

A WARPSTONE PUBLICATION

LEGION

issue five – january 2006

HELLO

Welcome to the latest issue of Legion. For those new to Legion, it is an irregular newsletter in support of Warpstone. This is the first issue that will only be available from the website. Our original intention to send Legion to subscribers has now come to a halt due to costs. What we hope to do is make Legion available more frequently, so do keep an eye out for it.

Legion contains articles that are not suitable for publication in Warpstone. There is a variety of reasons for this and is not a comment on quality. The articles in Legion are good, and we are sure you will enjoy them.

This issue we bring you a nice little piece from Robin Low inspired by the Ian Miller's cover of Warpstone 22, some thoughts on the GM and Character packs, as well as a location and cameos from the Talabheim Project (Warpstone issues 16-22) that we did not have space for at the time.

GM & CHARACTER PACKS BY Robin Low & John Foody

We were pretty disappointed with both these products. Here is what we might have done.

GM'S PACK

Both sides of the GM screens should carry information. Features: *essential* tables only,

readable at a glance, without duplication. Include the Critical Hit Effect table. Perhaps include weapon qualities and action descriptions.

In the booklet, keep the scenario and *Buildings of the Old World*. Use the remaining pages for: an Empire map; a brief timeline of the Empire; a who's who of the Empire describing key political and religious figures; a web diagram of political allegiances; a brief gazetteer of Imperial provinces and key cities. In other words, a source of quick answers to questions players are likely to ask about the world. Perhaps include expanded Critical Hit tables.

CHARACTER PACK

Two character sheets: a detailed sheet for recording and tracking advancement between sessions and an essentials-only, game-time sheet with large uncluttered text.

Keep equipment lists, spell lists and spell record sheets. Keep the names, but as lists, not tables, to save space; include some background on the meanings of names.

Include a *What Your Character Knows about the Old World* article - a clear, simple introduction to the world for new players, describing common knowledge and experience. (An excellent example of this can be found in *A Private War* by Tim Eccles. It was also given away to Warpstone subscribers.)

Editors: *The usual suspects*.

Legion is a Warpstone publication. Warpstone can be contacted at 47 Snowden Avenue, Hillingdon, Middlesex, UB10 0SD or contact us by e-mail at warpstone@bigfoot.com or for more info check out www.warpstone.darcove.net

Warhammer, White Dwarf and Games Workshop are registered trademarks and Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay, The Enemy Within, Shadows Over Bogenhafen, Death on the Reik, Power Behind the Throne, Carrion up the Reik, Marienburg: Sold Down the River, Apocrypha Now, Apocrypha 2: Charts of Darkness, Doomstones, Middenheim: City of Chaos, Empire in Flames, Empire in Chaos, Realms of Sorcery and the names of all prominent imagery, places and characters within the Warhammer world are trademarks of Games Workshop Ltd. and are used without permission. Warpstone recognises the status and ownership of all copyrights, trade marks and registered names that may be used herein and the use of the aforementioned within this publication should not be construed as a challenge to such status and ownership. Warpstone (ISSN 1465-6604) & Legion are independently produced magazines, and not owned, licensed or approved by Games Workshop Ltd, Black Industries or Green Ronin. All original material is copyright to the respective author/artist.

THE MURDER TREE

Inspired by Ian Miller's *The Ghoul Tree*, from *Warpstone 22*

by Robin Low

There is a tree. No, I lie; there are *three* trees. The first is an oak tree, and it is ancient. The bark of its broad, knotted trunk is deeply lined and holed with age; its many twisting branches spread wide and shadow the earth beneath. Hugging one side of the oak is the second tree, a rose tree, and it too is ancient. Its hard, talon-studded stems are inches in diameter; they climb and coil up the oak's trunk and along its branches; roses bloom scarlet among the oak's green leaves. The third tree is an apple tree, growing from a deep crack in the oak's trunk. It too rises against the trunk up through the canopy, its white flowers becoming small, bitter crab apples in autumn. Mistletoe flourishes among the branches.

The apples of the Murder Tree can be made into cider. It is foul and dry and bitter, but if you drink enough of it you are granted visions of death: your own death, the death of others, perhaps even a vision of Morr himself, or maybe Khaine. Who would wish

to see such things? The paranoid, perhaps? The cautious? A Necromancer? Those who simply *need* to know what will be in order to avoid it, or at least try? But would the knowledge be worth the side-effects?

There is a story: if you dance backwards around the Murder Tree seven times when Morrslieb is full, chanting the name of your enemy, then your enemy will be slain. But maybe something else is required by the ritual before it can truly work, and if so, what, and is this black magic worth the price?

A young Dwarf came from Middenheim. He picked a fallen acorn from the dirt and carried it back with him to the City of the White Wolf. The Dwarf planted the acorn in the rocky side of the Fauschlag. He

watched it grow from the rock for a hundred years. Its roots went deep.

There is a blackened wound in the trunk. With axe and flame, a woman once sought to destroy the tree for a wrong it had done her and her loved ones, but she met frightful resistance and was driven away, never to return. The Murder Tree can protect itself, you see, and there are those who would come to its

aid or travel forth to do its bidding.



A party of travellers slept beneath the branches of the tree. Even the one who sat guard shared in their dreams of a terrible battle fought long ago. The travellers dreamt they fought in the battle, and the wounds they dreamt they took followed them into the waking world. They remembered a hidden temple dedicated to blood, containing a prize worth risking death for, but none knew what the prize was. Signs and landmarks in the

dream were the clues to the location of the temple. Perhaps the travellers still search for the temple; perhaps they are yet to dream of it.

There is a Beastwoman. She is called Makragg Bloody-Thighs. She has curled sheep-horns and the legs of a goat, making her a Caprigror Truegor. She is also a shaman, leading a small pack of bloody-fanged Brays. The Murder Tree is sacred to her and she leads her pack to it in pilgrimage once a year. She rips her flesh on the rose thorns and allows her pack to lap at her bleeding wounds. Her blood excites them to kill her and eat her flesh, but they fear her too much to give in to their temptation. Makragg knows this, and the knowledge of her power over them makes her ambitious for power over yet more followers. She knows there are

Humans who would follow her and drink her blood in the belief it would give them savage strength. Every year that she bleeds on the tree, her belief that the tree makes her blood special increases, as does her desire to feed it to devoted adorers.

A Wizard cut a rosewood staff from the Murder Tree. He trimmed the prickles from all but the end of the staff. His magic has become stronger, but all his spells are now somehow tainted with pain and blood.

There is a man. He is non-descript; no-one would look at him twice. He has slain fourteen men and women, and will slay more if given the chance. The man is a poisoner, and his favoured venom is brewed from the apples and mistleberries gathered from the Murder Tree. (The antidote can be made from the petals of the roses.) He accepts written contracts that are left in a split in the tree's trunk.

An orphan climbed the branches of the Murder Tree. The child looked out and saw a party of wanderers and was inspired to lead them to the tree, making up a reason to get them to follow. The Murder Tree has need of them, you see?

TALABHEIM

Outcuts and Longbits

By Zeno Collins



THE WARRANT EXECUTION COMPANY CAMEOS

Plot Lines

The PCs could meet a company man at any time in Talabheim, executing a warrant, interviewing a target's friends or family or just walking about the city. Joining the company may involve some entertaining role-playing. It does give the GM an easy way to drag PCs into scenarios, or just complicate

matters for them. Other scenarios would involve a lot of information gathering and conspiring on the part of PCs as the Star Chamber is a secret everyone involved wants to keep.

Oi, you with the big nose...

If the PCs were to offend one of the directors, he may institute a Star Chamber warrant and the PCs may get some hints as to a relationship between assassins and the Warrant Execution Company. But, who do they tell if they do not know which of the directors runs the Star Chamber? The PCs may not even realise the Oath Sworn Keepers would want to stop the Star Chamber's work. This is likely to be a combat heavy scenario, but having the contract lifted could involve a lot of role-playing and thought.

Blackmail is such an ugly word

The nobility always say you cannot trust commoners; now someone is blackmailing an important personage over an old Star Chamber job. So, it seems they were right. The noble, possibly a Syber-Gronzy family member, would normally just kill the blackmailer but as the assassin was hired through the Star Chamber the assassin's identity is unknown to them. Enter the PCs, for whatever reason; blackmail, being framed for a murder or threats to family work best. The noble hires the PCs to join the company (even better if you let them join earlier) and then join the Star Chamber (the noble has a few details and could recommend the PCs to Mellinger) to find out who did the job, who knew about it and finally to track down and kill the blackmailer. Having the PCs spy on the guild they just joined in the hope of tracking down an assassin should make things very tense. After all, they will have to perform at least one assassination to get in and become trusted. However, everyone will get suspicious when they start asking questions, and assassins have only one way of dealing with people they do not trust.

Keep your enemies close, but your friends closer

Richleau is a man after power. He has avoided Chaos as he knows from his wizard's training that it only destroys in the end. His chosen route to power is via the company. By building influence and favours, Richleau has reached the board of directors. His work for the Star Chamber has given him money and

information that will be used to manipulate the city. Assassination, blackmail, betrayal, or extortion: nothing is beneath him, and now he is ready. Richleau's plan is to take over the company and a couple of major merchant enterprises, but in such a way that no one will know he's running things. Assassins in the Star Chamber will do his killing, and blackmailed merchants will sign businesses over to a lawyer retained by a Herr Schmidt who is being threatened by heavies unconnected with the company. Bribed clerks will destroy, lose or forge any problematic paperwork, accidents will happen, people will die, and Richleau will then become the head of the Star Chamber. He will go on to reap the profits of companies run by lawyers acting on behalf of a Herr Schmidt whom they have never met. Richleau's ultimate goal is to take control of several noble families. This would be a long running story and would shake up the company quite a bit.



THE HARE & HOUNDS (FULL TEXT)

Where you find criminals, you will find those who live off them. Though obviously not popular, the Warrant Execution Company likes to maintain a presence here to support its people who work in Talagraad and assist the City Watch and River Wardens. To this end, the company bought an inn in Talagraad that serves as a base of operation for their people. It still does business as a normal inn, but has sleeping quarters, storage and offices for Bounty Hunters and wardens. As the riff-raff are kept out and people think twice about robbing here, the Hare and Hounds is popular with the more well-to-do locals and those passing through Talagraad.

The widow Gratz is a thief turned merchant hired by the company to run its inn. Gratz is actually her maiden name and the title "widow" is a bit of a joke. Married four times already at thirty-three she keeps outliving her husbands, though only one of those was under fifty when she married him. Contrary to what some people say she did not kill any of them. Helene Gratz would not mind a nice, rich husband who actually stayed alive so she does not have to work,

but all the rich men she finds keep dying without leaving her any money. The majority of her income comes from wise investments in business ventures and a share of the profits from the Hare and Hounds.

Dwarfs originally built the inn and this shows in its solid, sturdy construction. The cellars have flagstone floors and brick-lined walls with vents that lead to the roof letting fresh air in. Windows in the inn are of thick leaded glass with latches and bolts.

The smithy is located off the main courtyard. It is so cramped that only a Dwarf can work there comfortably, it is used to offer horse shoeing to customers and repairs to weapons and armour for company men. The Dwarven smith Hans Jorgsun also works as handyman, barman and bouncer. A member of the guild in good standing, he is on good terms with most of their Bounty Hunters.

The main doors open to a drinking area full of tables and chairs with eight two-foot thick oak pillars supporting the wooden-beamed ceiling. The 30' long bar is on the left where the barrels of beer are kept. Behind the bar, shelves of wines and spirits line the wall and doors lead to the kitchen and pantry. The fire is always burning and is built up to a large roaring mass in winter. Other light is provided by lanterns. Doors on the right lead to a snug dining room for more refined guests. Stairs from the upper rooms head down here making it easier for well-to-do guests to dine without going outside. The current manager is Pieter Schuzbar. An ex-sailor in his late forties, he is tall, of average build with lank dark brown hair, watery brown eyes, a full brown beard and a tanned complexion from his sea days. Schuzbar is morose, depressed and generally miserable; he can make you forget your worries because after a few minutes speaking to him the whole world seems brighter. Since taking over, the widow Gratz has insisted that Pieter concentrate on organising and stocking the bar, not serving (except towards the end of the evening when they want people to leave).

Arno Horst, an ex-assassin trained by Halfling chefs, does the cooking. In his late forties, he has retired and has money invested with a couple of local merchants. He was an expert with knives and poisons before he took up cooking as a hobby from which he now makes a less risky living. After all, few cooks get killed by bodyguards. Arno also does some minor surgery on the side, since he knows a lot about stab wounds and poison.

The Hare and Hounds is a good place for the PCs to use as a base. If they ask the Widow nicely, they can store weapons and armour here that they cannot take into the city and they can eat, sleep, and drink here in relative safety.



HARE & HOUND CAMEO

Oh, ficklety, thy name is woman

The family of one of Widow Gratz's late husbands is not happy about his death and more importantly, his money. Why they have waited until now is up to the GM (a long trip away or sudden financial problems that the Widow's money could fix) and they retain the PCs to find evidence that she was responsible. The only problem is, she was not. But maybe the family does not care about evidence, just that her money becomes theirs. How honest are the PCs and do they realise they are investigating (and possibly framing) a woman who has friends in high places, working for a company that has nasty employees?

THE BROTERHOOD CAMEOS

The Levellers

Viktor Sorbas is an agitator with a capital A. A slim, plain looking young man of Kislevite extraction, he grew up in a nice middle class home with plenty of privileges and a very bright future. Then he rebelled against it all and went to live in the slums and become a radical. Sorbas did follow the Markovite philosophy (*Warpstone* 10) for a while, but thought it was not radical enough and instead came up with his own theory of a "levelled society" where all people are so equal that everyone has the same legal rights and access to food, healthcare and so on. He is not too sure about how to put this into practice, but he is very sure about his beliefs, and can and will talk about this theoretical utopia for hours. Naturally the authorities have seen his pamphlets and want to string him up *now*. He was staying with the

Brotherhood, helping out with the chores and teaching ex-pit-fighters to read and write. Unfortunately, someone saw him outside the house and now Viktor needs to be smuggled out of the city before a warrant can be written for him. Emmerich knows his people are not going to be able to get him out, so he hires the PCs to get Viktor to a group of Markovite sympathisers over the border.

This scenario could be a running battle, the PCs constantly under attack from city militia, Bounty Hunters and young nobles. Or, for more thoughtful PCs it could involve a complex plan to smuggle Viktor out in disguise or via a tunnel while the Brotherhood's house is being watched. A sort of prison escape scenario avoiding the city militia and Bounty Hunters by stealth and guile rather than brute force.

“Whose army? Well, *this* army.”

Crime lords have long memories and the Schultz incident has not been forgotten. One of the other crime lords, maybe an associate of Schultz's who survived, has been biding their time and now thinks they have enough people to take out the Brotherhood. Again, this could go either way. Fans of the Godfather movies may want a long drawn out struggle with both groups making alliances and hiring assassins to take out prominent members of the opposition, with the PCs acting as hit-men, planners and advisors, spies and informants. Or it could be all out war, an overwhelming assault on the Brotherhood house by every thug and hit-man the crime lord has. The PCs can either be hired to organise and lead the assault or could just be hanging out with the Brotherhood when it happens and are added to the hit list.

Perhaps the crime lord was not as discreet as she thought and Emmerich heard rumours. As the members of the brotherhood are known faces in Talagraad, he hires the PCs to spy on the heavies and find out who hired them or what they are planning. If they find out in time, the PCs could be part of a force sent to hit the crime lord first or they may warn the Brotherhood and be hired to help with the defence of the house when the raid comes. Either way, there is a lot of trouble brewing and the shock waves of a major crime war in Talagraad could have far-reaching effects, if the PCs last long enough to see them.