Brenner, who has a message for them from Captain Kessler. They are to meet him in an hour at the steps of the townhall – he has important information concerning last night's events.

RUMOURS AT BREAKFAST

The PCs have a chance to ready themselves for the day and break their fast. The mood is subdued in the taproom of the inn – there is nervous talk of a vast army of the undead approaching Stromdorf, led by a Vampire Count determined to seek vengeance for the defeat of his kind by Olaus Stichlem five hundred years ago.

THE MEETING

Captain Kessler waits for the PCs at the townhall steps at the appointed time. He is annoyed if they are late. He bids them good morning, then dives straight into business.

"The burgomeister wishes to talk to you. I was surprised when he summoned me; the man hasn't stirred from his room since that young lass committed suicide in the town well, Morr bless her. He wants a task performed, and in my opinion you're the best for the job. Follow me, the burgomeister can tell you himself what needs to be done."

Kessler leads the PCs into the townhall, up the grand stairway in the reception hall. Just before he knocks on the heavy oak door on the first floor, it opens and Niklas Schulmann emerges, still talking over his shoulder.

"Yes, yes, it's necromancy, but I'm afraid I really can't be bothered – terribly busy. Just kill the necromancer and your problem is solved. Oh, hello, here are the heroes of Stromdorf! Splendid. So you shan't need me at all."

With that, Schulmann leaves and Kessler, with a snort of disgust, ushers the PCs inside. Within is a large office, a layer of dust over the floor and furniture. One of the oak-panelled walls is devoted to books, another to shelves of parchment and scrolls. A door exits in the opposite wall. A large rain-spotted bay window looks out over the market square. Slumped on a red leather armchair is Phillip Adler (see page 18), behind a cluttered desk. He is holding a small portrait of a beautiful young woman, smiling from the canvass. She has long raven hair and wears an elegant, purple dress.

"My dear Madriga," sighs the burgomeister, staring sadly at the portrait. "She was buried in that dress."

He reverently places the portrait on the desk and turns towards you, his eyes tired and bloodshot.

"Last night she came to me. Her flesh hung on her bones, her dress torn and decayed. She clutched the silver pendant in her skeletal hand, my last ever gift to her, and her blue lips moved. 'Save me!' she wept. I woke shivering, and I dared not sleep again."

At this, he looks from one PC to the other in despair, waiting for them to provide some sort of answer or meaning. If the PCs press him for more, he continues:

"I need to know what she means. I need Brother Grabbe to come to interpret my dream, and if need be, to lay her spirit to rest."

"It doesn't take a genius to guess that Herr Adler's dreams and these abominations might be linked," interrupts Kessler, sternly. "The smart money's on Lazarus Mourn being involved – we burned him at the stake nigh one year ago, but if we've learned anything from last night it's that the dead don't always stay that way."

"Brother Grabbe – the priest of Morr who presides over the garden a mile southwest of town – is the resident expert on both dreams and the walking dead. We need him here. I'd send some of my men, but for all I know the town's about to be invaded by an army of corpses, and we've got no Olaus Stichelm to save us this time. I can't spare anyone. And I can't just send some messenger boy – we have no idea of the situation at the garden. This could be dangerous."

Kessler offers each adventurer who takes the job 50 silver coins each, not bad for a day's work. The cemetery is only a mile to the southwest. If they leave within the hour, they should easily be able to bring back the priest by early afternoon at the latest.

If they take the job, Adler thanks them profusely and tearfully, shaking each adventurer by the hand. Kessler escorts the party out of the town hall and, before departing to organise Stromdorf's defences, salutes them and wishes them luck.

SCHULMANN AGAIN

As the PCs emerge from the town hall, Schulmann approaches – he must have lingered outside, waiting for them. He looks very tired, as he has been up all night studying the map-stone shard. He learned very little – more pieces are needed to make sense of the text. However, his proximity to the stone gave him strange visions. He tells the PCs he saw a dead woman leading a dead army, and a dead hero rising from the grave, wielding a greatsword and clad head to foot in armour decorated with dragons.

Schulmann senses that this hero may be the guardian of one of the elven stones he is searching for. He urges the PCs to bring him the stone if they find it, as it is vital for the investigations of his masters at the Celestial College.

Schulmann's descriptions of the hero match the statue of Olaus Stichlem in the square, which the acolyte, caught up in his own thoughts, has not noticed. PCs who pass an **Average (2d) Observation or Folklore check** make this connection – unless the players have already done so. If Schulmann is delivering his description in plain sight of Stichelm's memorial statue (which is very likely), add two fortune dice to the check.

If asked about his meeting with Adler or why Schulmann doesn't help with the undead problem, he attempts to brush the whole affair aside. *"My work is far too important, and this is well within your capabilities. I have seen it in the stars."*

SETTING OFF

When they are ready to depart, the PCs will likely head out of the Reikland Gate and follow the narrow coffin path leading southwest. The path cuts through sodden fields. The PCs see the foreboding tall walls of the Garden of Morr in the distance, about a mile away.

AN AFFAIR TO DISMEMBER...

Phillip Adler seems especially distraught over Madriga. Earlier during their stay in Stromdorf, the PCs may have learned about the young woman's unfortunate suicide in the town well... But that's only part of the story.

Madriga Brenner was trapped in a loveless marriage with Sebastian Brenner, proprietor of the Thunderwater Inn. Desperate for some excitement and fulfillment to her life she had a lengthy affair with Phillip Adler, the most affluent man in all of Stromdorf.

When Sebastian became suspicious, jealous rage took over, and he drowned Madriga in the town's well – when her body was discovered the next morning, it was deemed an apparent suicide. The fact that Sebastian and Madriga fought and argued incessantly beforehand, and that Madriga was often seen wandering about town all alone reinforced this notion. Brenner has no idea that Adler was Madriga's lover. Should he find out, he will be enraged...

A SHADOW

A few minutes into their journey, allow each PC to attempt an **Easy (1d) Observation check**. PCs passing this check notice they are being followed by someone trying to hide amongst the cornstalks in the adjacent field. This is Waltrout Glöckinger. If nobody sees him, Waltrout reveals himself once the party reaches the river.

CROSSING THE TRANIG

After nearly a mile, the coffin track ends at the River Tranig. On the other side rises the tall walls of the Garden of Morr. The black waters of the river are slow and sluggish. The Tranig is about twenty feet wide, and too deep to wade through. On the east side of the river, there is a post on which hangs a large bronze bell decorated with skull motifs. On the other bank, a small raft is tethered to the trunk of a willow tree.

If Waltrout is not with the PCs, he makes himself known now, appearing from behind a bush. He tells them that the bell is to summon Brother Grabbe, the priest of Morr. Ordinarily, when the priest hears the bell being rung, he emerges from the Garden of Morr to punt visitors across to the other side.

If anybody rings the bell, nobody comes in answer to the mournful gong. *"But he always comes!"* wails Waltrout, peering across the river, distressed.

One way to cross the river is for one PC to swim to the raft. Then he can untie it and ferry the others across. When someone tries to swim across the Tranig, put the Deep River location card into play.

The black waters hold a nasty secret – Reik eels. A swarm of small eels attacks anyone in the water beginning on the second round he spends swimming. Roll a misfortune die for each swimmer at the end of each round. On a Challenge ✕ result, the eels bite that swimmer and he suffers 1 wound.

Crossing the river requires four total net successes on **Average (2d) Athletics checks**, either in a single check, or an accumulated total of four successes over the course of several checks. A PC can attempt one check per round as a manoeuvre to swim.

MORR'S DOMAIN

The first part of this section describes the cemetery outskirts, the temple, and the Garden of Morr. The second part details the encounter which takes place once the PCs enter the Garden.

THE CEMETERY & OUTSKIRTS

The cemetery is surrounded by a wall of dark grey granite, fifteen feet high and topped with black iron spikes. It circuits an area approximately 500 feet by 600 feet, and has no visible gateway. On the west bank of the river stands a solitary black gate, covered by a slate roof. Beyond the gate is the entrance to a tunnel, flanked by two life-sized skeletal statues wielding scythes.

On a successful **Average (2d) Observation check**, a PC notices that whenever lightning streaks through the sky, it repeatedly strikes a brass rod which runs down the southern wall of the cemetery and into the ground.

THE LICHE GATE

Under the roof of the gate there is a slab of stone, where the pallbearers rest a coffin while the priest of Morr blesses it before it is brought into the temple. A raven rests on the roof and caws mockingly at the PCs.

THE TUNNEL

Just beyond the liche gate, a path leads into a wide tunnel, as dark as night, skeletal statues standing guard on either side. Any non-magical light source dies in this passage. Runes carved in the walls kill all natural light – the tunnel represents the awful darkness of death. The air down here is as cold as ice.

There is nothing in the tunnel, but play up the tension if the party stumbles forward blindly. The GM may wish to have the PCs make Observation checks – those who pass think they see movement ahead, or feel an ethereal chill swish past their faces. If the PCs react overcautiously, advance the party tension one space to represent their nerves fraying. Startle them with a sudden flurry of leathery wings as they disturb bats roosting on the roof of the tunnel. The harmless bats fly outside, squeaking.

After a few minutes, which seems like hours if the PCs are scared, the tunnel ends at a low doorway, which yawns wide open into more darkness. It is flanked by a black pillar on the right and a white pillar on the left. A priest of Morr, or any priest character passing an **Easy (1d) Piety check** understands that these pillars symbolise the dual nature of the God of Death.

THE TEMPLE OF MORR

Beyond the door, natural flames flicker back to life, revealing an underground temple with a chequerboard floor stretching some fifty feet to an altar decorated with stone skulls. A low bier stands in front of the altar – during funerals, this is where the coffin is laid – next to this is a font perched on a short stone column, carved with scenes of death. It is very cold here, and dark. Torches in sconces along the walls can be lit to provide illumination.

FONT

The water from the font is sacred to Morr; it is used to bless the foreheads of the deceased. There is enough holy water for each PC to have one cupful each. Holy water can be splashed on undead at close range as a *Ranged Attack*. This blessed holy water used in this way has DR 6/CR 2 as a weapon versus the undead.

EMBALMING CHAMBERS

Six heavy black drapes hang at intervals along each long wall. Behind each curtain lies a small chamber, warding sigils decorating the walls. The runes delay the natural rotting process. Here the priest of Morr performs his sacred embalming ritual to prepare the corpse for burial. Large vats of embalming fluid stand in the corner of each chamber, and various medical tools hang on the far wall. A long table takes up most of the space.

In three of the chambers, there is a coffin on the table. The smallest contains a dead girl, another contains an old man, and the third a portly woman. All are covered by white shrouds, all are recently deceased... and all lie dormant in their coffins until they can smell fresh brains. A zombie bursts from its shroud as soon as a coffin is approached. Once combat begins, the other two zombies stir.

WALTROUT GLÖCKINGER

WaltROUT is following the PCs because he heard Mourn's voice summon him to the Garden of Morr. He tells no one this. He is eager to see his old friend again, but is frightened of going to the cemetery alone – he has heard that the dead are rising, and he is terrified of meeting his deceased mother there, a cruel woman who shouted at him and whipped him in his youth.

When WaltROUT sees the PCs head in that direction, he follows them, but is too shy to make himself known. WaltROUT has another reason to go to the cemetery. Brother Grabbe is an old friend of his, who he often visits to help construct the bone sculptures in the ossuary. He wants to go to the cemetery to see if the priest is safe. This is the reason he gives the PCs for following them down the coffin track.

WaltROUT will be fawning and overly friendly with his new 'friends', the adventurers. He will be completely oblivious to any threats they make towards him, smiling inanely, and if forced to go away, will follow at a short distance. Portray him as an innocent idiot, as eager to please as a puppy.

WaltROUT is afraid of the liche gate, and also dimly aware that the PCs might not like his friend Lazarus. He'll attempt to abandon the PCs in the darkness of the tunnel and use his "side door" in the north wall to get to Mourn first.

THE BLACK DOOR

Behind the altar is a large, black metal door, decorated with winged death's heads. It is locked on the inside. PCs will have to pass a **Hard (3d) Skulduggery check** to pick the lock or a **Hard (3d) Athletics check** to batter it down. A Priest of Morr can offer a short prayer to the God of Death, and with an **Easy (1d) Invocation check**, the doors open noiselessly. The stone font can be removed from its base and carried by four people as a battering ram, decreasing the difficulty for knocking down the door to **Average (2d)**.

STICHELM'S MEMORIAL STONE

One of the reasons that the PCs may be exploring the Garden of Morr is to seek out the second piece of the mapstone. If they press on to the back of the crypt, they can hardly fail to find it lashed to Olaus Stichelm's skeletal arm.

You can foreshadow this by pointing out that many of the finer headstones are marble, and that a headstone – presumably marble – appears to be missing from the central tomb. If the PCs are actively searching for the stone, then it can only help the story to leave clues pointing towards the Mausoleum (a few such clues are included for you, but feel free to add more). When the PCs do recover the stone, be sure to give them the Marble Headstone card.

ANOTHER ENTRANCE

If anyone circumnavigates the tall wall, on the north side they discover a small hole dug underneath it. It looks like the earth and wall foundations have been dug out.

The PCs can crawl through this hole to get straight into the Garden. This is the route that Waltrout prefers, as he has a superstitious fear of the Liche Gate. It is also how he has smuggled bodies out of the garden for Mourn's experiments in the past.

You may want to remind the players that only mourners in the company of a Morrite priest are allowed into a Garden of Morr. Depending on how they take this news and how frightened they already are, they may gain the Ill-Omened or Frightened conditions at your discretion.

THE GARDEN OF MORR

The door opens to a long flight of stone steps leading up. There is daylight at the top of the stairs, which lead to the Garden of Morr.

Surrounded by its high wall, the Garden consists of haphazard rows of modest gravestones, almost overgrown with bushes of black roses. The petals of the roses have begun to wither. This should seriously worry any Morrites in the party – this means that Morr is withdrawing his favour from this place, an omen that it is under the dominion of the undead.

INTO THE DARK

All underground areas within the Temple of Morr, the Ossuary, and the Crypt are pitch black.

Characters without a light source suffer significant penalties to Observation checks and tasks requiring their sense of sight while they remain in total darkness. The darkness is severe enough to impose four misfortune \square dice on all such checks. Characters with the Night Vision race ability reduce the number of misfortune dice suffered as detailed in their race description.

A **faint light source**, such as a candle or glowing rune, reduces the darkness penalty to three misfortune dice.

A **moderate light source**, such as a torch or lantern, reduces the darkness penalty to two misfortune dice.

A **strong light source**, such as a several torches or lanterns, or a Bright Wizard's flaming staff, reduces the darkness penalty to one misfortune die.

A few granite monuments – small statues or tombs commemorating the wealthier citizens of Stromdorf – are scattered around among the gravestones.

THE MAUSOLEUM

At the far end of the cemetery, stands a squat, stone building with a sloping slate roof and a magnificent oak door. Stone gargoyles mouth silent screams from the eaves of this mausoleum. Adjoining it is a small wooden shack containing gardening implements and grave digging tools. If Waltrout is still with the PCs, he gets excited when he sees the stone mausoleum. "*Brother Grabbe's house! Brother Grabbe's house!*" he giggles, tugging a PC's arm to follow him there.

The mausoleum door is unlocked and careful observation might reveal that something rather bulky (Stichelm's ambulatory corpse) came this way recently. However, the PCs are unlikely to have much time to examine the mausoleum in detail, since the zombies will burst from their graves and begin *Act I: What Lies Beneath* as soon as they approach.

As the PCs explore the garden, lightning continually strikes the mausoleum, dissipated harmlessly by a brass lightning rod. The lightning continues to strike throughout the rest of the episode, punctuating dramatically significant moments with a crash of thunder. If the PCs seem curious about the significance of the lightning, let them make **Easy (1d) Intelligence, Folklore, or Education checks** to make a connection between the lightning stone and the marble headstone that Schulmann seeks. Just after that revelation might be the perfect time to begin Act I.

THE HOLE IN THE WALL

Anyone entering the Garden of Morr via the steps may attempt an **Average (2d) Observation check**. A character who passes this check notices a small hole under the north wall.

If Waltrout used this entrance, an **Average (2d) Observation check** will reveal a Waltrout-sized footprint in the mud, rapidly filling with rainwater.

If the PCs use this entrance, remember that the liche-gate door is still closed and locked. This might be relevant during *Act I: What Lies Beneath*, if they attempt to flee that way.

STICHELM'S TOMB

In the centre of the garden, behind a hedge of black rose bushes, stands a low tomb of grey stone, carved with aspects of Morr and Stichelm's dragon crest. The tomb is surmounted with a small pedestal with a recessed niche, clearly intended to hold something.

The front of the tomb has been split asunder, and shards of stone lie scattered through the rain-sodden grass. Anyone peering inside (if they can muster the nerve!) sees nothing but darkness; the bones expected to reside within are gone.

An **Average (2d) Observation check** reveals flecks of powdered stone and a chip of white marble around the niche on the top – this is where the marble headstone stone used to reside. But now it is missing! If the check scores boons, the character notices a strange groove in the soft earth (already full of mud and rainwater) leading towards the ossuary against the west wall. Something heavy was dragged that way.

RISE OF THE UNDEAD

The Garden of Morr looks peaceful. Everything is very still, apart from the constant patter of rain against the tombstones and flash of lightning. Lazarus Mourn has animated the dead, but they lie dormant in their graves until they smell the flesh of the living, or are raised at Mourn's command. They begin to stir as soon as the PCs enter the cemetery proper.

The PCs may not notice the gravesoil being disturbed by clawing hands until it is too late, particularly if they are distracted by Stichelm's memorial or Waltrout's constant murmuring. When they enter, have each PC make an **Average (2d) Observation check**. Record each failed check, but don't tell the players what the check was for yet. Allow them to inspect the memorial stone, and the hole in the wall if they have spotted it.

After they have spent a short time exploring the cemetery, begin the following encounter.

ACT I: WHAT LIES BENEATH

A hand suddenly shoots up from one of the graves nearby. Then another, and another. The dead burst from the earth in a wave of rotting flesh. A shambling horde of decaying men and women, old and young, drag themselves from their graves, groaning in hunger. Waltrout screeches in utter terror.

OVERVIEW

The PCs soon find themselves surrounded by the living dead. There are so many, the PCs are unlikely to destroy them all. The PCs will have to fight their way to safety. It was the arrival of the PCs that drove the undead to fight their way out of the graves, so the undead emerge first where the PCs first entered the garden – either the liche gate or the hole in the wall – and spread out from there. The crowd is least dense in the direction of the ossuary, and that is the obvious escape route.

The mass rising of so many undead generates Terror 2 instead of the normal fear effects generated by undead.

RUNNING THE ACT

Roll for initiative for four groups of zombie henchmen. For each PC who failed the earlier Observation check, move one zombie token to the top of the initiative track, representing zombies taking the inattentive PCs by surprise.

ANYWHERE BUT HERE

This section is written assuming that the PCs are fighting their way to the ossuary. If the PCs head towards either the hole in the wall or the liche gate, advance the zombie token one extra space on the track to represent the denser zombie concentration in that direction, but otherwise run the act as described here, changing the rally step as appropriate.

If the PCs return later, the zombie track begins at 7 – the garden is already swarming with undead.

THE ZOMBIE TRACKER

Use a seven space progress tracker to represent the rise of the zombie horde. Place a Zombie tracking token on the first space of the track. Advance the Zombie token one space at the end of each round. Each round, the PCs face a number of zombie henchmen groups based on the position of the Zombie tracking token, as shown on the following table:

ZOMBIE TRACKER	ZOMBIE GROUPS
1-2	1
3-4	2
5-6	3
7+	4

At the beginning of each round, the PCs no longer face their previous opponents, but confront completely new groups of zombies. Surviving zombies from the previous round become part of one of the new hordes.

A single group of zombies consists of one zombie henchman for each member of the party.

TRACKING THE SLAUGHTER

Using the same progress tracker assembled to manage the zombies, place a different coloured Slaughter tracking token to represent the PCs carving a bloody path through the undead horde. This Slaughter token advances one space each time the PCs completely destroy a group of zombies in a single round.

A BRIEF RESPITE

When the Slaughter token reaches the end of the progress track, the PCs manage to battle their way to the ossuary, and earn themselves a chance to catch their breath with a rally step.

The PCs (and likely Waltrout) have made it to the mausoleum. Waltrout slams the heavy oak door shut, gibbering in terror. The mass of zombies press against the door on the outside, scratching at it. There is no bolt or lock on the inside, but the zombies have no concept of a door handle. The PCs can enjoy a brief, well-deserved rest. Likely spent slumping against the wall, panting heavily. When they have recovered their breath, move on to the next act.

OVERVIEW

Before the party can venture down the stairs, the walls and ceiling come alive as skeletons form from the bones decorating this macabre chamber.

RUNNING THE ACT

When the party has had a few moments to take in the bizarre décor, they are startled by a clattering sound from behind them. They spin round to see a fully-articulated skeleton grinning at them, flexing its bony fingers. There is another clatter, and another skeleton seems to drop from the ceiling, barring the way to the stairs. Looking up, the PCs see, to their horror, the bones on the ceiling and walls knit together to form human skeletons, which drop away from the decorated surfaces and land on their feet with a rattle of bone. The skulls of the pyramid begin gnashing their teeth in unison, a terrifying clacking sound. Meanwhile, the zombies continue to scratch at the outside of the door.

The characters must act quickly before they are completely surrounded. If Waltrout is with them, he cries with fear and scurries down the stairs to be engulfed by darkness. However, he reaches the stairs just in time before a skeleton lands in front of them, blocking the way.

Each PC faces a single standard skeleton which begins the encounter at close range (*Tome of Adventure* pages 64-65). Because of the particularly horrifying context of this encounter, these skeletons generate Terror rather than Fear.

UNEXPECTED COMPLICATIONS

When one of the standard skeletons is destroyed, there is a chance the necromantic energy infusing the Ossuary will re-knit the skeletons back together using a random assortment of bones from throughout the chamber. After a standard skeleton is defeated roll two misfortune ■■ dice and consult the following results:

Blank: No additional skeletons rise

✕ one skeleton henchman rise up

☠ two skeleton henchmen rise up

Any skeleton henchmen rising up join the fray the following round.

ACT 2: THE OSSUARY

Remember that the Ossuary is unnaturally dark, and the PCs will need some sort of light to see properly. If none of the PCs have a light source, Waltrout mentions a torch sconce nearby – which a PC can find with minimal stumbling about in the dark. When the PCs have an opportunity to examine their surroundings, read the following aloud:

Every conceivable space has been decorated with human bones. The centre of the room is dominated by a pyramid of skulls, eight feet tall, almost reaching the high ceiling beams. In each corner stand elegant candelabra, crafted from hundreds of small bones, creating a beautiful spiral pattern.

An ornate bone chandelier hangs from the ceiling. A pattern fashioned from arm and leg bones circles the ceiling, punctuated with grinning skulls. On the south wall is the coat of arms of the Emperor, composed entirely from bones. These grim decorations are both awe-inspiring and unsettling.

To the right of the skull pyramid, stone stairs circle down into darkness.

THE BONE SCULPTURES

When the priest of Morr needs to make space for new burials in the crowded cemetery, he exhumes bones from old, forgotten graves and houses them in the ossuary.

As a morbid hobby, Brother Grabbe bedecks the ossuary with these bones. Over the decades, he has constructed a pyramid of skulls, and all the other glorious bone decorations. Brother Grabbe considers his work as an act of devotion to Morr, a visible demonstration that even from death, great beauty can emerge.

In recent years, Waltrout, the only individual who regularly visits the priest, has helped him with his hobby, climbing ladders and delicately placing bone decorations where the old, frail Morrite cannot reach. Waltrout proudly boasts to the PCs of his involvement in helping the priest.

DOWNWARD, EVER DARKER

Once the PCs vanquish any remaining skeletons, there is a rally step. There is a constant, growing thumping and groaning sound from outside – the zombie horde has grown even larger. The PCs may feel they have little choice left but to venture down the dark stairs.

The stairs end at an open doorway, through which streams yellow light. The steps lead to a small room lit by oil lamps placed in tiny alcoves set into the granite walls of the chamber. This chamber is the crypt. Once the PCs have caught their breath, the next act is ready to begin.

ACT 3: THE CRYPT

When the PCs make their way down the stairs to the crypt, read the following aloud:

You have entered a crypt with a low ceiling and walls constructed of large granite blocks. Around the walls, lit oil-lamps are set into small recesses. On the right hand side of the chamber is a large elm table, on which lies open a large leather-bound book, displaying its beautifully illuminated pages. Also on the table is a complete human skull – delicately carved with spiral patterns etched in lapis lazuli – a loaf of black bread, a plate of green cheese, and a silver fork. Four black curtains hang on the walls, one on the west wall, one on the south wall next to the stairwell, and two on the east wall. Two doors stand ajar, set into the north wall.

Waltrout is cowering under the table. When he sees you, he scrambles to his feet. He is nervously brandishing a sharp silver knife. Beads of sweat trail down his face.

OVERVIEW

The PCs finally meet Lazarus Mourn, who inhabits the corpse of Madriga Brenner. He has been awaiting Waltrout's arrival, so he can flay the simpleton's skin to retrieve the text for the *Marche Funebre* ritual. The sound of combat in the ossuary above alerts Mourn that all is not well. He orders his undead lieutenant, Stichelm's reanimated skeleton, to defend him while he prepares his spells, powered by the life essence of the comatose Brother Grabbe.

RUNNING THE ACT

The PCs have ample time to explore the crypt. Mourn grows stronger the longer they linger (see *Necromantic Power* on page 48). If the PCs take an unusually long time (or if they try to rest!), Mourn drains the remainder of Grabbe's life-force and attacks with a staggering 20 power at his command.

THE TABLE

There are two items of potential interest to the PCs.

THE BOOK

Anyone with the Education skill can see that the pages of this tome contain devotional prayers to Morr.

THE SKULL

The skull bites anyone touching it, animated by Mourn's necromancy. This inflicts 1 wound. The skull does not let go until it is pried off or smashed against the wall by passing an **Easy (1d) Strength check**. This startling event causes Fear 1.

WEST WALL

Any PCs peering behind this curtain must attempt an **Easy (1d) Discipline check**. Those who fail see a tall, shrouded skeletal figure leering at them from the shadows, wielding a scythe.

Describe the skeleton and its menacing leer, how it's clearly wielding a weapon and ask the PC "What do you do!?" If he lashes out at the statue (for that is what he sees), he may injure himself, affect party tension, or acquire the Frightened condition, as appropriate.

SOUTH WALL

Behind this curtain is a wardrobe. A collection of identical black priestly robes hang from a rail. At the foot of the wardrobe is a small chest, containing a neat pile of black undergarments.

EAST WALL

There are two alcoves on the east wall.

ALCOVE 1

This alcove contains a well-stocked larder, a couple of bottles of fine Bretonnian wine (Chateaux les Corveaux), and three small casks of Thunderwater ale.

ALCOVE 2

This alcove shelters a well and a bucket on a rope.

A DEAD END?

In the unfortunate circumstance of a player character succumbing to the undead horde and falling during battle, roll one misfortune ■ die at the end of each round. On a bane ☠ result, the character's corpse rises as a zombie, joining the rest of the horde to attack his former companions.

If a quick-thinking character douses a fallen comrade with holy water, the body will not rise again as a zombie – something they can recall with an **Average (2d) Folklore check**. Also, if a follower of Morr performs a manoeuvre and says the proper prayers by passing an **Easy (1d) Piety check**, the GM does not roll a misfortune die at the end of that round.

THE STUDY

The door on the right leads to Theoderic Grabbe's study. The north wall is lined with bookshelves. There is a desk of red wood on the east wall, with a plush chair pushed under it. On the desk are a quill and ink, a candle, and a pile of parchment bound by string – a half-completed compilation of sayings and proverbs devoted to Morr that Brother Grabbe has been working on.

THE BOOKSHELVES

The books are a variety of religious or historical titles, bound in crumbling leather with yellowing pages.

Any PC making a cursory search through the books can attempt a **Hard (3d) Observation check**. A PC making a more thorough search can check once every half an hour, at a reduced difficulty of **Average (2d)**. If a PC passes the check, he finds a yellowing scroll hidden between the musty pages of an old tome. The scroll outlines the Sacred Rite of Saint Cyril.

THE SECRET ALCOVE

If a PC searching the bookshelf generates at least two boons (even if he fails to find the scroll), he discovers a false panel at the back of the bookcase. This panel slides back to reveal an alcove containing a small vial of pungent green liquid. An **Average (2d) Medicine check** or a **Hard (3d) First Aid or Education check** reveals that the vial contains two healing draughts.

THE PRIEST'S CELL

The left-hand door leads to Brother Theoderic Grabbe's cell. A highly polished, ebony coffin is mounted on a low stone plinth. In the black box, lined with red velvet, the priest of Morr lies recumbent, pale as death, eyes closed (see page 22 for a description of Brother Theoderic Grabbe).

Unless a PC examines the priest closely, or passes an **Average (2d) Medicine or First Aid check**, the priest appears dead.

THE SACRED RITE OF ST. CYRIL

A character who has Education, Piety, or Spellcraft trained recognises that the text is written in classical Tilean. If he passes a **Hard (3d) Education check**, he deciphers the arcane scribbles as a sacred Morrite ritual – the Rite of St. Cyril.

The ritual detailed on the scroll takes about five minutes to perform and uses materials found in the study. A **Hard (3d) Piety check** is necessary to complete it properly. If successful, all the zombies and skeletons in the Garden of Morr are returned to rest, including Stichelm. Mourn could undo this, but it will take him hours.

Despite the rite's effect on the majority of undead in the area, the Lazarus-possessed Madriga is completely unaffected. In fact, during the recitation, Lazarus Mourn has plenty of time to drain Brother Grabbe.

Mourn is here too, standing behind the priest. The corpse he possesses is described in detail on page 74. Madriga's dead hands are clamped around the priest's head, as Mourn sucks the life-force from him to power his spells.

However, the thing that is certain to hold the PCs attention the most is the presence of the corpse of Olaus Stichelm, which steps into the doorway to block access to the room.

CONFRONTING MOURN

When the PCs encounter Mourn, impress on them that the rotting woman standing before them looks familiar. She is wearing the same dress and has the same long raven hair as the woman in the portrait Adler was holding when he summoned them to his office.

This is a good time for the necromancer to confuse matters by introducing himself. The corpse-woman's mouth cracks open and a hoarse voice croaks out:

"Don't look so shocked, you pathetic simpletons. Yes, I am wearing the festering corpse of a feeble and weak-willed woman, but that is only temporary, I assure you. One of your bodies will serve my purposes well, I am sure." The woman fingers the silver pendant around her neck and croaks a harsh, wet laugh.

"I am Lazarus Mourn, and I will never die. Would that I could say the same of you..." With that, the woman makes a dismissive gesture with a rotting hand, and an immense, armoured skeleton steps into the doorway. The white marble stone slab it wears as a shield seems to flicker with an eerie light.

With that, combat is joined. Roll initiative for Lazarus Mourn, Olaus Stichelm, and Waltrout. Mourn's characteristics and special powers can be found on pages 74-75.

NECROMANTIC POWER

Mourn does not gather the winds of magic to him like a proper wizard. Rather, he drains the life-force from a living being to fuel his necromantic spells. Alerted by the sounds of combat from above, Mourn has been draining the life force from Brother Grabbe. When the PCs open the door, Mourn will have drained at least 8 power from Grabbe – more if they took their time exploring the crypt.

As his action on each turn, Mourn will drain another 2 power from Grabbe. He will continue to do this until Stichelm is destroyed or a PC manages to get by him and attack Mourn, or until Mourn has amassed 20 power.

Mourn does not have a power threshold and neither gains nor loses power on his turn except through casting spells and draining Grabbe as described here. If Mourn drains 24 power from Grabbe, Grabbe dies, then may rise as a zombie.

BETRAYAL

As the battle begins, Waltrout recognises that Mourn is inhabiting Madriga's body:

Waltrout suddenly shouts out, "Master! Master! I'm here master! I have brought you my skin..."

He tears open his shirt to reveal a scrawny chest scarred with tiny words. The whole of his chest and his back are inscribed in this way. Waltrout then begins drooling and babbling nonsense.

Nothing more can be got out of the poor man.

A PC who has Education, Piety, or Spellcraft trained recognises that the text has been written in an archaic form of Reikspiel. If he passes a **Hard (3d) Education check**, he grasps that the words are the recitation of some ghastly spell.

WALTROUT'S ACTIONS

Waltrout isn't precisely evil, but he is simple and he considers Mourn his friend. If the PCs have treated him badly thus far, he may join in the battle on Mourn's side. However, if he has been treated well, he may join the PCs. Treat Waltrout as a standard Townsfolk NPC (*Tome of Adventure* pages 66-67) with Intelligence 1 and Willpower 2. If Waltrout has been won over as an ally, he contributes a fortune die to the action of his favourite PC each round.

OLAUS STICHELM

Stichelm wears full plate armour, green with age and decorated with roaring dragons, and wields a greatsword in one hand with ease. To his left arm has been lashed a chunk of white marble, carved with the words "*Olaus Stichelm, the Saviour of Our Town*" and the date of his death – the headstone to his tomb! Stichelm uses this stone as a shield. To a character with magical sight, the stone flickers with the light of Azyl.

See pages 74-75 for complete details on Olaus Stichelm's skeletal remains.

Stichelm stands in the doorway and attempts to block access to Mourn. While he's in this position, only two people can engage him at one time. The undead hero fights until he or Mourn is killed, at which point he collapses into dust with a heavy groan of relief, his armour and sword clattering into a pile on the ground.

MOURN'S ACTIONS

On his turn, Mourn casts one spell at a target PC. He attempts to weaken foes with **Mortification** and **Curse of Undeath**, and uses **Hand of Dust** once they close. Mourn will attempt to critically wound as many PCs as possible, as it makes his **Drain Life** more potent.

Mourn has as much power at his disposal as he was able to drain from Brother Grabbe. When he starts to run low, he'll attempt to gain more via **Drain Life**.

Mourn tries to stand in the doorway leading into the priest's cell. In this position, only two opponents can engage him at the same time.

THE HERO'S GEAR

Olaus Stichelm's breastplate and greatsword are both superior craftsmanship items. These impressive pieces are untouched by the ravages of time. But they are also distinct symbols of this local hero's contributions and legendary status in the region.

A PC wielding Stichelm's breastplate or greatsword risks outraging Stromdorfers – they immediately recognise the hero's raiments and expect the PCs to turn them over to the Temple of Sigmar for proper veneration and treatment.

If the PCs refuse, they must add one misfortune ■ die to all subsequent *Social* actions and Fellowship-based checks for the duration of their stay in Stromdorf. Attempting to sell the gear to a Stromdorfer automatically triggers this negative effect. If the offending PC generates any ✨ Chaos Star results during these social interactions, the Stromdorfers may get unruly and openly hostile toward the character.

MOURN'S COMPOSURE

Mourn's control over Madriga's corpse is not absolute. Unlike standard adversaries, Mourn does not suffer additional wounds when he suffers stress or fatigue. Rather, stress and fatigue wear away at his composure.

Construct a five space progress track with an event space at the end of the track. Place a Composure tracking token on the first space. Every time Mourn would suffer fatigue or stress, instead advance the Composure token that number of spaces.

If the Composure token reaches the event space, he temporarily loses control of Madriga's body, and Madriga regains control briefly. Mourn cannot perform any actions on his next turn, as Madriga wails in horror at her circumstances.

Madriga will beg and plead with the PCs - "*Where's Phillip? What happened to me? Am I dead?*" She has only dim memories of being murdered by her husband. Madriga won't take any offensive actions against the PCs unless provoked, but her begging and wailing is unlikely to be pleasant for them.

If anyone mentions her suicide, Madriga will be confused. "*Suicide? No... he killed me! I was murdered!*"

DIFFERENT PATHS TO VICTORY?

If a PC manages to divest Madriga's corpse of the pendant around its neck, and move the necklace further than close range away from the body, Madriga's corpse collapses as Mourn's spirit is sucked back into the Pendant of Nectanubis.

Clever thinking could prise the pendant in the thick of combat. A **Hard (3d) Skulduggery** or **Coordination check** may do the trick, as might a **Hard (3d) Athletics check** to grapple and pin the zombie while another character grabs the pendant.

The GM should reward clever thinking by his players and allow them a chance to succeed with a plan that sounds interesting and plausible.

POSSESSION IS NINE-TENTHS OF NECROMANTIC LAW

When Mourn loses control of Madriga's body (either by the PCs destroying the corpse or stealing the pendant around its neck), his soul is sucked back inside the gem. The spell reanimating the dead is broken, and all skeletons and zombies collapse where they stand.

However, Madriga stirs one final time. She raises her head and her putrescent lips move. "*You shall never kill ME!*" she rasps, before collapsing again. A mist whips out of the pendant, ethereal tendrils curling about the room.

THE BLACK GEM

Mourn's spirit cannot be destroyed easily. It is linked to the powerful Pendant of Nectanubis. Left unchecked, Mourn will continue to possess dead bodies, reanimating them to serve his vile purposes.

Mourn can possess any dead person (which is more or less complete, with limbs and a head attached) within close range of the necklace. He does this automatically. It might be fun to have Waltrout come back to life, or even the priest of Morr, if either of them

IT ALL GOES HORRIBLY WRONG

If the PCs do not kill Lazarus Mourn, he will perform the March of Death ritual (providing he gets hold of the flayed skin of Waltrout Glöckinger). It takes the necromancer three hours to complete the ritual.

Mourn will seize personal control of all the zombies and skeletons in the garden of Morr, as well as animating and controlling every corpse for miles around. He will march this army of undeath to Stromdorf, with the skeleton of Olaus Stichelm at its head and lay siege to the town. However, it will take him a while to marshal his forces – it may not even occur until the rest of the adventure is done with, and form the nucleus of the next adventure!

died...or a PC who was tragically killed during this encounter. However, Lazarus Mourn cannot possess a body that has been anointed with holy water, been beheaded, or buried with one of Morr's black roses in its mouth.

The pendant's powerful magical wards mean that it is extremely resistant to harm – any damage caused by an attack on the necklace rebounds against the attacker in a flash of violent black lightning. Destroying the pendant is almost certainly beyond the reach of any attack or spell the PCs possess.

However, if the pendant can be placed somewhere where no person can go near it, Mourn will be trapped within the gem for eternity. Otherwise, submerging the pendant in a vial of holy water will keep the spirit bound, unable to venture forth in search of new victims. Another possibility is to drop the pendant down the deep well in the crypt. Clever players will no doubt think of other ways of dealing with the pendant.

A SHOCKING POSSIBILITY

The only sure fire way to destroy the pendant within the context of this campaign is to have it struck by lightning. If players have been tracking the lightning strikes and make the connections that it strikes at the stones or the lightning rods (on the temple within the Garden or attached to the Thunderwater Inn back in Stromdorf), they can affix the pendant to one of these lightning attractors – once struck, the pendant shatters, and Mourn's spirit shrieks in torment as he is irrevocably and utterly destroyed.

Whether accomplished now or at some later point, the GM should award the party an additional experience point if they destroy the dreadful pendant.

AFTERMATH

With Mourn destroyed, the PCs may want to revive Theoderic Grabbe if he is still alive. Using a dose of the healing draught they might have found brings the old priest to consciousness. He will be able to do nothing but hobble painfully, so long as someone supports him. When he discovers what has happened to his beloved Garden, he weeps. If Waltrout is alive, he tends to the old man as though the priest were a favourite grandfather.

When the party returns to the ossuary, they find a chaotic jumble of bones littering the floor. The decorations are in utter disarray. If Waltrout see this he cries with grief at the destruction. Outside, the Garden is strewn with hundreds of corpses, and burst graves. Already ravens are flocking overhead; some having landed and are pecking at the dead flesh.

The heroes are probably now also the proud owners of Olaus Stichelm's memorial headstone, much desired by Schulmann. Like the lightning stone, the PCs will have to devise a safe way to transport this stone back to town – perhaps they can cannibalise the brass lightning rod from the mausoleum?

The party can make its way without hindrance across the Tranig, by raft, and along the coffin track back to town.

INTERLUDE

BACK FROM THE DEAD

When the party arrives back at Stromdorf, the townsfolk will flock to hear their tale. They will be aghast that Lazarus Mourn rose again, and will greet the PCs as heroes if they learn that they defeated the necromancer.

REPORTING TO ADLER

Captain Kessler will be among the first to meet the returning adventurers, and will take them to report to Adler. The burgomeister will grieve when he hears their story, but will be indebted to the party if they defeated Mourn and laid Madriga's corpse to rest. He will pay any reward promised to the PCs there and then, taking bags of coin from a safe hidden behind a portrait of one of his fierce white-bearded predecessors.

"I have been a fool," Adler tells the PCs, shaking his head sadly. "I have allowed my devotion to my poor, dead... friend cloud my mind. In laying to rest Madriga, you have laid to rest my own guilt over her death. I have let my duties as burgomeister slip, I have been a poor servant to this town, and dishonoured my predecessors, in whose footsteps I am not worthy to follow."

The burgomeister gestures at the stern portraits that adorn the walls of his office before continuing. *"Well, my friends, Phillip Adler is back from among the dead, and he has you to thank for that. Kessler – inform the elders that I am holding a meeting in the council chambers. Time to show those greybeards I'm back."*

With that, he thanks the party once more for all they have done, and bids them farewell.

REBURYING THE DEAD

One of Adler's first worries on his return to office is reburying the dead at the Garden of Morr. Brother Grabbe is too sick to move, and only a priest of Morr can organise this work – the corpses need to be reblessed before they can return to the grave. As soon as the storms are over, the burgomeister will have to send for priests of Morr from Ubersreik or Auerswald.

Of course, if a priest of Morr is in the party, he may be asked to perform the ceremonies – it's a three day job even with the militia to help as gravediggers, but he will win great respect from the townsfolk – from now on all the PCs who helped rebury the dead can add two fortune dice ☐☐ to social checks versus any Stromdorfer.

THEODERIC GRABBE

If old Theoderic Grabbe is alive, he will be taken to Dr. Schneider's surgery for immediate medical care. He remains as the doctor's guest, bedridden for the next few weeks. However, after a couple of days the priest recovers enough to summon the PCs to thank them.

He has no blessing to grant the living, but can gift them each with a paring from one of his long finger nails – he is a very old and holy man, and this relic means that Morr will look away when danger threatens. Anyone possessing a paring can ignore the first wound he suffers once a session.

WALTROUT GLÖCKINGER

What will the PCs do about Waltrout, if he is still alive? If they decide that he is an innocent stooge, deluded by the evil necromancer, they might want to hush up his involvement with Mourn, and he will become as loyal as a dog to his new masters, following them everywhere they go.

If the adventurers think Waltrout should be punished for consorting with a necromancer, he will be thrown in gaol if he is handed over to the authorities. The script scarred into his flesh is enough to condemn him to the pyre as a heretic. After a few weeks languishing in gaol, he will go to his death sobbing and pleading for mercy.

THE MEMORIAL STONE

Schulmann hurries to greet the party upon their return. He is eager to see the stone they bring back, and asks for it to be carried to his room. It fits next to the lightning-stone, though some text will be missing at the cracks. The elven carvings are fainter on this piece.

There remains a little less than half of the circular map-stone still missing. Schulmann tells the PCs that it is imperative they discover the rest soon – his masters in the Celestial College are getting impatient. Schulmann takes this opportunity to relate a vivid nightmare he had – a green fiend, with a throne and crown of stone; a voracious, fanged maw; a chattering horde of devils shrouded by night. He believes that the crown and the throne are the last pieces of the stones they are searching for, and urges the PCs to find them.

TIME TO REST

For the next three days, the PCs can rest and heal their wounds. They will probably get to know the physician, barber-surgeon, or even the herbalist quite well during this time. The weather gets worse than ever, grey skies, a morale-sapping drizzle of cold rain, and violent storms ravaging the heavens.

THE GRAIN STORES

Soon after the PCs return from the Garden of Morr, a raging gale sweeps through the town, damaging property. Tiles are smashed from roofs, chimneys toppled, and windows broken. Worse, the storm has wrecked the granaries, and the harvest stored there has been ruined. The price of bread shoots up overnight, and people mutter worriedly about starvation and famine – perhaps there a few small riots at bakers' shops, or even one directed towards the mill.

That morning, the PCs are summoned by Kessler to meet Adler again. Cue Chapter 4: When Night Falls.



CHAPTER FOUR

WHEN NIGHT FALLS

The map stone fragment that fell among the Blitzfelsen Hills lay unnoticed until Schulmann's ritual reinvigorated it with aethyric energy. The stone lay near the territory of the Crooked Nose night goblin tribe, who eked out a troglodyte existence beneath the hills. The tribe's shaman, Gobspite Gutsik, discovered it while wandering the hills in a fungus-fuelled delirium.

Gobspite was convinced that this glowy stone was a gift from his gods, Mork and Gork – a portent that he should usurp the big boss of the tribe, da Stabeye. The shaman gathered his warband, the Sikboyz, who were gobsmacked by their master's revelation that he was the chosen one of Gork and Mork.

The shaman decided that the ground should no longer sully the toes of the gods' favoured one. The glowy stone would be his palanquin, borne by two of his most obsequious minions. Gobspite smashed off a chunk of the stone, and strapped it to his head with strips of leather so he could communicate directly with his gods. He was immediately struck with inspiration.

Da Stabeye ruled by fear. He kept a troll, Bulge, in a pit near his throne-grotto, and fed it anyone who annoyed him. Bulge ate well, and no gobbo dared cross da Stabeye. Gobspite realised that without the troll, no one would be scared of da Stabeye, and he would soon be assassinated. Gobspite, as the chosen one of Mork and Gork, would obviously emerge as the new leader.

Stealing the troll was easy. Gobspite got a few of his minions to start a riot in the night goblin cave. While the Stabeye was busy bashing skulls to restore order, the Sikboyz bound the troll in chains and brought it to the shaman. Only a few got eaten in the process. Gobspite needed to hide the troll quickly, but where? Thinking too hard always made him sneeze, and snot spattered on the cave floor, forming a crude green arrow. Gork and Mork had shown the way!

Following the arrow, Gobspite led his Sikboyz and the troll northwards, across the moors, where they chanced upon an uplands farmstead. Gobspite's Sikboyz took the inhabitants by surprise and trussed them up in the cellars, and Gobspite decided to hole up in this farm. The troll was getting hungry, so the shaman put him in the large, well-stocked pantry adjoining the kitchen.

The troll gluttet itself on all the food in the pantry. Within a day it needed feeding again. There were cows, horses and sheep on the farm, as well as the captured humans, but within two days the troll had eaten everything. When it wasn't eating, it pined loudly for its old pit, so Gobspite sent his Sikboyz out to thieve from neighbouring farms to keep it quiet. They went out at night and returned with plenty of animals, which kept the troll's belly full.

Gobspite is impatient to return to the caves and claim his throne. He sent out spies to find out whether da Stabeye had been overthrown. Until they return, he remains at the farm, 'finking.'

EPISODE 1: CRISIS IN THE HILLS

On the morning after the great gale, the adventurers are met by Captain Kessler who summons them to Burgomeister Adler's office. Kessler tells them that the burgomeister has another proposition for them. What he has to say is of great significance to the well-being of every man, woman, and child in Stromdorf. When the adventurers encounter Adler in his office, he is sitting behind his desk wearing a grave expression, although he has spruced up since their last meeting and evidently taken a much-needed bath.

Sitting opposite Adler is a middle-aged man dressed in the attire of a country gentleman, with a bald pate and a neat, black beard, his face drawn with worry. The burgomeister introduces him as Herr Gubo Ackerland, a farmer from the community in the uplands south of Stromdorf. Ackerland explains his predicament to the PCs.

For the past ten days, farms bordering the Blitzfelsen Hills have suffered from a serious spate of rustling. *"The thieves come,"* says Ackerland, *"when night falls."* If the thefts continue, the farmers will be ruined within a month. With the produce in the granaries ruined by the recent storm, and the bad weather making road and river travel slow and dangerous, Stromdorf faces a food shortage if the farm produce fails to reach its citizens.

Captain Kessler offered to send some of his militia to investigate, but Adler wants 'professionals' for the job. For this reason, Adler asks the adventurers if they want the job. He offers 50 silver coins each, and throws down a leather money bag onto the table – half the reward. They get the rest when they bring the rustlers to justice.

"I pray to Sigmar that after this I have no further need of your services, or the town coffers will quickly empty." Adler's lips crack into a smile at his joke, perhaps the first time he's done so for months.

QUESTIONING ACKERLAND

The adventurers may want to question Ackerland. He can impart the following information, if the PCs ask the appropriate questions:

THE RAIDS

The raids began seven days ago. Each night, rustlers have stolen several animals at a time. Despite Ackerland bringing the livestock closer to the farm and employing farmhands to guard them, the thefts continue right under their noses. By morning, the constant rain has ruined or eliminated the robbers' tracks.

The patrols tried to use dogs, but that first night they simply ran yelping back to the farm, completely useless. After that, the dogs refused to go outside at all after dark. Ackerland and his farmhands patrol in shifts from dusk to dawn. Everyone on first shift is always exhausted when they are relieved an hour after midnight.

AN ODD SMELL

If pressed to recollect anything unusual, Ackerland notes that around midnight, the folks on patrol smell a foul odour, much like rotting vegetation.

DA GLOWY STONE

When Gobspite discovered this piece of the map-stone, he broke it in two. The shaman uses the triangular, shield-sized slab as a palanquin, and has tied the smaller chunk to his head.

The piece strapped to Gobspite's head has affected the shaman's wrinkly greenskin brain. The influence of the residual Azyr has given him glimpses of insight and afforded him a crude understanding of other languages, including Reikspiel and Elvish.

Sometimes when he commands his Sikboyz, he unknowingly blurts in another language for a bit. Some of his Sikboyz see this as a sign from Gork (or Mork) of Gobspite's growing power. Others think Gobspite is getting a bit too clever for his own good, but they fear Da Stabeye even more... for now.

Both pieces are covered in dirt. To characters with magical sight, a vivid blue snake of light caresses each piece. Even to those without this gift, the shards seem to shimmer and spark with faint blue electricity.

If the stones are cleaned, it is clear that they are made from the same white marble as the other map-stones. The elvish text is also revealed. Refer to the *Glowy Stone* and *Gobspite's Brain Rock* item cards for more information.

PREDATORS

Before the raids, there was no problem from predators apart from a sheep taken now and again by a wolf.

THE HILLS

There are several farms on the edge of the Blitzfelsen Hills, but further upland, the moors are deserted. There are rumours that goblins have settled in the hills. However, to the best of Ackerland's knowledge, this area has had no trouble from greenskins for a hundred years.

THE TASK

If the PCs accept the job, they will accompany Ackerland to his farm, which has been a nightly target, and stake out his property. Adler wants the adventurers to bring down the brigands' leader, so they should follow the robbers to wherever their lair is hidden. *"Best cut off the problem at the source, eh? I want that fellow hanging from the gibbet-tree by the end of the week."*

THE JOURNEY

The adventurers leave just after midday, journeying on Ackerland's horse-drawn cart, stabled at the Thunderwater Inn. The cart crawls along – the incessant rain has turned the country roads to slough. Sometimes the characters have to help heave a wheel from a deep rut. The adventurers are soaked to the skin at the back of the cart. For the duration of the journey through the lowlands, fields of barley flank the road, the monotony broken now and then by small farm houses and stables.

SCHULMANN'S DREAMS

Schulmann's proximity to any Azyr-charged map stones he possesses fuels his mind with prophetic insights once more. The night after the farmer's arrival in Stromdorf, he has a vivid nightmare – a green fiend, with a throne and crown of stone; a voracious, all-consuming cavern of fangs; a chattering horde of devils shrouded by night.

Before the PCs depart, he tells them of his dream – he believes that the crown and the throne are the last pieces of the stones they are searching for. He urges them to bring these back so that he can complete his analysis of the inscription.

Two hours into the journey, the PCs see a low hill rise about a mile to the east. The clouds seem to gather blackly over this hill, and lightning crashes down upon it with angry intensity.

TEMPEST KNAP

Ackerland instinctively makes the sign of Sigmar's hammer when it comes into view. If he is asked about it, he says that it is called Tempest Knap, a place of haunted ruins where nobody ventures. He says that over a week ago, maybe two, well after dark, he saw spectres whirling round the top of the hill. They danced for hours, lighting up the summit with a dreadful blue light. Ackerland believes it was a terrible omen, for since then the weather in these parts has got even worse. He refuses to say any more about Tempest Knap or what he saw. *"No good will come of it."*

GETTING DRENCHED

If the PCs don't take any precautions to protect themselves from the rain, or keep themselves warm in the cold deluge, they may start to get sick.

After exposure to the rain and clammy conditions over an especially long time, the GM can ask the characters to attempt an **Average (2d) Resilience check** and apply the following results:

- ✘ The PC gains the Under the Weather condition, which lasts until the PC gets a good night's sleep, or until where they can change into dry clothes or warm themselves up.
- ✦ The PC is able to shrug off the effects and resists gaining the Under the Weather condition.
- ☠ The PC suffers one fatigue
- ✧ The PC suffers one fatigue, and if he gains the Under the Weather condition, it requires additional rest to recover from.

About two hours later, the lowlands rise into foothills. A moorland vista stretches away to the misty horizon. They have reached the Ackerland farm.

THE ACKERLAND FARM

Outbuildings surround a whitewashed, thatched farmhouse, its windows glowing invitingly. A wooden watchtower guards the settlement. Black cattle huddle in a nearby field, their backs to the driving rain. Further away graze sheep, indifferent to the weather.

The adventurers are welcomed into the Ackerlands' warm kitchen. Meg, his wife, offers food and drink. Marien, their attractive 16-year old daughter, fancies any human male with a high Strength. Kleb, their six foot son, gives them a surly nod. Nine other youngsters clamour for attention. A sheepdog is curled by the roaring hearth, whimpering if approached.

After having a wholesome dinner with the family, the adventurers must prepare for the night ahead.

PLAN OF ACTION

The adventurers may want to scout out potential sites for their stakeout. The farmhouse is surrounded by a haybarn, a cowshed, a horse stable and a pen, where his prize bull is tethered. A wooden watchtower looks over the moors. Adjoining the farm is Long Field, where a herd of cattle is gathered. There is a small copse in this field. Farther away, in Far Field, is a flock of sheep. At one end of the field is a mound of large boulders.

SEARCHING THE FARM

Although the ground is muddy, the rain soon washes away any tracks, so no trace of the raiders can be found. However, a PC passing a **Hard (3d) Observation check** while investigating the turret of the watchtower, or exploring either Long Field or Far Field, finds several damp husks on the ground.

Anyone passing an **Average (2d) Nature Lore check** identifies the husks as some sort of fungus. Held close to the nose, the husks stink of rotting vegetation. Anyone sniffing them must pass a **Daunting (4d) Resilience check** to avoid being overcome with lethargy; an afflicted PC gains the Sluggish condition until the end of the current act. Ackerland and his men recognise the odour as what they always seem to smell during their nightly patrols.

GUARDING THE FARM

At dusk, Ackerland and one of his farmhands, armed with crossbows and clubs, patrol Long Field. Two shepherds with slings guard Far Field. A lookout with a bow stands on top of the watchtower. The PCs should have found suitable places to hide – the copse and boulders are prime spots. When the players are ready, begin Act 1: Raiders in the Night.

ACT 1: RAIDERS IN THE NIGHT

At midnight, night goblins armed with spears raid the farm from the south, creeping up on the sentries to take them unawares. Two goblins converge on the tower, three on Long Field and three on Far Field. They use slackfungus puffballs, a type of fungus with soporific spores, to neutralise those on watch.

SNIFF SNIFF...

The goblins are good at sniffing out danger. The goblins attempt an **Observation check**, opposed by the PCs' Stealth (see page 77 for the goblin stats). If the goblins succeed, they spot a hidden adventurer. That PC is targeted with slackfungus – see the sidebar for details.

SPOTTING THE GOBLINS

Adventurers who do not succumb to slackfungus may attempt an opposed **Observation check** (against the goblins' Stealth) to notice their attackers. Because it is a dark, cloudy night, PCs add two misfortune ■■ dice to the check.

Adventurers who succeed at the Observation check spot any goblins in their area before they fire more slackfungus at available targets. Anyone scoring at least two boons ☼☼ notices the goblins when they are at long range, otherwise they are spotted at medium range.

The farmer and his farmhands are too unperceptive to notice the sneaky goblins and automatically succumb to slackfungus.

MOOV IN LADZ!

Once patrols are stupefied by slackfungus, the goblins start stealing animals. The three goblins in Long Field take two cows. Those in Far Fields are joined by the two from the watchtower, and wrangle some sheep. They herd the livestock southwards, the heavy rain obscuring their tracks after just a few minutes.

If the goblins are attacked, they abandon the animals and flee southward. If the puffballs appear to have no effect on any of the goblins' visible targets, they also flee, too cowardly to attack awake sentries. Once the goblins flee, the PCs need to immediately pursue them if they wish to catch them before they reach their lair.

If the adventurers do not follow the goblins, they will have to either track the goblins to the Baumer farm (where they will find the alarm raised) or wait for a future night.

Ackerland and his farmhands treat the adventurers as heroes if they prevent the goblins from stealing any animals.

ACT 2: GOBLIN STALKING

The night goblins prod the animals southwards. The PCs follow carefully, the rain masking their presence. When the goblins are a safe distance from the farm, they relax their pace. Jabbering to each other in their guttural language, they continue on their way. Their lair is only a few miles away. Heading deeper into the moors, the ground rises into stony land peppered with stunted bushes. The goblins stop now and again to bicker and fight. The largest goblin breaks up any argument with a slap of a head and a poke to an eye.

WOZZAT STINK?

If the PCs are following the goblins, there is a chance the goblins catch the characters' scent. The goblins attempt an **Observation check**, opposed by the PCs' Stealth. If the goblins succeed, at least one goblin smells an adventurer on their trail. At this, the goblins squeak in alarm and run south, abandoning any animals they stole.

If the goblins do not sniff out the party, they continue, but two of them remain suspicious and sneak back to see if they are being followed. Once the PCs catch up, they run into these goblins along the trail. These two goblins squeal and try to run to warn their mates.

SLACKFUNGUS ATTACK!

The goblins fire slackfungus puffballs at targets within medium range. On a successful Ranged Attack check, the puffballs land silently at the feet of their target, releasing their spores, causing a stench of rotting vegetation.

The target and characters engaged with the target must make **Daunting (4d) Resilience checks**, with bonuses for covering their mouth or noses. Characters within close range need only make an **Average (2d) Resilience check**.

On a failed check, the target inhales some spores. Their eyelids droop, their muscles slacken, and they become tired. Until the end of the current act, affected characters gain the **Sluggish** condition and add a misfortune die to all their actions.

Dogs in the area whine in fear and try to escape – the slackfungus odour is especially pungent to a dog's keen sense of smell.

The night goblins are unaffected by the spores.

GOBLIN CHASING

Make a six space progress tracker, with an event on the 3rd and 6th spaces. Place a Goblin token on the first space. Each space simulates several minutes of the chase. At the start of each round, advance the Goblin token one space.

Place a PC token on the first space. To advance the PC token a member of the group must perform two move manoeuvres, or succeed on a **Hard (3d) Athletics check** to catch up to the goblins. Any PC who fails this check or chooses not to perform two move manoeuvres must drop out of the chase, catching up with his companions at the end of this act. If all the PCs involved in the chase fail, the goblins get away. If the PC token stays on pace with the goblins, they are hot on their trail.

To represent the exertion of the chase, each PC still in the chase and each goblin suffers one fatigue when their token reaches the event spaces on the track.

CATCHING THE QUARRY

If the PC token reaches the final event space the same round the goblin token reaches that space, all PCs still involved in the chase catch up to the goblins. Otherwise, the goblins get away.

If caught, a fight ensues between the involved PCs and the goblins they were chasing. They begin within close range of each other. Straggling PCs are at extreme range, around obscuring terrain.

OTHER GOBLINS WARNED

If the two goblins who backtracked are being chased, when the Goblin token reaches the first event marker, these goblins reach their mates and urge them to flee. The entire group of goblins now becomes involved in the chase.

If any goblins get away, their tracks are fresh enough to follow. If the adventurers kill all the goblins, there are no tracks to follow, but they will reach the farm if they continue due south. (The goblins are none too bright, and take the most direct route.)

THE FARMSTEAD

The PCs reach the outskirts of the overrun farm after a few hours. In a small valley, enclosed within a high palisade of sturdy stakes, stands a half-timbered farmhouse with a thatched roof surrounded by several outbuildings. A stone gatehouse guards the entrance and a stone tower rises protectively above the settlement.

Because the farm is surrounded by hills, the PCs get a good view of what goes on down there from their current position. There are plenty of bushes and boulders to hide behind. From where they are, the farm is at long range. Extreme range from the farm lies beyond the crest of the surrounding hills and out of sight of the farmstead.

The PCs see several small groups of hooded goblins pottering round the farmyard. Some are sheltering from the rain in the barn, drinking from large casks of ale and squabbling. Others are herding groups of sheep and cattle into pens – including any goblins the PCs followed, if those goblins arrived here unaware of the adventurers. However, if the goblins are aware of the adventurers, the PCs see them running into the yard, squawking and squeaking in fear, but they shut up when Gobspite makes his entrance.

THE SHAMAN MAKES HIS ENTRANCE

Gobspite emerges from the farmhouse, borne on his stone palanquin by two struggling henchmen. He is surrounded by seven bodyguards with scimitars and shields. The shaman makes a nightly show of authority to make sure that his minions ‘don’t get any ideers.’ His henchmen rush to the farmyard from the barn or stockpens, shivering in the rain, grovelling before the shaman, who casts a beady eye over the crowd. Gobspite spots a goblin not bowing low enough and zaps him with green lightning, reducing him to a pile of ash. His henchmen moan in fear and wriggle even more prostrate.

THE ONES THAT GOT AWAY

If any goblins who raided the Ackerland farm were aware that the adventurers were following them, and safely reached the farm, they attract Gobspite’s attention by jumping up and down excitedly and jabbering at the shaman in their guttural language. The shaman snarls orders at the crowd of goblins, who will form into small mobs to hunt the intruders (see ‘Intrudaz!’ on page 56). All goblins are now on the alert.

A CLUMSY EXIT

After terrifying his henchmen, Gobspite imperiously crosses his arms as his bearers carry him back inside the farmhouse. They lift the stone too high and the shaman smashes his head on the door frame. His screams of rage are heard even as his guards close the farmhouse door behind them. When he has gone, the goblins scramble back to the barn to continue carousing, or to fetch their weapons if the alarm has been raised.

RESTING FOR THE NIGHT

An **Average (2d) Folklore check** will reveal that night goblins are nocturnal, have excellent night vision, and see poorly in bright light (so it’s too bad it’s raining). The farmyard is crawling with goblins when the PCs arrive, and will remain so until dawn.

There is a small shepherd’s shelter just over the hill from the farm where the PCs can keep warm (somewhat) and dry (not very) until dawn, when the goblins will retire to the barn to sleep, aside from a few guards.

EPISODE 2: ON THE FARM

The next morning, the PCs can explore the occupied farm. They must devise a way of getting rid of the goblins who have captured it.

WHEN NIGHT FALLS

When dusk falls, the goblins wake up. The troll wakes and clamours for food with terrifying roars. The goblins proceed to slaughter animals in the pens, and feed the troll by climbing a ladder to the pantry roof and dropping carcasses down the hole in the roof. They feast on any leftover meat, and booze on ale from barrels rolled from the farmhouse cellar. Shortly after dusk, the goblins disperse on raiding missions, leaving the barn and yard empty, returning a few hours after midnight.

SENTRIES

A group of four night goblin henchmen guard the farm’s watchtower, and another group of four guards the gatehouse, all armed with daggers and shortbows.

BEADY EYES

Anyone sneaking within long range of the sentries in the tower must make a **Stealth check** opposed by the goblins’ Observation. By day, the goblins hide miserably under their hoods from the glare of sunlight, and the sneaking PC gains one fortune ☐ die. If the goblins are on the alert, the sneaking PCs must add one misfortune ■ die. If the sentries spot any adventurer, they raise the alarm (see page 59).

TWITCHING EARS

Loud noises made by the PCs may attract unwanted attention. Any goblins within medium range of the noise hear it if they pass a **Hard (3d) Observation check**. Extremely loud noises (like a handgun being fired) attracts goblins at a further range and decreases the difficulty. If the goblins are on the alert, the difficulty is reduced by one increment. Within close range of the palisade, the gatehouse sentries and up to two groups of goblin henchmen from the barn investigate. The patrol investigates noises from outside.

GOBLIN PATROLS

The outskirts of the farm are guarded by several patrols comprised of six night goblins. One standard night goblin handles a squig on a chain, the others are henchmen armed with spears. If the adventurers encounter the patrol, they can either fight, or try and hide.

ENCOUNTERING THE PATROL

For every fifteen minutes or so the PCs spend skulking or investigating along the outskirts of the farm, roll one misfortune ■ die. On a bane ☹ result, a patrol moves into their area. The statistics for the night goblins and squig may be found on pages 76-77

HIDE & SEEK

The goblin patrols are none too stealthy (the squig is loud), and the PCs should have ample warning and time to hide when they approach, if they choose. The goblins make an **Observation check**

opposed by the lowest Agility and Stealth in the party. If the goblins have a squig, add one expertise ■ die to their pool. If the goblins succeed, the patrol locates the group and combat ensues.

COMBAT

The patrol's squig leaps at the PCs, dragging its handler behind it. The handler is too busy hanging on to fight. Other goblins in the patrol prepare to face the intruders. The noise of the combat may alert other goblins. If the alarm has not been raised, one goblin tries to alert the others at the farm. Remaining goblins try to capture the adventurers. If they succeed, see *Captured* on page 56.

The goblins try to run once half the goblins in the patrol have been killed. Surviving goblins scatter, and flee towards the farm for help.

EXPLORING THE FARM

The best time to explore the farm is by day. At night, the farm is crawling with night goblins. Because they prefer to live in darkness, the entire farm is unlit. Any light source used outside attracts the goblins sentries who will raise the alarm, so the PCs will need to wander about in the dark, which adds two misfortune ■ dice to all actions involving vision.

WATCHTOWER

The watchtower is built of rough-hewn stone. A ladder reaches up to a portal halfway up the tower. The first storey, marked with several arrow slits, contains a few mattresses, a table and a couple of chairs. A candle, some dice and two filthy plates are on the table. Stairs lead up to the ramparts, patrolled by two goblin henchmen with shortbows. A trapdoor leads down to an empty storeroom.

A group of night goblin henchmen armed with short bows and daggers guard the watchtower. By day, half are asleep under the table.

GATEHOUSE & PALISADE

The gatehouse is a squat, stone building with an oak gate, bolted from the inside. A group of goblin henchmen armed with short bows and daggers guard the gatehouse. By day, half will be asleep.

The palisade is ten feet tall. Climbing it requires a successful **Average (2d) Athletics check**. Add two misfortune ■ dice to the pool because the stakes are slick with rain. If this check generates a ✨ Chaos Star, the stakes rattle and make noise, which might attract unwanted attention.

WELL

The stone well is protected by a tile roof, and has a handle and pulley system to raise and lower a large bucket on the end of a rope, which is currently lowered.

Anyone peering down the well at night sees a small girl huddled asleep in the bucket. Pulling the bucket up wakes the little girl. Her name is Flea (see page 54 for more details).

FARMYARD

The farmyard is paved with muddy cobbles, glistening with rain and littered with animal bones. In the centre is a well. A cart stands outside the stables. Between midnight until just before dusk more than four dozen goblin henchmen are present in and around the farmyard. Sneaking past requires a **Daunting (4d) Stealth check**.

By day, the little girl named Flea spies on adventurers in the yard. With a successful **Average (2d) Observation check**, a PC notices someone dart out of sight in the window of the smithy.

YARD & GARDEN

At the back of the farmhouse is a small yard, containing a kennel splashed with blood, a shed housing a wash-tub, clothes barrel and dryer rack, and an outhouse (covering a smelly pit). Separated from the yard by a low fence is a garden where vegetables and herbs grow in neat rows.

ANIMAL PENS

The pens are empty from the troll's feeding time until an hour after midnight, when returning raiders begin to fill them with animals. They stink of fresh animal dung, which litters the floor. When full, they contain about three dozen sheep and about a dozen cows.

STABLES

This long wooden building contains three empty stables smelling of horses, and a storeroom containing sacks of feed, plenty of rope and farm tools, as well as saddles, bridles and other horse tack. Stacked in one corner are four large barrels, marked with a skull and crossbones. The lid of one is loose – at the bottom is the contorted corpse of a goblin, white froth congealed around its lips. The barrel is half full of white powder. The other barrels are full of this powder – a potent rat poison which is just as lethal to goblins.

SMITHY

The smithy is a small, single-storey stone building with a slate roof and chimney. The forge is cold. A badly burned goblin corpse lies among the ashes. Beside the forge are a bellows and a woodpile. Blacksmiths' tools hang from the walls. A half-made horseshoe rests on the anvil, and a hefty, blood-spattered hammer lies on the floor.

A door leads into a small room with a narrow bed. A lamp stands on a bedside table. A large chest lies upturned on the floor, breeches and shirts scattered everywhere. Flea hides here by day. If they haven't encountered her yet, a PC looking under the bed sees her peering at them with frightened eyes, or may hear her breathing under the bed with a **Hard (3d) Observation check**.

A FLEA IN THE FOLD

Gildetta, or Flea as she prefers to be known, is the youngest daughter of Balder Baumer, who owned this farm. This six year-old girl is very thin, with dishevelled golden braids and a green dress caked in mud. Brilliant blue eyes peer from her grimy face.

She is subdued from the horror of her experiences, but adventurers who earn her trust may see glimpses of her former playful nature, and witness the ghost of a smile that transforms her otherwise sullen features...as well as learn something about what has been going on at the farm.

ENCOUNTERING FLEA

Flea thinks the adventurers are in league with the goblins. Until the adventurers win her trust, she bites and scratches anyone approaching her. If grabbed, she screams loudly, which may alert the goblins.

If the adventurers try to befriend her, use a seven space progress tracker with an event space on each of the ends. Place a Trust token in the centre space. The right side of the track represents Flea's mistrust and dislike of the PCs. The left side of the track represents her growing trust or acceptance.

As the adventurers interact with Flea, they may attempt to calm her down or reassure her with skill checks (generally of **Average (2d)** difficulty). Reward checks with a fortune die or two for good roleplaying. Female PCs gain a fortune die to their checks, as Flea trusts women more than men.

Move the token one space to the left for each successful check or positive interaction with Flea. Move the token one space left if Flea is offered food, or is given one of her toys. Move the marker one space to the right if a PC fails a check or attempts to Intimidate her.

If the token reaches the farthest left event space, the adventurers befriend Flea. She follows them wherever they go, and refers to them as her uncles (or aunties), becoming particularly attached to the adventurer with the highest Fellowship. If the adventurers enter combat with the goblins, Flea squeaks with fear and darts away, returning when it safe. If her new friends are ever captured, she will rescue them (see pages 56-67).

If the token reaches the farthest right event space, Flea is convinced the adventurers are enemies and screams in terror until the PCs leave her alone.

FLEA'S STORY

If Flea is asked what happened here, she hides her face and sobs. Anyone making an **Average (2d) Charm check** calms her down and gets her to tell her story.

Flea lived happily on the farm until the night when the greenies captured her family and killed all the animals. They had a growling giant with them, with an ugly face, a big belly and sharp claws and teeth. Flea hid in the well.

The greenies sleep at day, except for the ones at the gate and in the tower, and the ones with the angry red fish-dog. At daytime, Flea sneaks from the well and eats the meat the greenies leave in the yard, and hides in Old Ham's house, who was kind to her before the greenies took him away. By night, the greenies squawk and fight. They get drunk on her dad's beer, which they steal from the cellar under the house.

Flea hopes the adventurers will kill all the greenies, their fish-dog and the giant, and rescue her family and toys.

FLEA'S CHARACTERISTICS

Flea should be treated as a Townsfolk NPC (*Tome of Adventure*, page 64) with a Strength and Toughness of 2.

THE BARN

This large wooden barn is two storeys high. When the goblins congregate here at night, it is impossible to enter the barn undetected. Most of the time, they are eating, drinking and arguing.

Bales of hay are stacked up to the barn's ceiling. A couple of pitchforks lean against one wall, along with a jumble of crude spears, and a dozen clubs and nets. When the goblins go raiding, they take the spears. Broken casks of beer and chewed bones are scattered about the floor, and rats scurry in the rubbish. Goblin dung is piled in one corner, buzzing with flies – the barn reeks. A ladder leads to the loft.

Up the ladder, the narrow windows in the loft are shuttered – it is extremely dark up there. A dozen sleeping mats are arrayed against the walls. This used to be the farmhands' quarters. By day, about

four dozen goblins sleep here, loudly snoring. Anyone creeping among the sleeping goblins must pass a **Hard (3d) Stealth check** to avoid waking them and raising the alarm.

THE FARMHOUSE

This half-timbered one-storey building has two stone chimneys jutting from each end of its thatched roof. A single-storey extension forms an L at the western end, its window crudely barred by slats. A ladder leans against the extension. The stink of rotten meat wafts from a hole smashed in the roof. By day, growling snores emanate from the hole. By night, grunts and crunching noises are heard. There is a drop of 8 feet into the pantry below.

Adjoining the east wall of the farmhouse is a woodshed, a two-handed axe leaning against it. Also on the east side is a low cellar door, opening onto a barrel-chute leading to the cellar. Piled near the cellar door is a mound of goblin dung, flies buzzing around it.

The farmhouse door is shut but unlocked. All the windows are shuttered, and it is very dark inside. PCs using a light source inside may alert the goblins on the landing. PCs must add two misfortune ■■ dice to all actions involving vision if they wander about in the dark.

LIVING ROOM

This large room contains a dining table and chairs, an oak dresser and a fireplace. A candlestick stands on the table. Porcelain crockery lies smashed on the floor.

Above the fireplace hangs a sword inscribed in with a single word – *Acitus* – on its pommel. Anyone passing a **Hard (3d) Education check** translates this as ‘keen-bladed,’ in Tilean. See the “Acitus” item card for details. If the PCs ask Flea who the sword belonged to, she tells them “it’s grandad’s old sword,” although the sword looks much older than that.

STAIRS

Adventurers climbing the stairs must pass an **Easy (1d) Coordination check** to avoid treading on a creaky step, alerting the goblin bodyguards on the landing.

KITCHEN

Cooking implements hang on a wall next to an old table, and a cauldron and kettle hang above the large fireplace. Smashed plates, cutlery, and jars litter the floor. There is a trapdoor in one corner, which leads to the cellar. A door to the west leads out to the yard. An empty cupboard blocks the pantry door on the north wall. If anyone listens at the door, by day they hear deep, snoring growls; at night: guttural grunts and crunching sounds.

The cupboard can be moved with an **Easy (1d) Athletics check**. If a Chaos Star ✱ is generated while moving the cupboard, it makes an awful racket, alerting the goblin guards on the landing.

PANTRY

This charnel house of animal carcasses and human bones swarms with flies. When a PC first enters this place, he must pass an **Average (2d) Resilience check** or suffers one fatigue, one stress and must spend his next turn throwing up from the gagging stench and horrific sight. This is the troll’s lair.

CELLAR

The walls of the musty cellar are damp and mouldy, cobwebs trailing from its low ceiling. Steep stairs descend from the kitchen. Broken barrels lie on the floor, but about a dozen beer casks remain untouched. During the day, thin shafts of light streak from a door above a barrel-chute, which provides an exit to the farmyard above.

Two goblins guard the barrels. They are thoroughly drunk and may actually mistake the adventurers for fellow greenskins if they perform any sort of ruse. Both goblins have the Intoxicated and Sluggish condition. The noise of any combat attracts the bodyguards upstairs.

LANDING

The landing at the top of the stairs has a small window overlooking the farmyard. One door leads to the childrens’ bedroom, a second door leads to Gobspite’s throne room. Three of Gobspite’s bodyguards, armed with scimitars and shields, stand watch here. They investigate any disturbance downstairs. If they encounter intruders, two attack while the third runs upstairs to alert Gobspite. If he alerts Gobspite, or if the PCs break down the door to Gobspite’s chambers, begin the *Gobspite’s Wrath* encounter (see page 58 for details).

CHILDRENS’ BEDROOM

Children’s clothes and food scraps are scattered about this bedroom. A large toy bear sits in a corner, surrounded by ragdolls – Flea’s toys. An empty birdcage hangs near the shuttered window on the south wall. Yellow feathers flecked with blood lie on the floor below it. The stink of goblins hangs in the air. The two glowy stone bearers are here. They are lying behind the bed, napping.

If the party makes a lot of noise or moves about the room, make a **Daunting (4d) Observation check** for the goblins, modified with a fortune die or two based on how much noise the PCs make. If the check succeeds, the goblins wake up and attack. Otherwise, if they are spotted while asleep, the PCs can slay them noiselessly with their weapons without needing to make a check.

HUNGRY TROLL AND THE GOBBOS!

If the adventurers encounter Bulge the troll in the pantry, it is confused by their presence. It must pass an Intelligence check before it realises what is going on. For the first round, this is a **Daunting (4d) Intelligence check**. Each round, the check becomes easier, until it is a **Simple (0d) Intelligence check**. If the troll has been injured, the GM may wish to add fortune dice to its Intelligence check based on how badly it was hurt that round.

If the check fails, Bulge looks at the PCs stupidly, snorting and laughing. Once it passes the check, it gives a daft grin, licks its lips, and lurches to its feet, drooling and roaring as it tries to eat the nearest adventurer. The troll fights to the death.

Space in the pantry is restrictive, so PCs using two-handed or especially large weapons must add two misfortune ■■ dice to their attack checks. Further, only three combatants can be engaged with the troll inside the pantry at one time. Once a fourth combatant enters the engagement, a previous combatant is pushed out to close range, back into the kitchen. If that is not an option, a fourth combatant can’t squeeze into the cramped quarters.

The troll’s roars raise the alarm and goblins pour into the yard to investigate (see *Intrudaz!*). The three bodyguards from the landing come down to the kitchen and listen nervously to the ruckus in the pantry. The goblins do not dare go near the troll – but they fight PCs left out in the kitchen.

SURVIVING THE TROLL

Unless the pantry door has been unblocked, or the slatted window opened, the only exit is through the hole in the ceiling. PCs must pass a **Hard (3d) Athletics check** to pull themselves up to safety.

Thankfully, there are a few other means of surviving the troll:

JAM ITS JAWS!

A PC can try to lodge something (such as a skull or helmet) into the troll's jaws. He must pass a **Hard (3d) Coordination check** to thrust the item home. If an object is stuck in its mouth, the troll chomps down on the object, its arms otherwise hanging limply at its side – it ceases to attack while so occupied.

If the troll passes a **Hard (3d) Strength check**, he successfully crunches and swallows the item, ready to renew its attacks. Attempting to chew an item in its maw requires an action.

SMASH THE DOOR!

The door can be burst open with a **Daunting (4d) Athletics check**. Otherwise, it can be battered and smashed open. The door has a Soak Value of 3 and is destroyed after taking 12 wounds.

Otherwise, a PC who stands in front of the door and goads the troll to charge him can try to dodge out of the way at the last minute. If he performs the **Dodge** action on a troll's attack when attempting this exploit, if the troll's attack misses, it smashes through the door, splintering the barricading cupboard and opening this egress.

Once the door has been smashed open and all PCs have left the pantry, the troll escapes from its tiny prison and goes on a rampage!

EVENT: INTRUDAZ!

The goblins react differently depending on when they are disturbed. During the day, the goblins will be bleary-eyed from sleep, and will be reluctant to venture out into the sun. The adventurers hear confused shouts coming from the barn. At night, goblins are awake. Those in the barn arm themselves. Those elsewhere in the yard rush to the barn to grab their weapons.

TROLL ON THE LOOSE!

As soon as the troll breaks out of the pantry, it goes on a goblin killing spree. Any goblins in the kitchen screech in terror and flee into the living room then out into the yard. The troll smashes its way through the front door of the farmhouse and into the yard, roaring.

Once in the yard, the troll tries to catch and eat any goblins it can see, causing utter panic among them. It will charge the nearest PC or NPC it can see. Most goblins try to run for the hills, although a dozen of them scale the ladder into the watchtower, bolting the portal behind them.

If the troll cannot see anything to chase, it scents any animals in the pens and lopes towards them, salivating. It happily rends them limb from limb and spends the next few hours gorging on their flesh. When it runs out of meat, the troll searches the farmstead for more.

ALARMED GOBLINS

Once some sort of alarm has been raised, there is a chance the goblins get organised enough to act. The GM makes a Discipline check for the goblins. Once they pass the Discipline check, they arm themselves and are ready for action.

After the first round, this is a **Daunting (4d) Discipline check**. Each round, the check becomes easier, until it is a **Simple (0d) Discipline check**. If Gobspite is present, spurring them on, or the goblins are otherwise motivated, the GM may wish to add fortune dice to this Discipline check.

Once this Discipline check is passed, the sentries in the tower shoot at any intruders they see, and those in the gatehouse manoeuvre to do likewise. The squig patrol starts moving in a circuit around the palisade. The remaining goblins rush out from the barn, having grabbed spears, clubs or nets.

Unless something special rouses him, Gobspite is too busy communing with Gork and Mork to notice the turmoil. His bodyguards remain dutifully at their posts, while his stone-bearers continue their nap.

GET 'EM LADZ!

The night goblins split into several mobs, each mob consisting of two groups of goblin henchmen. If one or more PCs are spotted by a nearby mob (by failing opposed **Stealth versus Observation checks**, for example), the mob immediately moves within close range and attacks.

Once a group of PCs has been attacked by a mob, another mob arrives within medium range at the beginning of the following round. Gobspite has ordered the goblins to capture rather than kill any intruders, so that he can torture them at leisure and feed them to the troll.

If the adventurers manage to hide and are not found for more than a half hour, the mobs get bored and call off the search. The alarm is no longer raised, though from now on, all goblins are on the alert for the next hour or so.

EVENT: CAPTURED

Captured PCs are knocked unconscious, and their possessions (except armour) are taken to Gobspite's makeshift throne room. The goblins don't search the PCs too carefully, however, so if the PCs have hidden gear about their person (such as a knife tucked into a boot), the goblins miss these items.

The first time the PCs are captured, they are dragged to the farmhouse cellar. Two drunk goblins are slumped asleep behind the casks of ale throughout this encounter. The PCs wake up in pitch blackness. Their heads bang with pain. They are lying on a cold, stone floor, bound hand and foot, and the air smells damp and musty. If they befriended Flea, she is not present – thankfully she managed to run off and hide.

One PC notices a pair of cruel eyes gleaming in the dark. As they loom closer, the stink of goblin fills his nostrils. He hears a low cackle and feels a blade against his jugular. If the PC has Night Vision, he sees a hooded goblin grinning at him, holding a knife to his throat. The metal digs into his flesh. The goblin cackles again, then light flares, illuminating the cellar stairwell.

The goblin squeals and drops his knife with a clatter, shielding his eyes against the glare. Seven large goblins – Gobspite’s personal bodyguards – stomp down the stairs. Four hold flickering torches. Gobspite is carried awkwardly down the stairs on his stone palanquin, his two bearers struggling beneath the weight. The shaman glares at the captives.

THE INTERROGATION

Gobspite orders his bodyguards to drag the weakest-looking PC forward. The bearers lower the stone so Gobspite is at the same level as the prisoner. From his nose, the shaman draws a sharp bone carved with eldritch symbols, and with a gleeful cry of “Pin!” he pricks the PC. The prick causes intense agony. The bone is etched with sigils of pain, inflicting one fatigue with each prod.

Gobspite addresses the captives in broken Reikspiel, his voice harsh and high-pitched:

“So dung ’edz. Why’s youze sneakin’ an’ peekin’ round ’ere? Flap ya tongues kwik, or Gobspite’ll prick out ya peeperz an’ suck on da jellies!”

The adventurers infuriate the shaman whatever they say to him. He pricks his victim again, screaming out “Pin! Pin!” with each prod. If his victim falls unconscious, Gobspite yawns ostentatiously and replaces the bone in his nose.

“Can’t be bovva’d with youze dung ’edz. Gobspite’ll giv youze to da Sikboyz, den yer bitz wotz left, ’e’ll feed to da troll. Come on ladz, let’s leave ’em stew fer a bit.”

At this, Gobspite and his bodyguards depart. The remaining guard sulks in the corner of the cellar, stealing sips of beer from the casks.

SECOND TIME’S A CHARM

If the PCs have been captured more than once, they are dropped into the pantry to feed the troll, if it is still alive. They awaken when they hit the floor. If the troll has been killed, they’re still stuffed in the pantry, and the cupboard put back in place if it was moved.

ESCAPE

The adventurers have several opportunities to escape.

FLEA

If they befriended Flea, once Gobspite is far away, she sneaks from her hiding place to the farmhouse, and climbs through the barrel-chute in the north wall. She creeps to her favourite PC and whispers in his ear, “Shh... it’s Flea. I’ve come to rescue you.” She uses a knife from the smithy to cut the adventurers’ bonds.

ESCAPE ARTISTS OR STRONGMEN

A PC can attempt to slip his bonds by passing a **Daunting (4d) Coordination check**. Muscle-bound adventurers can break their bonds by passing a **Daunting (4d) Strength check**. The GM should provide bonus fortune dice for clever ideas that help the PCs escape the situation.

NETTERS & CLUBBERS

Nets and clubs are favourite night goblin weapons. Used in concert, a group of night goblins armed with nets and clubs can quickly subdue their targets, knocking them unconscious in a devastating one-two combination.

Netters: In the first round of combat, one of the goblins attempt the *Net ‘Em* action, listed on page 77. Once a netter has thrown his net, he draws a long dagger instead.

Clubbers: A clubber wields a knobby two-handed wooden club (a great weapon) and tries to subdue his target with the *Club ‘Em* action listed on page 77. Rather than inflict wounds, this attack forces the target to suffer fatigue.

THE GOBLIN’S KNIFE

A PC who remembers the goblin’s dropped knife may sidle to where he heard it clatter, find it and pick it up. If no PC remembers the knife, and all other means of escape have failed, the GM may allow a PC to spend a fortune point to recall seeing the knife nearby.

THE GUARD

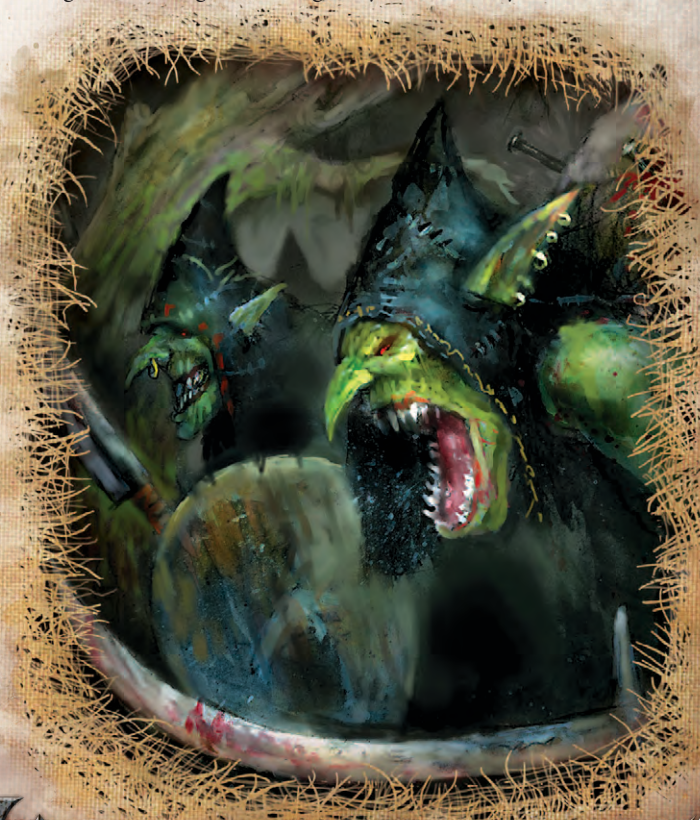
The guard is drunk. Creative PCs can take advantage of this...

GETTING THE GREENSKINS OUT

The adventurers will no doubt come up with all sorts of cunning plans to evict the goblin squatters. A few examples are discussed.

WADING IN

Unsubtle adventurers may want to slaughter the goblins with blades, missiles, and magic. Unless the adventurers attack when most goblins have gone raiding, they will be vastly outnumbered.



If the PCs prefer this approach, the GM can use a 12 space progress track to measure the goblins' overall morale throughout the chapter, with a Morale token on the first space. Every time the PCs kill a mob of goblin henchmen or one of Gobspite's bodyguards, advance the morale token one space. If Gobspite or Bulge are killed, advance the token two spaces.

When the morale token reaches the end of the track, there have been so many goblins killed that the survivors fear for their lives! Whenever goblins do not outnumber enemies in an engagement, all goblins in that engagement immediately flee! They scatter, vault the palisade, and don't come back. However, Gobspite and his bodyguards never run, and will have to be dealt with separately.

POISON

Adventurers can even the odds by poisoning the goblins' beer (perhaps with the handy rat poison found in the barn). Within ten minutes of the night goblins guzzling poisoned beer, they start frothing white foam before dropping dead. Unfortunately, Gobspite and his guards abstain from beer, and the troll is immune to the poison.

GOBSPITE'S WRATH

At some point, the adventurers will likely want to break into the 'throne room' and challenge Gobspite. If they defeat his bodyguards, Gobspite scurries up the chimney, and the adventurers must somehow get him down from the roof – or join him up there.

ACT 1: BREAKING & ENTERING

The heavy oak door leading into the throne room is bolted from the inside. From the other side of the door, the PCs can hear a high-pitched goblin voice barking orders furiously, and the sound of something heavy being dragged across the room. While the adventurers struggle to break down the door, Gobspite's minions on the other side are piling broken furniture against it.

The hard oak door has a Soak Value of 3 and can suffer 15 wounds. If the PCs fail to smash in the door within two rounds, the goblins manage to barricade it, increasing its Soak Value to 5. Once the door gives way, the adventurers can use this act's rally step to brace themselves for action.

WHAT ARE THE GOBLINS DOING?

Each round, Gobspite works himself into a frenzy, gathering the *Waaagh!* energy of Gork and Mork to himself to fuel his shaman magic. The PCs hear screeching gobbledegook within the room.

Any bodyguards on the landing or elsewhere in the house attempt to engage the PCs in combat, perhaps pinning the PCs on the stairwell between the heavy door and the first floor.

ACT 2: THE THRONE ROOM

When the door collapses, four cowed goblins with scimitars and shields rush to block the breach. Behind them, balanced on an upturned chamber pot atop a teetering pile of broken furniture in the centre of the room, a shaman in black robes with a chunk of white marble tied to his head glares at the PCs with hate-maddened yellow eyes. He screeches incantations, and the chunk of stone strapped to his head sparks and splutters with strange, blue energy.

If the goblins barricaded the door, bits of broken furniture are scattered around it on the floor. In the centre of the room is Gobspite's makeshift throne. There is a large fireplace on the north wall. The two windows in the north wall are shuttered. The larger piece of the glowy stone leans against this wall, along with any of the adventurers' belongings which the goblins may have taken from them.

DETERMINING INITIATIVE

If the adventurers break down the door while the goblin bodyguards are still trying to build their barricade, they drop the junk they are carrying and grab their scimitars and shields. Unprepared, each bodyguard adds one challenge ♦ die to its initiative check. If the door was barricaded, the PCs are impeded by the junk scattered in front of the broken door. Each PC must add one challenge ♦ die to his initiative check.

Regardless, the bodyguards rush to attack the PCs. Gobspite selected them for their tenacity – they fight to the death.

GOBSPITE'S GRAND EXIT

Gobspite blasts the adventurers with *Waaagh!* magic. He does not care if a spell hits or damages his bodyguards. The shaman uses his throne as cover; PCs making *Ranged Attacks* against him add one challenge ♦ die to their actions. As soon as Gobspite uses his explosive *Gaze of Mork* spell, the alarm is raised.

If Gobspite is wounded by any sort of ranged or melee attack, he flees to the roof. If the PCs incapacitate Gobspite before he can escape, he uses *Gerroff Me!* to break free and head to the roof. When this happens, begin Act 3.

Surviving bodyguards hesitate when they realise that their master is leaving them in the lurch. This allows the PCs to assess their situation during this act's rally step.

ACT 3: UP THE CHIMNEY

The shaman bounds from his throne to the fireplace, waving his arms and shrieking a spell in mid-air. Keep track of the rounds by using a five space progress tracker. Detailed below are the actions Gobspite and his henchmen take during each round... assuming they survive that long!

- ✦ **Round 1:** Gobspite casts *Gerroff Me!* as he flees. He tries to escape by climbing the chimney, which is small enough that most PCs get stuck unless they make **Hard (3d) Coordination checks** to wriggle through.
- ✦ **Round 2:** Safe on the thatched roof, Gobspite insults the PCs with high-pitched taunts flung down the chimney: "*Ya mamas eatz pig dung, and ya papas stinks of elves! Come 'n' git me stoopid gitz! Youse fink youse more kunning dan da Great Gobspite Gutsik?*" And so forth.
- ✦ **Round 3:** Gobspite marshals any goblin mobs that remain in the yard. If the troll is alive, Gobspite orders a few of them to go release it. Quaking, they skulk into the farmhouse. If the troll is no longer alive, stop tracking rounds. The remaining goblin mobs swarm the stairs, pressing the PCs.

✦ **Round 4:** The goblins move the cupboard barring the pantry door to the troll's cell and quickly open it. The troll lumbers out of the pantry, eats the goblins who freed him, then sniffs for more grub. The PCs hear goblins screaming, then the stairs creak as something heavy slowly pads up toward them.

✦ **Round 5:** The troll arrives and tries to eat the PCs.

DUEL ON THE ROOF

To kill the shaman, the adventurers may need to climb up onto the roof. A PC can clamber out of a window and haul himself onto the roof – this takes two manoeuvres and requires a successful **Hard (3d) Athletics or Coordination check**. While a character is climbing, he gains the Exposed condition. Everyone moving around the roof who does not have Coordination trained adds one misfortune to all physical actions. If a PC ever generates three ☠☠☠ banes or a single ✨ chaos star on a single check, he falls off the roof!

The craven shaman tries to avoid combat, skulking behind chimneystacks while he gathers his *Waaagh!* magic.

LIGHTNING STRIKE

This is a good time for the lightning storm to play havoc. At the end of each round roll a challenge die. On a bane, lightning strikes the roof. On a Chaos Star, lightning strikes the glowy-stone shard on Gobspite's head. Gobspite is frazzled, and falls off the roof, falling into a heap of goblin dung.

THE ALARM HAS BEEN RAISED!

The sounds of combat from the farmhouse may catch the attention of any goblins outside – see *Twitching Ears* on page 52. If the goblins hear anything unusual from the farmhouse, the alarm is immediately raised – their shaman is in danger!

Goblins begin to swarm into the farmhouse. The farmyard is at long range from the first floor of the farmhouse. One mob of goblin henchmen can fight the PCs on the landing or in the throne room at a time, while more mass outside.

Don't forget to track their morale to see if they break!

THE DEATH OF GOBSPITE

If Gobspite dies or is hit by lightning, he falls screaming off the edge of the roof, and disappears with a splat in a mound of goblin dung below. When Gobspite's warband realise he is dead, they scatter.

Without a strong leader, goblin warbands disintegrate. If word spreads among the goblins that Gobspite is dead, panic overwhelms them and they desert the farm.

THE ROOF CATCHES ON FIRE!

If the roof is struck more than once during the encounter, it catches fire. To track the fire, make a 12 space progress track, with event markers on the 4th, 8th, and 12th spaces. Place a Fire token on the 1st space. Advance the token one space each round the fire is burning. Move it back one space each time a character manages to fight the fire – if the PCs move the Fire token off the track, the fire is extinguished. However, the fire cannot be put out once the first event space has been reached.

Characters on the burning roof (or in the building if the blaze spreads) must make a **Resilience check**. The difficulty is Simple (0d) before the Fire token reaches the first event space, then increases one level for each event space reached. Characters suffer fatigue or wounds according to their dice pool results, as shown below:

- ☠ Suffer one fatigue from smoke inhalation
- ✕ Suffer one wound from burns
- ✨ One wound suffered becomes a critical wound

If the Fire token reaches the 1st event marker, the roof collapses. Anyone on the roof falls, and must make a **Hard (3d) Resilience or Coordination check**, possibly suffering wounds or fatigue as outlined above. If the Fire token reaches the 2nd event marker, the fire engulfs the entire building. If the Fire token reaches the third event marker, the entire building becomes a raging inferno and anyone still inside is incinerated.



INTERLUDE

A HERO'S WELCOME?

Leaving the farm, the PCs (and Flea if they rescued her) make their way back to Stromdorf, the way they came. Remember that if they have the 'glowy stone' shards, the stones attract lightning, but hopefully they have devised a practical method of transporting the stones by now.

THE ACKERLANDS

The party can stop by at the Acklerland place on the way back. If they report success, the Ackerlands will be extremely grateful. They are not a wealthy family, but Gubo Ackerland gifts them with the dubious present of a live cow as a mark of his thanks.

The Ackerlands grieve at the news that the Baumers all perished. They did not have much contact with them, as they lived too far into the hills, but they saw them once in a while on the way to Stromdorf market. The kindly Ackerlands are willing to adopt little Flea as their own, the least they can do for the poor girl, although Flea will want to stay with her new friends, and become an adventurer like them.

MISSING STONES

It is assumed by this point that the PCs have discovered all four map stone fragments before proceeding to the finale. However, if the PCs fail to discover one or more of the map stone fragments, all is not lost.

They will almost certainly have rescued the first fragment from the Oberslecht, but may have failed to recover the memorial stone or the glowy stone. It will be easy for them to return to the cemetery or the farms to recover forgotten stones, if they have defeated their enemies at these locations. Schulmann urges them to do this, but if they are ignoring him, then Lector Göttchalk tries to convince them to gather the stones, based on his disturbing visions. Both Göttchalk and Schulmann will offer some payment to get the PCs interested, but neither is rich.

There are a few other options to make the stones interesting to the PCs, if you feel comfortable deviating from the events detailed here. Perhaps the beastmen sneak into town to recover their lightning stone, and dig up the seerstone from the temple while they're at it. If Mourn is still "alive," he may deduce the nature of the stones and seek to gather them himself. Perhaps the PCs begin to have the same visions Schulmann and Lector Göttchalk complained of.

Or, Schulmann will simply gather the stones himself – an easy task, now that the goblins and undead are gone.

BACK IN STROMDORF

Word has spread throughout the town of the adventurers' mission, and by now they may have become local celebrities. Upon their return, a crowd flocks to hear tales of their adventure in the hills. The townsfolk cheer if the PCs described their victory over the goblins. Perhaps a couple of the characters are beginning to attract admirers of the opposite sex, who stalk their every move.

Kessler comes and rescues the party from the crowd, and escorts them into the townhall for an audience with the burgomeister. Adler looks much more dignified than when the PCs last saw him – he is clean-shaven, has neat hair, and his attire is pristine. He holds himself with pride, and has an authoritative gleam in his eyes, which soften as he greets the adventurers. His room has been dusted and cleaned, and the papers on his desk are stacked in organised piles.

Adler will hear the adventurers' story and pay them the remainder of their reward. If they bring him the head of Gobspite, he will ask to keep it. *"I will have it stuffed and mounted in the hall as a permanent reminder of your success,"* he beams.

Adler shakes each PC by the hand before they leave. *"You have performed a great service to this town. It has been my honour to meet you. I will certainly mention your names to my patron, Lord von Jungfreud."*

THE GLOWY STONE

After the PCs depart the townhall, Schulmann bustles up to them, excitedly. *"Well, did you find the last stone?"* he asks them.

If the PCs do not present him with the glowy stone pieces, he curses angrily and stomps back to his lodgings. Otherwise he claps his hands in glee and takes the stones back to his room.

"I have come close to interpreting the text," he tells the PCs, *"but these pieces should complete the puzzle."*



CHAPTER FIVE

SCHULMANN'S GAMBIT

SCHULMANN'S ROOM

The wizard allows the PCs to follow him into his room at the Thunderwater Inn. This may well be the first time he has let them visit. His bed lies unmade, his spare clothes are crumpled in an open travelling chest, and sheets of parchment scrawled with esoteric symbols are littered across the floor and pinned to every surface of the wall. The windows are shuttered, and candles on the small writing desk provide dim illumination.

If it is thundering outside, every so often lightning strikes just outside the window with a terrific crash. It hits Schulmann's brass contraption, coursing harmlessly down the rod and into the soil at the foot of the inn.

Any map-stones the wizard has have been laid out on the floor in the centre of the room, placed together to form a semi-circle. Schulmann slots the 'glowy-stone' fragments into place with the other stones, but cries out with frustration when he sees that there is still another quarter of the circle missing. He flies into a rage, kicking the stones, thumping the walls, spitting and cursing.

He calms down, looking embarrassed when he remembers that the adventurers are there.

"Ahem I'm sorry, it's just that this work is, erm, very important to me. Oh, and to the Colleges of Magic too, of course. Now, deep breath...yes, that's better. Well, it seems that, er, we seem to have come to a dead end. Without the last piece, I have no idea what this text means. Something, about something... Sigmar's eyes, none of it makes sense yet."

He looks at you, a manic gleam in his eyes.

"We're so close, damn it. Look, I'll give you everything if you can find this final piece. I'll talk to my superiors – they'll grant you an emperor's ransom. Gold, knowledge, magical whatnots, anything you desire. After all, erm, the future of the Empire hangs on a thread, and this riddle holds the key. Yes! Now leave me, I need to study this new stone in peace."

With that Schulmann ushers the PCs out.



SLEIGHT OF HAND

PCs might be interested in what Schulmann's papers are about. If asked, he mumbles something about his thesis, but is unwilling to elaborate. Anyone with Spellcraft, or who passes a **Hard (3d) Education check**, recognises the symbols as an arcane cypher used by wizards as a form of secret shorthand. Wizards often write important notes in their own unique cypher.

A player with itchy fingers may want to steal a sheaf of papers. If he passes an **Average (2d) Skulduggery check**, he manages to do this without Schulmann noticing. See *Schulmann's Jumbled Notes* on page 64 for more details on how the PCs can decipher these papers. If Schulmann notices the theft, he grabs the papers, and snaps "Not for your eyes!"

FINDING THE SEER-STONE

Several clues point towards the location of the last fragment. These are summarised below. If the players possess some of the clues but fail to interpret them, have each PC make an **Average (2d) Intuition check**, and highlight the clues according to the results.

- ✦ The PCs discovered the lightning stone a few miles east of the elven ruins on Tempest Knap. Gobspite was encountered due south of the ruins. The memorial stone was situated in the Garden of Morr, but had been moved from its original location at Frothing Ford, a few miles west of the ruins. The same distance north of the ruins lies Stromdorf, so logically, this is where the final map stone fragment might be found.
- ✦ The PCs gain insights into the future the more time they spend near a map stone. This also happens to Schulmann. When the PCs first encounter Lector Göttshalk, he tells them about recent visions he has experienced. Although he attributes these to Sigmar, the players may correctly surmise that his visions are due to his proximity to the fourth stone.
- ✦ Lightning is attracted to the map stones. The temple to Sigmar attracts a lot lightning, which may point them in that direction.
- ✦ If the PCs meet Professor Köpfchen (see below), they learn about Stromdorf's history, and the seer stone.

PROFESSOR KÖPFCHEN

The PCs may decide that they want some help from Professor Köpfchen. They may have encountered this elderly scholar during Chapter 3, when he pleaded with them to destroy the animated skeleton in his study. If the players don't remember him, and you think they are in need of his advice, subtly remind them of him.

THE PROFESSOR'S HOUSE

The professor resides in a narrow two-storey townhouse situated off Sumpfstrasse. The curtains on all the windows are drawn. The front door has a gold gargoyle knocker. If the PCs knock, they hear an angry "Go away! Nobody in!" from within. The door is unlocked.

Inside, a passage flanked by several doors leads to some stairs. One door is ajar, and the glow of candlelight and the sound of scribbling comes from within. PCs who have been here before know that this door leads to the professor's study.

The professor is sitting at his desk, making notes with a peacock feather quill, in the margins of a massive, leatherbound tome (entitled *Historium Stromdorfensis*) under candlelight. From wall to ceiling, shelves groan with piles and piles of books.

If the PCs helped the professor during Chapter 3, he is happy to help them, otherwise they have a hard time persuading this old scholar to assist them. A canny PC can try to pass an **Average (2d) Education check** to win him over with an erudite remark.

HOW CAN I BE OF HELP?

The professor is an expert in ancient elvish, and can quickly translate the text of a map stone fragment. He can also help decipher Schulmann's notes, or locate the final map stone fragment if the PCs share their clues with him.

If told about the stones, he flicks through the huge book on the table. "A little gazetteer I am compiling concerning this quaint little town's long and interesting history. These stones of yours remind me of the old seer-stone which used to stand where the temple of Sigmar is now situated. A fascinating tale..."

Köpfchen begins regaling the PCs with a tedious monologue concerning Stromdorf's founding. The GM should paraphrase the relevant information concerning the seer stone found on page 5.

"Of course, there is no sign of the stone now. It would be fascinating to organise an archaeological expedition in the crypts of the temple to discover this ancient relic of our ancestors' glorious past, but I fear that that firebrand priest Göttshalk will have none of it."

If asked about the ruins on Tempest Knap, Köpfchen snorts.

"Ha, these halfwit locals think the place is haunted. The truth is far more mundane. The late Professor Thule of the antiquities department at Altdorf University wrote a magnificent treatise on such dilapidations found throughout the Reikland, and concluded they are merely the remains of vainglorious follies erected by the barbarous elven princelings whose pitiful attempts at civilisation preceded our magnificent Empire. Nothing of any interest whatsoever."

THE TEMPLE CRYPT

The only way for the PCs to recover the seer stone is to extract it from the temple's crypt. If the PCs ask Göttshalk's permission, he will tremble with fury. "Desecrating holy ground in search of a heathen idol! That is blasphemy!" The PCs have to endure a long lecture about the sanctity of Sigmar's temple. Convincing him otherwise requires a **Daunting (4d) Charm check**, and failure earns his enmity for even suggesting such a thing.

The PCs will likely have to dig on the sly. Schulmann will encourage them to excavate. "That fool Göttshalk has his mind addled by incense. Let me deal with the old mule."

Schulmann conjures an aurora of shimmering rainbow colours to light up the sky, which he maintains until the PCs signal to him that they have finished in the crypt. A crowd of Stromdorfers gather in market square, despite the rain, marvelling at the wondrous sight. When word reaches Lector Göttshalk, he takes it as an omen of doom, and leaves his temple to urge the townsfolk to pray to Sigmar. When the PCs find the stone, the acolyte dispels the lights; the crowd disperses, and Göttshalk heads back to the temple.

AMATEUR ARCHAEOLOGY

The PCs, hopefully equipped with shovels, creep into the temple to excavate under the crypt. The PCs will have to lever up the stone slabs on the floor before they can start digging the yellow earth underneath. After about ten minutes, if the PCs have no permission to dig here, the initiate returns to the temple (see below).

After another ten to twenty minutes work, a shovel strikes stone. Scrabbling at the base of the pit, one PC discovers a two foot high triangular slab of white marble with silver high elf runes etched into it. It shimmers and sparks with faint blue electricity. To characters with magical sight, a vivid blue snake of light caresses the stone.

Give the PCs the Seerstone card.

THE INITIATE

Unfortunately, Schulmann forgot about the initiate, Chlodwig Fromm (see page 22). Göttshalk ordered him to guard the temple in his absence. However, he is not in the temple when the PCs first arrive, as he crept outside to marvel at the aurora. He soon feels guilty and sneaks back inside.

Fromm will hear the PCs hard at work and investigate. The PCs may have to intimidate, befriend, or overwhelm him to prevent the initiate from blabbing to Göttshalk or the watch.

DIVINE RETRIBUTION

When Göttshalk returns to the temple, he prays at the altar for a few hours. Eventually he discovers the gaping pit in the crypt – and seeks Fromm for a report. The enraged priest immediately informs Captain Kessler and Burgomeister Adler of the desecration. It's possible an unfriendly welcome awaits the PCs should they return to Stromdorf after dealing with Schulmann (see page 68).

A COMPLETED PUZZLE

As soon as Schulmann receives the final fragment, he urges the PCs to carry it to his room. He adds it to the other fragments, then grabs a quill and a map of the region. He kneels down to examine the assembled map stone.

Holding an oil lamp close to the marble, Schulmann mutters to himself under his breath as he reads the elven script in its entirety. While he examines the text, he jots down notes on the map, drawing symbols and lines, mumbling the translation below his breath. A PC passing a **Hard (3d) Observation check** overhears Schulmann mention something about "the nexus" and something being "even more powerful than I imagined."

When the acolyte is finished, he stands and looks around absent-mindedly. "Oh, you're still here," he smiles, "I seem to have misplaced some of my notes about the translation. I think I left them downstairs in the inn – I'll be right back!"

With that, Schulmann grabs his staff and heads down to the common room...or so he hopes the characters think. Once downstairs, he leaves the inn and heads to the nexus location indicated by his translation of the completed mapstone.

Allow a PC to attempt to notice something amiss about Schulmann if they pass a **Daunting (4d) Intuition check**. Otherwise, Schulmann does not return to his room, and the PCs may stand around

idly until they tire of waiting. While waiting, PCs spending some time scanning the wall of notes or other aspects of Schulmann's room may notice some clues with an **Average (2d) Observation, Spellcraft, or Education check**, piecing together some of the fragmented comments Schulmann has scribbled throughout the room.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

The PCs may have started to grow suspicious of Schulmann, or are unwilling to part with the final stone fragment without more information. Below are a few ways to possibly resolve this.

ON A MISSION FROM SIGMAR

If Schulmann is unable to befriend the PCs or is eyed with suspicion, the PCs may wish to keep the stone for themselves. Where the plot introduces Schulmann to tell the PCs about his dreams, use Göttshalk instead.

He talks feverishly of his dreams, telling the PCs that, in each vision, a shining white stone appears with blue ghosts swirling around it. The wild beastmen dance around it, the dead rise around it, the green devils that feed the hungry maw bow down before it. Göttshalk believes his dreams are divinely inspired, and that the stones will protect Stromdorf from a watery doom. He has seen the adventurers in his visions, and urges them to help him in his quest.

In fact, if the quest for the stones is sanctioned by Göttshalk, he will have no problem allowing the PCs to excavate the crypt.

If the PCs keep the map stones, remember that they too will have visions if they spend a long time near them – give them further clues as to the importance of the stones.

BREAKING & ENTERING

If Schulmann is unable to persuade the PCs to part with the stones, he bides his time until the PCs have recovered all the fragments. That night, he uses his magic to strike the roof of the Brenner Brewery with lightning (or a building next to wherever the PCs are staying, if they opt not to lodge at the Thunderwater Inn).



TRANSLATING THE STONES

Rather than give the stones to Schulmann to translate, the party may attempt to translate the stones themselves. If the PCs are able to understand what each fragment says, paraphrase the handout featuring Schulmann's notes.

A high elf who has Education trained, or any other character who specialises in ancient elvish, can attempt a **Hard (3d) Education check** to decipher each fragment. A character who fails this check cannot try again – the script is beyond his comprehension.

If the PCs do not trust Schulmann, they can also approach Professor Köpfchen (see page 62).

If the PCs join the other townsfolk to investigate or help fight the ensuing fire, Schulmann breaks in and quickly takes rubbings of the text on each stone, using charcoal and parchment. He then sneaks back to his own lodgings to examine the acquired text.

AN INTRUDER

When the PCs later return to this room, there are several clues that someone has been there, which can be gleaned with **Easy (1d) Observation checks**.

- ✦ If the door was locked, it is now unlocked.
- ✦ Blue wisps of Azyr magic dissipate around the lock to those with magical sight.
- ✦ The map stone fragments have obviously been moved.
- ✦ In his haste, Schulmann accidentally dropped a charcoal stick by the stones.
- ✦ There is a smudgy charcoal handprint on the inside of the room's door.

Several of the clues point to Schulmann:

- ✦ If the PCs are lodging in the Thunderwater, they do not remember Schulmann helping to put out the fire. Everyone else at the inn did help, apart from Lukas Kaltenbach, who was too drunk to move from his taproom seat by the stairs. If asked, Lukas swears that he saw nobody enter or leave via the stairs or main door. All other exits from the inn are locked and bolted from the inside, and no windows are open or broken, so the intruder must have been someone in the inn.
- ✦ If the PCs are staying somewhere other than the Thunderwater, a barmaid spotted Schulmann leaving the inn after everyone else had gone to help put out the fire. He was carrying a sheaf of large parchment.
- ✦ There are charcoal fingerprints on the outside handle of the door to Schulmann's lodgings, and Schulmann has charcoal marks on his fingers (requiring an **Easy (1d) Observation check** to spot).

CONFRONTING SCHULMANN

Schulmann is in his room, gleefully poring over the rubbings of the elven text. It doesn't take him long to decipher, read and understand the inscription.

If confronted, Schulmann attempts to lie his way out of it, with an **opposed Guile versus Intuition check**, saying the PCs are mistaken, or that he was merely checking on his contraptions and notes in an attempt to prevent more severe damage from occurring.

If he fears they may unmask him or attack, Schulmann bolts, casting **Swiftwing** to speed his escape.

SCHULMANN'S JUMBLED NOTES

Among the mess of Schulmann's disjointed, cluttered room are a few clues the PCs may come across, including a map and his translation of the runes.

The map that Schulmann used to chart his calculations depicts the Fleuchtschussel, with various arcane markings and lines drawn onto it. The lines converge at a bend in the River Tranig, a few miles southwest of Stromdorf.

A PC must pass a **Daunting (4d) Education check** to decipher the cramped, symbolic notes. If they succeed, give that character's player the translation handout. A character who failing this check cannot try again – the code defeats him.

THE STORM BREAKS

Now that Schulmann knows where the nexus lies, he wants to reach it as quickly as possible so that he can cast the spells required to shatter the ancient elven wards and tap into the pure Azyr energy it guards...thus becoming the most powerful Celestial Wizard the world has ever known.

TRACKING SCHULMANN'S SUCCESS

To keep track of how close Schulmann is to breaking the elven ward, use a 12 space progress track with an event space on the 8th and 12th spaces. Place a token representing Schulmann on space 3 (since he has a slight head start), and a token representing the PCs on space 1. If some PCs decide to forge ahead of the others, use several tokens to represent the different PC groups.

ACT I: SCHULMANN'S FLIGHT

This is a chase scene presented as a series of short events. Once the PCs decide to pursue Schulmann, the events are resolved in the following order.

EVENT I: LEAP OF FAITH

Once Schulmann leaves the Inn and the PCs behind him (whether by slinking out after duping the PCs, or fleeing with the PCs hot on his heels) he casts the Celestial spell **Swiftwing**. Witnesses see Schulmann transform mid-air into a streak of blue light that blurs over the rooftops of Stromdorf and towards the Wissenland Gate.

DELAYING PURSUIT

The PCs may decide not to give chase immediately – perhaps they want to grab some of Schulmann's possessions, such as his research notes or the map. If nobody follows Schulmann immediately, the PCs will need to rely on witnesses spotting Schulmann's blue blur to see which way he was headed. If they possess his map, that points towards the nexus. Alternatively, PCs can follow Schulmann's trail to the banks of the Tranig. The nexus is only a few miles from Stromdorf – about a half hour journey by horse through the heavy rain and mud-caked roads, or an hour's journey on foot.

- ✦ If the PCs do not immediately make pursuit, advance Schulmann's token 1 space along the progress track.

EVENT 2: GRABBING A RIDE

Schulmann rematerialises near the Wissenland Gate. He steals a horse tethered near the gate, and attacks the watchman posted there with his **Shooting Star** spell before galloping southward from Stromdorf, towards the nexus. The watchman is sorely injured.

When the PCs run out onto the street after Schulmann, they hear whinnying coming from the inn's stables. There are more than enough horses tethered in the stables for each PC, but the three stable hands (Townfolk NPCs, see *Tome of Adventure*, page 67) try to stop them.

- ✦ If it takes the PCs more than a few minutes to deal with the stable hands (be it by force or diplomacy), advance Schulmann's token 1 space along the progress track.

When the PCs come near the Wissenland Gate, the watchman is recovering and relates what happened. *"That damned thieving wizard tried to murder me!"* If asked, the sentry on duty above the gatehouse tells the PCs that he saw a man in a blue cloak *"ride like a daemon was chasing him,"* following the south road.

EVENT 3: PURSUIT

Schulmann gallops along the south road through the Fleuchtschusel. Hopefully the PCs are hot on his heels. The storm rages overhead as the riders gallop into the night.

- ✦ Advance Schulmann's token 1 space.
- ✦ Advance the PC token 1 space if they are on foot, or 2 spaces if they are on horses. If they choose to push their horses, the PCs may attempt an **Average (2d) Ride check** to advance their token one additional space. If they generate a ✨ Chaos Star, however, the horse is injured from being pushed so hard, and can proceed no further.

EVENT 4: BORROWING A BOAT

After a few miles, Schulmann pushes his horse, galloping off the road and through open fields. He soon reaches the River Tranig, a short distance from the nexus point. The weather continually gets even worse, lightning streaking the sky.

- ✦ Advance Schulmann's token 1 space.

Schulmann tries to steal a fishing boat tethered near a shack, but a fisherman emerges from the hut to challenge the thief. Schulmann kills him with another **Shooting Star**. If the PCs' token is within one space of Schulmann's token when this occurs, they see this happen at extreme range ahead of them. If they are two spaces behind, all they see is a flash of bright blue light ahead.

THE FISHERMAN'S SHACK

This rundown wooden hut stands on the banks of the Tranig. A man with a long grey beard, and weathered face and clothes lies face up, dead eyes staring in shock at the grey sky. A hole punctures his chest, still smoking if his death was in the last fifteen minutes. PCs with magical sight see flecks of Azyr magic dancing around the wound. An upturned rowing boat lies next to the shack, covered in oilskins. Oars are propped up next to the shack's wall. Inside the shack, there is nothing but a low bed, and fisherman's nets and rods.

Anyone passing an **Easy (1d) Observation check** notices a groove in the sand of the nearby riverbank, and footprints, where someone has recently pushed a boat into the water.

THE ROWING BOAT

Anyone examining the boat notices that a hole in its stern has been crudely patched with bits of wood and nails. If the PCs want to fully repair the hole, they must make a **Hard (3d) Tradecraft check**. The boat is large enough to accommodate up to six characters, with up to two rowing.

- ✦ When the PCs put the boat out on the water, advance their token 1 space as they start to make progress.
- ✦ If the PCs took the time to repair the boat, advance Schulmann's token 1 space.
- ✦ If they did not repair the boat, they need to make an **Average (2d) Athletics check** to row and bail water fast enough to make progress.

Schulmann has reached the nexus and is trying to break the elven ward by casting violent Azyr magicks against it. The PCs can see the flash and spark of magical lightning upriver, lighting up the night. It will take them a few minutes to row towards this light show, a perfect time for a rally step.

- ✦ Make an **Average (2d) Spellcraft check** for Schulmann, as he begins assaulting the ward. On a successful check, advance Schulmann's token 1 space.

ACT 2: SHOWDOWN

Schulmann is standing in his boat in the centre of the Tranig, blasting the dark waters with lightning that crackles from his outstretched hands and staff. There follows an earthshaking crack, like a mountain being split in two. The water around the boat churns and froths as beams of pure blue energy break the surface, illuminating Schulmann in an otherworldly glow. The sky above groans with thunder, and lightning bolts rip from the clouds. The rain pelts down in a biting torrent.

Characters with magical sight see a blazing aura of blue Azyr energy surrounding Schulmann, which flares anew each time he casts a spell into the water. They sense a source of incredible pent-up power churning beneath the water.

ENTERING THE FRAY

Place the Nexus location card in play. When the PCs arrive at the nexus and see Schulman through the driving rain and flashes of lightning, their starting position depends on the position of their tracking token compared to Schulmann's progress.


- ✦ On same space, start encounter at medium range
- ✦ One space away, start encounter at long range
- ✦ Two spaces away, start encounter at extreme range
- ✦ Three or more spaces away, advance the PC token 1 space and then allow Schulmann a chance to cast a spell against the wards (see *Weathering Down the Ward* on page 66). Repeat this until the PC token is two spaces away, then they begin the encounter at extreme range.

WEATHERING DOWN THE WARD

Schulmann continues casting spells at the ward until the PCs either target him with ranged attacks or magic, or come within close range of his boat. When he notices the PCs, he directs his magic at them. If they are shooting at him, he uses the **Cerulean Shield** spell to protect himself.

During this encounter, each time Schulmann casts an offensive spell at the ward, advance his tracking token one space for each critical wound inflicted.

THE WARD WEAKENS

When Schulmann's token reaches the event on the 8th space of the track, the ward weakens considerably, filling Schulmann with a rush of *Azyr* power. Schulmann gains an Expertise  die to all of his subsequent *Celestial Order* spells. However, for each ✧ Chaos Star generated, Schulmann suffers one wound.

THE WARD BREAKS


If Schulmann's token reaches the 12th space, he destroys the ward and this act immediately comes to an end. Proceed to *Act 3: A Watery Grave?*

GETTING AT SCHULMANN

Depending on the method of their pursuit, the PCs may have a few different means to confront Schulmann.

BY BOAT

A PC can row the boat a one range increment on his turn. This requires an **Average (2d) Athletics check**, and counts as he PC's action for the turn. Rowing is tiring work, and he suffers one fatigue for each ☉ bane generated. If the check fails, the PC struggles against the current and cannot move the boat this round.

If the boat has not been repaired, when a ✧ Chaos Star is generated on any check to manoeuvre or row the boat, water starts leaking in. This adds one misfortune  die to subsequent rowing checks. This effect is cumulative. Once the boat starts leaking, unless it is somehow repaired or PCs bail water to keep it afloat, on the next ✧ Chaos Star result, the boat sinks, and everyone in it must swim.



Schulmann can target the PCs' boat with his spells. The boat has a Soak Value of 3, and sinks once it has suffered 8 wounds.


SWIMMING

If any of the PCs attempt to (or are forced to) swim, put the Deep River location card into play. Whenever a swimmer generates a ✧ Chaos Star on a swimming check, he is bitten by a Reik eel and suffers one wound.

Lightning bolts electrify anyone in the water. If a lightning bolt strikes a target in the water, every creature within close range of the target that is also in the water is subjected to the same damage.

ATTACKING FROM THE BANK

Any characters at the edge of the river bank are within medium range of Schulmann's boat. There are bushes to hide behind, adding one misfortune  die to Schulmann's attempts to target a hiding PC with spells. Because of the driving rain, add a penalty of one misfortune  die to any normal ranged attacks and missile fire aimed at a target at medium range or further. Blackpowder weap-

ons add an additional Challenge  die, and on any ✧ Chaos Star result, the powder is soaked and the weapon cannot be fired until cleaned and dried.

BOARDING SCHULMANN'S BOAT

Any PCs who reaches Schulmann's boat can clamber aboard by performing one move manoeuvre if they are boarding from another boat, or by performing two manoeuvres if they are attempting to board the boat from within the water.

Schulmann's boat is small; only two PCs can clamber aboard to engage him on the boat. PCs fighting him from their own boat pulled close add a misfortune die to their attacks. If a character fighting close combat on a boat generates a ✧ Chaos Star, he falls into the river at the end of his turn.

VICTORY & DEFEAT

Once Schulmann has suffered 12 or more wounds, he screams in pain and falls into the water with a splash. The PCs have a few moments to recover during a brief rally step.

ACT 3: A WATERY GRAVE?

This act resolves differently depending on whether Schulmann was defeated (in which case, use *Ending 1: The Comet*) or managed to destroy the ward (in which case, use *Ending 2: Devastation*).

ENDING 1: THE COMET

Schulmann thrashes in the river, his face contorted in fear, his heavy wizards' robes dragging him under. He sinks below the water, his staff bobbing in the current. Then, he suddenly breaks to the surface again, his features a mask of fury. In his hand he clutches one of the many amulets he wore around his neck, this one a golden comet.

"You have ruined everything! As I have foreseen, you have doomed us all – now you will die with me!" he screams, and the comet sigil glows scarlet. He submerges again, and the glowing amulet slowly sinks down into the river's black depths, disappearing like a dying ember.

One of the PCs sees a bright light part the blackened clouds overhead – an enormous blazing rock, falling towards the earth, getting bigger and bigger with every passing second.

ESCAPING THE COMET

Make a six space progress track. Place a comet token on the first space. This represents how likely the comet is to strike as it plummets earthward.

At the end of each round, roll a number of misfortune dice equal to the score on the progress tracker. If at least one bane is generated, the comet strikes. If the token reaches the end of the track, the comet automatically hits. If the comet does not strike during the current round, advance the comet token one space.

Once the comet hits, it plummets into the river, causing a tidal wave that bursts the river's banks and threatens to dash to pieces anyone caught in the surge. Upon impact, the comet explodes, sending shards of rock flying in all directions. Blue energy lashes out from the explosion, then there is a blinding flash of azure light.

The crashing comet inflicts damage equal to its distance along the comet track plus 10 (so between 11 and 15 damage) to anything it within close range of the nexus. However, if the comet strikes automatically after reaching the end of the track, then everything within close range suffers 20 damage, and targets within medium range suffer 15 damage.

Anyone near the comet when it strikes must make a **Resilience check**. The difficulty is **Daunting (4d)** if the target is at close range from the nexus point, **Hard (3d)** if at medium range, and **Average (2d)** if at long range. If the check fails, the target gains the Deafened condition. Targets within range also suffer one fatigue per bane generated, and if the check failed, suffer one critical wound per Chaos Star.

THE NEXUS

A side effect of the comet strike is that when it hits, it not only utterly destroys the elven waystone, but also dissipates the nexus of Azyr energy bubbling beneath it. After the proverbial dust settles and the tidal wave calms, any survivors note that it has stopped thundering and raining! The sky begins to clear up, and the stars and the two moons, Morrslieb and Mannslieb, gleam from behind the disappearing curtain of cloud. The smaller moon, Morrslieb, seems to have a decidedly grumpy expression on its pockmarked face...

So, Schulmann is dead, and the rains have ceased. Undoubtedly the PCs will want to return to Stromdorf and relate their heroic tale to an adoring crowd...

ENDING 2: DEVASTATION

Below Schulmann's boat comes a deep cracking sound, as though the world has been split to its very marrow. Everything suddenly falls silent. The thunder rolls away and the lightning stops. Even the rain dies to a gentle mist.

Schulmann stands expectantly on his boat, arms in the air, glancing nervously up and down and from side to side. Suddenly a roaring shaft of blue light shoots from the water and into the dark sky, staining the clouds a vivid azure as they roll open to swallow it. The shaft completely surrounds Schulmann, who spreads his arms, electricity arcing from his eyes and laughing mouth. *"The power is mine! All mine, just as I had foreseen!"*

His cries of exultation suddenly transform into howls of agony. His body starts to... unravel... and his form vanishes into a fine mist, suspended for a second in a parody of his human silhouette before wisping into nothing. Yet his howls remain, like a maddened gale.

The sky seems to drink the shaft of light, the clouds sucking it into the heavens; then, crackling with blue electricity, the clouds burst once more, and a stinging torrent, like a sheet of water, cascades upon the land. Thunderbolts rip the sky, and come crashing down all around the PCs. The river surges from the sudden, unbelievably violent downpour, and breaks its banks – already muddy water is swirling about the ankles of those who are on land.

SURVIVING THE FLOOD

Even if the boats have been destroyed, the PCs should be able to grab hold of some planks of wood, or a floating tree branch. The rain is so intense that PCs in a boat have to quickly bail out the rainwater before the craft sinks. Bobbing up and down on the water, the PCs witness the land engulfed by the rapidly rising flood in a matter of minutes. Soon they are floating alongside the tops of

trees, surrounded by a choppy sea. Before long, animal carcasses, sheep and cattle, drift past them. Perhaps they see a few human bodies floating by. They might encounter survivors, crying for help.

The flood rises so rapidly that it quickly submerges the entire Fleuchtschussel, including Stromdorf. Hundreds die – caught in their sleep by the rising floodwater. Hundreds more paddle for safety on makeshift rafts. The Oberslecht is completely flooded too, wiping out the beastmen there – a small comfort. Any characters still in Stromdorf may try to organise a swift evacuation of the town and redeem themselves by saving innocent lives.

From henceforth, the Teufel, Tranig, and Ober all flow from the Grey Mountains into a great lake surrounding a tiny island on which stands ancient ruins – Tempest Knap, now the only place in the lowlands that escaped the flood.

This lake is ravaged by storms, worse than before. Within a few months, a legend grows that sometimes, those traversing the waters can hear the doleful tolling of a bell underwater – said to be the belltower of Stromdorf's temple of Sigmar, tolling the town's doom.

SCHULMANN'S 'GHOST'

Schulmann's flesh disintegrated as the pure Azyr energy flowed over it. However, he lives still, as a non-corporeal entity, able to think and feel and hate, but utterly powerless. He manifests as a breeze, warm when he touches flesh, and his voice susurrates like a gentle wind through treetops.

The GM may choose to have Schulmann avenge himself upon the PCs by following them wherever they go. He can be used to thoroughly annoy and harass the PCs. However, Schulmann's incorporeal spirit can only interact physically with things that a light breeze is able to move. But the spirit can still drive the PCs mad with his constant berating, sarcastic, venom-filled whispering.

While so harassed, the PCs recover one less stress, one less fatigue, and one less wound each night. After each chapter or other story break, the GM rolls a Challenge die. On a ✱ Chaos Star result, Schulmann's aethereal form completely dissipates and is swept up by the Azyr wind, never to be seen or heard from again.

HEROES OR VILLAINS?

Should the PCs succeed in defeating Schulmann, they will probably want to return to Stromdorf. And possibly collect their due praise and thanks.

The townsfolk have witnessed the fall of the comet, and there is much excited talk of the return of Sigmar, though cynics point out the comet only had one tail. More doom-obsessed individuals say that it is instead a sign that the End Times are near, that wailing hordes of madmen and monsters with gnashing fangs will soon descend from the north to lay waste to the Empire.

The fact that the rain has stopped actually disappoints the locals. As one of them points out glumly, *"Stromdorf will be famous for nothing now! We're ruined!"*

Nobody believes the PCs' tale. How could that idiot Schulmann be a threat to anyone other than himself? If the adventurers offer the wizard's coded scribbles as proof, they receive blank looks. The adventurers must have gone mad. *"You sure you ain't been hit on the head by that comet?"*

YOU HAVE... FAILED?

The PCs' reception will be slightly different if they were acting on the orders of Göttchalk to retrieve the stones.

When they return to Stromdorf, the hoary old warrior priest will be among the first to greet them.

"Strange weather we're having, eh? So You've got the stones?"

When presented with the stones, Göttchalk arranges them on the altar of Sigmar and waits for a sign. With the dissipation of Azyr magic after the comet, no sign is forthcoming. *"You have doomed the town, you fools! The stones are no longer holy! You have failed! I decree that you perform an immediate penance!"*

Göttchalk cannot be persuaded out of his decision. This is a good opportunity for the priest to send the PCs on a dangerous quest of penance of your own devising, the beginning of a new adventure.

AN UNFRIENDLY RECEPTION

As soon as word of the adventurers' return spreads through town, Lector Göttchalk is eager to make them pay for their desecration of his temple (if it was not sanctioned by him earlier). As far as he is concerned, the PCs are heretics of the worst order, fit for the pyre. He summons Captain Kessler and his watch and marches to confront the characters.

When he sees them, Göttchalk roars and has to be restrained by the watch from tearing them apart with his bare fists. *"Infidels! Ruining my crypt!? I will have you burnt, heretics!"*

If the priest has a public audience, the crowd begins to get very ugly towards the adventurers. Being accused of blasphemy by their priest of Sigmar is a serious thing.

Captain Kessler, however, is unwilling to arrest the PCs, but the mob is fickle and he cannot turn their anger. He must also respect the priest's wishes. He has a quiet word with the PCs while his men try to calm the priest and simmering crowd.

"My hands are tied. You have done much for this town, but you have committed a crime, against Sigmar no less. I do not want an explanation, I just want to keep the peace, so I want you away, immediately. Now do exactly as I say if you don't want to be lynched..."

Presuming the PCs agree, Kessler now has a whispered few words with the priest, who, with a face as black as thunder, gives his assent with a curt nod. Kessler addresses the PCs loudly.

"We have witnessed desecration of Stromdorf's grand temple of Sigmar. We cannot abide these heathens amongst us, and I sentence them to be whipped to the gates and banished from this town."

Kessler looks apologetically towards you as one of his lackeys hands him a whip. *"Move you scoundrels!" he cries, not unconvincingly, lashing the air above your heads with a crack of his whip.*

If the PCs comply and allow themselves to be whipped out of town, they each suffer 1 wound – Kessler is obviously taking it easy on them. If not, the PCs will need to find a way to deal with an angry warrior priest, a grizzled captain of the watch, and an entire town convinced they are heretics.

And so, the adventure ends with the brave adventurers banished from the very town they have saved.

As they say, it never rains, but it pours...

JUST REWARDS

If the PCs have survived to this point, they have likely acquired a number of experience points and advances, and may be ready for their next career. For completing the entire campaign, the GM should award an additional experience point.

Over the course of this adventure, the group goals, ideals, and personality may have also changed. The players now have the opportunity to change their current party sheet to a different sheet, reflecting a change to group dynamics and identity.



CHAPTER SIX

NOTABLE ADVERSARIES

The PCs will likely encounter all manner of interesting non-player characters over the course of this campaign. Some of the key people from Stromdorf – particularly those who may come to the aid of the adventurers – are given more detail than the NPC entries found in the *Tome of Adventure*.

Once the PCs venture outside of Stromdorf, they will quickly find the region is full of all sorts of nasty creatures and dangerous enemies. Each of the campaign's chapters has its own spread to highlight key adversaries found within that section.

The spread for **Chapter 2: The Lesser Evil** highlights Foaldeath the bray shaman, Izka Madtooth the beastman herd's leader, and the Madtooth Gor beastman the PCs may encounter.

The pages for **Chapter 3: Time to Mourn** highlights the possessed body of Madriga Brenner, the skeletal Olaus Stichelm, and the awakened zombies found in the nearby Garden of Morr.

The entries for **Chapter 4: When Night Falls** highlights the crazy goblin shaman Gobspite, his (somewhat) loyal night goblin henchmen, and the mob's unruly squig.

Finally, the failed Celestial Wizard Niklas Schulmann is detailed on the spread for **Chapter 5: Schulmann's Gambit**, where the PCs finally confront the deranged wizard, in an effort to prevent him from potentially destroying Stromdorf and its environs.

TOME OF ADVENTURE REVIEW

To brush up on managing enemies and reading creature statistics and abilities, you may wish to review the following chapters from the *Tome of Adventure* – **Chapter Six: Enemies & Adversaries** (page 40) and **Chapter Seven: The Bestiary** (page 45).

For most of the commonfolk encountered in Stromdorf, the GM can use the profile for the Townsfolk NPC found on page 66 of the *Tome of Adventure*.

A BALANCING ACT

The GM should feel free to adjust or modify the encounters, or the statistics for any of the NPCs or creatures involved, to account for the needs of the story and the composition of the player's group of characters. Adding or removing a few henchmen, or increasing or lowering an entry's A/C/E ratings can quickly help a GM adjust an encounter to match the desired challenge level.

STROMDORF CITIZENS

FRANZ BIEBER

This small, slight man is dressed in rugged outdoor clothes of greens and browns. He is much tougher than he looks, honed by years spent hunting in the wilderness. Clean-shaven, with close-cropped fair hair, his blue eyes dart suspiciously everywhere, as though he is expecting a sudden ambush at any moment.

Bieber is the best hunter around, and easily the best shot in Stromdorf. He has encyclopaedic knowledge of the Oberslecht, often penetrating deep into the marshes to bag game: geese for flesh, mink for fur, and giant beaver for its musk and tail – a delicacy among the nobility. He disappears for weeks at a time, and when he reemerges from the swamplands, his hunting spoils are piled high on a makeshift sledge. He never talks about his experiences there.

HATRED OF BEASTMEN

Bieber gains one fortune ☐ die on all *Melee Attacks* against beastmen targets.

When involved in an encounter with beastmen, Bieber's rage overwhelms his reasoning. Bieber must spend at least one Aggression die on each attack that targets a beastman, until he has no more Aggression dice remaining.

EXPERT HUNTER

Franz Bieber has both Ballistic Skill and Nature Lore trained.

Trappings: Longbow & quiver of 20 arrows. Dagger. Hat & sturdy outdoor clothes (count as leather armour – Soak 2). Lucky ferret's foot necklace. Leather backpack. Flint & Tinder. Bedroll. Cooking pot & water pouch.

LECTOR MAGNUS GOTTSCHALK

This veteran warrior priest has officiated Stromdorf's temple of Sigmar for more than 20 years. The townsfolk flock to hear his stirring sermons, which inspire them with hope in these dark times.

Bull-necked and with muscles of steel, he wears an iron diadem on his bald head, fashioned with sigils of Sigmar. His eyes burn with pious rage beneath his beetled brow, and the great silver ring through his broken nose furthers his semblance to an angry ox. His face is crisscrossed with old battle scars, and the twin-tailed comet of Sigmar is branded into his forehead.

He is always clad from neck to waist in a heavy steel breastplate, emblazoned with the cross of Reikland, and his crimson robes swish about his legs.

SON OF SIGMAR

Magnus Gottschalk has Invocation and Piety trained. As Stromdorf's spiritual leader, Magnus gains one fortune ☐ die on all Fellowship checks relating to the citizens of Stromdorf.

Debilitating social actions that target Magnus Gottschalk gain two misfortune ☐ dice unless he perceives the person trying to influence him as a just and righteous person motivated by piety towards Sigmar.

WILL OF IRON

Magnus Gottschalk does not suffer stress.

Trappings: Sigmarite robes & holy icons, breastplate armour (Defence 1, Soak 4), Great Weapon (hammer).

EDUARDO CASTILLO RODRIGUES

Eduardo hails from the city of Tobaro in far away Estalia. His voice is deep and rich, but often slurred with alcohol. He sports a finely waxed moustache and pointed beard, but his once-white loose-fitting shirt and tight leather trousers are torn, and the soles of his boots flap when he walks.

Whenever a lady passes by, he theatrically tips his wide-brimmed, feather-festooned, floppy Estalian hat. His prized possession is his finely-crafted sword *Vilaro*, a legacy, he says, from his father. He has dark, handsome features and his hair is a mass of black curls. His wit is sharp even when the rest of him is dulled by beer.

DRIVEN TO DRINK

When not directly threatened and there is an ample supply of alcohol, Eduardo Castillo Rodrigues must pass a **Hard (3d) Discipline check** or become intoxicated for several hours. While intoxicated all his skill checks gain two misfortune ☐ dice and one fortune ☐ die.

When not drunk, he gains the Overwhelmed and Perplexed conditions as he sinks into a despondent reverie.

CONSUMMATE SWORDSMAN

Eduardo Castillo Rodrigues has Weapon Skill trained and wields a superior rapier. He adds both one expertise ☐ die and one fortune ☐ die to all *Melee Attacks*.

While armed with *Vilaro*, Eduardo is considered to attempt to parry every incoming melee attack, which is reflected in his Defence value. If he does not have *Vilaro* equipped, lower his Defence value by two.

Once per turn, on his turn, Eduardo Castillo Rodrigues can draw or sheathe *Vilaro* for free. He does not need to perform a manoeuvre to do so.

ESTALIAN BRAVADO

Eduardo gains one fortune ☐ die to all checks of **Hard (3d)** or greater difficulty.

Trappings: Ragged, smelly clothes, a fine Estalian rapier (superior craftsmanship), a floppy, feathered hat, an empty purse.

CREATURE	ST	TO	AG	INT	WP	FEL	A/C/E	WOUNDS	STANCE
FRANZ BIEBER	3(5)	4(2)	4■(1)	3■	3	2	4/3/2	15	R1
MAGNUS GOTTSCHALK	4(7)	5(4)	3(1)	3	4■	4■	5/4/2	15	R2
EDUARDO RODRIGUES	3■(5)	3■(0)	5■(2)	3	3	4■	4/1/3	14	C2

AGILE STRIKE

Basic

WEAPON SKILL (AG) vs. TARGET DEFENCE

Used By: Franz Bieber, Eduardo Rodrigues
Engaged with target, melee weapon equipped

Effect: An attack that relies more on cunning and agility than brute force. Franz may use this attack with either his dagger or his bow, in which case it is a ranged attack

♣ The attack inflicts normal damage

♣♣ The attack inflicts +1 damage

♣♣♣ +1 critical

♣♣♣ The attacker may perform a free manoeuvre

☠ The attacker suffers 1 wound

I AM THE HAMMER

Basic, Sigmar

WEAPON SKILL (ST) vs. TARGET DEFENCE

Used By: Magnus Gottschalk
Engaged with target, melee weapon equipped

Special: Aggression dice spent on this attack add an additional ☐ to the dice pool

Effect: Lector Gottschalk imbues his weapon with the power of Sigmar and lays waste to the infidel!

♣ The attack inflicts normal damage

♣♣♣ The attack inflicts +2 damage, critical damage

♣♣♣ The target suffers the Staggered condition for 2 rounds

☠☠ The attacker loses 1 Aggression die from his dice budget

DAZZLING DISPLAY

Diestro

WEAPON SKILL (AG) vs. TARGET DEFENCE

Used By: Eduardo Rodrigues
Engaged with target, melee weapon equipped

Effect: A dazzling display of swordsmanship, intended to overawe the target as much as injure him

♣ The attack inflicts -1 damage

♣♣ The attack inflicts +1 damage

♣ The target gains the Exposed condition for 3 rounds

♣ The target suffers 1 fatigue

☠☠ The attacker suffers 1 wound

SIGMAR'S HEALING HAND

Sigmar, Holy, Ongoing

INVOCATION (FEL)

Used By: Magnus Gottschalk
Engaged with target, currently in a combat scene

Special: This action gains ☐ if the target is a devout Sigmarite

Effect: A nimbus of holy light surrounds the target, healing and protecting him

♣ The target is healed of 1 wound

♣♣♣ The target is healed of 3 wounds, or one critical wound of severity 3 or less is converted into a normal wound

♣♣ While this action is recharging, the target's Soak value is increased by 1

↻ Double the effect of any healing done by this blessing (twice as many wounds healed or critical wounds converted)

☠ Lector Gottschalk loses 1 Cunning die from his dice budget

THE LESSER EVIL



Twisted creatures of Chaos, beastmen were formed in the distant past, when a powerful release of Chaos energy in the north fused man and animal together into nightmarish aberrations. As varied in form as they are many in number, the brutal beastmen exist in many places across the world, but are most common in the woodlands of the Empire, especially the Reikwald Forest and Middenland's Drakwald Forest.

THE MADTOOTH HERD

The Madtooth herd of beastmen dwell deep in the Oberslecht, and can easily navigate the swamps, rivers and dark coves of the region as other beastmen move through their forests. The Madteeth are not afraid to plunge into the mud and muck of their home and often lay submerged just beneath the surface of a stagnant pool, waiting for prey to wander by.

Like other beastmen, the Madteeth are mutated creatures of Chaos. They are a varied and irregular lot, combining a twisted parody of mankind with the features of beasts and even more aberrant anatomy. If the Madteeth have a unifying, distinctive feature, it is that their teeth are somewhat larger and more yellow than most other beastmen – but as one might expect in a herd of beastmen, this feature is far from universal.

Due to the influence of Foaldeath and the sacrifices of the Holtz and Eigel families, the Madtooth herd hasn't wiped out the local farms, but contents itself with the occasional raid and hunting goblins and livestock for sport. However, travellers through the Oberslecht are still taking their lives in their hands, as the Madtooth herd is very much a ferocious, dangerous band of beastmen.

SPECIAL BEASTMAN RULES

Ambush: When rolling for initiative, each beastman group adds one expertise ☐ die to its check. When beastmen act during an encounter, add one fortune ☐ die to all combat actions they take against opponents who have not acted yet during the encounter.

Unruly: When critically wounded, beastmen lose their discipline. Whenever a beastman becomes critically wounded, remove one Aggression, Cunning, and Expertise die from that group's allotment.

UNGOR WARRIOR ☠☠

Madtooth herd ungors are identical to the ungors described on pages 50-51 of the *Tome of Adventure*.

MADTOOTH GOR ☠☠☠

Slightly leaner and faster than the common gor, Madtooth gors are no less heavily muscled or fearsome in combat. They are often mottled with mud and clay, sometimes as decoration and other times as camouflage.

FOALDEATH ☠☠☠☠

A clever, dangerous, and tortured ungor shaman, Foaldeath drives much of the plot of *The Lesser Evil*. Adorned in tattered robes and primitive charms and fetishes, Foaldeath can sometimes pass for human if he can hide his cloven hooves and misshapen face.

Foaldeath's motivations are complex and are described in detail on page 28. As the herd's bray shaman, Foaldeath is well-respected and wields a great deal of power. It is largely thanks to his influence that humans are suffered to live so close to the Oberslecht.

Chaos Shaman: Foaldeath has access to the Channel Power, as well as the Cloud of Gnats, Crackling Chaos, Grasp of the Oberslecht, and Howl of Chaos action cards included with this game, in addition to the actions noted here. He acquires and uses power just like a wizard.

Nemesis: Foaldeath has a stance meter (1 Reckless, 3 Conservative) and may adjust his stance just like a player character. He also suffers stress and fatigue exactly like a player character.

IZKA MADTOOTH ☠☠☠☠

Powerfully muscled and massive, Izka Madtooth is the leader of the Madtooth herd. He stands head and shoulders taller than any other beastman in the herd and has killed and eaten every beastman that has ever dared to challenge him. Frenzied and energised by the ferocity of the lightning stone, Izka is eager to bring destruction to the works of man.

Izka is armed with a two-handed greataxe and armoured with stolen and scavenged bits of metal and leather.

Frightening: Izka Madtooth causes Fear 2.

CREATURE	ST	TO	AG	INT	WP	FEL	A/C/E	WOUNDS	STANCE
MADTOOTH GOR	5(4)	5■(2)	4■(1)	3	3	2	4/3/1	12	R1
FOALDEATH	4■(4)	5(1)	4(1)	5	4■	3■	5/6/3	14	R1/C3
IZKA MADTOOTH	6■(7)	6(3)	4(2)	3	3■	2	6/2/2	18	R2

SAVAGE STRIKE

Basic

WEAPON SKILL (St) vs. TARGET DEFENCE

Used By: Beastmen
Engaged with target

Effect: The beastman's most common attack, it lashes out with fists, horns, claws, or weapons to pummel its foes

♣ The target is struck for normal damage

♣♣ The target is struck for normal damage, +1 critical

♣♣ +2 damage

☠ The attacker suffers 1 wound

✱ The attacker suffers 1 wound

FEARSOME CHARGE

Basic

WEAPON SKILL (St) vs. TARGET DEFENCE

Used By: Madtooth Gor, Izka Madtooth
Melee weapon, not engaged with target, target within close range

Special: The performs a free manoeuvre as part of the action to engage the target

Effect: The beastman lowers its sharp horns and charges into battle, looking to impale the target

♣ The target is struck for +1 damage

♣♣ The target is struck for +3 damage

♣♣ The target must succeed at an **Average (2d) Discipline check** or gain the rattled condition for 2 rounds

☠ The target may immediately take a free *Basic Melee Attack* against the beastman who attempted the Fearsome Charge

BERZERKER SLASH

Monstrous

WEAPON SKILL (St) vs. TARGET DEFENCE

Used By: Izka Madtooth
Engaged with target, melee weapon equipped

Special: Izka Madtooth must spend at least one Aggression die to use this ability

Effect: Foaming like a wild animal and roaring with fury, Izka lays about him with his axe

♣ The target is struck for +1 damage

♣♣♣ The target is struck for +4 damage and suffers 1 stress

♣♣ +1 critical

↘ The attack hits a second opponent in the same engagement

♠ Izka suffers 1 wound, but if the attack is successful, it inflicts +1 damage

☠ Izka suffers 1 wound

UNDYING FEROCITY

Reaction

WEAPON SKILL (STR) vs. TARGET DEFENCE

Used By: Izka Madtooth
Melee weapon, engaged with target, received a killing blow

Special: This action is performed immediately after the attack that dealt the killing blow is resolved, before any other manoeuvres or effects. Undying Ferocity interrupts the active player's turn until this action has been resolved

Effect: As the creature is dealt a death blow, Izka lashes out one last time at a nearby opponent

♣ The target is struck for normal damage

♣♣ The target is struck for +2 damage, critical damage

♣♣ +1 critical

✱ Lightning strikes the engagement, dealing 2 wounds and inflicting the Thunderstruck condition on all characters in the engagement for 2 rounds

A TIME TO MOURN



Over the course of A Time to Mourn, the heroes may come into contact with all sorts of undead monstrosities. Pages 64-65 of the *Tome of Adventure* contain a selection of undead creatures, and the encounter with the Holtz clan zombies after the trial should use the standard zombies from the *Tome of Adventure*.

MOURN'S UNDEAD

The undead described herein have been animated by Lazarus Mourn's fell ritual, with the exception of Mourn and his host body, Madriga Brenner. Destroying Mourn or severing his connection to Madriga Brenner's body will incapacitate or destroy all the undead resurrected by his magicks.

SPECIAL UNDEAD RULES

Fear of Undeath: Unless noted otherwise, undead cause Fear 1. This becomes Fear 2 if the undead outnumber their foes.

ARISEN ZOMBIES ☠

These blasphemous monsters burst forth from the soil, moaning and hungering for brains and the flesh of the living. Most of these zombies were embalmed with great care by priests of Morr, and as a consequence they still retain much of their flesh, now grey and chalky. However, the process of breaking free from their coffins and digging to the surface of the graveyard has done a lot of damage to these creatures, especially their hands, and now sharp splinters of bone protrude through their decaying meat, forming nasty talons.

Arisen Zombies are all considered henchmen. Their wounds entry reflects this.

Decaying: Arisen Zombies may add no more than 2 Aggression-dice to a single check.

STICHELM'S SKELETON ☠☠☠

This skeletal warrior was once the fabled hero of Stromdorf, the protector of the town. Lazarus Mourn is well aware of this fact, and relishes the irony of using Stichelm's corpse as his lieutenant in his quest to destroy Stromdorf.

The flesh has long since rotted from Stichelm's bones, and now he is held together only by Mourn's malevolent force of will. Olaus Stichelm still wears the plate armour, engraved with his dragon sigil, that he wore when he defeated the evil vampire count centuries ago, but it has pitted and turned green with age.

In his skeletal right hand he grips his mighty greatsword, a blade that took two hands to wield in life. Lashed to his left arm is the headstone of his tomb, a slab of white marble engraved with his name and deeds. This stone seems to crackle and pulse with energy, and burns with the blue of Azyr if viewed with magical sight.

Sword of the Hero: Stichelm's sword is of superior quality. It adds one fortune die ☐ to all *Melee Attack* action he makes.

Skeletal Guardian: Stichelm has access to and makes liberal use of the **Parry**, **Guarded Position**, and **Block** actions. He has *Weapon Skill* trained.

Marble Shield: The magical marble slab Stichelm is using as a shield crackles with eldritch power. If he uses the **Block** action and is still hit with a *Melee Attack*, the attacker suffers 1 wound on a ☠ bane result. PCs attacking Stichelm with a *Melee Attack* who generate a ✨ Chaos star also suffer 1 wound, hit or miss.

LAZARUS MOURN ☠☠☠☠

The necromancer's spirit inhabits the body of Madriga Brenner. The walking corpse is dressed in a ragged, dirty, purple gown. Her cheeks are sunken, and her eye sockets empty, her pale skin rotten and writhing with maggots. Her long black hair hangs lankly over her shoulders. Her mouth seems to leer in a lop-sided grin where her lips have been eaten away. A silver pendant hangs around her withered neck, set with a large, black gem (this is the *Pendant of Nectanubis*, which houses Mourn's undying spirit).

Necromantic Power: Lazarus Mourn has access to the *Curse of Undeath*, *Drain Life*, *Hand of Dust*, and *Mortification* action cards included with this game.

Mourn does not gather or store power like a wizard. He uses power as detailed on page 48.

Nemesis: Lazarus Mourn has a stance meter (1 Reckless, 3 Conservative) and may adjust his stance just like a player character. Rather than suffering fatigue or stress, Mourn loses composure as detailed on page 49.

CREATURE	ST	TO	AG	INT	WP	FEL	A/C/E	WOUNDS	STANCE
ARISEN ZOMBIE	4(4)	4(0)	2(0)	1	3	1	4/0/0	4	C1
STICHELM'S SKELETON	5(7)	4(5)	2(1)	2	3	1	5/0/2	15	C2
LAZARUS MOURN	4(4)	4(0)	2(0)	4	4	3	3/8/2	14	R1/C3

NO ESCAPE, NO HOPE 3

Basic, Ongoing, Undead

WEAPON SKILL (ST) vs. TARGET DEFENCE

Used By: Arisen Zombies
Engaged with target

Special: If the attack is successful, the target does not gain a free manoeuvre on its turn for as long as this action is recharging

Effect: The undead creature places an unyielding grip upon its target

✦ The target suffers 1 stress and 1 fatigue

✦✦✦ The target suffers 1 additional stress and 1 additional fatigue for each undead engaged with him

✦ The target suffers the Rattled condition for 2 rounds

✦✦ Add 1 additional recharge token to this action

☠☠ The attacker suffers 1 wound

✧ The target may immediately retaliate with a *Basic Melee Attack* after the attacker completes this action

DELICIOUS BRAAAAAAINS! 0

Undead

WEAPON SKILL (ST) vs. TARGET DEFENCE

Used By: Arisen Zombies, Lazarus Mourn
Engaged with target

Effect: The zombie bites its target, driven to mindlessly feast on its tasty brains

✦ The attack inflicts normal damage

✦✦ The attack inflicts +1 damage, critical damage

✦ The target suffers 2 stress

☠☠ The target may immediately disengage from the attacker as a free manoeuvre

✧ The target may immediately retaliate with a *Basic Melee Attack* after the attacker completes this action

GRAVE BLADE 0

Basic, Undead

WEAPON SKILL (ST) vs. TARGET DEFENCE

Used By: Stichelm's Skeleton
Melee weapon, target within close range

Special: If the target is not engaged with the attacker, add ■■ to the dice pool

Effect: A ferocious attack with an ancient and deadly blade, the sword has trailing wisps of foul, dark energy crackling about it

✦ The attack hits for normal damage

✦✦ The attack hits for +2 damage and the target suffers 1 stress

✦ The target suffers 1 stress

✦✦ +3 damage

☠ The attacker suffers 1 wound

DEATHLY PRESENCE 4

Undead, Ongoing

INTIMIDATE (ST) vs. TARGET DISCIPLINE (WP)

Used By: Stichelm's Skeleton, Lazarus Mourn
Target within medium range

Effect: A chill wind seems to blow through the area. While this action is recharging, undead in this encounter cause Terror rather than Fear

✦ The target suffers 1 stress

✦✦✦ The target suffers 2 stress

✦✦ The target gains an Insanity with the *Supernatural* or *Trauma* trait

☠ All PCs within close range may remove 1 recharge token from one of their action cards

WHEN NIGHT FALLS



Goblins are foul, cruel, and undisciplined beings. The only thing they enjoy more than tormenting anything weaker than them is tormenting something stronger than them – preferably after tying it up or otherwise rendering it harmless.

DA SIKBOYZ GANG

Da Sikboyz are a gang of evil-minded ill-smelling murderous loons. Like most night goblins, they wear heavy black hooded robes, often decorating the peaks of their hoods with bones and other trophies. Many of da Sikboyz wear scraps of moldering cloth across their faces as a sort of mask, particularly those armed with slackfungus bomz (see the "Slackfungus Bomz" item card). They do this to keep spores and foul odours of the slackfungus out of their mouths and lungs – although they do not suffer the ill effects of their fungal poisons, a snoutful of spores will cause a goblin to sneeze and cough.

They are neither brave nor especially clever, and obey Gobspite almost entirely out of fear of his gods-given power. If given a choice between fighting and fleeing for safety, da Sikboyz will usually make the same choice all other goblins do, and run for the hills (literally!). However, they fear Gobspite more than anything else – even Bulge the troll – and will risk much to avoid his displeasure.

SPECIAL NIGHT GOBLIN RULES

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

jected to unusually bright light. During the course of *A Gathering Storm*, the weather is so grey and stormy that even full daylight imposes only a single ■ penalty to the night goblins.

Elves Is Creepy: Whenever da Sikboyz goblins are outnumbered by elves in an engagement, they suffer ■ to all checks. If da Sikboyz goblins are outnumbered by more than two to one by elves, they suffer ♦ to checks instead.

DA SIKBOYZ GOBLINS ☠☠

These are the general rank-and-file goblins of da Sikboyz gang. Most are armed with curved swords or spears, but a few wield exotic night goblin weaponry such as nets and clubs. Sikboyz foraging parties are armed with slackfungus bomz.

GOBSPITE ☠☠☠☠

Gobspite is the unquestioned ruler of da Sikboyz due to his mighty magical powers.

Waaagh! Shaman: Gobspite has access to the Channel Power, as well as da Brainbursta, Gaze of Mork, Gerroff Me!, and Quit Yer Yappin' action cards included with this game. In terms of game mechanics, he gathers and uses power the same way a wizard PC does.

Nemesis: Gobspite has a stance meter (3 Reckless, 1 Conservative) and may adjust his stance just like a player character. He also suffers stress and fatigue exactly like a player character.

DA SQUIG ☠☠☠

Squigs resemble nothing so much as an enormous toothy maw on legs. The stubby tail, the beady eyes, and the warty red skin are all minor details – the important thing is the mouth. And the teeth. Especially the teeth.

Bouncin' Ball o' Death: If da Squig performs a move manoeuvre during its turn, it receives +2 defence until its next action.

GOBLINS AND COMEDY

Goblins are funny. In the grim and perilous world of Warhammer, danger threatens around every corner and even the smallest of foes may prove deadly...but none of that changes the fact that goblins are funny. They say goofy things and they talk in silly voices. They're comically cowardly and often inept.

As depicted in *When Night Falls*, the night goblins sit at the intersection of creepy and funny. It's okay to play this up – if the PCs have a plan to fool the goblins and it would be funny for the goblins to fall for it, then let them! But goblin humour is sick, twisted, and relies on hurting others, and play that up, too. Da Sikboyz think nothing of killing people to feed the troll – that's creepy. But they think nothing of killing one another to feed the troll in the pantry or because they don't like each other either – that's funny.

The other chapters of *A Gathering Storm* are serious, but there's plenty of room for grim and perilous comedy in Warhammer, too.

CREATURE	ST	TO	AG	INT	WP	FEL	A/C/E	WOUNDS	STANCE
DA SIKBOYZ GOBLINS	3(4)	3(1)	4 (0)	3 ■	2	3	3/2/1	10	C1
GOBSPITE	3 (3)	3 ■ (1)	3 (1)	4 ■ ■	4	4	3/6/2	12	R3/C1
DA SQUIG	4(5)	4 ■ (0)	5 (0/2*)	2	2	1	6/2/0	15	R2

STICK 'EM WIF DA POINTY END

Basic, Greenskin

WEAPON SKILL (ST) VS. TARGET DEFENCE

Used By: Sikboyz Goblins, Gobspite
Engaged with target

Special: For each other Sikboyz goblin in the engagement, remove ■ from the dice pool

Effect: The most basic of techniques learned by users of weapons with a point to them: stick the pointy end into the target

✦ The target is struck for normal damage

✦✦✦ The target is struck for +1 damage

✦ The target's soak value is reduced by 1 for each other Sikboyz goblin in the engagement

✦✦ The attack does +1 damage for each other Sikboyz goblin in the engagement

☠ The attacker suffers 1 wound

JEER 'N' JAB

Greenskin

WEAPON SKILL (ST) VS. TARGET DEFENCE

Used By: Sikboyz Goblins, Gobspite
Engaged with target

Effect: The goblin attacks simultaneously with his weapon and cruel laughter and mocking words (thoroughly corrupted by the strange goblin dialect)

✦ The target is struck for normal damage, and suffers 1 stress

✦✦✦ The attack inflicts normal damage, and the target suffers fatigue and stress equal to the number of critical wounds he is currently suffering

✦✦ +1 critical

☠ The target may immediately perform a manoeuvre after the attacker completes this action

✧ All greenskins in this engagement suffer 1 wound

CHOMPITY CHOMP CHOMP!

Monstrous

WEAPON SKILL (ST) VS. TARGET DEFENCE

Used By: da Squig
Engaged with target

Effect: Da squig puts 'iz toothy maw ta good use

✦ The attack inflicts normal damage

✦✦✦ The attack inflicts +3 damage, +1 critical

✦✦ +2 damage

☠ Da Squig may not perform any manoeuvres after this action resolves, until his next activation

✧ Repeat this action against a new target in the engagement, friend or foe. Da Squig never uses this ability to attack itself

BOUNCE 'N' CHOMP

Monstrous

WEAPON SKILL (ST) VS. TARGET DEFENCE

Used By: da Squig
Target within close range

Special: Da Squig moves to engage the target as part of this action. Da Squig does not suffer any penalty for leaving an engagement it was already in

Effect: Da Squig bounces on top of his target and bites down hard

✦ The attack hits for +1 damage

✦✦✦ The attack hits for +1 damage, critical damage

✦✦✦ As above, and the target falls prone, and suffers 1 fatigue

✦✦ All enemies in the engagement suffer 1 fatigue and 1 stress

☠ The attacker suffers 2 wounds

✧ +3 damage, +1 critical

NIKLAS SCHULMANN



Dressed in flamboyant midnight-blue robes, this young man's high cowl, skullcap, and flowing cloak are decorated with esoteric golden sigils. A small telescope, an elegant dagger, and several scrolls hang at his belt, and his staff is topped by a clockwork representation of moons and planets orbiting a golden sun.

Schulmann has a handsome face with a forked black beard. His deep blue eyes have a haughty stare. He portrays himself with smug self-assurance as an eminent wizard, a prodigy of the Celestial College.

He arrived in Stromdorf a few short weeks ago, and lodges in the Thunderwater Inn. He says he is on sabbatical from the Colleges of Magic, having come to Stromdorf to study its bizarre meteorological conditions – the subject of a thesis he is writing (a false claim).

The locals were extremely wary of him at first, but he has won them over by helping illiterate townsfolk draft letters and read documents. Every Wellentag, he teaches local children their letters, hiring out a room in the Thunderwater at his own expense.

SCHULMANN'S GOALS

Hungry for power and recognition, Schulmann is dimly aware of his own incompetence (although he is loathe to admit it to himself). He is all-too-acutely aware of the scorn that his superiors at the Celestial College hold him in, and it does not sit well with his own self-image. Schulmann has always wanted the seemingly easy life of a great wizard, respected and feared by the community and waited on hand-and-foot by students and servants. But he lacks the drive, energy, and sadly talent, to do the work necessary to achieve that status. Thus, his elaborate scheme to tap into the Nexus.

Schulmann's intentions are nothing less than to draw the energies of the Nexus into his body. With that much power at his command, he figures that his relative inexperience and lack of knowledge will be irrelevant. He can do anything! The Celestial College will have to accept him as a Master Wizard and his life of luxury will begin.

SECRETS WITHIN SECRETS

In truth, Schulmann's philanthropy is just a ruse to ameliorate the townsfolk. He is actually an incompetent acolyte, who has discovered a means of getting powerful quickly. He learned of the nexus from ancient high elf manuscripts and came to Stromdorf seeking the map stones that mark its location.

It was up in the old high elf ruins just a few weeks ago where he botched a ritual to locate the map stones. The backlash scarred him terribly. He has spent the last week desperately trying to plan another way to find the stones.

It's very possible that the PCs will conclude that Schulmann is hiding something from them. When confronted, Schulmann will confess to lesser sins if pressed or asked the right questions.

Yes, it's true, he is not a mighty wizard, but it's much easier to keep overzealous Witch Hunters at bay if you pretend to be more powerful than you truly are. No, he's not working on a thesis about the weather. The map stones are the real reason he's here, but again, the Witch Hunters can be so close-minded. Yes, Schulmann is in disgrace with the Celestial Order, but that just makes it all the more urgent that he find the high elf cache detailed on the mapstones! The knowledge contained in such a collection is just what he needs to get back in good graces with the Celestial College!

However, Schulmann does not divulge the secret of the Nexus, no matter what. The Nexus and his ultimate goals to tap into its powers are his trump cards.

THE OLD SWITCHEROO

It's possible, depending on how events unfold in the early part of this campaign, that the players grow suspicious of Schulmann. If they mistrust the wizard too strongly, or feel he's up to no good, they may confront him, or possibly even try to take him out of the picture for good.

If you start to sense things wandering down a path you'd rather not explore – removing Schulmann too early – there are several options.

First, find another scapegoat. Perhaps another Stromdorfer attracts more unwanted attention, or strange events or coincidences are attributed to someone else.

Otherwise, you could modify Schulmann's role slightly. Perhaps he's really there to put an end to things and stave off catastrophe, while an unlikely Stromdorfer (such as Professor Köpfchen or Marcel Gerber) is the real driving force behind collecting the stones.

CREATURE	ST	TO	AG	INT	WP	FEL	A/C/E	WOUNDS	STANCE
NIKLAS SCHULMANN	3 (3)	3 (1)	3 ■ (1)	4 ■	5	3 ■ ■	2/8/3	15	R2/C4

HOW TO MAKE FRIENDS AND INFLUENCE PEOPLE

Schulmann needs the PCs to accomplish his goals, and he is well aware of this. He goes to great lengths to keep on friendly terms with the PCs. But it's not just the PCs that you have to be careful of... it's the players.

Schulmann is a conniving weasel with an inflated sense of his own self-worth, but there's no reason for him to be less than polite to the PCs. Not so long as they can be useful. He uses flattery, speaking of the great and mighty futures he sees ahead of them, laid out clearly in the stars for anyone to see. He uses guilt, referring to the worsening weather as a crisis that only the high elf stones can solve. He will use any scheme or technique he thinks will work.

If the players still think Schulmann is some kind of fink, consider letting him "slip" with his disguise cantrip. This is a fairly innocent secret, after all – the magical equivalent of dying one's hair – but may explain any furtiveness or guardedness on Schulmann's part. The relative freshness of the injuries is also a clue...

PLOT DEPENDANT ABILITIES

As detailed in the *Tome of Mysteries*, wizards can use magic for a variety of tasks. Schulmann can do a number of things not concretely detailed in the rules, but highly relevant to the plot of the story, such as the ritual he performed on Tempest Knap.

In particular, Schulmann has perfected the art of spying on others with his magic, seeing people and places far removed from himself. He uses these abilities to keep tabs on the PCs, and can be as informed on the subject of their activities as you want him to be. Schulmann's not the most competent wizard the Celestial College has ever seen, but he is still an acolyte wizard.

Cantrip: Each morning, Schulmann casts a cantrip to disguise his injuries. It fades as he sleeps, revealing his hideous scars. Anyone meeting Schulmann who passes a **Hard (3d) Magical Sight** check notices this cantrip. Anyone passing an **Average (2d) Spellcraft** check (reduced to **Easy (1d)** for Celestial Wizards) sees through the masquerade. He tries to bluff his way out of any confrontation.


Nemesis: Niklas Schulmann has a stance meter (2 Reckless, 4 Conservative) and may adjust his stance just like a PC. Schulmann lets his desire for power cloud his judgement, and usually acts in the Reckless stance. He also suffers stress and fatigue exactly like a PC.

Trained Skills: Channelling (Celestial Order), Education (Ancient Elvish), Magical Sight, Spellcraft

Talents: Resolute

Action Cards: All Basic Actions plus Cerulean Shield, Channel Power, Curse, Lightning Bolt, Petty Magic (All), Shooting Star, Swiftwing

Trappings: Celestial Wizard robes, Quarterstaff (Attuned 1 Azyr, defensive), dagger, scrolls & sigils (fake)



STORM SHROUD

Celestial Order, Ongoing

SPELLCRAFT (INT)

Used By: Niklas Schulmann

4 power +1 power for each enemy engaged with Schulmann

4

Special: Reduce the difficulty modifier by a number of misfortune ■ dice equal to the stage the Stromdorf Storm Tracker is on.

Effect: Winds swirl around Schulmann, protecting him while keeping his enemies at bay

⚡ While this action is recharging, Schulmann's Soak and Defence values are increased by an amount equal to the current stage of the Stromdorf Storm Tracker

⚡⚡⚡ As above, and add 2 additional recharge tokens on this action

⚡ Enemies engaged with Schulmann suffer 1 fatigue

☠ Schulmann suffers 1 wound



IMPERIOUS MANNER

Social

WILLPOWER VS. TARGET DISCIPLINE (WP)

Used By: Niklas Schulmann

Target within medium range, target can understand you

2

Effect: Schulmann uses his inflated ego and superior status (real or only imagined) to put the target in his place. This may involve a snide comment, or nothing more than an artfully arched eyebrow

⚡ Place 1 recharge token on each Social action the target has recharging. While this action is recharging, skill checks that target Schulmann suffer ♦

⚡⚡⚡ As above, and the target suffers 2 stress

⚡ Schulmann recovers 1 stress and gains 1 power

☠ Schulmann suffers 1 stress



Reikwald
Forest

River Teufel

To Averswald
(25 miles)

Mill &
Wharf Ferry

West Bridge

Stromdorf

East Bridge

To Nuln
(140 miles)

To Ubersreik
(40 miles)

River Teufel

Garden
of Morr

Nexus
Point

Holtz Farm

Tempest Knap
& Ruins

Frothing
Ford

Lightning
Stone

Ackerland
Farm

The
Oberslecht

Gobspite's
Farm

Glowstone
Cave

Blitzfelsen Hills

0 1 mile 2



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