

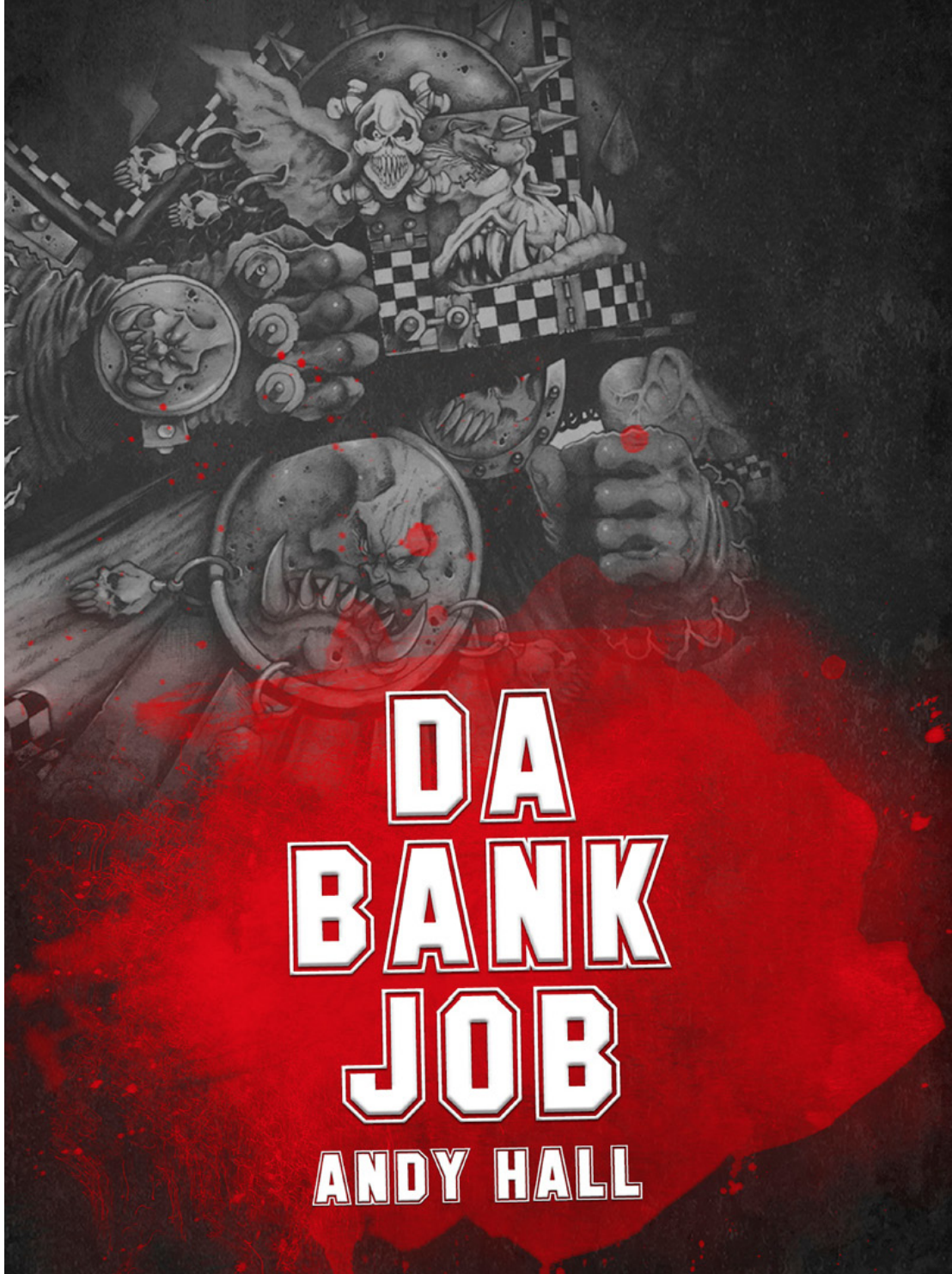
BLOOD BOWL



DA BANK JOB

ANDY HALL

BLOOD BOWL



DA BANK JOB

ANDY HALL

CONTENTS

[Cover](#)

[Da Bank Job – Andy Hall](#)

[About the Author](#)

[A Black Library Publication](#)

[eBook license](#)

DA BANK JOB

Andy Hall

The ball shot from the orc's arm as if fired from a cannon. It went spiralling high through the air in a perfect arc. By Nuffle's own definition, the throw was the epitome of a long bomb. The fans in the packed, ramshackle stadium – a noxious mix of dwarfs and greenskins – were silenced for the first time in what had been a brutal game thus far. The orc blitzer, wearing the captain's nose ring, looked on in momentary admiration as the ball went flying over the crowd, over the floodlights, over the stadium's high walls, and out of sight. He then looked at the thrower, stood next to him, and at the opponent's end zone... three yards away.

'You were meant to 'and it off, you stoopid, squig-sucking git.'

'Sorry, boss, it's just dat all season you've be on at me to throw a long 'un and I finally 'ad a chance.'

Before the captain could swear at his inept thrower again, the pair were set upon by the dwarf defence – piled into by eight bearded psychopaths, all eager to dig their elbows into the orcs' squashy bits. And then everything froze, as if a pause button had been pressed – most likely because it had.

'There you go, Bob,' snickered Jim Johnson to his fellow commentator, as the view switched from the frozen orc and dwarf scrum to an in-studio shot of a small, spectacle-wearing vampire with a rictus grin. 'As voted by CabalVision HD's viewers, that is last season's most hilarious play!' Large

CabalVision logos were revolving behind the studio sports desk at which the vampire presenter was sitting. Looming next to him was his fellow pundit, a brutal-looking ogre with scars that could only have been garnered off a Blood Bowl field.

‘The irony is, Jim, it was a good pass... if the thrower had been standing two hundred yards downfield of ’is target, instead of next to ’im! But then dat’s what we’ve come to expect from Brobrag’s Big ’Uns!’

‘True, Bob, they may have only formed at the start of the season, but they’re quickly gaining a dire reputation. Err, where you going, Bob?’

‘Dat’s it, Jim. Season’s done, I’m off on me jollies. See you in three months!’

‘Right... Okay... well, as Bob leaves let’s have another look at that humiliating clip of Brobrag’s Big ’Uns. I bet their backer wasn’t too pleased—’

The picture stopped suddenly as the ogre landlord smacked the large crystal ball positioned at the end of the bar, the vision within shaking for a second and then switching channel to the WOLF Network’s post-season offerings. The nose-ringed orc breathed a sigh of relief and cautiously peered about as he supped his grog, wondering if the other ‘patrons’ in the heaving bar had recognised him from the footage. It was a big ask, as The Krafty Snotling was a hotspot for Blood Bowl players, their agents and autograph-hunting fans. The walls were adorned with trophies, MVPs, pennants, and many pictures of the ogre landlord – himself an ex-coach – posing with star players, past and present. The orc blitzer wasn’t happy; this was the last place he wanted to be after the previous season, but those who wanted to meet him had insisted. So he sat in a corner booth, as far away from the bar as possible, with a picture above him of the smirking landlord giving a large thumbs up next to Varag Ghoul-Chewer. It was a nice shot, although the imprisoned daemon inside the CAMRA must have been running low on red pigment as the blood spatter on Ghoul-Chewer’s loin-cloth looked a little too orange.

Luckily for the orc, no one seemed interested in him. The bar was propped up by some more orcs, and two large tables of humies glared at each other – one group wearing Reavers colours, the other clearly Marauders fans. A ruck was mere rounds away, the orc reckoned. Sat on his own, a few tables away, was a lone, robed humie; he had a frenzied air

to him. His hand shook as he raised it to take a drink and occasionally he'd shout and grumble. In the far corner, a huddle of dwarfs were also looking about the place, and one of the stunty gits caught Brobrag's eye. They stared at each other across the bar, flinging eye-daggers. The orc had seen his like before – that one had grudge-fever, and if Brobrag didn't look out he'd be the target of the 'vengeance'.

'Mr Brobrag is it? Captain and owner of the Big 'Uns?'

The orc looked away from the dwarf – which, Brobrag knew, the bearded git would take as some minor victory – and saw two beings standing before his booth. One was a tall, pale humie in a scruffy, ill-fitting suit – the type Brobrag had seen moneyed agents and CabalVision executives wear. The other was a goblin, wearing similar attire and looking even more dishevelled in his clobber.

'Dis is Mr Ger, and I'm Mr Bil,' said the goblin. 'Glad ya came. Got a drink I see, get yer another?'

Before Brobrag could even grunt in acknowledgement the pair had sat down. Now the orc's table was attracting more eyes than just the grudge-loving dwarf. He waved away the offer of another grog. The goblin caught the eye of a tavern wench dressed in a Darkside Cowboys cheerleader kit and ordered a drink for himself and his partner.

'So tell me,' began Mr Ger, 'how's your boss's pet squig?'

'Yoo know well enuff, humie,' growled Brobrag. 'It was in last week's *Spike!* magazine.'

'Remind me.'

'Leg-cruncha ate da critter. Da boss wasn't 'appy about dat. Bloody troll vomited da squig right back up. Poor fing was partly digested. 'ad to get Fingurs to put the blighter out of its misery.'

'It's been a tough first season, ain't it?' said the goblin with an evil glint in his eye. 'Yoo retire from raidin', start a Blood Bowl team with yer krew, get fundin' from yer warboss and promise 'im he'll get rich from all yer winnins. Instead, yer didn't win a single match, yer lost all the boss's teef and yer troll playa eats yer backer's fave squig.'

'It could've been worse,' ventured Brobrag.

'Well, you could be dead, I suppose,' answered Mr Ger.

'Yoo've dragged me 'ere just to gloat? Sod that, I'm off.' Brobrag began to rise.

‘Let’s not be hasty, we simply wondered how desperate you are. We have a proposal.’

Suddenly, the CabalVision ball sounded louder, as these things always did when the programming cut to a commercial break.

‘Have you got the balls to challenge the Reikland Reavers? Blood Bowl balls that is!’ This announcement was greeted with a cheer from the table of Reavers’ fans. *‘Can’t wait for the start of next season? The Reikland Invitational is now accepting all-comers. Bring your team to the world-famous Altdorf Oldbowl stadium and play against other hopefuls – the winner then faces the Reikland Reavers! Beat them and take all the gate! Get noticed! Get more fans! C’mon, what else you going to do in the off-season? Raid and pillage? Boring! Play more Blood Bowl instead!’* The next advert was for Khorne-flakes – turns the milk all bloody! – and the volume seemed to calm down. The customers returned to their usual chatter.

‘Fancy it?’ asked Mr Bil.

‘Wot?’

‘The Invitational. Your boys win that thing, you’d be out of all that bother. Back on good terms with the warboss, the gate from a full stadium in your treasury and you’ll have sponsors across the Old World all desperate to sign you up.’

‘Dat’s no tourney, dat’s a stitch-up. Somefing the Reavers pull every off-season to keep da coffers flowin’ and their ’ome stadium full. Every git on da circuit knows dat. I may be an orc, but I ain’t dat thick.’

The inn’s front door smashed open, sending an unfortunate halfling – who had been heading for the exit – flying across the tap room. A black orc filled the portal. A seven-foot slab of green muscle, with a ripped left ear. He scowled at the patrons, who all nervously looked back at him. On spotting Brobrag’s group, the black orc made his way across, scattering the odd chair and smaller folk not quick enough to get out of his plodding way.

Mr Bil looked up at the towering orc as his shadow loomed over the booth.

‘Fingurs, ain’t it? Brobrag’s second-in-command, and one of the only scorers in the team?’

Brobrag gestured for his black orc blocker to sit. Fingurs grabbed a small stool from the nearby empty table and plonked himself down.

‘Wot I miss?’

‘These two geezers reckon we should play in the Reikland Invitational,’ said Brobrag. ‘Fink we can win it, ha!’

‘We could!’ said Fingurs. ‘Dey’re only humies. Kill enuff of ’em, and den dere’s no one ta stop yoo scorin’.’

‘Erm... Let’s not get ahead of ourselves...’ interjected the only human at the table. ‘The Reavers are one of the best teams in the world. Your captain is right, Brobrag’s Big ’Uns don’t stand much of a chance.’

While Brobrag didn’t give a snotling’s flea what the humie was saying – as it was annoyingly true – Fingurs growled from the back of his throat, the same growl he gave on the line of scrimmage. His ham-sized fist began to rise.

‘However,’ squeaked the goblin urgently, ‘yoo lot playin’ does present us with... an opportunity.’

Brobrag didn’t like the sound of this, but he forced Fingurs to lower his fist all the same.

‘Have you been introduced to your new team wizard yet?’ asked Mr Ger.

‘We ain’t got no wizard!’ said Fingurs.

‘Oh, you have now.’ As one, Ger and Bil turned to face the robed humie who sat two tables away. The man was still arguing with himself, and right then proceeded to smack the heavy wooden table with his head. Hard.

The orc captain frowned. He hated wizards and shamans; he hadn’t got time for that magicky-nonsense.

‘Wot kind of opportunity?’ he asked.

‘The best kind – one that makes you rich,’ said Mr Ger with a wide smile.

It was match day. Brobrag looked at his team as they gathered in the visitors’ locker room of the Oldbowl. They were all present – his mob of below-average line-orcs, the troll, Leg-cruncha, the gobbo twins known as the Chukka Brothers, Grappa, the thrower whose only ever decent pass was now CabalVision’s favourite blooper, and finally, Fingurs the black orc. Standing slightly away from the team were the new ‘coaching staff’ supplied by Mr Ger and Mr Bil, and Chanzeemitt, the strangely paranoid and shouty wizard, also recommended by the so-called ‘fixers’. Although, Brobrag wasn’t sure he’d trust those two near anything broken enough it needed them to fix it. And yet, here he was! The locker room crowd looked

on expectantly at the orc. He'd already explained the plan twice but knew what was coming when Fingurs opened his gob.

'So, why am I not playing in da game, boss?'

'I told ya, yer wiv dis krew,' said Brobrag gesturing to the orc coaching staff who had been 'recruited' just before the tournament. As orcs went, the four were as dodgy as they come. One had a broken tooth, one was missing an eye and the other two looked especially murderous, even when kitted out with cap, sponge and towel – the standard issue gear of any field-side assistant coach. 'Yer goin' into the vault wiv 'em, cos I don't trust dese orcs none – no offence. They're supplied by that pair of gits, so I need you to make sure we don't get stitched up! Dat's why yer in charge of 'em.'

'Okay, so it's a bank job?' asked Fingurs, who still looked confused.

'Maybe I could explain, captain?' said the wizard, who then gave an involuntary yelp.

Brobrag gestured for the humie to go on.

'You, my fine green-skinned friend, will lead this group of err... experts... into the vault of the Imperial Treasury that's just across the road from this stadium. I will be providing the means of ingress. In the visitors' dugout is a stable portal – an escape route for the treasury staff and clients should they come under attack, I expect – I will open it with my magic and transport you directly inside the vault. HAAHAA!'

Brobrag flinched at the maniacal laugh the wizard used to punctuate his speech – stoopid loony humie, that's what you get for meddling with magic.

'Once inside, yoo grab all da loot yoo can and den leg it back out,' explained the captain. 'Me and da rest of the lads are gonna be playin' in da match. The longer we make the game last, the more time yoo 'ave in the vault to collect da shiny stuff. Right, let's get out dere!'

The team cheered, although most clearly didn't know why, and headed to the field.

Brobrag strode purposely through the player tunnel that led to the AstralTurf® pitch. One of the Chukka Brothers ran up beside him.

'Boss?'

'Wot,' growled Brobrag.

'I'm confused. Who we playin'? We're not fightin' da Reavers are we?'

Cos we don't stand a chance against them, boss.'

'I kno! We ain't playin' da Reavers. Dey don't play until da challenger is established. All da teams that come, fight amongst demselves, and the best one plays against da Reavers. It's da "official" challengers dat get all da coverage on CabalVision. Da match scheduler's been bribed, 'e's putting us against some halfling team... Even we should manage against dem. We need to string it out though, so da krew gets maximum time in da vault.'

Brobrag's team filed out into the massive stadium. The Oldbowl was a glorious temple to violence and sport. The orcs looked about, taken in by the atmosphere, the high stadium walls, the gloriously turfed pitch dotted with brown and crimson stains. And the packed crowds screaming and shouting from the stands. The Big 'Uns had never played at a venue like this before. Grappa and a few of the line-orcs started waving their arms as they strode onto the field, fully embracing the crowd's jeering racket.

'And here are Brobrag's Big 'Uns!' shouted the unmistakable voice of Jim Johnson over the stadium's 'state of the arcane' speaker network. Brobrag's gut shifted as it always did when he felt something bad was happening. The game was against the Merrywald Chums, a bunch of halfling farmhands. Such a match shouldn't be drawing a crowd like this, let alone the attention of CabalVision's presenters...

'Boss...' said the goblin who hadn't left his side since the tunnel. 'The fans – dey're all wearin' Reavers' colours.'

The reverb sped around the stadium, as Jim continued.

'The challengers are on the field, but here comes the team you've all come to see, eighteen-time Chaos Cup winners, voted best team of all time by *Spike!* magazine... the Reikland Reavers!'

The crowd broke into thunderous applause. In the stands just above the visitors' dugout, Brobrag spied Messrs Ger and Bil. The gobbo was wearing a sheepish grin; the humie met the orc captain's gaze and gave a 'wotcha gonna do' shrug of his shoulders.

'Zoggin 'ell!' murmured Brobrag.

The Reavers ran through the player tunnel and onto the field in a blaze of glory, and the fans went wild. While they basked in their welcome at the centre of the field, Brobrag corralled his team towards the visitors' dugout

and sought out the nearest official. An elf in tailored zebra fur stood nonchalantly at the side of the pitch, twirling his whistle about on its twine.

‘Wot in Nuffle’s ball sack is goin’ on?’ demanded Brobrag.

‘Problem?’ snapped the elf.

‘We’re meant to be playin’ halflings, not the Reikland zoggin’ Reavers!’

‘Yeah, about that, seemed the schedules got shifted,’ the official said with a sly smile. ‘The Merrywald Chums played a Chaos team called the Flesh Hounds this morning. I think they lasted all of two downs before they were slaughtered to a soul. The Flesh Hounds went on a killing spree afterwards, leaving you lot to face the Reavers – the final was brought forward and everything, someone paid a lot to make that happen. Didn’t anyone tell you?’ he sneered.

Brobrag had never liked elves, but this long-eared git had quickly risen to the top of his hate list. He headed back to his dugout. The players looked expectantly at the captain.

‘Some gits want us to play da Reavers. So sod it, let’s do it!’

Chanzeemitt cleared his throat. ‘May I remind you the plan was that you fought against a weak team as a diversion and to maximise the vault-group’s time in the treasury. If your team is all in the “dead and injured box” within ten minutes then we are... to use language your kind understands... screwed.’

‘Can yoo still open da portal or not?’

‘Well, yes.’

‘Then get to it. Right ladz, it’s our biggest game yet. We ain’t just a diversion! We’re Blood Bowl players, let’z bloody well play!’ The team cheered and, led by Brobrag, ran onto the field.

Deep in the dugout, at the far end, away from the eyes of fans, the team wizard whispered in a language that made Fingurs shiver. The end wall shimmered and a black portal appeared where the cinder blocks had been moments before. Chanzeemitt let out a braying laugh but Fingurs was unsure if that was part of the spell or just one of the mage’s strange tics.

‘Go,’ hissed Chanzeemitt. The black orc ran through the portal, closely followed by the four assistant coaches. Instead of sponges and buckets they now carried sacks and jemmies. As the last of the orcs from the vault-group disappeared, the elven ref’s whistle was blown – the game had

started.

The Reavers hit hard for humies. They slammed into the Big 'Uns' front line, which was sorely lacking their black orc blocker. Brobrag was in the middle of the defence, on the line of scrimmage, and found himself face to face with the Reavers' captain.

'And the two captains meet!' shouted an excited Jim Johnson over the stadium's arcane sound system. 'Griff Oberwald is a NAF hall of famer, one of the highest scorers in the sport. Brobrag... Well you can't really compare the two, can you?'

The orc and humie butted helmets in the middle of the scrum. Both were bent forwards with shoulders planted firmly into the opposing players.

'Don't worry, greeny, this'll be over for you soon enough,' said Griff through gritted teeth.

'Not likely, pigeon-'ead, we need to make dis last until full time!' Griff looked bemused at Brobrag's response. As if that wasn't the kind of trash talk he'd expected from the orc. Brobrag used the star player's momentary confusion to punch the smug git in his face. Oberwald spat out a tooth, and looked thunderous. He thrust downwards with his shoulders and stepped back, Brobrag's momentum carried him forwards and the blood-stained turf came rushing up to meet him. Without breaking stride, Oberwald stepped on the back of the orc's prone form and used it as a springboard to leap into the air. As if preordained by Nuffle himself, at the zenith of Griff's leap the ball flew into view, and he plucked it out of the sky. The Reavers captain landed far beyond the Big 'Uns' defensive line and then ran. The star player easily dodged the few half-hearted tackles by the remaining orc defence and jogged into the end zone. The crowd went wild. Brobrag got upright and looked back to see a triumphant Oberwald staring straight back at him. The first touchdown had been scored less than a minute after the starting whistle.

Fingurs was in the strangest vault he'd ever been in. Not that he'd been in any vaults before, but where was all the shiny stuff? They were underground, which he had expected, but they were in a long, square corridor of yellow stone covered in vines and other strange-looking plants. He wasn't the only one that looked confused. The rest of his 'away team'

also seemed a bit lost as to where they were. Fingurs couldn't remember their names, or even if he'd asked for them in the first place, and so had decided to call them by their instantly recognisable feature.

'Oi, One-eye, where's dis treasure?!' Fingurs asked. The orc just gave him a shrug back. And then lost his head. A thin silver blade screamed out of a horizontal gap in the wall at head height and lopped off One-eye's bonce before the black orc could blink. The head rolled past Fingurs, who spun around to see Broken-toof looking guilty, his foot resting on a sunken flagstone.

'Soz,' he said, and carefully retracted the offending leg.

'By Gork's collected toe-jam, wot woz dat!?' shouted Fingurs to no one in particular.

'Booby trap,' said Angry-git. 'Bet dis place is full of 'em. Careful where ya tread.'

Fingurs wasn't happy. His place was on the Blood Bowl field, not here in this dark place, following a dungeon corridor to Nuffle knew where.

'This way... ' Fingurs heard a whispery voice. It seemed to come from just behind his ear. 'Move it!' said the whispery, but now clearly impatient, voice. Fingurs gestured to Broken-toof, Angry-git and Nasty-git.

'Better go where da voice sez,' said the black orc, cautiously moving down the corridor. The others looked at each other and followed.

'Wot voice?' asked Broken-toof to Angry and Nasty.

The Big 'Uns were already down two-zero, but losing didn't bother Brobrag that much – after all, they'd lost every game in the previous season. No, what was troubling him more were the two casualties they'd already sustained. NAF rules were pretty flexible about how many players a team could field. There was a maximum of eleven per side – that was literally written in stone, as transcribed by the very first NAF commissioner, Roze-el, back in the day, and strictly enforced. As to fielding fewer than Nuffle's sacred number, well, it wasn't advisable but not technically against the rules. As long as you had players, you could play. However, as Brobrag knew all too well, you needed at least three players on the line of scrimmage at kick-off. If the team couldn't do that then they'd forfeit the game no matter how much time was left on the

clock. While Brobrag's squad was large enough for now, if he kept losing players at this rate they'd be forfeiting before they even got to half time, leaving Fingurs and the loot stranded in the vault.

'The Big 'Uns are going to receive,' said a voice over the sound system. It wasn't Jim Johnson's, this announcer had a much deeper, metallic and troubling timbre. 'If they don't receive Nuffle's help, I know a few gods they can pray to for aid, hahaha!'

'Err, thank you, Lord Borak, I look forward to more of your comments throughout the game. Bob should go on vacation more often.'

The Big 'Uns had thirty seconds before the ref blew his whistle, so the captain called his players together for a huddle.

'We're gettin' butchered out dere,' moaned Grappa.

'Shut it!' growled Brobrag. 'We need to keep playin' and dose gits just want us off the field as fast as possible. We're green and mean, we should be da ones smashin' da humies ta bits, not da other way around. We gotta keep da ball out in our possession.' Grappa tried to speak, but Brobrag wasn't in the mood for more of his moaning and so carried on. 'Pick it up, don't pass it, we'll form a cage around the carrier and we'll march up the field real slow and steady...'

The ref whistled.

'Touchdown!' shouted Lord Borak, his voice reverberating around the stadium. Brobrag looked up from the huddle and saw a Reavers' catcher in their end zone.

'Wot the—'

'You were yabberin' too long, boss. Da Reavers kicked and then grabbed the ball while yoo were explainin' da plan. I did try and tell yoo.'

'Right, next play, we do dat plan.'

'Wot plan?' asked a line-orc.

Brobrag slapped him across the face.

Fingurs, Broken-toof and Angry-git stared down into the dark, fathomless hole that had swallowed Nasty-git two minutes ago.

'I fink 'e's ded,' said Broken-toof. Fingurs thought so too, and motioned them to move on. This left just the three of them to find the loot and get it back before the game ended. The black orc knew full well he wasn't the sharpest spike on the Blood Bowl ball, yet he sensed things were not going

to plan.

‘Dis voice you ’earin’,’ said Broken-toof. ‘Sure it’s not tryin’ to lead us *away* from da shiny stuff?’

‘Nah, it keeps gettin’ mad if we stop an’ talk or I go another way. It wants da gold as much as we do.’

Broken-toof was about to question the black orc’s logic when they came to a door at the end of the corridor. It was made of stout-looking wood with metal hinges and handle. A dungeon door if ever you saw one, thought Fingurs, as he tried the handle. The door didn’t budge. Broken-toof pushed him out the way, and produced his jemmy. The orc worked at the hinge and then around the handle, and with a final push the door swung open and the three greenskins stumbled into a large, dimly lit chamber. It was a large square space, the roof made of different rectangular levels jutting inwards as they went up into the dark void, the only entrance – or exit – being the one the orcs had just walked through. Looking up, the would-be robbers could not even see the ceiling – they were at the base of a tower or some tall building. In the very middle of the room three chests sat upon plinths, each bathed in a cone of light.

‘Shinies!’ shouted Angry-git.

Before Fingurs could stop him, the orc ran forwards into the light and tried to open the chest in the middle. There was a flash, like lightning, and smoking bones clattered to the floor where the angry-looking orc had stood seconds before. The central chest was gone.

‘Idiots!’ screamed the disembodied voice, although only Fingurs could hear it.

‘We ain’t across the road in the treasury, are we?’ said Fingurs.

‘You think?’ asked the voice, sarcasm dripping from both icy syllables.

‘Well, da treasury building ain’t got no tower,’ said Broken-toof, actually making a good point, although Fingurs had been talking to the voice.

‘I need what’s in the left-hand chest, the others are just decoys. Get me the item in the chest and I’ll guide you back out.’

As much as Fingurs hated the voice, he thought the best course of action was to follow its directions so he could get back to the ladz as quickly as possible. Now, if only he knew his left from his right...

The Big ’Uns were receiving. Not unexpected, as the team that concedes a

touchdown always receives the ball at the following kick-off, and the orcs were down three-zero. The ball flew into the Big 'Uns half from the steel-shod boot of Jacob von Altdorf. Brobrag was relieved to see Grappa scoop up the free ball without too much fuss. As planned, four line-orcs surrounded the carrier, with Leg-cruncha herded to the rear. The formation slowly advanced to Brobrag's position where he took his place at the head of the formation. There was now a cage of green flesh and spiked armour surrounding the ball. Even a team as good as the Reavers would struggle to break through.

'I can't think of anything more dull than a slow-moving cage play, Jim,' said Lord Borak across the speaker system, 'and I've dated daemonettes.'

'I'd have thought daemonettes are anything but boring. They strike me as quite... feisty?'

'Nope, they're all goffs. They just sit there and mope. Tedious. Talking of which, the Big 'Uns haven't advanced a yard since our witty banter started, Jim. They better get a move on!'

Brobrag didn't care one cold squig-fart what the commentators thought of his play. He was quite pleased, they had kept possession for well over a minute now, and the Reavers had backed off. All they had to do now was run down the clock, giving the vault-orcs time enough to collect the loot and get back. Brobrag managed a smile – maybe it would all work out after all. Then an axe embedded itself into his helmet. Swiftly followed by another that thudded into the ground between his legs, just as one of the line-orcs collapsed, an axe wrapped in a Reavers pennant lodged in his gut.

'It's da fans!' called Grappa. 'Dey ain't 'appy!'

The cage was getting pelted with more and more missiles, some less lethal than others, noted Brobrag, as a bottle of Bloodweiser went streaming past to clonk a line-orc between the eyes. Across the field, the orc captain saw the Reavers holding back, all sporting smug faces, happy to let the fans do the work.

'Da voice sez it'z dat one,' said Fingurs, and flashed Broken-toof a smile. Fingurs rarely smiled, so the effect was more unnerving than the black orc intended. Broken-toof looked suspicious.

'Which one?'

'Dat one!' pointed Fingurs at one of the remaining chests.

'Go on den,' said Broken-toof. 'Get da shinies.'

‘Dat’s yer job. I led us ’ere.’

‘You fink I’m stoopid? I’ve seen Dungeonbowl, I kno what ’appens when you open a chest in a dungeon!’

‘Fine, I’ll grab da loot, but if you want a share you’ll ’ave to take it from me.’ Fingurs approached one of the chests to the side of the now empty central plinth.

‘Oi!’ Broken-toof rushed up to the black orc. ‘You were pointing at the other chest before. Now yah gonna take da loot, yoo go ta dis one – da proper box! Nice try, but I told ya, I ain’t stoopid.’

Broken-toof pushed Fingurs backwards, and lifted the lid of the right-hand chest. The orc’s smoking bones fell to the floor. Fingurs looked at the remaining chest.

‘So, dat’s left.’

The cage formation had made it to the line of scrimmage, the Reavers’ fans jeering and lobbing various detritus all the way. Brobrag had lost two of his line-orcs under the onslaught.

‘Are there any halflings in that formation?’ Lord Borak wondered aloud. ‘They’re taking so bloody long it’s like they’re on an endless quest.’

As the Big ’Uns staggered into the opposing half, the Reavers made their play. A fireball shot out from the sidelines, taking down a line-orc from the flank of the cage.

‘The Reavers’ team wizard is on excellent form,’ said Jim.

‘Unlike the Big ’Uns’ new magic-user,’ countered Lord Borak. ‘Our field-side reporter say he’s stuck in the dugout, waving his arms around and speaking in tongues like a skink who’s had too much sun. Looks like another bad investment by the Big ’Uns’ team captain.’

The spell had left the orcs in disarray, then the Reavers linemen tackled from the flank, while the Mighty Zug strode forwards and butted Brobrag right on the bridge of his nose. Orcs have thick skulls compared to humies, but Zug was a legend for a reason. The orc captain went down like a sack of squigs, creating the opening Griff needed. He wrestled the ball from Grappa and dodged past the troll before the beast could even register it. Within seconds the ball was back in the greenskins’ end zone. Four-zero. The ref blew his annoying whistle again – it was the end of the half.

‘Oh dear me. I think it’s all over for the Big ’Uns. They’d need a miracle

to come back from this,' said Jim.

'My gods give out miracles like candy, although this would be a big ask no matter how many souls you offered. To be blunt, they suck, Jim – even worse than you.'

Brobrag stumbled down the steps into the dugout. His teammates followed.

'We're screwed!' shouted a line-orc.

'No, we 'ave been screwed. Those fixers set us up,' said Grappa, his anger rousing the others. Brobrag smelt a mutiny. He heard a snigger from behind and looked around to see the wizard, eyes closed, arms waving around like an insane conductor towards the portal in the far wall.

'Wot you laughing at?'

'Oh, just how your teammates are obviously considering a change at the top. I love change, don't you?'

Brobrag growled. 'Where's Fingurs and da others?'

Chanzeemitt opened his eyes and gave an involuntary screech that made one of the team gobbos jump. 'Sorry, comes with the territory.'

'Yer nutz!'

'No, not nuts, just unstable, there's a subtle difference.'

Before Brobrag could answer back, the wizard spoke again, this time in a different voice.

'The orc's right, you're crazier than Fungus the Loon! That's why I had to stop you, that's why I paid to have the Flesh Hounds play your halfling patsies!'

'What?' shouted Chanzeemitt in the first voice. 'You did this?'

'Of course I did, I hate you! Oh, look here comes another of your puppets now.' Fingurs shot through the portal, which fizzled out behind him. He was clutching something in his fist.

'Give me that!' demanded the wizard in his first, screeching voice.

'I wouldn't,' said Mr Ger, descending the dugout steps with Mr Bil closely in tow.

'You gits! Wot you doin' 'ere?' yelled Brobrag.

'Protecting our investment. We want to know why you aren't playing against the halflings as originally arranged.'

'So, you ain't got nuffin to do wiv dis?'

‘No. We wanted da loot in the vault as much as yoo. We were gonna double-cross ya when you ’ad the dosh. So, not us, boss... Well, we may have put a bet—’ Mr Bil was hastily nudged in the face by Mr Ger’s elbow.

‘You bumbling fools! You are puppets to be played with by greater minds than you are capable of comprehending,’ said the wizard. He looked directly at Fingurs and gave an involuntary laugh. ‘Now, give me it, or those scorched bones you saw in the Lost Temple will be nothing compared to my wrath!’

Just then, the elf official stuck his head over the dugout wall and treated the team to his most condescending smile.

‘On the field!’ he sneered.

Everybody in the dugout turned to look at Fingurs.

‘’Ave the bloody thing, ya nut job. Dis whole fing ’as been a waste of time.’ Fingurs uncurled his fist to reveal a silver whistle.

‘Yes-yes, hand it over!’ said Chanzeemitt. Then the wizard howled like a direwolf, and the second voice sneaked out.

‘No, keep it away! Don’t give it to him-me!’

‘Time!’ shouted the elf ref from above and blew his own whistle.

‘Yeah, time ta get our butts kicked!’ moaned Grappa again.

Brobrag had reached his limit. He gave out a guttural roar that silenced everyone in the dugout and a good portion of the fans in the stadium above. Ever since he had given up raiding and started this Blood Bowl team he had been under the cosh, pushed, played and manipulated. But no more! He was an orc, and a bloody good one at that, it was time for him to do the pushing! He stepped between the wizard and Fingurs, grabbing the whistle out of the black orc’s hand. Mr Bil had wheedled his way close to the action and looked at the whistle in awe, even as Brobrag waved it around in agitation.

‘Wot’s dis?’ he growled, holding it up.

‘It’s nuffin boss, I blew it on the way back through dat vault. It didn’t do diddly squat,’ said Fingurs from behind.

‘If you don’t give me that whistle, I’ll spend the rest of my days heaping humiliation upon humiliation on your pathetic team, orc. You think this performance is embarrassing? Well, wait till you see what an agent of Tzeentch can do when he has your full attention—’

Brobrag grabbed the yabbering humie by the throat and squeezed. There

was an evil glint back in his eye that hadn't been there since before last season. The wizard choked and spluttered and ineffectively tried to prise the orc's hand from his fragile throat.

'I want to talk to da other one.' The wizard thrashed about. 'The second git you 'ave in that mangled brain of yours, send 'im up,' rumbled Brobrag. The mage seemed to calm momentarily and Brobrag relaxed his fingers slightly. 'Talk!'

'We're both followers of the Great Conspirator. There was a rivalry, so our master thought it best to... merge us. Having two of us in here, it's made us a bit... unstable. The other one, my soul-rival, was trying to get that whistle. He couldn't enter the Lost Temple himself – another of our lord's caveats – so he engineered this situation.'

'Wot's so special about dis whistle? Every ref has one.'

The wizard jittered in the orc's hand and the first voice spoke.

'Fool! That is Nuffle's whistle. Once the correct rule from the Blood Bowl god's forgotten rulebook is spoken and the whistle blown, great power awaits.'

'I blew it, nuffin happened,' said Fingurs.

'Didn't you hear, you green ape? You need to speak the correct rule citation before using it. Ha! And I ain't telling you anythi—'

Brobrag squeezed again, and gave a vicious grin. From above, the elf popped his head over, met Brobrag's glare and quickly retreated.

'There's two of you sharing that 'ead. I reckon wotever you know, the other does too.' The orc grinned and let go of the wizard. 'I want to make a deal wiv da second git.'

The crowd was getting impatient; the Big 'Uns still hadn't surfaced, and the officials looked at each other, preparing to default the game. Then Brobrag emerged from the dugout and shouted:

'Rule 28B, sub-section 38G, paragraph 2 reads as follows: *Da whistle-blower will get his victory – as decreed by Nuffle.*' He then blew the whistle.

The piercing sound echoed around the stadium far longer than a normal whistle. The refs looked confused – players were not meant to blow whistles! And then the Big 'Uns stormed onto the field, with Fingurs leading the charge. The second half was on!

The Big 'Uns were receiving. Griff looked confident – the smug git. Before he could even lean into the Big 'Un's captain, the orc had side-stepped him and was up the field like a skaven rocket. Within seconds, the ball flew past and had been caught by Brobrag in the Reavers' end zone.

'That's four-one,' said Jim, sounding as stunned as everyone else felt. Griff Oberwald shook his head. The Reavers prepared for another kick-off, he got into his game-winning crouch – they'd be receiving this time. The ball was sent, but quickly intercepted. Before Griff could fathom what was going on, he saw a goblin fly overhead, ball in hand. The dumb-founded Reavers looked on, rooted to the spot, as the greenskin landed as if he were Jordell Freshbreeze and jogged into the end zone. In the next play, the Big 'Uns troll repeated the feat and soon the greenskins were four-three.

'It's a, erm... so... Bob Bifford is back off vacation next week,' stammered Lord Borak.

Then Fingurs came face to face with the Mighty Zug. The black orc nugged him in the face before Zug could bring his own noggin forwards as his usual devastating weapon. The infamous Reavers blocker fell to the ground and Fingurs gave him a substantial boot in the belly.

'Dat's for da boss,' he growled.

The Big 'Uns continued their wholesale destruction of the Reikland Reavers. Griff, Zug and the like ended the match in the dugout, nursing wounds. As the final whistle blew, Brobrag caught a long bomb thrown by Grappa. The orc charged through the solitary Reavers' lineman to score a touchdown as the whistle's shrill peep died away. The game ended four-seven.

For the first time ever, the Reikland Invitational had been won by a team other than the Reavers. The fans invaded the pitch in a rage. Like an angry tide they washed from their seats and onto the field. Under Brobrag's direction, the Big 'Uns formed a cage, and expected to be mobbed.

'Eat dis!' shouted Brobrag as he threw something into the troll's yearning mouth. The orc captain ordered his team to stay put and shot off at a blitz's pace into the rabble. Yet the fans' ire was aimed firmly at Griff and his players. The Reavers quickly retreated down the player tunnel followed by an angry rabble. Some Reavers supporters thought they could have a pot-shot at the victorious greenskins, but Leg-cruncha and Fingurs quickly changed the minds of any who were stupid enough to try.

The orcs partied all night – Mr Bil, as a fellow gobbo, was in the midst of it; whooping with the Chukka Brothers, chanting with the line-orcs and shaking Brobrag’s hand on more than one occasion. The gate alone was enough to keep the wrath of the warboss off the Big ’Uns – until next season, at least. With Nuffle’s whistle in Brobrag’s possession, the Majors were surely a given. And then the sponsorship, promotions and inducement offers would follow. Annoyingly for Brobrag, that meant he’d probably still need the services of Mr Ger after all. Strangely, there was no sign of him; perhaps the humie was already making deals on the Big ’Uns’ behalf behind his back? The sneaky git.

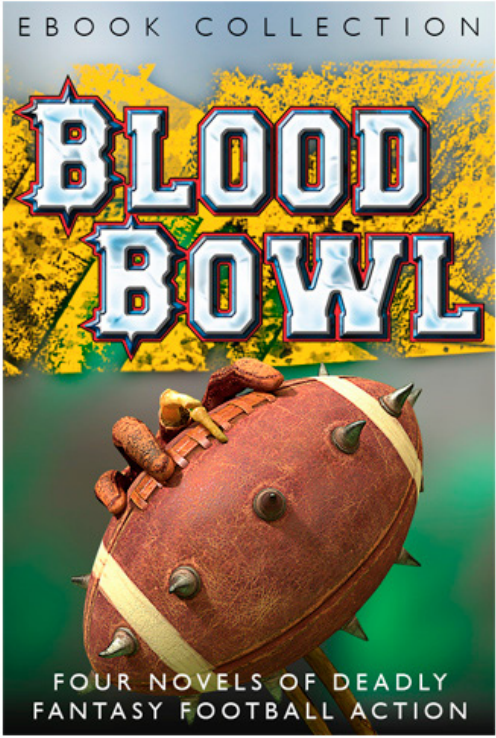
As they wandered back to the locker rooms, Brobrag wasn’t surprised to see the wizard had done a runner. Maybe he should have wrung the scrawny git’s neck, but a deal was a deal. If only his fixers-cum-agents had the same kind of integrity. Speaking of which, Mr Ger did turn up that night, but he wasn’t going to be making any deals on behalf of Brobrag’s Big ’Uns. Fingurs found him in the dead and injured box with a wicked blade shoved in his back. Mr Bil was suddenly missing... Brobrag urgently patted about his body and kit. The whistle had gone...

Well, *one* whistle had gone. Nuffle’s whistle was safe in Leg-cruncha’s gut, ready to be vomited out in time for the next game. Brobrag gave his most orcish smile; he never had liked that elven ref. The pitch invasion had made it easy to hunt the git down and take his very normal whistle that had hung around his very fragile neck.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andy Hall is a professional writer with many years in the games industry. After a stint working for Games Workshop's magazines *White Dwarf* and *Fanatic*, he is currently lead writer for the PC strategy game *Total War: Warhammer*.

[Dirk Hoffnung takes to the field for four epic novels covering his career in that greatest \(and most deadly\) of sports: Blood Bowl!](#)



[BUY NOW](#)



READ IT FIRST

EXCLUSIVE PRODUCTS | EARLY RELEASES | FREE DELIVERY

blacklibrary.com

THE BLACK LIBRARY NEWSLETTER



**Sign up today for regular updates on the
latest Black Library news and releases**

SIGN UP NOW

A BLACK LIBRARY PUBLICATION

Published in 2016 by Black Library, Games Workshop Ltd,
Willow Road, Nottingham, NG7 2WS, UK.

Produced by Games Workshop in Nottingham.

Da Bank Job © Copyright Games Workshop Limited 2016. Da Bank Job, GW, Games Workshop, Black Library, Blood Bowl, Warhammer, Warhammer Age of Sigmar, Stormcast Eternals, and all associated logos, illustrations, images, names, creatures, races, vehicles, locations, weapons, characters, and the distinctive likenesses thereof, are either ® or TM, and/or © Games Workshop Limited, variably registered around the world.

All Rights Reserved.

A CIP record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN: 978-1-78572-284-4

This is a work of fiction. All the characters and events portrayed in this book are fictional, and any resemblance to real people or incidents is purely coincidental.

See Black Library on the internet at

blacklibrary.com

Find out more about Games Workshop's world of Warhammer and the Warhammer 40,000 universe at

games-workshop.com

eBook license

This license is made between:

Games Workshop Limited t/a Black Library, Willow Road, Lenton, Nottingham, NG7 2WS, United Kingdom (“Black Library”); and

(2) the purchaser of an e-book product from Black Library website (“You/you/Your/your”)

(jointly, “the parties”)

These are the terms and conditions that apply when you purchase an e-book (“e-book”) from Black Library. The parties agree that in consideration of the fee paid by you, Black Library grants you a license to use the e-book on the following terms:

* 1. Black Library grants to you a personal, non-exclusive, non-transferable, royalty-free license to use the e-book in the following ways:

o 1.1 to store the e-book on any number of electronic devices and/or storage media (including, by way of example only, personal computers, e-book readers, mobile phones, portable hard drives, USB flash drives, CDs or DVDs) which are personally owned by you;

o 1.2 to access the e-book using an appropriate electronic device and/or through any appropriate storage media; and

* 2. For the avoidance of doubt, you are ONLY licensed to use the e-book as described in paragraph 1 above. You may NOT use or store the e-book in any other way. If you do, Black Library shall be entitled to terminate this license.

* 3. Further to the general restriction at paragraph 2, Black Library shall be entitled to terminate this license in the event that you use or store the e-book (or any part of it) in any way not expressly licensed. This includes (but is no means limited to) the following circumstances:

o 3.1 you provide the e-book to any company, individual or other legal

person who does not possess a license to use or store it;

o 3.2 you make the e-book available on bit-torrent sites, or are otherwise complicit in ‘seeding’ or sharing the e-book with any company, individual or other legal person who does not possess a license to use or store it;

o 3.3 you print and distribute hard copies of the e-book to any company, individual or other legal person who does not possess a license to use or store it;

o 3.4 you attempt to reverse engineer, bypass, alter, amend, remove or otherwise make any change to any copy protection technology which may be applied to the e-book.

* 4. By purchasing an e-book, you agree for the purposes of the Consumer Protection (Distance Selling) Regulations 2000 that Black Library may commence the service (of provision of the e-book to you) prior to your ordinary cancellation period coming to an end, and that by purchasing an e-book, your cancellation rights shall end immediately upon receipt of the e-book.

* 5. You acknowledge that all copyright, trademark and other intellectual property rights in the e-book are, shall remain, the sole property of Black Library.

* 6. On termination of this license, howsoever effected, you shall immediately and permanently delete all copies of the e-book from your computers and storage media, and shall destroy all hard copies of the e-book which you have derived from the e-book.

* 7. Black Library shall be entitled to amend these terms and conditions from time to time by written notice to you.

* 8. These terms and conditions shall be governed by English law, and shall be subject only to the jurisdiction of the Courts in England and Wales.

* 9. If any part of this license is illegal, or becomes illegal as a result of any change in the law, then that part shall be deleted, and replaced with wording that is as close to the original meaning as possible without

being illegal.

* 10. Any failure by Black Library to exercise its rights under this license for whatever reason shall not be in any way deemed to be a waiver of its rights, and in particular, Black Library reserves the right at all times to terminate this license in the event that you breach clause 2 or clause 3.