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WARPS



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WARRIORS GRIMOIRE

New Combat Skills for Warriors

TWO SCENARIOS

KIM NEWMAN INTERVIEW

ISSN 1465-6604

W.B.P.

AND MUCH, MUCH MORE...

EDITORIAL

By John Keane

The question that may be on everyone's lips is "What happened to the November 1999 release date for issue 12?" Not that we like to pass the buck or anything, but... "It wasn't our fault!!!" Apologies to all who had to wait for so long, but the delay was out of our control. I hope you enjoyed it and thought the wait worthwhile and for those who haven't seen it - buy it now! Hopefully this issue got to you on time.

You may have noticed we now have a larger compliment of artists contributing to the magazine, each with their own inimitable style. I hope you will agree that this improves the overall look of the magazine and gives new and different perspectives on the look of the Warhammer world. To match this we have writers who produce consistently good material. However, as with the art, the more voices that can be heard the richer the tapestry that can be woven into the Old World. We are very grateful for the time and effort writers (and artists) put into their submissions and want to attract as many new writers as we can. I'm sorry to harp on about this subject, especially as it was mentioned in last issue's editorial, but it's a matter of great importance to us. So, if you have written an unpublished piece, even if you think it is unfinished, please submit it. We'll tell you what's good about it, what we feel it's missing or where it needs re-writing; but if we don't see it we can't comment. Warpstone sells well world-wide so you get pretty good exposure for your work - so go ahead make our day.

Elsewhere, what's happening to the industry? Or, more to the point, what will happen to the industry with the current production of two fantasy role-playing films. I am, of course, referring to *The Lord of the Rings* and *Dungeons and Dragons*. LoTR is likely to do better than D&D purely for the talent (both directorial and cast-members) and more importantly - the story. From the little we've seen on D&D on the other hand it's likely to be a complete dud, especially in terms of production and story. However, I hope that both films do well, for success could breathe some new life into the role-playing industry. A good fantasy film, or two, would also be welcome - as they are few and far between. (Also see Fragments on page 17). The gaming industry needs to capitalise on these films to bring in a new generation. The release of the third edition of AD&D, the first major release with the might of Wizards of the Coast and Hasbro behind it may be the game to do this. We may yet get to see the game advertised on TV and radio. I just hope its better than the *Magic: The Gathering* adverts. Shudder!

Fanzine or Prozine? We have recently been referred to by the fanzine *Camel** as a Prozine. Although they accuse us of 'selling-out' with some of our articles, if I have hold of the right end of the stick, I think they're also saying that in terms of production and content we have, in their opinion, risen from the depths (and believe me, Warpstone Issue One was right down at the bottom of the pile!) to somewhere in between a Fanzine and Professional magazine - a sort of limbo maybe? So, what are we? As far as we're concerned, Warpstone is still a non-profit making magazine written by fans for fans. We have and always will attempt to produce a magazine that is as close to the production quality of professional magazines, as we can. However, at the end of the day, the articles are the most important aspect of the magazine and we will always ensure that these are of a high quality. Substance over form should always win through. And while we're talking about it, apparently we are now classed as a professional magazine in the eyes of the "Origins" Awards (the gaming version of the "Oscars"), due to the size of our print run. This, unfortunately, means we are no longer eligible for the 'Best Amateur Publication' category, which we were at least hoping to get nominated for! A victim of our own success.

Some of you may notice the lack of the Slavery and Horses articles we said would be turning up this issue. So where did they go to? Well, for various reasons we've moved them to Issue 14. Indeed, we cannot guarantee that any of our "Next Issue" articles will definitely appear in the issue we suggest. We can, within reason, say any article removed from an issue will appear at some time but as we attempt to ensure that all articles are fully and professionally finished and that the overall make-up of the magazine is well rounded we reserve this right. Some of these things are just out of our control. For those of you who wish to adventure, or set adventures, in Talabheim, we hope to soon bring you a series of articles on Talabheim; the city, its culture, cameos and scenarios. The first instalment is planned to appear in Issue 15 (November 2000) and we will try our best to make it so.

Finally, we've really had to pack it in this issue and we apologise in advance for the size of some of the fonts. We're confident that it's all readable and was a necessity due to the huge amount of text and excellent pictures. We really could have done with more pages, but who knows, maybe next issue (don't quote me!).

* See Fragments for details

Errata

We sincerely apologise for the omission in the last issue of the accreditation for two fonts (type faces). They were "Demon Night" (as seen in the *Thralls of Darkness* article) created by "B.O. Nelson - Brain Eaters Font Co." and "Alphabet of the Magi" (as seen in the *Tomes of Magic* article) created by Stephan Baitz.

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Thanks to: Spencer Wallace, Garret Lepper, Blah, Blah, Blah & James Wallis. Also to Anthony Carol, Tim Eccles, Peter Huntington and Adam Januszewski for playtesting the scenarios. Finally, to B.O. Nelson - Brain Eaters Font Co. for the use of their "Demon Night" font in our Cultists article.

SUBMISSIONS

Version 1.5 - July 1999

Warpstone is happy to receive submissions of both written work and art. We will *always* respond to submissions, even if they are not suitable for publication in Warpstone. If you send a submission and don't hear back from us in good time, please drop us a line to remind us. Failure to reply is simply a symptom of the chaotic nature of the Warpstone organisation. If you take the time with a submission, we will take the time to respond.

Payment

A published contribution earns a you a free copy of Warpstone.

How?

We are happy to receive submissions by post or e-mail. Articles should be in RTF (Rich Text Format) or MS Word format. Disks should be 3.5", formatted for PC and marked with your name and article names.

Art Submissions

We are always looking for artists. You must have an understanding of the "Warhammer style" (which covers a broad range of styles, as our current artists will testify!), but we are happy to look at all kinds of work, whether your speciality is maps, caricatures, portraits or anything else. Just send us a picture you think should be included in Warpstone, and some examples of any other work you have done. Please remember not to send originals, but only copies.

Article Submissions

Warpstone tries not to include articles that rewrite game rules or are in themselves rules-heavy. In the same vein we are not looking for new monsters, careers, skills, gods etc. (That said, if you have something good send it in.) We are looking for articles that expand of the world of Warhammer, filling in the gaps that are present. We also look at how the game is played, discussing issues relevant to all gamers.

If you have an article but you're not sure whether it's suitable, send us an outline. We will tell you if we are interested in seeing it developed. If you could include a sample of some other work you've completed at the same time, this would be useful (but is not essential).

Regular Articles

Reviews: We will review WFRP material. If you wish to write a review on any other release (WFB etc.) then please check with us first to make sure no-one else is writing it. Should be 600+ words.

Comment Articles: We are always looking for articles where you put across your point of view on a particular subject. **Cameos:** Brief encounters and adventure outlines. Don't include character profiles, only descriptions.

Scenarios: Full length, detailed adventures. We are especially interested in scenarios that do not include hosts of creatures, lots of magic or loads of Chaos cultists. When these are included, they should be integral part of the story. A tribe of goblins with +1 swords all round will prove the adage that "the editor's red pen is mightier than the sword..." **Short stories:** Set firmly in the Warhammer World. Same guidelines as Scenarios.

The Article List

Insanities: We had been promised these but it seems to have fallen through. The playing of insanity in WFRP could do with some fleshing out.

Lichemaster: Still looking for someone to review this.

Mannikans: Some background and detail on Manniocs-quinsh, the Elven police from SDtR. Anthony Ragan said he had not developed them but they were "sometimes involved in covert operations in Marienburg, since an over entry into the city often leads to confrontation"

Careers: As mentioned in issue 10. Not new ones, but fleshed out cultures and backgrounds for the current ones

ETC.

The champions had been forced to escape the wrath of the crowds. Each time they had delivered, they had been delayed. The fight with the creature in the fog had been too tiring. In the end they could not sate their anger. Still there was a more valid reason for leaving. The herald was coming... A hellish scream rang through the castle and out into the courtyard, full of pain but somehow hollow of anger. The chaos warrior writhed on the floor as the hellspawn within her grew. "It grows in strength my lord." She said as the pain subsided. "Good, we will need this creature for the forthcoming battle." Came the voice from beneath the devilish helm. Gazing out into the wastes he pondered the signs and portents that heralded the truth of the prophesy. The day of judgement was coming, maybe not this year or the next, but it was clear that the threads of time would soon meet in a final battle for which there was only one outcome.

REPORTS FROM THE HEART OF CORRUPTION

Reviews

2

A Special on Warhammer Fiction.

"while part of this material does a nice job of describing the Old World, other parts seem to completely violate our understanding of how parts of the Old World works."

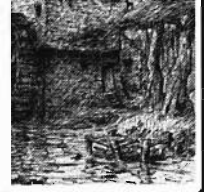


Remains of the Knight

18

A complete scenario about a long forgotten evil that will not rest.

"The cycle has come to an end, the chase finishes with the fox's flesh pulled from his bones by the dogs. There will be a sign and you will know the time has come."

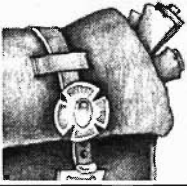


The Correspondent

7

Tim Eccles regular column looks at prejudice in the Old World.

"Stressing the regional differences in religion, speech, dress and codes of behaviour can add real flavour to a campaign."



The Road To Damnation

27

All you need to know to start your own cult... in WFRP that is!

"The fewer the members, and the more ignorant of the real goals of the leadership, the more likely the organisation is to remain undiscovered."



The Warpstone Interview

9

Kim Newman (a.k.a. Jack Yeovil) shares some of his views on Warhammer fiction, amongst other things.

"there's magic, there's Orcs, there's monsters, there's all this guy-stuff and anything could happen."



Sold in the Hills

33

From one small, dark place to another in a tale of greed and corruption.

"Risking all, the family sold their only cow, placing themselves on the verge of starvation"



The Warriors' Grimoire

13

A set of additional combat skills to give warriors the edge they have been lacking for so long.

"What does a warrior learn during those frequent training sessions whilst the wizards learn forbidden secrets of the arcane?"



Letters

38

The latest offerings of praise and criticism.

"The Chaos powers are contrary entities. Nurgle is diseased and rotting, but possesses a joyous excitement and enthusiasm for life born of an acceptance of the inevitable."

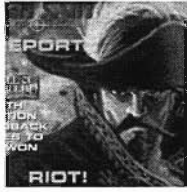


Warpstone Fragments

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News and Brief Reviews. The latest news from Hogshead and the return of Valkyrie.

"Issue 18 is out now and with full time editors on-board, it promises to become a welcome regular on the shelves."



A Darkness Over Nuln

39

A Short Story that goes to prove that you can't keep a bad man down!

"He toyed with his victim, who was the pretty daughter of a local merchant, tossing her hair back and forth over her face and flinging her about him like a rag-doll."



ABBREVIATIONS

A	Number of Attacks	Fel	Fellowship	M	Movement	SMB	Strike Mighty Blow
AP	Armour Points	GC	Gold Crown	MP	Magic Points	SS	Secret Signs
BS	Ballistic Skill	GM	Gamesmaster	NPC	Non-player character	SW	Specialist Weapons
CI	Cool	Gu	Guilder (Marienburg Coinage)	P	Parry	T	Toughness
CR	Complexity Rating	GW	Games Workshop	PC	Player Character	W	Wounds
DB	Dodge Blow	I	Initiative	R	Range	WFB	Warhammer Fantasy Battle
Dex	Dexterity	IC	Imperial Calendar	S	Strength	WFRP	Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay
EPs	Experience Points	Int	Intelligence	SDtR	Marienburg: Sold Down the River	WP	Will Power
ES	Effective Strength	Ld	Leadership	SL	Secret Language	WS	Weapon Skill

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REVIEWS SPECIAL

WARHAMMER FICTION (1989-1995) BY RICK DAVIS



In light of the fact that a number of the fiction works commissioned by Games Workshop have recently become available again - most of the Gotrek and Felix work is being reissued by GW in three volumes, and most of the other books are available from Internet auctions - it seems an opportune time to make a review of these books: one I hope will help the usually cash-strapped WFRP player to decide where he or she might want to invest their money.

It can be argued that the job of a critic is twofold. On the one hand, to evaluate whether a book is "important"; by which I mean, does it belong in that category referred to as literature, and on the other hand, to give the reader some idea of whether a book is enjoyable, and if so, why. The reader can then decide whether to invest the time and money necessary to read that book.

Well, for those books that collectively make up the "Warhammer" novels, the first half of that equation is quite easy: I can say without a doubt that none of these novels will ever be taught in literature classes at Oxford. Sorry to burst your bubble, but there isn't a hidden classic amongst them.

Don't give up on this review just yet, though. In the case of these twelve books - some novels, some collections of short stories - I feel compelled to add a third job to the tasks of the review: to evaluate whether any or all of them might be valuable to the reader. By this I mean, is there material here that will enhance your Warhammer campaign, as GM or as player? Are there NPCs to harvest and insert in your game, settings to employ, plots to transfer and run your characters/players through? In fact, do these books expand upon the Old World in ways that are useful to those of us devoted to Warhammer Fantasy Role Play?

So, sit back and enjoy an evaluation of the stories written in the Old World and set in print - you might ardently disagree with my evaluations, or you might wholeheartedly agree, but in either case, hopefully I will also manage to point out ways in which even the worst of these works might be used to enhance your own game.

The books divide up into four major groups: the three *Konrad* novels, all by David Ferring; the three *Orfeo* novels, all by Brian Craig; the three *Genevieve* novels, all by Jack Yeovil, and three collections of short stories, all edited by David Pringle.

It seems, from discussions with many WFRP fans that there is something of a toss-up between the *Konrad* material and the *Orfeo* material for which, among the novels at least, contains the worst bit of Warhammer-related writing currently available. This doesn't mean, however, that either series of works is uniformly bad, nor that there is nothing a GM could take from the works and extend into his or her campaign.

Konrad is the first novel of the cycle: it tells the story of a young orphaned boy's early life, in which he suffers a childhood made tolerable only by the occasional secret visits of his only friend, and eventual lover, the daughter of the local landowner. Late in his teen years, *Konrad* witnesses the destruction of his entire town at the hands of Beastmen and Skaven, but he is saved from this fate. Apparently he has been singled out, perhaps by the gods, perhaps by a less-savoury entity, for some greater role in the world - and for some Chaotic plan hinted at throughout the novel in the form of brief vignettes which feature a bronze-armoured stranger whose presence is always near.

Konrad quickly meets up with Wolf, a mysterious figure who is part mercenary, part rogue, part Templar of Sigmar - despite his name and his appearance. *Konrad* signs on as Wolf's squire and their travels together begin. They strike out for Kislev, where they slowly build a substantial mercenary army, which Wolf uses to fight Chaos, while preparing himself for an attempt to raid an old Dwarfen temple for the rumoured treasure inside. The raid is made, the obligatory goblins are fought, and *Konrad* finds himself briefly, apparently, embodied by the Avatar of Sigmar Heldenhammer, though *Konrad* doesn't recognize it for what it is. In the end *Konrad* leaves Wolf to pursue his destiny, in the form of the bronze warrior, whom he has nicknamed Skullface.

Shadowbred then picks up the story, with *Konrad* setting off in pursuit of the bronze warrior and his Chaos army. He chases the warrior back to the mine where he and Wolf have been living, only to discover he is too late - there has been a total massacre.

Konrad trails the Beastman army toward more populated regions. After more obligatory gore and torture scenes, he is captured, and meets the brother of his childhood love, now a creature of Chaos. He learns more about who he is as he is force-marched with the Beastman army back toward Ostland, before escaping to pursue the bronze warrior once again. He finds the bronze amour,

now lying empty, and puts it on only to find himself trapped in it, forced to kill in order to feed it. He travels for some unreckoned time in that condition, until he meets the next important figure in his life, the wizard Litzenreich.

Litzenreich is obsessed with warpstone, that Chaotic element so prized by Skaven, and he is convinced that the bronze armour is powered by such stone, so he works to free *Konrad* of it as a way to further his own research. While healing up from the experience, *Konrad* spends time learning more about Sigmar and about warpstone. Eventually, Litzenreich convinces *Konrad* to repay his rescue by attempting to steal warpstone from Skaven living under Middenheim. This results in *Konrad* being captured yet again, in the first of several battles against the Skaven and others. Eventually he discovers a plot against the Emperor, and heads to Altdorf. More battles occur, and the end of the novel finds *Konrad* narrowly escaping with his life, but not before he gains a brief glimpse of his oldest enemy and his childhood love, side by side.

Warblade is the last book of the saga. *Konrad* emerges from underground, to spend fruitless time trying again to discover who he is, and also in some rather pointless encounters with Slanneshi cultists. Eventually he is in danger of death yet again, and escapes this time only because Wolf suddenly reappears. The two of them catch up on old times and then strike out together for the Wasteland. Wolf leads *Konrad* to an oracle there, from whom *Konrad* receives a lesson in the history of the Old World and of Sigmar - this part, if you haven't read the Warhammer RPG book, might prove informative.

The two then travel to Marienburg, where they encounter old friends as well as old enemies, and hatch a plan to return to Altdorf and "invade" the city. *Konrad* commissions a sword embedded with warpstone, and once it is completed they begin their plan. They make their way to Altdorf, where they discover the city under attack. After fighting to get to the Emperor's castle, *Konrad* confronts the Skaven leader, has another vision of Sigmar, and finally rids himself of this old enemy. The battle proceeds underground where *Konrad*, for better or worse, confronts his destiny. The story ends, more or less.

As I have already noted, the *Konrad* novels are not hidden classics. But this set of novels does generate some interesting responses. Some readers seem really enthusiastic about them, but I agree with those who say they are the worst of the Warhammer novels. While there is some material of interest here, by and large, they are very poorly written. Subplots are thrown in but never resolved, the character of *Konrad* is driven along in a very linear fashion, with very little depth, and often no motivation at all for his behaviour. The rest of the characters are for the most part caricatures, with even less development than *Konrad* gets. Worst of all, the story really doesn't make sense. I suppose it is possible that Ferring intended to continue to the story at some point in the future, but that apparently never happened, and so you are left with a lot of teasing and no payoff. Especially annoying is the entire unifying story arc, where we are supposed to apparently conclude that *Konrad* is an Avatar of Sigmar, but at the same time apparently an elf, or at least part elf. Even though no one notices any physical difference in him apart from his discolored eyes.

The novels read very much like pulp fiction of the late 19th or early 20th Century - the *Fu Manchu*, *Shadow*, *Doc Savage* sort of work, where characterisation is almost non-existent. Where it does exist, it is plainly a plot device rather than any attempt to enrich the characters beyond the level of objects serving only to carry the story along. The story is everything, and to a great extent is formulaic as well. In the case of the *Konrad* novels, there really isn't any "formula" to follow, but it does seem to strongly fit into the "bad fantasy" genre of writing. Indeed, these works almost embody what the term "genre" means in academic/literary circles, where it is most commonly used as a derisive term for work that relies on plot rather than character to carry it forward.

Yes, all in all, very weak work. But is there material here at least useful for someone designing a new campaign? There is, but you must be careful in choosing, because while part of this material does a nice job of describing the Old World, other parts seem to completely violate our understanding of how parts of the Old World works. Some examples: part of the description of the Skaven seems dead on, but I've never seen any other reference to reincarnation as a possibility in that culture. And the descriptions of the various dangers and uses of warpstone can prove quite valuable - in some ways, this is the most valuable material in the books - but on the other hand, the book makes it sound like the material is lying around in substantial quantities, which if true would make the level of mutation in the Empire considerably greater than it

is. Another problem is the level of corruption seen: certainly the Old World has a problem with the “enemy within,” but if these books are to be believed, every institution of the Empire is corrupt. The guard, the nobility, the common people, everyone. This level of corruption would make it impossible to function on a day-to-day scale. And Konrad would have to be even luckier than he is to survive it, let alone anyone else. So, my recommendation: if your finances are limited, save buying these until last.

The next set of three books I am reluctant to review, to a certain extent. This is not due to the quality of the work - in fact, I would agree with most that, of the Warhammer novels, these are the best. Unfortunately, I cannot completely confirm that opinion, due to the fact that I’ve never managed to get my hands on a copy of *Genevieve Undead*, the collection of three novellas which are said to provide the best perspective on that arguably most famous of Warhammer NPCs. To a certain extent, the fact that this book is so difficult to find lends credence to the notion that it may well be the best of the Warhammer books— in other words, since it is out of print no one wants to part with their copy of it. I’ve seen two copies of it offered on Ebay in the past few months: one of them sold for \$77, the other for \$57. I’m sorry to say I can’t afford to be paying that much for a book. So, my review of Jack Yeovil’s (Kim Newman’s) works will unfortunately be incomplete.

Drachenfels, *Genevieve Undead*, and *Beasts in Velvet* are the three volumes of this set, but unlike the Konrad novels, they don’t all focus upon a central character, or tell a single story. The first, *Drachenfels*, begins with a Prologue in which Genevieve - a 600-year old vampire, Oswald - a nobleman, and companions stage an assault on the Castle of Drachenfels, also known as The Great Enchanter. The group work their way through his maze of horrors, losing one companion after another until only Genevieve and Oswald are left to confront the evil one. Genevieve is defeated, but Oswald triumphs, in “the battle that would put an end to Constant Drachenfels.”

The rest of the novel, in keeping with the theme of a dramatic presentation, is presented in five Acts, the theme being that Detlef Sierck, the greatest playwright the Old World, has undertaken to write a play about the battle between Oswald and Drachenfels, and to stage that play for its first performance on the site of the climactic battle. Act One sets the stage and establishes the characters. Act Two begins the development of the play, gathers the actors, and reacquaints us with the rest of the characters from the Prologue. It also reveals the existence of a plot within the plot. Act Three returns Genevieve to the centre of attention briefly, complicates matters further, as any good Act Three should, and then moves the action to Drachenfels’ “abandoned” citadel, where the real shenanigans began. Act Four has party and cast members dropping like flies in grisly and innovative ways, throws in a number of false leads, and leads the reader up to the point where you discover the identity of the real villain. Act Five, of course, contains the performance of the play within the novel, as well as the final confrontation. After that there’s a small “Epilogue” which wraps things up, and those that have survived this far live (relatively) happily ever after.

Drachenfels is a much more sophisticated novel than any of the *Konrad* work. The characters are explored in much more depth - they actually have interior lives independent of their relationship to the plot of the novel. There’s a fair amount of both obvious and sophisticated humour, and the writing shows a much surer and more mature hand. This is not to say that the novel is perfect - for example, the ending features a *deus ex machina* that is unfortunately all too common in fantasy work, and in fact is for all intents and purposes the same *deus ex machina* that the *Konrad* work uses. Nonetheless, of the various Warhammer novels that I’ve managed to read this is the most sophisticated. Detlef Sierck is a very interesting character in and of himself, complex in his tastes, his fears and ambitions, a pretty decent portrayal of an artist torn between a desire for fame and fortune and one who wishes to remain true to himself and his art. In many ways he is a fool and a buffoon, but in others he is a grand creature, well worthy of inclusion as the “occasional” NPC for your players to encounter at appropriate occasions - especially if they are playing any artistic careers themselves.

More importantly, *Drachenfels* also introduces what most seem to consider the most valuable of the non-player characters any of the novels introduce (with the possible exception of Gotrek), Genevieve Dieudonné. The past decade or so has seen a great many attempts by a variety of writers to create “sympathetic” vampire characters. Not the least among these is Kim’s Newman’s work, but Steven Brust and others have had at it as well. Indeed, an entire game has evolved out of that effort, which has then led to other Vampire style

games. Genevieve is one of the best products of this trend. While she is too powerful an NPC to use frequently, or without substantial plotting to ensure she doesn’t take over the adventure from your PCs, she is also too valuable a character to not take advantage of at some point.

If this novel has a downfall, it is that there is little here to use from a GM’s perspective. Certainly the NPCs I’ve mentioned could be useful, and some of the descriptions of the nobility might provide some insight. There’s even been an attempt to make a scenario out of *Drachenfels*, but the effort resulted in a poorly-regarded product.

Since I have never managed to obtain a copy of *Genevieve Undead*, all I can do is borrow the advertising description from the back pages of another of the books:

“Genevieve Dieudonné, vampire heroine of *Drachenfels*.... embarks on an odyssey of perilous self-discovery in which she must face monsters and magicians, intrigue and evil. In three linked novellas, Genevieve’s journey takes her from the labyrinthine depths of an old Altdorf theatre to an accursed mansion under a deadly gothic spell, and finally to the hunt of a savage unicorn mare through haunted forests.”

That’s all I can provide on the subject, so I will move on to *Beasts in Velvet*. The general layout of this novel is actually quite similar to *Drachenfels*, and features a few of the characters. However, in plotting it shares much more with *The Enemy Within* than with the earlier novel - in fact, a number of characters from that campaign also appear. It also features an appearance by Wolf, last seen in the *Konrad* novels. To this extent, it represents an attempt, along with a number of short stories to be discussed later, to unify the fictional material into a “history” of the Warhammer world. A not entirely successful effort that is also reflected in the time-line provided within the front cover of each of the books.

Beasts in Velvet is an extended murder mystery, but as much as it is that, it is also a series of character studies, a look at a variety of career types clearly drawn from the Warhammer RPG book. It is also an examination of the politics, behaviors and complex relationships spawned in any large city - in this case the capital, Altdorf. There is intrigue, loyalty, betrayal, corruption, honourable and dishonourable behavior. There is a lot of strutting about, as one would expect of nobility, and there are vivid scenes of the conditions of squalor the lower classes would endure in such a setting. Warhammer players will particularly enjoy the anarchists and the Watch - one gets the impression that Yeovil might have even played the game before he wrote these. And of course much of this material can be lifted, some of it almost word-for-word, to use in your own campaigns.

Without going into too much detail: *Beasts in Velvet* is ostensibly about one “beast,” a serial killer stalking the streets

of Altdorf and murdering women. But of course, as you can see from the title, there are beasts here, plural. The “velvet” part makes it pretty clear which class is being characterized. I mentioned before that this book parallels *The Enemy Within*. More specifically, it is reminiscent of *Middenheim: City of Chaos* in the complexity of the interweaving of characters, plots, subplots and intrigues. Many suspects are dangled before the reader, several interesting characters are explored, and one is left with a rather sad impression, if probably typical of the corresponding “real-world” period, of the huge gap between rich and poor, powerful and powerless, in a world-class city.

Ultimately there is rioting in the streets of that city, lots of people die, and the debasement of the rich and powerful is revealed. But to a great extent, the plot of this novel is less important than the development of setting, character and ambience. This is a fun novel to read, if lacking in the humor of *Drachenfels*, but what a gamer will get out of it is much more valuable. The sense, *themisé en scene* of Altdorf should prove invaluable to anyone wishing to run characters in the city, or really in any city in the Empire.

One can see, after reading both, the difference between the *Konrad* work and the *Genevieve* work: it is the difference of “plot” versus “character,” and it is telling. Plot can rarely carry character, but character can often carry plot.

The next set of three works are Brian Craig’s *Orfeo trilogy* - the title character being a traveling minstrel who conveniently spends essentially all of the time of the three novels outside the Empire itself, exploring other portions of the world. Or perhaps that is an unfair description, since in fact the actual location of ‘realtime’ action in all three novels is a pirate’s lair and caliphate on the coast of Araby. While imprisoned in that lair, Orfeo relates to the local Caliph his three tales, one per novel, and those stories span a small kingdom in Estalia, a city in the Border Princes region, and an island of Albion. Basically, this is a Warhammer version of “The Tale of A Thousand Nights and a Night,”



with Orfeo playing the part of Scheherazade, with the price of the tales being not life, but freedom from captivity by the Caliph.

So, the framing device is of Orfeo trying to buy his freedom with his tales, and also slowly becoming friends with the Caliph Nasreen, but the tales themselves adopt a different conceit - each involves the interference in human affairs of one of the "major" chaos gods: the first novel, *Zaragoz*, finds Slannesh corrupting a kingdom; the second, *Plague Daemon*, reveals Nurgle's destruction of a city; the third, *Storm Warriors*, returns to Slannesh, but from a very different perspective than the first.

Zaragoz is a relatively complex novel, though much of its complexity is rather clichéd. Many of the plot devices are standard fantasy fare: the chance meeting on the road, the drunken barroom brawl, the rapacious but evil vixen, the usurped throne with an imprisoned heir, the masque, etc. This is not to say that Craig is unskilled as a writer - certainly his writing here is more complex, and the characterizations are more developed, than what is to be found in the *Konrad* work. It is just that the novel reads more like an amalgamation of every average-to-mediocre fantasy novel you've ever read (except Quag Keep, of course, which is below mediocre, and so not to be included in that list).

Zaragoz is the story of a small mountainous kingdom in Estalia, where a pretender Duke has usurped the throne from the "rightful" heirs, the Quixana family, and now endeavors to solidify his claim by forcing marriage between his son and the daughter of the Quixana family, brought from banishment for that purpose. There are a variety of court intrigues going on about the place, and Orfeo is immediately involved, against his will, because he happened to enter town in the company of a Priest of Solkan, one who has his own hand in things as well. Orfeo's fortunes go from one extreme to another - at one point hired to play at the Ducal masque, at another captured and tortured - as he slowly learns the truth about the various players in the plot. We learn more about the priest, as well as about the court magician, and about the various intrigues thick about the place, as the curse placed upon *Zaragoz* winds toward its inevitable conclusion.

Of the three *Orfeo* novels, this is certainly the best. The plot, though occasionally convoluted, and often clichéd, at least keeps you interested, and the characterization, while not up to the standard of the Yeovil novels, is sufficient that you feel you understand Orfeo's motivations in his actions. The story itself could as easily be set anywhere in the empire as it is in Estalia - there is nothing here which makes the setting interesting or instructive; indeed there is very little that is unique in the descriptions of the setting at all. There are some slip-ups along the way - moments when the reader will yell, "No! Nobody could be that stupid!" to themselves, but isn't that true of most fantasy literature?

From a gaming perspective, however, is where I would argue this book has its greatest value. Indeed, there is a single paragraph on page 132 (of the edition I have) that makes the book, to my reading, invaluable:

"All magic needs an instrument, and though the human body is one which plays many a miraculous tune, still there are many tricks which need the alchemist's earths or the elementalists' samples. It is said that anything imaginable might actually be achieved, if only one had the right tools, but such recipes as I have seen for spells involving the blood of dragons or ogre's teeth are very hard to try, and I suspect they have often tested the imagination of the men who wrote them down far more than their actual experience."

If that paragraph doesn't sum up the magic system of WFRP better than anything you can find in the WFRP manual, I don't know what does. Both in the acknowledgement of the principles of magic, and in the admission of its imprecision as a science, this makes it easier, I think, for a GM to administer magic-wielding players than does anything we currently have (he said as he waited tirelessly for *Realms of Sorcery*)!

Yet another portion of this book is of equal value, I believe, to the GM who seeks to learn to Master his players better: Chapter 13 consists entirely of a conversation between Orfeo and Semjaza, the Duke's magician, one in which Semjaza propounds his belief and understanding of the nature of Chaos, Law and the Universe. While I know some Warhammer players and GMs do not agree with this description, one must at least accept that it is internally consistent, as well as consistent with the WFRP manual and other published materials. If you play the game with all of the pessimism and bleak outlook that the Warhammer world is capable of possessing, this description will do wonders for your ability to articulate it. And even if you don't agree with this description, it certainly can prove useful in providing one viewpoint of folk in the Warhammer world that you can hand to your players as a possible worldview.

Where I think the novel misses most painfully is in the way in which demons are handled: the "demonic" effects in evidence at the end of the novel seem, while colorfully described, to be rather weak on specificity - and they don't fit any description of such that I recall reading in either any of the

WFRP material or in the *Realms of Chaos* volumes. These demons are creatures of shadow, not of substance, and they apparently operate more by fear than by violence. Of course, demons are certainly capable of being as widely varied as is anything in a world of Chaos, so one can chalk it up to Craig being creative, but all in all I don't find much to pull from this section to adopt into my own campaign.

So, all in all reasonable read - better than much fantasy dreck, but not quite up to the *Genevieve* cycle. But I do encourage you, at the very least, to read the two sections highlighted above.

After *Zaragoz*, however, the *Orfeo* novels go down hill rapidly. The second novel, *Plague Demon*, does not feature Orfeo, but rather tells the story of Harmis Detz, a border guard for a small "kingdom" in the Border Princes region. It also tells the story of an incursion of Chaos into the region - a region poor enough and rugged enough that it needs no incursion of Chaos to make it almost unlivable - which ultimately lays waste to much of the region.

There is a fair amount of interesting material here. Descriptions of mutants and beastmen are more compelling than that found in any of the other work, there is yet another powerful mage, this time in an isolated tower in the middle of a lake (yet another clichéd?), there are several excellent battle-scenes. The descriptions of the effects of Nurgle are generally quite vivid and effective - one might even borrow some of the language for use in one's own game. There is an invasion of barbarians, a race against time to save a besieged city, a hero in the making. There are descriptions of several large battle scenes that read well and might prove useful to the GM. Perhaps most importantly, the tone here feels more Warhammerish than at any point in any of the Craig novels - the setting described here is truly a "grim and perilous world."

But there are also many problems with the novel: there is the standard "vengeance for a murdered brother" sort of motivation that is the hallmark of weak creativity on the part of the writer. There is much running about with very little accomplished other than to lengthen the novel - indeed, this story could have as easily been told in 135 pages than in the 235 it took. The Zani - the barbarians being used by Nurgle to do his will - are little more than a plot device, with almost no attempt made to expand upon them farther than to label them "the barbarian horde" who periodically threaten the civilized. And our hero, Harmis, carries off so many miraculous rescues and escapes from death as to challenge credibility even in a low-fantasy novel. Admittedly, he is a hero - even referred to as "the stuff of legends" by an early benefactor - yet I found him less than believable in many ways, even allowing for the sort of "willing suspension of disbelief" necessary to read work such as this.

As with *Zaragoz*, the greatest value of this book lies in its descriptions of magic and of demonology. The behaviour of the katharos, the wielding of spells, the combining of powers, all I think will help the GM who wishes his characters and his players magic use to be as "realistic" as possible. Some of it is essentially a rehash of the same sort of material from *Zaragoz*, but the demon here is more substantial, and more involved in the story, so much more is told of it, and the magic is also more common and more prevalent, so more can be learned of it.

Had this been the first of the *Orfeo* novels, or had it contained the material from Chapter 13 of *Zaragoz* in a single place, it would have ranked as highly as that work, but as it stands, this is not quite the novel *Zaragoz* is.

One final note on *Plague Demon*: this is the first of the Warhammer books which I own which is actually the Games Workshop edition, rather than the Boxtree edition. It is a larger edition, though not quite "trade" sized, and it contains a number of illustrations throughout, most of them relatively detailed line drawing of soldiers and fighters, and as such, these I think hold some value for the reader in illustrating the Warhammer world, in the same way that the illustrations in the manual do so. If you can find this edition of any of the books, rather than the Boxtree edition, I would recommend you buy them.

The final novel of the *Orfeo* cycle, *Storm Warriors*, is also the weakest; I would say it has also possibly generated the most controversy of any of the works, because of its depiction of Albion. While the Albion of my personal game bears little resemblance to that described here, I will review it as objectively as possible first, before making comments about the setting described.

The story is one which borrows somewhat from the Arthurian legend - just as one would expect from a clichéd set in an analog-England. Here, the new young king and his court wizard/bard are the principal players. Clearly, Herla the King is an Arthur-analog, while Trystan serves both as Merlin and as Lancelot, rolled into one. Morgana is the queen whose love Herla tries to win, and with whom Trystan falls in love - interesting that, in this case, Craig gives the wife of Arthur the name of Arthur's mother and lover!

The setting is rather more of a Scottish/Irish blend than it is English, and there are extraneous elements: some maybe-Dark Elves, an ancestral wizard

who to some degree echoes the Merlin of the Arthuriad, court intrigue and a Wild Hunt; there is also a Code reminiscent of Arthur's Round Table. The tale is one of love and honor, of betrayal and trickery. Herla wins, and in winning loses. And the end, while somewhat dark, is at least more upbeat than that in Malory or Tennyson.

The problems here, however, are abundant: first, the clichéd nature of it all; if it weren't for the "dark" elves, the story would be a poor retelling of the Arthuriad with a bit more magic and color thrown in. The magic is also a major problem - certainly this is fiction, and not the Warhammer game itself, but if bards in Warhammer have the sort of power displayed herein, including such ridiculous abilities as stopping time and crossing trans-dimensionally, then the game is horribly out of balance. Herla and Trystan are reasonably well-developed for characters - after all, there is actually little action in the novel, so there is plenty of time to spend inside the heads of these two main characters, as they ponder their feelings and their behaviours - but their thoughts and feelings are often contradictory, and they evidence little or no growth across the span of the novel.

The depiction of Slannesh in this is also problematic - I don't see either the actions of his devotees, the elves, as very "Slanneshi-like," nor does the description of Slannesh him/herself, nor that of the "Warriors of Slannesh" fit well. Craig takes more poetic license with Chaos here than he has previously, and I think it is not to positive effect. And finally, I don't find the descriptions of the bards convincing at all. I find them, at least as embodied by Trystan and the glimpses of Bavian we get, rather hackneyed and bland. The only exception is when Trystan plays at the wedding of Thoron, and there he is "inspired" by Slannesh, so not really operating as a druid. All in all, the weakest of the three *Orfeo* novels.

There are a couple of other important points to note before moving on to the short stories. First: the framing story of Orfeo, where he goes from being a captive of the Caliph to being a friend, and eventually a trusted companion. This story, with its hints of intrigue and a grand adventure to come, shows promise. One wonders if Craig intended, as Ferring with the *Konrad* material, to write more. In the case of Orfeo, I would be gratified to see where the expedition into the Southlands might lead, and what Orfeo's family secret might be - hoping of course that it wouldn't just turn out to be a dungeon crawl and Orfeo the dispossessed heir to the throne that would be such a disappointing cliché.

Second: all three of these works deal, on more than one level, with the idea of a character who is marked in some way by Chaos - forced, if you will, to have to make a choice whether to give in to their darker nature and gain personally while creating despair around them, or to maintain their honor and yet sacrifice much to see Order/Law maintained as well. If it were not that the situations they are placed in to make this choice were so clichéd, this would make for an interesting triptych, but the attempt is largely defeated by the weakness of the plotting. One never doubts that the characters will make the 'right' choice, and without at least some degree of uncertainty, there is no drama, and the works are weaker as a result.

Finally, then, we come to the three volumes of short stories. It is held as a truism in SF criticism that much, if not most, of the best writing done in that genre has been done in short story form. While I don't really have an opinion of whether that truism holds true in fantasy as well as SF, it is certainly fair to argue that much of the best of the Warhammer fiction is to be found in these three volumes. I will discuss them in the order in which I originally read them, though it turns out that is probably not the best order one could adopt.

Red Thirst is I think without doubt the best of the three collections; it contains more high quality stories, and fewer duds, than either of the other two volumes.

The first story, the title story for the volume, is by Jack Yeovil, and again features his "heroine", Genevieve, as well as another notable character of his, Vukotich the mercenary. It also introduces another two frightful villains to the world, this time the powerful Eastern mage and Tzeentch worshiper Dien Ch'ing, and the future High Priest of Tzeentch in the West, Yefimovich. We discover that Eastern magic is quite a bit different from Western magic, and learn of the power of Tzeentch (known as Tsien-Tsin in Cathay) in the East, where demon-worship is apparently common and quite ritualized. This story clearly takes place after the events of *Drachenfels*, but apparently before the events of *Beasts in Velvet*. Zhufbar is the setting, and Genevieve, though trying to maintain a low profile, and Vukotich, trying only to stay alive and earn a living, manage nonetheless to foil both a plot by Chaos and a plot by Law. An entertaining, if somewhat dragged-out, story - the battles with the elementals,

for example, really don't advance the story at all, but are included only to add color, illustrate Genevieve's wit, and demonstrate the power of Dien. Other than a broadening of the world, and the possible introduction of some very dangerous NPCs your own players might meet, this story doesn't really supply much in the way of playable material.

The next story, "The Dark Beneath the World," was my first introduction to Gotrek and Felix, William King's signature characters in the Warhammer World. In this story, Gotrek is determined to clear the evil out of Carag-Eight Peaks, where he has been told there is both dwarfish treasure and the largest troll anyone has ever seen. Being a trollslayer, this represents too great a challenge to even consider passing up. And engage it he does, with typical trollslayer flair, leading after much trial to a final confrontation with a mutant troll, the shades of long-dead but restless dwarfs, and the death of comrades. This story, if it were not for Gotrek, would be essentially a dungeon-bash, but the Warhammerish aspects introduced by the fatalistic Gotrek and the other dwarfs make it stand out.

A final note: a battle in this story, in the crypts of Carag-Eight Peaks, supplies the scene depicted on the cover of the Warhammer FRP rulebook; the monster with the black and white hair is not the mutant troll, but rather an ogre they encounter earlier. As you can see, one of the more "Other Game™"ish elements of the story is the standard ranger, warrior, wizard combination of ancillary characters in the story. As such, it is well-designed as a scenario to run your players through, if they don't mind the occasional dungeon-crawl.

"The Spells Below" is a tale of manipulation and betrayal among mages - not the best story in the book in terms of writing, but the behaviour is very Warhammerish. The magic itself owes more to the Colour Colleges scheme of Warhammer Fantasy Battle than I would prefer, given that I dislike that game design, but ultimately you might pick up some interesting ideas for a scenario or a magic item, or even a trap, from this story.

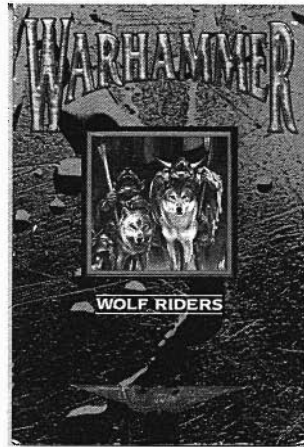
"The Light of Transfiguration" introduces Orfeo again, as he tells the story of a nunery inhabited by evil. This not an adventure story in any sense, but rather an atmospheric tale that nicely depicts the subtle ways in which Chaos can work its way into everyday life, and can find horror in beauty, or perhaps that is beauty in horror. No memorable characters here, nor anything playable, but the sense of style is useful, especially for the newer GM who might not yet have a handle on just what the Warhammer World is like.

"The Song" is set in Marienburg, and introduces us to Sam Warble, in a slight tale of little substance. Other than a bit of guidance on how elves might fit into Marienburg, and what I think is a rather poor depiction of halflings, this holds little value to the GM or player.

"The Voyage South," on the other hand, is a much more valuable piece. An early work by Nicola Griffith (and much unlike her later work, I might add), this story expands greatly upon the world of Estalia, much more than did *Zaragoz*. The first two thirds of the story are nicely paced, and feel quite Warhammerish in the depiction of treachery, of the helplessness of even the relatively wealthy in the face of Chaos, and even in the depiction of river life in the southern Old World. Unfortunately, the final third of the story, where what had been a fine if unimportant mystery plot unravels, is cluttered by the introduction of a bevy of new Elvish characters impossible to tell apart, with confusingly similar names, and suddenly takes the story from a personal quest of one woman to an epic battle between nations and between Chaotic demons. Our heroine Ariel is thrust aside and lost amid the clutter. It feels as though Griffith had been given a specific length that the story must adhere to, and realized with only a few pages left that she had to wrap it up - at which point rather than going back and editing, she just dropped a pile of new plot elements into the picture, and hoped nobody noticed. The elves aren't particularly elvish, the Magritans are never encountered as real characters, and the story takes a strange side-twist that leaves the reader at best dissatisfied and at worst angry with Griffith. All in all, disappointing even more for being promising at first.

Red Thirst, then, holds a fair number of very readable stories, and also has substantial value to the GM looking for inspiration. Not flawless, but certainly as worth having as any of the Yeovil books.

The next volume I read was *Wolf Riders*. The first, and again the title story, finds Gotrek and Felix on their way to Carag Eight-Peaks, at which point I realized I was probably reading these stories in the wrong order - alas, it was too late. Onward, then: Gotrek and Felix agree to sign on as guards for a train of refugees leaving the Empire for the Border Princes region, where they can find no place that will welcome them. They are winnowed by attacks from orcs, and then by undead, and the pair conclude that there is treachery within



the band as well, but they fail to find it before the train arrives finally at a place they can attempt to build a new life for themselves - the ruins of a keep. However, they discover soon enough why the keep was in ruins, and the settlement comes to ruin as well. Gotrek loses an eye in the process, and Felix, for the first time, understands the motivation behind the trollslayer, when he is confronted with his own despair. A very Warhammerish piece, and also a nice depiction of the Border Princes region, though if it is all as bad as depicted here, it is a wonder that anyone survives it for long.

"The Tilean Rat" again presents Sam Warble, the halfling detective, in a story that is a straight (in fact, sometimes it feels almost word for word) ripoff of Dashell Hammett's *The Maltese Falcon*, with only the Chaotic ending distinguishing it, and that part is over-the-top enough to disappoint.

"The Phantom of Yremy" is apparently another Orfeo tale, though he is never referred to by name. And it need not be a Warhammer tale at all - it is certainly fantasy, but nothing in it sets it firmly in the Warhammer world. It is amusing, though predictable, and it is largely a well-told piece, but don't expect to take away from it anything of use.

"The Cry of the Beast," on the other hand, goes to great lengths to set itself in the Warhammer world, though it reads and feels more like a cut-rate HP. Lovecraft or August Derleth story. The depiction of halflings here I find no more convincing than I do that of Sam Warble, and the story tries to set an epic tone yet is unconvincing.

Jack Yeovil returns in "No Gold in the Grey Mountains," a tale which centers on yet another vampire, and one which convinces me that, at least the way Yeovil styles them, vampires have no place as characters, either PC or NPC, in the Warhammer world. Genevieve is an interesting character if one assumes that in some way she is a freak of a vampire, a one-of-a-kind, but in the case of this new character, we are faced with the inevitable conclusion that "non-dead" vampires are quite common, are incredibly powerful, and have no effective limits on what they can do. Why they have not long-since conquered the Old World, if this is the case, is beyond me. As far as the story goes, at any rate: this is the weakest of the Yeovil work - stock characters play out their parts in a blood-letting, with the ending being much more predictable than one assumes Yeovil anticipated.

"The Hammer of the Stars" and "Pulg's Grand Carnival" I will lump together in saying that both stories could just as easily be included in any volume of fantasy stories - there is nothing of importance that ties them to a Warhammer setting, though both include references to the world in an attempt to fit them in. The first is over-powered silliness, the second an attempt at humorous by-play. Both involve much-too-overpowered magic items to fit into any "magic-poor" campaign, which I believe most Warhammer campaigns are, but there are bits and pieces here that can be adopted and fit into your own campaign.

The final story, "The Way of the Witchfinder," on the other hand, is most definitely a Warhammer story. Again, Brian Craig's 'story-teller' character recites, this time about a new champion of Law on this first assignment to combat Chaos, and the poor fellow's discovery that Chaos is not nearly so easy to conquer as he supposed. The story is pretty much fluff, and reads in about 5 minutes, but for feel and scene it fits well into the world, especially the sense of inevitable destruction embodied by the sea in the story.

So, *Wolf Riders*, while not up to the standard of *Red Thirst*, nonetheless contains a fair amount of valuable material, and some good reading besides.

The final volume of short stories, which chronologically turns out to be the first set of stories for some of the mentioned characters, but not for others, is *Ignorant Armies*. Herein you meet Gotrek and Felix for the first time (in terms of their timeline), as well as Vukotich, and Johann and Wolf von Mecklenberg (of the Konrad books). There is some good work here, but there are also a couple of the weakest works from all the Warhammer material.

The first story, "Geheimnisnacht," introduces the reader to Gotrek and Felix, apparently at a point relatively soon after they have joined forces. We discover the story behind Felix's need to escape his background, though the story of Gotrek is still denied us. And we are provided with a very Warhammerish story of the way in which Chaos wends its way into even the smallest of lives. Atmospheric. The piece reads pretty much like any short scenario from a game - in fact, this would fit quite well into a collection of short pieces like *Death's Dark Shadow* or *The Restless Dead*.

Next comes "The Reavers and the Dead," another atmospheric piece that would give a nice image of the sort of day-to-day struggles to live in a medieval society, were it not for the fact that the way magic is handled in the story is so

offensively botched as to ruin the whole thing. That seems to be the biggest single problem with virtually all of the Warhammer fiction - none of the writers manage to get the magic right; in fact, it is often so horribly wrong as to almost compel one to fling the book across the room in disgust, as we shall see soon. Other than as a source piece for describing a small fishing village in the northern Empire, do not use this story for gaming!

Another Nicola Griffith work comes next, "The Other." This one is paced much better than her other, though her treatment of warpstone is at least suspect. But the characters are believable enough for a short story (where one can't accomplish much in the way of character development anyway), and you do get a feel for life in Middenheim. "Apprentice Luck" then rears its ugly head. It is enough to say that this is an unimaginative, even lack-witted, dungeon-bash. The worst story of any of the collections.

"The Gardener of Parravon," another Orfeo story - or "the storyteller" at any rate - is much more of a Warhammer sort of story. A tale of temptation and deception, of the danger of knowledge and of lacking wisdom, this story of a young man's curiosity, which becomes obsession, and leads to his downfall, captures the feel of the Old World quite nicely. Its biggest flaw is that too much of the story takes place in dreams, which removes any need for discipline on the part of the writer, but the story isn't fatally harmed by that. As a setting, Parravon isn't very fleshed out here, but the story is worth reading for the atmosphere.

Next comes "The Star Boat." Did I say "Apprentice Luck" was the worst of the Warhammer. Werewolves and Slann and mithril turtles, oh my! Since when do Slann warriors regularly appear as foot soldiers in battles in the Empire? Since when has the common man even heard of the Slann? Since when can a mage - no matter how powerful - metamorph a human into a Slann? Since when do werewolves just walk the streets without anyone worrying about the Chaos involved? Since when is there enough mithril lying around that one fake Slann could gather enough to cover a battlewagon to hold two people and a team of horses? These are only a few of the absurdities of the story. Is there any saving grace whatsoever? A slight one: some of the descriptive writing about the Northern Wastes at least illustrates the variety of environments and the danger involved in attempting to cross such a place. Other than that, however, this piece has little to offer, and much to offend.

"The Ignorant Armies," fortunately, returns us to much firmer footing. Not that it is perfect, by any means, but at least it creates compelling characters in Vukotich and Johann. Their quest is a noble if hopeless one, and the telling of it takes us across a believable landscape, and into a place where the only necessary "willing suspension of disbelief" is that required to engage with the Warhammer world at all. The endless battle of the "Ignorant Armies" explains in an acceptable manner why Chaos has not long since overrun the world, and the fate of our heroes is altogether fitting. The timing of this story doesn't fit with the idea that this is the first collection of stories, for reasons that become obvious at the end of the story, and some of the secondary characters are less than compelling, but that doesn't detract from the value of the work as a primer for the workings of Chaos in the Old World.

Finally, "The Laughter of Dark Gods" finishes the collection, and the reviews. The most bleak of all the Warhammer stories, and the first and only to use a follower of Chaos as its main character, this story succeeds in telling a difficult story - the degeneration of a human from some level of humanity to a hollow object filled only with Chaos. I find the ending weak, but overall a worthwhile effort, and one I recommend for any GM who wishes to populate his Chaotic NPCs with believable and motivated characters.

Of the three short story collections, this volume contains the worst of the Warhammer writing, but also enough of value to make it worth the investment.

Where does that leave the Warhammer player or GM who has decided to start a personal quest to read the Warhammer fiction? Since most of it is out of print, the hardest step might well be just finding any of it, in which case you take what you can get. If you do find yourselves confronted with a choice as to which to buy, the order seems fairly clear: grab the Yeovil works and the short fiction first, especially *Red Thirst*. After that, I would recommend the Craig material next, and the Ferring work last. Reading your way through it all, though occasionally frustrating or even infuriating, will also often be enjoyable, and in any event will yield value in the way much of it strengthens your feel for the Warhammer world. While none of this material is essential to anyone's ability to play or GM Warhammer, the atmosphere, the geography, and the inhabitants of that world do occasionally come alive through the texts. Enjoy!



THE CORRESPONDENT

Prejudice in the Old World by Tim Eccles

It was obvious Milius of Nuln was a man of intellect but Theodor was shocked at his ideas. Some of his language was that of the street side agitators. Why would Father Kretheim even read them, let alone keep them. Pulling open the scroll gave Theodor the shocking answer, for it began "My dearest Brother"...

Introduction

The Old World is an extremely prejudiced place, a fact that can provide many plot hooks and interesting social background for the game. What I am proposing to do in this article is to examine this prejudice in more detail, suggest some common beliefs and show how GMs can use this to enliven their games.

Within the Old World, there are three main types of prejudice: *Religious prejudice*, *regional xenophobia* concerning those from other nations, counties or villages, and *racism* affecting the different PC and NPC races.

Religion

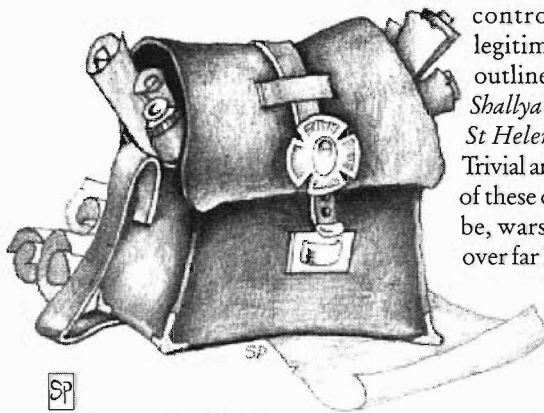
Religious prejudice is both doctrinal and socialised. By this I mean that certain religions are by their very nature opposed as a consequence of their contradictory beliefs, whilst others are opposed as part of a wider social, political and economic argument.

It is obvious that the gods of Chaos follow belief systems that are incompatible with those of the accepted pantheon, and thus conflict is inevitable. It is equally likely that a god of thieves (Ranald) is likely to be in conflict with gods of Law (such as Solkan), the law (such as Verena) and legitimate business (such as Handrich). These tensions can be drawn out by political and social situations, forming a ready-made set of factions for an adventure. One such possibility rests on the argument that the only difference between legal and illegal trade is who is in power and makes the law. Trading in slaves, for example, might be legal in some areas and not in others. There is nothing to say that Handrich insists on legal trade, and some might argue that merchants are simply nothing more than prosperous thieves.

An additional source of doctrinal conflict is internal strife; there is no reason to assume that all clerics of a given religion hold exactly the same tenets of belief. Most disagreements might be tediously academic, but there are possibilities for more serious and visible differences. For example, the Warhammer Mailing List recently argued over the existence (or not) of Templars of Shallya. If they did exist, it seems clear that many factions of the cult would be tremendously unhappy with them.

There is also the potential for controversy over the legitimacy of Saints, as outlined in *The Clerics of Shallya* (Warpstone 10) and *St Helena* (Warpstone 6). Trivial and obscure as some of these disagreements may be, wars have been fought over far less.

The more nebulous area of conflict is in the field of politics.



Much of the official material concentrates on the Sigmar-Ulric conflict, which is a well-developed idea. Another familiar conflict is that between the classes in The Empire. Religious groups can be used to mirror this by developing an increasingly vocal dislike between (say) the cults of Shallya (supporting the poor) and Sigmar (supporting the ruling elite and the existing political order). In addition, there can be conflict *within* such cults: certain Shallyan cultists will object to any behaviour that might encourage the mob, and hence lead to bloodshed. Similarly, certain Sigmarite cultists dislike the divisiveness perpetuated by their hierarchy, and see this as creating a breeding ground that will allow the forces of Chaos to capitalise on genuine social unrest. There is also scope for issues to confuse the cults. In this case, the Cult of Verena might be torn by the wish to uphold the law, but also the need to generate fair laws incorporating the concept of social justice.

Regionalism

I have termed this source of prejudice as regionalism, because the concept of the nation state is still in its infancy in the Old World. However, the concept is essentially the same as nationalism and jingoism, but works on a variety of different scales.

At the wider end of the scale is *Continental Regionalism*, such as the opposition to the last Chaos incursion or the crusades against Araby. Regionalism on this scale tends to manifest itself in outright war on a massive scale. The next 'level' is *National Regionalism*, such as the Bretonnia-Empire and Empire-Marienburg conflicts. Within this can be found a *Regional distinction*, such as the intense dislike between many provinces and city-states within the Empire, which is well detailed in *Empire in Flames*. At the most detailed end of the scale is *Local Regionalism*. This created by the intensely localised nature of most lifestyles within the Old World, and the standard resentment of outsiders. An 'outsider' could be anyone not from your village, perhaps even covering anyone from the next street or farmstead.

This regional myopia will obviously form a prime motivation for the actions of NPCs, as well as offering sources for scenario ideas. Players must interact with NPCs who are culturally suspicious of them, or even prejudiced against them. On the other hand, bigotry can form the mechanism for scenarios, as PCs are forced to defend individuals guilty simply of being different – unless they join in the persecution, of course.

Racism

Care is needed with the concept of racism, as in WFRP we are referring to the innate dislike of separate races (humans, dwarves, elves, halflings and gnomes) rather than of different types of humans (covered by regionalism above). However, it is worth noting that intense prejudice occurs with regard to the concepts of normality and perfection within each race. Whilst obvious chaotic mutations condemn an individual outright, the definition of 'obvious' will vary considerably. There is a great deal of paranoia concerning exactly what counts as a 'mutation'. Birthmarks, moles, injuries (such as loss of a finger or prominent scar), skin tone, hair colour, obesity and many other natural imperfections may be construed within a given environment as signs of chaos or actual mutations. Therefore, within the Old World, each race will have a clear sense of its own physical norms – and will rigorously enforce these.

The early days of the Warhammer World provide an excellent example of policing racial conformity. Ulfar Stonehammer, King of Karak-Ungor, swore, as part of a typically tedious piece of dwarforatory,

that, "we shall speak in civil tongue to the scatterbrains of the forest before we shall suffer Chaos Dwarfs to live". The oath is regarded as binding upon all Dwarfs who live under the suzerainty of the ancient Dwarf empire. It also formed the basis for the Regiment of Renown Prince Ulther's *Dragon Company*, who tirelessly hunt down chaos amongst the dwarf kin.

There are two basic types of racism in WFRP; the stereotyping of different creatures and the general psychology of the races described in the bestiary.

When we create a PC (or a NPC), we have an essential description of that character in our minds: Dwarfs are engineers who like drink and gold, Elves are woodsmen who live in harmony with nature, for example. This is a stereotype, and is essentially racist. It is adopting a template for an individual and assuming conformity with that standard. I do not think this is wrong as a starting point; in fact, I use it as an argument to create more realistic non-humans in *Warpstone 7*. What matters is how that template is then developed, and individuality created from this initial broad look at a character. Within WFRP, the character creation system offers a simple means of personalising characters, which can then be developed by career choices and personalities developed with judicious use of insanities and mental disorders.

The general psychology rules within WFRP also stress racism, particularly with the Dwarfen *animosity* towards Elves. This is as racist as one can get; (all) Dwarfs hate (all) Elves by nature of their race. Indeed, it is also rather at odds with the general setting of the Old World. Dwarfs, for example, are firmly embedded as equals within the Empire as both steadfast allies and theological bedfellows via the Sigmar-Grungni axis. Even the Elves have implied Imperial citizenship by their living in the Laurelorn Forest within its boundaries – this would make an interesting addition to the legend of Sigmar, if he also negotiated with wood elves.

Even where this animosity pervades, there are additional forms of racism open to GMs. What happens when a group of good-aligned PCs stumble onto a goblin lair? They slaughter them. In WFRP, how many good-aligned PCs will question whether the goblin lair they are exterminating may contain those who refused to engage in evil, those who simply tagged along without getting involved to preserve their own skins ("we were only following orders"), or even young goblins who could be re-educated or socialised in different perspectives? The implicit assumption in WFRP is that evil is genetic; that all goblins by their very nature are evil, and thus exempted from the right to be treated humanely. This is unquestionably racist.

Salvatore perhaps most famously (in the sense that he shifts a lot of

books) exemplifies the new approach in his Dark Elf novels. In these, the hero is a good-aligned drow, a device that is used to examine prejudice as a plot device. He even takes the argument further, and in a short story in *Realms of Valor*, introduces the idea of a good-aligned goblin. Here the point is stressed that because drow are attractive, they can be more easily accepted; an ugly warty goblin is doubly prejudiced.

Once again, prejudice is part of the daily life of the Old World. There is, perhaps, less scope for a GM to use the concept to add much to the game world. I have always found the Dwarf animosity makes Elf-Dwarf parties all but impossible, and thus restricts the initial choice of PCs. Apart from this, inter-racial interaction tends to be hack-and-slash. Using racial standards of normality offers GMs some scope to test PCs willingness to follow NPCs down the route of racism – or prove their capacity to role-play by joining in the racial cleansing. For example, I have used the example of a Dwarf family who flee their hold as their youngest son lacks facial hair (no beard) and was judged chaotic through the manipulation of a political rival. The eldest son refuses to flee, and becomes a troll slayer – swearing to kill his own chaotic kin. Have these rivals meet up in a location with the PCs, and watch the action.

Conclusions

The idea of prejudice adds more flavour to the culture of the Old World. It is easy to forget in the propaganda of WFB that nation states in the Old World are little more than a loose collection of city-states and provinces. Stressing the regional differences in religion, speech, dress and codes of behaviour can add real flavour to a campaign. This is particularly true of the Empire, which, because of its size and the WFB reconstruction of Karl-Franz, is particularly easy to mistake for a centralised nation-state. Throw in some regional differences, and emphasise them by use of prejudice and bigotry, and your campaign will exemplify the flavour of the Old World that is so unique to WFRP. You do not have to push the racism theme to show the parochial nature of Old Worlders, but doing so might add some interesting choices for players.

Theodor escaped to his room, sweating fearfully. This time however, it was not the thought of the words only the worry that one of the other clerics would catch him. Milius' argument had not been so outspoken this time, it would offend no educated man who had travelled. Still were his master and Milius brothers of the blood or something more sinister instead...



NEXT ISSUE

HUMAN MERCHANDISE

Slavery In The Known World

OLD BOOKS

Ancient Books Of Knowledge

SECRETS OF THE WARHAMMER WRITERS

Gracme Davis Explains All

& ALL THE USUAL STUFF

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THE WARPSTONE INTERVIEW: KIM NEWMAN

Questions by John Foody

The Warhammer novels published between 1989 and 1994 have a mixed reputation. To some they are but poor hack fantasy; to others, they are useful and atmospheric guides to the Old World. The quality of these books was variable, but hidden under pseudonyms are a group of well-known writers. These books are now out of print in English, and Games Workshop show no signs of republishing them, instead concentrating on new works through their Black Library publishing division. The best of these books were by Jack Yeovil, better known under his real name, Kim Newman. I had read a couple of the Yeovil books, enjoyed them, but placed them to one side and forgot about them for several years. Later, I would read the excellent Kim Newman novel *Anno Dracula* and come across his work as a film critic in various publications.

Only then did I learn that Newman and Yeovil were one in the same. Thus, since the beginning of *Warpstone*, I always hoped that I would be able to interview him. With the news that his latest books are due out (*Dracula Cha Cha Cha & Life's Lottery*) I decided to try and track him down.

Of course, these things are never simple. I fired off e-mails to his publishers and the various film magazines he wrote for and waited. No response. Then in the end he responded (thanks, *Sight & Sound*) and said yes, he would do an interview. Good news, and quite a relief – I had begun to suspect that he treated his association with Games Workshop with embarrassment. However, my fears were unfounded.

We agreed to meet at his home, an old Police Station now converted into flats. Inside, the walls were lined with books, including one bookcase filled with *Dracula* books and another two filled with his own works in a variety of languages and editions. From here we made our way to a nearby coffee bar and began the interview.

In his career, Kim has tried his hand at many things: writing, criticism, cabaret and theatre directing among them. The biography at the front of his books proudly announces he was even a semi-professional kazoo player. However, he is most widely known as a writer. Author of a host of short stories, Kim's first two novels (*The Night Mayor & Bad Dreams*) were both firmly in the horror genre, although his love of films also featured strongly. When David Pringle, editor of the science fiction magazine *Interzone*, was hired by Games Workshop to commission authors to write fiction for the various Games Workshop settings, Kim was brought in. "Really, the guy must be credited for the whole thing. When Games Workshop decided they wanted to do this series they hired him and he just went to all his friends who were writers." All those involved decided to take on pseudonyms for the work, and Jack Yeovil was born. It wasn't a conscious decision made to mask his involvement, and is something that Kim says he would now do differently.

'Well great, we'll change the rules, we do all the time'

Games Workshop have a reputation for wanting to keep tight control over all the work they commission. Kim had no trouble with this. "I remember the first meeting I had in Nottingham when I had done the outline for *Drachenfels*. I went up with David Pringle and we're in the meeting and somebody says something like, 'Well according to our rules, Vampires can't do what you want your character to do.' And Bryan Ansell [then Managing Director of Games Workshop] said, 'Well great,

we'll change the rules, we do all the time' and that was actually a very liberating thing. Until then, we had all tried to stick to everything. But then somebody pointed out that if you compared different editions of the manual things really mutate and so I figured great, if things are changing while I'm doing them I'll just have to assume what I'm writing is correct."

However, there was a downside, "I have frustrations about it, everyone does, but it was more to do with them not being what you would call a real publisher. I got quite well paid for them but I felt they could have done better with the books. Just in terms of selling them. I think they could have done enormously well. I underestimated the resistance there was in the general readership towards books with Warhammer on them. I think my books would have done better had they not been associated with them, but that is entirely a marketing thing and nothing to do with the experience I had with the writing or dealing with the editors – which was fine. It's their loss. I just think they could have sold more books if they had another bash at it."

'I wanted scattershot, I wanted to embrace the universe'

A common story is that Kim wrote the books in a few days; just treating them as hack work. It is something he is keen to put straight. "They took three weeks: two weeks to do a first draft, a week off and then a week for revisions. I kept that with all of them. I don't regard that as hack work. I write fast anyway. They were written quickly. One of the reasons was that if you write quickly the book moves quickly and I really wanted a bit of narrative drive to this. I was trying to do the kind of thing I wanted to read as a kid. There is a certain pulp element to it. You get on the plot train. There's a lot of stuff in them. I noticed some of the other writers of the series did books with one viewpoint characters and a gradual build up of detail, but I didn't. I wanted scattershot, I wanted to embrace the universe, to give as many view points as possible, partly because I felt we were always seeing these worlds through one set of eyes. I thought, what's it like being poor? What's it like being a landlady? Or Whatever. So the books, particularly *Beasts in Velvet* which is a murder mystery too, I wanted to do one of those stories that took you from the gutters to the palaces and you'd meet loads of people. You meet the future emperor and you also met someone who is begging in the streets. I wanted a sense that all these people live in the same world, they all have relationships, that they see things differently." Certainly, his enthusiasm for the books does come through, and puts paid to any suggestion he was only in it for the money.

Kim's interest in the Warhammer world is also genuine, seeing it as a canvas on which to portray his ideas. "The thing that really helped, and it's the one thing people criticise the company for, was that the world was kind of second hand. It was bits and pieces of other people's books; there was a bit of Tolkein, Moorcock, whatever; all glued together. What I liked about it was that it gave you a fantasy world like the west you see in mid-range westerns. It was like a Sergio Leone movie. You just need to see the cactus, the town, the guy in the cowboy hat and you know so much about the world. To me, the Warhammer world was a fantasy version of that. It was like you didn't need all the maps and all the history and stuff. Here, it was a world, semi-medieval; there's magic, there's Orcs, there's monsters, there's all this guy-stuff and anything could happen. It was that kind of landscape. I looked at it and thought



well, fine. It struck me that most fantasy was telling basically the same story. I thought why not tell other stories. Why not do a cop story, which I did, or a serial killer story or a putting-on-a-show story. Why not tell all these other great mythic type stories. There was a theory at one time you could do any story as a western. You could make remake *King Lear* as a western, or *Hamlet*, or *Jude the Obscure* because the setting was so archetypal, so pleasurable that it'd be very simple. *Hamlet* comes back from the civil war, and his ranch has been usurped by his uncles. It's the perfect western plot. I think it was probably done as a spaghetti western!"

"When I wrote the Warhammer books I set out to think like that. The first one is forty-second street: a bunch of people get together and put on a show. I'd never read a fantasy that was done like that. In fantasy you always think these people have to do something apart from fighting, they've got to have some entertainment, some art, I thought, well, they'll probably go to the theatre. What's interesting to me is the idea of a fantasy novel where the lead character was an Orson Welles figure, a playwright or an actor; that allows you to be more colourful. I deeply enjoy that side of it."

'They got diverted into tabletop wargaming'

Kim feels he was penalised for putting so much emphasis on the atmosphere of the World. He has an unpublished Warhammer story (*Warhawk*) which Games Workshop have said he could publish if he takes out the Warhammer elements. "I know a couple of other people who had the same thing and were able to do it. I can't, because I feel I answered the question." This is something he feels is true of all the early Warhammer novels. "I think we added more to the game world than they noticed. I look at this story and think yeah, I took some of this from the manuals or whatever, but I also feel I added a lot to it." In some ways he sees the fiction as a casualty of Games Workshop's growth, "I think it was something Bryan Ansell, who was behind us getting involved, understood and he saw the potential of that; but he left. I think the people that come along had enough problems; they were overworked doing other things, they were always a company that was expanding too fast and they didn't quite pay the attention to it. Plus, they got diverted into tabletop war gaming."

However, Games Workshop didn't try and interfere with the work, although he credits David Pringle with protecting him from such attempts. "I don't remember us ever having any real knockdown rows where something they wanted would completely destroy the sense. In fact, on that *Drachenfels* case, whoever it was (and I'm probably doing them a terrible disservice) said 'Couldn't she be an Elf?' The answer to which is no, I'm sorry. Vampires are sexy and Elves aren't! But I actually incorporated that into the story, where the actress says she doesn't want to play a Vampire and couldn't she play an Elf instead."

In addition to *Warhawk*, Kim also had ideas for further Warhammer novels. "One was to do a kind of macho book. Some of my other books have been very feminine, rather girly, and I wanted to do a bunch of heroes, a *Dirty Dozen*, *Seven Samurai* kind of book. I was going to do a caper novel, *Where Eagles Dare* or something like that. A bunch of heroes get together, have to go and climb mountains and take the castle. I also wanted to a book that took place over centuries. It was called the *Scarlet Empress*, about the Vampire Queen of Russia. That was going to be a sort of Marlene Dietrich movie but with a Jackie Collins thing to it. It was about this terrible woman, who was very powerful and then loses it all. There were other things to do with the world." It is a shame these works will never be written; Kim says it is unlikely he could ever go back and write for the Warhammer World.

In all Kim's Warhammer stories, the same characters reoccurred. "There is a thread running through the books that was going to climax in [a book called] *The Invisible Empire*, which would be the political story that goes through [all the books] about who's the Emperor and who the Emperor is going to be. I believe they subsequently did a book called *Empire in Flames*, which was a broader version of what I was

planning. I wasn't going to destroy everything, but I was going to start questioning the basis of it. There are continuing bad guys in the books who don't die. I was going to conclude their stories, so we could see what happens to them." These characters would also appear in his other work. "There is a kind of cosmic rationale to it. At some point I worked out the equivalencies between the various universes I was writing about. In fact there was always a sense that the Games Workshop and Dark Future universes were alternates to each other and they can spill across."

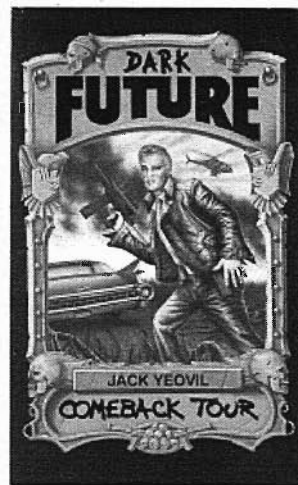
"I don't know if they would've let me bring in a new emperor or whatever, but I might have liked to. Partly because the Emperor, Karl Franz, was their character, but I gave him a son called Luitpold who I kind of liked. I think he was a fun character and I suppose, again, it's me trying to impose my personality on it. I would like to have seen him become Emperor. I also created a bunch of evil courtiers all of whom were based on government ministers at the time, which now dates the books. There were Michael Heseltine and Norman Tebbit characters."

It wasn't just characters that reoccurred; the Warhammer book *Beasts in Velvet* and his vampire book *Anno Dracula* both use similar plots and ideas. It's not something Kim denies, "although the idea for *Anno Dracula* had been around a lot longer. The plot was officially pitched as a 40K novel but they didn't get it. It was about the Vampire girl and the hero, Wyatt Earp, living thousands of years in the future tracking a reborn Jack the Ripper. That's the broad outline. The Jack the Ripper thing ended up being folded back into the *Anno Dracula* plot. I took Genevieve back for that because it seemed to work for it. It's a good way of exploring an invented society. I feel that most fantasy doesn't, it just helps to draw the maps."

'Some people found they were difficult to work with'

The other books Kim wrote for Games Workshop were in the alternate history *Dark Future* setting. It was a game that never really took off. Certainly the role playing version never appeared. "The problem there was that they had big plans for the game but never went anywhere. I think that's a shame." Although only three books ever appeared in print, Kim had planned it as a seven part epic, climaxing at the Millennium. Kim has an obvious fondness for the world. "[*Comeback Tour*] may well be my favourite of the Jack Yeovil books. That was a book that just had a lot of feeling to it that I didn't quite expect. It started out as a joke idea, but it's about something quite serious. I'm always suspicious of people who say, 'I want to write this book because I want to explore racism' or whatever. What you tend to do is write the book and then find out what it's about. Always the meaning is what I discover during the journey of writing the book. I felt that the meaning of *Comeback Tour*, not my title, was quite poignant: the whole thing about the way Elvis' life was discarded, in our world and in theirs. In both, he didn't do what he should have. My title, which was attributed to Buddy Holly, is *The Sky Belongs to the Stars*, which is what he said to Richie Valens to convince him to get on the plane. It's a great image. To me that's a much better title, and it has a lot more of the poetry and the strangeness of it, that horrible level of irony."

Although Kim doesn't feel bitter in any way towards Games Workshop, he has frustrations about the way the work is dealt with. "There was a sense that the franchise was more to them than the individual works of 'art', or just what was good for the story. Some people found they were difficult to work with, but that wasn't my experience. One of the things that does frustrate me about Games Workshop is that they bought the books and it was like they hired a



carpenter to come in to put up a shelf. They don't feel obliged to tell me anything. I keep finding out that they sold them abroad, then have to pester Nottingham to get copies of my books in German or Polish." It is a fact he mentions a couple of times. "When they were publishing the books themselves I got the impression that a few people in the company had a huge enthusiasm for this, thought it was a really good idea and then after a while, left or were replaced. Then suddenly, they all got very enthusiastic about being a record label, or 'something'. Then again, I haven't heard of Games Workshop records recently either!"

In tandem with writing the novels for Games Workshop, he continued with his own work. Kim describes the novel *Jago* as his attempt to do a Stephen King style novel. Originally planned as his first novel in ended up as the third. To my mind it is his worst book, laboured and over-long. However, the same year saw the release of *Anno Dracula*, his most famous book, and (I think) his best. It is based in a world where Dracula survived his encounter with van Helsing, travelled to London and married Queen Victoria; as a result, Vampires walk the streets openly. It is successful cross-genre novel, but underneath this and a Jack the

Ripper plot is a vivid Victorian world of poverty, politics and change. Certainly a lot of Kim's work has a political dimension to it. "Yeah, true. I think deep down most fiction does. I was working a lot in fantasy and horror and they tend, as genre, to emphasise the psychological and the symbolic over the actual and the political. I thought I would redress the balance a bit." Again, he returns to his Games Workshop books, showing how much a part of his overall work it is. "What kind of politics does a feudal Empire have? I seem to remember, going back to the Warhammer objections to my work, it was once said that the Empire was a nicer place than I wanted it to be." He laughs at the memory. "I did want policemen to torture people and all that kind of stuff. A medieval Empire has to run like that: no matter how nice the guy at the head."

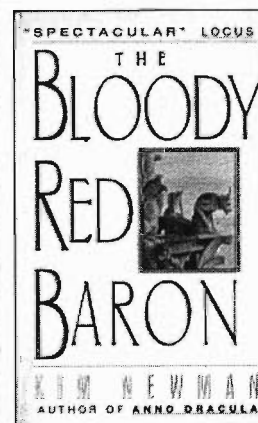
It was also believed that Warhammer 40K would be impossible to write for, trying to find something real beneath the shallow assumptions of the game world. Talking of the 40K Marines, "They had this alien, strange quality, rooted in this Japanese notion of loyalty and honour. I don't believe even the Japanese ever really acted like that. I really don't believe all these people were happy to die for the Emperor. Particularly if the Emperor is useless. Anywhere that has a powerful Empire, the Emperor will be surrounded by courtiers and intrigue. People to jump for power and position; I wanted to use that in the books. *Anno Dracula* is very much about that too. If there is an overall story to the books, it is the uses of power and politics in the 20th century. How to control people? How should society run? For whose benefit? What point is there? I don't come to any great new conclusions or anything but, as centuries go, we've tried some fairly strange experiments in governments. Certainly Fascism and Soviet style communism are truly bizarre systems. I think if you look at the *Back in the USSA*, the *Anno Dracula* series and *The Matter of Britain* books, I'm coming back and worrying about those issues very much, over and over again. I think you have to. We have to learn a lesson from this century somehow." It is a large issue to get to grips with, especially as such attempts are often ignored in the fields of fantasy and horror.

Indeed, genre fiction is often ignored or looked down on as unimportant and empty. However, many genre writers, and Kim is among

'I think on the whole there isn't enough actual criticism of fiction'

them, use their work to comment upon society and wider issues. Kim doesn't feel as if he has suffered as much as others but accepts that this might be to do with his visibility in other areas, whether as a broadcaster or critic. "Again it's unfair, it has nothing to do with intrinsic worth. There are plenty of very fine writers working in purely science fiction or horror who don't get that kind of notice and that's probably not a good thing. I think on the whole there isn't enough actual criticism of fiction."

The sequel to *Anno Dracula* was *The Bloody Red Baron*, set against the background of the First World War, which is soon to be followed by *Dracula Cha Cha Cha*. The *Anno Dracula* series of books is an alternative history of the world, one with a horror edge. A more recent book, *Back in the USSA*, co-written with Eugene Byrne, looks at a world where Germany won World War II and invaded Britain. More so than his earlier work he has chosen to concentrate on the lives of the average person. "Certainly the *Anno Dracula* books are about people changing the world: you have the Prime Minister as a character. I thought it would be nice to do something that was a bit more rooted in ordinary peoples' experience. What we hope will be the attraction of these books is that people will read them and think, 'This is what my life would have been



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The Original Dr. Shade, and Other Stories (1994): An anthology of short stories.

The Quorum (1994): Faust for the eighties.

Anno Dracula (1992): An alternate reality horror novel in which Dracula survives Van Helsing and returns to London to seek his revenge, marry Queen Victoria and turn the population into Vampires. Not to mention being a retelling of Jack the Ripper.

Jago (1992): Strange goings on in a Somerset town.

Bad Dreams (1990)

The Night Mayor (1989)

Also numerous short stories.

NON-FICTION BOOKS

Millennium Movies: End of the World Cinema, BFI Companion to Horror (Editor), Wild West Movies, Nightmare Movies: A Critical History of the Horror Film since 1968, Horror: 100 Best Books (with Stephen Jones), Ghastly Beyond Belief: The Science Fiction and Fantasy Book of Quotations (with Neil Gaiman)

As JACK YEOVIL

Orgy of the Blood Parasites aka Bloody Students (1994)

DARK FUTURE

Route 666 (1994)

Comeback Tour (1991)

Krokodil Tears (1991)

Demon Download (1990)

WARHAMMER

Genevieve Undead (1993): Collection of three novellas.

Beasts in Velvet (1991)

Drachenfels (1989)

Short stories also appear in the anthologies *Red Thirst*, *Wolf Riders & Ignorant Armies*.

More information can be found on the Kim Newman website.
<http://indigo.ie/~imago/newman.html>

like.” Kim and Eugene are planning on this being the first book of six set in this background.

In his recent book *Virtual History*, Niall Ferguson argued that examining alternative histories was a valid way of looking at history. I asked Kim how much he subscribed to that point of view. “Yeah, I’ll go with that. I’m not sure that’s quite what I was doing. I think what me and Eugene do is closer to satire than history. The whole point is not what could have happened but what did happen. I certainly think the *Anno Dracula* books are about the 20th century we did live through, not the one we didn’t. We wanted to stick with history people know, but make them look at it in a different way, make them look at it through different cultures.” In fact Kim says they tried to diverge from history as little as possible. “In fact, all the *Back in the USSA* stories stick fairly closely to what really happened; we don’t diverge enormously. I know some people who are alternate history fans don’t take us seriously because we don’t do what they imagine is our job. I counter: we’re doing what we intend to do. It’s not that we’re setting out to do something and failing, we are succeeding in doing what we want to do. It may not be what people want to read. That’s their problem. I know that sounds really arrogant but it’s true.”

The art of collaboration is something he enjoys “I wouldn’t do it all the time but it’s fun. Partly you just need someone to talk to, and writers tend to hang around together and in conversation ideas come up. So, sometimes you can’t tell whose idea it was and it makes sense to write it together.”

His latest book, *Life’s Lottery*, he says has involved the most research of anything that he’s written, simply because it touches on so many aspects of life. *Life’s Lottery* is, strangely enough, based on the same format as the ‘Choose your own Adventure’ game books that very popular some time ago. Was this intentional? “Yeah, almost certainly. I wasn’t a great reader of those but I was aware of them. Me and Neil Gaiman did a parody of those for Penthouse, a porno magazine, and that was the first time I had played with the structure. At the time I filed it away as something I could do. The whole idea of *Life’s Lottery* is that it should pretend to be a game. It’s serious, it’s not a game, but I liked the idea of people who were familiar with those books reading it as if it were a game, as if they could win.” Was he at all worried it would be seen as a gimmick? “Yes. That is the reason I worked so hard on it. I knew it would get a lot of attention because of the gimmick, and it is a gimmick. There’s no question about that. I knew if it didn’t work a lot of people would point it out.”

The book’s hero, Keith Marion, is born in the same area as Kim and is roughly the same age. It’s fair to ask how much of Kim is in the character. “Almost none. *The Quorum* is about me, it’s about people like me. *The Quorum* is about who I was as a kid and the people I knew as a kid, and what we’re doing now. *Life’s Lottery* is, again, a book about an ordinary person. That’s really a terrible thing to say but it’s about the kind of person who didn’t leave town who didn’t go and work for the media. Went and worked in a bank.” Kim is certain that such a fate could never have befallen him simply because he was brought up in an artistic background, one with different expectations.

Kim has also had a long career as a film critic and a well known expert on film history, especially horror. I put it to him that film criticism does seem to have been replaced by film ‘reviewing’, which in many cases is little more than regurgitated hype. It seems to be an extension of the belief that films are entertainment and nothing more. “In order to be able to write about films for a newspaper you had to know about films. Now there is a sense that they would rather you didn’t. I think that’s bad. There’s a sense that any semi-celebrity can be the film critic of a magazine. They would never send an amateur to test drive a car or to be a restaurant critic. It mostly means that film writing in many of our newspapers is just embarrassing. It’s ill informed, trivial and useless.

Either as criticism or as reviewing.” Such an attitude has shown itself this year. “We’ve all been the victims of George Lucas. Everybody had to do big features on a film that was fundamentally uninteresting, about which there was very little you could say. That was a bad thing! That was a waste of space that could have been spent writing about more interesting movies. That’s not to put down *The Phantom Menace*. It was the third-best Star Wars movie ever made. But it had no depth, there was nothing to discuss, there were no issues.”

“People genuinely get fed up of being given utter rubbish. I mean this year, looking at something like the *Wild Wild West*. That made a hundred million dollars, so a lot of people saw it, but nobody liked it,” says Kim, getting into his stride. “That’s bad for the next film. Over the last couple of years we’ve had a succession of these: *Batman & Robin*, *Godzilla*, *The Avengers*; movies like that. Built big and disappointed.” I have to agree. All these were bad, movies, soulless and cynical. “And I forgot it as quick as I forgot whatever else. In the future when people ask you what Science Fiction films were made in 1999, you’ll say *The Matrix*. Because that’s a film, like it or hate it; it’s a 1999 movie. *Phantom Menace* is the most eagerly awaited film of 1978.”

However, there are always good films out there. Kim sees some good signs in some of the successes of the year, particularly *The Blair Witch Project* and *Sixth Sense*. “The reason those films will last is because people come out and say, ‘I’ve never felt that before, I was confronted with things I hadn’t thought about.’ That is a good recipe for lasting popular art. *The Blair Witch Project* is such an unusual success but it may well be the most significant film of the year, in that it will change the way Hollywood make and sell films. Which is good.”

With such a love of films I found it surprising that Kim has never concentrated on scripts. In fact, he has scripted *Anno Dracula*, *The Quorum* and *The Original Doctor Shade*, but doesn’t expect to see them in a cinema soon. Not that he has any love for script-writing. “If I had an idea I would write a book. I’d much rather produce a published book than an unproduced screenplay. It is just enormously frustrating to work on something you think is good and is ready, and then doesn’t happen. It’s sort of emotionally draining in ways that writing novels isn’t and there’s all kinds of dealing with idiots stuff that comes as part of it.”

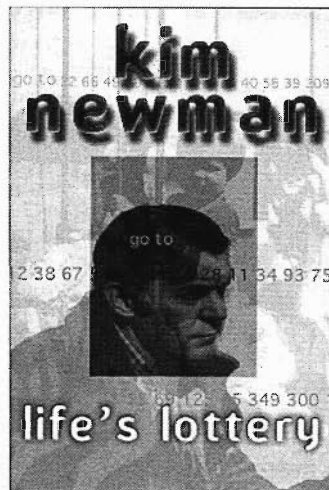
So as we come to the end of the interview, what’s next for Kim Newman? “The third *Anno Dracula* book which has been out in America for about a year. That will be out early in the new year, as ‘*Dracula Cha, Cha, Cha*’. There is a further *Anno Dracula* planned, provisionally titled *Johnny Alucard*. There are also *The Matter of Britain* books and a novel, *An English Ghost Story*.”

All that’s left is to thank Kim Newman for his time. I was pleasantly surprised about how open he has been about all aspects of his work, particularly the Warhammer novels. Let us hope they will be republished again, for no matter what your opinion of them, it’s only fair that everyone has a chance to read such an important part of the history of Warhammer and form their own opinion.

COMPETITION

Yes, we are offering you a chance to win a signed copy of Kim Newman’s latest book *Life’s Lottery*. In hardback and signed by Kim himself. It’s a great prize! All you have to do is answer the following question and send us the answer with your name and address. We’ll put them all in a pot-helm and pull out the winner on the 1st September 2000.

Question: What character will you find in both *Anno Dracula* and *Drachenfels*?



THE WARRIORS' GRIMOIRE

by Ouroboros

It gives me a warm glow of pride to look across three dozen lick-spittles that, with a month of hard work and training, I will turn from farmers into soldiers.

"Well, you maggots, you just made the last mistake you are ever likely to. You joined up. You accepted the Duke's gold. Now you are going to fight against some of the most ferocious green-skins the gods themselves ever saw." I hawked up the stem building in my throat and spat. I may look like dog-vomit, I can smell like stale beer and used prostitute, but if my voice don't sound like Ulric's own, then they won't do a thing I say.

"They have the edge in numbers, in strength and in pure animal ferocity. All you have is me. Only I can keep you alive. Only I can teach you what you need to know."

I heard someone in the rear utter a comment about my Ma and Da that wasn't polite in the least. Only one. This was going to be a good group.

"First, the weapon you will use to defend yourself and strike at your enemy; the Broadsword." I walked back and picked up the two practice swords from the turf of the courtyard. Crudely built, unsharpened and with a blunt tip... more of a sword-shaped club really. Still, a well-placed blow would hurt... and could kill. But I had lied to them. Swordsmanship wasn't the first lesson. The First lesson with all batches of recruits is: Who Is In Charge. For the past fifteen years, the answer has always been me. As it should be. I stuck the sword upright in the ground.

"Who here thinks they can take me?" Three tried. Three failed, like sheep to the slaughter each was taken by the most basic of tricks, each beaten by the least of my training. Like all new recruits, they never saw it coming, and they never saw it happen. Now I let my voice raise above all others, showing the icy wrath that Ultricans are rightly known for. "I have served the Duke for twenty years, and I have fought, and drunk, eaten and bled with him. Only the Gods pull more praise from my lips and I would gladly die with or for him at any time. Know this: I would rather kill you than let you fail him."

"There is more to being a warrior than swinging steel like a club! It is an Art! It is a Code! It is a Life-long occupation! You will learn all this, or by Ulric's teats you won't SURVIVE long enough to get to die at the hands of the orcs! Now, break formation and collect your practice weapons from the stand, then reform here.... GO!"

They broke and ran, grabbing their new, clumsy steel rods and crosspieces. They moved smartly, following my words. The three nursing wounds from their beatings moments ago were amongst the fastest. I, Sergeant Keller, was definitely in charge. "Looks like there may be a bucket-load of brains between you after all. I'm going to see whether we can beat them out of you. The man who goes untouched today gets an extra ration of beer tonight!"

Now it was time to begin the training.



Let us first say this: not every fighter is the same. While the WFRP system is quick and easy, several issues begin to creep in as the game progresses. The Elven wizard may be a better warrior than the Halfling soldier! Even after several careers, this may still be true, leaving us the question: Where did all these years of training for the Halfling go? Even if he becomes a mercenary captain, he will still not be half as adept in combat as the Elven mage who picks up his steel only when not busy working in a mouldy library. What does a warrior learn during those frequent training session whilst the wizards learn forbidden secrets of the arcane? In this article, you will find extra skills for the Warrior class to fill themselves out and show that the base hacking and slashing is only the beginning.

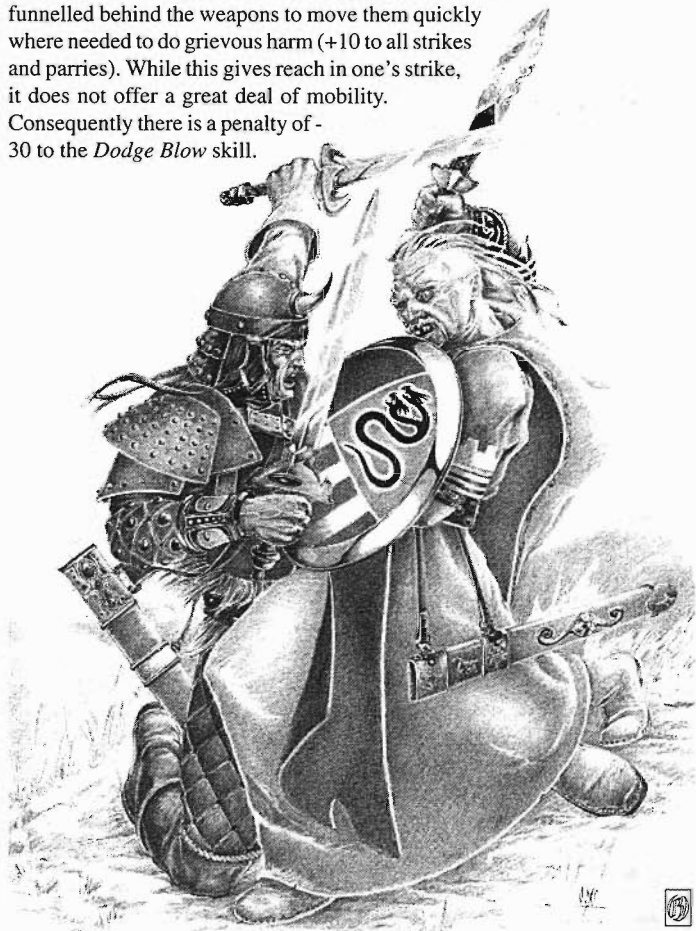
As a fighter gains experience, he gains more 'tricks'. Half of being good with a blade is having a ready supply of prepared combinations of strikes or slight of hand 'illusions' that he can use to fool his opponent into an early grave. In this article, we will try to expand the repertoire of the common WFRP warrior to allow them to become real experts with the blade. After all, wizards get to personalise themselves with their spells; now Lars the Barbarian has the chance to distinguish himself from Pierre the Duellist. Some GMs may wish to limit what character can learn according to what their career is and whom they are learning it from. It is logical that a duellist can teach *Strike Back*, *Corps-a-corps*, *Pinking*, *Parry and Bind Out*, but will he teach such skills to a Dwarf Slayer? Also, the GM may wish to think about how easy it is to transfer the skill to another weapon. If a person is learning a manoeuvre for a sword (pinking, say) and wishes to use it with a nifty new magical axe, the GM may wish to charge 20 experience and a week or two of time to learn how to transfer the experience. You can be as stingy or as generous with this system as you like.

THE WARRIOR'S STANCE: WHERE THE COMBAT BEGINS

The stance you take affects how people can hit you and how you can hit people. It affects the reach of your weapons, strength of the strike and is the most basic beginning of a warrior's training. Each one has strengths and weaknesses, and must be used wisely to fit the situation. This stance is declared at the beginning of a round and can not be changed until the next round is declared unless the warrior is knocked down and must get back up. Anyone in a warrior career can learn any of the stances; training time is 1 week (2 weeks if self-taught). Stances, as you can imagine, cannot be mixed.

Offensive Stance, Experience Cost: 100

This manoeuvre allows the warrior to set himself to reach far into the opponent's defences and cause the most damage, but also opens him up to attack. This is usually done by setting oneself with the body leaning forward, weapon(s) extended out front. The feet are placed about as far apart as the width of the shoulders. The weight is on the foot placed in front, funnelled behind the weapons to move them quickly where needed to do grievous harm (+10 to all strikes and parries). While this gives reach in one's strike, it does not offer a great deal of mobility. Consequently there is a penalty of -30 to the *Dodge Blow* skill.



Neutral Stance, Experience Cost: 0 (*Automatically gained by all*)

This is the normal WFRP stance, neither offensive nor defensive. It is performed with the weapons close to the body, ready to lash out to defend or attack. The feet are also placed shoulder-width apart, but are in line with the shoulders or with one slightly ahead of the other.

Defensive Stance, Experience Cost: 100

This manoeuvre allows the warrior to set himself up to intercept all incoming blows. This is done by leaning the body away from the enemy, weapon(s) extended forward. The feet are placed about as far apart as the width of the shoulders, one in front of the other, with the weight on the rear foot, ready to move the body backward and out of harm's way.

The fighter gets -10 to hit because of the limited reach of the defensive stance. The warrior can parry blows at +10. All parries stop strength +1D6 in wounds, instead of the normal 1D6, greatly enhancing their ability to survive. Attempts to dodge are made at +10.

COMBAT MANOEUVRES: THE SECRETS OF STEEL

Combat tricks can only be learned by someone currently in a warrior career. Each combat manoeuvre has advantages and disadvantages, just as each stance gives both bonuses and penalties. Only one trick may be used per attack, but some have a much longer set-up time, and thus require numerous attacks to complete. Combat manoeuvres can be combined with any stance. These manoeuvres replace all of the *Strike to...* skills. At the GM's discretion, the players may recoup the experience spent to spend on Combat Manoeuvres or simply translate them over to the equivalent 'trick' below.

There are two ways to learn a combat trick: to be taught it by someone who knows it, or to develop it yourself in practice. The latter option means the warrior pays twice the experience cost listed, as it is much more difficult to learn this way. The training time for each manoeuvre is 1 week (or 2 weeks if teaching yourself). Each combat trick has both the experience cost listed, and whether you must be in a basic or advanced career to be able to learn the skill. Advanced careers can learn basic tricks, but not the other way around.

As an aside, these manoeuvres may make critical fumbles more common. For example, if a warrior has *Weapon Skill* 50, attempts a *Sheath Strike* (-20) and misses with a role of 33, this counts as a critical fumble.

Aimed Strike, Experience Cost: 100 [Basic]

This skill replaces *Strike to Injure*. This is used by soldiers to avoid armour of all types by striking an uncovered area. This can be done in any stance. The character must specify which location they wish to strike, and then calculate their *Weapon Skill* based on the following table:

Head:	<i>Weapon Skill</i>	-25
Arm:	<i>Weapon Skill</i>	-20
Torso:	<i>Weapon Skill</i>	-15
Leg:	<i>Weapon Skill</i>	-20

Bash, Experience Cost: 50 [Basic]

This is used as a bum-rush. A *Weapon Skill* test is made to get the opponent's blade out of the way. If this is successful, the attacker's *Strength* is increased by 1d3. An additional +1 is granted if the attacker has a shield. From this total, subtract the defender's *Toughness* (+1 for shield). The result is how far backwards the defender is thrown in feet, falling prone if they are knocked more than three feet. Large creatures (giants, trolls, ogres, horses, centaurs, Manticores, etc.) double their *Toughness* or *Strength* for the purposes of this test. This tactic is extremely useful on precipices, bridges and the like, where the attacker can force an opponent over the edge.

If the attacker fails the manoeuvre for any reason, he will not be able to parry or block until a new round begins, and may even be unable to prevent himself from toppling over any edge themselves. This tactic can only be used from a neutral or offensive combat stance, against opponents moving at *cautious* rate or less and uses two attacks. This attack can be dodged but not parried.

Combination Strike, Experience Cost: 200 [Advanced]

This weapon tactic lets the warrior lay about him in a wild storm of steel. Each strike is less sure, and has less muscle-power behind it, but the speed the blade attains through the pre-planned manoeuvres is considerable, allowing multiple strikes to be made in a single attack. Characters get D3 strikes at targets in front or to the sides, but are at 1/2 *Weapon Skill* and -2 to damage for each strike. Not very useful against a well-armoured opponent, but very good for slaying Snotlings or swarms of forest creatures. This tactic can be used in any stance.

Corps-a-corps, Experience Cost: 100 [Basic]

This tactic allows an attacker to bind up an opponent's weapon with his own on a successful *Weapon Skill* test. From that point on, both the attacker and opponent must make opposed *Strength* tests. The person who succeeds by the greatest amount decides whether to stay *Corps-a-corps* or to disengage. While *Corps-a-corps*, neither attacker nor opponent may attack or parry any blow unless they have a short, stabbing weapon in their off-hand. Even then, an additional -20 penalty to hit or to parry is levied. Should both opponents have two weapons, they can of course go *Corps-a-corps* with both weapons, immobilising both. This tactic can be used in any stance, and costs one attack.

Disengage, Experience Cost: 100 [Basic]

This is the base training for a warrior to leap back from an engagement without the free strike from behind ruining his day. It eats one attack, as the warrior usually disengages combat by lunging or swinging widely to back his enemy up a step. Then it is a simple matter of retreating a few steps beyond the reach of the enemy's weapons and then turning to run.

Fcint, Experience Cost: 100 [Advanced]

This is an attempt to try to get an opponent to parry a blow that is not going where he thinks it is. The attacker tests against *Weapon Skill*, as normal for an attack. If successful, opponent may not parry the blow. (Parries or dodges may be attempted, effectively "using them up" for that round, but will automatically fail.) This tactic can be performed in any stance.

Headman's chop, Experience Cost: 100 [Basic]

Used versus prone targets as a finishing strike to the wounded or the helpless. It involves arcing the weapon far back to gain the extra distance for a good wind-up. It can only be used against a character that has fallen and is prone (perhaps because of a mishap or critical), and inflicts double the rolled damage. Because it takes



time to execute, the attacker can neither parry nor dodge during the round in which he uses a *headman's chop*. This tactic can only be used in an offensive or neutral stance.

Massive attack, Experience Cost: 100 [Basic]

This form, beloved by berserkers, allows the Attacker to add +1 to damage done. This is accomplished by exaggerating swings and thrusts to give the blow added momentum. However, because the attacks take slightly longer, opponents gain +10 to attempts to parry or dodge. This manoeuvre replaces *Strike Mighty Blow*, and can only be performed in an offensive stance.

Parry and Bind Out (Parry and Beat-Aside), Experience Cost: 100 [Advanced]

This manoeuvre allows a character, after a successful parry, to bind out or beat a weapon to the side. This moves the opponent's weapon out of the way, opening them up to a follow-up strike. After a successful parry, a second successful *Weapon Skill* will give the character an attack (if one is available) that can not be parried or dodged by the opponent. This tactic can only be used in a neutral or offensive stance.

Pinking, Experience Cost: 100 [Advanced]

This allows an attacker to strike in painful, but not deadly, areas of the limbs. Commonly used during fighting to first blood, or to disarm a particularly foolish opponent, it can also be used to slow down a dangerous foe. On a successful strike, no damage is inflicted (unless a 6 or higher is rolled on the damage die, in which case damage is calculated as normal). Instead of raw damage, an effect is generated depending on the target area called:

Area	Damage effects	Penalty to hit
Arm	-5 <i>Weapon Skill</i>	-20
Leg	-5 <i>Initiative</i>	-10
Foot	-10 <i>Initiative</i> , -1 <i>Movement</i>	-30
Hand	-10 <i>Weapon Skill</i>	-30

Areas covered in metal armour can not be 'pinked' as the armour will deflect such a light, quick blow. Any weapon can be used to 'pink'. Effects are cumulative. When the damage heals naturally, the penalties disappear as well. *Pinking* can only be used when in an offensive stance.

Pummeling, Experience Cost: 100 [Basic]

This skill replaces *Strike to Stun*. It allows a warrior to use a blunt weapon (clubs, maces, hammers, etc.) to pummel a victim unconscious. Strikes are made as normal, but are counted as temporary damage and recover at the victim's *Toughness* each day (double with bed-rest). Temporary damage should be recorded separately from normal damage, and should be equal to the character's normal *wounds* score.

Should the victim take temporary damage that reduces this score to 0, they fall unconscious until they recover to above 0. If reduced below 0, then they begin to take real damage as normal. Remember that striking with surprise means the character does double damage, and this applies to pummeling as well. It is still possible to accidentally kill someone if a strong character rolls up a few sixes, so beware.

It is possible to Pummel bare handed as well, with the normal penalties and damage reductions listed under unarmed combat in the rule book, but the character must have the *Street Fighting* skill.

This tactic can be used with swords by using the flat of the blade, or single bitted axes by using the back of the axe. Doing this incurs a -20 to *Weapon Skill* because of the care needed to strike someone with a lethal weapon in a decidedly non-lethal manner. If using a deadly weapon to pummel, if a 6 is rolled for damage, real damage is done. Note that striking with a sheathed weapon will avoid this problem, although the added weight will impair the weapon's balance, leading to a -10 penalty to *Weapon Skill*.

Sheath Strike, Experience Cost: 100 [Advanced]

This trick allows an attacker to draw and strike or parry with a sword in the same move, hitting the target with the same motion that draws the sword. There is a -20 to hit or parry with this trick, however. This tactic can be used in any stance.

Slide-Cut, Experience Cost: 100 [Basic]

This is a simple combat manoeuvre used against many inexperienced foes: People who put their forefinger above the guard for greater control (rather than buying a properly balanced blade, a common mistake for non-veteran warriors). To find out if someone wielding a sword has a finger exposed make a regular *Intelligence* test, +10 bonus for every warrior career they have been through. Success means that no fingers are exposed, failure means one is out there for the taking.

People using spears, staffs, axes, flails, hammers or maces (all weapons that usually do not have hand-guards or crosspieces to protect the hands) are vulnerable to this technique as all five fingers are exposed. Single-handed maces, axes and war-hammers can be constructed with crosspieces (110% normal cost), but spears and two-handed variants can not. Note that if the opponent is wearing metal gauntlets of any type, this attack automatically fails, as gauntlets are designed to stop just this type of thing.

After parrying or having been parried, the swordsman simply slides the weapon down the blade to lop off offending fingers. This requires a *Weapon Skill* check. If successful, opponent takes 1 wound and the hand suffers the loss of d6-2 fingers, up to the total exposed. If only one finger is hooked over a crosspiece, then only one can be cut off. If a modified 0 is rolled, the blade skips off the shaft/blade and the attack hits as a normal strike. For obvious reasons, this can only be done with bladed weapons, but can be done from any stance. See below for the penalties of losing fingers.

Digits Lost:	
1 finger:	-10 <i>Weapon Skill</i> for weapons in that hand, -5 <i>Dexterity</i>
2 fingers:	Reduce <i>Weapon Skill</i> by half for weapons in that hand, -5 <i>Dexterity</i>
3 fingers:	Reduce <i>Weapon Skill</i> to a quarter for weapons in that hand, -10 <i>Dexterity</i>
4 fingers:	You can not wield a weapon in that hand, and lose half <i>Dexterity</i>
4 fingers and a thumb:	Friends will call you stumpy...Halve <i>Dexterity</i> and then lose a further 5 (Minimum <i>Dexterity</i> is 5)

(NB: The reduction of *Dexterity* relates solely to tests requiring the use of this hand.)

Strike Back (Riposte), Experience Cost: 100 [Advanced]

This trick allows a warrior to strike right after he has parried, as long as the warrior has attacks remaining. This riposte is at -20 to be parried. This cannot be done from an offensive stance, as the warrior must wait for an attack to come to them to use this skill.

Trip, Experience Cost: 100 [Basic]

This attack is used to get an opponent to fall, either by striking the legs, stepping on the opponent's foot while advancing, or such. Test versus *Weapon Skill*. If successful, the opponent must make an *Initiative* test or fall. If he falls, he can only parry until he can get up. This tactic can be used in any stance, but only on moving/charging opponents. It can be used with a bonus of +10 to *Weapon Skill* against opponents using the *Bash* tactic.

Wrist Grapple, Experience Cost: 50 [Basic]

This weapon manoeuvre involves grabbing the opponent's wrist. This requires a test at -20 against *Weapon Skill* (only -10 if you have *Street Fighting*, no penalties if you and your opponent are *Corps-a-corps*). Success allows the warrior to keep the weapon in that hand from being used against him. Each subsequent round, opposed *Strength* tests must be taken, with the winner by the highest margin deciding whether to disengage from the grapple. Can be done from any stance.

FLAILING MERCILESSLY AT YOUR OPPONENTS

The question has been raised many times: Why flails? They are hard to control when compared to maces or hammers. They require extensive training and cost more to own. There must be a reason to use a flail except that you need one as a trapping to advance!

The answer is simple: Physics.

The chain allows a slightly extended reach, with the ball at the end whipping down to strike an opponent with fearsome force, this is why they get a +1 to damage in the WFRP rule book. Unknown to many, there were also some pretty vicious tricks you could pull off using a flail that could not be done with any other weapon. The following can only be done with a Flail and can only be learned once someone has learned the *Specialist Weapon – Flail* skill.

The Wrist-Snap, Experience Cost: 100 [Advanced]

This manoeuvre can only be made with a flail. In essence, it involves using the Flail like a whip. Most flails have a 6"-8" chain, meaning they can wrap around a human wrist. In this manoeuvre, the wrist/lower arm is targeted (-20 to *Weapon Skill*). If successful, the attacker takes a second test against *Weapon Skill* again (-10 if opponent wears leather gauntlets, -20 if wearing metal gauntlets). If that succeeds, he may cause a #4 arm critical if he also makes a successful *Strength* check. This tactic can be used in any stance.

Snatch Weapon, Experience Cost: 100 [Advanced]

This manoeuvre uses a flail like a whip to snatch a weapon from an opponent. First, a test must be made against *Weapon Skill* at -10 to target the weapon. If successful, the weapon is 'bound' and cannot be used to strike or parry because the flail's chain has wrapped around it. From then on, on every attack, the two must wrestle with the locked weapons with a *Strength* check. If one opponent succeeds and the other fails, the winner can snatch both weapons. Whomsoever gains control of the weapons will attack at *Weapon Skill* -20 due to the entangled weapon. Only by shaking the tangled weapon free can the wielder strike without this penalty. This is achieved by using up attacks. For each *Attack* in which they choose to disentangle the weapons, rather than strike at their opponent, the wielder can make a *Weapon Skill* test. On a success, the weapons will be disentangled. This tactic can be used from any stance.

Whip-Over, Experience Cost 100 [Basic]

This skill is used by placing the end of the flail's handle at the edge of the opponent's shield. Then, the ball and chain, still in motion, will whip over the shield with great force to strike the opponent. Because the radius of the strike is cut considerably by the edge of the shield, the flail gains incredible speed and an additional +1 in damage (total of +2). Any strikes in this manner will only hit the head (1-15), shield-arm (16-70) or torso (71-00) as the chains on flails were usually 6-8" in length and could not reach anywhere else. However, as this attack is difficult to pull off, the *Weapon Skill* roll to strike is made at -20. This tactic cannot be carried out from a defensive stance, as considerable reach is necessary to successfully commit to this manoeuvre.

FLORENTINE WARRIORS: EXPERTS IN TWO WEAPONS

Two-weapon fighting is actually a lot easier than many people will tell you. It is, however, also a lot less of an advantage than some would have you believe. The main thing to get used to is training your hands to deal with two weapons that have completely different methods of inflicting damage simultaneously. Blades, for example, are wielded in a different manner than a mass weapon (that kills by crushing), and neither works exactly like wielding an axe.

To fight two-handed, characters simply pick up two weapons. The off handed weapon gets -20 to *Weapon Skill* to strike (-10 *Weapon Skill* if the character is ambidextrous), and the main hand has a -10 penalty. No additional attacks are gained simply by picking up an extra weapon.

To be proficient in Two-fisted fighting one must possess one of these skills:

Two Blade Experience Cost: 100 [Basic]

This is used to wield two swords, two knives, a sword and dagger... You get the idea.

Two Mass Experience Cost: 100 [Basic]

This is used to wield two hammers, two maces, or any other combination of crushing weapons.

Two Axe Experience Cost: 100 [Basic]

This is used to wield two axes at the same time.

Axe/Blade Experience Cost: 150 [Advanced]

This skill is used to wield a blade in one hand and an axe in the other.

Axe/Mass Experience Cost: 150 [Advanced]

This skill is used to wield a Mass weapon in one hand and an axe in the other.

Blade/Mass Experience Cost: 150 [Advanced]

This skill is used to wield a blade in one hand and a mass weapon in the other.

When using the appropriate skill the off-handed weapon gets -10 to strike (no penalty for ambidextrous characters). Because of the two blades available to parry with the user gets 1 free parry (without losing an attack).

Some combat manoeuvres can only be attempted with two weapons, and only then if they have the relevant specialist skill listed above.

The Invisible Dagger, Experience Cost: 150 [Advanced]

This is a simple manoeuvre, although it requires some set-up. The Warrior first declares he is hiding his off-hand weapon (only daggers, short swords and knives will do). This is usually done by grabbing it in the 'ice-pick' stance (with the blade held out of the bottom of the fist), though it can be done as well by holding it behind one's back. After that, an *Initiative* test must be made by the attacker in order to keep the dagger hidden. Success means that, after two full combat turns have elapsed (20 seconds), the opponent rolls *Intelligence* at -20 to remember the dagger is there. If the opponent fails, the dagger may be used for *one* additional strike at +30 to hit. As the target is unlikely to forget the existence of the dagger after such a blow, this tactic cannot be used more than once in the same battle. This tactic can only be attempted from a defensive stance.

The Parry/Strike, Experience Cost: 200 [Advanced]

This combat manoeuvre allows characters to simultaneously parry an attack and strike at the same time. No other combat manoeuvres may be used that round. Although this tactic uses up two attacks, the strike can not be parried unless the opponent is fighting two-weapon style as well, or parries with a shield.

Whip-Swing, Experience Cost: 200 [Advanced]

This tactic involves throwing a knife or dagger (or even a handy stick or clod of dirt) at an opponent (at half normal *Ballistic Skill*) with the off hand whilst attacking with the primary weapon a moment later. The purpose of this tactic is to get the opponent to dodge the missile, and hence lean into the strike. If the opponent dodges the attack, the attacker gets +20 to hit bonus to his next sword strike. In addition, this follow-on strike may not be parried or dodged. However, this combination takes two attacks to implement and requires the *Specialist Weapon – Throwing Weapons* skill. This tactic can only be performed in an offensive or defensive stance, not in a neutral stance.

Using these stances and tactics only adds moments to the time required to play through combat, especially once players are familiar with their own preferred tactics, and if the relevant modifiers are noted on an index card before the session. More importantly, though, it allows warriors to develop their own distinctive style and tactics, and gives them something to spend their Experience upon in later careers when the wizards are busy buying spells.

One-fisted? Two-fisted? Fencer? Knight? What kind of warrior do you play?

WARPSTONE FRAGMENTS

BRIEF REVIEWS AND NEWS FROM THE WORLD OF WARHAMMER



VALK'S BACK!

After being 'Missing in Action' for over 18 months *Valkyrie* has been relaunched. Issue 18 is out now and with full time editors on-board, it promises to become a welcome regular on the shelves. Although it suffers from a few problems (news that just regurgitates press releases, a duff comic strip and the over reliance on the font in the 7th *Sea* review) there is plenty of interest. It is the variety of articles they fit in that means there is usually something for everyone. Although there is a distinct lack of Fantasy stuff, there is the usual mix of news, reviews, scenarios, comment and articles covering a variety of games.

If the new team can overcome the teething problems it stands a good chance of becoming a strong contender to become the independent magazine and an essential purchase. We shall be keeping an eye on future developments and we hope *Valkyrie* gets plenty of support.

Priced at £3.50/\$7.50 and available from all games shops or direct from Partizan Press, 816-818 London Road, Leigh-on-Sea, Southend, Essex, SS9 3NH England.

THE ORIGIN OF TREE WORSHIP

Subscribers will have noticed issue One of *The Origin of Tree Worship* drop out of their copy of issue 12. They may also notice the name on the top was Tim Eccles, regular writer for *Warpstone*. Tim has described Tree Worship as "a self-proclaimed gazetteer of the Empire". Issue One is simply four A4 sides, but within the limited space, are some thoughts on physicians and surgeons (an extremely overdue look), templars of Verena, running a post *Empire in Flames* Empire (some very nice touches) and a couple of interesting snippets that probably deserve greater coverage in future (a Reikspiel dictionary, anyone?). For a hard copy format, it is mysteriously available only by e-mail from Tim at mohock@email.msn.com.



Things have been quiet on the Hogshead front recently. They have mostly been reprinting books: five titles including the rulebook and the GM Screen have been back on the presses. The Company has also been changing the way the business is run, consolidating some areas and devolving others. James Wallis has said, "that's taking up precious development time right now, it should mean that ultimately Hogshead not only runs more smoothly, but that we have more time for doing the creative stuff."

However, there are a number of books in the works. The progress of *Doomstones 3* plods on although most of Ralph Horsley's artwork for the interior is now done, and looks excellent, while Danny Willis's cover progresses apace. We've included a draft rendering of one of the elements from it. Whatever it is, Hogshead aren't telling.

Empire in Chaos is slipping back due to James Wallis's other commitments, so *Apocrypha 2* moves up the release tree and is looking very good indeed. Using the same cover as *Castle Drachenfels* it is a mix of reprints of old material, including the much-requested character-generation booklet from the first Character Pack, and new material from authors including Graeme Davis, Ken Rolston and Anthony Ragan.

Realms of Sorcery has almost finished being edited but Games Workshop have yet to approve the revised manuscript. Also, the Dwarf and Skaven books have been finished but await editing and approval.

Outside of WFRP, Hogshead have also just signed a deal with French Publisher Asmodee to produce an English language version of the RPG *Bloodlust*. Hogshead have also signed a deal with Nightfall Games to distribute the game *SLA Industries*.

FANTASY MOVIES AHOY!

LORD OF THE RINGS

The wisdom in adapting a classic piece of fantasy literature to the big screen remains to be seen. As shown recently with the four-part BBC adaptation of the Gormenghast Trilogy a certain amount of story and substance can, and must, be lost during production. The needs of a successful film are very different to the needs of an author and their readers. However, with such a strong underlying story, characters and world the transformation should be easier - although this could also be its downfall. So many people know Tolkien's work and have their own vision of how the characters look and behave that most are likely to feel that director Peter Jackson's (*The Frighteners*, *Braindead*, *Heavenly Creatures*) vision of these characters does not match their own. With the guidance of Alan Lee and John Howe (internationally renowned Middle-earth artists) we can, at least, be fairly confident that the design will be close to our expectations.

Production is taking place in New Zealand and the official web-site can be located at www.lordoftherings.net

but is currently more style than substance. At the time of writing, they've lost the computer-manipulated images of how some scenes may look (post production) and replaced them with pure 'window-dressing'. One useful addition is the ability to submit your e-mail address so that you can be notified of changes and additions to the site.

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

Unlike the Lord of the Rings I would expect this movie to suffer somewhat less from the 'baggage' of familiarity. Since this film is not a straight adaptation there is less pressure to match the characters to well known figures, instead they are merely fitting them into game stereotypes. The cast includes Jeremy Irons as Profion the evil arch-mage and whilst some may see this as a good choice, I feel uneasy. I will not deny that he is a fine actor, but I must say that outside of classical/exceptionally written scripts he does not fair so well. The thought of him hamming it up sends shivers down my spine (and not for the right reasons) with Hollywood once again feeling the necessity to make their main villain British!

Several locations in Prague are being used for the film, and if nothing else it may be worth watching for the architecture. Another problem fantasy films usually have is non-human characters. Some ignore them completely whilst others cannot. LoTR could not be made without them and D&D would be a pale imitation of the gaming world if it ignored them. D&D uses both Dwarves and Half-Elves as main characters, but unlike LoTR they are not using special computer effects to alter them. The Dwarf in this film is by all accounts a bald, bearded human - who's a bit short. A couple of prosthetic ears seem to suffice for the Half-Elf and one could argue that her otherwise human appearance explains why she only a 'Half'.

You can find the uninspiring Wizards of the Coast web-site at www.wizards.com/dnd/movie.asp and a reasonably up-to-date and jam-packed unaffiliated web-site at www.dndmovie.com where the enthusiasm does not seem to wane.

We look forward to seeing both movies and hope they can surpass the poor crop that has passed for fantasy in the past.(JK)

WARPSTONE ON THE WEB

Warpstone's new Website is up and running at www.warpstone.darcove.net. Apart from ordering details and the like, you will find out of print articles including our *What's in a Name* articles, scenarios and various other pieces.

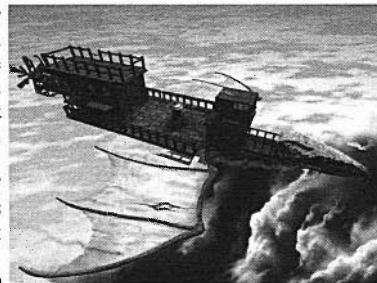
REGIMENTS OF RENOWN FOR FREE

Games Workshop have made a number of Regiments of Renown available for free on their website. These mercenary units, Lumpin Croop's Fighting Cocks and the Giants of Albion among others, are designed for use in the Battle game but WFRP fans may find them of their interest. Download them from www.games-workshop.com/Regiments_of_Renown.html.

ERRATA

Vidar Edland, author of Last issue's *Tomes of Magic* article has let us know of a small problem. Our fault it must be said. On page 19 under the heading Stage 2, the article stated that by paying the required Experience cost the reader gains or advances a level of Illusionist. This meant a reader can become a Illusionist in one month. However, it misses one important detail. Here is how the Stage 2 paragraph should read;

Stage 2: The adventurer has studied the secrets of Illusion Magick, and this roll on the contents table counts as a only one part (1 of 1D3+1) of becoming a Level 1 Illusionist (the character must roll the School of Illusion entry on the contents table 1D3+1 times before he can become a level 1 Illusionist). The adventurer must spend half the required Experience now (round down) and the rest once the study time is finished. If the adventurer is already an Illusionist of level 1 or higher, immediately proceed to stage three.



GAMES MAGAZINES

Mythic Perspectives

Similar in style and intent to *Warpstone*, MP is dedicated to *Ars Magica*. MP is quarterly and available from Gnawing Ideas, PO Box 276677, Sacramento, CA 95827-6677, USA. Prices for one issue are \$6.95 (Europe)/\$4.95 (USA) and subscriptions \$28.00 (Europe)/\$17.00 (USA). For further info contact ideas@gnawing.com or www.gnawing.com/mythic_perspectives.com/mp_index.html

Carnel

An A5 fanzine that covers RPG's in an entertaining way, usually in a discussion style. Contact Robert Rees at Flat 9, Oakfield Mansions, Oakfield Grove, Clifton, Bristol, BS8 3BN or e-mail carnel@talk21.com. Issues 1-10 50p per issue, Issue 11 onwards £1 (Plus an SSAE).. Issue 13 is out now. Website can be found at www.geocities.com/shudderfix.

Games Gazette

Reviews of the latest games, RPGs, computer, boardgames and anything else that qualifies. Bi-monthly, it can be picked up from good game stores or by contacting Chris Baylis, 67 Mynchens, Lee Chapel North, Basildon, Essex, SS15 5EG. £1.25 each or £9 for a subscription.

imagine

A free magazine that looks at roleplaying in general and is always entertaining. Issue 33 is out now and can be obtained from www.tcp-ip.or.jp/~panurge or contact the editor Paul Mason at 101 Green Heights, Shimpo-cho 4-50, Chikusa-ku, Nagoya 464-0072 Japan or panurge@tcp-ip.or.jp (imagine is a paper based magazine, it is just distributed across the internet.)

REMAINS OF THE KNIGHT

A scenario by John Foody

Three years ago it was, but it feels so much longer. Then I was just twenty summers old. We were moving away from the Grey Mountains approaching Parravon. On the orders of the Guard Captain the caravan had come to a stop for the night, the perimeter was set and I lay down to sleep after supper. I tried to sleep anyway but I was so nervous, just waiting for someone to denounce me. On the border of The Empire the caravan had been joined by two wagons, painted black, driven by a group of dour looking men. They sat apart from us and stayed near their cargo. Over the mountains all I could think of was the debts I owed at home and how long it would take to repay them. However, that night the gold burned a hole in my pocket. At the border keep, I had been approached by two men in the livery of Hofbauer-Bodelstein Trading Company, rivals to the people I worked for. Their offer had been too good to resist...

Two nights later, and may the gods curse me, I found myself pouring the sleeping draft into the stew. Soon I felt the kick in my back waking me for my turn on watch. Nodding to the guard I replaced I could hear the snoring of my comrades. "Leave the way open for us and we will steal the wagons and cargo." the two men had said. Climbing the hill overlooking the campsite I looked forward to returning to The Empire with my new-found wealth. Then in the campfires below were figures approaching from my sentry position. Into the camp they crept until they were upon the first tent. Suddenly there was a scream and the blood-bath began. Armed men were every where, their faces hidden with red hoods. The few men awake were cut down, their bodies mutilated where they lay. The unconscious men in the tents were dragged out and placed in the centre of the camp. The guards on the stranger's wagons put up a fight though, taking down many of the attackers. At one point one of them cast a spell, an attacker consumed by flame. But in time they were silenced and the attackers screamed an eerie victory cry.

Into the camp strode a tall man, robed in red, and the men bowed to him. On his head sat a huge warhelm, the faceplate completely smooth, even without eye-holes. On his orders a casket was dragged from the back of the black wagons, it seemed of silver marked with the sign of the Raven. I didn't see the signal but all the men, bar two, knelt to the ground, their faces near the mud. The man, and I guessed him a priest, began to chant as the casket lid was lifted. Without warning he slit the throat of one of his men, blood gushing into the casket before the poor fool collapsed. From within the casket seemed to come a howling, a sound I hope never to hear again. Then something seemed to form, a man seemingly of red-mist but his face was something else, something I will not describe. Shaking in fear the second man's throat was slit and the blood seemed to disappear into the shadow. "My master", the helmed man said, falling to his knees. "You are reborn, the crimes of the Raven are forgotten. You will lead us anew and the moon will seem as red with blood." The red-mist started to thicken as it absorbed the blood and speaking as if from under water, a voice of fear. "My son... I will repay the crimes wrought upon me tenfold. The people who sought my destruction will die. One thousand of their descendants will lay unburied for each day I have lain in death. My shadow will pass across these lands... What! What! Is this." The spirit's form seems to melt and dissipate. Terror ran through my body as it seemed to stare straight at me. "We have been seen!" Its scream was anger and pain itself.

Then the priest cried out "The Spell is broken!"

"There!" I'm not afraid to say it but I soiled myself when that thing turned and pointed to me. "I will have his eyes as my first feast." Then he was gone, the armed men swarming up the hill after me. I ran as I'd never run before not resting until morning. In truth I don't think I have rested since.

Introduction

Sins of the Past is set in the small town of Obelheim, located somewhere in the East of The Empire. The scenario was originally written to finish off a story belonging to one of my player's characters background. Hence certain changes have been made in this revised version. It is a simple scenario set, linear to a point, within a limited time-frame (two days) and designed to play straight through. I have given a number of options in the beginning and ending of the scenario, specifically around one of the 'concepts' within. The story was partly inspired by reading the Vampire Counts army book (reviewed in issue 12) and thus there is a Sylvania influence. Certain aspects and clues lead towards the existence of a Vampire within the scenario. You may wish to play this up for full effect to scare your players. The scenario is filled with prophecies, omens, and visions, which may not be to everyone's taste but they are tightly bound to the scenario.

The Name that is Forgotten

The story begins many years ago, in the thirteenth century of The Empire. Count Radild von Reibelstein was known throughout The Empire. Through war and politics he rose, however briefly, to rule the land of Sylvania. He was a mighty Warlord, a title rightly bestowed upon him after years of constant fighting against the Orcs. However, he sought power where he could, fighting to expand his borders. Those that opposed him were slaughtered, those that survived reduced to harsh servitude. The use of an assassin's knife was not unknown to remove an enemy and many feared him. Such unscrupulous methods nearly brought about his own end. After taking the keep of a neighbouring lord, he was flattered by the wife of his dead rival. However, here seduction was only a cover for an attempt to poison him. She succeeded promising a slow death. Sylvania was, as it is now, filled with stories of the dead that walk. Stories that told of noble families who ruled them, Vampires. Heralds were sent to bargain for their secrets but they denied and refused von Reibelstein. He was left to die.

When he felt he could hear the Raven's wings, Kabil of the Red Robe came to him. An old withered man, Kabil was blind and dressed in a dirtied red robe, his only possession a staff. He was feared by those who met him but he cured von Reibelstein of his affliction.

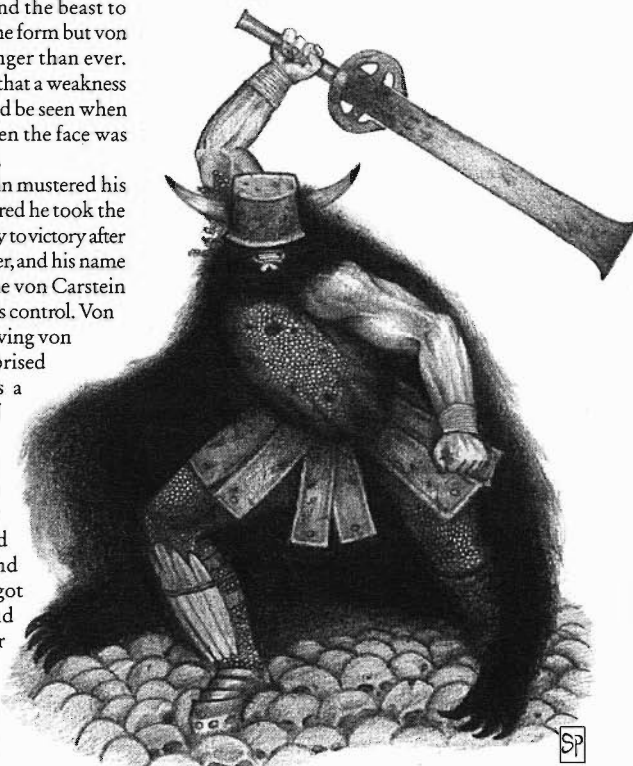
In truth, Kabil was a high priest of Khaine. Through visions, the God of Murder told Kabil that the Warlord served him even though he did not yet know it. Kabil had given Radild von Reibelstein a simple choice, die or become a servant of Khaine. Radild's choice would have surprised no one had they known. Kabil summoned a Xxsaster, a demon of Khaine and bound the beast to the Count's body. Both existed within the form but von Reibelstein did not care. He was stronger than ever. However, it wasn't until an early battle that a weakness became evident. The demon's face could be seen when blood was being, or to be, spilled. When the face was seen von Reibelstein became vulnerable.

With health restored von Reibelstein mustered his army to him. Now dressed in armour of red he took the Scorpion as his standard and led his army to victory after victory. The slaughter was worse than ever, and his name itself was feared. His victory against the von Carstein family finally brought Sylvania under his control. Von Carstein had made a fatal mistake believing von Reibelstein was a Vampire and was surprised when the Count led his army across a shallow river at midday into the rear of his army.

His territorial ambitions were not sated by Sylvania alone and he looked to neighbouring Stirland. The province was a wounded giant, its population devastated by plague, its army underfunded and undermanned. Stirland ruler Graf Ragot von Matterburg saw Sylvania's greed and ambitions and hired assassins to murder von Reibelstein. Only one of the group returned alive. He told von Matterburg that von Reibelstein had made a pact with Khaine, god of murder through

Kabil of the Red Robe. The Elector now realised how dangerous his enemy was and sent for help. In Sylvania many of the other nobles began to send word to Stirland of the Count's movements and plans. Thus he knew when a Sylvanian force made a move on a border town.

The Elector's cry for help had brought little assistance but the few warriors that did come were ideally suited to the task. They were a group of Templars of Morr, members of the Order of the Gate. They knew of Kabil and guessed what he had done. They told von Matterburg that he must move against the Count as soon



as he could. The longer he waited the more blood would be spilt and the more powerful von Reibelstein would become.

The Graf gathered as large an army as he could to him in a short time and sent this pitifully small force out. They were massacred almost to the man with only a small group of nobles escaping. However, as planned, the defeat had given the Templars an opportunity. During the night they entered the Count's compound and slew him. They burnt the body in preparation for the journey to Luccini. However, Kabil managed to invoke Khaine to protect his servant. A spell was cast that meant Radild could be resurrected under certain circumstances. The Templars tortured Kabil until he told them what he had done, the priest dying in the process. However, for various political and practical reasons the ashes only reached Altdorf and here they have lain until recently.

Kabil's ghost was restless after his painful passing. With its guidance a secret tradition was begun that planned for the return of von Reibelstein. For many centuries it was kept alive by a single individual but at other times an Order grew. Sylvania's current decline has led many within to look to past glories to inspire them. The current leader of the group has named himself Kabil and he has brought the return of von Reibelstein closer than ever before. A botched attempt at stealing the Count's remains from the Temple in Altdorf resulted in them being transported to Luccini, the spiritual centre of the cult of Morr.

The remains were to be transported to Luccini by a group of Templars and Clerics travelling in secret with a small merchant caravan. However, Kabil discovered the details and bribed a young caravan guard to betray his employers. Kabil and his cultists struck with surprise and after a fierce battle, regained control of the remains. Overconfident, they made a mistake in their over-eagerness. The ceremony to revive the Count was performed there and then. The Count was raised but it was only then that it realised that one of the prerequisites for his successful reincarnation had not been met. The guard who had been bribed was observing the ceremony and hence saw the face of Xxsaster. The summoning failed and the guard escaped.

In the days that followed Kabil summoned his predecessor to him to find out what had gone wrong. It seemed that much had gone awry in the original ceremony at von Reibelstein's death, much derived from circumstance. Kabil discovered that von Reibelstein spirit was now free but would be claimed by Morr in thirty-six passes of Morrslieb, unless all those that had seen his true face were killed, their fresh blood christening the remains of the Count. However, there was a second chance. The spirit could be bound to the descendant of the Count himself. A weak vessel maybe but at least he would be able to continue the work of Khaine. Cultists and bounty hunters were sent to find and kidnap the errant guard and Kabil returned to Sylvania to find the von Reibelsteins.

Things were not so easy. The guard became adept at staying alive, staying ahead of his pursuers. The current von Reibelsteins were certainly not going to volunteer to revive their ancestor. They had been lucky to have escaped their notorious past, and spent years re-establishing themselves. In recent times representatives have even been seen at the Emperors court. The family continues to be plagued by rumours and a hereditary illness, one suffered by the current heir. Plans were made to kidnap the heir, a boy of ten but it was a dangerous task at his home.

Instead, as the time grew shorter, Kabil planned to put all his eggs in one basket. His lord Khaine sent him a vision telling him the guard would be arriving at the town of Obelheim soon and he summoned the Countess

von Reibelstein there with her son. An attack on their coach was fought off and they are due to arrive at the town later this day. Kabil knew his time was now at hand. His master's name had been stricken from the pages in which it had been written, and in time was forgotten. Soon though, the name of Count Radild von Reibelstein would be feared across the Old World.

Involving the PCs

Broadly, there are two ways the PCs can become involved. The first is potentially more satisfying but possibly more problematic. This is for one of the PCs to be the guard in question. If your players have detailed their character's histories then this will not work. However, if they have been left vague or they are new then it may be appropriate. If you choose this option then you need to make the player aware of his history (and stress the opportunity to gain experience points for role-playing). The longer you can leave before actually running the scenario the better. The PC will wake screaming from the occasional nightmare, see faded Wanted posters, be attacked by bounty hunters or cultists. Such incidents should not be overdone and leave the others players worried. The PC who is the subject of this attention should be encouraged not to divulge the reasons. After all, he has guilty secrets of his own.

The second method to involve the PCs is to have them encounter the guard now near insanity and death. However, the intervention of Morr will grant a PC a vision of Xxaster through the madman. The PC becomes the only one knowing his true face. In this scenario, this PC is the only one who has the power to truly banish the restless Count. The other side of the coin is that the Count requires the PC (his death more accurately to guarantee his immortality). The PCs blood must be spilt over his remains to bring him back to life. If you find this too contrived then the PC simply acts as a target but von Reibelstein can be slain by anyone or Radild may simply be after his descendant Karl von Reibelstein once the guard dies.

Journey to Obelheim

The road to Obelheim is typical of many of The Empire's better roads, bumpy but passable. There are a number of events on the way the way to the town:

Dwarfs: By the side of the road stands a wagon surrounded by six armed dwarfs. A few have shields and all have good weapons, but they look like miners more than soldiers. Their appearance is weathered, their clothes old and dirty. As the PCs approach it can be seen that the wagon has broken a wheel and three dwarfs are currently mending it. Barrels can be seen strapped in the back and covered with waterproof tarpaulin. The dwarfs make no greeting to the PCs and if there are no dwarfs in the party they certainly appear hostile. Any offer of help is gruffly turned down.

The dwarfs are heading to the mine at Gral Vorheim, located on the far side of Obelheim. The barrels are filled with gunpowder, which the dwarfs will protect with their lives. The reason for their surly attitude is that the relations between the dwarf miners and the locals has hit an all time low. After the dwarfs bought the working mine they slowly fired most of the human miners while increasing their own numbers. This has increased tensions sky-high, reaching a peak with the firing of the last Obelheimers last week. Both dwarfs and humans have been attacked and there have been accusations of sabotage.

Crossroads: A large stone stands crooked by the side of the road, directions chiselled into the surface. It states 'Talabheim' is 100 miles distant, the town of 'Obelheim' 25 miles off. A sign for 'Sylvania' points off into the forest, where the road seems to be long unused. Someone

has made an attempt to scratch it off. The other arrow points to Altdorf, while the fourth direction is unmarked.

The Gypsy

Some miles later along the road the PCs come across a small caravan parked in the trees. A horse grazes nearby and a campfire burns in front. The caravan is painted in bright colours an old woman singing from its step. If the PCs approach a muscular man carrying a huge axe appears from the trees followed by a vicious looking dog. The pair are Sylvania gypsies passing through the area. If the PCs don't appear threatening, the man, Thomkar, invites them to join him and his mother. They have some gossip from the local area but no information of substance to pass on. At some point the Old Woman tries to sell a PC a charm. Thomkar translates for her saying that it will protect them from the ravages of Morrslieb, for tomorrow night it will be full in the sky. Indeed the moon is important to the scenario and the GM should mention at some stage that it is almost full. Whether the charm offers any sort of benefit is for the GM to decide.

The gypsies are here to be used by the GM if their players are getting really stuck at any stage in the scenario. They can be used to pass on any Sylvania history the players need or other more vital clues. If you don't want the players to have access to this source of information then the pair could have moved on. They can always reappear later in town if needed.

The Coach

As the PCs crest the top of a hill they see a small town, sitting astride the river. At its centre stands a large building, which they guess is a temple. As they approach the town, they hear the sound of riders behind them. From around the bend comes a black coach, armoured guards riding before and after it, four in all. They look like they have no intention for stopping for the PCs. If the PCs do not get out of the way they will ride them down otherwise they will stop and threaten them.

The coach is ornate and old fashioned, the windows blocked out by black curtains. It is Count Heniretta von Reibelstein and her son making their way to Obelheim. Their escort and drivers are dressed in black, again their clothes and armour seems ornate and old fashioned. Close examination shows that some of the guards have minor wounds. A horse, with a bloodied saddle, is tied to the back of the coach. The guards are wounded after an ambush by the cultists led by Kabil. Two of their number were killed but they managed to break free, killing six of their attackers.

Welcome to Obelheim

The town of Obelheim has a long history and although small is quite wealthy. Standing in Talabecland, it is ruled by Baron Roberto von Obelheim a loyal supporter of the Grand Duke of Talabecland. However, he prefers to spend most of his time in Talabheim enjoying himself. He has returned to Obelheim recently to collect some money to finance his lifestyle. It was the Baron who sold the mine at Gral Vorheim to raise funds and thus is disliked by most of the locals. Although he carries the name Obelheim the current Baron is not a direct descendant of Obel von Matteredburg the hero the town is named after. His family purchased the title three centuries ago. That is not to say the Obelheim family has claimed differently of course. Legend has it the town was built on the spot where Obel von Matteredburg died a millennia ago. His body is said to rest in the Temple of Ulric that stands at the centre of town. Many of the locals are devout worshipers of Ulric. During the time the cult of Sigmar was outlawed in the region many Sigmarites were burnt for their faith. To this day there is

no chapel to the god of The Empire in the town.

Obelheim makes money from trade, fishing, timber and mining. The local land is rich in resources although it is often difficult to collect. The importance of each commodity fluctuates over time and although the merchant classes have gained a solid stronghold they have done so without alienating the nobility to the degree they have elsewhere. Their location on the Talabec is well placed to look after travellers and merchants on their way from Altdorf to Talabheim and vice versa.

A solid stone wall surrounds the town, gates facing east and west. Towers give a view of both the road and river. The largest building in town is the Temple of Ulric followed by the Obelheim townhouse. Although all citizens between the ages of 15 and 35 must train for two days in preparation for a call-up to the militia, the town guard are a full time body. They are also responsible for law-keeping and there is no separate Watch.

Entry

A sign on the town gate announces a 2-shilling per leg toll (hence a man must pay 4/- and a mounted man 12/-). Clerics of Ulric and local nobility are exempt from this toll. In reality any local who is recognised does not have to pay. However as the PCs arrive the guards don't seem to be taking much interest in them. Instead they are looking at a large group of angry people gathered just inside the town. The crowd is squeezed in and around a group of market stalls, the traders looking distinctly nervous. Getting closer to the crowd it can be observed an argument is taking place between a small group of dwarf miners (a different bunch to those encountered earlier) and a much larger group of local men and women. The locals are accusing the dwarfs of stealing their jobs and money and various other crimes, edging ever nearer violence. The dwarfs are transferring crates filled with ore from their wagon to a merchant's wagon. One of their number tries to shout down the accusations but is drowned out while all of them look ready to go for their weapons. If the PCs don't intervene to either calm or aggravate events the crowd is eventually broken up by the town guard. This happens after all the ore has been transferred. The Guard Captain loudly orders the dwarfs expelled from town, much to the appreciation of the people.

Talking to any local will get a run down of recent events. Simply, the Baron sold the mine at Gral Vorheim to the Dwarfs who proceeded to sack all the human miners. The dwarfs still come to town to sell the ore and "rub our faces in it." The Baron is roundly and venomously blamed for the situation. Any dwarf in the party will be stared at in the street and occasionally sworn at from the safety of a group.

The town has three inns (in addition to a number of taverns): Obelheim's Victory, The Running Druid & The Duke's Seat. The fourth The Pick and Shovel was burnt down two weeks ago. The miners blame the dwarfs for this and the dwarfs blame the miners. The nearest inn to the gate is The Duke's Seat, and even if they don't decide to visit, they will pass it on the way to the others.

The Duke's Seat

The Duke's Seat is the best and most expensive inn in town. It is clean and comfortable, serving fine food and drink. The atmosphere is good and for somewhere so expensive it is welcoming to most classes. However tonight it is now sold out. Countess Heniretta von Reibelstein and her party have taken it over, and will soon order the poor innkeeper to clear everyone else out early. He had little choice knowing they are guests of the Baron.

As the PCs approach the inn they notice the shutters are all closed and a guard stands blocking the front door. The PC will recognise him from the coach and he puts his hand on his sword as they approach. He steadfastly refuses to allow them entry to the inn talking in a heavy eastern accent. If asked why he says "my mistress, Countess Heniretta von Reibelstein is staying here. Others are not welcome." He will defend himself if attacked and the other guards will come to help, followed shortly by a town guard patrol.

The Running Druid

The Druid is a rundown inn on the Northern side of town. Prices are standard and the food is cold and of poor quality. The owner is heavily involved in smuggling and doesn't bother too much about the inn.

Obelheim's Victory

The main inn in town is huge, three houses knocked together into one. It is well lit, the lanterns illuminating the square on which it faces and the large statue of the town hero Obel von Matterburg standing outside. He is dressed in furs and chainmail, carrying an axe and shield, a pile of beastmen heads around his feet. The inn sign is a painting of this. The barkeep is happy to have visitors, as business is slow tonight. The food and drink are good if a little over the standard price. Good rooms are available at the normal cost. When they are eating or drinking the innkeeper comes over and asks if it is OK to sit down. If the PCs agree he asks about news outside the town and about the PCs business. He is just being friendly and won't take offence if they don't want to talk. When a couple of locals enter he gets up but then comes back to the table as he has remembered something. He tells the party two men had been asking for them early in the day. All he can tell them was that they were thick set men, easterners probably. Who these men are is up to the GM to decide. If one of the PCs is the being hunted by the cultists then they are after him.

A little later in the evening a disgruntled coach-load of travellers arrive, having being thrown out of The Duke's Rest. They all enter the inn complaining about upstart nobility (none of them are blue-blooded). If the PCs ask what happened they say the innkeeper was forced to move them out on orders of the Countess. She was an ill looking young woman dressed in black, being supported by her young son. They accuse her guards of being rude and threatening.

The Madman

Before they retire for the night a middle-aged man dressed in a thick hooded robe enters the inn, gasps and drops his cane. He is obviously in shock at the sight of the PCs. After some calming, the innkeeper getting him to drink brandy, he introduces himself as Goodman Helmut Renold, a cleric of Shallya. His speech is dignified and mannered, and the PCs automatically feel they trust him. He tells them he studies madness at the small asylum he founded. One of his inmates told him to come to Obelheim's Victory and described the PCs to him. He didn't believe the man but popped in on impulse while on the way home. He says the PCs should come to the asylum straight away and talk to the man, "Although I fear you will get no sense from him." If they insist they should wait until morning he is disappointed but agrees to meet them there. It is obvious the innkeeper and other locals are nervous of the asylum, but this is just through superstitious fear of the insane and nothing specific.

The asylum is housed in a small stone building once used as a barracks for the town guard. Two wardens are on duty at night and they are joined by a Shallyan apprentice in the day. From nearby the screams and moaning from the afflicted can be heard. Once inside it is much louder, the insane chained to their beds, some thrashing around, others catatonic. Renold is studying them to try and discover, what has caused their madness and how to cure it. Although it is his life's work he has never made any real progress and is unlikely ever to do so. At the far-end of the room a haggard man sits staring at them with malevolent eyes. If you are running the adventure with one of the PCs as the traitorous guard then the madman is a herald of Morr, sent to guide the PCs towards defeating his brother's servants. However, if one of the PCs is not involved then the man is the guard that betrayed the caravan and the clerics. Either way, he has been at the asylum for six months and has remained silent until three days ago when he began to dream of the player characters.

As they approach the bed Helmut introduces him, "The poor fellow has no name he remembers but we call him Otto. He had been silent since his arrival, however three days ago he began mumbling and muttering incoherently, thrashing around in his sleep. He spoke his first words yesterday." If the PCs ask what they were, Otto lunges forward but is yanked back by the chains. Staring at the traitorous PC (or one of your choosing) he gasps out the following. "My friend, he has found you! He has come, his shadow lies across the streets and you have errors to amend. The cycle has come to end, the chase finishes with the fox's flesh pulled from his bones by the dogs. There will be a sign and you will know the time has come."

If they ask who has come, his eyes roll back into his head and he begins to shake, "Thirty six moons he lived with the Scorpion, his history was recorded with blood... I cannot speak his name for to do so invites him. I will not have him know of me. Then I would truly be among the insane."

Depending on how you decided to play this scenario influences what happens next. If one of the PCs saw the true face of von Reibelstein then Otto shouts their name before falling comatose, dribbling from the mouth, his eyes vacant. If however Otto is the guard then he passes his burden on. One of the PCs will experience a vision showing them the true face of von Reibelstein, the demon Xxaster. Choose well, for this PC may become the sole way of stopping the Warlord's return.

The vision happens as such: After Otto has finished his rant, the PC suddenly sees a Raven fly at them. The other PCs see them duck suddenly and cry out in shock. He is granted a vision of what Otto saw that night. This is the story from the beginning of the scenario on page 18.

SCENARIO TIMELINE

This is to help GMs keep track of what is going on. Change events and times as you see fit.

DAY ONE

- Morrslieb is almost full.
- Afternoon: Meet Dwarf Miners
- Encounter Gypsy
- See Coach
- Evening: Enter Obelheim
- Meet Goodman Renold
- Night: The Attack

DAY TWO

- Morrslieb is full in the sky.
- Morning: Ambush at Mill
- Blacksmith
- The scholar
- Evening: Explosion at mine
- Karl kidnapped
- The Ceremony

The PC must make a Cool test or gain an insanity point. The vision ends. One of the other PCs hears Otto mutter calmly "Thank you my lord", before peacefully dying. What has happened to the PC will not be apparent to them quite yet but you should have some fun watching them worry.

If they came here at night then there is little option but to return to the inn. Otherwise they are free to continue their investigations.

The Attack

Whichever inn the PCs decide to stay, Kabil arranges for them to be attacked in the night. However, his plan is actually to lure them outside of town and capture them. The four attackers are locals, ex-miners, desperate for money who don't care what they have to do to get it. They were hired by Alberto Klaudius who has given them the description of the relevant characters. He was hired by Kabil who gave very specific instructions on what he should do. Kabil is under no illusions to the miner's abilities and expects them to fail. His plan is for the PCs to follow the trail to him where he will ambush them. The men have orders to grab the character who saw the true face of von Reibelstein and take them to a location near the west gate. He has men waiting there in the unlikely event they should succeed.

Near midnight Kabil finishes casting a spell, one that takes him over an hour and tires him greatly. The effect is very simple, he casts a sleep spell upon the inn and all the inhabitants within. The scale of the spell does have some effect on its strength. All PCs currently sleeping are required to make a *Willpower* test, all others get +20 to the roll. Those that fail fall into an unnatural slumber, their dreams filled with blood. Assume all NPCs have failed unless you need them to be awake (if all the PCs fail for example). Just after midnight the four would-be kidnappers break in through the kitchen door. They then make their way to the PCs room, although they are not exactly stealthy. Any PC who is awake gets two *Initiative* tests to hear them. Once the four have entered a PCs room they will grab the first character remotely matching the description they have been given and run.

Kidnappers

W	WS	BS	S	T	W	I
4	33	25	4*	3	6	30
A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fcl
1	26	28	28	32	35	31

Skills: Mining, Very Strong*

Equipment: Hand Weapon, leather jerkin

The four men are ex-miners desperate for a job. After being fired from the mine they have, as with many others, struggled to make ends meet especially where they have a family (as three have). They are nervous about the job but accepted as they trusted Alberto Klaudius.

Any of the four that are captured will tell they were hired by Alberto Klaudius, an ex foreman at the mine. They were given a description of the PC and told to take him to the west gate. They each were to receive 10GCs for the job. If handed over to the watch they will be thrown in jail, but if someone was killed then they will be hung. If there are only bodies left, the inn staff recognises one as Peter Jackov, right hand man of Alberto.

Alberto

A miner for over thirty years, twelve of which he was a foreman, Alberto is well known about town. He is highly respected by the men who worked with him as he had their best interests at heart. He often argued with the representatives of the Baron on their behalf, escaping censure as it was recognised he encouraged workers to

produce good results. When he was a young man he visited Nuln where he fell under the angry words of a street corner Agitator. He took the revolutionary ideas with him and has carried them out in his own small way. Over the years he has taken part in various thefts from the mine reasoning that it was the profits the workers deserved. Much of it did find its way to the miners and their families (especially when a miner was killed). Nevertheless, Alberto made good money himself and now lives in a good-sized house near the West Gate. His wife died three years ago and he has spent the time since fighting against the mine take-over. Since failing in that he has tried to look after the men as well as he can, finding them jobs and supporting them.

Kabil approached him with a job for four men in which they would earn good money. They were to kidnap a certain man from the inn and take him to Trager's Mill. Kabil said the man wouldn't be hurt and there was little was little danger to the men. The man (tall, blond hair, pale) was a stranger to Alberto and gave him a handful of small gems (50GCs worth) as a deposit. They were taken from a chest carried by a servant which Alberto saw was full of them.

When the PCs arrive at his house they see a single light through the curtains but all else is quiet. The backdoor lies slightly ajar and from inside can be heard a faint moaning. Alberto lies in a pool of his own blood, obviously in great pain. He has been beaten and cut in a number of places although he is lucky no wound is serious. He was attacked after sending the four men off and has lain here in great pain since. He was attacked by five men, their faces hidden by red hoods. In fact the men did enough to Alberto to make it look bad and incapacitate him, but not to leave him in any real danger. Any character with Heal Wounds, Surgery or Torture skills with this suspicion will be able to confirm this is the case and he could stay in this state for hours.

If the PCs discover this they are likely to suspect they are being set up for a trap. They would be right. Kabil is hoping to lure them to Trager's Mill to kidnap his target and dispose of his comrades.

Trager's Mill

Kabil has set up his ambush a mile outside of town. If the PCs do not show by mid morning he will abandon the attempt. He has a scout watching the road ready to warn him of any approaches. Trager's Mill has been abandoned for over twenty years. There are rumours that the previous owners disappeared one night and the place is now haunted. Local youths sometimes come here on dares, otherwise it is left alone. In fact, the previous owner ran away to avoid his debts after the mill became unprofitable. This was due to the river that powered the water wheel growing smaller. Now, the wheel doesn't even touch the water.

Kabil's men are scattered throughout the building and surrounding woods, while he waits a little further back. There are twelve of them in total but the figure should be adjusted as you see fit. If the PCs don't arrive he leaves just one man to keep an eye on the building. The men are well hidden, covered in black cloaks. They are under orders to wait until the first PC enters the building then to hit the others with crossbows before charging. Kabil will attempt to cast *Steal Mind* spells to disable his opponents. After four of his men have died Kabil will order them to retreat.

W	WS	BS	S	T	W	I
4	40	25	3	4	8	30
A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fcl
1	35	30	28	35	28	29

Skills: Dodge Blow, Street Fighter, Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Stun

Equipment: Leather Armour, Shield, Sword (Brand New), Crossbows

These men are all Sylvaniaian and like many of their brethren are simple, superstitious and tough. They are loyal to Kabil and follow his word to the letter. Torturing them for information will take longer than the PCs have got. All the men have an insignia or tattoos of a red Scorpion. Characters with Theology, and others succeeding with an Intelligence test, recognize it as a sign of Khaine.





All Kabil's men have newly forged weapons. Indeed, inside the mill are two empty boxes, each with oiled cloths of the kind used to protect swords. One box still has a sword inside, its blade slightly cracked. These were made by the local blacksmith to replace the group's collection of old and battered weapons.

The Blacksmith

While in Obelheim the group have been using the blacksmith's to hide out. There is only one in the town and they forced him to make the new swords for them. Three young cultists have acted as his apprentices and kept an eye on him. When the PCs arrive they will be greeted coldly. The three know enough to shoe horses or perform minor repairs but will say they are too busy for anything else. If the PCs take the time to look they will notice the three look distinctly nervous. Indeed they should, for they have just murdered the blacksmith. His body has been pushed behind the forge and they intend to burn it at first opportunity. If he is discovered the three will make a run for it. If there is a fight, locals will call the watch. PCs may well be seen as the guilty parties unless they are careful.

Hidden in the main room of the smithy are a dozen bedrolls with a few other odds and ends, nothing of any purpose. Inside a storeroom is a chained a young man, a gag stuffed in his mouth. Dressed in poor peasant clothes, he is not yet out of teens and has been badly beaten. When freed he will happily blurt out his story. His name is Marko and has travelled here from Sylvania, sent by his grandmother. She is a seer who "sees the future and past as if they are now". In a vision, granted Marko says by "the Lord of Dreams", she had seen "the end of the von Reibelsteins would happen at the same time they were reborn". He was supposed to watch and report what happened. He knows the men that captured him were Sylvanian, led by a tall blond man. He overheard them talk of Khaine, also mentioning a "site of significance". The leader believed Khaine had sent them to this town so the site could be used in their coming ritual.

In the blacksmith's own room (taken by Kabil) there is an oak box containing a set of pens and paper. One has the beginnings of a letter ("My Dear Lady, Again I write..."). Also inside, is a gauntlet marked with an ancient looking coat of arms. Players will not recognize it as the ancient von Reibelstein coat-of-arms, long out of use.

The Descendant

Countess Heniretta von Reibelstein is a direct descendant of the long dead warlord. Her retinue of guards are loyal and skilled and any attempts to force their way through to her are met with violence. However, they are not stupid either and will attempt to avoid combat. Getting in to see the countess will be difficult at this stage of the scenario. The earliest they will have any chance of an audience is mid-morning after the day they arrive. Until this point she is exhausted, both from the journey and stress of the attack. However, players that come up with a good reason or a convincing story to give to the guards will be admitted to her presence. They will be brought into the inn's common room where she will be seated regally upon a chair, Karl standing at her shoulder, two guards within reach. The room is lit by candles, the window shutters firmly closed.

She is a good woman as nobles go, trying not to inflict too many burdens on her subjects and with a generous and brave nature. Thin and pale, but possessed of a fragile beauty she is afflicted by a hereditary disease meaning she cannot tolerate sunlight. This has effected many generations of the family and has thus led to rumours they are Vampires. Investigations by clerics of Morr have proved this false and indeed a trusting relationship has grown up between them. She is travelling with her son Karl, heir to the title. He is twelve years old and suffers only a minor version of the disease. He shows a strong personality and is very protective of his mother.

She has come to Obelheim after receiving a mysterious note (Player Handout One). With it was a gauntlet bearing the ancient insignia of the von Reibelsteins (it makes a pair with the one to be found at the blacksmiths). The gauntlet is certainly ancient and the family records showed the cost-of-arms was correct. Few could have fabricated such an item. In fact the note was sent by Kabil of the Red Robe, High Priest of Khaine. He knew it would lure her to Obelheim, where if necessary he could take her son (who never leaves her side). He arranged the attack on the coach on the way to town to try and kidnap Karl.

The Invitation (Player Handout 1)

My Dear Lady

Events concerning the von Reibelstein family will be undertaken at the town of Obelheim in Stirland. Your presence is sought at the town before Sommerzeit 31st. I enclose a token I hope you will accept as a sign of my genuine goodwill to your family.

A friend

If the PCs manage to convince the Countess they are on her side, or at least have the same common enemy, she will answer questions as to why she is in Obelheim. Although the family has long managed to overcome the burden of the von Reibelstein name, they have passed down the knowledge of his dark deeds. They have also attempted to keep watch for those who would use his name for their own ends. However, it had almost become a fairy tale until her father began to research it once more. He had been driven to investigate the family's dark history by the words of a seer, although these are not recorded. His investigations led to the discovery of a tome, one

she believes to be have been a bible of Khaine, in the family vaults. This was handed to the Temple of Morr for their investigations. She has continued his research and has a collection of relevant papers (Player Handouts 2 & 3) and a portrait of the count (see picture above).

The Notes of Bragnah von Reibelstein (Player Handout 2)

My series of interviews with Templar Karr Ternam is now over. The discovery of the hidden chamber in the vaults, and the tome hidden there, offered us the possibilities of discovering the true nature of the shadow that hangs over this family. I have recovered from the journey to Altdorf but I had to insist they bowed to my request. After delivery of the tome once belonging to Kabil of the Red Robe, the Temple investigated its hidden secrets and have come to some grave conclusions. I trust Ternam but it was obvious he could not tell me the whole truth and that they certainly would not countenance return of the tome. Hints dropped by Ternam lead me to believe they indeed intend to move the remnants of my cursed ancestor from the mausoleum in Altdorf but there seemed some resistance from the cult hierarchy. Luccini seems the likely destination.

From what I read myself and Ternam tells me it seems likely that the demonic spirit bound to my ancestor was trapped with his remains. Knowing the name offers power over the spirit, but of course this brings its own dangers. Its weakness is the sight of its true face for that allows it to be struck down. It seems Kabil was ready for the possibility of the Count's demise and his incantation was prepared. The destruction of the body was only temporary for with freely given blood he would rise again unseen. However, the spell came with limitations. The temple can only guess at them but it seems that if the resurrection ceremony is somehow interrupted then 'all those who see' must be 'made blind' or the Spirit will be trapped to wander the earth for eternity. However, it seems likely that it would be an immensely destructive force. Ternam also spoke of a second way for the Spirit to regain form but one with an inherent weakness. He was reluctant to tell me what this way was and I see why. It will not be repeated and will die with me...

What Ternam did not mention, and I fear to, is the words of the old woman, the Seer in the woods. A day when his name will be known again.

The Lost (Player Handout 3)

By Franco von Plunder

*Thirty six moons he lived with the Scorpion,
Then history was recorded with blood,
Ink of innocents,
This bloody shadow,
This cursed soul*

*The Raven came,
Its eyes saw the armour's weakness,
And plunged in the sword,
For it truly knew,
This cursed soul*

*Now it is overcome,
Its blood is dust,
The life of the Scorpion is lived twice,
And history will choose to remember,
Either the Shadow or his cursed name*

Chapel of Morr

Once the players reason that Khaine is the power behind this then it is likely that they will head to the Chapel of Morr. The graveyard outside the town is small and rundown. However, the section near the gate is well-tended and planted with fresh plants. Nearby is a set of gardening tools. The chapel is a small building, home and workplace to young initiate Klaus Junger on his first posting. He is happy to talk to visitors, feeling somewhat lonely away from his fellow initiates. The previous

incumbent "joined our lord" recently, leaving the chapel and graveyard in a poor state. Inside the chapel is bare and cold. The only items of interest are a small selection of books kept by the late cleric, a keen scholar. He had amassed an interesting library which Klaus will allow them to look through. Only if they are looking for information on the von Reibelsteins will they come across an relevant entry in The History of The Empire, (Player Handout Four, unusual because it only has the forename stricken). If the PCs ask Klaus what he knows of local history he says he doesn't. He suggests they ask the Cleric of Ulric, "a friendly old chap, seems to have been here years" or the local Baron.

If asked, Klaus has never heard of the von Reibelsteins or anything similar. He believes the story is probably exaggerated. If he helps the PCs or not is up to the GM to decide. If they don't need his help make him timid and nervous, looking just for a quiet life. Otherwise, he is still nervous but tries to overcome his fears. In truth he won't be that much use either way.

The History of The Empire (Player Handout 4)
Various parts of the text, those mentioning the Count's name, have been carefully scoured away (shown as "X"s).
Count xxxxxx von Reibelstein

Reibelstein lived in the thirteenth century, his blood from a long and distinguished Sylvaniaian lineage. However, even then their enemies whispered the blood was weak, too much inbreeding producing feeble and warped children. Outwantly, xxxxxx was no such child, and grew to be a warrior and leader of renown. Victories against the orcs made him famous across The Empire. What such didn't tell of was the local conflicts he won in expansion of his territory. Each victory brought an aftermath of blood letting and plunder as his enemies fell before him.

It was at the victory celebrations of one such battle that he was brought down, poisoned by the wife of the Count whose castle he had just taken and whose head was to be found on a stake in the courtyard. Blood seeped from his skin as he was carried home, Reibelstein had longed been fascinated by the stories of the Vampires that caused the peasants to lock their doors at night. Forsaking the gods, he sent his servants to offer gifts to each of the families rumoured to be of the Undead. None would accede to such a request for all were godly citizens of The Empire.

It was then the blind healer came. Known as Kabil of the Red Robe he cured Reibelstein of his affliction. However, those who knew him said he was not the same man. Appearing at the head of his army dressed in red armour and carrying the banner of the Scorpion he brought terror wherever his shadow fell. Kabil stood at his side, and battle after battle was won. His victory against the von Carstein family finally brought Sylvania under his control. Believing Reibelstein was a Vampire he was surprised when the Count led his army across a shallow river at midday into the rear of his army, breaking it asunder. Sylvania became a land of terror, covering under the red shadow of Count xxxxxx von Reibelstein. Peasants refused to speak his name fearing it would summon him to their home and invite destruction, for he often came to villages in the night and satisfied his lusts.

With Sylvania under his control he looked towards Stirland. Having suffered devastation from the Black Plague the Graf of Stirland Ragot von Matterburg saw such movements with worry. The Elector decided to send a group to murder von Reibelstein. The assassins entered the castle and were all but destroyed. The only survivor told that von Reibelstein had made a pact with Kabil, a high priest of the god of murder. Von Reibelstein's army approached Stirland and defeated the small army sent against them. The survivors told tales of Reibelstein fearsome in his blood armour slaying all before him. However, Graf Ragot Matterburg of Stirland had sacrificed his men to allow a second group to get near. The group, led by a Templar of Morr, entered the General's compound, killing each servant they found, noticing all were blind.

They found the Count with his advisor Kabil and struck down the healer. It was then they saw the true face of xxxxxx and some were sent mad by his visage. Their struggle was titanic but they slew

the Count and his reign was ended. His flesh was burned and ashes collected to be taken to Luccini. However, they were not to know until too late that Kabil had survived long enough to invoke the dark gods in a bid to save his master. The terms he made with the forbidden ones were tortured from him and recorded, to be kept in secret. Thus, the bloody reign of xxxxxx von Reibelstein came to an end. The loyal band of his followers who served him in life escaped never to be heard of again.

The Local Count

Baron Roberto von Obelheim lives in a fortified and impressive manor house currently under guard by a bunch of watchful heavies. They have been hired in addition to the normal guards to frighten off angry miners from doing anything rash. The PCs will be able to knock at the door under their watchful eye. It is answered by a footman who says that the Baron is in residence but is seeing no one. He cannot be convinced to let them enter. However, if they mention they are after local history on the town or von Matterburg he will again deny them entry but as they leave he summons them back. "I know someone who can help. Wait for me, I can leave in a couple of hours."

The Scholar

The footman Peter, will take the PCs to his father Kasper. The old man spends his days in bed, his legs wasted away. His only pleasure in life is receiving visitors, although he has precious few. He is an educated man, proud of his son but somewhat disappointed by his choice of career. He worked at the University of Nuln for many years but his passion was the history of his hometown. However, his vast knowledge is anecdotal and to be lost with his death. He is happy to talk at length to the PCs.

"It was more than a 1000 years ago when villages stood where the Talac now flows. The winter had been hard and when it didn't break many cursed Ulric as they gave offerings. In Talabheim it was worst, the food had run short and people died in the streets. However, help was on its way. Obel von Matterburg, generations before the family gained the Electorship of Stirland, had travelled throughout the winter to get supplies. Even though the great river was frozen Obelheim brought wagons filled with supplies to the great city. However, in the forests, servants of chaos also went hungry. News of the caravan reached them and a horde of twisted beastmen marched to ambush them. Battle was joined and soon Obel realised he could no longer win. With twenty men he turned to hold the attackers off. His sacrifice allowed the caravan to reach the city and many lives were saved. When Ulric forgave the people, the snows thawed and the widow of the great hero came to find his body. It was found under a rotting pile of the corrupted warriors, untouched by Taal. She took his body and buried it by the side of the Talabec. From that day forward she watched under the protection of Ulric and tended his grave, building a monument to his memory. Those of his followers who survived came with their families and a town grew around his resting place."

The old man has heard the von Reibelstein name. It was connected with his research into the von Matterburg family but he can no longer remember the context. However, the one book he does own (a gift from his father is Noble Families of the Eastern Empire) does contain information on the family (Player Handout Five).

Noble Families of the Eastern Empire (Player Handout 5)

Published IC 2307

The Sylvaniaian family of von Reibelstein have a long and often disreputable history. Currently they have revived their fortunes by trading through Talabheim, using strong connections with the influential von Syberg family. They have been lucky to have escaped

their notorious past. The Bloody Shadow that brought Sylvania under the von Reibelstein control a millennium ago was at an end and many called for the family to be destroyed such was the people's fear. The proclamation of Count Hansvelt von Reibelstein to ban any mention of his cousins name or deeds were taken seriously and the name was scratched from all books and parchments. Hansvelt was rumoured to have brought his own destruction. For after mentioning the name he was found slain in his room, the forbidden name scrawled on the wall in his blood.

The von Reibelstein fortunes of recent times were revived by Count Dalmat II after he presented himself at the Emperors Court "to revoke slanderous allegations of my noble blood and the belief we eastern brethren are of Vampiric nature, disgusted to Morr." Although he was accepted to courtly life the family are known to be plagued by hereditary illness.

If the players haven't been to the Chapel of Morr the old man will say that more information may be gained there.

Blood Moon

Some time after dusk, the PCs will feel the ground shake. Tiles fall from roofs, horses are spooked, drinks on the edges of tables fall to the ground. The locals, looking for omens in everything, are fearful of what has happened. Some speculate a meteorite may have fallen to earth but few other ideas are forthcoming. A few minutes later their fear turns to terror. In the night sky Morrslieb is slowly turning red, a process completed minutes later. The town reacts with panic. Children are pushed indoors by their parents, shutters are closed, doors are bolted and worse will be expected.

In fact the cause is simple. The mine at Gral Vorheim has exploded and sent red ore into the sky. However, this event does herald dark events. The blood moon is seen by Kabil as a good omen, it also features in a prophecy known to the Temple of Ulric. Soon after the moon turns red, Kabil makes his attempt to kidnap Karl von Reibelstein, the vessel to hold the dark soul of his lord.

Kidnapped

The climax of the scenario comes the second night the PCs are in town. Pulling together the clues they should realise the Countess's son is in danger. However, they will be too late. It is the night of the thirty-sixth moon since the spirit of von Reibelstein was released from his prison. Before the sun rises again the spirit must be bound to physical form again, whether by sacrificing the one who saw the original ceremony or by taking possession of his descendant. If the relevant PC has been captured then he will be killed at the ceremony. Otherwise Kabil will cut his losses and attempt the lesser of two options starting by kidnapping Karl von Reibelstein.

Kabil leads the attack himself, although careful not to get into much danger, but over-confidently believing the blood moon to be an omen. The cultists have the element of surprise but the Countess guards are also split up this time. The one guarding the door is easily despatched and the one inside the inn's common room is taken out with Steal Mind, the men pouring into the inn, the staff easily and quietly killed. The battle with the other two guards is brutal and bloody, Kabil losing two more men but he was enough to make the difference. Karl wounded a cultist but was easily overpowered while the Countess begged for his mercy. They then head straight to the tomb of Obel von Matterburg.

When the PCs arrive they find the inn seemingly in peace and quiet, ignored by the locals who have heard of the strangers taking the place for themselves. Inside much of the floor is covered in blood. One guard is propped in a chair, blood dripping down his arm from his slit throat. The other lies on the floor, numerous cuts

over his body. At the bar and in the kitchen lie the landlord, his wife and two staff. All are hacked to pieces. The cook has a ripped red hood in his hand. Blood trickles down the stairs, the sprawled body of a cultist half way up. The remaining guards and cultists are spread around the hallway. One guard is still alive but is beyond help.

One door in the corridor has been kicked from its hinges. Inside the Countess lies passed out. She can be easily awoken with cold water. Both her and the dying guard can tell them what happened. After Karl left the room Kabil knelt down to talk to her. "You fight me now but soon you will be proud of your blood. Your son will meet with his ancestor in a blessed union. We shall undo what was wrongly done in sight of the enemy's father. How utterly proper. Then the shadow will rise again."

Kabil's speech is the clue to stopping the ceremony. As with all villains egotistical enough to gloat he has no idea his words contains clues to his downfall. The vital part is "in sight of the enemy's father". This alludes to the "father" of Count Ragot von Matterburg, in this case his ancestor Obel von Matterburg, who is buried in the town. Any local will be able to tell them his tomb is at the Temple of Ulric.

The Mine

If the PCs decide to travel out to the mine they find the miners in confusion. A gunpowder store has blown up killing a number of dwarfs. The others are milling about in shock, although there is a determined effort to get to a group of survivors. The PCs will need to be diplomatic when talking to the miners, as the word sabotage is not far from their lips. As is to be expected they are all

somewhat on edge.

Temple of Ulric

The Temple of Ulric is a fine building as befits the memory of one of The Empire's heroes. It was built after the destruction of its predecessor. The local nobility invested a lot of money to get it built and the fact it has lasted more than a millennium is a testament to the quality of the workmanship. Compared to other temples it is not that big, just large compared to the size of the town it serves. However, the irony of this monument to Ulric and Obel von Matterburg is that the dead hero does not lie here. The large stone tomb dominates the interior of the church, carved with scenes from his life. His image is cast into the slab.

Currently the temple is served by Father Holt, a very old cleric who although weak is sprightly. He is served by a younger cleric and an initiate. In addition, many warriors passing through the town choose to stay a few days and perform duties here. However, when the PCs arrive Holt is alone, praying at the altar. From his belt hangs a Warhammer and a Knights Panther badge. Before joining the cult, Holt served in many regiments and campaigns before serving in the Graf of Middenheim's personal bodyguard for a decade. He came to Obelheim to see out his remaining years. He requested the post as von Matterburg was one of his heroes and he knew that he could avoid most of the political sniping that goes on elsewhere.

When he came to the Temple, the clerics then serving initiated him into a secret tradition. It was one he was sworn to protect and serve with his life, for it had been handed down since the building of the Temple. Firstly it told that the Obel von Matterburg did not lie in

the Temple's tomb. The clerics had knowingly misinformed the people by request from the Temple of Morr. In addition (and Holt is not sure of its origin) but there is a long prophecy associated with it. It tells that the events of the prophecy are to be set in motion by the omen of the blood moon and the defeat of the Scorpion. It told that a group of "travellers" would come and seek access to the tomb of Obel von Matterburg. They were to be allowed to open the tomb (for they are disturbing no dead in truth) and make use of the truth within.

The timing of the PCs visit to the Temple is of obvious importance. Before the moon turns red and the kidnapping, Holt will happily explain the history of the town and Obel von Matterburg but under no circumstances he will allow access to the tomb, although they may be allowed to search the rest of the temple. However, once the prophecy comes into play he will be waiting for them.

The top of the tomb is heavy and hasn't been moved for years. It will require at least twenty Strength points to move it (Holt has 4 if need be). Inside it is empty, bar dust. However, if you want to give the players some help they discover the shield of Obel von Matterburg. This is magical giving +1 AP and +20 to all psychological tests, although its carrier may not leave battle. Holt makes it clear this is to be returned before dawn.

The secret truth of the prophecy is that the tomb is empty. Simple. Holt knew this but does not know the location of the actual tomb. If the PCs come up with a good idea to work it out let them have it. The most likely route is to ask the old man, Kasper (there is always the gypsy too). He will be able to tell them of the location of the old Temple if asked.

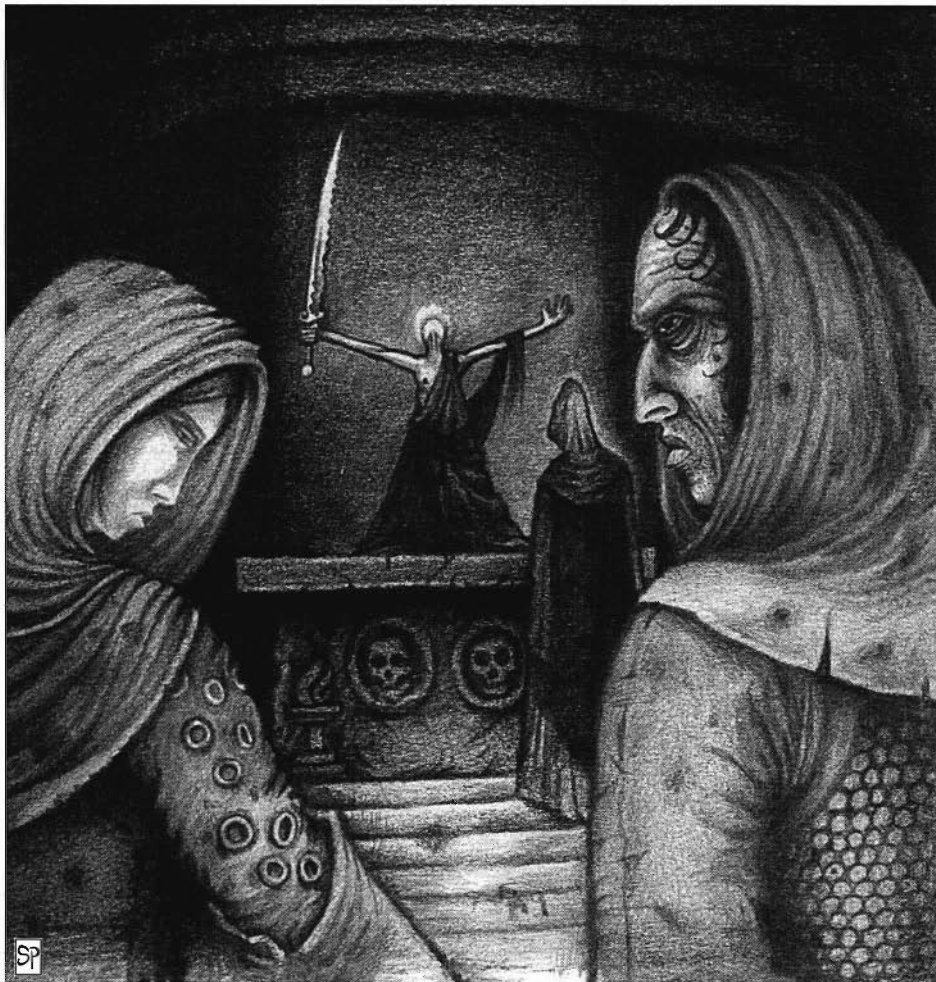
The Chapel

Sitting on the edge of the docks within sight of the Talabec this chapel is known locally as The Chapel of Two Brothers. It is dedicated to Ulric but many leave offerings to Manann. Circular in shape, it is very old and crumbling in parts, being the last remains of the old temple. Opposite the door is a fresco, carved into the wall. It shows Ulric standing proud over the bodies of his chaotic enemies. Characters will recognise the similarity to the statue of Obel von Matterburg. Kneeling in the centre of the floor is a young woman saying a prayer to Ulric. If the players think to ask she does have an Eastern Empire accent. She claims to have been there for hours, praying for her husband, a riverman, to return. In fact she is a follower of Kabil and carries a short sword covered with two doses of Manbane. She will rely on the element of surprise to get in the first blow. The woman has been left here to hide the trapdoor that leads in the tomb of Obel von Matterburg. A square of tiles in the centre of the floor has obviously been recently replaced.

Below the tiles is a cover made of iron, rusted in parts. Its removal reveals a dark hole dropping down ten feet or more. The brick sides are crumbling slightly and there is a faint smell of incense.

The Ceremony

On his death Obel von Matterburg was buried on this spot. His followers dug down and built a tomb placing a small temple to Ulric above it. At the time a stair case lead down for visitors to pay their respects. However, the town was sacked in the late 6th Century, the tomb damaged and the temple destroyed but for a small chapel. Plans for a larger temple where made with the body to be placed at its centre. On the day of its completion a Cleric of Morr refused to allow the body of be moved, instructed in a vision by his god. The clerics of Ulric argued but Morr's followers could not be moved. Hence



the chapel came to mark his resting place and the tomb in the Temple to lie empty.

At the bottom of the hole lies a narrow passage. Anyone with Mining will be able to tell it was hastily constructed a long time ago. At this location the sound of a single voice chanting can be heard. Those with the ability to understand Arcane Language-Magick will recognize it as a summoning incantation. As they pass the bottom half of a blocked off stone staircase flickering torch light filters up the passage. At the entrance of the tomb stand two guards, watching the passage. Unless the PCs have been particularly careful they will have been seen.

Over the shoulders of the two guards can be seen a chamber lit by men carrying torches. In the centre of the chamber is an ornate tomb, a relief of a wolf at both ends. On top has been placed the unconscious figure of Karl von Reibelstein. To one side kneels Kabil of the Red Robe, dressed in a full robe of red his head adorned by a helm with no eye-holes. In front of him is a silver box containing the ashes and spirit of Count Radild von Reibelstein. The number of cultists in the chamber is for the GM to decide, based upon the strength of the PCs. All but two rush to meet the PCs.

Kabil is mid way through the ceremony to bind the spirit of von Reibelstein to his descendant Karl. With the arrivals of the PCs he is placed in a quandary, whether to continue with this or try and capture the relevant PC. In the end he will decide to bind it to the boy, fearful the PCs may defeat his men. Any magic-user's familiar will be able to see the spirit of the Count in the chamber and doing so becomes terrified. Any character with *Magical Awareness* or *Sixth Sense* find they can sense something "bad", their *Cool* and *Willpower* being reduced by 20.

It will take Kabil three rounds to complete his incantation and these don't have to be consecutive. His men should give him enough time to manage it. When the spell is complete the ashes in the box rise in a man-shaped red mist before disappearing. Karl begins to convulse and scream, blood spitting out of his mouth before lying still. Kabil approached the still boy and wraps part of cloak around his head to cover his face. All but the eyes are covered. This takes a further two rounds. By the beginning of the sixth round the boy Karl is dead, his body possessed by von Reibelstein. The player who has seen the true face of Xxaster has the power to really damage Karl, although the other PCs can also do so they will have a harder task.

The Cultists will fight on until Karl/von Reibelstein is destroyed. If this happens Kabil and the cultist know they have lost, although Kabil will not surrender. However, he will offer to cease fighting if they let him escape. He will attempt to any bargain for the chance to flee, even giving up his men

Kabil of the Red Robe High Priest of Khaine

The latest in a long line of High Priests who have taken the name Kabil of the Red Robe. Growing up in Sylvania as a petty thief and then soldier, he showed a nasty streak of sadism. Matched with magical ability and self-discipline he came to the attention of a Champion of Khaine within the army ranks. Seduced by the power he was being offered, his training began. In time he became a fanatical follower of the god of murder. Murdering his mentor he deserted from the army and began to track down the location of the one they called Kabil of the Red Robe. In time he did so and began his initiation. On Kabil's death, he became Kabil of the Red Robe.

Charismatic, handsome and intelligent, Kabil gathered disenchanted Sylvanians to his cause. When required he can pass as nobility, the cold detached

air he exudes - one so familiar to the aristocracy. He began to seek the return of his lord, scheming for his remains to be transferred to Luccini. However, his arrogance would prove his undoing, allowing the ceremony to be observed. Kabil is a powerful opponent, in might and intellect. However, he has weaknesses, he is too quick to respond with violence, over-confident and has little regard for his followers.

His training allows him to wear the helm of Kabil with no side effects. Effectively it means he is blind but he suffers no penalties for this.

W	WS	BS	S	T	W	I
4	54	36	5	4	9	55
A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fcl
2	39	51	57	40	59	35

Skills: Arcane Language-Demonology, Arcane Language-Magick, Cast Spells - Demonic Level 1, Cast Spells - Demonic Level 2, Cast Spells-Battle Magic Level 1, Demon Lore, Identify Plants, Identify Undead, Magic Sense, Meditate, Prepare Poisons, Read/Write, Rune Lore, Scroll Lore, Secret Language-Classical, Specialist Weapons-Two Handed, Theology (Khaine)
Magic Points: 29
Spells: Sleep (1 or special (see earlier)), Ceremony of Von Reibelstein (10AP), Fire Ball (1 each), Hammerhand (2), Steal Mind (4), Cause Hatred (4), Smash (3), Bind Demon (3), Zone of Demonic Protection (2), Stop Demonic Instability (3), Summon Energy (3)

Special Abilities: Can operate blind, thus does not suffer effects of darkness etc. Has also gained the insanity Frenzy.

Equipment: Robes (count as leather), blind helm (1AP), two handed sword, scorpion ring

Von Reibelstein - The Younger

If von Reibelstein possesses the body of his young descendant Karl, he will be vulnerable in comparison to what he will become. Nevertheless he will still be a challenge for the PCs to overcome. His wound score is high because it is still Xxaster they must damage to some degree.

W	WS	BS	S	T	W	I
3	33	28	3	3	17	45
A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fcl
2	30	30	70	70	70	25

Special Abilities: Karl regenerates 3 Wounds a round. Non-magic weapons do a maximum of four wounds. Wounds caused by people who have seen the true face of Xxaster are not regenerated in this way nor have their damage limited. Characters who see Xxaster's face are subject to Fear. Von Reibelstein is also subject to Frenzy. He suffers no penalties for not using weapons. He cannot enter a Zone of Sanctuary.

Von Reibelstein the Reincarnated

If Von Reibelstein has been reincarnated using the blood of the relevant PC, the PCs will have a difficult task on their hands. At first he appears as a slightly insubstantial figure, the red surface seemingly shifting and moving. However he quickly becomes more and more solid. He appears as a tall naked man, powerfully built, his body covered in scars. He is not handsome, more rugged, his eyes are possessed of a cold evil.

W	WS	BS	S	T	W	I
4	59	46	4	5	18	45
A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fcl
3	40	50	70	70	70	35

Skills: Dodge Blow, Strike Mighty Blow, Theology (Khaine), Specialist Weapons - All (except gunpowder)

Special Abilities: The Annihilate Undead spell will cause 2D6 damage. He also cannot enter a Zone of Sanctuary. Immune to non-magic attacks except by those who have seen the face of Xxaster. Regenerates at 3 Wounds a round.

The above abilities are only guidelines and you should feel free to change to suit your PCs strengths. It should not be a hopeless battle but one they can overcome.

Outcomes

There are a number of possible outcomes to the Scenario. If Karl has been killed then it is possible the PCs may be implicated in his death, especially if they act guilty. Informing the authorities of what has happened will give the PCs some uncomfortable moments as they will be disarmed and thrown in jail until the truth is uncovered. However, in the end their version of events will be clarified and if you so choose they should receive a monetary reward from the town.

If Karl was captured then Von Reibelstein may be exorcised from the body. The appropriate parties can be summoned through the Temple of Morr. They may also choose to reward the PCs as will Countess von Reibelstein. However, is the spirit truly banished? If you so desire Von Reibelstein spirit, is now but a weak shade. In time it may regain some power and return to haunt the PCs. If Kabil escapes then he may try and find some way to return his lord, either way gaining a hatred of the PCs.

Outside of Von Reibelstein there are other strands that could be elaborated on. Who caused the explosion at the mine? The dwarfs may be trying to hide something or it may have just been an accident. Nevertheless, relations between the two factions will deteriorate unless someone comes up with a good answer.

There is also the prophecy known to the Clerics of Ulric. What else does it say? Are the PCs involved? If you choose to give them the shield, will they give it back?

Experience Points

As you see fit. Reward should be given for stopping the return of Kabil and saving Karl's life. If the PC who had the power to damage Von Reibelstein performed bravely then they should be well rewarded.

Player Handout Three

The Lost

By Franco von Plunder

*Thirty six moons he lived with the Scorpion,
Then history was recorded with blood,
Ink of innocents,
This bloody shadow,
This cursed soul*

*The Raven came,
Its eyes saw the armour's weakness,
And plunged in the sword,
For it truly knew,
This cursed soul*

*Now it is overcome,
Its blood is dust,
The life of the Scorpion is lived twice,
And history will choose to remember,
Either the Shadow or his cursed name*

Player Handout Two

My series of interviews with Templar Karc Ternaru is now over. The discovery of the hidden chamber in the vaults, and the tome hidden there, offered us the possibilities of discovering the true nature of the shadow that hangs over this family. I have recovered from the journey to Altdorf but I had to insist they bowed to my request. After delivery of the tome once belonging to Kabil of the Red Robe, the Temple investigated its hidden secrets and have come to some grave conclusions. I trust Ternaru but it was obvious he could not tell me the whole truth and that they certainly would not countenance return of the tome. Hints dropped by Ternaru lead me to believe they indeed intend to move the remnants of my cursed ancestor from the mausoleum in Altdorf but there seemed some resistance from the cult hierarchy. Luccini seems the likely destination.

From what I read myself and Ternaru tells me it seems likely that the demonic spirit bound to my ancestor was trapped with his remains. Knowing the name offers power over the spirit, but of course this brings its own dangers. Its weakness is the sight of its true face for that allows it to be struck down. It seems Kabil was ready for the possibility of the Count's demise and his incantation was prepared. The destruction of the body was only temporary for with freely given blood he would rise again unseen. However, the spell came with limitations. The temple can only guess at them but it seems that if the resurrection ceremony is somehow interrupted then 'all those who see must be 'made blind' or the Spirit will be trapped to wander the earth for eternity. However, it seems likely that it would be an immensely destructive force. Ternaru also spoke of a second way for the Spirit to regain form but one with an inherent weakness. He was reluctant to tell me what this way was and I see why. It will not be repeated and will die with me...

What Ternaru did not mention, and I fear to, is the words of the old woman, the Seer in the woods: A day when his name will be known again.

Noble Families of the Eastern Empire

Published IC 2307

The Sylvania family of von Reibelstein have a long and often disreputable history. Currently they have revived their fortunes by trading through Talabheim, using strong connections with the influential von Syberg family. They have been lucky to have escaped their notorious past. The Bloody Shadow that brought Sylvania under the von Reibelstein control a millennium ago was at an end and many called for the family to be destroyed such was the people's fear. The proclamation of Count Hansvelt von Reibelstein to ban any mention of his cousins name or deeds were taken seriously and the name was scratched from all books and parchments. Hansvelt was rumoured to have brought his own destruction. For after mentioning the name he was found slain in his room, the forbidden name scrawled on the wall in his blood.

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My Dear Lady,

Events concerning the von Reibelstein family will be undertaken at the town of Obelheim in Stirland. Your presence is sought at the town before Sommerzeit 31st. I enclose a token I hope you will accept as a sign of my genuine goodwill to your family.

A friend

Count █████ von Reibelstein

Reibelstein lived in the thirteenth century, his blood from a long and distinguished Sylvania lineage. However, even then their enemies whispered the blood was weak, too much inbreeding producing feeble and warped children. Outwardly, █████ was no such child, and grew to be a warrior and leader of renown. Victories against the orcs made him famous across The Empire. What such didn't tell of was the local conflicts he won in expansion of his territory. Each victory brought an aftermath of blood letting and plunder as his enemies fell before him.

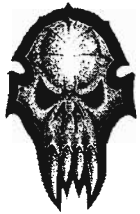
It was at the victory celebrations of one such battle that he was brought down, poisoned by the wife of the Count whose castle he had just taken and whose head was to be found on a stake in the courtyard. Blood seeped from his skin as he was carried home, Reibelstein had longed been fascinated by the stories of the Vampires that caused the peasants to lock their doors at night. Forsaking the gods, he sent his servants to offer gifts to each of the families rumoured to be of the Undead. None would accede to such a request for all were goodly citizens of The Empire.

It was then the blind healer came. Known as Kabil of the Red Robe he cured Reibelstein of his affliction. However, those who knew him said he was not the same man. Appearing at the head of his army dressed in red armour and carrying the banner of the Scorpion he brought terror wherever his shadow fell. Kabil stood at his side, and battle after battle was won. His victory against the von Carstein family finally brought Sylvania under his control. Believing Reibelstein was a Vampire he was surprised when the Count led his army across a shallow river at midday into the rear of his army, breaking it asunder. Sylvania became a land of

terror, cowering under the red shadow of Count █████ von Reibelstein. Peasants refused to speak his name fearing it would summon him to their home and invite destruction, for he often came to villages in the night and satisfied his lusts.

With Sylvania under his control he looked towards Stirland. Having suffered devastation from the Black Plague the Graf of Stirland Ragot von Matterburg saw such movements with worry. The Elector decided to send a group to murder von Reibelstein. The assassins entered the castle and were all but destroyed. The only survivor told that von Reibelstein had made a pact with Kabil, a high priest of the god of murder. Von Reibelstein's army approached Stirland and defeated the small army sent against them. The survivors told tales of Reibelstein fearsome in his blood armour slaying all before him. However, Graf Ragot Matterburg of Stirland had sacrificed his men to allow a second group to get near. The group, led by a Templar of Morr, entered the General's compound, killing each servant they found, noticing all were blind.

They found the Count with his advisor Kabil and struck down the healer. It was then they saw the true face of █████ and some were sent mad by his visage. Their struggle was titanic but they slew the Count and his reign was ended. His flesh was burned and ashes collected to be taken to Luccini. However, they were not to know until too late that Kabil had survived long enough to invoke the dark gods in a bid to save his master. The terms he made with the forbidden ones were tortured from him and recorded, to be kept in secret. Thus, the bloody reign of █████ von Reibelstein came to an end. The loyal band of his followers who served him in life escaped never to be heard of again.



THE ROAD TO DAMNATION

CULTS AND WORSHIP OF CHAOS IN THE WARHAMMER WORLD

BY REV. GARETT LEPPER



A FOLLOW UP ARTICLE TO LAST ISSUES THRILLS OF DARKNESS, IT LOOKS IN MORE DETAIL AT THE MOTIVATIONS AND WORKINGS OF THE CHAOS CULT AND ITS MEMBERS.

"The trail has been long and difficult, obscured by secrecy and darkness; the natural defences of the groups we hunt. But by the guiding light of Solkan and Sigmar we have unearthed their dark devices and overturned the stone of their dank lair. Soon it will be at an end."

Unknown witch-hunter

"We are the mystical beast. Destroy us and another is already in our place."

A brief survey of both official and unofficial WFRP material suggests that every city, town, village and inn in the Old World harbors a secret cult of worshippers of Chaos. This probably reflects the appeal of chaos to game designers and players, rather than those people that would actually live in such a society. One of the first cults to appear in an official publication was in *Shadows Over Bogenhafen*. This scenario offered excellent insights into the activities of these cults and explored some of the potential for the occult in WFRP. However, since then, most of the material has glossed over the background on cults, creating two dimensional cultist stereotypes of robed maniacal madman with little motivation other than undermining society to fulfil the wishes of their gods.

What is not addressed in most of this material is why these people turn to the worship of chaos. How are they initially exposed to this forbidden knowledge? How do they begin their practice? How do they learn the rituals? How do they increase their membership? What price do they have to pay for their knowledge? What kind of people follow them? How do they keep their practice a secret? This article hopes to explore a whole range of topics regarding the worship of those gods best left unmentioned, and aims to not only answer these questions, but offers suggestions for ways in which GMs can best develop and use such groups.

CULTS AND WARBANDS

In Warhammer Fantasy Battle and WFRP there is a focus on the warband that figures so prominently in the tabletop games, particularly in the various editions of *Realm of Chaos*. Chaos Warbands are headed by a Chaos Champion, who has devoted his life to fulfilling the ideals and goals of their god. These warbands tend to gravitate to the Chaos Wastes where they can be closer to the radiating energy of the warp gates, and so that their dark lord's gaze may more easily revel in their deeds. Warbands exist elsewhere in the Old World, particularly in under-populated areas, since local authorities react quickly and decisively when warbands appear in civilised lands. A warband is thus best described as a group of chaos worshippers devoted to their god who act openly and publicly beyond the confines of their society to execute their god's will. They are usually led by a Chaos Champion who openly bears the marks of their patron.

Cults, on the other hand, are very different. A chaos cult is a secret organisation of worshippers of chaos who secretly practice their occult activities and seek to spread

their influence. Cults, like warbands, have a leadership, but this leadership can be composed of either an individual or group. There is considerable more variation in cults than in warbands, and many cult members may not be entirely knowledgeable of whom their leaders are or what the group's true goals may be.

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CULTS AND WARBANDS

Distinctions between cults and chaos warbands are easily blurred. Because each chooses to serve their gods in different ways, these two different groups sometimes choose to interact, pooling together information, talents, and resources. Those cultists who are too warped to continue hiding in society can join the warbands or beastmen in the forest, and warbands can carry information and contraband between cults in different cities. In return, the cultists provide information to the warbands of easy victims leaving the city or of efforts to cleanse the forest. Co-operation between a cult within a town and a warband out of town can be a very powerful relationship.

"Silence is not golden but the worth of knowing to whom you speak is priceless."

High Priest of Tzeentch

CULTS AND THE VEIL OF SECRECY

Cults are defined by their secrecy. Some cults may, in a fashion, be quite public, for example by employing a different cover such as a trade organisation or religious sect. However, even then, their actual loyalties and activities are still concealed from the public. All cults have this paramount concern with concealment, and as such its members must always consider the secrecy of their movement as their main concern. The fewer the members, and the more ignorant of the real goals of the leadership, the more likely the organisation is to remain undiscovered. The whole cult may be enshrouded in secrecy, and the identities of the individual members may be known only by the leader, or possibly by none at all. Information within cults tends to be carefully restricted as well. This may be a hindrance in some aspects, but it reduces the chance of the group's long term goals from being exposed or contested.

Although it is true that chaos cultists revere chaos, they are not fools, and will not consciously compromise their service to their god. Most cults realise that the potential for extended rather than temporary chaos are particularly pleasing to their dark masters, and therefore are quite careful in their behaviour. Few cultists are willing to risk their lives for some entirely public and random act with little benefit to them or the cult. After all no matter how chaotic a cultist is, they are still human beings who will never, while in the flesh, be able to throw off that last semblance of structure that orders human existence.

Below is a listing of various degrees of secrecy that a cult can maintain. These are not absolute categories and a cult may intentionally or unintentionally alter its level of secrecy.

Exposed Cults: These are cults that have been revealed to non-cultists, and are consequently in extreme danger. The cult is either in disorder and disarray as the various members try desperate measures to avoid capture, or

unified and organised against the outside dangers. They may possibly even attempt a coup, a mass flight from the city, a panicked attempt at completing their work, or incredibly destructive magical rites in an attempt to do away with their persecutors.

Overt Cults: These cults have emerged to practice their worship of a Chaos god publicly. If a small village has been destroyed by the plague, and the only survivors are members of a cult of Nurgle, they may perform rituals publicly in the streets and defend this area against outsiders since they view the village as an area sacred to Nurgle. Another opportunity for cults to throw off their cover is when the cult has usurped the power of the reigning religion and converted its followers to the worship of their own god. All practitioners in the cult are by this time knowledgeable of the cult's agenda and the nature of their worship. Such groups surrender the safety of anonymity and can quickly become the targets of persecution. Many cults who reach this point turn into chaos warbands with the ascendance of a Chaos Champion rewarded for their cult's great deeds.

Covert Cults: Covert cults exist secretly, but have a legitimate or criminal institution providing cover. This could be a warrior society, a charitable organisation, a scholarly society, a dock workers union, a trade or merchant association, or even another religion. The largest type of this society to exist was the Pleasure Cults of Ulthuan which was secretly dedicated to the worship of Slaanesh. These societies often have large memberships, but are hierarchical with true knowledge of the society limited to a few leaders or an inner sanctum of devotees. Members often have to pass through levels of knowledge, and at the point of full disclosure it is too late for them to turn back. The secret sanctum or leaders can thus carefully watch the membership for aspiring candidates, as well as the safety of the cover institution that allows for meetings to go on without suspicion. An excellent example of such a cult is in *Shadows Over Bogenhafen*.

Secret Cults: Secret Cults are close-knit associations where no outsiders are aware of the secret co-operation between the cult's members. The cult has no cover, and operates solely in an occult fashion. These cults are by their nature very small, and most of the members have some knowledge of what they are involved in. Any outsiders learning of the cult or its secrets are in grave danger of falling prey to the cult.

The name Mattias Krefeld is either highly respected or reviled in the streets of Nuln. Ten years ago this Witch Hunter arrived in the town quietly, and at the end of the month, in one bloody day, over fifty orphans, street urchins, beggars, and petty criminals were summarily executed by Mattias and his associates. The public was outraged and attacked the inn at which he was staying. The authorities intervened to prosecute him until he produced compelling and stunning evidence that these children had been used by the Skaven as spies and agents. Mattias left the town to continue a highly feared but effective career as political turmoil in the city broke out amongst the embarrassed and humiliated authorities and its outraged citizens.



"It appears the Priest had convinced the group he was the chosen of one they called The Lord Changer, Tzeentch I reckon they mean. Say that again and I'll kill you. Anyway, they'd been following along, giving him what ever he asked for; money, possessions and other, shall we say, more intimate favours. Stop sniggering Kohl! Where was I... So last night he gathered them together for some ceremony. It seems that he showed them his blessing from the god, a group of tentacles in the sign of the god. Well it seems the crafty fellow forgot to glue them on properly this time and the others took some offence to this."

Sergeant of the Watch report to his Captain

LEADERSHIP

Predictably, every cult has a founder, either an individual or group of individuals, and their position, status, and personality will determine to a great extent the form and membership of the cult. Cult leaders who are influential and powerful will recruit from their peers, while those who are popular agitators are likely to draw from the miserable and impoverished.

It is important to develop a thorough description of the leadership and their degree of control. Although there are some characteristics common to most leaders, there can be remarkable differences between them. In vague archetypes there is the conspiracy mastermind, who is powerful, motivated, and dangerous. His influence and status in society is great, and nobody would ever suspect him of such nefarious deeds. There is the opportunist, using the cult for his own purposes, probably not aware of whom is truly being used. There is the devout and religious leader who zealously serves his god leading with a strange and charismatic air, whose devotees are willing to bite out and swallow their tongues rather than betray him. There are always those leaders who are weak, and their organisation is accordingly small and ineffective. Such leaders are likely to be done away with by those more ambitious. What about the occult researcher, who has a very small coven concerned only with the furthering of knowledge? Or the

noble who uses the powers of the occult to further his power in court and maintain a hold on his restless population? These are broad generalisations to illustrate some examples, but each leader will offer their cult strengths, weaknesses, and challenges, and the more developed a leader is the more interesting their cult.

The possibility of multiple leaders adds another dynamic, for there then exists the likelihood of envy and jealousy within the leadership, these tensions adding to the already paranoid atmosphere within the cult. If multiple leaders exist, it is important to explore how they relate to each other, their own dark secrets they keep from their comrades (and those they have not been able to keep secret...), as well as their ambitions and resources. It is possible that an apparent single cult can in fact be two or more hostile cults fractured by a division in leadership.

The current leaders may not be the cult's founders. Create a history for the cult. What happened to previous leaders? Are they still alive? Are their allies still alive and seeking vengeance against those inside or outside of the cult who deposed its leadership? What about the leaders' own individual histories? What about their dark secrets, their old friends (and rivals), and others who are not necessarily associated with the cult but may have a role to play at a later date?

The first issue worthy of addressing is how the leader of the cult came to this knowledge, and their initial motivation. Not every occult leader starts out as a maniacal fiend, and it is recommended that GMs use their early involvement to create some variety between cults. A cult may have some human tragedy attached to it, and those that lead or comprise a cult may never have wanted to become what they are. Listed first are some of the motivations for being involved in the occult, followed by the means of exposure to the occult. Note that there is some overlap since such subjects can rarely be confined to neat categories.

Accidental Exposure: There is a tendency when dealing with Chaos to deal in extremes such as good versus evil. In the case of accidental exposure, this line is blurred. The leader was accidentally exposed to something that increased their knowledge. Perhaps they witnessed a ritual and duplicated it without knowing the consequences, accidentally read a book, or perhaps touched something better left undisturbed.

An example of this would be a Shallyan cleric who was assigned to recover a lost artefact of their church. Sadly, long ago it was subverted by Nurgle, and the artefact corrupts the Cleric. The cleric arrives at towns and villages that are immediately struck by the plague, and believes that Shallya is guiding her through divine revelation and premonition to those areas where her healing powers are sorely needed, not realizing that it is the sacred artefact of Shallya that is causing the outbreaks in the first place. Soon a small and misguided community of folk healers and survivors accompanies

her on her disease spreading pilgrimage, oblivious to the truth and the misery.

Intentional Exposure: Those who actively sought out the secret knowledge. It could have been a desire for wealth, power, influence, revenge, or any number of factors. The majority may have done it for purely selfish reasons, risking their own humanity for momentary gain. There are possibly those who turned to the worship of chaos for unselfish reasons. Maybe the existing social institutions failed them and they resorted to this in a quest for empowerment. An example would be a peasant forced from his land who calls upon Nurgle to strike down the oppressive noble who has exploited him and others for so many years. Although these people act in a misguided fashion for good reason, the taint of Chaos inevitably twists their minds and souls.

No Other Recourse: Some turn to the worship of Chaos because they have no alternative. A perfect example is that of a mutant, who may be warped in body but not mind, but is driven from their home and family, alone in to a dangerous world. Other examples are similar to the aforementioned case of the peasant wishing to strike down an unfair overlord, or a parent praying to Nurgle because their dearly beloved child or spouse is dying. The Chaos gods often arrange such situations where ignorant or desperate people are sorely tested and seduced by the god.

One infamous cult leader was Hans Mueller, a prominent Imperial merchant who resided in Marienburg. At this time a number of atrocious deeds were being committed, and suspicion fell on unknown cultists. Hans Mueller was particularly vocal in his criticism of the authorities, and often while he was addressing the public about one atrocity, another horrible act would be committed by persons unknown. Public outrage was directed at Marienburg's leadership and rioting broke out. It was only when the unknown killer's next would-be victim fought off and killed one of his attackers during the attempted murder that Hans' deception came to an end. The watch arrived to discover the identity of one of the perpetrator of the crimes, only to be astonished to see Hans Mueller's body lying there, for they had just left a rally at which he was speaking. They returned to the rally to see him still addressing the crowds and, in spite of their bewilderment, arrested him. It was then determined in the resulting inquiry that Hans was actually one of two twins (the other his now deceased brother Kurt), who cleverly used this arrangement to create disorder. Hans and a number of associates were executed as cultists of Tzeentch.

Having determined the leader's motivation, it is important to explore the exact means by which they were introduced or exposed to the occult. A listing, by no means complete, is provided below.

Ancient Artefacts: Throughout the Known World Chaos gods and their servants have scattered numerous artefacts for their use and for the unwitting discovery by mortals. These objects can take any form or shape. Weapons, books, scrolls, even clothing can all be used. A creative GM can employ different items, including objects like an accursed coin, whose possessor is beset by all manner of ill fortune.

Once a form is chosen, it is important to decide what kind of an artefact it is. Is it human, made by some ancient race, or daemonic in origin? Mortal artefacts may include, for example, a diary of an occultist that may recount a number of secrets about the cult, so that anyone reading this diary can learn some fundamental tenets and perform some rituals. Ancient artefacts are those whose origins are unknown. Curious scholars have learned more than they wanted to when translating ancient glyphs on a strange item. Such artefacts are often bloated with power after years of occult use. Lastly there are daemonic artefacts, or those that are actually daemonic entities. These are particularly powerful, capable of communicating with and influencing their owner, if not outright possessing the poor soul. Daemonic artefacts are powerful tools, and should be rare in light of this.

The next step is to decide just how informative the artefact is. Did it merely hint at the existence of other gods? Did it contain contradictory, useless, or dangerous information? Maybe the cult is practicing a spurious doctrine or performing unstable rituals outlined in an ancient text. Although there is always the possibility that the artefact contains considerable information, most artefacts are not so informative, due to the secrecy of cults, and merely hint at means of gaining additional information.

The origin and history of the artefact should be considered. Who created it? What was their motivation? Were they still sane at the time of writing or the manufacture? Do they attempt to mislead or curse the possessor of such an artefact? Maybe the artefact was one aligned to another religion, but was twisted through dark ritual to serve the deities of a god. This provides a number of possibilities. Let's reconsider the case of the missing priestess of Shallya who went to recover the lost Shallyan artefact. Is there the possibility of redemption for the priestess and the artefact? Artefacts with a long and troubled history can be hinted at in campaigns only to be discovered at the centre of a cult at a later date. Such artefacts provide considerable atmosphere to a game, but should be kept rare.

Artefacts that inspired the cult are at the very heart of that same cult, and will be kept by the leader. Whether they are a secret known only to that leader and used to ensure their monopoly on power, used in rituals, or one shared amongst its members should be determined by the GM. Such an artefact can add further detail to a campaign, and players may be startled to learn after cleansing a town of a cult that such an artefact is missing, whisked away by a fleeing cultist.

Ancient Writings: The category of ancient writings is covered by ancient artefacts, but deserves special attention. The most effective of ancient artefacts are often ancient writings, since they allow transmission of considerable information. However, many writings may inadvertently give hints about cults, artefacts, and worship. By reading enough literature, it would be possible to read between the lines and draw conclusions. Ancient writings may hint at gods, worship, or rituals

that are attributed to chaos gods but under a different name, and a researcher may be misled into research that benefits gods that the researcher did not want to help.

Furthermore, ancient writings do not have to be texts. Consider the possibility of a grave robber or antiquarian stumbling upon an ancient tomb or barrow, whose walls depict images or writings detailing ancient rituals that were practised there. Yet another pitfall for poor hapless scholars.

Daemonic Influence: In some respects this is similar to ancient artefacts, particularly daemonic ones. A person living in a house under which an Axe of Khorne was long buried might have nightmares at night, and one night murder his entire family. This category however best belongs with daemonologists, who are not chaos sorcerers. Chaos sorcerers have dedicated themselves to the patronage of chaos, while daemonologists dabble about with daemonic powers without hoping to "sell their soul" to any one power. In a sense, chaos sorcerers are priests of chaos gods, while Daemonologists seek to duplicate (in a wizardly fashion) rituals similar to those of the chaos servants.

Daemonologists are in constant contact with daemons and are subject to their influence. Daemons are highly intelligent ruthlessly clever and use their knowledge to manipulate a daemonologist to their service. For this reason many daemonologists succumb to the plottings of daemons, giving their allegiance for greater power and influence that the daemon offers. Many cults are started by daemonologists who become beholden to the daemons they sought to master, and are now driven to fulfil the demands of their new patron.

Divine Inspiration: None truly know the limits of the Chaos gods. Their power can manifest itself in strange ways, and some people, through fate or coincidence, find themselves susceptible to the influence of a Chaos god. An example is a noble dynasty that has long had a reputation for self-indulgence. In a night of particular debauchery a son is conceived, and after long exposure to the continued decadence of the family he has become in effect an "open door", able to channel some of the thoughts and desires of Slaanesh. He may have strange whims and dreams, and the source may never be clear, but the susceptible individual is nudged into a direction and influenced to make certain choices that lead down to a path of service to the influencing deity.

In the aforementioned example, the noble may have a keen sense of intuition, and throughout his life has felt as if someone or something has urged him to perform such things. While browsing in a library, his hand pauses over a book, which when removed from the shelf falls open on a random page of poetry. After looking at the poetry, his hand almost on its own seems to copy down the first letters of each line, hinting at some great secret. His eyes are drawn to images on pages, he finds himself wandering through seedy areas of town, and finds himself drawn to the obscene, vulgar, and lecherous. In such a fashion, the gods create their servants.

Divine Revelation: The notion of Divine Revelation is similar to divine inspiration, the difference is a matter of degree. Whereas divine inspiration is a subtle influence, and the person subject to it may never succumb, or even recognise by whom they are being influenced, divine revelation is much stronger. Divine Revelation is the deity-induced revelation of secret knowledge. A warrior on a battlefield may fall into a berserk rage and suddenly receive visions from Khorne, or a

noble participating in obscene revelry may receive visions at the climax of the experience. The subject of the divine revelations knows that they have been chosen for a special task by a god, and are given secret rituals or knowledge to set them on their path. They may or may not continue to gain knowledge through revelation, and those that do not may still attempt to obsessively perform the behaviours that originally led to the divine revelation, in hopes of further communing with their god.

Divine Revelation strikes specific individuals, particularly those who embody what that deity represents. At times when the individual approaches the ideal of that deity, the deity is able to commune with that individual through empathy. Such an experience is always an awe inspiring one, and rarely mistaken.

A variation on this is insanity, where a person who is insane believes that they have had this experience and act it out, even though their knowledge is wrong or dangerous, and that they were never truly contacted by a god.

Experimentation: Dabbling in things best left unknown has been the downfall of many experimenters. First, determine if the experimentation was meant to intentionally bring one closer to Chaos or an unfortunate side effect. A scholar translating ancient texts or examining reliefs on a wall, a chemist accidentally mixing warpstone-tainted chemicals, all of these can give knowledge or affect one's mind. Magical experimentation can also be a source of unanticipated discovery. Research manipulating time and space with magic may temporarily open a portal in the mind, or actually fling the experimenter's body into the Realm of Chaos for a fraction of a second - long enough for them to emerge changed in mind if not body.

Mistaken Tradition: The chaos gods and their followers can be fiendishly clever, and they have in the past left behind a treacherous legacy: what appear to be legitimate religious practices of certain deities. However, the truth is much darker for these are corrupted texts, doctrines, rituals, and beliefs intended to bring the unwary worshipper further from their god and closer to chaos. In the past many of these heretical groups have been discovered and destroyed by religious authorities who



are careful to monitor those groups that practice unorthodox teachings.

Possession: Possession provides the opportunity for some helpless innocent to become the unwitting and involuntary instrument of evil, and creates a dilemma for those purging a town of a cult. Possession is possible through a number of means. Exposure to a daemonic artefact, experimentation that has gone wrong, entering an area or touching an object controlled by a daemonic spirit, or by being the subject of harmful magic.

When possessed, the daemon can control the victim's body and set about its own agenda, including setting up a cult. Even if the daemon is forced to leave the body for one reason or another, the damage may be done and the possessed victim may find himself or herself driven to continue the misdeeds through either insanity or the belief that they have been chosen for some great task. When adventurers discover that at the heart of a cult is an innocent young cursed eight-year old girl possessed by a daemon summoned through malice, they may seek other solutions than to "burn and cleanse".

Ritual Victim: A child is stolen away from its house at night, only to be discovered wandering naked covered in blood in the streets at dawn. The child seems traumatised, but continues on to a meaningful life, with none knowing that the child has been a victim of a ritual designed to make that child susceptible to possession by a daemon, or an open portal for divine revelation or influence. Another variant of this are rituals performed on a pregnant mother in an attempt to give birth to some avatar or incarnation of a god. This is common in occult lore, but none know for certain if any of these rituals have succeeded.

Socialised: There are those rare people who worship Chaos because they never knew any better. Their parents were worshippers of Chaos, or they were taken at a young age by cultists and raised. Possibly they were struck with amnesia later in life and after wandering about homeless and destitute were taken in and taught by Cultists. The individual has simply never been offered any other option, and this can create a moral dilemma for the players, as well as lead them to the cult that indoctrinated this individual in the first place.

"I always knew which one to approach. You can see it in their eyes. Behind their arrogant façade of velvet, snobbery and rules of etiquette lies lust and desire, suppressed by a thin veneer of civilization. These aristocrats are afraid of themselves and the art is showing them it doesn't matter, only their gratification is important. Paradise is at the end of a path and my lord Slaanesh is their guide."

Taken from the confession of Freida Knopp

MEMBERSHIP AND RECRUITMENT

Once a leader or group of leaders has come across occult knowledge, they will seek to gain some assistance to better perform their duty and spread the knowledge of their dark god. The type of follower is generally dictated by the leader's position in society. If a religious figure, the membership and form of the society will take on that of a variant of a local religion, or a society related to that religion. If a merchant, then the society will be composed of merchants and traders and will probably use the cover of a gentleman's organisation, a trade union, or a merchant supported charity. If the leader is a scholar, their pupils make ideal candidates.

The leader by this time through their own descent into worship should have a good idea for what kind of individual they are looking for, and will carefully watch and manipulate those that seem susceptible or amenable to the influence of their god. Information is slowly

CULTS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

It would be a grave mistake to assume that all cults are in urban areas. The truth of the matter is that cults have long existed in the countryside. Where they are more commonly known as covens, and members are known as witches if female, and warlocks if male. Folklore claims that they practice their misdeeds at night in forest clearings, consorting with beastmen, and invoking daemons and mischievous imps, whom they sometimes bind as familiars.

disclosed to the possible member, to see if they are likely candidates. Those who are deemed unworthy are hopefully told little else, misled, or murdered.

Once a cult begins, the first members tend to be the most trusted. These early members form an inner sanctum, with others again looking for new members with the approval of the leader. This inner sanctum provides the manpower for recruitment and performing rituals, and those who are particularly effective are sent elsewhere to start up related cults, which they can then form with themselves as the new leader.

There tends to be considerable solidarity within this group. They see themselves as the privileged confidants to the leader, and they possess considerable influence within the cult. They may not however be privy to all the secrets or knowledge of the leader. It should be noted that those most likely to challenge the existing leadership are likely to come from this group within the cult, and it is critical for a leader to command and maintain the respect and fear of those within his inner sanctum or council.

Those cults that use some sort of cover institution often have additional casual membership, some who are simple functionaries and members of the cover organisation, such as the Lady Agnes' Soup Charity, people who believe that the organisation has one sole and public purpose. Then there are those who are invited into an inner circle, who know that there is a secret dimension to the society. They may simply believe that it is a power or influence brokering group, or even a criminal organisation, for the real secret is still beyond them. Through careful testing and manipulation, these members may eventually become aware of the inner society and the group's secrets, being officially drawn into the cult. Once within the inner circle they may still never learn the true motivations of the leader or the group's true character.

Some groups may require some sort of initiation at each stage, whether it is tattooing or a form of sacrifice, such as that performed by the Purple Hand Cult, or a criminal act designed to involve the member even deeper in the secrecy of the group. The type of behaviour depends on the group, its secrecy, and its membership composition.

CULT HAVENS

Cult Havens are those areas where a cult carries out most of its activities. Where and how often they meet are important questions, as is where the artefacts, vestments, temple and altar are kept. **Where a cult meets and where their ceremonies occur are going to greatly depend on the makeup of the cult membership and leadership. Poor cults are likely to meet in sewers, basements, cemeteries, and abandoned houses. The better-off can worship in secure places, warehouses, barges, attics, and offices; while the wealthiest can afford to have meetings in highly secure places like guild houses, mansions, and castles - thereby avoiding any unwanted intrusions.**

The membership should not be robed fanatics at the disposal of the GM or the cult leader. A GM should endeavour to develop the cult membership, in a fashion similar to the cult's leaders. Not every cultist needs to be fleshed out, but certainly the more important members. These could be those members who are powerful and seek to usurp the leadership of the group, or those who do much of the cult's dirty work. Those members capable of betraying the group, or those that feel guilty about their actions, are deserving of more attention, since they are likely to approach investigators. Lastly, eccentric, individualistic, or overly zealous members should not be ignored, since such loose cannons give the cult a personality, provide tension, and are a risk to the cult since their activities and eccentricities may call attention to the cult.

"...fornicating with demons, revolutionary incitement of the masses, murder and blood sacrifice, eating small babies, spitting outside the Temple of Ulric, conspiring to undermine the authority of the Elector(May Ulric protect him!), insulting the good name of the Emperor (May Sigmar protect him!), consorting with sorcerous familiars, worship of unlawful gods, paraphernalia of a outlawed cult, early signs of corruption of the flesh in the form of third nipple (No, you may not see! Guard arrest that boy!), deviant practices with unsavoury women and seen to be enjoying himself on Hexensnacht which can only mean demons were at his beck and call!!!!"

Magistrate reading cultist charge list from gallows

ACTIVITIES OF CULTS

Once a cult has been organised and begins growing, its membership does not simply sit around in robes, wearing goat head masks and performing secret handshakes with each other. They do not spend all their time performing horrid rituals and sacrifices, summoning daemons, invoking their god, and attempting to undermine the fabric of reality. There are also more "mundane" activities that are critical to the security and continued welfare of the organisation, and are taken very seriously.

Acquiring and Manufacturing Artefacts: Many cults realise that the best means of contributing to their god is to leave behind a legacy, and for this reason many spend considerable time gathering together a horde of artefacts so that those that come later may use these resources for the furthering of their god's ambitions. Those cults that are more sophisticated may even create their own artefacts or publish their own related cult literature. These cults are extremely dangerous for the knowledge they have and the powers they can wield are considerable. If the leadership is not particularly jealous or paranoid, the cult will often copy manuscripts and produce occult texts which are then distributed through secret means to other cults or hidden, in the hopes that the dissemination of knowledge will further the designs of their god.

Acquisition of Wealth: The cult will spend much of its time acquiring wealth, demanding tribute from its members, committing criminal acts that will provide it with wealth, or manipulating trade and creating monopolies. With the solidarity of its membership, it is quite easy for cults to share wealth and knowledge to acquire money to fund its other services, as well as provide a luxurious lifestyle for its members. This money can also be used for numerous purposes, including bribes and purchases that the group requires.

Cover Activities: Those cults that have a cover organisation wisely spend time ensuring that the cover organisation remains functional, profitable, and inconspicuous. Merchants will spend their time in trade,

agitators in printing up pamphlets and preaching on street corners. It is important that society at large think that nothing is amiss within this group.

Elimination of threats: There are always the possibility that within the cult there are those have second thoughts, and cult members are always carefully watching for signs of doubt. Those within or without who know or suspect too much, or whose loyalty is questionable are quietly disposed of. Many of the members may have rivals outside the cult thwarting their ambition, and the cult will do away with these as well, especially if the rival of a member is likely to investigate into the member's extra-curricular activities or strange purchases of ancient tomes.

Further Occult Research: Cults are constantly striving to learn more secrets, acquire more artefacts, perfect their rituals. Much of the cult's time and energy is spent in furthering the ends and means of their gods. This is closely tied to the acquisition and manufacture of artefacts and occult knowledge.

Influence Peddling: Like wealth, influence can be critical for the power and welfare of a cult. The group will work secretly to increase their influence, undermining the power of rivals, eliminating superiors, doing away with competitors, and making themselves indispensable to the local populace. A position of high political, religious, or military authority is particularly desirous.

Performing Rituals: For most cults the activity held in highest regard is the performing of rituals. Some may be merely symbolic, while others may be used to open gates, commune with daemons, or perform any other host of magical phenomenon.

Recruitment: The members are always looking for those with special talents or like disposition who can contribute to the organization. This is covered in great detail above, but it must be stressed that particular caution is used in recruitment, and the process can be very slow and methodical.

Spreading Out: Cults like to disperse their power. A single cell of a cult is vulnerable and can be easily weeded out by a single witch hunter. However, if the cult has spawned into a network of different cults, their chances of survival and subsequently passing on their knowledge are much greater.

THE HOUSE FOR FOUNDLINGS

Shock and horror swept through the small town of Kreuenberg one evening when the angry townsfolk rushed to the orphanage on the outside of the town. A small child had fled from there telling the most ghastly of stories - that children of the orphanage had been sacrificed in horrific rituals, rather than dying of plague as previously reported. The child also recounted that some children were given to beast-like men who emerged from the forest near the foundling home late at night.

Upon arrival, the townsfolk discovered the orphanage still and quiet, all of its occupants missing - both the children and their custodian, Hilda Gruener. Suspicious and accusations ran rampant as everyone else suspected their neighbors of complicity, a state of affairs that only ended after a particularly virulent outbreak of the plague struck the town exactly a week after the disappearance of the children and Hilda.

POWER WITHIN THE CULT

Critical to the understanding of a cult is to take into account is how power is dispersed within the cult, for this will structure internal group dynamics. Power, in regards to cults, is particularly focused on those who have knowledge of cult rituals, the membership, and the activities of the cult. Those with access to knowledge are able to use it to further their own aims, as well as make them indispensable to the cult. For this reason the leader, or leaders, of the cult are likely to tightly control their knowledge and access to books and material. They may often add additional or unneeded flourishes, or secretly perform some components of rituals to ensure that the others do not learn the requisite actions.

Access to occult artefacts is another important part of cult organisation, and those with the power are likely to hold and control them, and will be unwilling to trust those beneath them. This atmosphere of denied knowledge and restricted access to artefacts can be frustrating for the membership, and can cause envy and jealousy and other schisms within the group, with sub-groups forming to manoeuvre for greater access to knowledge and power, and the leaders covetously holding on to what they have. This creates an air of paranoia and resentment amongst the membership. Although strong and dominant leaders who can keep their cult appeased with the occasional offering or terrified by the power that can often head this off.

AVOIDING DISCOVERY

Most cults have a crisis at one time or another, where the curious friend, spiteful rivals, pesky adventurers or authorities suspect that not everything is as it seems. Cults that are indiscreet disappear quickly, but those that survive develop sophisticated means of avoiding discovery. Remember that these cults are experienced and accomplished in maintaining their secrecy, and those attempting to discover the truth are up against competent and wily adversaries.

When the cult is being investigated, there are a number of measures it can take. If the threat is not altogether dangerous, it may simply ignore the threat, and continue with its actions, although this is a rather arrogant or dangerous gesture, a decision made with either over-confidence or timidity.

A more common course is to mislead those threatening the cult. One possibility is to hide behind any cover organisation. Better methods are to point at another suspicious but not necessarily guilty party. Those thus used as scapegoats can be other cults or secret organisations, but this can be dangerous, as it is better to convince the curious that there really is no danger at all. The more resourceful cults are able to mislead investigations to other towns or cities, while the truly ingenious use investigations to dispose of rivals through the falsification of evidence, use of rumour, and the planting of suspicious or occult materials. This is probably one of the most effective measures available to cults.

Those without the resources to misdirect investigations of the curious may attempt to evade the threat. They end all their activities and associations with each other and feign ignorance of the cult. If the attention becomes too great, they may attempt to flee to another area, or retreat into the forest seeking assistance there.

Although it is uncommon, cults may also attempt to eliminate those threatening their organisation by subverting them. Blackmail, seduction, bribery, magic, and even possession are all means of turning a rival or a threat into an ally and a member. This is a very dangerous but potentially rewarding tactic for a group to use, and these groups must be extremely competent and manipulative to succeed.

BASEMENT

The authorities made a gruesome discovery while routinely examining the estate of Adelbert Vollermein, a recently deceased and prominent lawyer. While examining the estate for tax purposes, they passed by his cellar and were overcome by an awful stench. Investigating further, to their horror they discovered over a score of bodies. An investigation quickly followed and it was determined that Adelbert was a cultist, and consequently many of his associates were arrested. Half of the bodies were believed to be innocents cold bloodedly murdered by the cult, but the other half were believed to be his own cultists, those whom Adelbert felt knew too much or of whom he was suspicious. His fellow cultists were unaware of their fellows' fates, believing that they had been dispatched by Adelbert to other cities or had, through ritual, ascended into the Realm of Chaos, a belief central to their cult doctrine.

Amongst the more common of methods is to dispose of the threat. Wealthy groups and nobility can incarcerate those close to discovering the truth, or even execute them if the pretext is strong enough. Those with magical abilities can use their sorcery to do away with their hunters, be it through a wasting disease, a daemonic invocation, or warping their bodies through sorcery. The most clever and competent of cultists arrange for those investigating the cult to be exposed themselves as the alleged cultists! This requires careful arrangement and planting of incriminating evidence, although the investigators' policy of prowling about, talking of chaos and nocturnal activities may have already earned them the suspicion of the local community. It helps if, during their arrest, the investigating adventurers are "accidentally" killed whilst resisting. Especially if this can be arranged by the cultists. Those less inclined to such artful manipulations may prefer poison in food, a dagger in the back, or arson. Some see investigators as sacrificial volunteers for the next ritual. Investigators are always horrified to discover that a cult exists, just as they suspected, when they awaken naked on an altar in a basement surrounded by chanting cultists!

BETRAYAL AND DISCOVERY

Betrayal is what all cults fear, for once its intentions and membership is exposed all in grave danger and their work compromised. Once exposed, a cult will eliminate those capable of revealing too much and attempt to limit further damage. Those at risk may flee to a distant but safe location, while others will hurriedly destroy any evidence linking them to the cult. If they have some power or influence, they may attempt to use the authorities to quash any further investigation, although this carries risks.

The greatest chance of discovery is through betrayal from within. Some members become squeamish or uncomfortable with the cult's activities, or their sense of guilt becomes overwhelming. Others may in a moment of weakness or fear let slip sensitive or revealing information. Should such information become public, there are many who welcome such an opportunity to investigate and persecute, whether they be rivals of the cult membership, a religious organisation, civic authorities, witch hunters, agitators, or adventurers.

Over zealous activities may betray them. If a number of ritually sacrificed bodies appears on a regular basis the authorities are likely to investigate, so cults must be careful about their activities. However, some members

seek to continue their research on their own outside of cult activities and this as well can inadvertently bring attention to the cult.

Lastly, the cult may develop internal schisms, whether through theological or practical differences or just plain ambition. Members may attempt to undermine their leadership, killings begin, and the cult is at risk due from internal rivalry and hostility. After a schism develops it is not unknown for cults to expose rival cults to the authorities if possible.

PERSECUTION!

When a cult has been revealed, the success of the persecution depends on the competence and initiative of those pursuing the investigation. Participation in an outlawed cult is usually an offence punishable by execution. Most feared is the persecution by Witch Hunters and other religious authorities. These groups are often hindered by tensions with the local authorities, so their effectiveness depends on their religious power in that area. Witch Hunters with a mandate by the nobility or by a powerful local church can exert extremely broad powers of enforcement. At their most powerful, they may not only investigate independent of any authority, but they may interrogate, torture, incarcerate, prosecute, and even possibly execute the accused with remarkable autonomy. For those Witch Hunters blessed with this power, they are their own judge, jury, and executioner, and are above reproach. This is reserved for the most successful or those where there is a remarkable absence of authority or opposition. Most have their powers limited both in regards to persecution and execution. When the investigation has come up with enough credible evidence, they are usually expected to report their finding to the religious or civic authorities. They may then be given the approval to continue on their own with more authority or expected to co-operate with the authorities.

Witch Hunter's have considerable recourse to acting on their own if they persecute the cult under religious law where secular authorities have very little say. Many acts of heresy or blasphemy can be prosecuted by religious authorities, and under such circumstances the Witch Hunter may prosecute the cults in a religious court, which can execute the cultists themselves or more frequently, turn them over to the secular authorities for punishment. Most trials of cultists investigated and prosecuted by Witch Hunters are done under religious law, and the charges are often 'heresy', 'blasphemy', and 'trafficking with fiends and daemons', all punishable by death.

In some areas the religious authorities are less powerful than the nobility or civic authorities and here there are great limits to a Witch Hunter's or a church's powers. In these areas, the authorities themselves may investigate, preferring not to have Witch Hunters and the ilk meddling in their law enforcing duties. These investigations are carried out by the watch or other agents of the government. Less zealous in their duty than Witch Hunters, they are also less motivated. When a cult is discovered, the charges against them are often "treason", "sedition", "conspiracy with malicious intent or mischief", and "practising a proscribed religion", again all punishable by death.

Responses vary dramatically to a cult discovery. Some investigations are bought off or hushed up by the authorities through blackmail, bribes, or intimidation by the cultists themselves. A handful of cults is prosecuted in an effective and efficient manner, but in reality, this is rare. Most are half-heartedly purged and a few scapegoats who are (or are not) members of the cult executed. Prosecutions and executions may well be a public spectacle intended to strengthen the power of the

authorities, while other trials may be secret and closed to the public. This is out of fear of panic that the presence of a cult may reflect badly on the ability of the government to maintain power.

Not all persecution of cults is necessarily so organised. There are numerous cases of vigilante and mob justice directed against those suspected of cult activities. It should be noted that these are not necessarily effective, and in many cases have been used by cultists themselves to dispose of scapegoats, rivals and even those close to uncovering the secrets of the cult!

CULTS OF EVIL DEITIES

The list of evil deities in the game are few, primarily limited to Khaine, but other versions of evil deities exist in the unofficial literature. These cults are just as vehemently opposed by all law-abiding citizens and are as in great risk as servants of Chaos. Since they worship evil deities, their risk of gaining mutations is much lower, and they are often able to sustain themselves much longer and with greater secrecy than many chaos cults. Organisations of assassins are an ideal example of these types of cults and despite their secrecy gain a fearsome reputation throughout the area. Although the material above covers chaos cults, these cults to evil deities still require secrecy and most of the material above can be easily implemented to further develop them.

ILLUMINATI AND CONSPIRATORIAL GROUPS

Not all secretive groups necessarily worship evil or chaotic gods. Some hoard information or knowledge while others have a political or social agenda best deemed secret, be it the overthrow of the government or the murder of homeless orphans. These conspiratorial groups exercise many of the same measures as cults, and a GM can easily extrapolate many of the suggestions above for such groups. An excellent example is that of a cult of Solkan, which feels that the authorities are too weak and

permissive, and seeks to place its allies in positions of power. Such a group can easily be as dangerous an adversary as chaos.

LESS IS MORE

This article should not be construed as encouraging GMs to draw up elaborate cults in every inn and tavern across the Old World. In fact the one thing that should be stressed is that the fewer the cults, the better. Cults should be invisible, and even if present the odds are the players will not be aware of them for some time. It will require a high degree of initiative, investigation, and luck for them to even develop suspicions about a cult in the area. The older the cult the more effective they are at remaining unnoticed.

Rather than fill the Old World with cults, it is best to develop a few varied cults here and there operating within that region of the Old World even before the campaign begins. As the players develop their characters, the GM should ensure that the cults themselves spread and strengthen, and over a long period of time the characters may grow conscious of these shadowy organisations with their dark motives.

ROLE PLAYING CHAOS CULTS AND CULTISTS

Although there is the potential for abuse and power gaming, a GM may find it rewarding to run a campaign where the players play the cultists themselves. Such a group should be experienced role players who are interested in the idea. This provides an ideal opportunity for the players to be pestered by adventurers and authorities. The players may want to start their own cult, or decide to join an existing one. Either way it is important for the GM to flesh out existing members, providing their motivations, personalities, and resources. This is quite demanding on the GM, as well as on the players for one mistake can spell disaster for the whole campaign.

FURTHER READING

Beastmen: The best information on Beastmen is in *Realm of Chaos: Lost and the Damned*, although the latest edition for WFB has relevant information

Chaos gods: Once again the best source is the original two volume *Realm of Chaos* books. Other sources are *Something Rotten in Kislev* which provides for two new deities and a different type of pact.

Chaos Weapons: Chaos Weapons appear in the *Realm of Chaos: Slaves to Darkness*, and reprinted in *White Dwarf* 103.

Cults: The best descriptive source for cults is the excellent *Shadows Over Bogenhafen*. Also see the *Middenheim: City of the White Wolf* book, under its various different titles that provides additional information on cults. Communication between servants of chaos appears in *Death on the Reik*, and co-operation between cults and warbands is done to great effect in *Power Behind the Throne*.

Daemonic Weapons: *Realm of Chaos: Slaves to Darkness*.

Mutants: The *Realm of Chaos* books contain some information on mutants, but overall the material is too high powered. The best source is *The Enemy Within*, although *Dying of the Light* depicts an unusual group of Mutants.

Possession: Possession rules appear in *Castle Drachenfels*, and in the *Doomstones Campaign*, although daemonic possession is not clearly outlined. Daemonic possession appears as a plot element in *Empire in Flames* as well as in Ken Rolston's unpublished and rejected *Realms of Sorcery*, available on the internet.

Sacrificial Rituals: The best and most descriptive one is in *Shadows Over Bogenhafen*. "Night of Blood" in *White Dwarf* 87 has some details on this, as does The Ritual from *The Restless Dead* and *White Dwarf* 99.

Undivided Chaos: The forces of undivided Chaos is covered in the third and fourth WFB edition *Realm of Chaos* books.



SOLD IN THE HILLS

A scenario by John Foody

"What price freedom?"

Background

This short scenario is designed to be slotted into a campaign at a moment's notice. Locations can easily be changed with little extra work required, although combats may need to be modified to make sure different strengths of parties are challenged.

For twenty years, Theodor Brandeur impotently watched his father reign over the slow decay of the family's land and holdings. The ancient castle, the Brandeur homestead for over a millennium, crumbled slowly, towers and lofts unsafe to enter. Meanwhile, taxes went uncollected and the few commodities the land had to offer started to suffer. Theodor (pictured below with his servant Jurgen) watched his father, suffering from depression and often consigned to his bed, and grew bitter. However, he was in no position to do anything. His elder brother Sven looked likely to continue the downfall, not through incompetence but through disinterest. The Brandeur heir spent his days hunting, gambling and chasing local women. Theodor, meanwhile, was sent to Carroburg to

study as a cleric at the Temple of Sigmar, where he soon found that an initiate's life was not for him. He was too used to the better things, and saw little attraction in the hard work at the temple.

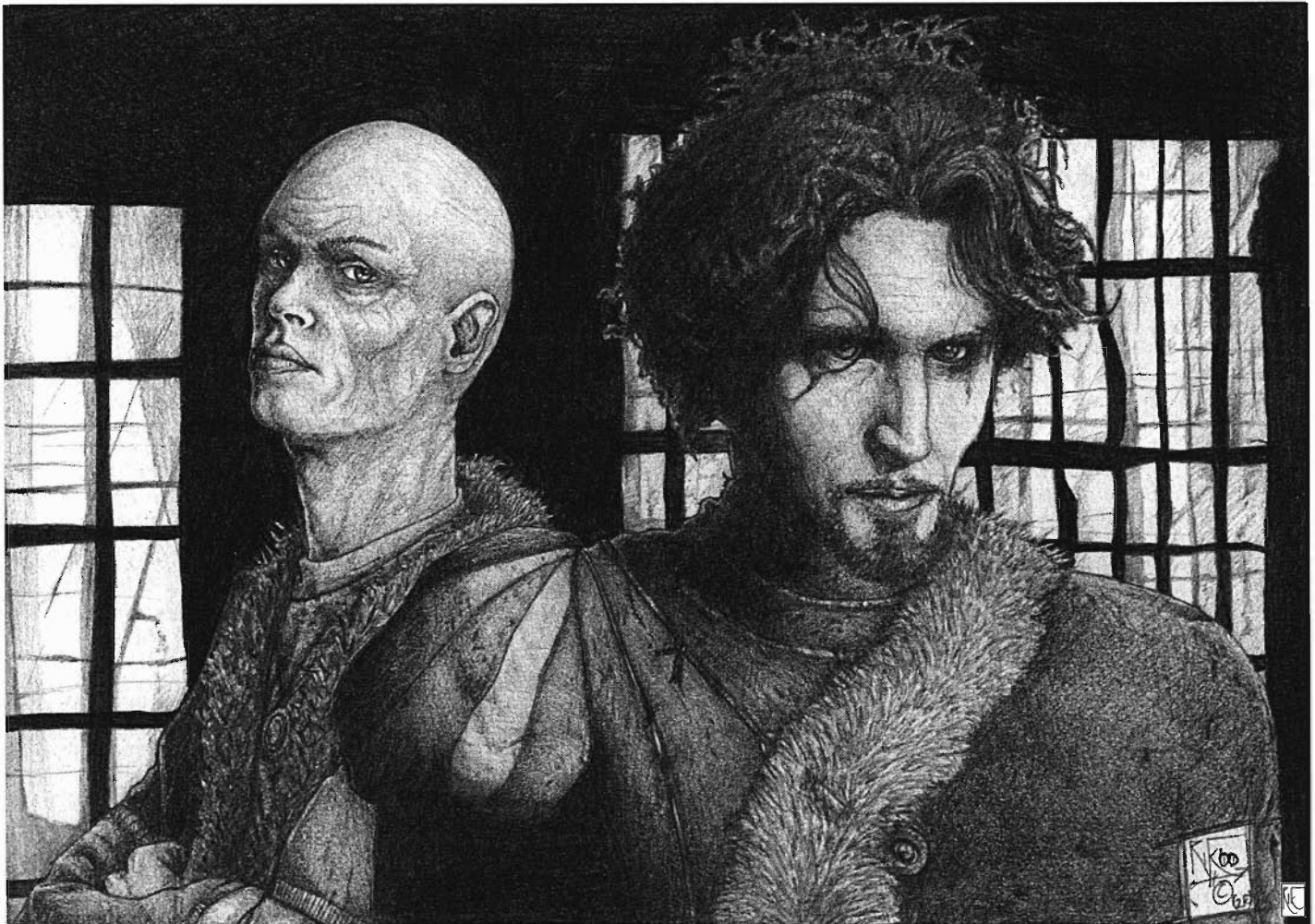
However, all this waiting was about to end. Before long, events would conspire to bring things to a head.

Early one winter morning a messenger arrived to announce that Theodor's brother had died in a hunting accident, and he was summoned home. While in the family forest, Sven had crossed a frozen lake, one unable to take the weight of the rider and his steed. The body was not to be found until the spring. Taking the first coach, Theodor arrived home to find he was the new Marquis, his father having past away in the night. In fact, the old man had committed suicide, a secret kept amongst the family and his loyal retainers. Feeling exhilaration rather than grief, Theodor swore to restore the fortunes of the Brandeur family.

The Brandeur name is old and distinguished. The portraits hanging on the walls are names to be found in The Empire's history books: Soldiers, Politicians, Senior Clerics and Scholars. For three hundred years, the family performed the honourable and profitable post of

Chancellor to the Emperor himself. Theodor had heard these stories as a boy, but he was well aware that mere words would never make him money. Indeed, even the family name carried little currency these days. Examining the dusty records he found that his father was not to blame for the downfall. He had just been the latest in a long line of Brandeurs that had allowed the noble reputation of their ancestors to slip. There were no guilty secrets behind the decline (no more than any other noble family, anyway), but simply uninspired Marquis after uninspired Marquis.

Burning candles late into the night, Theodor planned and calculated how to restore his fortunes. It would require money – something he had precious little of. Things took a step for the worst with the arrival of Lucius von Bruckhourst, a minor member of the powerful Talabheim noble family. The family had heard of the death of his father and had come to pay their respects. He also chose that moment to remind Theodor of the debt the Brandeurs owed his family. It seemed that Theodor's great grandfather Oswald had borrowed money to finance a number of doomed business ventures. Since then, the family had managed to pay the interest on the loan, but never the capital. The family land was the collateral for



this debt.

In the two years following his father's death, Theodor slowly began to bring gold into the coffers. He raised new taxes on the people on his land, cashed in a couple of long-standing family debts (making a few enemies along the way) and even invested in a venture of dubious legality but eventually high profits. Such income was welcome, but never secure. Whilst out riding one day, he came across an abandoned mine on the edge of his land. It had closed down years ago as unprofitable, but with a little research Theodor realised that cheap labour would bring low costs and sustained profit. He also knew where to find the manpower for his scheme.

The harsh taxes had forced many of the poor living on his land to fall in to debt. He had made an example of the worst offenders by sending them to the debtor's gaol nearby in Carroburg. They would be released from their incarceration only when any outstanding money was paid to him. An unlikely occurrence. Nevertheless, such an act made the condemned subjects afraid for their own freedom and more inclined to pay the taxes. Instead of rotting unproductively in a damp gaol, the Marquis decided they could be of use. He sent his loyal servant, Jurgen Blech, to Carroburg to hire a group of mercenaries who would be well rewarded; promised a share of the profits. Meanwhile, he summoned Alexander Krilber to him. Krilber was a local magistrate, based in Carroburg, who travelled on regular rounds of surrounding villages, passing judgements and collecting prisoners. Theodor had met Krilber and knew he could be easily threatened. In time, Krilber has come to enjoy his share of the profits.

Now, whenever one of his tenants falls into debt, Krilber is sent to arrest them on his next visit. They are then delivered to the mine where they begin their life of slavery. Krilber records that their debt has paid. In truth, nobody cares about these people; it is easy for them to become 'lost', and for no one to hear of them again.

However, the PCs are about to be drawn into events that threaten this cosy scheme.

Prisoner Cell Black WFRP

The scenario begins when the PCs see a bedraggled looking woman, dressed in tattered clothes, sitting in a doorway, crying. She is obviously cold, miserable and distressed. If they do not approach her now, she meets them later while begging for help from anyone who will listen. She is in her early thirties, and looks worn by a hard and difficult life. Liva Nilsson has left her children at home to tend the land while she travelled to Carroburg looking for her husband. She is desperate and confused, and will be relieved to be treated with anything other than surly indifference.

Hige Nilsson was arrested by the Magistrate on the orders of their lord, the Marquis Brandeur. The family had fallen into debt after a barn fire destroyed much of their seed stock. Neighbours tried to help, but they too are suffering from heavy taxes and poor weather. As far they are concerned, the Magistrate took him to the debtor's prison in Carroburg. Two weeks after he was taken, a stranger arrived saying he represented Steinheim, Steinheim & Steinheim of Weissburg, lawyers to Albers Nilsson. His father's brother Albers had always been the black sheep of the family, running away from home and refusing to have anything to do with them. However, it seems he had done well for himself, and on his death, left it all to Hige Nilsson, his only surviving relation (not counting Hige's four offspring). The Lawyer's clerk said that Nilsson had to journey to Weissburg himself and collect the money. If he hadn't done so within two years, the money would become the property of Steinheim, Steinheim & Steinheim.

Liva felt the gods had blessed the family with good

fortune. Risking all, the family sold their only cow, placing themselves on the verge of starvation (no milk or cheese to eat or sell, no calves to replace it or to sell). However, the sale provided Liva with enough money to travel to Carroburg and pay off the debt in her husband's name. Leaving the area for the first time she travelled to the "big city" and sought out the prison. Here, her hopes were dashed. The prison staff said her husband wasn't there, but refused to tell her where he was. She didn't believe their protests of ignorance, but could go no further. She is now looking for someone to champion her cause. The 30GCs to free her husband are hidden in her bag and she won't spend this on anything else. With her poor clothes and rural accents, the locals just think she is simple or a con-artist trying it on. Having slept on the streets for the last two nights she is hungry and desperate. If the PCs listen to her she blurts out her story and begs their help. She offers them half of the inheritance if they can find her husband. When the PCs get round to asking the question of the amount of inheritance, she looks around and whispers, "500 crowns".

Liva is completely genuine. She doesn't know how to proceed, and her last hope is the PCs. If they don't help her she will probably end up robbed or beaten, or perhaps thrown into prison herself. It is possible that the PCs may think she is trying to scam them or that they could pretend to be Hige Nilsson and try and get the money themselves. However, assuming the PCs are kind-hearted or perhaps greedy enough to risk it, then their first port of call will be the prison.

Blackwall Prison stands grim and foreboding in the poorest part of town, built to remind the locals of what awaits them should they stray from the straight and narrow. Three stories high, its name derives from the tar painted across the walls. Apart from the main gate there is no other entrance. Small barred windows give the prisoners some light and air, and occasionally shouting can be heard from within. Once used as a criminal prison, its main function now is to serve as a home for debtors. No longer are executions carried out in its courtyard, but nonetheless, many die here in the dark and dismal conditions. Controlled by Governor Krisshelm, a noble appointed as a punishment after he disgraced himself at the Royal Court, who is assisted by a team of brutal and corrupt wardens. The quality of food and cell will depend on the social level of the criminal and the amount they can afford in bribes. As a result, the third floor is populated by nobles who can usually be found playing cards and drinking cheap wine. Meanwhile in the cellars are to be found the poorest of the poor, wasting away in the dark and damp, fighting for the meagre food with the rats. Few ever leave here alive. Occasionally Clerics of Shallya manage to convince the Governor to give them access and they bring with them food and compassion. However, the effects of such ministrations can only be short lived.

The two guards on duty at the gate answer the PCs' questions with shrugs and "Can't help you, mate." It will take an exchange of money to get them to answer questions. They haven't heard of Nilsson, but the clerks inside may have. The amount the PCs will have to pay up to get the information will depend on how mean you're feeling. There could be an awful lot of closed doors between the gate and the clerks. Inside, the corridors are ill-lit, damp, smelly and filled with the pitiful sounds of the dispossessed. The PCs may even witness a piece of mindless sadism by a guard on a prisoner: unthinking and not unusual.

The two clerks on duty are overworked and underpaid and not particularly happy to talk to the PCs. Of course, some small change will ease that opinion. The duo can confirm that no-one by the name of Hige Nilsson is incarcerated in the prison, nor ever has been.

If the PCs explain the situation then the pair will say that all records of prisoners collected are kept at the Regional Magistrate's Offices in the Royal Courts.

The Criminal

At some point, the PCs may well try and track down other prisoners who were bought into Carroburg at the same time as Nilsson. The Magistrates' office can furnish them with a list, or they can spend time and money searching them out. Two criminals were brought in. The first, Clemons Pascal, has already been hung for his crimes (various thefts from his lord); Jorg Dagover has been sentenced to two years for stealing a farmer's shovel (of which he is innocent). When the PCs find him, he is languishing in Blackwall, bruised and battered by a beating. He has already learnt not to proclaim his innocence within earshot of the guards. He will be happy to talk to the PCs in the hope that they will tell someone of his misfortune.

He was the last prisoner to be taken from his village, manacled and placed into a wagon with three other men. The gaol wagon was escorted by two armed guards, taking turns to act as the driver. Magistrate Krilber escorted them on his horse. Overhearing conversations, he learned that two of the men had come from the estates of Marquis Brandeur. A couple of days after leaving the village, heading to Carroburg, they met another wagon (a normal one), and he remembers that Krilber greeted them as if he had been expecting them. The Magistrate talked with one of the three men for five minutes, and then he passed the two men from Marquis Brandeur's estates over into the other gaol wagon, which headed into the hills. He said all their debts had been paid and they were being returned home. If asked, Jorg will confirm that the duo were still in chains. The wagon that collected them was escorted by four armed men. The wagon headed further into the hills; Jorg can give a good description of the area if necessary.

Regional Magistrate's Offices

The Offices of the Regional Magistrates sits in the shadows of the spires of the Royal Courts. In the centre of Carroburg, it is quieter than the other parts of the court, standing on two sides of a secluded square, adorned by the statue of Zachariah van Abarhat, the famous hanging judge. The other two sides contain the Magistrates' stables. Here horses, wagons and carriages for use by both the Regional Magistrates and their city based counterparts. Two guards are stationed here at all times and a dozen more can be summoned at short notice.

The Regional Magistrates are responsible for the land surrounding Carroburg. They travel to smaller towns and villages in the name of Grand Duke Leopold of Middenland. At each location they try offenders and, where necessary, bring them to Carroburg to be gaoled. The Magistrates themselves have a mixture of backgrounds, but most served as clerks of lawyers at the Royal Courts. They hope working the Regional Courts will bring them promotion to the city courts. Indeed, over ninety percent of city judges have been promoted in this way in the last century.

Inside, there are a dozen scribes maintaining the records. As the public only rarely come here, the atmosphere is industrious and quiet. The scribe on duty, Paulus Streiber, is young and eager. In fact, it is likely that he will make a reasonably welcome change for those PCs used to dealing with difficult and obstructive clerks. Paulus is happy to give the PCs the information they require as long as they give a good explanation. There is a form to fill in, a gold coin to pay and a week to wait. If the PCs want a quicker response, Paulus has to ask the senior clerk. He comes back saying it can be done in

a day for three gold coins.

The information that can be provided for the PCs depends on the questions they ask. Hige Nilsson was collected by Magistrate Krilber along with a three other criminals (their names can be supplied), but was freed before reaching Blackwall. This is a reasonably common occurrence as, once the prisoner realises there is no other option, they frequently manager to find the money from somewhere. Magistrate Krilber is responsible for four villages and a number of hamlets along the River Bögen and at the foot of the Skaag hills. He is very good at his job and, whenever possible, collects the debts instead of bringing in the debtor. He has collected debts for seventy prisoners over the last few years. If the PCs think to look, they will discover that all the prisoners on which debts were paid were resident on the land of Marquis Brandeur. Krilber is currently on his rounds and is due back in the city in the next few days. A bribe to one of the other clerks will be necessary to gain Krilber's home address.

Krilber's House

Located near the courts in middle class but quiet part of the city, the house lies quiet. Entrances are well secured and from inside can be heard the sound of fierce barking. Characters trying to look through windows are faced by a pair of large slaving dogs. A clerk from the court, an old man of nearly seventy, comes to feed and walk them daily.

Inside the house is expensively decorated (light-fingered characters could carry off 5-30 GCs of household items). Hanging from many of the walls are fine tapestries, a particular passion of the magistrate. A character with *Evaluate* won't take long to calculate that such quality items are usually found in the houses of the well-to-do, rather than the professional classes. The only room in which any incriminating evidence is to be found is the study. The door is locked (CR 0) and inside is an ornate desk and stool. The desk is also locked. On top is a collection of quills, court paperwork and letters from merchants selling rare items. Hidden in the desk is a locked drawer (CR-10). Inside can be found a rolled-up map of the Skaag Hills, although nothing is marked on it. Next to it is a scroll sealed with the Guild of Silver and Gold Craftsmen, saying, 'receipt for 100lbs received'. It is signed by Luis Bordello, Senior Craftsman. Both sit on a leather-bound ledger filled with accounts. Within these are lists of names that match the names of prisoners that have gone missing. A character with the *Super Numerate* skill will be able to identify that there is a list of outgoing amounts next to prisoner names and a separate incoming list, one of the entries matching the receipt for the gold. Other incomings and outgoing are shown next to various initials and abbreviations, none of which mean anything to the PCs.

Luis Bordello

In his late forties, Bordello is a renowned and much sought after goldsmith. After finishing his apprenticeship he quickly gained a name for himself in Tobaró. He was brought to Carroburg with the promise of becoming the personal jeweller to the Grand Duke. He served in this position for years, working only to the Grand Duke's order. As a consequence, wearing his jewellery was an indicator that this person was someone to be watched in the Court. However, such success went to his head and he made enemies. With the Duke's death and the shifting of power, he found himself ousted from the Court. In the years since then, he has learnt humility, and although he is prone to being snobbish, he is also approachable.

Bordello doesn't like Krilber much and will confirm the Magistrate has sold him various amounts of gold over the last couple of years. He has heard rumours that

Krilber bought a gold mine in the Skaag Hills, and although the gold shows this to be true it is a lot of work for little return. Bordello believes all the old mines are worked out, and it is generally believed that little gold remains. He knows the Royal Chartered Guild of Middenland Surveyors Office would have the information about who owns the land and if it had been sold recently.

Royal Chartered Guild of Middenland Surveyors

One of the oldest Guilds in the city, this is located in a small but impressive stone building. The Grand Duke himself is the patron of the guild, a tradition handed down from an ancestor who granted them the Royal Charter. Among their other duties (and the main one is protecting their member's interests) they are responsible for recording land transactions in Middenland. In reality, it is a difficult task as many transactions are carried out privately. However, Middenland law requires that all land transactions be stamped and recorded by the guild. The nobility and professional classes have certainly taken this to heart. The main reason for this is the sad case of Baron Reithold who bought an estate to the north of the city and began building an impressive mansion. However, after travelling to the capital to visit relations, he returned to find the previous owner had moved himself back in. After years of argument, lawsuits, the odd duel and a rather undignified punch-up in a Halfing Pie Shop, he bankrupted himself and died a penniless wreck. The defendant's case was simply that no transaction had been made for the land and that the receipt was but a simple forged copy. Lessons were learned quickly.

Getting information out of the Guild is not an easy task. They are a secretive and well-organised group and the clerks (all guild members) will be polite but obstructive. Access to the information can be bought, but the fees will be steep – apparently, such research will require days' worth of effort on the part of professionals. Bribery may well work if the PCs are subtle. Breaking and entry will be dangerous, the area is regularly patrolled by the watch and two guards are

always on duty inside the Guild Hall. If characters do manage to gain access to the information, they will find no trace of Krilber having been involved in any land transactions in the last few years or being the owner of any land. Looking up the Brandeur land shows a medium sized estate but no record of any mines (not that such would be recorded).



Alexander Krilber

The son of a renowned magistrate, Alexander Krilber grew up knowing he would follow his father's footsteps. Not that he wanted to. As a child, he was nervous and withdrawn; characteristics he has retained. He was too weak to stand up against his domineering parent. He was tutored at home before being sent to university where he managed to scrape through. However, he cheated – a fact known only to himself and the master he bribed.

Immediately his father arranged his training at a Carroburg law firm, where he excelled only at being mediocre. The death of his father resulted in strings being pulled and, in time, he was given the role of Regional Magistrate. However, his father's death meant he had no protector and few friends. In truth, he has little chance of ever reaching the heights of a city magistrate, but he's also unlikely to ever be removed from his current role. He is resigned to the fact that he will simply remain a slightly incompetent magistrate, trying not to draw attention to himself. His quick temper has also lead him into trouble son occasion.

Krilber lives alone and has no close friends. Apart from the maid, the man who feeds the dogs and the guards who escort him while on duty, he has little contact with others. He often sinks into bouts of depression, during which he eats and drinks far too much. He always appears well dressed, something

his mother drilled into him. Krilber lives in the family house, although he has completely redecorated it since his father's death. His passion is for furniture and tapestries, and the house is filled with examples from near and far. He has a particular love of chess sets. In fact, the money he receives from the Marquis has allowed him to indulge more than ever, and he has begun expanding his collection with rarer, more choice pieces.

His involvement with the Marquis began two years ago when he was summoned to the Brandeur estate. A shrewd judge of character, the Marquis brought Krilber under his control by threatening him. It was the right tactic, for although he was interested in the scheme he is a natural coward and needed coercing. He is happy to be involved, and has convinced himself he is an equal partner in the venture. His primary motivation is the money. He has no feelings of guilt, and although he realises the scheme is illegal he has no perception that using slaves is wrong.

W	WS	BS	S	T	W	I
4	30	25	3	3	6	35
A	De x	L d	In t	C l	W P	F c l
1	35	30	40	35	30	35

Skills: Etiquette, Evaluate, Law, Public Speaking, Read/Write, Secret Language – Classical
Equipment: Sword, Wig & Gown. Gavel

The Playtest

When *Sold in the Hills* was play-tested, everything went well to a certain point. The PCs cleared the mine and rescued the prisoners, leaving themselves with two injured. After getting them back to Carroburg, they decided to report Krilber to the Marquis and let him punish the errant Magistrate. Unfortunately, this resulted in them spending months in the Brandeur cellar. Here they were tortured and gained a few insanity points. Only when the party members that had been injured called in a few favours were they freed. PCs will always find horrendous and unpredictable scrapes to get into: if they do this through simple misjudgement then it might be worth going easy on them. Make the guards a little inept, for example, or have a conspirator inside the castle that has a relative in the mines and is willing to take risks in order to help the PCs escape.

Off to see the Marquis

At this stage the information available to PCs is sketchy. They will probably have an idea of what is going on, if not the details. Broadly two courses of action are open to them. The first is to confront Krilber, either by waiting for him to return to the city or by meeting him en route, perhaps at the changeover point. The second course is to approach Marquis Brandeur.

Travelling through the Brandeur lands, they will encounter various locals. Many of these peasants are hungry looking, and the children are all dressed in rags. The reaction the PCs receive on approaching any of them depends on their own appearance. Anyone on a horse or in good clothing will receive nothing but short, surly answers followed by "Sire". Otherwise, they will get complaints about high taxes, poor harvests and a harsh lord.

The Marquis lives in a small crumbling castle, somewhat worse the wear due to years of neglect. However, it still retains a good defensive capability. This is enforced by eight trained soldiers who also double as servants. Brandeur pays them reasonably well and this, coupled with the generally safe nature of the job, is enough to keep them happy. They are armed with halberds, swords and wear a leather jerkin and shield with the Brandeur coat of arms. All their equipment looks old and tarnished, but it is functional. (If needed use the statistics for the mine guards given below.)

The PCs will be asked to state their business at the front door. Whatever story is used, Jurgen Blech, the Marquis' right hand man, will come to the door and ask them again to explain themselves. Unless he considers them a real threat he will invite them in. He says his lord is busy at the moment but will receive them when possible. The story they have told and their numbers will influence the reaction of the Marquis. If there are a few of them, Blech returns and ask for two or three representatives ("my lord, doesn't like to be crowded") to make their case to the Marquis. This is done with the firm intention of splitting the group up.

The Marquis awaits the PCs in the dining room, a chair placed at one end to simulate a throne room. The tables are empty. The tapestries on the wall are old, worn and faded. Brandeur listens to them with interest. He will deny any wrongdoing, and will say the mine is empty and spent of any worth. If asked, he will say he does know Magistrate Krilber, and thought him a fine upstanding individual. If it is obvious that the PCs suspect him, he will make every effort to stop them. As the group is split into half he will order his men to surround them and disarm them, then lock them away in a convenient

side room. The others will suffer the same fate once the first group is subdued. If they seem too dangerous or have not realised the truth, he will let them go and make plans to deal with them later. Brandeur is not worried about the authorities uncovering his deeds. Although the mine is on his land he could successfully claim to know nothing of it. All the evidence will point towards Krilber. After all, if it comes to the PCs' word against the Marquis, he will be believed over a bunch of itinerant adventurers.

If the party is captured, they will be stripped of their weapons and armour, tortured and manacled to a cellar wall. If the mine is still in operation they will be taken there a few days later and set to work. How they escape is left to the PCs; hopefully, though, they won't get into this situation...

The Changeover

If the PCs wait for Krilber to arrive home, they will discover a flaw in their plans to find the location of Hige Nilsson. Quite simply, Krilber doesn't know where the mine is. He passes on the relevant prisoners at the same crossroads, and each time they are taken off to the mine. If any gold is to be sold it is given to him there. He passes on the money when he visits the Marquis (this is the only way of linking the Marquis to the scheme). He isn't due for another meeting for almost a month, so unless they get the information out of Brandeur the PCs will have to scout the hills. How easy or difficult such a task will be is for the GM to decide.

The easiest way to uncover the location of the mine is to observe the prisoner transfer and then follow the caravan to the mine. Krilber and the prisoners will arrive at the crossroads and await the arrival of the other wagon. The wagon has five prisoners manacled to the floor. It has thick wooden bars and is pulled by a solitary horse. The two armed guards sitting on the wagon relieve themselves in the hour wait. Afterwards, one of them takes the saddle of the Magistrate's horse and rubs it down. From the narrowest track the other wagon will arrive. It is escorted by four scruffy looking armed men, all sitting in the back of the wagon. The leader of the

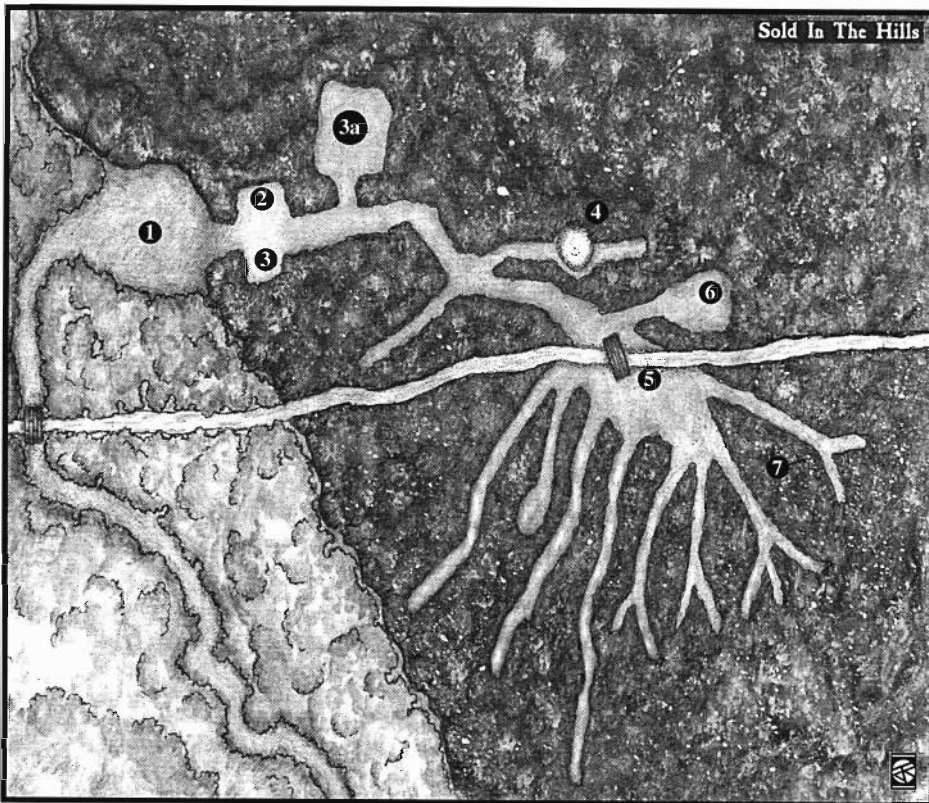
four hails Krilber and they talk for a few minutes. Meanwhile one of the men carries a small chest (containing a little gold) across to the wagon and places it under the driver's wooden seat. The heavy padlock on the door is then unlocked and three of the prisoners are ordered out. They are roughly shoved towards the other wagon. Once aboard, both wagons slowly move off.

Into The Hills

Tracking the wagon to the mine is not a difficult task if care is taken. The guards are not watchful and the track twists and winds around the hills. If they are spotted the guards will spur the horse on and then wait to see if they are being followed. If they decide they are, they will hide the wagon and finish the journey on foot. If they remain unaware of the tail, they reach the mine late in the evening.

If the PCs don't approach the mine from the road or scout the area, they will come across a small tent by the side of a stream. The tent contains a few basic possessions, including prospecting equipment. It looks like it is still being used. It is; the prospector is hiding in the bushes, having seen these armed men arriving. If they are there for a little while or if they search the immediate area they will find him hiding in a bush. Once it is clear that they mean him no harm, he will be happy to talk to them. He is in his sixties, has a scruffy white beard and thick clothes, and introduces himself as Armin. He realised the mine was being worked a few months ago whilst searching for a new site to set-up. It is being worked pretty inefficiently and he is making some good finds (buried under a tree nearby). He knows the mine used to be worked by Carroburg men, but was abandoned eighty years ago after proving to be less than profitable.

Armin has been careful to avoid the new people in the mine. He sees armed men come and go sometimes, and he saw a wagon bring in manacled men six months ago. Just after he arrived he saw two miners burying a third roughly in the ground. An armed man escorted them but they weren't manacled.



Mine! All Mine!

The mine entrance is built into a hill, and is approached by a muddy track. The debris of the previous owners lies around the entrance, including rusty tools, a broken wagon wheel and a rotting cart. The entrance (1) is clear, however, and a guard is always present. The wagon that is used to bring the prisoners in stands to one side. Three horses are tethered under a makeshift shelter. A character with *Animal Care* will be able to tell that they have not been looked after very well. When the PCs arrive, one guard and a dog are on watch. If they observe for a while they see a young guard stumble in the open and throw up. The other guard laughs at him, and those with *Excellent Hearing* hear, "Can't stomach the boss' treatment of the men, eh? Don't worry - you'll get used to it." The man is not expecting trouble and although the dog will bark at the PCs if they sneak too close, he will tell it to shut up. The PCs' approach will have to be careful or the guard will summon the others from the guardroom. A character with *Silent Move Rural* would be able to get near and *Scale Sheer Surface* will enable them to get above them on the cave mouth.

Inside, the tunnels are narrow but solid. Some of the props are slowly rotting, but characters with *Mining* will be able to tell that there is no danger from them. Torches or lanterns will be needed, as once past the Storeroom it is pitch black. The further they go, the more the characters will notice a nasty stench, a mixture of waste, sweat, fear and rotten flesh.

The Guardroom (2): The guards sleep in an old storeroom, now containing three beds. The door is a sheet of wood that they have to shove out of the way each time, but it is enough to keep the draft out. There are five bunks here and, at night, all five are used. In the day three are usually full. When not sleeping, the guards spend the time playing Three Emperors' Bluff and drinking watered-down ale. It is likely they will also be complaining about Huld (the boss - it is obvious they are afraid of him) and their pay. None of them are sure who they work for but they think it is a Magistrate from Carroburg.

Storeroom (3): Filled with boxes of rations (cheap & nasty, but enough to keep people alive), tools, a box of manacles, two barrels of ale, canteens, lanterns and fuel.

The Pool (4): A dank stagnant pool filled with water that slowly seeps through the rock. It once contained small crabs, but they are all long dead. Now it is filled with bones. The skeletons of eight prisoners are scattered around, all of whom have been eaten by Huld after they displeased him or were wounded when working.

The Main Cavern (5): Damp but warm, this is where operations are based and the prisoners sleep. They are worked for twelve to fourteen hours a day; the miners are allowed to sleep or eat for the rest of the time. At present there are forty-one prisoners here and all live in a state of fear. Many sport bruises or cuts from Huld, and they have all seen him eat at least one of their number. Each has their own bedroll and their feet are manacled. A stream runs through the cavern. This has a plank across it but it is narrow enough to be leaped.

At night, the prisoners will be asleep here, watched by two guards. During the day they will be working down the tunnels, and Huld and the guards will patrol the area.

Huld's Room (6): Huld's Room contains little more than a straw mattress, but he forbids all from entering. He sleeps for just three to four hours a night, during which time the entrance is guarded by his dog. At all other times, the dog is with him.

The Mines (7): Various size and length tunnels stretch out into the hill. Most are worked out, and the current mining is concentrated in just three or four.

Tactics

The tactics of Huld and his guards depends on the actions of the PCs. The all-important figure is Huld; the Guards won't surrender unless he is out of action. Similarly, the prisoners are unlikely to revolt while he is around. If the fight isn't going well, the GM might allow some of the miners to be persuaded to help if a rousing speech is made by a character with high *Leadership* and/or *Public Speaking*. In any combat, Huld will take the centre ground, escorted by his dog. The guards will flank him on either side. The Ogre will chase any fleeing characters if the combat is lost. This is one way to isolate the Ogre and take him out.

Outcomes

The outcomes of this adventure will depend on how successful the PCs have been, and how generous the GM is feeling. Assuming that the prisoners are freed, they will want to return home. Whether Hige Nilsson is alive or not depends whether you want the PCs to collect the inheritance. Either way, they should have enough evidence to bring Krilber down - but only if they handle it right. If he is found guilty of the crime, it will be hushed up and he will retire. He doesn't have enough friends to gain another job. His life will decline from then on, until he is forced to sell his house and everything in it. If Huld and the other guards are captured, their fate depends on the evidence the PCs give, although if he has any say in the matter Brandeur will demand that they be hung. (He will also demand the same of Krilber). It is likely that Huld will be executed as soon as possible, to stop him being a threat.

If Krilber isn't brought down then the PCs have earned themselves an enemy. However, more dangerous still would be having the Marquis as a foe. If this is a theme that you want to develop, then the PCs could see him slowly regain his position and power, eventually returning to the Royal Court in Carroburg and then, one day, joining the court in Altdorf.



THE CAPTORS

Huld

An old Ogre, Huld has served for years in various mercenary units. His motivation is simply cash and a full belly. Still suffering the after effects of a bad leg wound, he is badly scarred all over. He has little time for humans generally, and being put in charge of so many has allowed him to exert his sadistic personality to the full. He knows they are afraid of him and he enjoys this 'respect'. Getting to eat the occasional human is a welcome fringe benefit. When joining combat, he will refuse to surrender and will not allow others to, either. Competent with his whip, he also carries his two-handed sword strapped across his back. Huld can speak Old Wordler well enough to get by in The Empire.

W	WS	BS	S	T	W	I
4	43	17	4	5	17	35
A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fcl
2	18	18	24	26	29	10

Psychological Traits: Causes Fear

Equipment: Heavy Furs (0/1 AP to all locations except head), Two handed Sword (I-10, D+2), a pair of spiked maces, whip.



The Guards

A mixed bunch of mercenaries and soldiers. All are involved solely for the money. All fear Huld, and would never stand up to him.

W	WS	BS	S	T	W	I
4	42	35	3	3	8	40
A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fcl
1	29	39	29	29	29	27

Skills: Disarm, Dodge Blow, Secret Language - Battle Tongue, Strike Mighty Blow

Equipment: Various weapons and armour (assume 1AP per location)

Dogs

Well Trained and vicious.

W	WS	BS	S	T	W	I
6	38	0	3	3	6	30
A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fcl
1	-	43	14	43	43	-

THE FORUM

“rammed down the throats of the players”

Olivier Chaussure: Tim Eccles’ article on gender in the Old World struck a chord with me. My gaming group has dabbled in various systems over the years, with mixed success – particularly with Pendragon, where the social limitations placed on women in the game alienated a female gamer.

Nonetheless, I couldn’t help but think that the article is an over-simplification. The “opinions” at the end are great; I have no problem with them whatsoever – but the suggestion that people should opt for a system of equality I can’t agree with. As Tim pointed out, WFRP is a game, and its primary purpose is to be enjoyed. It isn’t intended as a lesson in sociology or history. Yet completely removing one of the primary sources of tension in our society is like throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

Just think of all the wonderful opportunities that are lost if the Old World was truly an equal place. Injustices would be avoided. Prejudice would be removed. Successful women would be mundane, not exceptional. In short, it would be a much duller place. I’ve tried drawing in some of these themes when I play, and believe me, they can really add to the quality and believability of the session, and the players loved it. At the same time, over-emphasis on inequality is a mistake. If it’s rammed down the throats of the players, of course it’s going to cause problems – but exactly the same is true of the religious tensions throughout *The Enemy Within*, and I don’t see anyone calling for them to be removed.

In short, do what all good GMs do: respond to your players. Any form of injustice or prejudice can add colour and substance to the game; keep it up your sleeve, bring it out on occasions, and see what happens. If it works, great; build on it. If not, particularly if it leads to difficulty or ill-feeling, don’t use it again.

Many thanks for an excellent and thought provoking piece; it’s a great resource, with some good ideas. It’s one that I don’t happen to agree with 100%, but that’s no bad thing – vive le difference!

“There are alternatives to attribute increases”

Mark Norfolk: People do like to whinge about Games Workshop in Forum, don’t they? Just remember, it is Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay so the two games are always going to remain linked. The ‘Armies books as local propaganda’ approach is fine and with mentions of Lahmian vampire brides for Bretonnian knights (*White Dwarf* #237) GW themselves may be taking a similar line, so come on, let’s talk about something else (and not that other poor victim, the magic system, either).

Job for Life (WS 11) is something worth talking about. John rightly calling for more emphasis on careers in the game, a missing facet of the otherwise excellent setting. Perhaps it is because this is where the nuts ‘n’ bolts of the mechanics interfaces with the background. Articles that have appeared for the Pit Fighter (WS 11) and Troll Slayer (WS 10) are more of what we need and the same goes for Thieves Guilds outlined by Alfred Nuñez Jr in ‘Behind the Scenes’ (WS 11) giving more depth to the thief career. One thing we don’t need is more careers (sorry, Executioner).

Extrapolating some careers out into advanced versions is an obvious step, particularly for the military professions, introducing sergeant and captain ranks to careers like Soldier and Roadwarden. Others could be tied together more to develop a natural career progression, with some kind of goal achieved towards the end. There are alternatives to attribute increases and

new skills. Like climbing the ‘social ladder’ for instance. Wealth and influence could beckon if you follow the correct career path. Achieving notable deeds, i.e. ‘adventuring’ could help to get you noticed, giving a reason to have an active career and be an adventurer simultaneously.

Admittedly some career paths may mean a poor soul is destined to remain firmly rooted in the ‘D’ class (Social Standing - *Apocrypha Now*), but other benefits may exist, such as infamy, reputation or power (i.e. the Crime Lord from the Behind the Scenes article).

I also really enjoyed the Excommunication article. The word itself seems to have an impact all of its own and it’s a great plot device for political and character based adventures (à la PBtT), all the more so in a fantasy setting where gods magic are real. Excommunication could be a magical ritual - marking the offender in some way with a symbol to the world that this person is guilty of crimes against the faiths of the Empire. Legitimate excommunications of Clerics would result in the loss of abilities based on the patronage of a deity.

Interesting situations could develop when the gods don’t agree with an excommunication, particularly a politically motivated one. For example if the Grand Theogonist arranges the excommunication of a potential rival in the church and Sigmar doesn’t agree. Excommunicates who keep any god-given powers may give rise to doubts about the integrity of the church organisation and could lead to schisms in the church!

And while we’re talking about gods...

Tim Eccles’ Correspondent (WS 10), is I think, trying to make things too complicated. The background is more than capable of handling a pantheon of deities. As for NPC’s personal beliefs, I don’t see a problem.

As has been mentioned, prayers are spoken out of fear or of evoking a deity’s favour i.e. sailors praying to Manaen not to drown them, etc - not “help me be good so I can go to heaven”. The Warhammer gods are guardians looking over their own patch: Bogenbauer looking out for Bogenhafen, Taal looking out for wild places, etc. You want protecting in some way - just be nice to the right deity. Tim’s militiaman might see Kislev nature spirits in the same way, or maybe they would be seen as minions of Taal. As for the afterlife, the citizens of Bogenhof don’t necessarily want to go to ‘Bogen heaven’ when they die. The WFRP rulebook already mentions an afterlife, looked after by Morr. This seems to be the preferred destination for mankind, (and probably other races too if the non-human deities are aspects of the human pantheon).

On the other hand, if Khaine can steal souls, and the Gods of Chaos also, maybe the others can too. Maybe particularly zealous followers and those sacrificed in the name of a god go to that deity’s personal realm (or merge with said deity, whatever you like) swelling their power in the Warp/Realm of Chaos/whatever.

“historically at fault”

Jonas Germannsen: In Warpstone # 10 there is an article by Anthony Dawber entitled “Foundation and Faith”. While I do not think it is an inherently bad article, it is so full of factual errors and plain misconceptions that I felt I simply had to react. While Mr. Dawber maintains that he wants to make the WFRP world more ‘realistic’ (now, there’s a contradiction in terms) he consistently uses examples from post-Elizabethan English history; a period which certainly wasn’t medieval nor early renaissance, as the WFRP world is supposed to be. First things first: Mr. Dawber has some valid, but

rather self-explanatory points about the differences in social classes - differences which, I might add, are very well covered in WFRP terms in the social standing rules in *Apocrypha Now*. Even the differences in clothing is covered in the very first part of TEW. Mr. Dawber then goes on telling us about the importance of the family and the immediate community in society. This might be the strongest part of his article; every PC should have a fully-developed family as part of his background, even if he isn’t of noble birth. Incidentally, players in my WFRP campaigns often choose to play characters that are related to each other, but that’s another story. It should be noted that guilds would take over part of the family’s role in cities and larger towns.

Mr. Dawber is certainly wrong to assume that ‘families have their own holdings’; in a medieval/early renaissance society, the vast majority of the population would be farmers, and the vast majority of those farmers would be tenant farmers - paying rent and labour in return for the protection of their local lord. Of course, things could be different in the Warhammer world, but then Mr. Dawber should have argued why things are different in the WFRP world rather than making a statement which is plainly wrong. Tithes, by the way, was generally paid in natural produce, not money. This natural produce was accounted for in ‘barrels of corn’, although it could actually be barrels of ale, sacks of flour, stabling the clergy’s animals, even a few days spent repairing the roof of the local church... whatever the peasant was able to provide. But now I’m digressing again...

The comments about the importance of the church in the old days are generally correct, but it should be noted that religion and worship is very different in the WFRP world - the ever-present threat of the chaos forces would insure that. Also, I think that people in the Old World would be perhaps even more loyal towards their deities, since magical spells of healing and protection actually work. The religions of the WFRP world have much more to offer than just consolation and forgiveness.

Mr. Dawber’s comments about diet and hygiene are, again, somewhat misguided. His remark that ‘meat becomes expensive in winter’ is downright wrong and in direct contradiction to the preceding article - ‘The Passing of Time’. Late autumn and winter were the butchers’ high season. Animals that were no longer required to work the fields would be slaughtered instead of just spending an unproductive winter in the stables. Keeping animals for their meat alone would be comparatively rare. Famine, if it happened, would generally take place during spring and early summer. The absence of flush toilets sets a definite upper level to the size of cities, although most cities of The Empire are built next to great rivers which provide a convenient way of getting rid of waste. Marienburg must be an incredibly filthy place!

The description of a progressive tax system is generally correct, but Mr. Dawber misses the most important point: the nobility did not pay taxes, but the merchants did. That was in fact the major difference between the two social classes.

The comments about social order and fear of innovation are generally in place, but I must remark that the renaissance (it means rebirth, you know) was also a period of invention and social mobility never seen before. Modest by our standards, but revolutionary by medieval standards. Trade and the very widespread use of money in the WFRP world make it possible for anybody - except, perhaps, the tenant farmer - to seek his own fortunes and climb the social ladder. Marienburg is a perfect example of a self-made city made up of self-made people.

This leads me to the most outrageous part of Mr. Dawber's article: his claim that the medieval period was a time when absolute monarchies were emerging all over Europe. In fact, the exact opposite was happening everywhere; the Scandinavian Union of late medieval times was becoming an informal confederation ruled by the nobles, and the holy roman emperor was being reduced to little more than a figurehead while the electors did as they pleased. For the WFRP world, try telling an elector that the emperor rules by grace of Sigmar alone! The constant tension between the great land-holding nobles, the major religions and the emperor is in fact the second most important theme in the Warhammer world, second only to the ever-present threat of chaos. Sovereign kings belong to the age of reason, a time when the church didn't play any serious political role anymore, and the politically outmanoeuvred nobility was primarily preoccupied with huntin', shootin' and fishin' because their services weren't required anymore in time of war.

The various religious conflicts mentioned in Mr. Dawber's article, while in character with 17th century England, would be very difficult to adopt to the WFRP world as Mr. Dawber also points out himself. I think his description of Old World religion as a sort of Greek/Roman pantheon with moody and unpredictable gods is far more to the point. Anyway, I don't think it is necessary to make a distinction between astronomy and astrology in a world where the gods actually exist. Astronomical events already play an important role in several published WFRP scenarios - the looming chaos moon in *Shadows Over Bogenhafen*, twin-tailed comets in *Empire In Flames* etc.. In these scenarios, real astronomical phenomena are also used as story-driving portents of doom.

In conclusion, I must say that I think Anthony Dawber's article is historically at fault on several points; but also in error relating to the WFRP world. 17th century England, while an interesting period in history, is not the closest historical parallel to the Old World that you can find. You'd be much better off researching the complex and chaotic history of the Holy Roman Empire in the late 15th and early 16th centuries. This period was characterised by political conflict between great landholding nobles, religious division, peasant uprisings and a general economical crisis caused by the disastrous manpower loss of the black death. Such research could give us an interesting and useful article, but I'll leave that to you for now...

"Khorne, the most boring of the Chaos powers"

Robin Low: I have to say that 'Thralls of Darkness' (issue 12) was hugely disappointing, lacking any depth or originality in its ideas, merely reinforcing the stereotypes.

The Chaos powers are contrary entities. Nurgle is diseased and rotting, but possesses a joyous excitement and enthusiasm for life born of an acceptance of the inevitable. Tzeentch loves brilliant, riotous colour and yet delights in the dark shadows of conspiracy and plot. Slaanesh is obsessed with pleasure, yet is spiteful and vindictive when spurned. Khorne has his obsession for more and more blood, yet must realize that when all are dead there will be no blood left for him.

Let's just look at Khorne, the most boring of the Chaos powers and the hardest to do anything interesting with. Sure, Khorne is primarily a violent war god, but he's most often referred to as 'the blood god'. So, where

are the blood cultists, the Khornate vampires (real ones or human wannabes) with brass fangs and the Elizabeth Balthory-types bathing in virgins' blood?

How about Khorne worshipping alchemists brewing up 'Chaos steroids' provoking aggression and violence in the users? Heretical Khorne worshippers getting too close to Slaanesh when they find joy in their sacrificial rituals? What about weird rural fertility cults shedding the blood of the new-born to bring forth a bountiful harvest?

And what about the relationships between Khorne and the other Chaos powers? Are the whispered tales that the hatred between Khorne and Slaanesh began when Khorne spurned Slaanesh's advances true? What about those cultists who seek to unite blood letting with sensual pleasure? Do Khorne and Tzeentch conspire with one another, and through their followers, to incite riot, war and political upheaval? What about the link between disease and blood - are Khorne and Nurgle really allies?

There's so many interesting questions and ideas that could be explored. I'd offer to write a new article, but I doubt you can justify another on the subject so soon.

Just to balance the criticism, I thought 'A Little Bit of This and a Little Bit of That' was a nice little article, containing some fun, simple ideas that can spice up any alchemist's life.

Editor (JF): Some interesting points there. We would be happy to receive further articles on the subject, as long as they give us a new angle. This issues 'Road to Damnation' is a good example.



A DARKNESS OVER NULN

A Short Story by David L. Stone

On the night Heinrich Mullen clawed his way back from hell, the skies bled over Nuln. Agitators screamed vile retribution and Acolytes wept as crimson blotches splashed onto the bare-arms of peasants, searing flesh and burning thatch. The gutters became surging veins and an explosion ripped through the coach-houses of the merchants' quarter.

The gate-wardens watched in fascinated horror as the statues above Verena's Temple began to fracture, showering the streets with dust. The cracks widened, became erratic and great stone limbs crashed onto the cobbles. The thatch-fires were intensifying and flames licked along swiftly from roof to roof as people rushed from their houses, panic-stricken and tortured by their own desperation.

Brione Chadwick had been retrieved from the throws of sleep by the demented shrieking of his landlady. A respected Sergeant of the Watch, he occupied rented accommodation on the outskirts of the city; squalid but adequate to his needs. A small mirror, hung haphazardly from a rusty nail on the east wall, fell to the floor and shattered. Glass showered onto the mattress where he lay and Brione felt the splintered shards piercing the flesh of his bare legs. He gathered up the weathered uniform draped over a rickety bedside chair and hurried over to the window.

The usual assortment of deformed gargoyles and crooked chimney-stacks that constituted the rooftop silhouette of the city had been drastically altered. Instead, the skyline was ablaze, the streets below heaving with a frantic sea of humanity, people taking to the higher climbs of the Guild Houses with all their slim possessions. Instinctively Brione, leaned out from his attic window and scanned the skies for a dragon. Such creatures were rare, even in Nuln, but he could think of no other plausible explanation for the obvious catastrophe erupting all around him. He dressed with speed, drank deeply from a grimy bottle beside the mattress and departed for the Watch-house.

Heinrich Mullen entered Nuln by the Field Gate. Flesh hung loosely from his bones as he staggered awkwardly towards a handful of sentries who (wiser than most) abandoned their pikes and ran. Uttering fowl defamations against the Countess and her people, the necromancer advanced, urging his tired limbs toward the palace. His eyes had hollowed, replaced by empty-sockets void of the merest indication of life. The corpse lifted a withered finger and pointed toward a barrow behind which a number of unfortunate citizens had huddled for safety.

Lightning leapt from Mullen's decrepit fingers and the barrow erupted in a ball of flame. Few escaped the ensuing debris and fewer escaped without injury. Mullen smiled, the remaining chipped and broken teeth in his head lending little to improve his appearance. How long had he waited for revenge? Could it be that just three nights ago he had been slain by the Countess's Mercenaries? It felt like centuries to him, centuries of agony and torment in a cursed pit of hallowed earth. He yearned for the Countess; her tender flesh, the icy perfection of her features. He needed her; reviled as he was by the thought of her pure nature, needed her life in exchange for his own immortality. Hadn't that been the agreement? His own re-animation granted by fell Nagash himself in return for her soul. The grim lord of death had promised him a place at his right hand for such a sacrifice. Mullen thought only of his desire to become one with his lord. How they would fear him; the legends of dark sorcery. How they would worship Heinrich Mullen. His eyes lost in the realms of possibility, he staggered onward...

Brione Chadwick hurried through the Market Place, careering into abandoned stalls and apple-carts, colliding with fear-stricken traders heading in the opposite direction. From the increasing surge of citizens flooding past he picked a young lad and lifted him from the ground like a puppy. The boy was aged between nine and twelve with scruffy, unkempt hair and a cheeky grin; in perspective much like a million more of Nuln's young scoundrels.

"Boy," said Brione authoritatively. "Tell me what causes this unrest!" "It's im, sir. Mullen the Grim - he's cum back from out the grave!" Brione scowled at the youth.

"If you lie to me boy," he growled. "It will be worse for you." "Ain't lying, sir; I swear. Tis the truth as I live, sir."

Brione released the child, who scrambled to his feet and promptly disappeared down a shadow-filled alleyway. Then he turned back against the oncoming stream of Nuln's poorer inhabitants and, gritting his teeth, marched forward into the gathering evening mist.

Lightning stabbed erratically at the rooftops of Nuln as Brione arrived at the Watch-house. He noted with relief that the building had remained untouched by the fires that raged all around it. He recognised a few of the Watch Commanders

gathered outside the entrance, lost in heated discussion.

Inside the guardrooms Pandemonium was rife. Watchmen rushed to and fro, preparing to face the enemy in the grim certainty of death should they fail. Brione spotted Holst Truman, a member of his own patrol, and headed over to where he and a junior member were distributing helms and pike-staffs.

"Is it true?" he asked.

"He's been spotted at the Field Gate heading toward the palace." replied Holst, supplying his friend with a trusty-looking pike.

"Then it's all my fault."

"Nonsense."

"He's my flesh and blood."

Holst nodded, then smirked at Brione and patted him companionably on the shoulder.

"Every family is allowed one bad apple."

"I have to kill him."

"We're going in groups, Brione. Don't try any heroics, okay? Mullen isn't your grandfather any more."

"He hasn't been my grandfather for years."

"You don't understand, Brione. He's not even the evil bastard he was three nights ago. He's undead now; a creature of darkness, an empty soul."

"Even so, I should be the one."

He grabbed a helm from the junior Watchman and returned to the darkened streets.

A crowd had gathered outside the palace of Countess Emmanuelle von Leibewitz. Mullen had seized a young girl and was threatening to mutate her into hell-spawn before their very eyes. He toyed with his victim, who was the pretty daughter of a local merchant, tossing her hair back and forth over her face and flinging her about him like a rag-doll. His strength was returning; he could feel the black blood beginning to circulate once more. A page had been sent into the palace to convey Mullen's ultimatum to the Countess, and had not yet returned. The necromancer's tolerance was waning. He longed to snap the neck of his fragile prey but knew that such an action would leave him without a prize on which to barter.

The huge double-doors of the palace swung outward, discharging a tide of noblemen and city dignitaries. Countess Leibewitz emerged, surrounded by advisers, and instead of descending the last flight of steps she led her group west to a small balcony that overlooked the palace square.

"Mullen!" she cried, a blanket of silence descending over the city.

The Necromancer said nothing.

"Your evil has overshadowed this city for too many years. If you think that necromantic bargaining will ensure you a place with your vile gods then my guardsmen will take pleasure in assisting you to meet them."

A handful of armoured militiamen descended the steps, surrounded Mullen on all sides, and promptly burst into flame. Panic spread once again through the throngs as the crazed city officials collapsed in screaming agony flesh melting from their bones.

The necromancer's hollow eyes took on a faint blue sparkle. He raised himself up to his full height and prepared the speak. The voice that followed was quite unlike any heard in Nuln before; a tone so empty, so aged that some later believed it erupted from the throat of Nagash himself.

"I think, Countess, that you are in no position to bargain."

The swelling clouds projected over Nuln, showering the streets with rain and lashing the rooftops with lightning. The storm was ethereal, an embittered force which raged across the city like an angry giant.

Brione arrived at the palace square at a dead run and searched the gathering, his eyes darting erratically from side to side, seeking the necromancer. He spotted Mullen advancing with the (now unconscious) girl and readied his pike. It wasn't difficult to detach himself from the crowd; a wide unoccupied circle had formed around the necromancer. Before he knew what method of attack he must employ the silence had become deafening and he stood alone; a solitary figure directly behind his ancient relative.

"Grandfather!"

Even the Countess, who's icy indifference had been present throughout the evening, seemed momentarily taken aback. Mullen craned his bony neck around, looked behind him and grinned like a bloodletter.

"Well, if it isn't my murderer-grandson. How are you Brione? Well, I trust."

"Release the girl and return to the vile-pit from whence you came!"

The laughter that proceeded to echo throughout the square was heard with clarity from as far off as the Grey Mountains.

"I've killed you once, Heinrich. I can do it again."

"Foolish mortal," the necromancer replied. "You reckon to challenge one who has bargained with Nagash himself?"

"I fear neither your evil or that of the foul worms you worship."

"You dare to deem the lord of darkness a worm? Your suffering will be legendary!"

As these words rang in the ears of the crowd Mullen spun around, releasing the girl, and gripped the throats of two brave knights who had crept up behind him during his lapse of concentration. Swords clattered to the steps as the two fought for breath against the demon grip that ensnared them.

Brione needed no prompting, he rushed forward and plunged his pike into the necromancer's back. The edge pierced Mullen's tattered robes and sank deep into his flesh, yet he maintained his grip on the knights until their bodies became limp and their strangled cries ceased. Then, slowly and deliberately, he turned around and removed the pike-staff from his torso, dragging it out slowly from the front to achieve maximum effect. As the weapon was tossed aside Brione bared his teeth against the necromancer in grim defiance and leapt forward, plunging his hand inside Mullen's robes, reaching for his heart.

Heinrich let out a shrill cry of fury and fastened his hands around the watchman's neck in the same fashion that had silenced the assassins. The two circled the courtyard, locked in battle like a couple performing some demented dance. Mullen's fingernails scratched and scraped at Brione's flesh but the watchman continued to reach for his grandfather's cursed heart.

A supply group of twelve or thirteen militiamen edged forward, stopping abruptly following a signal from the Countess. Brione felt his life draining away, felt the dark sorcery of hell dragging at his soul. In one second of weakness the tide could turn, this fell practitioner from the nethermost depths might ply his dark-art in Nuln forever. Still Brione pushed, his fingers finding purchase inside Mullen's chest as he attempted to avoid the gimlet gaze that was fastened firmly on his soul. All of a sudden the two combatants stopped in the centre of the square. There was complete silence now, the storm had ceased as abruptly as their own movement. An owl perched atop the palace balcony hooted and flew off into the distance, somewhere in the crowd a baby began to cry. Then the scream began. It started as a low moaning, almost a sob of despair then it rose in pitch, twisted, becoming agonised and reached an ear-splitting tone that brought many of Nuln's citizens to their knees. Windows exploded and glass showered out onto the streets.

As the wail subsided all eyes fell on Brione and Mullen, desperate to determine which side had triumphed. The watchman moved first, stepping back from his adversary with the necromancer's still-beating heart clenched tightly in his right fist. Blood leaked from between Mullen's crumbling lips and he fell to the ground and lay still.

Later...

The body of Heinrich Mullen was taken to a crossroads in the forest halfway between Nuln and Altdorf. The ground was blessed in accordance with ancient tradition yet no animals ever stopped to graze in the clearing from that day on. Even travellers whose journeying demanded that they pass the crossing avoided entering the clearing itself and instead walked around it to pursue the path. A signpost was erected on Heinrich's grave, declaring the area to be 'The Mullen Crossing'. No-one ever forgot how it had been called into existence and generations of the Empire's children were always reminded of 'the night Heinrich Mullen returned from death' whenever they misbehaved.

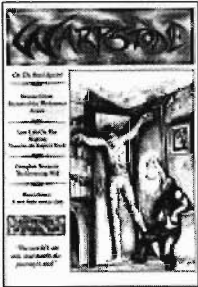
Brione Chadwick was promoted to Commander of the Watch and moved from his squalled accommodation to an expensive and thoroughly respectable town-house in the merchant's district of Nuln. Although constantly requested to recount his tale, Brione never spoke of that night again...



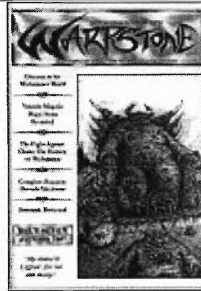
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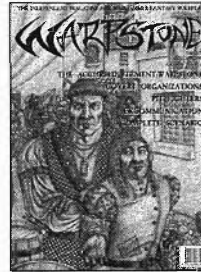
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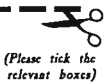
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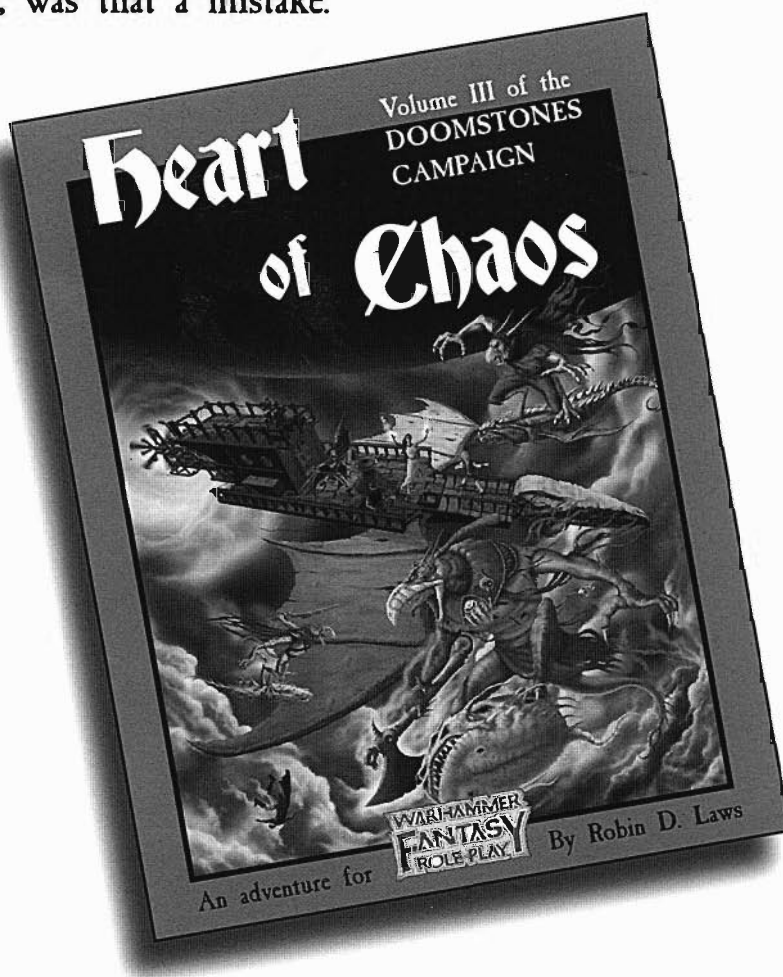


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Oh man, was that a mistake.



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