

Privateer Press



NO QUARTER™

ISSUE N° 53
Mar 2014

THE DRAGON RISES!

PLAY EVERBLIGHT IN A NEW HORDES SCENARIO

IMMORTALITY: UNDEATH METAL

PART 1 OF A NEW ROLEPLAYING ADVENTURE

TOURNAMENT TRIPLE THREAT

LEGION OF EVERBLIGHT

ZOMBIES KEEP OUT!

FIRST LOOK AT THE
NEW BODGERS GAME



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ON THE COVER

Athanc by Andrea Uderzo

JUGGERNAUT'S JOURNEY: SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA



As we move down the West Coast, the Bay Area's famous Golden Gate Bridge is this month's stop for our Juggernaut to seek gold in peace, iron in war...

—Photo by Wangchen Engels, aka PG_Mr. Mayhem



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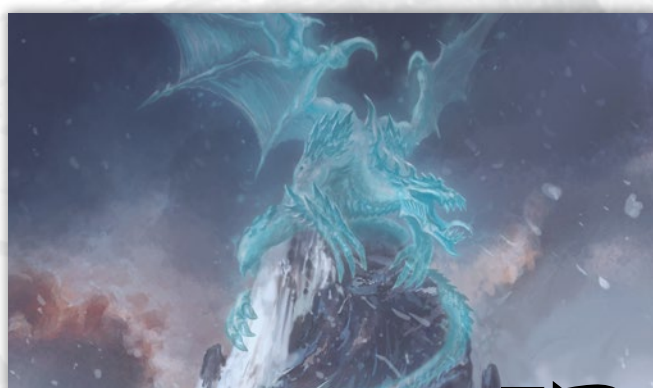
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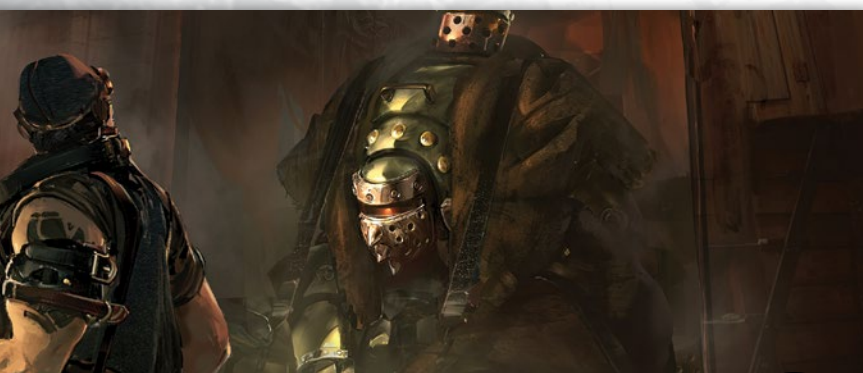
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NEWS FROM THE FRONT



FOODMACHINE 2013

By Norbert Brunhuber

ANOTHER GREAT YEAR FOR THE CHARITY DRIVE

The 8th annual Foodmachine charity drive continued the great tradition of bringing WARMACHINE and HORDES players together in a group effort to combat the ravages of hunger for families all around the world. With thirty-one unique events taking place all around the United States, as well as in Iceland, Spain, and now in Germany, players collected the equivalent of an incredible 42,056 cans of food this year.

Privateer Press continued to support Foodmachine by awarding personalized vinyl banners in each of the three competitive categories—Top Overall Donations, Top Average Donations, and Highest Single Donation. This was an outstanding year for Foodmachine, and the entire community should be proud of its efforts. To send suggestions or for more information about Foodmachine, email foodmachinepp@gmail.com, and for a full list of participants and top donations, visit handcannononline.com/foodmachine.



PIN THE WORKS...

Privateer Press rolls out its own unique line of collector's pins this summer, launching at Lock & Load GameFest in early June, where a host of unique event pins will be available to attendees. Other pins—from faction logos to popular characters to unique promotional pieces—will be available at launch and monthly through the Privateer Press website and at more events throughout the year.

"We've been asked about this hundreds of time over the years," said Will Shick, Privateer's director of business development. "But we wanted to be certain we could fully support collectors before we started a long-term line. Now we're certain."

Look for more info next issue and on Privateer (P)insider at Privateerpress.com this spring.

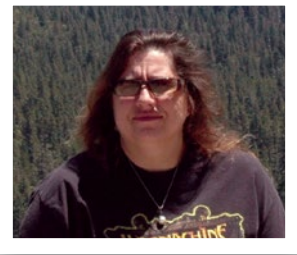
MORE WAYS TO GET TO THE ISLAND

Privateer Press has partnered with Audible to produce audiobooks for Skull Island eXpeditions' library of fiction set in the award-winning Iron Kingdoms setting. The first two audiobooks, *Into the Storm* and *Instruments of War*, both by Larry Correia, will be available on February 4.

In addition, Skull Island eXpeditions eBooks are now available directly through the Barnes & Noble website (barnesandnoble.com) for use with NOOK readers and will be available soon directly through iTunes on Apple devices. With these new channels, readers will be able to purchase Skull Island eXpeditions' fiction for the most popular eBook platforms or purchase DRM-free versions directly through skullislandx.com to enjoy on any device.



PROS & CONS



PRO: GAIL MARTINDALE

Gail Martindale discovered WARMACHINE during Mark I and immediately fell in love with the game. Joining the Privateer Press Gang in 2010, she has since been working hard to build communities and spread the word about WARMACHINE all over southern California. The community for Gail is not just the meta at her local game store but the overall community of WARMACHINE players everywhere. She has been the Tournament Organizer for Kingdom-Con since 2011, as well as part of the Team USA WTC Player Selection Committee.



CON: KINGDOM-CON

Kingdom-Con in San Diego, California, is just one of the conventions for which Gail oversees WARMACHINE events. Founded by Ross Thompson as a place where he and his friends could come together to play games, Kingdom-Con is now in its 5th year. Marquee events for Kingdom-Con 2014 include a WARMACHINE Weekend Qualifier and, for the first time, an Iron Gauntlet Qualifier. Come and join Ross and Gail April 24-27!

News from the Front brings you recaps and advance information about WARMACHINE and HORDES-related events, as well as updates on products and people in the community. Is there a cool event taking place in your area?

Tell us about it at: submissions@privateerpress.com



HAVE BATTLE FOAM, WILL TRAVEL

The Privateer Press Tournament Bag from Battle Foam is here! With room for 15" of Battle Foam's Privateer Press half-trays, this bag is big enough to haul an army yet small enough to make that haul easy. The Tournament Bag is constructed with a hard plastic inner shell and includes pockets for tablets, rulebooks, cards, and more. Visit battlefoam.com for more information or to purchase the new Tournament Bag.

CRUCIBLE 3 THROWS DOWN IN FLORIDA

Crucible returned to sunny Orlando, Florida, February 28–March 2. From its humble beginnings in 2012, Crucible has grown into the premier WARMACHINE & HORDES event in the southeastern United States, attracting players from all over the region. Crucible 3 kicked off three days of tournaments and activities with its own 35-point Hardcore tournament, Red Skies at Night. Saturday saw twin 32-player Masters Qualifier Heats, with the top six players from each advancing to the Masters tournament on Sunday. For details and photos, check out www.crucibleorlando.com.



PRIVATEER PRESS AT ADEPTICON 2014

A wargamer's dream come true, AdeptiCon 2014 (April 3–6 in Lombard, Illinois) is packed full of tactical miniature action of all kinds, and Privateer Press will be present in full force to represent WARMACHINE, HORDES, *High Command*, and all the other Privateer game lines.

With round-the-clock gaming, a schedule packed to capacity with tournaments and events, and plenty of outstanding prize giveaways, players can go for glory in Hardcore, Masters, and Iron Gauntlet tournaments, ally with friends for the ever-popular team tournament, or get in on a few casual games in the Iron Arena. For tickets, schedules, and more info, check out www.adepticon.org.



PACKING FOR PAX EAST

Privateer Press is packing up the convention booth and heading to Boston, Massachusetts, this April

11–13 to take part in the 5th annual PAX East. Join us at the Privateer Press booth for demos of the hottest new offerings and to purchase prereleases and convention-exclusives models.

Players looking to test their mettle can always find an opponent in the Iron Arena or compete in one of the WARMACHINE and HORDES tournaments leading up to the first-ever PAX East Masters on Sunday! Players should bring their *High Command* decks along as well—this year we will be running Kingmaker tournaments right alongside our WARMACHINE and HORDES events! Visit www.paxsite.com for more information.

ROLLING BONES: HORDES FACTION DICE NOW AVAILABLE

In partnership with Q-Workshop, Privateer Press released the much-anticipated HORDES Faction Dice, the follow-up to the popular WARMACHINE Faction Dice, on February 14. Available now at game stores everywhere, these new dice sets each include five dice featuring faction-specific colors and iconography, plus one HORDES die designed for AOE deviation and damage location rolls.



LOCK & LOAD GAMEFEST 2014

The 4th annual Lock & Load GameFest is coming to Bellevue, Washington, June 6–8. Players looking for three days of good times need look no further.

Looking to get your game on? Lock & Load has non-stop events for WARMACHINE, HORDES, LEVEL 7, BODGERS, *High Command*, and much more. Play casually in the Iron Arena to win prizes or test your skill in one of the competitive tournaments and unique formats, including the first-ever Iron Gauntlet World Championship finals.

Looking for the hottest new releases from Privateer Press? The Lock & Load store not only carries nearly the entire range of Privateer Press products on the market, it also delivers some of the most sought-after prereleases each year.

Looking to meet the staff? With a host of in-depth seminars and staffers throwing down in the Iron Arena, Lock & Load is your chance to get up close and personal with the Privateer Press staff.

Take a look at www.pplockandload.com to get your tickets, and we'll look for you this June!

NEW RELEASES



WARMACHINE: VENGEANCE

Take your adventures to new heights with this exhaustive guide to the people and nations that form the heart of the Iron Kingdoms—Cygnar, Khador, Llael, Ord, and the Protectorate of Menoth. Explore the steam-driven core of a world of conflict and epic adventure with a wealth of information that brings these nations to life in stunningly vivid detail.

PIP 1055 • \$34.99 (SOFTCOVER)

PIP 1056 • \$44.99 (HARDCOVER)



BANE RIDERS (PLASTIC)

GAME: WARMACHINE/CRYX

SCULPTORS: BEN MISENAR AND TODD HARRIS

PAINTER: MEG MAPLES

RELEASE: APRIL • PIP 34079 • \$64.99

In last issue's New Releases, we miscredited the painter for the Houseguard Thane. The correct credit should be Meg Maples.



GATORMAN BOKOR & BOG TROG SWAMP SHAMBLERS (METAL)

GAME: HORDES/MINIONS
SCULPTOR: STEVE SAUNDERS
PAINTER: MATT DIPIETRO

RELEASE: MARCH • PIP 75046 • \$74.99



TROLLKIN SORCERER (METAL)

GAME: HORDES/TROLLBLOODS
SCULPTOR: TODD HARRIS
PAINTER: MATT DIPIETRO

RELEASE: MARCH • PIP 71076 • \$24.99



DESPOILER (RESIN/METAL)

GAME: HORDES/SKORNE
SCULPTOR: SEAN BULLOUGH • PAINTER: MATT DIPIETRO
RELEASE: APRIL • PIP 74076 • \$59.99

NEW RELEASES



HORDES HIGH COMMAND: ELEMENTAL RAGE

Enhance your forces with *Elemental Rage*, an 84-card expansion for *HORDES High Command*! *Elemental Rage* contains 5 copies each of 16 different cards, plus 4 additional warlock cards, to bring new strategies to your Trollbloods, Circle Orboros, Skorne, and Legion of Everblight decks.

RELEASE: MARCH • PIP 61014 • \$15.99



COROLLARY (METAL)

GAME: WARMACHINE/CONVERGENCE OF CYRISS

SCULPTOR: BEN MISENAR

PAINTER: GEORDIE HICKS

RELEASE: APRIL • PIP 36013 • \$16.99



SKARLOCK COMMANDER (METAL)

GAME: WARMACHINE/CRYX

SCULPTORS: NATE SCOTT AND STEPHANE NGUYEN VAN GIGI

PAINTER: MATT DIPIETRO

RELEASE: MARCH • PIP 34104 • \$16.99



**ASSIMILATOR/CONSERVATOR/MODULATOR
HEAVY VECTOR PLASTIC KIT**
GAME: WARMACHINE/CONVERGENCE OF CYRISS
SCULPTOR: BEN MISENAR
PAINTER: MEG MAPLES
RELEASE: APRIL • PIP 36014 • \$34.99



FATHER LUCANT, DIVINITY ARCHITECT (METAL)
GAME: WARMACHINE/CONVERGENCE OF CYRISS
SCULPTOR: DOUG HAMILTON
PAINTER: MATT DIPIETRO
RELEASE: APRIL • PIP 36019 • \$24.99

NEW RELEASES



ZOMBIES KEEP OUT
BODGERS GAMES
RELEASE: APRIL
PIP 60008 • \$35.99





WARMACHINE HIGH COMMAND: HEROES & LEGENDS

Enhance your forces with *Heroes & Legends*, an 84-card expansion for WARMACHINE *High Command*! *Heroes & Legends* contains 5 copies each of 16 different cards, plus 4 additional warcaster cards, to bring new strategies to your Cygnar, Khador, Protectorate of Menoth, and Cryx decks.

RELEASE: APRIL • PIP 61009 • \$15.99

CLASSIC WARMACHINE AND HORDES MODELS NOW AVAILABLE IN PLASTIC



TRENCHER INFANTRY UNIT WITH THREE WEAPON ATTACHMENTS

GAME: WARMACHINE/CYGNAR

RELEASE: MARCH • PIP 31105 • \$49.99

CLASSIC WARMACHINE AND HORDES MODELS NOW AVAILABLE IN FULL-SIZE UNITS



SPAWNING VESSEL

GAME: HORDES/LEGION OF EVERBLIGHT

RELEASE: APRIL • PIP 73085 • \$34.99



HAMMERFALL HIGH SHIELD GUN CORPS

GAME: WARMACHINE/MERCENARIES

RELEASE: MARCH • PIP 41122 • \$61.99



GLOBAL PLAYER RANKINGS

Through January 2014

PLAYER NAME	POINTS	REGION
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REGION LEADERS

Daniel Knauss	18	Europe / Africa
Jay Larsen	14	NA West
Keith Christianson	12	NA West
Robin Maukisch	10	Europe / Africa
Jake Van Meter	10	NA East
Trent Denison	10	▲ Australia / Asia
James Moorhouse	8	▲ Australia / Asia
Jake Hoffman	6	NA East

AT-LARGE LEADERS

Colin Hill	10	NA West
Jan Souza	10	Europe / Africa
Brandon Cating	9	NA West
Andy McBirnie	8	Europe / Africa
Chris Green	8	NA West
Christopher Wedding	8	Europe / Africa
Charles Arrasmith	6	NA West
Liam Jordan	6	Europe / Africa
Tobias Voight	6	Europe / Africa
Dan Riker	6	NA East
Torbjorn Hansson	6	Europe / Africa
Christopher Davies	6	▲ Australia / Asia

IN THE HUNT

Endre Fodstad	4	Europe / Africa
Walter Langendorf	4	NA East
Joseph Skladanka	4	Europe / Africa
David Chandler	4	NA East
Bartholomäus Dobrzanski	4	Europe / Africa
Gord Wepler	4	NA West
Jakob Oskarsson	4	Europe / Africa
Michael Blyth	4	▲ Australia / Asia

IRON GAUNTLET UPDATE

Do you have what it takes to battle for the ultimate title in WARMACHINE and HORDES competitive play? Then... ENTER THE IRON GAUNTLET. Compete in Iron Gauntlet Qualifier events around the world for glory and a chance to compete against the best of the best at the Iron Gauntlet: The WARMACHINE & HORDES World Championship at Lock & Load GameFest 2014! In this epic confrontation, one competitor will dominate the championship and claim the title "Best in the World."

The gauntlet has been thrown down. Prove you're the best... if you've got the metal!

UPCOMING IRON GAUNTLET QUALIFIERS

TEMPLECON 2014

Warwick, RI • February 6–9

SMOGCON 2014

United Kingdom • February 21–23

ADEPTICON 2014

Lombard, IL • April 3–6

KINGDOM-CON 2014

San Diego, CA • April 24–27

At the end of the season the top two players from each region and the top eight at-large players will earn a spot at the Iron Gauntlet Finals at Lock & Load GameFest 2014. Results include Lock & Load GameFest 2013, Gen Con 2013, UK Masters 2013, RatCon 2013, WARMACHINE Weekend 2013, Iron Moot 2013, and Cancon 2014.

For more information about Iron Gauntlet:
The WARMACHINE & HORDES World Championship, visit
www.privateerpress.com/organized-play/iron-gauntlet



PLAY LIKE A PRIVATEER!

PRIVATEER PLAY DAY IS COMING MAY 4-10

What is Privateer Play Day? In one sentence: It's a day when you and your friends meet up to play your favorite Privateer Press board and card games at a participating retailer, get free swag just for doing so, and potentially win an awesome grand prize. Plus, your local retailer can win a separate grand prize just for hosting the event. (Turns out, it takes two sentences.)

A participating retailer chooses on which day during the week of May 4–10 it will host its Play Day. On that day, you and your friends come into that retailer, sign up, and bring in your personal copy of whichever Privateer Press board or card game you want to enjoy from among critically acclaimed titles like the terrifying and tense *LEVEL 7* games, the quick and zany *Bodgers Games*, or the strategic deck-building game of *High Command*. Privateer Press will provide a bounty of swag to participating retailers to give out based on the games you play.

There will be special promo cards for *LEVEL 7 [ESCAPE]*, *LEVEL 7 [OMEGA PROTOCOL]*, *High Command*, *Infernal Contraption*, *Heap*, *Bodgermania*, and the newly released *Zombies Keep Out*. Whichever game you play, you'll earn a promo for that game. It's that simple: show up, play games, earn promos, have fun. The Press Gang will be out in force as well, so players interested in demos of any of these games will have a great chance to try them out.

PRIVATEER PRIZES!

Sign in with your retailer when you arrive, and after the Play Day retailers will send Privateer Press their signup sheets with names of all participants. We will send a special thank-you gift just for them—after all, we want to show our appreciation to all the store owners, managers, and employees for hosting this event for our players.

Ten player names will be randomly selected from the signup sheets to win a great prize: three unique art prints taken from *Bodgers*, *High Command*, and *LEVEL 7*. And one randomly selected player will win the grand prize: an art gallery of three exceptional *canvas* prints using the previously mentioned art. Nothing says "I'm a classy gamer" like an art gallery featuring steam-powered warjacks, insane goblin mechanics, and alien horrors.

In addition, Privateer Press will hold a separate contest just for the retailers. Any store that takes photos of its Play Day and uploads them to the store's social media, tagging Privateer Press in the process, will be entered to win.

A randomly selected retailer will win the retail grand prize: a pirate's treasure chest full of...treasure. Coins, to be exact. Not just any coins, however. Privateer Press will create 100 coins featuring the Privateer Press logo on one side and the store's logo on the other side to fill that treasure chest. This will not only make a great display piece for the store but will also provide the winning retailer with a literal treasure trove of free promotional items truly unique to their business.

Privateer Play Day takes place the week of May 4–10. Check with your local retailer to see if they are participating, grab a few friends, choose some games, and go earn great prizes just for playing Privateer Press board and card games!



ZOMBIES

KEEP OUT

By David "DC" Carl

Around the office, we're really excited about the *Zombies Keep Out* board game release. *Zombies Keep Out* is the first cooperative game in the Bodgers Games product line, and as you can imagine, that puts a whole new spin on the typical antics of our favorite goblin tinkerers.

Contraption Chaos

One of the cornerstones of the Bodgers Games is the experience of building a convoluted machine of some kind. This might be a literal contraption, but it might also be a tricked-out vehicle from *Heap* or the perfect hand with just the right prize cards to secure a win in *Bodgermania*.

In *Zombies Keep Out*, players work together to build at least three contraptions before zombies overrun the bodgers' workshop and do bad things to everyone inside. Completing contraptions nets the players cards and comes with a contraption-specific special effect, but just as important, it gives players a whole new option for their "Bodge" action each turn. The "Push the Button" action allows a player to use his or her turn to activate any of the special effects of a completed contraption.

This adds some fun friction to the decision of which contraptions to work on first. Should you focus on the contraption that happens to match your current part cards, the ones that net the bodgers the most part cards upon completion, or the contraption with the most potent anti-zombie "Push the Button" action?

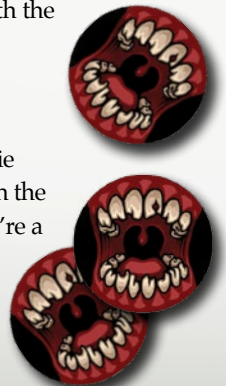


Madness Ensues

The other cornerstone of the Bodgers Games line is the "anything can happen!" facet of gameplay. Massive quantities of cards can go from parts piles and hands into the scrap pile when you activate a machine in *Infernal Contraption*, and you just never know who's going to win the next rush in *Heap*.

In *Zombies Keep Out*, the deck of Terrible Things definitely adds an element of the unknown to gameplay, but it's the zombie bite tokens that really bring down the crazy. With each successive bite token a player receives, that player's ability to help the bodgers win the game decreases—and the player's ability to communicate with the other players decreases as well!

With a single bite token, a player can no longer trade part cards with other players and must slur his or her speech as the zombie infection begins to take hold. Once you reach the maximum of four bite tokens, however, you're a full-fledged zombie, moaning incoherently and actively using your turn to wreck the bodgers' safe-haven workshop!



United Survival

The aspect of *Zombies Keep Out* that sets it apart from the other Bodgers Games released thus far is that it is a cooperative game for up to six players. As the game progresses, the zombies progressively shamble toward the workshop and smash down more and more of the barricades keeping the undead at bay. The players win or lose together, so it's in their collective best interest to think critically about the group's goals and resources, not just their own individual ones.

Which contraptions to work on and when to work on them is a major aspect of cooperative decision-making, but it's far from the only one. Players will want to communicate about which of the five workshop areas they're most focused on protecting and which could stand to lose a few barricades now and then. Of course, the workshop isn't going to make it through the game completely unscathed, but if there's a breach in the wrong place, all the progress the players have made on a contraption could be lost!

One pitfall of some cooperative games is the potential for one experienced player to direct the efforts of the team overall. While there are definitely numerous opportunities for cooperation in *Zombies Keep Out*, the active player each turn must face the deck of Terrible Things cards all alone.

Drawing from the deck of Terrible Things and choosing one of the three possibilities on the card is known as the "Zombies Close In" part of the turn. Terrible Things cards are not revealed to the other players and are even discarded face down. Only the active player will ever truly know how bad things could have been and whether he or she actually made the best decision for the team... or would have chosen just about anything to avoid taking another bite token.

The exact nature of the Terrible Things varies widely, but some of the most common options include adding zombies to the board and allowing the zombies to "shamble" closer to the workshop. Other possibilities include discarding cards, moving contraption progress tokens backward, or taking those infamous bite tokens.



Decisions, Decisions

The second part of each turn is also all about choices.

When players "Bodge," they select one action from a pretty lengthy list: they can draw a couple more part cards, use the "Push the Button" ability on a completed contraption, use cards to destroy zombies, use cards to repair barricades, or, most often, use a part card to make progress on one of the contraptions needed to win the game.

At its most fundamental level, each turn consists of trying to choose the *least detrimental* option from a menu of choices and then trying to choose the *most beneficial* option from a new menu of choices. As the

game moves forward, it's inevitable that the zombies will make progress toward the workshop and eventually begin tearing through the barricades. This increases the tension of each choice players make—both when making their "least bad" choice and their "most good" choice each turn.

Cooperate Or...

Sometimes, taking a bit of a break from cutthroat gaming for some cooperative gaming is just what the zombie ordered. Cooperative board games provoke very different interactions around the gaming table, and the good ones can be tons of fun.

Zombies Keep Out is a great game for taking those co-op board game breaks. The mechanics are simple enough for even relatively young gamers, and the entertainment value of watching your friends forced to act like zombies cannot be overstated. (The less they're able to verbalize, the more fun it gets.) On the other hand, *Zombies Keep Out* includes rules for increasing the game's difficulty, putting even the most tactical gamers' backs against a wall. In the end, if you can't work together, you won't keep the zombies out...and that means you'll *grrnar arr snarrgrrrr...*



HIGHER COMMAND

ALTERNATE FORMATS

By David “DC” Carl

In *No Quarter* #52, we explored a few alternate formats that featured team play for *WARMACHINE High Command* and *HORDES High Command*. This time, we’ll look at a pair of formats for the standard number of players (2–4) acting in their own best interests, but these formats incorporate deck alterations that shake up the standard gameplay or even provide a whole new goal for the game...

KICKSTART

Overview

The Kickstart format gets players into the action from the very first turn thanks to customized starting army decks.

Rules

Kickstart utilizes the standard reinforcement decks, warcasters/warlocks, locations deck, and Winds of War deck with variant starting army decks. After creating their reinforcement decks, players can exchange as many cards as they wish from their starting army decks for *unused* faction army cards that have 0 victory points and that have a total cost of 3 or fewer resources.

In the Kickstart variant, players *can* deploy and rush army cards during the first two rounds of the game.

These additional player choices during the first couple rounds of the Kickstart format can cause the game to run a little bit longer than normal, so players may wish to remove one or two cards from the Winds of War deck to compensate. (Just don’t remove the Day of Reckoning card or the game will never end!)

Discussion

The Kickstart format is perfect for players who do not wish to build up their army deck for a few rounds before the action heats up. From the very first turn, players can fight over location cards.

For players who have access to an expansion or two, Kickstart gives them lots of interesting options for creating and customizing their decks. Not only are there a multitude of ways to build the revised starting army deck, but the format also makes it much easier to use a reinforcement deck that focuses purely (or almost purely) on a single resource type—CMD or WAR.

Kickstart also gives a new perspective on low-cost cards within the factions because it eliminates the step of purchasing some of those cards from the reserves. Cards like Paladins of the Wall or Spawning Vessel are particularly interesting choices for starting army decks, as they typically don’t show up until mid-game due to their high rush costs.

CONQUEROR

Overview

The Conqueror format is all about capturing locations. The player to capture the most victory points of location cards wins the game.

Rules

Conqueror utilizes standard starting army decks, reinforcement decks, warcasters/warlocks, and locations deck but with a variant Winds of War deck. To set up the Winds of War deck for the Conqueror variant, take the Early and Mid Winds of War cards and shuffle them together to form a 10-card Winds of War deck. If players need to draw a card from the Winds of War deck once the deck is depleted, simply reshuffle all 10 Winds of War cards, draw the top card, and continue normally.

When a player captures a location, do *not* move that card to the player’s discard pile. Instead, place it near the occupying forces pile face up. The quantity of location card victory points each player has at a given time is open information for all players.



Once a player has attained a predetermined quantity of location card victory points (usually 10, 15, or 20, but any value that all players agree on is acceptable), players then complete the current game round, and the game immediately ends. Additionally, if a player needs to add a card to his reserves when his reinforcement deck is out of cards, players complete the current game round, and then the game immediately ends.

When the game ends, players count up their total location victory points, and the player with the most victory points wins the game. In the case of a tie, use the standard criteria from the *High Command* rulebook for breaking a tie.

Discussion

For players who enjoy fierce battles over locations more than they enjoy creating a finely tuned machine for war, *Conqueror* really zeroes in on their gameplay preferences. Note that *Conqueror* does impact the value of many army cards. While still powerful battle assets, the victory points on expensive warbeasts, warjacks, and warriors are no longer a consideration for ultimate victory.

In addition to giving a new perspective on your current favorite reinforcement deck, *Conqueror* is a great opportunity to try out new things—new cards, new detachment colors, or whole new factions. For players who have a number of *High Command* expansions, it also provides a new direction to the process of creating a reinforcement deck. A tuned Kingmaker deck is not going to lend itself seamlessly to a game of *Conqueror* against competitive friends.

Still, *Conqueror* plays out very much like a standard game of *High Command* and has a far more familiar feel than formats with more severe gameplay alterations. It's a great change of pace that does not substantially distort the core *High Command* experience.

CONCLUSION

Though alternate *High Command* formats are intended to shake up a game night rather than replace the core game experience, they can be a lot of fun, provide new excitement and variety in between expansion releases, and generate ideas for ways to create new experiences with your existing *High Command* cards.



HIGH COMMAND™

EXPAND YOUR COMMAND



HEROES AND LEGENDS

CARD LIST

By David "DC" Carl

Heroes and Legends introduces the latest expansion cards for WARMACHINE High Command, giving players new options for their reinforcement decks for Cygnar, the Protectorate of Menoth, Khador, and Cryx. Heroes and Legends focuses on the theme of famous characters in the Iron Kingdoms, and every new army card has the "character" ability. Characters are a little bit stronger or tougher for their cost, but you can only have one friendly card with that name in play at a time. Each faction gains a new warcaster card along with five copies each of four new army cards players can use to customize their detachments.



These colored pips represent the maximum number of times a card can appear in a particular detachment.



CYGNAR

Heroes and Legends brings some great new assets to the Cynaran arsenal led by the first-ever Power 5 warcaster card, Lord Commander Coleman Stryker. The two warjacks, the Thunderhead and Gallant, bring a great deal of offense and defense, respectively, and Captain Maxwell Finn is the perfect complement to any deck that includes a lot of Trencher cards.



WARCASTER

- Lord Commander Coleman Stryker

REINFORCEMENTS

- Black 13th Strike Team
- Captain Maxwell Finn
- Gallant
- Thunderhead



PROTECTORATE OF MENOOTH

The Protectorate cards from *Heroes and Legends* radiate Menoth's power. The Avatar of Menoth uses the Menoth's Gaze ability to take the brunt of an enemy attack and safeguard more vulnerable support cards. The Lawgiver's Creed ability on the Covenant of Menoth can be just as disruptive to an opponent's plans by completely shutting down his or her cards' abilities.



WARCASTER

- Hierarch Severius

REINFORCEMENTS

- The Avatar of Menoth
- The Covenant of Menoth
- Fire of Salvation
- Nicia, Tear of Vengeance





KHADOR

The Khador cards in *Heroes and Legends* are perhaps best typified by their extremes. On one end of the spectrum, the Great Bears of Gallowswood card is one of the most efficient in all of

High Command. On the other, the Behemoth is the highest-cost warjack to date but comes with a staggering array of resource production or combat capabilities along with 2 VPs.



WARCASTER

- Supreme Kommandant Iruks

REINFORCEMENTS

- Behemoth
- Drago
- Great Bears of Gallowswood
- Kovnik Jozef Grigorovich



CRYX

Necromantic powers really come to the fore in *Heroes and Legends*, showcasing Cryx's discard pile as a renewable resource. Lich Lord Asphyxious, Deathjack, and the Withershadow

Combine all provide means of reusing your discarded cards. Then there's Captain Rengrave, a card that brings out free Revenants from your hand any time he's rushed, deployed, or even moved!



WARCASTER

- Lich Lord Asphyxious

REINFORCEMENTS

- Captain Rengrave
- Deathjack
- Malice
- The Withershadow Combine





HIGH COMMAND™

EXPAND YOUR COMMAND



IMMORTAL TALES

CARD LIST

By David "DC" Carl

Immortal Tales parallels the Heroes and Legends expansion by bringing HORDES High Command players a host of new character options for Trollbloods, Circle Orboros, Skorne, and Legion of Everblight decks. As with the warcasters in Heroes and Legends, the new warlock cards in Immortal Tales are more expensive and more powerful incarnations of characters already present in High Command. In addition to figuring out the right number of character cards to use in a reinforcement deck, players will also need to decide if these more-powerful warlocks justify their higher costs alongside the other cards players have chosen. Each faction gains a new warlock card along with five copies each of four new army cards players can use to customize their detachments.



These colored pips represent the maximum number of times a card can appear in a particular detachment.





TROLLBLOODS

Efficiency, control, and a warlock oozing with raw power—*Immortal Tales* has something for everyone when it comes to the Trollbloods. The character Fell Callers, known as the

Sons of Bragg, are worth a special mention even in such elite company, however. Like a double dose of Kriel Fell Callers, they'll reduce nearly any rush cost down to the card's purchase cost.



WARLOCK

- Madrak Ironhide, World Ender

REINFORCEMENTS

- Horthol, Long Rider Hero
- Mulg the Ancient
- Rök the Frostborn
- Sons of Bragg



CIRCLE ORBOROS

The Circle's new warrior cards pack quite a punch for their resource costs, but it's the Circle's warbeasts that really lead the way in this expansion. Megalith slows down opponents

at the battlefield of your choice while Ghetorix punishes opponents for his destruction more than any previous card in *High Command*.



WARLOCK

- Krueger the Stormlord

REINFORCEMENTS

- Ghetorix
- Lord of the Feast
- Megalith
- Wolf Lord Morraig





SKORNE

Immortal Tales cranks up Skorne's impressive survivability even further with Tiberion and Hakaar the Destroyer, cards your opponents will be hard-pressed to remove from a location. Molik Karn is an impressive combatant with 2 VPs, but just as important, he introduces a new deck archetype, one that leans on warbeasts nearly to the exclusion of Skorne warrior cards.



WARLOCK

- Supreme Archdomina Makeda

REINFORCEMENTS

- Hakaar the Destroyer
- Molik Karn
- Tiberion
- Tyrant Rhadeim



LEGION OF EVERBLIGHT

Many Legion of Everblight players will be immediately drawn to Proteus, a new Blight Gift warbeast with 3 Power and a rush cost of just 6 WAR. Typhon and the Blackfrost Shard are not to be overlooked, though. Both of these cards bring unparalleled survivability under the right battlefield circumstances, and they combo beautifully with cards that have Superior Range.



WARLOCK

- Thagros, The Messiah

REINFORCEMENTS

- Annyssa Ryvaal
- The Blackfrost Shard
- Proteus
- Typhon





LOVE AND THE ART OF CHARACTER CONSTRUCTION

Scott Campbell, Creative Director of WhiteMoon Dreams, Inc.

What does it take to get a WARMACHINE: Tactics character from an idea in someone's head to a moving, acting image in the game? Seven steps and a certain degree of affection...

When I think of WARMACHINE, I think of characters.

Specifically, I think of the thousands of decisions that went into making those characters unique: how they visually communicate their functionality and attitudes, how they represent their faction's sensibilities, and their overall levels of bad-assery.

With *Tactics*, our job is to take those awesome tabletop models and bring them to life—fully animated, performance-optimized, painstakingly detailed *life*.

So, how do we do it? What does it take to go from a metal figure to a digital character?

Love. And a *lot* of hard work.

STEP 1: CONCEPT ARTISTRY

Most game characters start on a blank piece of paper. A concept artist begins to doodle and ask difficult questions: What is this character's purpose? What kind of exemplary statistics or weaponry does he or she possess? How does this character fit in with the rest of the team's existing shapes and themes? What kind of unique silhouette will make him or her stand out from the others? What kinds of colors and textures should this character have?

The good news for us is this laborious effort has already been done—we can piggyback on the exquisite modeling already used for the WARMACHINE tabletop game.

Although this gives us a leg up, Concept is not completely out of the woods.

So, What's a Polygon?

Most everything you see in a computer game nowadays is made from polygons. For a decade and a half now, computer graphics hardware has been built to blast as many polygons to the screen as possible—in the range of tens of millions of polygons per second.

A polygon is basically a planar triangle defined by three vertices. A vertex is simply a point in 3D space representing a corner of the triangle. Simple, right?

Each polygon can have a material assigned to it, which defines what textures and shader properties the polygon will be drawn with. A shader is essentially how the flat polygon will respond to the light in a scene. Each vertex of the polygon can have a few properties that tell the shader how the light should affect it: RGB Color (which can tint a texture), tangent and normal vectors (skewing the light for bump and specular maps), and UV coordinates (which tell the texture maps how to be drawn on the polygon).

Our once-humble polygon has now become a force to be reckoned with.



CONCEPT



MODELING

When designing static figures, you don't have to think too hard about how they'll be moving about. Unfortunately, we do; our digital characters will have to articulate.

Often times this isn't so bad. Other times...I give you Vlad. If he raises his arms past his shoulders, his massive pauldrons will swallow his head like a giant clam. Mind you, his gigantic shoulder armor is crucial to his silhouette, so our cunning artist must figure out how to give Vlad's arms mobility while they're adorned with a bisected church bell.

And speaking of walking churches, the armor of the Protectorate not only resembles one but is often as wide as one. Fitting the faction's resplendent armor onto a human skeleton while keeping that character's silhouette true to his miniature is quite challenging.

So, once the character is sketched from all angles in the right proportions, it's time to move on to modeling.

STEP 2: MODELING

Often a model begins as a cube. By extruding its sides and dividing its surfaces, the modeler begins to rough out the overall shape of the character. Very quickly you can start to see the creation unfold from blocky geometric design into a vaguely humanoid shape. Polygonal vertices are pushed, pulled, and tweaked until the sizes and shapes are spot-on with the concept—but there's still much more work ahead.

Moving into the "high-poly modeling" stage, our modeler creates every detail of the character's face, armor, and weaponry. That tiny bolt on his armor? That's about 100 polygons. That wrinkle under his eye? A mere 300 out of the 200,000 for his whole face. By a process called tessellation, the modeler divides large polygon triangles into many smaller ones, and those into even smaller ones. The result is *millions* of polygons forming a latticework of planes and edges that perfectly defines the surface of the character.

Now, if we were to use these models as-is, we would barely be able to display a single character on screen at 30 FPS (frames-per-second), let alone the 40+ we'll need to show. These models will now have to be optimized back down into 50,000 polygon meshes before they are ready to be put into the game.

So why do all this high-poly work just to remove it all again? The answer is texturing.

Diffuse, Specular, and Emissive—Oh My!

Each model has a variety of texture maps applied to it. All of these detailed paintings tell the shader how to light each pixel of the model.

Diffuse Map: The straight-up color map of the model as it would appear in diffuse light.

Normal Map: The surface facing for each texture pixel. This creates a bump-map effect, where changes in the surface can create creases and bulges when they are lit.

Specularity Map: In Unreal 4, this is the ambient light reflected off the model. The mapping can make the surface shiny, dull, plastic, or skin-like.

Emissive Map: Makes stuff glow. Everything from warjack boilers to mechanithrall eyes—if it glows, it is part of the emissive map.

STEP 3: TEXTURING

To begin, the finished high-poly model is exploded. Well, “unwrapped” might be more accurate—like laying out a globe on a flat sheet. The real work is to get all the parts to fit on one flattened texture. Although there are programs to help with this process, the texture artist will have to move, rotate, and scale all the parts of the model. It’s much like playing Tetris but without any uniform blocks. Once the entire surface of the model is unwrapped onto our square texture, we can create our normal map.

Now the work of creating a high-poly model pays off. All that loving detail is unwrapped onto our gigantic 2048x2048 pixel texture sheet. Since the optimized character mesh will not contain polygons for each rivet, the normal map records every indentation from the high-poly surface onto each pixel. This means that a single polygon can appear as though it contains all manner of bumps and ridges. Through the magic of bump-mapping, our relatively low-poly model will appear in the game with all the detail and perfection of a high-poly model.



The diffuse map is now painted. There are all sorts of groovy tools that allow you to paint right on the surface of your 3D model and instantly unwrap the brush stroke into the diffuse map. No amount of tools, however, can replace the painting skills of the texture artist.

With all the various texture mapping done, our character looks like the work of art it truly is. But we’ve still got more to do.

STEP 4: RIGGING

Like living and breathing beings, our characters need skeletons if they want to move about. This is where the rigger comes in.

A skeletal mesh is basically a hierarchy of joints placed in 3D space. If you remember the whole “foot bone’s connected to the ankle bone” bit, then you get the idea. Each model needs these skeletal joints moved to their unique positions, and many models need additional bones to support hoses, capes, or extra limbs.

Ragdoll Mayhem

When a character goes “ragdoll,” his or her limbs become physics-driven objects, colliding with the environment and themselves as the character is propelled by gravity and percussive force. Watching a Winter Guard somersaulting across the field after being hit by a Quake Hammer is definitely good fun—but it takes some doing.

The first problem is with math. The computational power required to move and collide physical objects is expensive for high frame-rate games. This means we can’t just use the realistic skeletal mesh’s hierarchy; we have to build another, simpler one. So, with spheres, capsules, and the occasional rectangular solid, we construct a shell around the surface of our mesh. This secondary “ragdoll” skeleton uses about 1/10 of the bones as the skeletal mesh, but each of these bones has special properties. For the skeletal mesh, animators define how the joints bend—but this is not so for ragdoll joints. Animators know that a femur can’t twist 360 degrees in its knee joint, but the physics engine does not know this. Without setting the constraints on a ragdoll joint, the model literally turns into a pile of quivering, colliding, body chunks. And that would strain our desired Teen ESRB rating.

Now it’s time for the “skinning.” Each bone (which is the length from one joint to another) requires a volumetric “envelope” to be created. Any polygonal vertices on the mesh that fall within this envelope will be weighted to bend when the bone bends. This is extremely simple in theory, but in practice, it can be quite a nightmare. Each vertex (of which there are tens of thousands in a single model) can be affected by multiple bone envelopes. This requires the rigger to go through each vertex and set the desired “weight” to its parent bones. This is also the time where unassigned verts are given bone parents. A single unassigned vert that will not animate with the skeleton can cause bizarre and sometimes horrifying results. Once you’ve seen a model animate with one unassigned face vert, you’ll know what I mean...

With the skinning done, the rigger moves on to controls. Like a marionette’s manipulator, digital controls are created for the animator. Typically used to control fingers on a hand or the facial muscles for expressions, the controls allow for fine manipulation of complex joints.

STEP 5: ANIMATION

With the model built, textures set, and the skeleton in place, we’re now ready for animation.

Animations are atomic segments represented by a linear timeline—for example, the “running” animation lasts 24 frames and loops back onto itself. Like making a stop-motion movie, the animator rotates each bone joint by hand, setting keyframes in the timeline. Dozens of bone positioning and



EFFECTS

rotating keyframes make up a single animation segment. Each character has over forty unique animation segments required to make it idle, walk, run, charge, attack, shoot, vault, fidget, flinch, defend, cast spells, fall off heights, and stagger from knockback. This makes for some busy animators.

Special animation blends are also created for programatic animations, things like aiming a weapon at an enemy, targeting something with a spell, or taking cover next to a wall.

Capes! Why Does Everyone Have to Wear Capes!?

Dangly cloth-bits cause no shortage of problems. For cloth to animate, it is set up as long chains of skeletal joints that deform the drapery. There are two ways to handle their movement, and neither is good: either animate all the cloth by hand (which is the equivalent of moving Mount Fuji with chopsticks) or by physics-driving the cloth bones, which is prohibitively expensive to the CPU (and can cause problems like capes unexpectedly flipping over a character's head).

Because we are a turn-based game, we have a cheat that solves our cloth problem. The animators animate the cloth for a character's idle animations. When the character moves or acts, however, his or her cloth becomes physics driven. This keeps the amount of animations down while giving us the dynamic cloth only on the characters that need it (saving us a boat-load of CPU time).

STEP 6: EFFECTS

What would a warjack be without the smoke and steam from its boiler? What would a warcaster be without his or her spiraling rune magic? Effects are the icing on the cake. They take a great model and turn it into a spectacular one. From the flames of the Protectorate to the lightning of Cygnar, all characters have big effects.

When your character pops his or her feat and the skies open up with glowing lightning that rains down on your enemies and explodes into sizzling shrapnel, thank an effects guy.

STEP 7: AUDIO

Everything from footsteps to a gurgling boiler to the clash of weapons—a character's audio anchors that character within the world. It's almost a subconscious thing, really, but the audio carries so much information about the characters: does their armor creak when they move? Are their footsteps light or heavy? How damaging was that hit? Just by listening, you can get an idea of the character. If done right, it forms an audio-visual harmony that is the last step in bringing the character to life.

CONCLUSION

So, going back to the question: "How do we do it?" Hopefully you can see that when I answered, "hard work," I wasn't understating the facts.

But in truth the answer is love. All the hard work, all the technical details, all the bugs and pulling-out-your-hair drama—it's all worth it in the end, once you see the excitement on a player's face and the fun that player is having playing your game. What it comes down to in the end is love of what we do.

COMING TO A GAME TABLE NEAR YOU:

WHAT'S NEW

TEMPLECON LIVESTREAM HIGHLIGHTS

Privateer Press held its 2014 Keynote Presentation on February 7 at TempleCon, where we announced some of the exciting new releases coming your way in 2014—the next HORDES expansion, new games for LEVEL 7 and the Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game, and, of course, the emergence of the cephalyx as a new mercenary contract!

That presentation, which was broadcast live, is now available to view on-demand at twitch.tv/privateerpress and on our Privateer Press Prime video channel at privateerpress.com/videos.



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE KEYNOTE

We kicked things off with the announcement of *Iron Kingdoms: Unleashed*, the new standalone, cross-compatible roleplaying game set in the wilds of Immoren. This massive release is complete with full game rules, a wide variety of races and careers, and over a hundred pages of monsters and beasts. *Iron Kingdoms: Unleashed* will offer players a more savage experience—so, if you've ever wanted to release your inner beast, you need to get *Unleashed*.

Exigence is the next HORDES expansion, and it's full of great new options for the armies of HORDES. The Keynote teased some of the new warlocks and showed off new Minion battle engines, but the big news is the new lesser warlocks and warbeast packs! As you might expect, the lesser warlocks are HORDES' answer to the novice warcasters from *WARMACHINE: Vengeance*. But what are the warbeast packs? Check out the video to find out!

Next up was a teaser for *LEVEL 7 [INVASION]*. This short film depicts an alien attack on Earth, with an orbital

IN 2014



bombardment killing over a billion people. The coalitions of Earth must unite to save the planet from its attackers, but their fate may rest in the hands of an unlikely ally... More information about the new standalone LEVEL 7 board game will be coming soon, so stay tuned.

Finally, the Keynote turned to the highly anticipated announcement of the cephalyx! The cephalyx will be available soon as a new mercenary contract, emerging with their monstrosities from their underground tunnel networks this summer at Lock & Load GameFest to batter

to a pulp all who stand in their way. Similar to warjacks in some respects, monstrosities feel no pain and hit like a truck. And not only is the video filled with more details on the cephalyx and monstrosities, it also features stunning visuals depicting the live-action creation of a drudge. You don't want to miss this one!

So what are you waiting for? Watch the videos, and be sure to follow our Twitch channel and subscribe to our Youtube channel so you'll always be the first to know when a new Privateer Press video airs!

UP ALL NIGHT

LOCK & LOAD 2014

The winds of wargaming will blow in the dead of night at this year's Lock & Load GameFest.

The 4th annual Lock & Load GameFest is coming to Bellevue, Washington, June 6–8, 2014. Bigger and better than ever before, this year's event will fill a massive new venue from end to end with open gaming, modeling and painting, seminars, WARMACHINE and HORDES tournaments, and many other exciting activities.

The ever-popular Masters and Hardcore tournaments will return, along with a slew of other popular formats, including Who's the Boss, Hardcore, Spellcraft, and Speedmachine. Foremost on the roster will be the most highly anticipated tournament of the year, one the entire community has been building toward since last summer's Lock & Load. The Iron Gauntlet: The WARMACHINE & HORDES World Championship will determine the best player on the planet, and everyone who attends Lock & Load will be able to watch the action unfold as the world's top sixteen players compete in the ultimate championship.

Lock & Load will have plenty to offer the casual gamer as well, including the return of the Iron Arena open gaming area—all night long. Featuring professional-quality gaming tables, the Iron Arena allows competitors to play WARMACHINE and HORDES in whatever manner they choose, with or without scenarios or special rules—and players will earn "skulls" with every game, redeemable right there at the Iron Arena for valuable prizes that will be unavailable anywhere else. Best of all, this year the Iron Arena is open all night and day, so players never need to stop gaming or earning rewards—as long as they can keep their eyes open.

But Lock & Load isn't just about WARMACHINE and HORDES. This year's GameFest will host events for *High Command*, LEVEL 7, Bodgers, and the *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game*. In between games and seminars, attendees can drop by the Privateer Press Store for prereleases and convention exclusives, pick up professional insight at the P3 Studios open Q&A, and find out more about all the games and products Privateer Press has in store throughout the year ahead. To top it all off, Privateer Press Chief Creative Officer Matt Wilson himself will be joined by the WhiteMoon Dreams staff to discuss the history and creation of the eagerly anticipated *WARMACHINE: Tactics* video game.

Check out www.ppluckandload.com to purchase badges, and check back often for more Lock & Load GameFest event information.

WWW.PPLOCKANDLOAD.COM



2014 GRANDMASTER PAINTING COMPETITION



THE CATEGORIES AND PRIZES

SINGLE MINIATURE

A single trooper, solo, warlock, or warcaster.
1st Place Prize: \$200 U.S.

LARGE MINIATURE

A battle engine, colossal, gargantuan, warbeast, warjack, or a vignette depicting a scene from the Iron Kingdoms, featuring 2-4 models and measuring no more than 12" wide x 12" deep.
1st Place Prize: \$200 U.S.

GROUP

A battle group with a single warcaster/journeyman with 2-5 warjacks or a warlock/lesser warlock with 2-5 warbeasts (attachments are permitted); a diorama depicting a scene from the Iron Kingdoms, featuring 5+ models and measuring no more than 12" wide x 12" deep; or a unit of at least the minimum number of models allowed and no more than the maximum number of models allowed (attachments are permitted).
1st Place Prize: \$200 U.S.

GRANDMASTER

A single Grandmaster will be selected from among the winners of the three categories.
Grand Prize: \$300 U.S.

The Grandmaster will win a total of \$500: \$300 for the Grand Prize and \$200 for the qualifying category win.

JUDGE'S CHOICE

Each P3 Studio judge will also have a \$50 Privateer Press Gift Certificate to award to entries particularly deserving of merit.

Each entry in the competition will be judged based on its own merits irrespective of the other entries and categories. Judges will look at each piece and award entries a gold, silver, or bronze (or possibly no award) based solely on the quality of the entry. For example, in a category with 30 entries, there may be 4 gold, 7 silver, 13 bronze, and 6 entries with no award.

We feel this system will enable participants to judge the progress of their work from year to year without regard to what other competitors may enter. This will also ensure each entry gets recognized for its effort despite being in a category with an abundance of entries.

There will be an overall winner for each category, selected from the models that earned a gold medal.

The title of Grandmaster will be awarded to one entry, the best piece in the competition, selected from the overall winners of each of the three categories.



**2013
GRANDMASTER
SUBMISSION**



HOW TO ENTER

Show up at Lock & Load. Fill out an entry form at the P3 area and drop off your entries at the appointed time and place (see Lock & Load schedule for full details).

RULES

- All entries must be Privateer Press miniatures. Conversions and scratch-building are allowed but must fall within the scope and atmosphere of the Iron Kingdoms game. Resin bases and hobby miniature terrain accessories, including but not limited to brass etched parts, resin columns, grass tufts, flock, and pre-made trees made by third party companies who do not market and/or promote table top miniature games are allowed. Entries containing terrain/accessories from other miniature gaming companies will result in a disqualification.
- All entries must be modeled and painted by the person entering. The person entering must personally hand in the entry at the specified time. Entries must also be collected from the display case at the specified time. Any entries not collected by the end of the show automatically become the property of Privateer Press.
- All entries must be accompanied by the appropriate entry form. The form must be filled out correctly and clearly. Competitors will be issued a numbered ticket when they hand in their miniatures. In order to collect their entry at the end of the show, competitors must present this ticket and a valid ID in person.
- Competitors can enter each category only once. However, competitors can enter as many of the categories as they choose.
- While every care possible will be taken with the entries, Privateer Press will not be responsible for any damage or loss that might occur while the miniatures are in their care.
- Privateer Press has the right to photograph the competition entries and to publish photographs on the web or in print.
- Privateer Press reserves the right to refuse entry to any competitor with or without cause. Privateer Press staff and family are not eligible to enter.
- Cash winnings are subject to all state, local, and federal laws. Winnings will be paid in U.S. dollars with a U.S. check.
- The judges' decisions are final in all cases.

For full contest rules, go to: www.pplockandload.com/p3_rules



GUTS & GEARS

ARGUS

BY MICHAEL SANBEG

ART BY CARLOS CABRERA, ALBERTO DAL LAGO,
AND DAVID KUO

Unmistakably characterized by its two heads, powerful frame, and fierce temperament, the argus is one of the most distinctive and fascinating predators of western Immoren. The two most successful subspecies of these two-headed canines are the common argus and the winter argus. The common argus is noted for its short coat and stocky muscular frame, while the winter argus has a thick, dense coat suitable for the northern climates. There are also several domesticated breeds closely related to the common argus often employed as fighting hounds by those brave enough to risk maiming injuries while training them. While smaller and more receptive to commands than their wild counterparts, domesticated

argus are nonetheless tough and vicious creatures whose killing instincts have been methodically preserved.

These fearsome animals are compact and muscular, weighing anywhere from five hundred to eight hundred pounds. A mature wild argus stands about four feet at the shoulder and can measure nearly seven feet from rump to snout, while the domesticated breeds are typically about three feet at the shoulder and weigh three hundred to four hundred pounds.

Argus of all major subspecies are notoriously tireless and capable of pursuing prey over long distances when necessary. They can also run very quickly for

short bursts. Argus are relentless pack hunters that maintain well-established territories in the dense forests and untamed mountains of western Immoren. Argus aggressively defend their hunting grounds from other predators, including humans and competing argus packs. Individually an argus avoids larger and more dangerous beasts, like trolls and satyrs, but a pack of argus can drive away even the most formidable adversaries. Such packs have demonstrated cunning group tactics; often half the pack will drive or lure potential prey into the waiting jaws of the remaining pack members.

PHYSIOLOGY

The most notable and oft-misunderstood physical characteristic of the argus is its unusual two-headed body structure, a fascinating and unique peculiarity of the species. Those who have never encountered or studied the argus commonly underestimate the significance of this trait and assume the argus is simply a huge dog with four watchful eyes and two sets of rending jaws. Others may believe the argus is more akin to a pair of animals sharing a single body, perhaps with one head dominant over the other. In fact, there is a degree of truth to both hypotheses.

It has been observed that each of an argus' heads can exhibit distinct personality traits. For example, one head might be more or less observant or aggressive than the other. This gives credence to the idea that the argus is effectively a twin animal within a single body. If such is the case, however, the two animals exist in such perfect synchronicity that the idea of a "dominant head" is irrelevant. Even among newborn pups there has never been an observable struggle for dominance between the animals' disparate minds. Though it might have two slightly divergent personalities, the argus functions in every way as a single entity. Its two brains communicate so flawlessly and at such an intrinsic level that any communication must occur instantaneously. It is for precisely this reason that the argus is virtually impossible to surprise—at least one of the two heads is aware of anything that happens at any given time within its vicinity.

The argus is unique not only for possessing two brains but for requiring them. In the rare instances that an argus has been observed to suffer head trauma severe enough to kill one head but localized enough to leave the beast otherwise intact, the animal has never survived for long. Likewise, argus born with abnormalities to one of its heads will not survive infancy.

BEHAVIOR

Much as a single argus is reliant on the dynamic between its two heads, so too do the individual members of a pack closely depend on one another. These animals live together in small groups led by a dominant, monogamous

pair and function cooperatively with one another in all respects, hunting as a group and sharing a single den. The common argus maintains smaller packs than the winter argus, whose behavior bears closer resemblance to the wolf. Common argus packs may be as small as two or three pairs, while winter argus are sometimes found in packs of a dozen or more members. Common argus are also more inclined toward violent competition between members for dominance. Regardless, interdependence between argus is indicative of a deep sense of loyalty within the species, particularly between members of the same litter. It is this trait more than any other that makes these beasts so prized as guardians or hunting companions and notoriously coveted as beasts of war by the druids of the Circle Orboros.

The savagery and fierce disposition of these animals belies a considerable intelligence, which furthers their appeal as domesticated fighting beasts. Argus in the wild coordinate and communicate attacks through a series of yips and barks. As further evidence of this fusion of instinct and intellect, whole packs of these exceptionally alert animals have evaded traps they should have been unable to detect. Domesticated argus have been known to recognize individual humans and can create lasting bonds, retaining familiarity with an accepted master over an extended period of time.

Were an attacking argus pack driven off by the death of one or two of its members, the remaining argus are not likely to forget the intruder who diminished their numbers. Whether this means the intruder will be avoided for the safety of the pack or attacked later in a more coordinated fashion is wholly dependent on the situation and on the nature of the remaining argus themselves. Whatever the case, argus are clearly capable of learning from their experiences and adjusting their hunting and defensive strategies accordingly.

SUBSPECIES OF ARGUS

Ranging from the northern forests of Khador to the southern mountains of Cygnar, the common argus is the most widespread and well understood of the argus subspecies. It is a large and powerful predator, capable of dragging down even a healthy ulk bull. These animals would expose themselves to the dangers of such an encounter only out of desperation, however, and would much prefer to converge as a group upon a single sick or injured member of a herd. Once a prey animal has been isolated and seized, packs of argus use their considerable weight to bear the animal to the ground before tearing through flesh and bone with their powerful jaws. Trackers of unsurpassed natural ability, it is not unknown for an argus pack to spend a considerable amount of time—as many as several days if necessary—stalking a herd to determine which animal or animals they will attack.

The most distinctive aspect of the wild common argus is the beast's unique ability known as a doppler bark. The wild argus is capable of emitting an explosive dual bark of almost supernatural intensity, capable of causing disorientation and even momentary paralysis in its prey. When hunting, this ability is frequently employed by one member of the pack to immobilize sizable prey while its pack mates close in on the disoriented target from multiple directions.

The next most pervasive species is the winter argus, which is roughly identical in size and physical strength to the wild argus. It is covered in a thick coat of white fur that protects it from the extreme cold of the vast Khardic tundra. This subspecies only exists in any number within the desolate frozen northern fringes of Khador and Rhul. It is speculated that the first winter argus packs may have emigrated south from the even more extreme region below the Blackice Mountains.

The scarcity of easy prey in these climates makes it necessary for the winter argus to range over far greater territories than their southern counterparts, and a pack of such animals may travel a hundred miles or more in search of prey. This also means winter argus are willing to prey upon larger and more dangerous beasts, including other apex predators, which has encouraged the formation of sizable and extremely cooperative packs. These beasts are highly aggressive toward those encroaching on their territory, and will viciously attack

humans, other argus packs, or even large predators such as winter trolls. Since these intruders are also potential food sources, winter argus are more tenacious than the common argus and demonstrate fearsome courage when fighting off threats to the pack.

Though it does not share the doppler bark that has made the wild argus such an efficient hunter, the winter argus can instead produce a blast of extreme cold from either head in a manner similar to that of the winter troll. This frost breath sprays outward at a temperature so extreme even momentary exposure may kill a creature outright and in some cases encase prey in a sheath of ice.

DOMESTICATED ARGUS

Common argus have been bred in captivity for centuries, though only with any regularity in Khador. Some few have been bred elsewhere, such as among the Gnasir of the Wyrmswall Mountains. Despite generations of breeding, it would be a mistake to consider these argus as tamed. Along with its intelligence has come a natural defiance toward the will of men, and argus of all breeds have proven exceedingly difficult to train. After the first two or three months, captive argus become progressively more stubborn as they mature into adulthood. Adult argus are virtually untrainable; however, they are sometimes captured and carefully maintained as breeding stock.





Most of these breeds have been trained as fighting stock, either as guardians or to be employed in fighting pits. Though they retain their aggression and killer instincts, they can bond to some humans whom they consider pack mates. They remain dangerous even in this event, however, as they do not always recognize fragility of their human masters. Even the best-trained argus are only used in a few narrow roles, primarily for war or protection. They have no capacity to perform the more general work tasks in which regular canines excel, such as herding.

These animals have long been bred among the rural clans and barbaric tribes of northern Khador, and captive-bred argus pups are sometimes found within wealthy Khadoran households. They are still prohibitively expensive and difficult to upkeep, making them less appealing than regular canines to most buyers, but the Khadoran military has sometimes employed them alongside regular war dogs. Argus employed by the military are selected for size and strength in addition to receptivity to training, making them among the largest of the domesticated variants, although still smaller on average than the wild common argus. The domesticated breeds long ago lost their ability to perform the doppler bark, likely a deliberate breeding choice due to the inherent dangers of such an ability. Misguided attempts to reintroduce this ability by taming and conditioning wild argus or breeding them

with domesticated variants have generally resulted in fatalities after stunned handlers lost control of the beasts. The druids of the Circle Orboros are the only handlers known to have effectively trained wild common argus.

The methods employed by that organization are unknown to the civilized world; however, the argus is among the more widely employed beasts in the Circle's arsenal. The blackclads are also known to use the winter argus, a beast which even the bravest Khadoran animal handlers have failed to subdue. Instinctively distrusting of any animal not of its own pack, even newborn winter argus pups will not regularly accept or bond to a human master.

SUMMATION

An argus of any breed is a powerful, deceptively clever, and oft-unpredictable animal that should never be approached without considerable caution. Even the most well-trained and companionable domesticated argus has a savage core. This combination of traits makes the argus an ideal beast of war. Its willfulness and the difficulties required to train an argus mean—at least for now—only the Circle Orboros possesses the skill to employ these creatures as beasts of war to any significant degree.

ARGUS TACTICS

BY JACK COLEMAN



ARGUS

The two-headed Argus is a well-rounded warbeast that brings utility, control, and surprising damage output at an affordable cost. It is highly versatile and well suited to many Circle Orboros army lists.

The Tracker animus provides Circular Vision and Pathfinder to the target model for one turn. While the majority of the Circle Orboros faction already possesses Pathfinder, there are several key models that do not (the Gorax, Feral Warpwolf, and Ghetorix, to name a few). The ability to charge into rough terrain or over a linear obstacle can make the difference between victory and defeat, and the Argus provides this for some of the Circle's hardest-hitting warbeasts without taxing your warlock's resources. And the other half of the Tracker animus should not be overlooked: the 360° front arc provided by Circular Vision allows you to aim or charge at models trying to outflank/ambush your army and to surprise your opponent with unforeseen threats.

The Argus' Doppler Bark is an SP 6 ranged attack that causes Paralysis (a living model hit by this weapon has its base DEF reduced to 7 and cannot run or charge; Paralysis lasts for one round). An Argus can use Doppler Bark to control the flow of battle by locking down enemy warbeasts and lines of infantry, preventing them from charging or reaching zones and objectives. Doppler Bark can also be used to reduce the DEF of important models, setting them up for a heavier hitter.

With two P+S 12 melee attacks and a P+S 16 Combo Strike, the Argus can never be accused of being "all bark." When combined with the support animi and spells available to the Circle Orboros, an Argus can dish out damage on the level of many heavy warbeasts!

WINTER ARGUS

The Winter Argus is a specialized variant of the standard Argus, focusing on personal survivability and infantry-clearing spray attacks.

Winter Coat is a RNG Self animus that provides the target with +2 ARM and Immunity: Cold for one round. This animus is invaluable when facing army lists with stationary effects, as it can save your warlock from assassination. The additional ARM is also a boon for warlocks who can stack the animus with their other spells or feat (Grayle the Farstrider can reach ARM 20 by combining the animus with Storm Rager, and Baldur the Stonesoul can obtain ARM 22 during his feat turn). Winter Coat is most often used by the Winter Argus itself, however. Under the effects of its animus the Winter Argus becomes remarkably survivable at DEF 15 and ARM 16 with 21 damage boxes.

The Winter Argus is primarily a ranged warbeast, sporting two initial SP 6 POW 12 ranged attacks with Critical Freeze. The Winter Argus' low RAT is easily mitigated by boosting attack rolls (which should be boosted anyway to take advantage of Critical Freeze), aiming, and by the inherent advantages of spray attacks.

Smart positioning will allow the Winter Argus to take advantage of the aiming bonus and to deal frosty retribution to any clumped-up troopers. Try to put the Winter Argus where you know your opponent wants to be but just a bit out of melee range. Placing it inside a zone or behind your front line when you are anticipating an enemy charge is a good way to force your opponent into moving into your threat/aiming range.

Critical Freeze is less reliable than Paralysis, but it does have its advantages. The stationary effect works on non-living targets like constructs and undead reduces the defenses of the target even more than Paralysis, and can completely shut down solos and trooper models who are unable to shake effects. With two boosted attack rolls, the odds are actually pretty high that you will land a critical hit when you need it.



SIG 'EM

Don't be afraid to commit your Argus to the fray. Their high mobility, solid DEF, and cheap cost make both variants ideal for the front line. Charge them into swarms of MAT 6 infantry to spray those infantries down with Paralysis or Critical Freeze or place your Argus in the charge lanes of enemy heavies.

An Argus has little to fear from run-of-the mill troopers, solos, warbeasts, or warjacks, which will have difficulty dealing with the Argus' combination of DEF, ARM, and hit boxes. Your Argus will probably die eventually, but if it buys you the time to take control of an objective or to set up a deadly counter-attack, the trade will surely be in your favor.

AN ARGUS' BEST FRIENDS

Your Argus can be a ferocious companion to many different allies. If you're looking for that kind of loyalty, look no further.

- The Gorax provides an exceptional buff to melee damage and accuracy with the Primal animus. This increases an Argus to MAT 7 and P+S 14 on his bite attacks or P+S 18 with a Combo Strike!
- A Blackclad Wayfarer increases the threat range and fury efficiency of all friendly models with Hunter's Mark. This increases the threat range of a charging Argus to 12.5", which is more than enough to ensure an alpha strike against most army compositions.

- It should come as no surprise that Kaya the Wildborne has great synergy with the Argus. Pack Hunters increases the Argus to MAT 7 while in Kaya's control area. Combined with Primal, your Argus can reach MAT 9, which allows them to hit even the most evasive enemies on an average boosted attack roll. Kaya's Spirit Door spell can teleport the Argus to safety, allowing your Argus to apply Paralysis, stationary, or powerful Combo Strike charge attacks without leaving them in a bad location.
- Kaya the Moonhunter can enhance an Argus well beyond its natural capabilities. Forced Evolution grants +2 STR and DEF to a friendly living warbeast, and used with Primal an Argus can hit at P+S 20 with a Combo Strike and multiple P+S 16 bites. Kaya can cycle this spell between two Argus to maximize the damage output (two charging Argus with Forced Evolution will kill most heavy warbeasts in a single turn). The extra DEF adds insult to injury and is just as useful as the damage buff. The majority of warjacks and warbeasts cannot hit a DEF 17 model reliably even with boosted attack rolls. Run an Argus with Forced Evolution into a zone and smile as your opponent tries to deal with it. Even if he or she does kill the Argus, your opponent is sure to commit far more than 4 or 5 points of his or her army to do it.
- Krueger the Stormlord can perform a powerful combo with the Winter Argus. His spear Wurmtongue causes Disruption on a hit, allowing him to completely shut down any stationary warjacks since they will not be able to shake the effect due to Disruption.
- And finally, the rerolled attack rolls provided by Morvahna the Dawnshadow's Scales of Fate ability practically guarantees a Critical Freeze by allowing you to roll your Frost Breath up to four times against your targets.

The Argus works well alone, in packs, or side by side with others, so cry havoc and let slip these dogs of war.

PAINTING THE WINTER ARGUS

BY STUART SPENGLER

COLORS USED

-  Armor Wash
-  Bastion Grey
-  Blighted Gold
-  Brass Balls
-  Brown Ink
-  Cryx Bane Base
-  Cryx Bane Highlight
-  Frostbite
-  Greatcoat Grey
-  Gun Corps Brown
-  Idrian Flesh
-  Ironhull Grey
-  Khardic Flesh
-  Menoth White Highlight
-  Midlund Flesh
-  Radiant Platinum
-  Rucksack Tan
-  Ryn Flesh
-  Trollblood Highlight
-  Umbral Umber

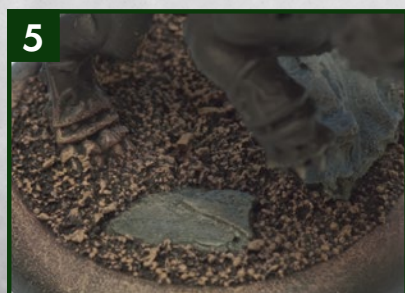
The Winter Argus is a newer variation of the classic Circle Orboros warbeast that provides a good opportunity to practice painting fur, helpful when taking on larger and even hairier warbeasts like Warpwolves or Satyrs. Departing from the classic green and gold color scheme, this Winter Argus will be painted in an autumnal palette. With a little thought, the general ideas presented in this article can be used on other warbeasts or creatures in your army.

STEP 1 – BASE

Drybrushing first can save time cleaning up stray brush strokes later. It is a good idea to think about how you are going to approach your colors, so you aren't trying to gingerly drybrush next to an area that has already been painstakingly blended.

- 1) On top of the black primer, drybrush the base with Umbral Umber.
- 2) Drybrush with Gun Corps Brown.
- 3) Drybrush with Rucksack Tan.
- 4) Paint the rocks with Cryx Bane Base.
- 5) Drybrush the rocks with Bastion Grey.
- 6) Drybrush the rocks with Cryx Bane Highlight.
- 7) Drybrush everything with Menoth White Highlight.

Colors Used: Bastion Grey, Cryx Bane Base, Cryx Bane Highlight, Gun Corps Brown, Menoth White Highlight, Rucksack Tan, Umbral Umber



STEP 2 – ARGUS ARMOR

- 1) Paint the armor with Blighted Gold.
- 2) Wash the interior of the armor plates with Brown Ink that has been slightly thinned with water.
- 3) Wash the interior of the armor plates with Armor Wash that has been slightly thinned with water.
- 4) Highlight the armor trim with Brass Balls.
- 5) Pick out the highlights and edges with Radiant Platinum.

Colors Used: *Armor Wash, Blighted Gold, Brass Balls, Brown Ink, Radiant Platinum*



STEP 3 – FUR

Since the texture is supposed to be furry, the highlights will be applied with a feathery technique to give the impression of hair or fur. These mixes might seem complicated, but you'll just be adding another portion of color to the mix you already have on hand.

- 1) Paint the fur with a 1:1 mix of Frostbite and Ironhull Grey.
- 2) Highlight the fur with a 2:1 mix of Frostbite and Ironhull Grey.
- 3) Highlight the fur with a 3:1 mix of Frostbite and Ironhull Grey.
- 4) Highlight the fur with a 3:1:1 mix of Frostbite, Ironhull Grey, and Menoth White Highlight.
- 5) Highlight the fur with a 3:1:2 mix of Frostbite, Ironhull Grey, and Menoth White Highlight.

Colors Used: *Frostbite, Ironhull Grey, Menoth White Highlight*



STEP 4 – LONG FUR

- 1) Paint the longer fur with Greatcoat Grey.
- 2) Highlight the fur with Ironhull Grey.
- 3) Highlight the fur with a 1:1 mix of Frostbite and Ironhull Grey.
- 4) Wash the fur with Armor Wash.

Colors Used: Armor Wash, Frostbite, Greatcoat Grey, Ironhull Grey



STEP 5 – HEAD DETAILS

- 1) Paint the mouth with Khardic Flesh.
- 2) Highlight the mouth with Midlund Flesh.
- 3) Highlight the tongue with Ryn Flesh.
- 4) Paint the claws and teeth with Cryx Bane Base.
- 5) Highlight the claws and teeth with Bastion Grey.
- 6) Highlight the claws and teeth with Trollblood Highlight.

Colors Used: Bastion Grey, Cryx Bane Base, Khardic Flesh, Midlund Flesh, Ryn Flesh, Trollblood Highlight

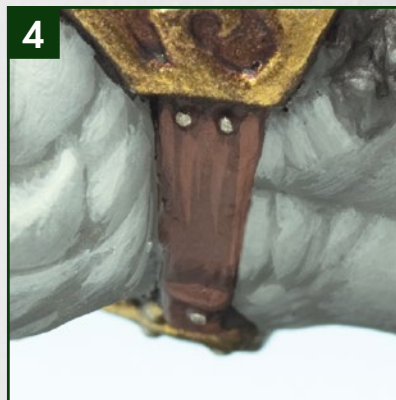
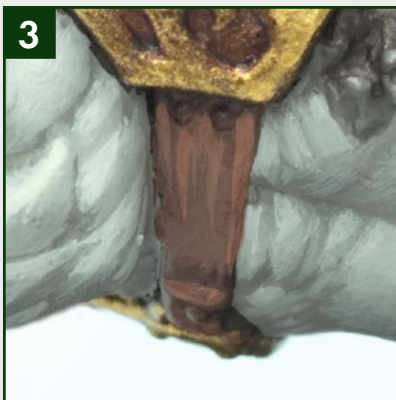




STEP 6 – LEATHER

- 1) Paint the leather details with Umbral Umber.
- 2) Highlight the leather with 1:1 mix of Idrian Flesh and Umbral Umber.
- 3) Highlight the leather with Idrian Flesh.
- 4) Paint the rivets and metal details with Radiant Platinum.

Colors Used: *Idrian Flesh, Radiant Platinum, Umbral Umber*



CONCLUSION

Now that you have seen how this Winter Argus has been painted, you too can add a furry new addition to your forces!



The Gavyn Kyle FILES

Transcribed by William Shick
Art by Mariusz Gandzel, Brian Snoddy,
Andrea Uderzo, and Matthew D. Wilson

EVERBLIGHT

I am pleased you accepted my offer and engaged my services in pursuit of more information on the emerging threat of the dragon Ethrunbal, or Everblight, as he is more commonly known in the human kingdoms.

The information about the dragon itself, uncovered during my investigations into his generals Vayl Hallyr and Lylyth Voassyr, points to a creature that poses a significant potential threat to the interests of all nations and peoples of Immoren.

Indeed, unlike so many of Toruk's progeny, who appear content to remain hidden from the watchful eyes of their progenitor, Everblight seems to have taken a cue from the Dragonfather with his subjugation and assimilation of the Nyss, crafting his own highly mobile and effective army. Whereas Toruk uses the powers of death and mechanika to augment the majority of his forces, Everblight has discovered a far more sinister route, using his blight in a manner in which no other dragon appears capable.

The speed at which Everblight was able to corrupt the Nyss could not have occurred spontaneously. Having conferred with both Viktor Pendrake and Lynus Wesselbaum under the guise of one of my academic pseudonyms, I believe what has transpired with the Nyss is the culmination of thousands of years of Everblight's subtle study and manipulation of his own dragon blight. His assimilation of the Nyss points to nothing less than a tireless intelligence with the willingness and patience to manipulate external forces to suit his own purposes.

Within his correspondence to me, Pendrake presented a theory based on his study of remains of dragonspawn attributed to Everblight and concerning the dark and ancient kingdom of Morrdh. Though stories of the terrible lords of Morrdh and the nightmarish creatures who served them are well known, most historians dismiss such notions as fanciful tales and exaggerated myth.



Pendrake offhandedly suggested, however, that the ancient accounts and descriptions of beasts that accompanied Morrdh's army might actually bear some grain of truth. He believes such creatures might have been dragonspawn, though proving this definitively would be nearly impossible, based on the scant records surviving from that era.

Intrigued by the hypothesis and energized by the challenge, I followed up with my contact Professor Allabaster Lumbridge, an expert in ancient texts at the Royal Cygnaran University. With his help, I was able to unearth several documents from the time of Morrdh's rise to power.

The excerpt below, translated from an ancient variant of Calacian common to the Midlunds, is the first reference of the creatures appearing within Morrdh's forces. The excerpt dates circa 3,300 BR—200 years after the first accounts of Morrdh's sorcerous powers were documented.

—GK

Everblight Summary

c. 3,300 BR: Legends and folktales describe monstrous servants of the Kings of Morrdh greatly aiding in the conquest of their neighbors. Descriptions of these creatures closely match those of dragonspawn currently seen alongside the Nyss in Everblight's new legion.

c. 1,800 BR: Toruk is sighted over the mainland. At this point ancient histories note a distinct absence of reptilian horrors among Morrdhic armies.

c. 390 AR: There is no sign of any dragon for two millennia until Ios is attacked by a dragon the Iosans refer to as Ethrunbal, another name for Everblight, who emerges from beneath the city of Issyrah. The dragon is defeated at great cost, and his athanc is sealed away and then buried "at the Top of the World."

605 AR: The Nyss shards come under a resurgent Everblight's control through the machinations of Vayl Hallyr.

606 AR: The exodus of surviving Nyss reach the Khadoran heartland, and refugees are given shelter by Empress Vanar. After this time, Khador's 3rd Border Legion is clandestinely engaged in numerous operations directed by Zevanna Agha. Rumors abound of entire northern villages disappearing overnight.

Cinten, 607 AR: Everblight's force of Nyss and dragonspawn makes its way to the Castle of the Keys, where it eliminates the dragon Pyromalfic.

Late 607 to early 608 AR: Several Rhulic surface communities come under attack by dragonspawn and blighted Nyss. The mercenary warcaster Gorten Grundback is eventually enlisted to help protect nearby settlements. Everblight's lair remains undiscovered. Reports abound from various kingdoms of scattered skirmishes and sightings of dragonspawn and heavily armed blighted Nyss, presumably enacting the dragon's will.

Thrice the agents of Morrdh came to King Randelvin's throne. The first time they sent a single envoy, who promised that submission to Morrdh would bring great opportunity. But our good king saw through the lies the black-hooded envoy spoke and sent him away.

The second time three came: women dressed in the finest blood-red silks. Witches they were, and as witches did our grand king greet them. When they showed their power in an attempt to awe the king, he had them seized and burned, their stain removed from Menoth's sight by the holy work of the scrutators.

The third time they came as an army foul and terrible. We thought we had seen the depths of Morrdh's depravity, but nothing could have prepared us for the truth. There was no pact so vile, no concord so wretched, the lords of Morrdh would shy away from if it served their own gluttonous need for power.

Horrors abounded in that dark host, their foul arts casting a palpable aura of blackness over them. It made the skin crawl and the stomach churn. For all our enemy's corruption, the holy power of our priests was more than a match. Their radiance, drawn directly from the Creator of Man, could not be undone by the infernal arts of Morrdh. I believe with all my soul—soon to be consumed by the depraved lords of this vile kingdom—had dark magic been the extent of the threat we faced we would have been victorious.

Amid the warriors clad in black iron and bearing the device of their dark lords upon their shields prowled creatures given birth

from nightmare. These monsters were all teeth and scale and hulking muscle. Bereft of eyes though they were, they moved with a speed and grace I have not witnessed in even the greatest predators. They spewed ashen fire from their maws that melted iron like wax. They ripped apart men with fang and claw and consumed the chunks of gory flesh.

Our king's men fought bravely, but against such creatures there was no defense. They murdered our priests and left us at the mercy of Morrdh's dark magics.

Though my death approaches, I write this account in hope that it might serve as a warning to those who read it. That this grave threat might be seen and fought before it consumes us all. I appeal to the righteous to unite and strike down this terrible evil.

Make no mistake: the appetites of Morrdh are insatiable.

Let it never be forgotten that our great lord, King Randelvin, opposed the darkness to his last breath. We must follow his example, lest the evil that has taken root within Morrdh devour us all.

Eager to find some corroborating evidence of Everblight's presence within Morrdh, I had several of my learned colleagues scour for more sources, many quite obscure, containing descriptions of the creatures that began appearing in Morrdhic armies around 3300 BR. Though the veracity of these accounts varied greatly, I believe there is enough evidence to make the argument that not only

were these creatures dragonspawn, they also bore characteristics that can be ascribed to Everblight's more recently witnessed creations.

After searching the most established libraries within Immoren, one of my colleagues discovered this report within the governmental archives of Berck. The obscure kingdom from which the document originated ceased to exist before the arrival of the Orgoth, and through some serendipity it survived through the ages. A translation is provided.

—GK

To his High Eminence Alover Correaga,

I, your most humble servant, Sky-watcher Abele Adamo, have witnessed astounding and awesome portents during my thirty years in service to you and your father. It was I who saw the sky rent with fire, which presaged your birth and eventual ascension to the throne as our great king. It was I who predicted your father's victory over the Malodichis. Much have I witnessed, Great King, but though it gives me no pleasure to impart tidings of ill fortune, I have never shirked from warning of dire portents.

What I am about to tell you heralds the direst of portents imaginable. Perhaps foretelling the end of not only your great kingdom but all kingdoms in a rain of fire.

Tonight, as I watched the immaculate heavens, I saw the sky itself blotted out, and a great blackness from the south surged forward. Ever your devoted servant, I denied the terror within my breast and forced my eyes to observe.

I have heard legends of the great wyrms purported to lair in hidden places within our land. But I, like many others, thought these tales to be little more than stories told to scare children. Yet, as the darkness approached my observatory, the truth became apparent. It was a dragon—one of the terrible ancient wyrms of legend—that blocked the stars from my eyes. Its massive body, larger than even the greatest galleon, was borne aloft on vast, sweeping wings.

That it flew from the dark kingdom of Morrdh represents such a portent that my hand still trembles to write of it. Put simply my lord, it is an omen of destruction.

The document above cannot prove the identity of the dragon witnessed, but given the other evidence I uncovered concerning the suspected draconic presence within that kingdom, I believe the dragon seen flying from Morrdh was Everblight.

Furthermore, the timing of this sighting corresponds with the period historians note as the beginning of the decline for Morrdh, lending even more credence to my hypothesis.

As to why Everblight chose to leave Morrdh, I can offer only speculation. The era surrounding this event is one noted for increased draconic activity. There are hundreds of surviving documents concerning dragon sightings across western Immoren and the doomsday prophecies that resulted. As such, I feel it safe to conclude that Everblight either left Morrdh to wage war with one of his siblings or was himself assailed by one or more of them.

It is here, however, the dragon's trail grows cold. Despite the immense information-gathering resources at my disposal, I was unable to find any mention of Everblight until 2,200 years after the above account, when he attacked the Iosan city of Issyrah.

There are still many Iosan exiles in the Iron Kingdoms embittered enough with their former homeland to talk—for the right price. Thankfully, Jylvyn Eyveryn is just such an Iosan.

—GK

Ios has survived largely based on its reputation of imperviousness. Despite the tales you've heard, trust me when I tell you Ios' defenses are far from inviolable. So it was with the coming of the accursed dragon *Ethrunbal* and the fall of Issyrah.

No one knows how the dragon penetrated the borders or how it was able to secretly take up residence beneath one of our most holy cities. It is a mystery that still perplexes the great leaders of Ios to this day. That time was one of great internal strife among my people. Perhaps in our turmoil we simply failed to see the signs.

I have only heard the stories, and though many are exaggerations, there is no question that each is based on truth. There is no doubt that *Ethrunbal* carved a great lair beneath the Fane of Issyrah. He used the chaos of the day and the confusion and panic that ran rife among our people to his advantage. Through blighted whispers he corrupted those once holy. The tales say he poisoned their minds while leaving their bodies pure so none could see the dark changes he wrought. Through these warped slaves he was able to exert his own perversions upon the people of Issyrah for a time.

When his evil was finally uncovered our retribution was swift, though the dragon's own vengeance was terrible. It took the full might of Ios to destroy *Ethrunbal* and those he had corrupted. Issyrah remains nothing but a blackened scar. It is a cursed place, and no Iosan who values his sanity or his soul would go there.

Given the physiological similarities between Iosans and their Nyss cousins, it seems that whatever Everblight learned from his experimentation upon the people of Issyrah allowed him to corrupt the Nyss quickly and fully. Though Jylvyn was silent when pressed for more information on the events in Issyrah, I postulate that Everblight had to have been waiting beneath the city for some time before he was discovered. That a creature of his size could possibly infiltrate the mystic borders of Ios is astonishing. Yet, given the ease at which he moves about the Iron Kingdoms today, perhaps not surprising.

Though Everblight's body was destroyed in the battle of Issyrah, the resilience of dragons is mythical. According to what little is known about them, their essence is eternal unless consumed by another of their ilk. It would appear the Iosans' attempt to prevent Everblight's from creating a new body failed. Given what little additional information I could pull from Jylvyn and the initial reports of Everblight's reemerging spawn, I believe the Iosans attempted to contain the dragon's athanc in a sealed container hidden somewhere in the northern mountains of Khador. Apparently, this was based a prophecy requiring the athanc be secured at the "Top of the World." Whether the Iosans understood the danger such a location posed to their northern cousins is unknown.

Following reports from census takers and petty nobles in Khador's northern extremes, it was fairly simple to extrapolate the approximate time of Everblight's regeneration and subjugation of the Nyss shards. Though a trickle at first in late 605 AR, by early 606 AR there was a flood of Nyss from the north pouring into the Khadoran interior. The following account from Gaelyr Wyllothyr, a surviving member of the Hylovayas shard, describes creatures that attacked alongside blighted Nyss and leaves little doubt as to Everblight's involvement.

—GK

They arrived in the night, silent and without warning. The first indication we had of the coming terror was the screaming of the first to die. The creatures varied in size, some no larger than a dog, while others resembled sleek and powerful mountain cats. None of the beasts had eyes, their heads were little more than fanged maws filled with razor sharp teeth, and their bodies shared the same pale reptilian sheen.

As terrifying as these creatures were, they were nothing compared to the horror we were to experience next. As my shard attempted to defend itself, we spied upon the rise a line of our kin. At first we believed ourselves saved. We called to them in brotherly greeting, praising Nyssor for our good fortune.

The newly arrived tribesmen did not call back; indeed, they made no sound. It was then we noticed something was wrong. The newcomers threw back great cloaks of black raven feathers, revealing twisted bodies beneath. Their legs were unnaturally transfigured and lengthened. Their bodies were covered in spiny growths jutting from beneath their flesh. Without a word they drew back their bowstrings and fired upon us. Alongside their monstrous creatures they slaughtered without remorse or mercy. It was only by chance that I and precious few of my kinsmen escaped their clutches. We fled south, doing our best to warn other shards.

We have long prided individuality. Though we share a common ancestry and culture we preferred to remain isolated, one shard from another. It is that which led to our downfall. Those shards we came upon who had not yet fallen to Ethrunbal's host were often unwilling to listen to our warnings, their distrust for our story plain. I do not know if I can blame them for their reticence. Even today, with our people all but a shadow upon this world, I still struggle to accept what has occurred.

The speed with which Everblight was able to subjugate the majority of the Nyss shards is nothing short of incredible. I believe Everblight was able to accomplish so much so quickly by using what he learned in Issyrah to poison the minds and infect the bodies of the majority of the Nyss, subverting them to his will.

After this there was a noticeable increase in activity within Khador's 3rd Border Legion. Though the Prikaz Chancellery has done a commendable job of keeping much of the particulars of these events under wraps, there is still some scattered information regarding the destruction of several remote northern Khadoran villages. These villages were attacked by Nyss and by beasts whose descriptions mark them as dragonspawn.

The attacks Everblight perpetrated in the Khadoran north appear to be little more than a byproduct of his consolidation of power. Once his domination over the Nyss was complete, Everblight took his forces elsewhere. The following CRS report from mid-607 AR gives some clue to the path Everblight's forces took under the dragon's command.

—GK

Major Reims,

My team was dispatched to follow up on reports of dragonspawn and Nyss traveling through the Widower's Wood north of Corvis. Though initial reports were questionable at best, the sudden cessation of communication from several smaller communities around the eastern edge of the Widower's Wood led credence to the presence of some unknown threat. General Ebonhart believed

the trouble was likely the result of farrow or gatorman activity rather than dragonspawn.

I can tell you unequivocally, however, that what we found was not caused by either farrow or gatormen tribes. While I cannot confirm with any certainty the presence of dragonspawn, we did find tracks indicative of large predators alongside evidence of Nyss.

Of the missing farming communities, little remains except for charred ruins. I have submitted castings of the unidentified tracks we found for further study. Hopefully, the minds at Corvis University can shed some light on them.

In regards to the danger this group poses to Corvis itself, I believe, for the moment, it is minimal. Based on the information my team was able to gather, I am certain this force was heading east toward Scarleforth Lake and the Bloodstone. The lost farming communities had the simple misfortune of being in the path of the dragonspawn.

—Swift Sergeant Colleen Daniels

The purpose of this expedition was only revealed to me thanks to my network within Ternon Crag. One of my fellows found a surprisingly loose-lipped member of the Wolves of Orboros—a warrior cult that serves the enigmatic blackclads. It seems Everblight's movements were motivated by the discovery of one of his siblings, a dragon the blackclads referred to as Pyromalfic. The following is his account of the battle that occurred between the forces of Everblight, Pyromalfic, and the blackclads.

—GK

For all their bluster and bragging, the kings and generals of this continent don't have half a sense of what goes on within their own backyards. They'd never believe that entire armies move through their borders, unseen and unnoticed. If they knew the truth, they'd never sleep soundly again.

I was there at the Castle of the Keys, answering the call of the blackclads to whom my family is bound by blood. I saw the biggest army of dragonspawn ever assembled. An army of the dragon Everblight, I heard one of the blackclads say,

The dragonspawn had come down from Khador and crossed beneath the Thornwood, unnoticed and undetected. Why had they come? That is still the subject of my nightmares.





Long ago, another dragon took up residence beneath those great ruins. Everblight had brought his army halfway across Immoren to kill his brother and claim his essence. My pack and I were there with the rest of the blackclads to stop Everblight. Ours was a mighty host. Still, it was nothing compared to the power of the dragons.

I never saw Everblight, but I did see the one called Pyromalfic. Terrible it was to behold. The myths and legends? They don't give even a fleeting glimpse of the true power of these creatures. Yet, for all the dragon's might, it was overcome by Everblight's spawn. Try as we might to stop it, Everblight's army claimed his prize from the bloody carcass of his sibling. Our efforts earned us nothing but death amid the sands.

The absence of Everblight from this critical battle is fascinating. Though given his physical destruction at Issyrah, I hypothesize perhaps Everblight might still be recuperating and unwilling to risk direct confrontation with his siblings. If he is in a weakened state, it might help justify this clear focus on building an army to fight in his stead.

That his army overcame another dragon without his assistance while simultaneously contending with the blackclads truly illustrates the effectiveness of what he has accomplished. Through careful machinations, Everblight makes war against his fellows without placing himself at risk. This is largely accomplished by his use of generals like Vayl Hallyr and Lylyth Voassyr to exert his will over his spawn and army. Since he does not need to be in close proximity to his forces, Everblight's reach extends to wherever he wishes.

Based on eyewitness accounts acquired from the notable mercenary Alten Ashley during my investigation of Lylyth Voassyr, it is clear that after their victory at the Castle of the Keys, Everblight's army withdrew north under pressure from the druids.

Following up on this trail, I discovered a sizable contingent of soldiers from the Hammerfall fortress were hired to deal with a dragonspawn infestation of several mines on the border between Rhul and Khador in the Thundercliff Peaks. This company included the famed warcaster Gorten Grundback, with whom I have had dealings in the past. He proved even more willing than I had hoped to discuss the nature of that contract—once his purse had been sufficiently fattened.

I was hired, along with a large contingent of the Hammerfall fortress, by several interests within the moot to help liberate several mines that had become infested around late 607 AR. Turns out the Nyss were behind it, and the pointy-eared bastards were dug in pretty good. The Nyss weren't the real problem, though. It was the sharp-toothed beasts they had with

them. Nasty things, all teeth and claws. Several of them were as big as a Rockram and just as powerful. Worst thing was these creatures didn't seem to need eyes to hunt—they didn't have any. It made fighting them a real nightmare within the dark tunnels of those mines.

We cleared them out, mile by bloody mile. When we finally killed the last I thought my time fighting Nyss was done. I was wrong.

About four months later I got contracted again. This time it seemed more blighted Nyss and their beasts were targeting Rhulic villages down near the border with Ios. I spent some time there protecting those that remained, although I heard some horrific stories about entire villages getting gobbled up, with corpses thrown into blood-filled vats. No idea how true any of that was, but something horrible happened down there.

The question remains: if Everblight does not travel with his forces, where does he hide? I believe, based on Gorten's account, that Everblight currently lairs somewhere within the mountain range in southern Rhul, outside the immediate protection of the most powerful clans and near to the border of Ios. The Rhulfolk have long allowed the geography to serve as a barrier in this region, and settlements there are isolated and vulnerable. I cannot help but wonder if such a location means the dragon is scheming for revenge against the Iosans who defeated him at Issyrah.

Regardless, while Everblight's true location may remain hidden, the threat he poses to the nations and people of Immoren is quite clear. Everblight has proven willing and able to subvert lesser beings and even entire species to his will. His forces move unfettered by national borders or logistical concerns that would hinder regular armies. Able to strike anywhere, and with sufficient strength to challenge the legendary might of the dragons, these forces must be deemed a match for any conventional military force. Should Everblight's gaze fall upon one of the nations of the Iron Kingdoms, I fear the destruction he could inflict would be terrible. As to any deeper agenda or long-term goals, only Everblight himself can know those. I don't think he'll be answering any of my questions directly.

—GK

AN ALTERNATE SCENARIO FOR WARMACHINE & HORDES

ETHRUNBAL RISES

BY AERYN RUDEL & DAVID "DC" CARL

ART BY CARLOS CABRERA, KARL RICHARDSON, BRIAN SNODDY, VIKTOR TITOV, ANDREA UDERZO & CHRIS WALTON

The following fiction and scenario depict the rise of the dragon Ethrunbal and the beginning of Issyrah's fall. The scenario and the alternate models provided can be used to replicate this pivotal moment in Iosan history or they can be used with existing WARMACHINE and HORDES armies to give the confrontation a modern twist.

THE BLIGHT BENEATH

Issyrah in western Ios, 4356 (390 AR)

Scyr Koryn Dyshyr pulled his sword from the creature's body, grimacing in disgust at the stench rising up from the thing. The sword, Velsyr, was stained with a strange mix of dark red blood and black ichor. Koryn hoped it wouldn't harm his family's ancestral blade.

"Captain, report," Koryn said and turned to where his second-in-command was crouched over a body in the middle of the boulevard.

Captain Lothwyn Breir shook her head, slung her heavy long rifle, and stood. "Dead. It's the same with the other four." Behind her, other members of Issyrah's Homeguard garrison were moving corpses from the street onto the green veld beside it. The boulevard and the grand square beyond were empty save for the armored soldiers. They'd quickly removed everyone from the area before engaging the beast, but it had killed at least five, probably more judging by the general panic that had swept through the area.



Koryn flicked the blood from Velsyr and stared down at the monster that had brought them here. Its general shape was that of an Iosan, but its body was covered in greyish-black scales and a riot of razor-sharp spines rose from its shoulders, face, and limbs. Stunted wings jutted from its back, and its oversized hands bore immense talons. The creature's face was something conjured from a lunatic's dream: a huge distended jaw overflowing with needle fangs, slits for nostrils, a pair of curling horns, and wide misshapen eyes. He had fought it himself, and despite his armor and skill with a blade he'd been hard-pressed to put the beast down.

"What is it, Scyr?" Captain Breir had moved up to stand next to him and prodded the creature's corpse with one armored boot. Her family, a minor house, had served his for many generations, and she was a capable soldier.

Koryn shook his head. "I think it was Iosan. Once," he said. "Now, I cannot say, though I have a terrible suspicion."

"You've seen something like this before?" Captain Breir asked. Her blunt features were creased with worry. The garrison had not been called upon to defend Issyrah's populace in some time, and although they were well trained, nothing could have prepared them for this.

"Not seen," Koryn said, "but I've heard stories of creatures such as this, stories related by visitors from Rhul." His hands had begun to shake, and he gripped the hilt of Velsyr to hide it. He looked up and saw the abandoned Fane of Ayisla rising above the city. Since the Rivening, the former home of the goddess of night had become a shunned place.

There was a trail of blood and ichor leading away from the corpse and down the boulevard, toward the fane. From long tradition Issyrah was a largely nocturnal city, as befitted the goddess around whose home it had been built, and ornate lanterns hung from tall posts or from the eaves of buildings. Even in the darkest winter night, Issyrah was a city of light . . . except around the Fane of Ayisla. There, darkness held sway.

"I don't understand, Scyr," Captain Breir said. "What in Rhul could produce a creature such as this?"

Koryn pulled his gaze away from the Fane of Ayisla. The rush of battle had left him, and now only cold dread remained. He turned to Captain Brier, searching for the words to answer her question and give voice to the terror building inside him. In the end, he said only one.

"Dragons."



"Scyr Koryn of House Dyshyr, you are to be commended for your prompt and efficient response to the tragedy," Narcissar Lyssya Syvas said, nodding at Koryn from her lectern. Other members of the ruling houses of Issyrah stood at similar lecterns around the great hall, each upon a dais of white stone, although none stood as high as the Narcissar of House Syvas.

"Thank you, Narcissar," Koryn said. "I merely did my duty."

"However," a younger Iosan with a short-cropped hair and the bearing of a soldier spoke up. This was Arsyrr Vyar Rhyslyrr, who had arrived earlier in the day from the Gate of Mists with an impressively large force of soldiers and myrmidons. The arsyrr was

a powerful scion of his house, one of the Five Great Military Houses of Ios. "One misshapen creature is not sufficient cause to evacuate the city." He paused and smiled down at Koryn; there was no warmth in his smile. "Especially now that House Rhyslyrr is here."

The great hall where the rulers of Issyrah held court was an immense circular room, its ceiling open to the night sky. Bright lanterns of blue and yellow illuminated the space with stark, unwelcoming light. The white stone floor of the great hall bore the symbol of the goddess Ayisla, and Koryn stood in its very center feeling small and insignificant beneath the gaze of the representatives of the ruling houses. Still, he would not be swayed from his purpose.

"I think that is a mistake, Arsyrr," Koryn said, hoping the waver in his voice wasn't as evident as it sounded to his own ears. "The presence of this blighted creature can mean only one thing—a dragon."

"No one is denying this," Arsyrr Rhyslyrr said. "I have seen the creature you slew. The fact that it is dragon blighted is without question. I do not believe, however, that a dragon is nearby or, as you have suggested, actually within the city. That is clearly an impossibility."

"How else would you explain its presence in the center of Issyrah?" Koryn said, anger at the Arsyrr's dismissal lending him confidence. "The creature was clearly an Iosan corrupted by dragon blight."

"The conclusions you leap to are clear only to you, Scyr," said Narcissar Unas Thryn. His house was renowned for its arcanists, and he was foremost among them. Narcissar Thryn's lectern was the next highest after Lord Syvas'. "We have no evidence of a dragon. Dragon blight, yes, and a grave threat that is in its own right, but this creature was not spawned within Ios. It came from elsewhere. The mountains of southern Rhul, most likely."

"Agreed," Arsyrr Rhyslyrr said. "It must have come down from the mountains to the north and evaded notice. A regrettable lapse in security, and one that will be rectified. On the chance there are others, the Gate of Mists has responded quickly and with more men than is likely needed. A sensible precaution and more than sufficient."

Narcissar Syvas held up her thin hands, palms out in a conciliatory gesture. "I for one appreciate and am grateful for the rapid response of these defenders of Ios to a threat we may well be overestimating."

"I understand you believe the creature came from the Fane of Ayisla," Arsyrr Rhyslyrr said. His smirk was all but imperceptible, yet Koryn saw it just the same. "An unlikely theory."

"Not a theory, but a witnessed fact," Koryn said. "I interviewed citizens who saw the creature emerge from the fane. I also believe there are more of these creatures there, together with—as I have presented to this council—something far worse." He drew in a deep breath, knowing his next words would fall upon deaf ears. "How such a creature has managed to lair beneath the city is unknown to me and irrelevant. We know the Rhulic historical accounts of the devastation inflicted by one of these creatures on their northern cities. We must evacuate Issyrah, bring in more men, more myrmidons—"

The arsyrr cut Koryn short. "You do not believe ten full companies and six Manticores is sufficient to protect Issyrah?" He shook his head. "I should not blame you. Your garrison has not seen real battle in some time. Perhaps it has made you overcautious."

Koryn gritted his teeth at the insult, knowing as he did that House Rhslyrr had seen no more combat than his own soldiers, for all their vaunted drills. He held his tongue. "Very well," he said, directing his words at the narcissar. "Will I still be permitted to take a small force to the fane and investigate further?"

"By all means, Scyir," Narcissar Syvas said. "You know your duty. The arsyrr will ensure the safety of the streets of Issyrah while you conduct your search. Take what men and arms you deem necessary and go at once."

"Yes, conduct your search," the arsyrr said imperiously. "You may find more of these blighted creatures, but you will not find a dragon. The sibyls would have detected so great an evil in our midst."

Koryn nodded, turned on his heel, and began walking away from the half-circle of house leaders. He heard quiet, concerned voices behind him. They did not truly believe there was any danger. They thought the presence of the arsyrr and his soldiers made them safe. Koryn desperately hoped they were right.



Koryn had lived in Issyrah his entire life and never once had he been close enough to the Fane of Ayisla to really see its beauty. It was a single tower of white stone, tapering as it rose into the night sky. Whirling symbols depicting the moons and the stars were worked into the stone, indigo blue against the stark alabaster. Once, before the Rivening, the fane glowed with soft blue light, a beacon in the dark. Now the darkness had reclaimed it, and he felt the absence of the goddess keenly, a melancholy emptiness that pulled at his soul.

"Captain Breir, take two squads and the Griffon and patrol the perimeter of the fane," Koryn said, turning to address his captain where she stood beside two towering myrmidons: a Griffon and a Gorgon. The war machines stood like ivory statues, the soft blue of their arcane nodes a subtle reminder of their power. A lightly armored Iosan in a long leather coat moved around the two myrmidons, a heavy arcantrik multi-tool in his right hand. This was arcanist Gyrrish Vvir, who had served in Koryn's garrison for many years, keeping its myrmidons in top condition.

Behind the myrmidons were four squads of houseguard drawn from his garrison. He commanded a mixed force of halberdiers and riflemen. It was the largest force he'd ever personally commanded in the field, but he still felt vulnerable, naked.

"Yes, Scyir," Captain Breir said and began barking orders at the houseguard behind her. Soon she set off toward the eastern side of the fane, five halberdiers, five riflemen, and the Griffon in tow.

The area around the fane was quite dark, but they had brought their own light with them. One out of every ten men carried an arcantrik torch that shed stark white light; it was enough to illuminate the entire square in which the fane sat. Compared to the rest of the city, the Fane of Ayisla felt ancient. This was largely because it was avoided and had fallen into disrepair. Cracked masonry, encroaching vines and weeds, and the pervasive darkness made it very clear the divine presence that once dwelled here had long since fled.

Captain Breir returned in short order. She had obviously found nothing malignant in the area. "The area is clear, Scyir," she said, slinging her rifle. "Shall I give the order to enter the fane?"

Koryn shook his head and drew Velsyr from its scabbard across his back. He held the blade in his right hand and drew a heavy pistol holstered on his hip with his left. "I'll lead them, Captain," he said and waved his sword toward the fane. The sound of men and machines moving together soon followed.

The entrance to the Fane of Ayisla was a single open portal in the side of the great tower. It was large enough to admit a heavy myrmidon with ease. As they approached, light splashed into the interior of the fane, revealing the dust-covered floor of the great antechamber just beyond the entrance. Besides the dust, the fane seemed remarkably intact.

Like many of those living in Issyrah, Koryn had never set foot in the fane. He had hoped to feel some sense of reverence now that he was inside. He thought a structure that had once housed a living deity might kindle awe or wonder within his soul. But all he felt was the same emptiness he'd experienced outside, and beneath that, fear at what might have taken up residence in the goddess' absence.

"Feels dead in here," Gyrrish said. The arcanist had a habit of saying whatever popped into his head. This time, Koryn couldn't help but agree with his blunt assessment.

They did not linger, moving quickly from the antechamber into another large room. This one was clearly intended as a place of worship. A great dais sat at the northern end of the chamber, and Ayisla's symbol took up the entire wall behind it. Smaller symbols of the other Iosan deities were etched into the floor.

"Scyir, look," Gyrrish said. The arcanist pointed his multi-tool at a spot just beneath the dais. There a great hole yawned in the stone floor, easily ten feet in diameter.

Koryn holstered his pistol and took an arcantrik torch from a rifleman standing next to him. He nodded to Captain Breir, and she whispered orders to the men. They spread out across the chamber, rifles and halberds trained on the hole.

"Come," Koryn said to the Gorgon. The myrmidon reacted immediately, moving smoothly across the floor toward Koryn. Gyrrish trailed behind it. The slight hum and visible shimmer of the myrmidon's power field and the two great fighting blades attached to its forearms were somewhat reassuring to Koryn as he approached the hole.

Light splashed down into the pit, revealing an earthen tunnel some ten feet below the floor of the fane. The tunnel was even wider than the mouth of the pit, twenty feet maybe.

Koryn waved his men forward, and they pressed in. He handed the arcantrik torch back to a halberdier and sheathed his sword. As if reading his mind, Captain Breir began gathering rope from the packs of the houseguard troops tasked with carrying additional equipment that might be needed in the field.

They began lowering soldiers into the pit, using the Gorgon as an anchor point. Captain Breir and a squad of riflemen went first. As soon as they hit the ground, they advanced thirty feet, knelt, and covered the passageway with raised rifles. Koryn, Gyrrish, and the Griffon came next. Koryn and Gyrrish climbed down the rope while the myrmidon simply stepped over the edge, its sturdy frame more than adequate to absorb the ten-foot plunge.

With Koryn and the Griffon in the tunnel, Captain Breir and her riflemen advanced further, allowing enough room for the rest of the houseguard and the Gorgon.

The first thing Koryn noticed when he set foot on the tunnel floor was a curious smell, a musky odor he couldn't quite place. There was an animal quality to it, but beneath this organic smell was a slight acrid tang.

"Orders, Scyir?" Captain Breir asked once all their forces were in the tunnel.

"Take two squads of riflemen and scout thirty feet ahead," he said. "I'll follow with halberdiers and the myrmidons."

She nodded and moved down the tunnel with her men.

"How long do you think this has been here?" Gyrish asked as they began moving slowly down the tunnel.

"Some time," he answered. "It doesn't look like something engineered. I think the area collapsed or was quickly dug out."

"Dug out by what?" Gyrish answered. "And how could no one in the city have noticed?"

"I cannot say," Koryn said, shaking his head. His flat tone silenced further questions.

The tunnel turned to the left ahead, and Captain Breir and her riflemen disappeared from sight as they rounded the corner.

There was silence for the space of a heartbeat and then a single loud report, the telltale sound of a houseguard long rifle.

"Contact!" came Captain Breir's shout, which was quickly drowned out by a fusillade of rifle fire.

Koryn drew sword and pistol and waved the rest of the houseguard forward. Beside him he saw Gyrish's hands glow with a soft blue radiance. The barely visible force field around the myrmidon flared as the arcanist poured power into its energy matrix.

"Guard position," Gyrish said to the Griffon, and it raised its halberd and shield. "Rapid advance," Gyrish said, this time to both the Griffon and the Gorgon, and both moved swiftly toward the sounds of combat echoing down the tunnel. Koryn and the arcanist followed behind them.

The gunfire suddenly stopped and was replaced with screams. As Koryn rounded the corner a wave of terror washed over him, and he felt that fear rapidly spread through the halberdiers behind him.

Captain Brier and her men were locked in combat with a group of what looked like Iosan civilians. The close combat had forced the riflemen to throw aside their firearms, and they were fighting with the short, stabbing swords they carried as backup weapons. The strange Iosans were fighting with swords as well, although it was obvious they lacked the expertise of their enemies.

Despite their superior skill the riflemen suddenly gave ground, their faces pinched with terror. Koryn soon saw why. A twisted, spine-covered horror nearly identical to the creature he'd killed in the grand square had emerged from a side tunnel and was cutting a swathe through the riflemen in a blur of claws and fangs. The thing was surrounded by a palpable aura of dread, and the Iosan swordsmen seemed to draw encouragement from the awful creature and pressed forward.



Koryn watched Captain Breir cut down one of the enemy swordsmen, then grab a wounded rifleman by his gorget and drag him back. "Fall back!" Koryn shouted and ordered the Griffon into a charge, while Gyrish pushed the Gorgon forward to cover the retreating riflemen. Captain Breir repeated the order, and she and the riflemen retreated to allow the Griffon, empowered by Gyrish's magic, surge through them and directly into the blighted horror.

The creature lashed out at the myrmidon, scoring its hull with long black talons, but the Griffon's momentum and a heavy blow from its shield smashed the creature off its feet. The myrmidon brought its halberd down in a powerful overhand slash, and the blade bit through the creature's armor and deep into its flesh, eliciting a piercing shriek.

"Charge!" Koryn heard Gyrish shout, and the Gorgon rushed forward, slashing at the Iosan swordsmen with its forearm blades, cutting one down and keeping the rest from catching up to the retreating riflemen.

Koryn felt the nauseating terror of the blighted creature suddenly disappear as the Griffon pulled its bloodied halberd from the

THE CREATURE LASHED OUT AT THE MYRMIDON, SCORING ITS HULL WITH LONG BLACK TALONS, BUT THE GRIFFON'S MOMENTUM AND A HEAVY BLOW FROM ITS SHIELD SMASHED THE CREATURE OFF ITS FEET.

beast's corpse. "Forward!" he shouted, and the halberdiers flowed around him, engaging the remaining swordsmen surrounding the Gorgon. They made quick work of their enemies, hacking them down before the swordsmen could get close enough to strike.

The battle was over and the enemy had been slain in their entirety. In the grim quiet that followed, Koryn took stock of his troops and equipment.

"Gyrish," Koryn called out. "See if the myrmidons took any serious damage."

The arcanist nodded and hurried forward to inspect his charges. Halberdiers and riflemen moved with him, spreading out to secure the area.

"Three casualties," Captain Breir said, wiping bloody hands on her armor. "Maybe four. Hyrek's bleeding badly. That thing nearly cut him in half."

Koryn nodded. It could have been worse.

"These *people* were waiting for us when we came around the corner," Breir said, pointing to one of the dead swordsmen.

Koryn moved to a corpse and stared down at it. It was an Iosan woman; her face was thin, gaunt, and he saw what looked like small scales around her mouth and eyes. Short spines sprouted from her chin. He looked and saw most of the men and women who had attacked them bore similar deformities. These were not random monstrosities wandering down from the mountains of Rhul—these were Iosan men and women who had been blighted within Issyrah.

"This one is still alive," Breir called out. She was standing over one of the swordsmen, a man. Her boot was planted in his back.

Koryn hurried over, drawing his sword. The Iosan man pinned to the ground by Captain Breir was struggling feebly, trying to crawl away. Faintly, Koryn heard the man speaking, whispering something.

"Ethrungal..."

Koryn leaned forward and placed the tip of Velsyr on the back of the man's neck. "Who are you?" Koryn said.

The man's mouth moved in response, but his breath was failing, and Koryn knelt down to hear the man's final words.

"Violators...Ethrungal...will destroy you," the man whispered, then stopped moving.

Koryn stood up. "Ethrungal. Does that mean anything to you, Captain?" he asked. The name was alien on his tongue, yet it filled him with an unidentifiable fear. It carried weight and age, and saying it aloud made him feel as if he were conjuring some malevolent spirit.

Breir shook her head. "No, but I think these people have been down here a while," she said. "Look at their clothes—old, torn, stained."

"Let's move," he said. "There may be more of these creatures here." He gestured with Velsyr at the hacked corpse of the blighted monstrosity.

Koryn sent the injured houseguard soldiers along with an escort back to the fane with orders to report what they had found and to relay the message that he would proceed. Shortly after that, Gyrish reported the myrmidons were largely undamaged; the dragonspawn had only marred the Griffon's armor. Its talons had not penetrated into the vital inner workings beneath.

They continued on.

As they walked, Koryn noticed the ground was sloping downward. Small side tunnels began to appear, but Koryn ignored them—he wanted to keep pressing forward on what appeared to be the main arterial pathway of these tunnels. He was leading, walking beside both myrmidons and Gyrish. He wanted their most powerful weapons in front if they ran afoul of any more dragonspawn. Three ranks of halberdiers followed behind him while Breir and her riflemen covered the rear. The riflemen often worked with halberdiers and were trained to fire on enemies *through* ranks of friendly troops. They could engage a threat behind the main group and in front of it.

It was growing warmer as they moved deeper into the warren of tunnels, and the acrid smell Koryn had noticed in the fane had become stronger. It felt like they were moving through a living thing, wending their way through the veins and capillaries of a giant beast, headed toward its malignant heart. The men were silent, and an oppressive fear had settled over them. Koryn saw many of them casting nervous looks over their shoulders or talking to each other in desperate, whispered voices.

The next attack did not come from the front or the rear; it came from the myriad smaller tunnels branching off the main passageway beside them.

One moment the main tunnel was still and quiet; the next it was alive with scaled bodies pouring out of the side tunnels. Shots and screams rose up as half a dozen fanged, scaly creatures the size of small dogs barreled into the houseguard.

One of the beasts came out of a tunnel not more than a stone's throw from Koryn. It was nearly all mouth, a drooling fanged orifice supported by two powerful legs. Two small taloned arms hung below the great maw and a single horn rose up from the creature's blunt snout. It was eyeless; the space where its eyes should have been was covered over by a smooth plate of scale and bone.

Koryn pulled his heavy pistol from its holster and fired. His aim was true, and the heavy slug struck the creature's right leg, knocking it over. It sprang up immediately with an angry hiss and raced toward him.

"Guard!" Koryn shouted, and the Griffon stepped forward, shield lowered, into the path of the charging beast.

He glanced to his left and was relieved to see that Gyrish had taken the Gorgon and was leading it back to where a knot of halberdiers and riflemen were battling five more of the diminutive monstrosities.

Koryn snapped his attention back to the immediate threat, slammed his pistol back into its holster, and took a two-handed grip on Velsyr. The creature charged directly into the Griffon's shield, mouth agape. Its jaws closed with a snap, and it ripped a piece of the hardened steel away from the shield's rim with a shriek of tearing metal. The Griffon jabbed at the creature with its halberd, but the beast was small and agile and leapt away from the blow.

The beast was focused on the Griffon, and Koryn circled around the myrmidon, putting it between him and his foe. "Attack!" he shouted, pushing the Griffon to keep up a steady assault with its halberd and the edge of its shield. The creature leapt forward, jaws snapping, but the Griffon slammed the flat of its shield into the springing beast. It bounced off the steel bulwark and crashed into the ground on its side. Seeing his opportunity, Koryn raced around the myrmidon, Velsyr raised above his head. The creature was climbing to its feet when he reached it, and he plunged his sword into its body, leaning into the thrust so his entire weight pushed the blade clean through the creature. It convulsed, jaws snapping, then sagged to the ground and stopped moving.

Koryn placed one foot on the carcass and yanked Velsyr free. A mixture of triumph and terror surged through him—he had the evidence he needed, and his worst fears had been realized. These creatures were undoubtedly dragonspawn, monsters birthed by a dragon's blood to serve as minions.

He turned to see his houseguard, aided by the Gorgon, had put down four more of the dragonspawn, but he also saw elven bodies among the corpses of their enemies. "Come!" Koryn shouted at the Griffon and raced toward his troops, drawing his pistol again. He snapped off a shot at the last of the dragonspawn but missed. It didn't matter; his target was soon cut to pieces by the ring of halberdiers surrounding it.

He had almost reached the rest of the houseguard when an ear-splitting screech tore through the air behind him from deeper into the tunnels. He stopped and whirled around. The Griffon, which had been moving behind him, halted as well.

Beyond the light thrown from their arcantrik torches, huge shapes moved in the darkness. Koryn felt courage drain from him like

water from a broken dam as the dragonspawn heaved their grotesque bodies into the light.

There were three of them. The first two were the size of horses, six-limbed monstrosities covered in armored scales. Their long barbed tails lashed at the air. They moved like wolves, lithe and predatory, their eyeless shark-like heads low to the ground, as if searching for the scent of prey. These wolfish dragonspawn, despite their obvious lethality, paled in comparison to the horror that came after them. Larger than a heavy myrmidon, it too had six limbs: four pillar-like legs supporting a thick serpentine body and a pair of arms that terminated in immense bony blades, like scythes. Its head, a full ten feet above the ground, was similar to all the dragonspawn they'd encountered thus far—bullet-shaped, eyeless, and nearly bisected by a great toothy maw.

Koryn could feel the terror surge through his men; it gripped his own heart with throttling strength, but he shoved it aside. They had to get out of the fane, get back to the surface, and warn the city. There was no denying what they faced now.

"Halberdiers front!" Koryn shouted, hoping his voice would steel his men. "Guard!" he then shouted to the Griffon, and the myrmidon, possessed of the unthinking courage of machines, strode forward into the path of the dragonspawn.

"Riflemen!" he heard Captain Breir shouting. "Three ranks—"

The big dragonspawn opened its maw and screeched, drowning out the rest of Breir's commands. Then it rushed forward, huge scything claws raised.

"Attack!" Koryn shouted at the Griffon, and the myrmidon advanced, halberd raised. Koryn then backpedaled and fired a shot at one of the wolf-like spawn, striking it in the neck. It leapt back, jaws snapping, but seemed otherwise unharmed.

Soon he reached the halberdiers behind him. Shields parted, allowing him to slide between the forest of blades to the relative safety behind them. The men moved quickly and efficiently, but their ashen faces and wide fearful eyes told him they were on the brink of panic. Gyrish moved up beside him, and he felt the looming presence of the Gorgon close behind. The arcanist's hands glowed blue, and thirty feet away the Griffon's force field flared with power.

"Strike!" Koryn shouted, and the Griffon swung its halberd, using the extra power Gyrish had lent it to add strength to the blow. The heavy blade connected and gouged into the dragonspawn's flank. It screeched and bulled into the Griffon, its scythes shredding armor from the myrmidon's hull. The Griffon staggered back beneath the assault.

The smaller dragonspawn now raced forward, and Koryn thought they would charge directly into the raised blades of the halberdiers. Instead they halted twenty feet from the line, dug their talons into the rocky floor of the tunnel, and opened their jaws. From within each of the dragonspawns' gullets a pulsing, shadowy light appeared, and Koryn's eyes went wide as he realized what was about to happen.

"Shields!" He shouted, and the halberdiers in front of him locked their shields together and put their heads down.

The wolf-like dragonspawn snapped their heads forward, disgorging globes of swirling black fire from their mouths. The ebon fire streaked into the locked shields of the halberdiers

and detonated. Searing heat washed over everything, and Koryn heard the agonized screams of the men in the front ranks as the blight fire consumed them. Their sacrifice, however, had shielded the men behind them, and the rest of the halberdiers were scorched but still upright.

Captain Breir had not been idle during the initial attack. She had moved her riflemen up and into two separate firing squads of ten men each, just behind the halberdiers. "First squad, left! Second squad, right!" she shouted. "Fire!"

The riflemen opened fire, their weapons filling the tunnel with thunder and smoke. They fired over and through the halberdiers, each squad concentrating fire on one of the wolf-like dragonspawn. At this range and with the size of their targets, it was impossible to miss.

A hail of bullets ripped into the dragonspawn, and both were torn to pieces, splattering black blood across the floor of the tunnel. The danger was far from over. Seconds after the smaller dragonspawn were killed the Griffon toppled over, its metal body partially dismembered by the larger dragonspawn it had been holding at bay. Appearing unwounded, the huge creature rushed forward, and the halberdiers moved to meet the beast.

Koryn heard Gyrish shouting instructions to the Gorgon and soon after heard the high-pitched whine of its polarity cannon cycling up. A bolt of bright blue fire lanced out from the myrmidon and struck the dragonspawn as it advanced, leaching away kinetic energy and halting the massive beast in its tracks. Despite its blunted charge, the dragonspawn was now within reach of the first rank of halberdiers.

The halberdiers lashed out, easily striking the dragonspawn, but their blades raked ineffectively across the creature's scaled body. It bulled forward again, and its scything arms cut down three halberdiers. The Gorgon now rushed forward to fill the hole left by the fallen houseguard, slashing at the dragonspawn with its forearm blades.

"Forward!" Koryn shouted and advanced. The halberdiers followed, moving around the myrmidon and dragonspawn, encircling the pair, slashing at the beast whenever there was an opening. Koryn joined them, jumping forward to hack at the creature's legs with Velsyr when the opportunity presented itself.

Captain Breir and her riflemen kept a steady stream of fire on the dragonspawn, and Gyrish stood behind them pouring arcane power into the Gorgon's force field, adding strength to its blows.

Despite their efforts, the dragonspawn seemed tireless and unconcerned with its mounting wounds. With each second that passed its scythes opened huge rents in the Gorgon's armor or cut down a halberdier. Finally, with the tunnel floor soaked in its black blood, the dragonspawn staggered, its back legs failing. Its lower half collapsed, and the Gorgon surged forward and chopped both its blades into the beast's neck. The dragonspawn's head came away from its body in a fountain of black gore and it sagged to the ground, dead at last.

"Merciful Scyrah," Gyrish said as he pushed past Koryn to inspect the wreck of the Griffon and the damage done to the Gorgon.

Koryn glanced around. Now that the battle had ended, his men seemed stunned. They leaned on their weapons, breathing hard, eyes wide and unfocused. He knew he needed to get them moving, get them working, before fear took hold completely.

"Injury detail, Captain Breir," Koryn called out. Breir was crouched over the prostrate form of a rifleman, his hand in hers. She was close with her men, and he watched her set the rifleman's limp hand on his chest, stand, and wipe at her eyes with the back of one gauntleted hand. His heart broke for her. They'd never seen combat like this. They'd drilled together for decades, lived together in the garrison, growing close, becoming like family, and now this. To see a person you'd shared a life with for twenty, thirty years snuffed out, and nothing you could do about it. Breir was a soldier, though, one of the best, and she was quickly all business again.

"Gather the injured and dead and pull them back," she called out, slung her rifle, then bent down and began dragging the man at her feet away from the scene of the battle.

"Two squads forward, mixed units," Koryn said. "Do not engage. One shot to warn us and then get back here."

They spent ten minutes moving the dead. There were no injured; the wounds the dragonspawn had inflicted had all been fatal.

"How many?" Koryn asked when Captain Breir came to give him the casualty report.

"Eighteen," she said.

"Leave them," Koryn said. "We're getting out of these tunnels. Now."

"The Griffon isn't salvageable," Gyrish said, coming up to join Koryn and Breir. "The Gorgon is in decent shape, but it could use some repairs. Do you want me to shore it up now?"

Koryn opened his mouth to give his answer but stopped short as a deep, penetrating rumble rolled through the floor of the tunnel. The ground shook, and a blast of hot, fetid wind washed over them, carrying with it a carrion reek like nothing he had ever smelled.

Gyrish and Breir stared at Koryn, eyes wide and fearful.

"Retreat," he said, his voice shaking as another tremor rocked the tunnel. "Retreat!" he shouted and began moving backward. "Back to the fane! Now!"

The houseguard needed no further encouragement and they began moving, double time, back the way they had come.

"Rear guard!" Koryn heard Gyrish shouted at the Gorgon. The arcanist then sprinted to join Koryn and Captain Brier. They were moving in the very center of the twenty or so houseguard that remained. Most of the riflemen took up the rear, in front of the Gorgon, while the slower halberdiers took point.

Another blast of hot air rolled through the tunnel—hot enough to redden exposed skin—and a great shuddering screech followed. It was the loudest thing Koryn had ever heard, and he clapped his hands over his ears to keep his head from splitting open. There was no question in his mind what lay at the heart of these tunnels, and he knew there was no time to retreat in an orderly fashion.

"Run!" Koryn shouted, and the men around him broke into a dead sprint. Some dropped weapons and shields to lighten their load while others tried to maintain some semblance of military order.

They surged down the tunnel, rounding a tight L-shaped curve, and then the fire came. At first it was dull, distant roar, then it became louder and louder, and heat coursed through the tunnel in front of it.

The flames were lurid yellow and green, a wall of searing agony that

consumed the Gorgon and the back row of riflemen, obliterating mechanika, armor, and flesh before a single scream could be uttered. The curve in the tunnel blunted the progress of the huge gout of flame, or they would have been incinerated to a man.

Panic gripped the houseguard that remained, and Koryn was not immune. They ran, lungs bursting, frantic voices calling to the gods. The ground continued to shake and buckle, and when they finally reached the hole where they'd first entered they could barely keep their feet on the roiling earth.

The lip of the pit was ten feet from the floor, and Koryn ordered the men to stand on one another's shoulders to reach it. It took them five precious minutes to pull themselves out of the pit: Koryn, Breir, Gyrish, and ten houseguard. Then it was a maddened dash through the fane. Masonry broke apart and fell from the ceiling, and great cracks appeared in the floor, some wide enough that they had to leap over them. The fane was crumbling around them.

They burst into the darkened square around the fane as a massive tremor shook the earth. They were pitched forward and off their feet, helpless as the ground heaved and roiled.

Koryn could hear alarms ringing throughout the city and a chorus of panicked screams as the citizens of Issyrah began to realize their peril.

They have no idea, Koryn thought, crawling backward on his backside. He watched the great tower in front of him lean to one side and come crashing down, untold tons of masonry that had stood for millennia reduced to rubble in seconds.

Koryn managed to climb to his feet, grasping Captain Brier's hand and pulling her up from where she had sprawled beside him. He saw no sign of Gyrish, but some of the houseguard had gained their feet as well.

They ran.

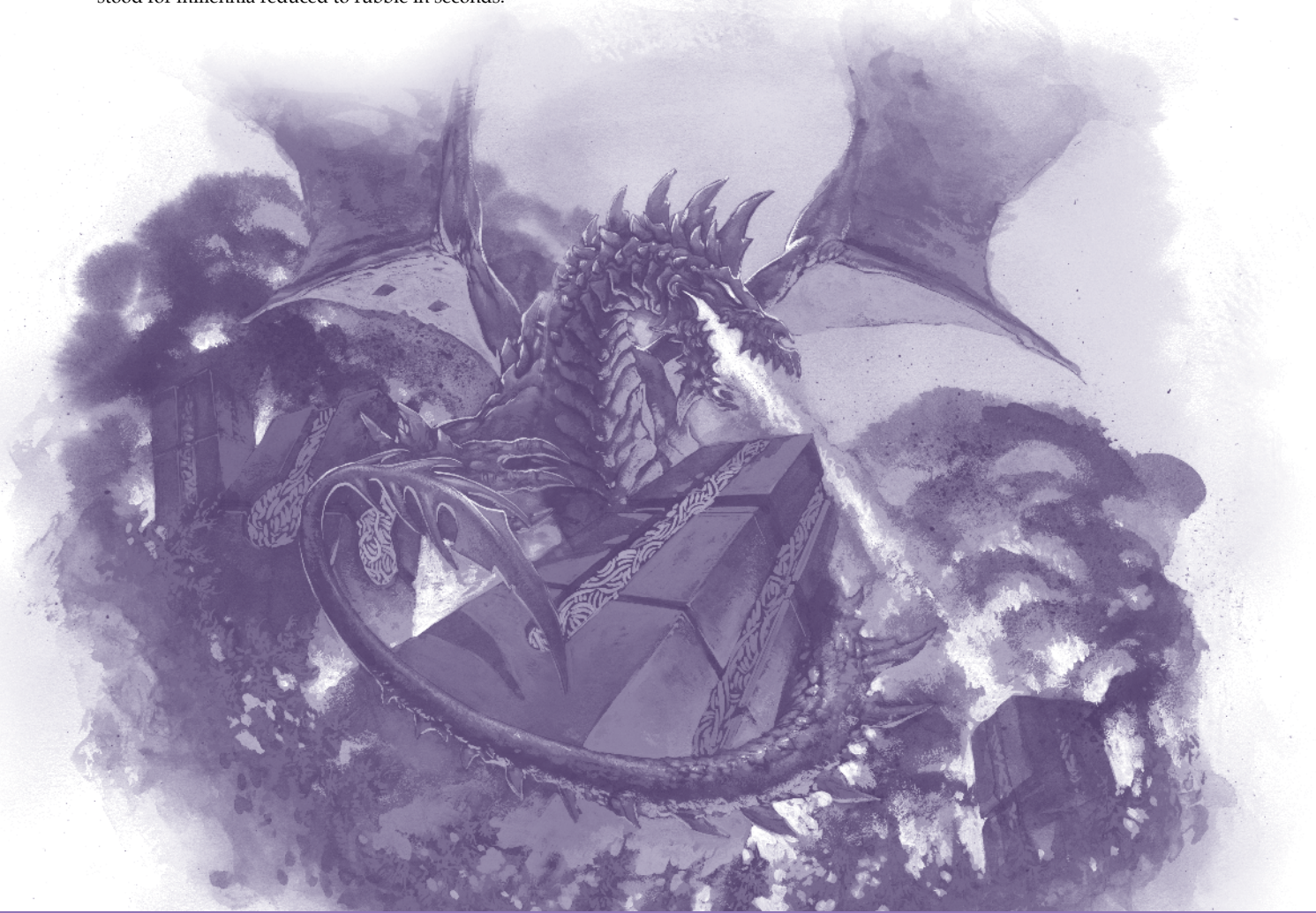
Koryn and Breir reached the wide boulevard that connected to the square of the fane. There he saw some of the Arsyra's soldiers and half-a-dozen myrmidons waiting, stunned and unmoving. Another tremor shook the world, knocking everyone to the ground.

Koryn looked back to where the fane had once stood and saw that a gargantuan hole had completely swallowed it, a mammoth pit filled with searing blue and white flames.

The dragon rose up from those flames, its body a great shadow that blotted out the night sky, swallowing the moon and stars in its nebulous form. Its wings opened, and they stretched to the ends of the world. He heard its voice, a great bellowing wind that filled him with uncontrollable dread.

"Ethrunbal," Koryn whispered as the dragon opened its eyes, twin spheres of luminous green larger than moons that stared down at the insignificant creatures that had foolishly entered its abode and roused its endless, immortal anger.

There was a great sucking wind as the dragon drew in breath, and Koryn closed his eyes. He took some comfort in the knowledge that the flames would spare him the sight of Issyrah's doom.



ETHRUNBAL RISES

SETUP

Before the game, determine who will be the attacker (Retribution forces) and who will be the defender (Legion of Everblight forces). Then designate one table edge as the attacker's table edge and the opposite table edge as the defender's table edge.

The attacker's deployment zone is the area within 10" of his table edge, and the defender's deployment zone is the area within 10" of his table edge.

Set up the terrain according to the map. The 4" x 6" terrain features represent the rubble of destroyed Iosan buildings. These destroyed buildings are rough terrain that also provide cover (like a warjack wreck marker).

The attacker deploys first and takes the first turn.

ARMY COMPOSITION

The attacker's army consists of Arsyrr Vyar Rhyslyrr* with 2 'Jack Marshaled Griffons; Arcanist Gyrrish Vrir* with 2 'Jack Marshaled Manticores; a 12-model unit of Houseguard Halberdiers including Officer & Standard; and a 12-model unit of Houseguard Riflemen including Officer & Standard.

The defender's army consists of a 10-model unit of Blighted Iosan Swordsmen*, 2 Iosan Forsaken*, 2 Shredders, 2 Teraphs, and 1 Scythean.

**These models are specific to the "Ethrunbal Rises" scenario. We recommend using a Houseguard Thane solo, Arcanist solo, Blighted Nyss Swordsmen unit, and Forsaken solo, respectively, for your proxy models.*

SPECIAL RULES

The defender is the dragon Everblight.

Everblight is not a warlock but has the following warlock special rules: Battlegroup Commander, Control Area, Forcing, Fury Manipulation, and Healing. Everblight can leech up to 20 fury points each turn, all warbeasts in the defender's army are part of Everblight's battlegroup, and all models in the game are in his control area at all times. Everblight cannot be targeted by attacks.

At the start of the defender's turn, Everblight activates. Everblight can make up to two unboostable ranged attacks at RNG 60, AOE 5, and POW 20 using his RAT 6 and ignoring line of sight. The point of origin of Everblight's attacks is the center of the defender's table edge. Everblight never receives the aiming bonus.

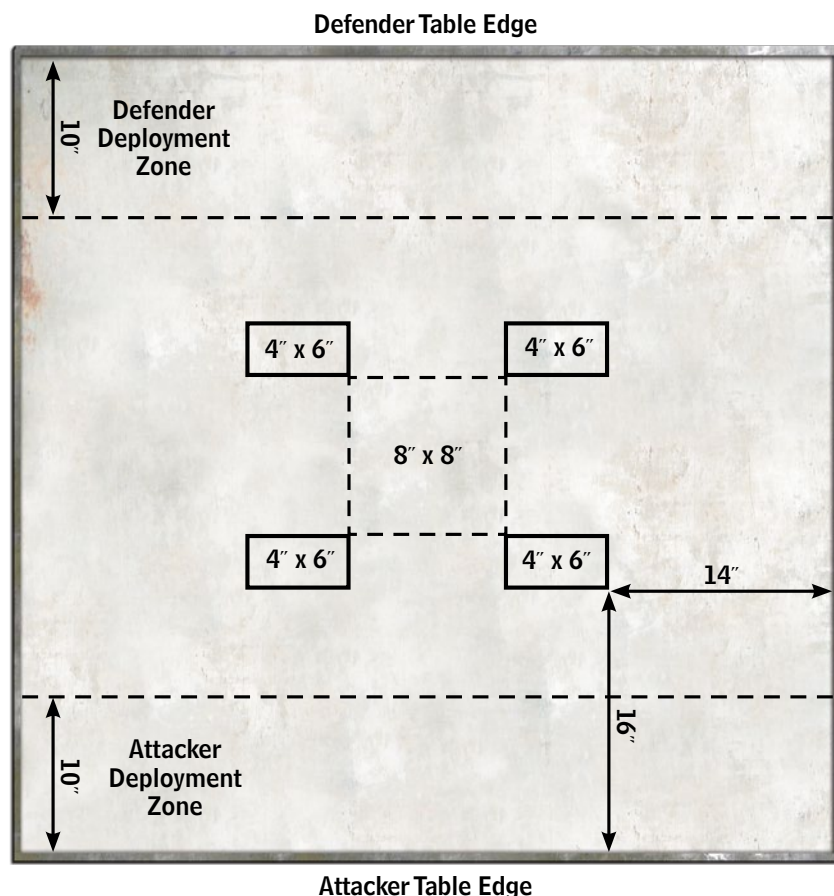
VICTORY CONDITIONS

Beginning on the second player's second turn, the attacker wins the game if Arsyrr Vyar Rhyslyrr or Arcanist Gyrrish Vrir is within the 8" x 8" zone between the four buildings and there are no Legion of Everblight warbeasts within the zone.

The defender wins the game if all Retribution character models are destroyed.

OPTIONAL RULES

If both players agree, they can play a variation of the "Ethrunbal Rises" scenario. In this variant, the attacker adds a 50-point Retribution army to the army listed above in Army Composition, and the defender adds a 35-point Legion of Everblight army to his or her forces. Note that the victory conditions do not change, so destroying the opposing warcaster or warlock does *not* result in victory.



ARSYR VYAR RHYSLYRR

RHYSLYRR

DRIVE: BOOSTED ATTACK – This model can attempt to drive each warjack under its control in its command range. To drive a warjack, this model must make a command check at any time during its activation. If it passes, the attack rolls for the warjack's initial attacks are boosted during that activation. If it fails, the warjack does not benefit from Jack Marshal this turn.

FLANK FRACTION WARPACK – When this model makes a melee attack against an enemy model within the melee range of a friendly model of the type indicated, this model gains +2 to attack rolls and gains an additional damage die.

IRON WALL – This model gains +2 ARM for each warpack. It controls B2B with it. When this model is directly hit by an enemy ranged or magic attack, you can choose to have one of those non-incorporeal warpacks be directly hit instead. That model is automatically hit and suffers all damage and effects.

BLADE OF RHYSLYRR

BLESSED – When making an attack with this weapon, ignore spell effects that add to a model's ARM or DEF.

THRESHOLD (*ATTACK) – This model makes one melee attack with this weapon against each model in its LOS and this weapon's melee range.



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3 FA
* PC



RHYSLYRR									
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD	P+S	POW	P+S
6	6	6	8	4	14	17	10	8	14

BLADE OF RHYSLYRR

P+S	POW
8	8



ARSYR VYAR RHYSLYRR
RETRIBUTION SOLO

ARCANIST GYRISH VRIR

VRIR

CONCENTRATED POWER (*ACTION) – RNG 5. Target friendly Faction warjack. If the warjack is in range, it gains +2 on melee damage rolls this turn.

IRON WALL – This model gains +2 ARM for each warjack. It controls B2B with it. When this model is directly hit by an enemy ranged or magic attack, you can choose to have one of those non-incorporeal warpacks be directly hit instead. That model is automatically hit and suffers all damage and effects.

MASTER ARCANIST – When this model makes a special action, it targets all friendly warpacks within the ability's range.

POWER BOOSTER (*ACTION) – RNG 5. Target friendly Faction warjack. If the target warjack is in range and has no focus points, it gains 1 focus point. If the warjack is Disrupted, it is no longer Disrupted.

REPAIR 100 (*ACTION) – This model can attempt repairs on any damaged friendly Faction warjack. To attempt repairs, this model must be B2B with the damaged warjack and make a skill check. If successful, remove d6 damage points from the warjack's damage grid.



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3 FA
* PC



VRIR									
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD	P+S	POW	P+S
6	6	6	5	16	15	8	9	3	6

MULTI-TOOL

P+S	POW
9	3



ARCANIST GYRISH VRIR
RETRIBUTION SOLO

JOSAN FORSAKEN

FORSAKEN

CONSUME FURY (*ACTION) – RNG CMD. Target friendly Faction warjack. If the warjack is in range, remove up to 5 fury points from it and put them on this model. This model can have up to 5 fury points at a time.

FEROCIOUS – During its activation, this model can spend fury points to gain additional attacks or to boost attack or damage rolls, at 1 fury point per attack or boost.

FUTURE SIGHT – This model can boost attack and damage rolls after rolling.

IGNOR – When this model suffers damage, roll a d6. On a roll of 6, the attacker suffers 1 damage point.

OVERTAKE – When this model destroys one or more enemy warrior models with a normal melee attack, after the attack is resolved this model can immediately advance up to 1'.



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2 FA
* PC



FORSAKEN									
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD	P+S	POW	P+S
6	7	7	6	5	13	16	8	5	12

CLAWS

P+S	POW
12	5



JOSAN FORSAKEN
LEGION BLIGHTED SOLO

BLIGHTED JOSAN SWORDSMEN

LEADER & GRUNTS

BLIGHTED MINION – While within the command range of a friendly warjack or solo, this model gains boosted attack and damage rolls.

IGNOR – When this model suffers damage, roll a d6. On a roll of 6, the attacker suffers 1 damage point.



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1 FA
* PC



LEADER & GRUNTS									
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD	P+S	POW	P+S
6	5	5	4	13	14	7	8	3	8

SWORD

P+S	POW
8	3



BLIGHTED JOSAN SWORDSMEN
LEGION UNIT



IRON KINGDOMS ARCHIVES

THE ORGOTH OCCUPATION

BY MICHAEL SANBEG • ART BY ALBERTO DAL LAGO & CHRIS WALTON

The final years of the 7th century BR were a time of great progress throughout western Immoren, as the consolidation of strong kingdoms throughout the Thousand Cities Era allowed for an unprecedented stability among the human nations. The moveable-type printing press was in common use by then, and this device allowed for the spread of information and scientific advancements such as alchemy, steam engines, and piston-driven machinery. Tordoran shipwrights constructed the first steam-powered ocean vessels in 620 BR, and the first locomotive was developed in Korsk not two decades later. As that century drew to a close, the Khards were busy laying the groundwork for the world's first rail line. This would be the first of many advancements that would come to an abrupt end as the 6th century began.

608 BR

A vast Orgoth armada lands on the shores of Garlghost Island and begins construction of the great fortress of Drer Drakkerung. This would serve as the main staging ground for the initial Orgoth conquest, as well as a coordinating base for reinforcement fleets and for slaves and supplies sent back to the homeland.

The Orgoth soon begin undertaking a series of raids and probing attacks along the Immorese coastline.

~ 600 BR

Orgoth blackships enter the severed reach and land at Ohk to begin the initial incursion of mainland Immoren, beginning with attacks against the Khardic Empire.

597 BR

Orgoth forces advance south and destroy the Khardic village of Borzovin, north of the Great

Zerutsk lake. Borzovin's enslaved inhabitants begin construction of the Orgoth city of Uld Vroggen, which would soon serve as the northern capital of the Orgoth Empire.

595 BR

The Tordoran Armada, currently at the height of its power, achieves several minor victories against the Orgoth fleet.

593 BR

The Battle of a Thousand Sails—In the bloodiest naval battle in the history of Immoren, the whole of the Tordoran Armada is destroyed after ambushing a combined Orgoth fleet in the Dying Strands west of Garlghost Island. Following this victory, Orgoth forces destroy the Tordoran city of Corbhen. Concerned with the Tordorans' abilities as shipbuilders and seafarers, Orgoth generals order the majority of the populations of this and other coastal settlements to be slaughtered rather than enslaved.

593 BR

Orgoth blackships raid the town of Larkholm and burn it to the ground before landing at Henge Hold in western Caspia. There, priests and warwitches conduct dark ceremonies to consecrate the Orgoth invasion, slaughtering the local populace to the last and casting their mutilated bodies into the sea. Slaves are gathered from the outlying area to begin construction of a naval stronghold at Henge Hold.

592 BR

Blackships sail up the Rohannor and into the city of Tordor, at the site of present-day Merin, to seize the city and enslave its population. The nation soon falls to Orgoth control.

Tordoran slaves begin to construct a major Orgoth naval fortress on the Five Fingers islands.

591 BR

A massive slave encampment, today known as the Warrens, is built north of Five Fingers along the newly constructed road to Tordor.

589 BR

Thurian and Caspian river vessels begin making organized raids against Orgoth outposts but achieve no substantial victories.

588 BR

Blackships advance up the Lothpool river and reach Khardov, but initially find their forces insufficient to overwhelm the city.

586 BR

Thuria and most of the Midlunds fall to Orgoth control. The lands south of the Dragon's Tongue and west of the Black River are consolidated into a single Orgoth providence.

584 BR

The Orgoth conquer Khardov, subsequently demolishing much of the city and using the enslaved populace to rebuild the area. During this reconstruction effort, raw iron is discovered beneath the city and within the surrounding hills, which is then heavily mined to supply the Orgoth war effort.

581 BR

The conquest of the Khardic Empire stalls temporarily as Orgoth forces advance into the Khardic Empire's southern Volozkya.

569 BR

In the final defeat of the Khardic Empire, Orgoth forces conquer the Umbrean capital of Korska after an extended siege.

557 BR

The Orgoth begin the construction of a series of fortresses and temples along the Wyrmswall Mountains.

542 BR

After a prolonged siege, the Orgoth seize control of the fortified city of Leryn. Rynyr and eastern Umbrey are consolidated into a single providence.

A massive army advances from Ryn to the southern border of Rhul, eventually penetrating the outer defenses of Horgenhold and initiating a three-month assault that nearly overwhelms the hold's considerable internal defenses. The invader's losses are so staggering, however, that Rhul is declared unassailable from the south. Original plans to establish a foothold in Rhul, and from there to begin the conquest of both Rhul and Ios, are put on hold. This conquest is never resumed.

Korska, considered by the Orgoth to be a hive of insurgency, is destroyed and its population slaughtered.

538 BR

Seeking to expand their holdings beyond Garlghast to the remainder of the Scharde Islands, Orgoth blackships destroy a Satyxis fleet sent to intercept them. In response, Lord Toruk personally takes to the skies for the first time in centuries and annihilates the whole of the Orgoth fleet within proximity to the islands. The Orgoth would never again challenge the nation of Cryx.

517 BR

Orgoth forces destroy Fort Rhyker, a holdout for a small but well armed fiefdom of defiant Morridanes.

503 BR

Orgoth priests begin construction of the Temple of Garrodh deep within the Thornwood on the site of ancient Morrdhic ruins. Over the following decades thousands of slaves will be brutally tortured and sacrificed to sanctify the temple.

481 BR

Having seized most of the centers of human authority in western Immoren, Orgoth governors institute policies to shift their focus away from pure conquest and toward the improvement of their current holdings and infrastructure. Orgoth generals work toward the domination of small and remote human settlements and begin the century-long process of tracking and eliminating organized militant groups.

462 BR

Orgoth tyrants order the capture and execution of inventors, scientists, and alchemists. This includes the systematic destruction of printing presses and a wide variety of printed materials. The Church of Morrow undertakes efforts to preserve and hide as much lore as possible.

433 BR

Western Caspia falls to Orgoth control, effectively granting the invaders absolute power over western Immoren. The walled city of Caspia is by now the only significant human settlement to remain free of Orgoth control.

392 BR

The Orgoth formally outlaw the Order of the Wall, by now recognized as a subversive militant organization.

376 BR

Orgoth warwitches establish a remote outpost within the ruins of Ancient Acrennia.

321 BR

To consolidate trade along the region's major waterways, the Orgoth begin the construction of the city now known as Corvis at the confluence of the Dragon's Tongue and Black Rivers. The city will eventually serve as their regional seat of governance.

289 BR

Having long since disavowed her family name and life of relative privilege, a woman now known only as Rowan ascends to join Morrow after a decades-long effort to ease the suffering of the masses. This indisputable evidence of Morrow's compassion further spreads the teachings of Morrow and escalates the decline of the Menite faith.

243 BR

In retaliation for harboring known rebels, the Skirov city of Porsk is burned and its population executed.

~ 150 BR

Thamar alleged to have imparted the Gift of Magic on humanity, portents of which were bestowed on her most devoted advocates. A cabal of occultists called the Circle or the Oath is believed to have begun based around these first portents of the Gift.

Iron slave collar, discovered near New Vrogen



140 BR

Overcome by strange visions and shorn from their connection to the divine, Iosan priests—excepting only priests of the goddess Scyrah—are driven insane. In subsequent years some Iosans will link this event to the rise of human magic, a theory that eventually gives rise to the Retribution of Scyrah.

137 BR

The first known human sorcerer, a Thurian named Madruva Dagra, kills three Orgoth soldiers near Tarna. In retaliation, Dagra and her entire family are hunted down and killed and Tarna is razed.

129 BR

The Orgoth expand an existing subterranean prison underneath their Five Fingers naval base, creating a facility for the interrogation, torture, and ritual sacrifice of rebel wizards.



Orgoth captain's shield, circa 400 BR

96 BR

Sebastian Kerwin publishes *Dissertations on Thaumaturgical Formulation*, a study in the control of magic using specialized runes.

81 BR

Kerwin institutes the Arcanist's Academe, the first known assembly of wizards, in Ceryl.

73 AR

Kerwin publishes *The Essence of Divine Magic*.

69 BR

Dominic Cavanaugh, a disciple of Kerwin, organizes a raid to free over three hundred Thurian slaves. The Orgoth retaliate by tracking down and executing all those responsible, including Cavanaugh. Believing the Church of Morrow to be responsible for this uprising, Orgoth tyrants commit the Vicarate Slaughter in the city of Fharin, killing over five hundred priests of both Menite and Morrowan faiths.

67 BR

Kerwin and his followers join the Circle of the Oath but quickly change its purview, turning it away from esoteric Thamarite mysticism and redirecting its efforts toward the systematic refinement of arcane principles.

64 BR

Kerwin publishes *Synthesis*, thus essentially inventing mechanika. Considerable efforts to copy and distribute arcane lore begin around this time; however, these efforts ultimately allow Orgoth spies to trace the Arcanist's Academe back to Ceryl.

63 BR

The Orgoth destroy the Arcanist's Academe, allegedly killing Kerwin. His body is never found.

59 BR

Agathius Nerrek, Kerwin's most powerful disciple, reorganizes the Circle of the Oath. Under his direction they established safe houses in Ceryl, Fharin, Merin, and Merywyn.

54 BR

The Orgoth commence a brutal purging of arcanists known as the Wizard Hunts, ultimately shattering the Circle of the Oath.

25 BR

In their continuing effort to combat the Orgoth, surviving members of the Circle of the Oath form the Order of the Golden Crucible in Leryn under the cover of studying simple alchemy.

1 BR

The Orgoth governor stationed in the Fharin fortress prepares to send a tithe of eight thousand slaves across the Meredius, including among them all the prominent Menite and Morrowan priests within the city. Outrage over this incident provokes a general uprising of the citizenry, which is assisted by the Order of the Golden Crucible's distribution of alchemical weapons. The Orgoth governor is slain along with his warwitches, and word of this success sparks a wider Rebellion against the Orgoth. The first Rebellion organization calls itself the Iron Fellowship.

7 AR

The Iron Fellowship is destroyed after its leaders are captured and publically executed by a cadre of Orgoth warriors and warwitches. This does not quell rebellious sentiment in the general population, however, but incites it. Those slain are deemed martyrs to the cause.

16 AR

The descendants of Khardic and Umbrean horselords ride into the mountainous terrain near Rhul to undertake organized raids against the Orgoth.

25 AR

An occult scholar named Nivara, considered by many to be the rightful successor of Kerwin, ascends as the Scion of Thamarite wizards and sorcerers.

28 AR

Order of the Golden Crucible Aurumn Alchemist Oliver Gulvont invents the first firearm, utilizing alchemical blasting powder to propel shot.

32 AR

The Battle of the Hundred Wizards—The city of Tordor is liberated with the aid of over a hundred arcanists, former students of Kerwin and Nivara led by the archwizard Cortis Vendarl.

40 AR

Largely recovered from their defeat at the Battle of the Hundred Wizards, the Orgoth recapture Tordor and put all known arcanists to death. Many arcanists and alchemists escape south and east, the followers of who would eventually aid in the construction of the first colossals in Caspia.

79 AR

Golden Crucible alchemists, having improved their initial firearm designs to employ a pin lock firing mechanism, begin producing firearms in large numbers in a secret foundry beneath the abandoned Merywyn Coliseum.

83 AR

The rip lung plague begins, taking an incredible toll on the Orgoth and Immorese alike.

84 AR

Rynyr is liberated by an army of rifle-wielding revolutionaries known as the Army of Thunder.

85 AR

The Army of Thunder cuts off Orgoth supply routes in Midfast and Merin.

86 AR

The Battle of the Thunderhead—The Army of Thunder repels ten thousand Orgoth at Leryn



Coins of the Orgoth Empire, Thunderhead Fortress Collection



Bust of
General
Orvos XIII,
Berck Museum



with battle magic, alchemical grenades, and massed volleys of rifle fire. Leryn remains free, marking this as the first major victory of the Rebellion; however, the Orgoth reclaim the remainder of Rynyr.

Thunderhead Fortress is constructed in Leryn as a base for the Army of Thunder and the headquarters of the Order of the Golden Crucible. Though the Army of Thunder endures heavy reprisals and suffers losses to the Orgoth in subsequent years, they maintain their hold on Leryn.

87 AR

The Orgoth develop their own firearms, known as *blackdrakes*, precursors to the modern scattergun.

93 AR

The rip lung plague, after killing thousands in Rynyr, Tordor, and Caspia, is cured by an arcanist and alchemist named Corben.

102 AR

Corben ascends as the patron of alchemy, astronomy, and the arcane. This is taken as a sign of Morrow's approval of arcanists who apply their powers toward the greater good.

107 AR

Using the arcane principles in Kerwin's *Synthesis*, Victor Baerd creates the first arcane runeplate.

111 AR

The Fraternal Order of Wizardry is founded by Victor Baerd in a warren of tunnels beneath Ceryl.

124 AR

Order of the Golden Crucible Aurum Magnus Phineas Bainbridge creates a prototype arcanodynamic accumulator capable of storing arcane energy for an extended period of time.

147 AR

Umbrean horselords, led by Prince Buruvan Tzepesci and joined by an army of Rynnish

nomads, liberate Korsk and Rorschik from Orgoth control.

149 AR

Umbreans and Khards endure a siege at Korsk, and with support from the free cities of Caspia and Leryn, subsequently repel the Orgoth attackers.

155 AR

An alchemist named Maximilian Nivin, after joining the Fraternal Order of Wizardry, creates the first cerebral matrix—a device capable of limited reasoning capacity.

158 AR

Using the cerebral matrix, Nivin and apprentice Elias Decklan create the first man-sized automaton, a precursor to the era's colossals and the modern-day steamjack.

164 AR

The free cities of Korsk, Rorschik, Leryn, and Caspia form the Iron Alliance in Merywyn, under the leadership of the newly formed Council of Ten. The Iron Alliance declares open warfare against the Orgoth.

177 AR

After being smuggled from Ceryl to Caspia, Decklan proposes the creation of colossals to the Council of Ten, utilizing a more advanced version of the cerebral matrix.

178 AR

Taking an unprecedented role in outside affairs, Rhul agrees to assist human nations in the construction of colossals and begins smuggling metal, ore, and crafted components into Caspia.

181 AR

The Iron Alliance begins construction of secret colossal factories.

Ellensburg is liberated from Orgoth control.

185 AR

Khards begin construction of their own colossals.

188 AR

The Orgoth discover Khardic plans to create colossals, and thus turn their full might against colossal foundries in Korsk. This subsequently gives rise to rumors of betrayal from Caspia or Rhul, creating a resentment among many Khadorans that persists to this day.

191 AR

The first colossals are completed and march out of Caspia to destroy an Orgoth fortress near Fharin, the first of several to fall as the Orgoth are driven from the southeastern territories.

The decade is consumed by an ongoing struggle. The Iron Alliance faces setbacks as the Orgoth learn to target the battle-wizards controlling the colossals, which requires a shift in Alliance tactics. Support armies are mustered and fielded alongside the colossals, with the protection of their controlling battle-wizards as the highest priorities. These wizards would later be considered precursors to modern warcasters.

201 AR

The Orgoth initiate the Scourge, destroying the vast majority of their records and structures, poisoning wells, salting fields, and slaughtering thousands of slaves before being driven from the shores of Immoren. They retreat to consolidate their forces on Garlghast.

Though the armies of Cryx had never before stood against the Orgoth presence on Garlghast, for unknown reasons this policy is reversed. A Cryxian fleet attacks and captures blackships at port and anchored along the Dying Strand, while a vast thrall horde forces the stranded Orgoth to fall back to the walls of Drer Drakkerung. There the Orgoth endured a four-month siege. When at last the forces of Cryx breach Drer Drakkerung's walls, Orgoth warwitches initiate a suicidal counteroffensive that annihilates the city, destroying the remaining Orgoth along with most of the Cryxian attackers.

Though it would take centuries for Toruk to replenish his forces, the attack is considered a great success, as Cryx recovers a wealth of knowledge and mystic artifacts from the vanquished Orgoth.

202 AR

The Corvis Treaties are ratified by the Council of Ten, creating the Iron Kingdoms by defining the original borders of Cygnar, Khador, Llael, and Ord.





Gazetteer

BEXLYFE

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Map by Ed Bourelle

INTRODUCTION

The Llaelese town of Bexlyfe, located on the northwestern edge of the Territory of the Northern Crusade, was until recently a prosperous township with strong prospects in both mining and river trade. Now locked in a stranglehold by Protectorate occupation and essentially cut off from its major shipping route, Bexlyfe is in the midst of a downward spiral marked by widespread unemployment and escalating civil unrest. The town's tenuous economic position has, at least for now, also led to an increase in petty crime despite the Protectorate's harsh policies against thievery.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Ruler: Scrutator Waldryn di Morsini

Approximate Population: 17,000 Ryn; 7,000 Caspian/Sulese; 3,000 Umbrean; 2,000 Idrian; 250 Midlunder; 100 Skirov; small numbers of trollkin, Rhulfolk, and gobbers

Climate: Temperate. Winters are cold and cloudy with frequent snowfall. Summers are sunny and warm but rarely hot, with significant rain and thunderstorms.

Terrain: Dominated by steep hills and wide, shallow valleys, Bexlyfe is built to accommodate sharp changes in elevation. The outlying area west of Bexlyfe, long used for farmland, is less hilly and more fertile than most of the immediate area.

Military Presence: Only a dozen miles removed from the edge of Khadoran Llael, Bexlyfe serves as a significant waypoint for the Protectorate military. There are typically several thousand Protectorate soldiers within the town at any time. The defenders here are always on alert and are keenly aware of the sizable Khadoran garrison protecting Riversmet to the south, which is being steadily rebuilt and fortified.

Natural Resources: A steady trickle of iron and other industrial metal ore is mined out of the nearby foothills of the Llaelese Mountains, then refined and in some cases fabricated into consumer goods within the town. Prior to the war these goods, as well as processed metals, were shipped downriver to the rest of Llael and then to the Black River and beyond, though under Protectorate rule such trade is forbidden. The area also has a respectable industry of consumer crops, particularly fruit trees.

HISTORY

Bexlyfe lies in the Llaelese duchy of Esmyna, currently within the western edge of the Territory of the Northern Crusade. Only a day's ride from the ruins of Riversmet and half as far from the Rangercliffe Run, Bexlyfe sprawls beside a significant tributary off the Rangercliffe and among the steep, rolling foothills of the nearby Llaelese Mountains. The terrain grows ever more rugged toward the north end of town, though even alongside the river the elevation is pronounced.

Bexlyfe was founded in 327 AR to serve mining interests operating in and around the mountains to the east. In hopes of using the river to cover the greatest span of shipping distance as possible, mining magnates built the town among previously mined hills at what is roughly the easternmost navigable point of the river for most large vessels. With easy access to both raw ore and to a reliable shipping lane, as well as to sufficient arable land to serve the needs of the community, Bexlyfe seemed destined to prosper indefinitely. Over the following decades the town grew beyond its original design, attracting a secondary industry of metal refinery and expanding deeper into the northern hills.

Over time Bexlyfe's industry developed further as manufacturers moved into town, drawn by easy access to refined metals and to Bexlyfe's enviable river shipping network. Well established by 604 AR as an affluent though somewhat geographically isolated township, Bexlyfe's fate took a dark turn that year with the start of the Llaelese War.

When the nearby town of Riversmet was destroyed in early 605 AR, many of the survivors fled to Bexlyfe, and though the town struggled to accommodate them it filled beyond capacity virtually overnight. Having little financial resources and no real prospects for employment, these refugees flocked to hastily constructed communal housing that still exists for their benefit at the southern edge of town. Naturally, many of these refugees count themselves among the most adamant opposition to Khadoran occupation.



These people were horrified when the Khadorans then marched into their town and seized control as part of their intent to secure the rest of the region extending east. Fortunately Bexlyfe did not suffer the same fate as Riversmet, which had been destroyed in order to break the will of the defenders of Leryn. The resources here were deemed valuable enough to the occupiers to inspire them to preserve Bexlyfe largely intact. The town was also fortunate in that the Khadorans were spread thin and never had the liberty of garrisoning more than a token force. This was sufficient to maintain control but not to defend it from other, more determined external forces.

The town's future grew darker still with the arrival of the Protectorate of Menoth's Northern Crusade, after Grand Scrutator Severius seized Leryn and transformed it into a regional capital. The small Khadoran garrison heard of an approaching Menite army and fled across the river to the west, leaving the town no choice but to welcome the Sul-Menites. Mercifully, the town's Protectorate rulers have taken a relatively light hand with the populace, being far more concerned with Khadoran forces garrisoned nearby.

The river that had for so long been the town's lifeblood, and which now leads directly to the contested border of Khadoran Llael, is closed to all traffic except that allowed by the Protectorate military itself. Thankfully, Protectorate forces purchase some of Bexlyfe's refined metals for their own war industry, so there isn't a total lack of custom. Likewise the town is permitted to engage in limited trade with Free Llael to the south. Such trade must

be authorized by agents of the scrutators before being shipped overland. Some commerce with Rhul also passes through these channels, serving as a useful conduit for Rhulic merchants and smugglers intent on avoiding Khadoran checkpoints to the south.

POLITICS

Though some within Bexlyfe were more concerned with the prospect of life under the Protectorate than under Khador, ultimately they had little hope of mustering any significant resistance to their new masters. The town's former ruler, Baron Baey's d'Votis, passed his command peaceably to the Protectorate's chosen representative, a scrutator of Llae'se descent named Waldryn di Morsini.

Though Scrutator di Morsini's star had been on the rise since before the outset of the Northern Crusade, Bexlyfe had been put under his command in the hopes that having one of their own in charge would make the populace more agreeable to Protectorate control, and that di Morsini's faith and high standing would serve as a bold inspiration to local Menites. Indeed, it is well known that the scrutator originally hails not only from Llael but from the very town of Bexlyfe itself.

Waldryn di Morsini emigrated to the Protectorate of Menoth along with his family when he was a boy, though he does have vague memories of Bexlyfe and has quickly re-familiarized himself with the town. Scrutator di Morsini is far more concerned with the town's ability and willingness to contribute to the war effort than to its daily governance, however, and while he is a

capable administrator, much of his attention has been focused on rooting out potential spies and informants. His seemingly faultless ability to sense any manner of deception, despite a lack of reliance on the physical tortures for which his caste is infamous, has led many citizens to believe the scrutator possesses a supernatural ability to recognize any falsehood and see into the heart of even the smallest ruse.

Not entirely unsympathetic to the townsfolk and understanding the difficult position the lack of river trade has put them in, di Morsini has allowed most local officials to retain the positions they'd held prior to the Northern Crusade's arrival—though they now do so under the supervision of his agents. This includes a few dozen Knights Exemplar, a similar number of monks of the Order of the Fist, and four subordinate scrutators, all tasked to root out potential traitors. A permanent garrison of Temple Flameguard is quartered here to see to the town's defense, and its officers sometimes assist in keeping the peace. As a whole, the Protectorate hierarchy has little direct influence over the day-to-day operations of Bexlyfe, and ordinary law enforcement is left to the original constabulary, provided they obey Temple agents.

THE TOWN

Bexlyfe's architecture is elaborate and well designed in the style typical of Llael. Because the elevation is so pronounced throughout the city, most of the roadways wind and curve around the natural hills and valley across which they've been built. Few streets, particularly minor streets, run straight for any considerable distance. The town is further interspersed with countless narrow, looping footpaths and alleyways—which make it extremely easy for cautious residents to avoid being followed and to evade pursuit. Bexlyfe's most prominent architectural feature, however, is the extraordinary preponderance of exterior staircases carved into the myriad hillsides.

THE BARON'S ESTATE

Currently inhabited by Scrutator di Morsini himself, this grand, walled riverside estate commands an impressive view of the town's bridges as well as of any river traffic. The structure is two stories tall, built from white stone, and capped with a wide domed tower. Much of the lower building is used to house the subordinate scrutators and Knights Exemplar under di Morsini. The estate is framed by a lavish network of gardens, sectioned off by wrought-iron fences and cobblestone walkways and flanked by a pair of small houses and a stable. Servants of the estate reside in one of these houses while the other is now home to Baron Baey's d'Votis himself. The baron is ever in the presence of his personal bodyguards, two of his own former men-at-arms, though both are Menites now secretly loyal to di Morsini himself. The baron's once impressive wealth has suffered due to the repeated occupations of Bexlyfe. Following its invasion, the Khadoran military seized a sizable portion as spoils of war, and much of what remained was gradually siphoned away as a tithe to the Temple authorities. D'Votis now lives a shadow of his former life, scraping by with what little of his affluence remains.

CHURCH OF ASC. SAMBERT

Alongside and slightly uphill of the Baron's estate, and joined to its grounds by a sculpted white marble staircase, is a large and well-appointed Church of Morrow that serves as the local seat of the faith. Due to the proliferation of craftsmen in Bexlyfe, it is dedicated to Asc. Sambert. There are a dozen other, lesser Morrowan churches and shrines in the town, but this is the largest and most elaborate; it is easily the second most majestic structure within Bexlyfe. The head of this church, Prelate Antio di Valius, is the town's principle Morrowan authority, and though each church and shrine has at least one priest of its own, all of them ultimately answer to Prelate di Valius. Justifiably fearful in his dealings with the new Menite authorities, di Valius is extremely averse to any perception that he might be subversive toward the Protectorate. He has grudgingly, though unhesitatingly, incorporated the supremacy of the Creator into his sermons and met the demands of the Protectorate in all other ways.

THE DOCKS

Bexlyfe's northern riverbank features three large dock areas, with a fourth on the river's south side near the second bridge. This eastern bridge is too low to allow large river craft to pass below it, however, and the water beyond that point is questionably capable of accommodating such vessels regardless. The easternmost dock beyond the bridge on the north side of the river was built exclusively for the use of smaller boats formerly used as transportation in both directions along the river.

Because of the steep elevation of the riverbank, many of the town's warehouses are either carved right into the hillside or built on the hills directly above the water. In the latter case, warehouses are accessed primarily by ramps or by wide platform elevators, while large cargo is hoisted and loaded into storage by one of the docks' many cargo cranes.

Formerly serving as the vital connection between the heavy industry of Bexlyfe and the world beyond the mountains, the once bustling activity of the dockside has undergone the town's most dramatic changes since the Protectorate's occupation. All five dock areas are well maintained and in current use, although to nowhere near the extent they were in times past. They are also regularly patrolled by both Protectorate and local authorities, as only ships of the Northern Crusade are permitted to travel along the river and only members of the Protectorate or other authorized personnel are allowed enter the dockside area.

Few outside the ranks of the Protectorate have such authorization, though Scrutator di Morsini has wisely retained the services of the old harbormaster, Lazo Ongori, a surly Tordoran Menite. Ongori has been permitted to keep on a few of his old dockworkers, as well as his assistant and resident 'jack marshal, Olson d'Rosso. Most of the former staff did not pass the Protectorate's intense scrutiny and were forced to seek employment elsewhere.

MAP OF CENTRAL BEXLYEE



- 1. The Baron's Estate
- 2. Church of Asc. Sambert
- 3. The Docks
- 4. The Shipyard
- 5. Temple of Menoth
- 6. Broken Cliffs
- 7. The Aston di la Vyardi Academy
- 8. Headquarters of the Constabulary



THE SHIPYARD

A former harbormaster of Riversmet who moved to Bexlyfe long before that city's destruction, Corvyn di Bovio today operates as the town's primary remaining shipwright. All repair work and fabrication is done under his direction, though he and his employees now work exclusively in servicing Protectorate supply ships. He is overt and unapologetic in his hatred for all things Khadoran, which is at least part of the reason he was left in place at the shipyard.

Unknown to the forces of the Protectorate, di Bovio has for years operated as a smuggler, shipping illicit goods into and out of Bexlyfe. In fact, the sole reason he moved to Bexlyfe was for the opportunity to corner a then-untapped illegal market. The shipwright's habits have not changed since the Protectorate's arrival, though his primary service has.

Utilizing his unique status and his prime riverfront location, di Bovio provides those who most fear the Protectorate's rule with simple, black-painted river craft, used to send folk upriver on a one-way trip to Khadoran Llael. Though the man's hatred of the Khadorans is genuine, it is in fact not as pronounced as he would lead others to believe. He agrees, as do many others, that Khadoran rule would be far better in the long run than that of the Protectorate. Even if such were not his belief, he would certainly be willing to provide relocation there to anyone with the coin to pay for it.

Corvyn di Bovio is aided in this endeavor by his remaining employees, each of whom was originally hired to assist in di Bovio's criminal enterprises. Chief among di Bovio's organizers is Huxfyr di Morsini—the owner of a profitable fruit plantation outside of town and uncle to Scrutator di Morsini himself. As it is a given that those who take up the scrutator's mask put aside all family ties, Jorvyn's blood ties to the new power in Bexlyfe have, thankfully, brought him no special attention from Protectorate agents. It has never occurred to Scrutator di Morsini to check in on Corvyn or any of his extended family. Corvyn di Bovio and Huxfyr di Morsini have no apparent professional connection to one another, and both men are adamant about keeping it that way.

Assistant Harbormaster Olson d'Rosso is also heavily involved in di Bovio's scheme, though d'Rosso is motivated not by his earnings but by the prospect of helping others to escape the Protectorate's grasp.

TEMPLE OF MENOTh

Smaller and far less impressive than the town's major Morrowan churches, this is the primary temple of what were, until recently, only three modest temples of Menoth in Bexlyfe. Several more temples have been built since the Protectorate's arrival, and construction is currently underway to transform the structure into something more impressive than its Morrowan counterpart. This necessitated the demolition of several neighboring buildings, creating yet another bone of contention for the residents of Bexlyfe.



In keeping with the Protectorate's general policy in Llael, Potentiate Goran Zhigovski has maintained his authority over this Temple of Menoth and over the Menite faith in Bexlyfe as a whole. Though outwardly accepting of Protectorate-enforced Sul-Menite revisions to his services, Zhigovski is in fact deeply troubled by such interference and by the town's prospects under Protectorate rule. He continues to secretly operate counter to the Protectorate's interests, putting members of his congregation who fear increased scrutiny in touch with Huxfyr di Morsini so that he might facilitate their escape. Ever fearful that the scrutators will discover his treachery, Zhigovski deftly avoids all but the most casual encounters with Scrutator di Morsini and his cohorts.

BROKEN CLIFFS

This wide section of the cliff face along the south side of the river gave way and collapsed into the river many years ago, destroying the few buildings that once stood there. The remaining terrain is not only difficult to traverse, but parts of it could slip into the river at any time. Most of the rubble has long since been cleared to accommodate the adjacent docks, though some remains are scattered along the river's bottom.

THE ASTON DI LA VYARDI ACADEMY

No longer permitted to operate in its original form due to the Protectorate's ban on dueling, the former Aston di la Vyardi Dueling Academy has since undergone the unlikely transition from dueling academy to school of dance. Aston di la Vyardi has often touted the idea of familiarizing oneself with the rhythms and techniques of dance as a path to understanding the physicality of certain styles of sword fighting.

In truth, di la Vyardi continues to instruct his students in the classic Llaeese tradition of dueling; he does so now, however, under the guise of dance instruction. To maintain this deception he has employed two full-time dance instructors, Isabella Lasca and Deklyn di Gustyv, both of whom are also accomplished duelists. If di la Vyardi is uncertain of a student's intentions, that student is put into one of the school's actual dance classes, taught by Lasca and di Gustyv. All three instructors live within the school and keep a cautious eye on any suspicious activity.

Aston di la Vyardi's continued instruction in the art of dueling, itself a fairly minor offense, is only the least of his secrets. The Academy also serves as the primary local headquarters for an fringe organization of Llaeese revolutionaries known as the Bexlyfe Liberation Alliance. Distinctly separate from, and often in direct opposition with, the Llaeese Resistance, members of the Alliance have accepted the futility of trying to free Llael from Khadoran occupation. Many of the group's members, particularly but by no means exclusively Umbreans, are acutely aware that for most folks life under Khadoran rule is as good as or even better than it had been prior to the occupation. The same certainly cannot be said for life under the Protectorate, and there are few who don't fear what turn their lives may take if the forces of the Northern Crusade ever decide to take a stronger hand.

Staunch patriots with an unwavering loyalty to their beloved nation of Llael, members of the Bexlyfe Liberation Alliance are dedicated to removing the influence of the Protectorate of Menoth by any means necessary—including collusion with Khador itself. As such, they have often worked against the local branch of the Llaeese Resistance to a degree that would be considered treasonous to some, for they blame the Resistance for granting the Protectorate its original foothold within Llael. Most members of the Alliance do not know more than a few of their compatriots, and only the highest among them know of di la Vyardi's involvement in the organization. Assistant Harbormaster Olson d'Rosso and Potentiate Goran Zhigovski both count themselves as members of the Bexlyfe Liberation Alliance.

HEADQUARTERS OF THE CONSTABULARY

This large, square three-story building bears only a vague architectural resemblance to its neighboring structures, and unlike most of the town's buildings, it was obviously built with any eye toward functionality instead of architectural style. Stout enough to be a minor fortress, the exterior walls are constructed from thick stone blocks, while ornate wrought-iron bars cover each of its windows. Surrounded by a wide balcony and protected by waist-high crenellations, its domed roof can be accessed by a single door.

The current chief constable of Bexlyfe, a woman named Vessia d'Loryns, is highly regarded as both a peerless investigator with a vast knowledge of Llaeese law and as a quick-draw artist of uncanny accuracy. Relentless in her pursuit of the truth and utterly merciless in her interpretation of justice, d'Loryns is respected and feared by Bexlyfe's small remaining criminal class.

Like much of the local population, d'Loryns holds to the Morrowan faith—but she is also an extremely pragmatic woman and far more willing than even most Menites to function precisely as the scrutators desire. Ruthless in her desire to exemplify her department's willingness to stamp out crime and civil unrest despite the considerable political and religious differences she has with the Protectorate, d'Loryns seeks out suspected traitors with a zeal rarely seen beyond the ranks of the Protectorate itself. Chief Constable d'Loryns is as yet unaware of the existence of the Bexlyfe Liberation Alliance, though how long that might last is anyone's guess.

As with most of the town's authorities, loyalties and attitudes among the constabulary vary widely. Without exception, however, each of d'Loryn's constables is far too intimidated by the woman to even consider protesting her methods or openly working against her.



FOUNDRY, FORGE & CRUCIBLE ACQUIRING STEAMJACKS

BY WILLIAM SCHOONOVER • ART BY BRIAN DESPAIN & BEN LO

Steamjacks are an iconic aspect of the Iron Kingdoms, and they play an important part in many Iron Kingdoms RPG campaigns. Acquiring a 'jack can be the first step in the resolution of a campaign's story arc, or it can be the culmination of many sessions of gameplay. Players may want to pick up a 'jack or two to enrich their gaming experience, but it is up to the Game Master to determine how acquisition of steamjacks will be handled.

A wide variety of new steamjacks were introduced in Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Kings, Nations, and Gods. For groups interested in including these 'jacks in their games, there are three common ways a character can acquire a steamjack: purchase it, borrow it, or steal it.

PURCHASE

Buying a steamjack is the most straightforward way a character can acquire one of these formidable machines, but steamjacks are very expensive. The Game Master can mitigate the staggering cost by providing plenty of opportunities for characters to acquire wealth and by setting the campaign in an area thriving with ample merchants. A Game Master might also decide that gathering the required funds and finding a seller is the main focus of an entire campaign.

In the cities of western Immoren, buying a laborjack is a common occurrence. The industrial centers and shipping districts of many cities boast merchants who carry a variety of new and used laborjacks built to perform any number of industrial functions.



Yet legitimately purchasing a warjack is a far more complicated endeavor. The largest hurdles are the lack of availability and the dearth of trustworthy suppliers. The warjacks used by the major military powers of the Iron Kingdoms are almost never available for sale when new. Characters may be able to find a black market supplier offering to sell a fresh-off-the-assembly-line Charger or Juggernaut, but these deals should be approached with extreme caution. The first risk of a black market transaction is the possibility the merchandise is a low-quality counterfeit, and there is not always a proper amount of time to adequately inspect the warjack in question. Another danger when purchasing black-market warjacks is the seller may, in fact, be the representative of a kingdom's intelligence agency, setting a trap to disrupt illegal distribution of its warjacks. A character caught involved in the unlawful sale of military property is likely to face serious punishment.

Warjack varieties commonly used by mercenaries can be found for sale in areas that service large mercenary companies. Black Anchor Heavy Industries in Clocker's Cove, for example, is the largest privately owned producer of such warjacks, and it supplies many of the more prosperous mercenary companies of western Immoren.

Used warjacks can be found for sale in some of the larger cities of Cygnar, Khador, and Ord. These 'jacks come in three varieties: decommissioned, resale, and salvage. When determining the cost of a used warjack, the Game Master must take into account supply and demand along with the condition of the 'jack. If the market in a region is flooded with surplus warjacks of a particular kind and there is no major conflict in that region, the 'jacks will be offered at a slight discount. If a few 'jacks of a very popular model become available, however, the price will be

inflated to match the demand. Further, many of these 'jacks have discounted prices because they possess persistent mechanical issues that the purchaser is likely to be unable to discern during a hurried transaction. A 'jack with mechanical issues is always offered at a higher discount. The chart below is a guide for what type of discount is common for each type of 'jack.

TYPE OF 'JACK	LOWEST DISCOUNT	HIGHEST DISCOUNT
Decommissioned	5%	15%
Resale	10%	25%
Salvage	15%	50%

The type of mechanical issues a 'jack has, and the repairability of those issues, is determined by its history and previous uses. A warjack in good condition will have slight amounts of wear and tear that could result in higher fuel consumption rates or a -1 to a primary stat. Warjacks with significant issues may be suffering from one or more crippled systems, including the Wear and Tear Catastrophic Damage result, which could require a thorough strip-down inspection to discover. 'Jacks with multiple issues may be missing parts and might not even be functional at all.

A decommissioned warjack is a model that was phased out of use and sold as scrap or surplus. These are usually the highest quality used 'jacks available and represent the vast majority of mercenary warjacks. During their time with a kingdom's military these warjacks received regular maintenance, but their current condition depends greatly on their more recent owners. A decommissioned 'jack kept in military surplus will still be in fairly good condition, but those that have passed through multiple owners do not often receive the same level of maintenance they enjoyed during military service.



LLAELESE WARJACKS?

Warjacks that were previously part of the Llaelese army fit primarily into the decommissioned or salvage categories of used 'jacks. During the months following the fall of Llael, some of that nation's warcasters found themselves penniless refugees in the cities of Cygnar and Ord, and many of these warcasters sold warjacks from their surviving battlegroups just to keep going.

An actual warjack offered for resale was likely the property of a recently disbanded mercenary company or one that needed to liquidate assets due to financial problems. For a newly founded mercenary company, the availability of these warjacks can be very helpful during the process of setting up its charter. A disbanded mercenary company is likely to sell off these 'jacks at a steep discount, allowing a new group of mercenaries to purchase 'jacks far beyond their normal means. Resale 'jacks have a higher likelihood of mechanical issues, however, as most mercenary companies do not have the resources to properly maintain them.

Salvaged warjacks are the cheapest option available and are all but guaranteed to have significant issues. These present unique fixer-upper opportunities to challenge the skills of even talented mechanical savants. These 'jacks universally show signs of wear, and some are not even capable of the most basic functions. Salvaged warjacks are available for sale in cities near the front lines of current conflicts, but they are also sometimes available from roving bands of bodgers. These bodgers are usually a mix



OLD SCRAPPY

A Game Master who wants to present a heavily salvaged warjack in a game such as those offered by roving bodgers should consider giving the warjack some negative traits to reflect its haphazard construction. For example, a crazy bodger may have chosen to attach three propulsion packs from wrecked Minuteman warjacks onto a Juggernaut with a massive boiler he salvaged. If these bodged contraptions function at all, it should be very dangerous and have a high tendency to malfunction when put into use.

of humans and gobbers who travel in small caravans, finding scrap wherever they can and offering their services to villages along cyclical routes. Some of these caravans specialize in selling cobbled-together warjacks to desperate mercenary companies.

BORROW

For some characters, borrowing a steamjack from their employer is far easier than purchasing one. A warcaster or 'jack marshal serving in a kingdom's military or in a successful mercenary company can requisition warjacks. Some high-ranking warcasters in these organizations can also count on a support staff to accompany their warjacks to keep them fueled and repaired.

The Game Master must determine, based on risk, necessity, and perhaps even a character's persuasive skills, if a character will be given access to a warjack for a particular mission. The Game Master must also determine what 'jacks are on hand based on a host of circumstances. For a frontier outpost, the selection will be much more restrictive than for a major military installation. Some installations might not even have surplus 'jacks readily on hand. For instance, a character working for a minor Steelheads chapter house may have to petition a larger chapter nearby for the temporary use of a 'jack. Not only will he have to wait for delivery, the character will have to deal with whatever warjack was deemed of low enough value to loan out. These 'jacks may be in poor condition, have unusual personality quirks, or simply be hauled out of storage after decades of inactivity.

If a character is given a complement of warjacks to take on a long journey, he will also be granted an appropriately sized wagon to haul those 'jacks (*Kings, Nations, and Gods*, p. 99) and vouchers to requisition fuel and water at way stations along the route.

STEAL

The most dangerous (and often most exciting) way of procuring a steamjack is through theft. A group of players and their Game Master can decide to build an entire campaign around the concept of a group of 'jack thieves.

The theft and resale of steamjacks is a lucrative business. It is most profitable to steal a warjack just after it just come off the assembly line, allowing the thief to command the highest possible price from prospective buyers. These 'jacks are often the most difficult to steal, however, since they are likely to be heavily guarded within a secure facility. A warcaster who manages to learn the cortex lock codes of a kingdom will only have a few chances to steal a warjack, and there will only be certain times when a warjack will be without the bond locks that make it impossible for another warcaster to control it. Choices times for theft, then, are when these locks have not been installed before the warjack is assigned to a warcaster, or when they have been removed as it is being transferred between warcasters.

Whether a 'jack is a laborjack or a warjack is a large factor in the chances of a successful theft. Laborjack security is based on verbal codes—anyone who knows the proper series of phrases and the location of the 'jack's reset switch can recite the code to take over as the 'jack's controller. In areas where theft is a problem, however, physical locks are commonly installed on the reset switches of laborjacks. Added security usually means laborjacks are stored in a secure facility with watchmen or other deterrents when not in use.

Warjacks always have those reset switches protected by the highest quality physical locks along with cortex locks. A cortex lock can only be bypassed with the mental commands of a warcaster who knows the complex visual and verbal code imprinted on the lock. Once a warcaster has bonded with a warjack, he installs a second, personal code in addition to the cortex lock. Once a 'jack has been bonded to a warcaster, it no longer responds to anyone else's commands.

ADDED CORTEX SECURITY

Laborjack cortexes are not built with cortex locks because they are rarely needed on a 'jack that will spend years simply hauling cargo on and off of ships. Compounding this, the lowest grades of cortex are not able to accommodate the added components that make up the physical aspect of the lock. After the physical components, the process for adding the mental barriers is very time consuming and expensive.

Once a character gets his hands on a warjack, he needs to ensure he retains control of it when enemy warcasters are present. This is done either with cortex bulwarks or cortex locks.

ADDING CORTEX BULWARKS

A cortex bulwark is a fairly simple mechanical device. It consists of a housing and a runeplate. It does not require a capacitor since it is installed onto a cortex and tied into a 'jack's power supply. A cortex bulwark does not prevent a warcaster from bonding with a 'jack's cortex, but it does make the process more difficult by creating a mentally disruptive field around the cortex. This makes cortex bulwarks popular among 'jack marshals who expect to face enemy warcasters. A cortex bulwark is a dedicated mechanical device.

BULWARK

Cost: 170 gc

Description: This is a mechanical device attached to a cortex without cortex locks to make it more difficult for a warcaster to bond with it.

Rune Points: 1

Special Rules: A warcaster attempting to bond with a warjack that has a cortex bulwark must make an ARC stat roll against a target number of 16 to bond with the 'jack. This roll can only be boosted by spending a focus point. If the roll succeeds, the cortex bulwark is destroyed and the warcaster bonds with the 'jack. If the roll fails, the warcaster can spend his next full action attempting to bond with the 'jack, receiving a cumulative +2 to the roll.

Fabrication: The material cost of the bulwark's housing is 20 gc. It takes one week to construct the device. The pertinent Craft skill for construction is Craft (metalworking).



The bulwark's runeplate requires one week to inscribe and requires a successful INT + Mechanical Engineering roll against a target number of 14.

Installing a bulwark requires access to a full mechanic's workshop and two hours of labor. At the end of this time the character makes an INT + Mechanical Engineering skill roll against a target number of 14. If the roll fails, the character can try again after another hour of labor.

ADDING CORTEX LOCKS

Mercenary companies who frequently transfer 'jacks between warcasters can upgrade cortexes with cortex locks. Military-grade cortexes have integral cortex lock mechanisms inside the outer cortex housing, and such mechanisms cannot be easily extracted or isolated. Adding cortex locks to a simpler laborjack involves attaching external machinery to the cortex housing, which links to internal mechanisms via conduits. This requires complete access to the cortex, considerable time, and a degree of expertise. On rare occasions a botched job could result in permanent damage to the cortex.

The most essential component of a cortex lock is the lock code receiver, a device that is receptive to a warcaster's mental commands and intercepts those commands unless bypassed by a very specific set of thoughts—usually a sequence of images, words, and sounds. A warcaster must know this sequence to access and bond to a locked cortex. Cortexes created by the militaries of the Iron Kingdoms install pre-set lock codes known to all of that kingdom's military warcasters. There are a limited number of pre-set codes in use at a given time, and it is expensive and time consuming to replace them. Lock code receivers can either be "blank" or "imprinted." Blank receivers can receive a new sequence set by a warcaster, at which point they become permanently imprinted. Barring the physical removal and replacement of the cortex lock, only a full cortex wipe can reset a receiver to the blank state.

Factories like the Cygnaran Armory maintain a master template to replicate their pre-set receivers in each cortex they create, which does not require the involvement of a warcaster. Mercenary warcasters prefer to imprint their own unique codes and purchase blank receivers or wipe salvaged cortexes to restore them to the blank state.

The physical components of a cortex lock cost 350 gc. Performing the physical half of a cortex lock installation requires the cortex to be removed from the steamjack, four hours of labor with the proper tools (see "Removing or Replacing the Cortex," *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules*, p. 320) and a successful INT + Mechanical Engineering skill roll against a target number of 18. If the roll fails, the character can attempt it again after another hour of labor. Paying to have the cortex lock materials installed costs 500 gc (including the cost of the materials and the process of having the cortex removed and reinstalled, which may require slight modifications to the steamjack's cortex bay).

After the cortex lock has been installed, or after a cortex has been wiped, a warcaster must commune with the cortex to install the code images and phrases on the lock receiver. This action can only be performed by a warcaster after spending one hour in physical contact with the cortex and a successful ARC roll against a target number of 14. If the roll fails, the character can attempt it again after another hour of communing with the cortex. If a character wishes instead to replicate an existing cortex lock code receiver in another cortex lock, the cost in materials is the same, but the device can be prepared without requiring a warcaster's involvement. A replicated cortex lock opens to the same mental sequence as the original.



USING A STOLEN CORTEX

The cortex locks of the warjacks of the Iron Kingdoms cannot be bypassed by an unauthorized individual. This is due to the complex combination of images, phrases, and remembered sounds employed. The images are the strongest portion of the code because of how very specific they are. During military warcaster training, apprentices are repeatedly taken through a very specific but complex process to arrive at unique experiences, which must be recalled with perfect detail. Many of these memories involve views of landmarks from a specific angle or sounds that can only be heard in one place. Arriving at these exact memories without going through the same process as an apprentice warcaster is nearly impossible. Once a set of images, sounds, and phrases has been properly memorized, they can be recombined in a different order to create other codes.

Needless to say, the process required to learn all of the images would be difficult for a spy to access without actually going through military warcaster training. Simply hearing a general description of the landmarks or sounds employed would be insufficient. This means that if a cortex with a lock is acquired through nefarious means, it will only be useful if it is thoroughly wiped to reset the cortex to its original state. This also eliminates any of its battlefield experience, accumulated personality, and training in specific weapons systems.

NEXT ISSUE: TUNING YOUR STEAMJACK



The Iron Kingdoms abound with folk both good and evil, but many others live and even thrive in the grey spaces between heroics and villainy. Social misfits but not always social outcasts, they make their way through the world any way they can—even if it results in hardship for others. In the end, even scoundrels and sell-swords feel justified in doing what they must to stay alive. These characters make excellent NPCs—whether as antagonists or allies—for your Iron Kingdoms RPG campaign.

Scoundrels & Sell-Swords

Karloff the Relentless

BY MICHAEL G. RYAN
ART BY AARON RILEY

THE SCRUTATOR

Karloff the Relentless is a scrutator of the Protectorate of Menoth, one of those charged with overseeing—and when necessary, disciplining—even the priests of the faith. Unlike many of his kind, however, Karloff is no longer tied to a specific region, town, or temple; in fact, precisely where he came from is a mystery. All that's known is the temple where he served was burned to the ground, nearly killing Karloff, who escaped to hunt down those responsible for the fire...and for stealing all of the temple's wealth. Specifically, Karloff hunts for a traitorous Protectorate priest named Pratt and six survivors who still serve the renegade bandit-priest. Karloff's horrifying burned appearance is his silent testimony to the betrayal he suffered at the hands of a heretic he once foolishly trusted.

KARLOFF: A BRIEF HISTORY

As a scrutator, Karloff had a responsibility to root out and punish the heresy growing in the temple where he served. Like most of his kind, he was stoic and mostly disconnected from emotion, but he let his guard down with a suave priest named Pratt. He allowed himself to feel pride in his role as a scrutator, and he ultimately placed much of the authority of the temple in Pratt, who masked his lack of piety with false admiration of Karloff and his position. When Pratt and his retinue—six temple guards, the priest's assistant, and a novice under his charge—were ready to strike, they stole the temple's wealth and set fire to the temple to disguise their crime and allow them to escape.

Karloff was savagely burned, but he sought no medical attention for his wounds or repair for his attire—his single-minded obsession has become to find and execute the fugitive priest and his followers. He considers bearing his injuries to be penitence for being fooled and his dismissal of vanity and appearance when a higher calling—vengeance—commands him.

To date, Karloff has avoided the inner circles of other scrutators until he can track down the heretics. He is aware that he will face recriminations for his blindness to Pratt's machinations and how his pride allowed him to be fooled by Pratt's false praise. In fact, the hierarchy of the Protectorate believes Karloff died in the temple fire, and though they have their own forces in search of the temple's missing treasures, Karloff has obsessively honed his tracking skills, his powers of perception, and his recollections of Pratt's personality to give him a better sense of where those who betrayed him might have fled.

Karloff presents a frightful image: his scrutator mask is charred and partially melted to his face. His robes are scorched and ash-streaked; the damage appears old now, indicative of Karloff's indifference to it. He cares nothing for his appearance now, devoted entirely to pursuit of Pratt and his conspirators. The Stave of Authority he carries is scorched, the wood blackened and the metal dulled.

If Karloff is killed or captured and his mask is removed, his face is a cracked, poorly healed landscape of burned flesh. One of his eyes waters constantly, giving the appearance of tears.

His speech is marred due to the burns on his lips and throat, so his words are often slurred and snarled, as it pains him just to speak. Karloff's breathing is ragged due to the scars inside his throat, making every breath sound like the growl of an enraged beast.

OUT IN THE WORLD

To date, Karloff has tracked down two of Pratt's original band of heretics, both of them temple guards, and the PCs may come across the tortured remains of one of those guards before they encounter the scrutator himself. They might also be confronted by a fleeing member of the band, seeking protection from Karloff, or they might come into possession of some of the temple's treasures that Karloff seeks to recover.

If any of the PCs are Menites, Karloff might be more forgiving—or calculating, if he thinks he's outnumbered. He will most certainly compel Menites in the party to aid him, regardless of their loyalty to or position in their party, and he may well attempt to turn PCs against one another in order to secure a Menite character's allegiance.

On occasion, Karloff's force of will to track down Pratt's cabal of renegade heretics draws others to his cause; he is often accompanied by a small contingent of Protectorate characters who follow his commands in pursuit of Pratt and his band. These characters are similarly driven to seek out the object of Karloff's holy obsession.



PHYSIQUE	PHY	7
SPEED	SPD	6
STRENGTH	STR	5
AGILITY	AGL	3
PROWESS	PRW	5
POISE	POI	4
INTELLECT	INT	4
ARCANE	ARC	4
PERCEPTION	PER	3



BATTLE STAFF		
MAT	POW	P+S
6	4	9

Abilities: Battle staves are Reach weapons.

Battle staves must be used two-handed. A character can spend 1 feat point to make a trip attack instead of a normal attack with his staff. If the attack hits, the target is knocked down instead of suffering damage.

On a critical hit, a living target hit has a chance to be knocked out (p. 219) by the attack. If the target suffers damage from the attack, he must make a Willpower roll against a target number equal to the attacking character's STR + 9. If the target succeeds, he stays conscious. If he fails, he is knocked out.

INITIATIVE	INIT	14
DEFENSE	DEF	11
ARMOR	ARM	14
WILLPOWER	WILL	11



COMMAND RANGE: 8

BASE SIZE: SMALL

ENCOUNTER POINTS: 18

EQUIPMENT:

battle staff, manacles (x2), somnolence elixir (1 dose), scorched robes, scrutator's masked helm, tailored plate, wrack (*Kings, Nations, and Gods* p. 369), 15 gc

KARLOFF THE RELENTLESS

ABILITIES:

Astute – The character can reroll failed Detection rolls. Each failed roll can be rerolled only once as a result of Astute.

Authority – A character with this ability gains +2 on social skill rolls when dealing with other Menites.

Battle Scars – The character has suffered a permanent disfigurement to his face and body. As a result of this disfigurement, the character suffers –1 on social skill rolls in which his scars would frighten or disgust the subject of the character's skill attempt. The character gains +1 on Intimidation skill rolls against anyone who can see his scars.

Combat Caster – When this character makes a magic attack roll, he gains an additional die. Discard the lowest die of each roll.

Feat Points – This character starts each encounter with 2 feat points. He is allocated 1 feat point at the start of each of his turns. He can only have up to 1 feat point at a time.

Gifted – This character was born with the ability to work magic. His arcane tradition is Will Weaver.

Higher Purpose – Karloff is devoted to hunting down his betrayers and all who aid them. Karloff can spend feat points to reroll melee attack damage rolls against Pratt and characters friendly to him.

Hyper Perception – The character's PER rolls are boosted.

Natural Leader – A character with the Natural Leader increases his command range by 2'.

Torture – This character can torture a helpless victim within his power. See *Kings, Nations, and Gods*, p. 362.

SPELL NAME	COST	RNG	AOE	POW	UP	OFF
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Chasten	2	8	—	12	NO	YES
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Enemy upkeep spells and animi on a character damaged by Chasten expire.

Influence	1	10	—	—	NO	YES
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The spellcaster makes a contested Willpower roll against target living enemy hit by this spell. If the spellcaster loses, nothing happens. If the spellcaster wins, his player takes control of the character hit. The character immediately makes one normal melee attack, then Influence expires.

Protector's Mark	3	8	—	—	YES	YES
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When the spellcaster is directly hit by an enemy attack, if the character affected by this spell is within 3" of him, the spellcaster can cause the affected character to be directly hit instead. That character is automatically hit and suffers all damage and effects from the attack, then this spell expires.

Righteous Flames	2	6	—	—	NO	NO
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Target character gains Immunity: Fire. When a character without Immunity: Fire ends his turn within 2" of the affected character, the character without Immunity: Fire suffers the Fire continuous effect. Righteous Flames lasts for one round.

SKILLS:

NAME	STAT	RANK	STAT + RANK
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Etiquette	SOC	2	*
Command	SOC	2	*
Detection	PER	2	5
Forensic Science	INT	2	6
Great Weapon	PRW	1	6
Interrogation	INT	2	6
Intimidation	SOC	2	*
Law	INT	2	6
Medicine	INT	1	5
Research	INT	1	5

M&P

MODELING & PAINTING

THE DARK SIDE OF THE CONVERGENCE

BY MEG MAPLES

Convergence of Cyriss models are beautiful pieces that lend themselves to a variety of color schemes. Ever since painting the studio versions of these models, I wanted to try out a pattern on them showcasing some of the wide-open spaces on their armor. Using an airbrush to create a pattern was very experimental, but it netted fantastic results. Of course, it also requires some patience and careful handling of parts during the painting process.

DARK CONVERGENCE OF CYRISS



I wanted to create a pattern similar to a carbon fiber pattern, but I had to take the scale of the model into consideration when creating this look. When choosing the mesh fabric to create the pattern, make sure the holes in the netting are not too large. It's wise to do a few test runs ahead of time in a paint journal using different types of mesh fabric.

Notes about creating the carbon fiber pattern: Some mesh fabrics have a pattern that runs in a specific direction. Pay careful attention to that orientation throughout the painting process. Further, the fabric will need to be right on top of the parts with little or no gap between the mesh fabric and the part surface. If the fabric is floating over the surface of the model, paint will pass through the holes of the fabric. If you spray too much paint, it will run underneath the fabric. Applying two light layers of Quick Silver can help modulate the brightness of the silver, creating highlights.

COLORS USED

- Armor Wash
- Bastion Grey
- Beaten Purple
- Blighted Gold
- Blue Ink
- Brass Balls
- Brown Ink
- Coal Black
- Cold Steel
- Cryx Bane Base
- Exile Blue
- Ironhull Grey
- Mixing Medium
- Morrow White
- Murderous Magenta
- Pig Iron
- Quick Silver
- Radiant Platinum
- Sanguine Base
- Sanguine Highlight
- Tamar Black
- Turquoise Ink

STEP 1: PREPARATION

Clean all pieces of the model but do not glue them together. Each piece will need to be airbrushed separately in the beginning stages of this tutorial. I recommend gluing each individual piece to a stick for easier handling during the airbrushing stage. Cover the joint surfaces with painter's tape or masking tape. This is important because if two painted surfaces are glued together, the paint will crack and pieces will come apart.

Once the pieces are clean, spray them with P3 Black Primer.



ALWAYS USE AIRBRUSH SAFETY

When using an airbrush, always work in a well-ventilated area and wear safety goggles and a dual filter respirator mask.

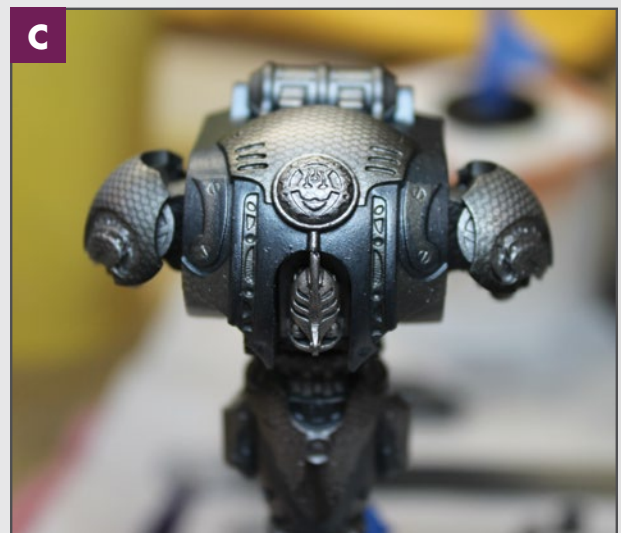
STEP 2: CARBON FIBER



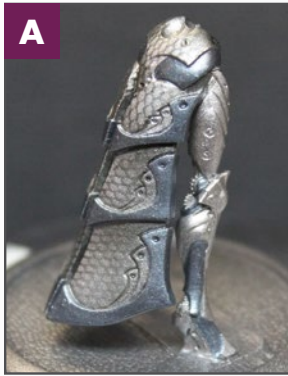
A) Mix Pig Iron, Blue Ink, and Brown Ink, and then airbrush the basecoat at PSI 20. Apply two light coats, allowing each coat to dry before moving on.

B) After cleaning the airbrush, thin some Quick Silver to spray over the netting. Spray at PSI 15 a few inches away from the surface of the model.

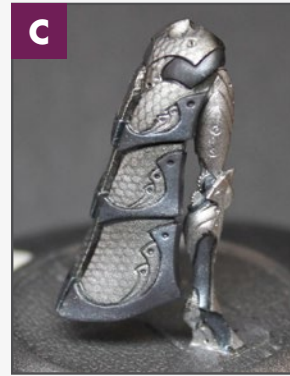
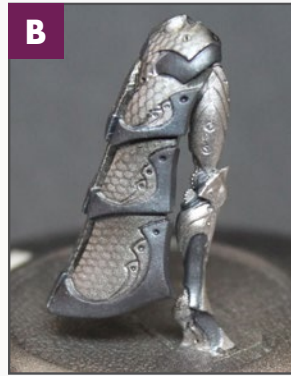
C) Shade using a mixture of Turquoise Ink, Brown Ink, Armor Wash, and a touch of Thamar Black. This step can be applied after assembling the models if you choose.



STEP 3: CYRISSIST GUNMETAL

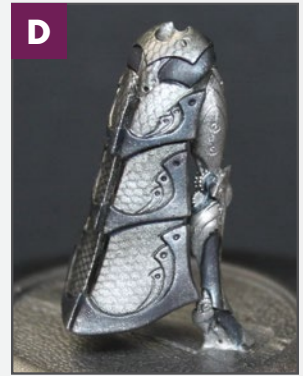


A) Mix Blue Ink, Brown Ink, and Pig Iron and basecoat some of the trim around the carbon fiber plates. This will make the patterned plates stand out and maintain contrast.



B) Shade with a mixture of Coal Black, Sanguine Base, and a touch of Tamar Black.

C) Highlight with Pig Iron.



D) Highlight the glinting edges with Cold Steel.

STEP 4: COLD STEEL



A) Basecoat remaining pieces in Cold Steel with the airbrush. If you haven't already assembled the models, do so now.



B) Blend Bastion Grey over the Cold Steel for the first shadow.



C) Use Ironhull Grey for the darkest shadow.



D) Highlight with Quick Silver; apply multiple layers to make your highlights brighter.

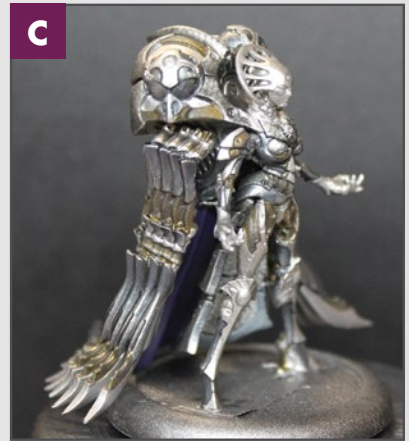
STEP 5: BLIGHTED GOLD



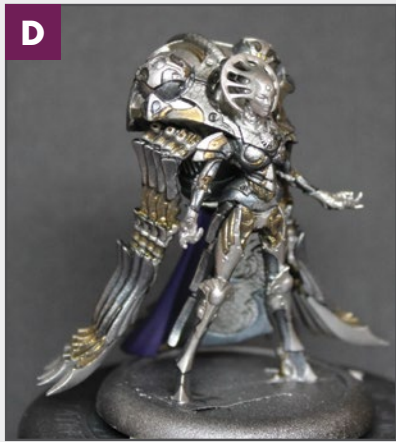
A) Basecoat some of the accent details with Blighted Gold.



B) Apply the first shade of Cryx Bane Base.



C) Add a few drops of Brown Ink and a small amount of Tamar Black to the Cryx Bane Base for deeper shadows and some lining around the plates.



D) Highlight with a mix of Blighted Gold and Brass Balls.



E) Mix in some Radiant Platinum for the highest highlights. Apply sparingly.

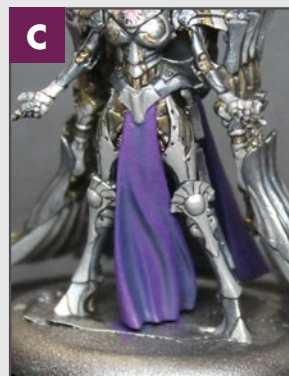
STEP 6: REGALIA PURPLE



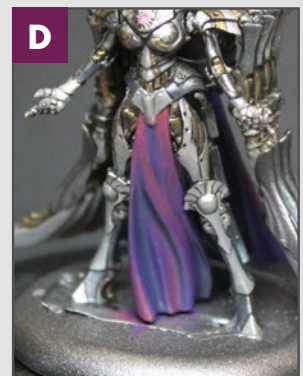
A) Mix two parts Beaten Purple to one part Exile Blue for the basecoat.



B) Shade with Coal Black, applying a couple of layers to make the shadows darker in the deepest folds.



C) Highlight with Beaten Purple.



D) Apply Sanguine Highlight for the final highlight.

MAGENTA GLOW



A) Basecoat areas that will be glowing with Morrow White.

B) Mix Murderous Magenta with a few drops of Mixing Medium and water, and then apply as a wash over the white glow areas. To make the glow more intense, apply a couple of layers and touch up the highlight with Morrow White.



CONCLUSION

There you have it: Convergence models with a dark twist. You can try out other color schemes to create different effects, and you may find the carbon fiber look works well on models from other WARMACHINE factions. Enjoy experimenting with your options!

TAKE YOUR BEST SHOT: PHOTOGRAPHY GUIDELINES

By Michael Sanbeg with Matt Ferbrache

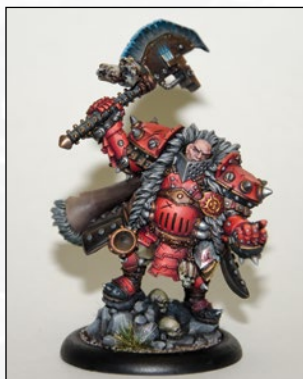
No matter how great your model might look in person, submitting a sub-par or downright unpublishable photo is certain to doom your chances of winning the new *No Quarter* Painting Challenge (see page 112). Here are a few simple tips to help you best present your hard work to our challenge judges...or to anyone else you might want to impress with your modeling expertise.

FOCUS

With the advent of digital photo technology, it's easy to tell whether your photo is in focus even before you take it and equally simple to shoot as many photos as you need to get it right. Be careful, however, not to accidentally focus on a single part of the model instead of the work as a whole—when photographing something like a warjack with an extended arm, your camera might auto-focus on the arm and leave the rest of the model blurry. Try to stabilize your camera by using a tripod or by resting it on a solid surface to avoid motion blur.



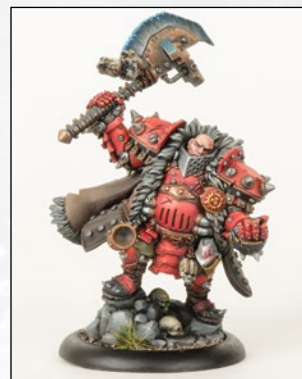
A quick & easy two-lamp setup



The Butcher Unleashed, over-illuminated with a standard camera flash...



...and again, with the wrong lighting



The final photo with proper lighting and focus

CONSTRUCTING A LIGHT BOX

A good way to light your miniatures is to set up a light box. To build a basic light box, simply cut the top and sides out of a cardboard box and tape a sheet of plain white paper over the holes. These paper windows will help diffuse the light coming into the shot.

This light box was built in about ten minutes using only materials that were already on hand.

The photo on the right was taken with an ordinary cell phone, using our homemade light box.



BACKDROP

Your photos should have a solid, opaque background, free from any visual distractions. The easiest way to achieve this is to curve a sheet of paper in front of a vertical structure such as a cardboard box, a book standing upright, or the back wall of your light box. The curve of the paper will also serve to conceal the angle between the horizontal surface your model is sitting on and the vertical surface behind it. A model with a dark paint scheme is generally better photographed in front of a light-colored background while a light paint scheme will call for a dark background (which may require extra lighting).



CONCLUSION

These basic guideline will help you present your *No Quarter* Painting Challenge submissions, or any other work you'd like to photograph, in the best possible way. Bear in mind there's nothing wrong with submitting multiple photos if you're unsure which one might most impress our judges—we love having options. All of us here at *No Quarter* are looking forward to seeing your work, so start painting and photographing!



TERRAIN BUILDING

TRENCH TEMPLATES

BY MICHAEL ARCHER

In this article we'll take you through the steps our own terrain specialists have used to create trench templates for Privateer Press' official tournaments. Trenches in WARMACHINE and HORDES can be tricky to represent, especially for tournaments where the exactness of every measurement is so critical. These trench designs will allow you to create something that visually represents a trench yet still serves as an effective piece of gaming terrain.

MATERIALS & TOOLS

Balsa wood strips	Rotary tool
Construction adhesive, spackling compound, or wood filler	Ruler
Epoxy sculpt	Sand, fine grade
Formula P3 File Set	Sandpaper
Formula P3 Hobby Brush	Sheet styrene, 1/16" thickness
Formula P3 Hobby Knife	Square styrene strips, .100" x .100"
Formula P3 Modeling Putty	Styrene angles, 5/32"
Formula P3 Sculpting Set	Utility Knife
Formula P3 Super Glue	Water effects
Hobby syringe	White glue
Insulation foam	Wood glue
Leather punch	

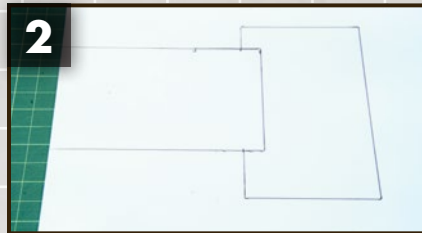
LAYING OUT THE TEMPLATES

First, decide on a layout for your trench templates. You want them to be effective as individual pieces of terrain yet still able to link together to form a trench network. I decided to use two trench templates linked together per trench piece, which will allow for a full ten-man unit to stand within the trench.

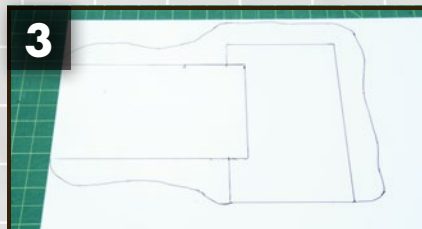
Step 1: Cut out a 3"x5" rectangle, the dimensions of a single trench template, from a piece of sheet styrene.



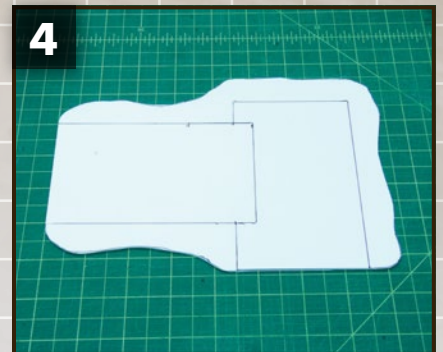
Step 2: Use the template to trace the trench configurations onto a second piece of styrene.



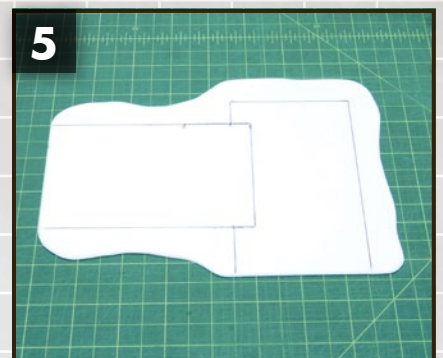
Step 3: Mark out a border of about 3/4" around the trench, everywhere except at the two connection points. Use natural lines to draw around the template that will help it blend into the table.



Step 4: Use a Formula P3 Hobby Knife to cut out your template. Make sure the two parts that will connect to other templates are perfectly straight to ensure a nice join.



Step 5: Bevel the edges of the template by sanding them, then use sandpaper to rough up the surface of the template so glue and putty will adhere to it better.



THE FRAMES AND PLANKS

The walls of the trench should be as short as possible because that part will count as open terrain, though the walls still have to create a hard line to represent the edge of the template.

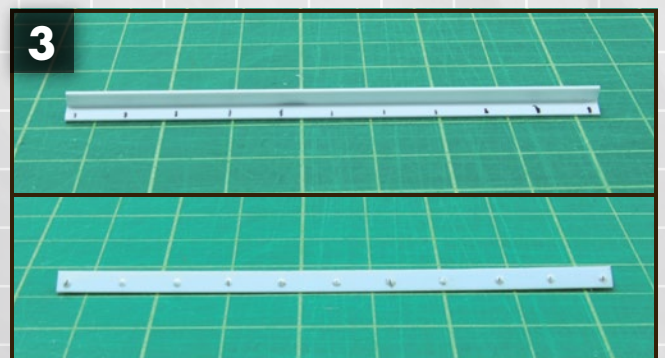
Step 1: Using the unsharpened side of your hobby knife, etch a natural-looking wood grain into pieces of 3/8" and 1/2" balsa wood. You can even add some knots in the wood by using a dulled syringe. Do this etching before you cut the long strips of balsa into planks, as this step will go a lot quicker if you don't have to work with individual planks. Rough up the edges of the planks to give them a worn look.

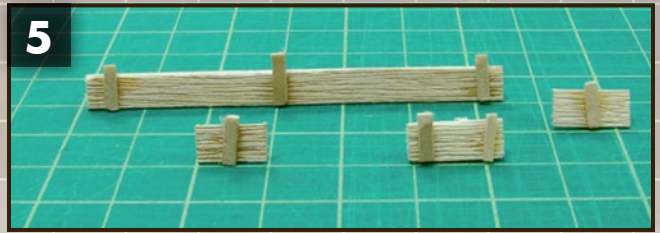
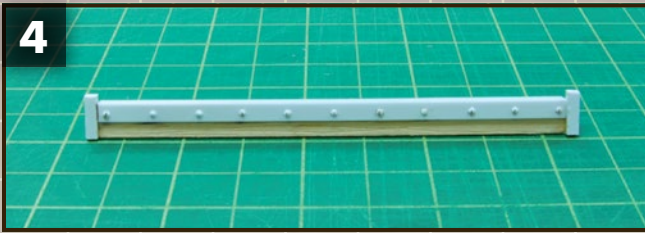


Step 2: Cut three strips of 3/8"-wide balsa wood and three pieces styrene angles into 4" lengths. These will serve as pre-fabricated wall supports for the trench.



Step 3: Using a leather punch, gently press rivets into one side of the styrene angles, spacing them 3/8" apart and leaving 1/16" of un-riveted space at either end. If you crack the plastic while doing this, simply go back and fill in the cracks with Formula P3 Modeling Putty.





Step 4: Using Formula P3 Super Glue, join the balsa wood to the un-riveted side of the styrene angles. Next, add square styrene strips, slightly taller than the styrene and balsa pieces, to the ends of each support. When gluing these pieces together, make sure they are straight and flush with the sides.

Step 5: Create some small supports to fill in the gaps left by the larger supports. Cut planks to fit inside the gaps, then cut some 3/8" stakes. Glue these to the strips from Step 4.

Step 6: Cut wooden planks, ranging from about a 7/8" to 1-1/8" in length, from the etched balsa. These will be used to create the walkways along the bottom of the trench.

PREPARING THE DETAILS

The inside of the trench needs to be as flat and open as possible, but it should still have some eye-catching details to tie it into the Iron Kingdoms. To start, find some model bits you can leave scattered and half-buried around the trench.

MODEL PARTS USED

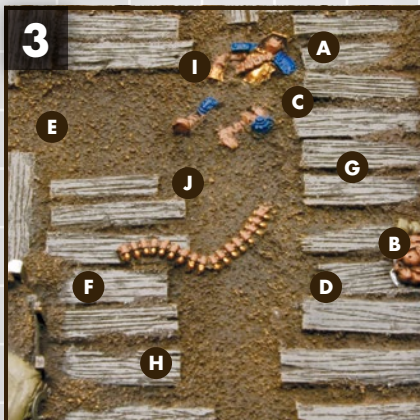
- A) Captain Maxwell Finn ammo belt
- B) Dannon Blythe & Bull beer bottle
- C) Extreme Juggernaut thumb
- D) Trencher Infantry backpack (resculpt)
- E) Nomad right arm
- F) Trencher Cannon Crew pack 1
- G) Trencher Chain Gun Crew rifle
- H) Trencher Infantry (resculpt) grunt 4 body
- I) Winter Guard Mortar Crew ammo case
- J) Winter Guard Rifle Corps backpack



Step 1: Use a rotary tool to grind down the backs of the backpacks and the front of a Nomad arm to flatten them out. Be sure to secure the parts in a vise or hold them while wearing work gloves, as the metal will get very hot during grinding. Alternatively, you can file the parts by hand using a Formula P3 File Set.



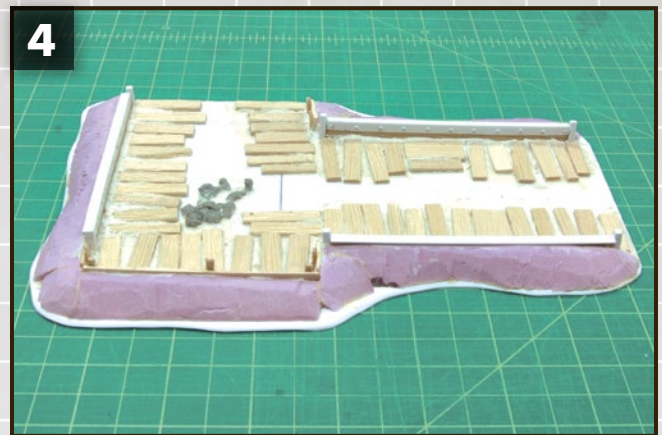
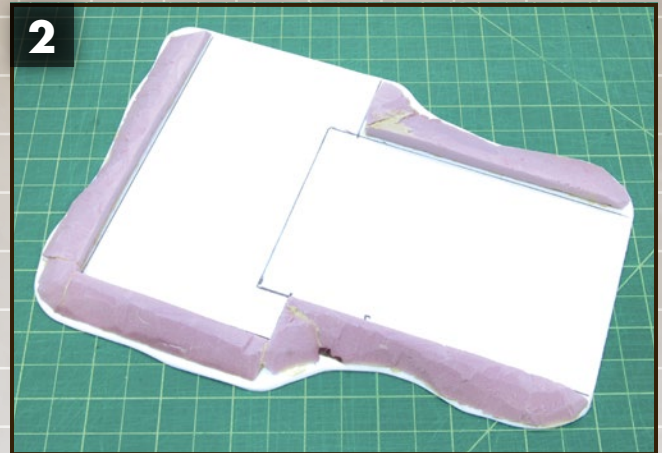
Step 2: To add even more visual interest to the piece, I created a half-buried trencher corpse from one of the new plastic Trencher Infantry models. Grind the back of the miniature until it's nearly flat, then used the leg of another Trencher model to alter the pose.



Step 3: Find a few other bits to help convey a battlefield environment, but be careful not to have too many parts strewn about or the trench may look like it's surrounded by rough terrain.

Now that you've prepared the details of the trench, it's time to build the trench itself.

ASSEMBLING THE TRENCH



Step 1: Using a utility knife, cut strips of insulation foam to the approximate width of the berm of earth around the trench. Cut these strips a bit shorter than the wall supports you made earlier. Don't worry about making your cuts look nice—you'll apply epoxy sculpt over the insulation foam to bulk it up and make it look more natural.

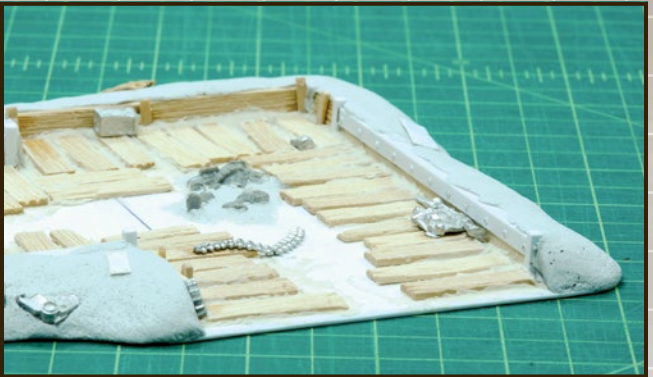
Step 2: Glue these foam walls to the template, leaving enough room for the interior plank walls you made earlier to be added to the foam without shrinking the inside of the trench too much.

Step 3: Spread some construction adhesive, spackling compound, or wood filler into the trench. Start by applying a thick layer alongside the foam berms and then pull the adhesive toward the middle of the trench, sloping it downward to create a shallow channel through the center of the template. Place the precut wooden planks across the bottom, spacing them haphazardly to suggest the trench was made in a hurry. This is where I added the trencher corpse, building up some construction adhesive around his body.

Step 4: Apply construction adhesive to the inside edges of the insulation foam and attach the trench supports.

Step 5: With the walls in place, use epoxy sculpt to bulk up the berms around the trench. Simply follow the contour of the base and raise it slightly above the walls to give them a dug-in feel. Embed the Nomad arm and Juggernaut finger into one of the berms. Stipple the putty while it's still curing to give it a better texture for glue to adhere to.

ADDING THE DETAILS



Step 1: Lay out the various model bits you've prepared within the trench, making sure to spread them around to keep things from getting too crowded in one area or too sparse in another, and glue them in place. Add some scraps of balsa wood and small pieces of sheet styrene with rivets to the exterior of the berms.

Step 2: The next step is to add a couple of sandbags to the trench. When sculpting sandbags, look at the models who would be using them and make sure they are the right size for someone that scale to carry.



SANDBAG TUTORIAL

A: Measure out enough Formula P3 Modeling Putty for one sandbag and press it onto a clean, wet surface.

B: Use a Formula P3 Hobby Knife to cut off the edges of the putty blob.

C: Place the sandbag where you want it in the trench.

D: To add some gravity to the sandbag, take a clay shaper and move some of the putty around. I try to make it look as though the sand in the bag is conforming to the contours of its environment. Sculpt some wrinkles to emphasize the effect of weight of the sand.

E: Finally, take a clay shaper with a flat, rounded tip and push down repeatedly around the edges of the sandbag, making it look like there is a seam.



Step 3: Now it's time to put some fine sand on the trench. Using an old brush, and a hobby syringe to get into the hard-to-reach places, apply a 1:1 mix of white glue and water; use super glue around the edges for extra durability. Dump fine sand over the top and brush off the excess after a few moments. Once the glue has dried, go back and add another layer of sand in random spots to give your trench a dug-up look.



PAINTING: BASE COATING

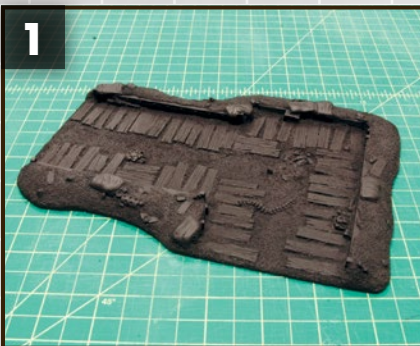
Step 1: Spray the trench with Formula P3 Black Primer.

Step 2: Give it a heavy drybrush of Umbral Umber.

Step 3: Next, drybrush a layer of Rucksack Tan. Go for a lighter coverage than before, but you should still scrub in the color in some areas.

Step 4: Paint the wooden parts of the trench and any rocks with Bastion Grey, getting good coverage while still allowing the wood grain to show through.

Step 5: Paint the sandbags, bedrolls, and ammo box with Traitor Green.



COLORS USED

- Bastion Grey
- Battlefield Brown
- Bloodstone
- Bootstrap Leather
- Brown Ink
- Cygnar Base Blue
- Cygnar Blue Highlight
- Flesh Wash
- Menoth White Base
- Molten Bronze
- Pig Iron
- Quick Silver
- Rucksack Tan
- Traitor Green
- Umbral Umber

PAINTING: DETAILS



Step 1: Paint the backpacks, ammo belt, and trencher clothing with Bootstrap Leather.



Step 2: Pick out areas of metal with Pig Iron.



Step 3: Give the brass areas a coat of Molten Bronze and pick out the armor plates on the trencher body with Cygnar Base Blue.



Step 4: Drybrush a light layer of Menoth White Base over the ground in the trench.

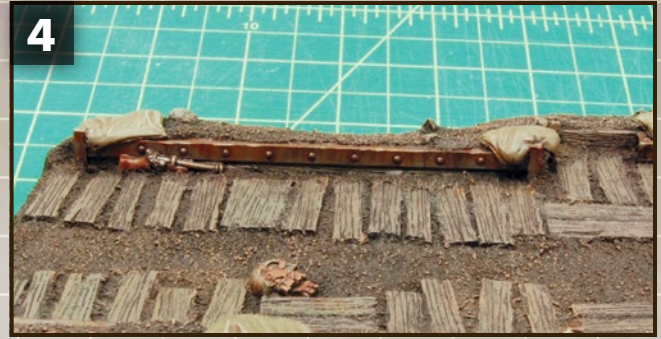
PAINTING: WEATHERING



Step 1: Give the whole model a wash of 1:1 Flesh Wash and water.



Step 2: Wash the planks and wood with a 1:2 mix of Traitor Green and water.



Step 3: For the metal parts, take a small brush and paint downward streaks of 1:1 Bloodstone and water.

Step 4: Wash the metal with a mix of 1:1:2 Battlefield Brown, Brown Ink, and water. Go lightly with this and apply a few layers as needed, all with a downward motion.



Step 5: To bring back some contrast, drybrush the soil with Rucksack Tan.

Step 6: Finally, add a highlight of Menoth White Base. Clean up any excessive drybrushing with highlights, add Quick Silver edge highlights to the metal, and bring back some of the blue in the Trencher's armor with Cygnar Blue Highlight.

FLOCKING THE EDGES



Step 1: Stipple some watered-down wood glue around the edge, being careful to avoid the connecting edges of the trench, then apply dark green flock from a shaker as a base color.

Step 2: Following the shape of the flock, apply a blend of dried static grass with a darker green static grass to highlight it.

Step 3: Finally, add a line of water effects down the center of the trench where water would naturally gather and where it would be the muddiest. Add a touch of Traitor Green to the first layer of water effects, then go over it with straight water effects to add some wetter-looking areas.

CONCLUSION

Trenches are a great piece of terrain to bring to the game and are a dynamic way to add some variety to the basic forests and hills that occupy most tables. These trenches will be cast and featured on the tables at Lock & Load GameFest this June, but with this tutorial you can make your own trenches today!



T3 TOURNAMENT TRIPLE THREAT LEGION OF EVERBLIGHT

BY WILLIAM HUNGERFORD • ART BY NÉSTOR OSSANDÓN & ANDREA UDERZO

Building a great WARMACHINE or HORDES army takes practice, ingenuity, and a deep understanding of the play style you enjoy most. Sure, you could copy whichever army list did best at the most recent Iron Gauntlet Qualifier, but you'll almost always have more fun and perform better at competitive tournaments when you play a list you've created on your own.

This article series focuses on the art of building an awesome list that works for you. The idea isn't to provide you with a list you should copy and use for yourself, though that certainly is an option. Rather, we're going to dissect the process of choosing models for different types of forces with their own distinctive play styles. While these decisions will be specific to each author and each list, they will provide insight into concepts to consider when building a list with specific goals in mind.

As with previous Tournament Triple Threat articles we offer three lists, one for each of three major army archetypes: assassination, attrition, and control. There are definitely more archetypes, but this trio is the most popular and prevalent.

Let's jump right in with the blighted HORDES faction: Legion of Everblight!

Faction Breakdown

The Legion of Everblight oozes blighted style, both in its aesthetic and in its abilities. This HORDES faction is known for its lightning-fast speed, high damage output, and the ability to see through or flat-out ignore many of the conventional techniques an opponent might use to protect his or her models. Fighting *against* the Legion requires a player to understand just how unsafe he or she is at any given moment; fighting *with* the Legion requires a player to see angles of attack and opportunities that aren't typically available to other factions.

While these gameplay aspects are the prevalent flavor of Legion tactics, they are by no means the only way to play the faction. The Legion roster is deep enough to provide a player with a wide variety of army compositions. Whether you want to play beast heavy, run an elite army of medium-based ogrun, or construct a stealthy list of ranged assassins, the Legion of Everblight can accommodate your needs.

With that said, let's take a look at some sample lists for the three main list-building archetypes. We'll start with something the Legion of Everblight is particularly good at: assassinating the enemy.

Assassination

Building an assassination list for Legion is an absolute treat. Because the entire faction is so strong when playing to this style, there are many options to experiment with to find what works best for you.

Now I say that, but—as you will soon find out—I decided not to experiment too much with my assassination list. Instead, I decided to go with a list I’m already very familiar with, very comfortable playing, and one that offers a vastly different experience on the battlefield than the other two lists I will be creating.

When building a Legion of Everblight army, once I decide on a warlock I almost always go immediately to my battlegroup. Legion warbeasts not only look fantastic and perform phenomenally on the tabletop, but they can also take advantage of some of the best fury management in all of HORDES. They are the heart of my Legion lists, and as such I give them the highest priority when I spend my army points.

I decided on ranged attacks as the flavor of assassination I want for this list. Not just any ranged attacks, mind you—accurate, long-range attacks that ignore almost every trick my opponent could use to keep his army alive. The choice of a warlock is an easy one as Lylyth, Shadow of Everblight will supercharge my already impressive shooting options and allow me to lay waste to my opponent with a rain of arrows, spears, and blighted death.

My first warbeast choice is the Naga Nightlurker. While the Naga’s ranged attack isn’t to be ignored I primarily chose it due to its animus, Wraithbane. With so many of my models having Eyeless Sight I will already be ignoring many rules that could give me fits, such as Stealth or concealment, but there are still situations that could completely ruin my game plan. Incorporeal models or Protectorate warjacks protected by a Choir of Menoth could pose a serious threat, so the benefits granted by Wraithbane are necessary to help compensate for my weaknesses.

Next up are the primary damage dealers in my battlegroup: a pair of Ravagores providing the hellacious firepower I’m looking for. They have great range, solid damage, utility in the Scather ability on their ranged attack, and an amazing animus that lets me set my enemy ablaze. The Ravagore will still be capable of going toe-to-toe with most heavies in the game if my enemy does make his way into melee with me, though I would rather have it standing back spitting blighted fire all over the opposing army’s faces.

My battlegroup isn’t complete yet, as I still want more ranged damage and utility. My goal with this list is fairly simple: clear any models out of my LOS and annihilate the enemy warlock or warcaster with my absurd ranged capabilities. I could choose more ranged Legion heavies at this point, but I’ll opt for a different route based on my personal gameplay experience. Instead of a third Ravagore, or perhaps an Angelus, I’ll take two Nephilim Bolt Throwers.

ASSASSINATION: 50-POINT LIST

Model	Point Cost
Lylyth, Shadow of Everblight	+5
Succubus	2
Naga Nightlurker	5
Nephilim Bolt Thrower x2	6 each
Ravagore x2	10 each
Annyssa Ryvaal	4
Blighted Nyss Shepherd x2	1 each
Blighted Ogrun Warspears (5)	8
Warspear Chieftain	2
Total	50



Like the Ravagore, the Bolt Thrower has a nice ranged attack that also provides great utility. With the ability to push or possibly even knock down a target, the Bolt Thrower can ensure I'll be able to move any models blocking my LOS if I can't kill them outright. To complete my battlegroup I'll add a Succubus warlock attachment. Since Lylyth only has FURY 5, I need to provide her with a bit of assistance when it comes to casting animi, especially Wraithbane, at key moments. The Succubus will provide an important boost to my overall fury economy.

Speaking of fury economy, before I move on to infantry I'll turn my attention to the support models I need for this force. You'll notice all three of my lists feature a pair of Blighted Nyss Shepherds. As I mentioned before, between the Shepherd and the Forsaken, Legion has some of the best fury management in HORDES. Which solo you take depends only on your own personal preference. Some players opt for the damage capabilities of the Forsaken while others, like me, prefer the simplicity and healing capabilities of the Shepherd.

Whichever you choose, either solo provides a lot of potential to push your warbeasts to the limit without leaving massive amounts of fury on them.

At this point my model count is still fairly low; I'll need a screen of infantry to prevent my battlegroup from getting tied up in melee. At the same time, I want my infantry to be able to contribute to my overall strategy of filling my opponent full of holes. To ensure my infantry screen will be sturdy enough to survive in melee, and to offer some additional ranged options, I'll go with a full unit of Blighted Ogrun Warspears with their unit attachment, the Warspear Chieftain. With Huntsman available from the unit's UA and the potent Pin Cushion spell from Lylyth's arsenal, this unit can dish out some serious hurt at a distance. In fact, more often than not I find this unit gets the caster kill itself after Lylyth and her warbeasts have softened up the intended target. With assault and Lylyth's feat, the threat range of this elite force is incredible, especially given how far up the field they typically end up.

Finally, with 4 points left I need a solo or pair of solos that can operate outside of Lylyth's control area to deal with any flanking forces or problem models I need to put down. I considered a pair of Strider Deathstalkers, but finally settled on Annyssa Ryvaal. She has the mobility to both deal with her intended targets and course-correct toward the enemy warlock when the assassination run begins.

Once my list is complete, I review my strengths and weaknesses to see if any glaring holes exist in my plan. Mass armor, especially on huge-based models, is going to be a problem. I will have to rely on my mobility in such a situation to go around any threats I can't consistently deal with. Additionally, there are a few match-ups where I might need to completely change my strategy—for example, facing any warlock that could completely shut down my shooting, such as Bloody Barnabas. These weaknesses aside, the assassination list is strong and will get the job done as intended in the majority of my games.



ATTRITION: 50-POINT LIST

Model	Point Cost
Kallus, Wrath of Everblight	+5
Shredder x2	2 each
Carnivean x2	11 each
Blighted Nyss Shepherd x2	1 each
Warmonger War Chief	3
Blighted Ogrun Warmongers (5) x3	8 each
Total	50



Attrition

For my attrition list, I had two different thoughts. First was a Thagrosh, Prophet of Everblight list that was incredibly warbeast heavy, relying on Thagrosh's suite of defensive spells and abilities in tandem with Spiny Growth from my Carniveans. After much consideration, however, I decided to go in the completely opposite direction and build an elite infantry force backed by Kallus "Dark Guidance fixes everything" Wrath of Everblight.

My goal with this list is about as far from that of my assassination list as possible. I'm not looking to scalpel out key models and score a quick win. Instead, I'm trying to choke my opponent with 120 wounds' worth of Reach, Berserk, P+S 14 monsters made even harder to kill by great defensive animi and Kallus' Unconquerable ability. Once my forces are in place, Dark Guidance will ensure I'll have no trouble hitting whatever is in front of me. With the use of some good front arc positioning and with the Warmonger War Chief to grant my Blighted Ogrun Warmongers the Blood Drinker ability, I should be able to avoid destroying too many of my own troops.

Unlike my standard Legion list-building procedure, I'll start with my troops before moving on to my battlegroup. Three full units of Warmongers will form the core of my army. Not only is this choice intimidating in-game, but it looks sinister on the tabletop as well! Now, let's take a moment to review this decision. Why Warmongers? Why not two units of Gatorman Posse and some Warmongers, or perhaps a massive amount of single-wound infantry such as Blighted

Nyss Swordsmen and Blighted Nyss Legionnaires? The answer is multifaceted.

I want to get the most out of Dark Guidance and Unyielding each turn, which the Gatorman Posse couldn't benefit from. I'm also looking for a force that can soak up a charge, strike back, and potentially even heal itself in the process. The idea is to take the hit from my opponent and then slowly, inch by bloody inch, fight my way downfield toward his warlock or warcaster. This means single-wound infantry won't quite cut it. I'm not looking to swarm my opponent and run the risk of having swathes of my army cut down by AOE or spells like Ashes to Ashes. Warmongers are the perfect fit for my plan.

Before turning my attention to my battlegroup I'll add a single Warmonger War Chief, as the benefits he grants all three units of Warmongers make him impossible to pass up. My intention here is to run him behind the units, keeping him safe. In this conservative board position, not every Warmonger will benefit from the War Chief's Veteran Leader ability, but with solid positioning I could selectively apply the +2 attack roll benefit as needed. For Warmongers that can't take advantage of this particular accuracy buff, I'll still have Dark Guidance to help their melee attacks connect against high DEF targets.

With the War Chief in place it's time to fill out my battlegroup. I already know exactly what I need from my warbeasts: defensive animi and the capability to crack armor that's too heavy for a unit of Ignited Warmongers to deal with. A pair of Carniveans and a pair of Shredders will perform this role perfectly. To get the most out of my warbeasts, I once again include a pair of Shepherds.

This list is simply terrifying. It can handle high armor and high defense, and it can take a major hit. I will need to work to make sure Kallus remains safe and well-protected at all times, since to make this list function I can't keep him too far behind my frontline troops for the majority of the game. Dedicated gun lines might be an issue, but with this list I'll be able to force them to engage me via scenario. My major concern is the prospect of facing an opponent who can slow me down by creating difficult terrain or lowering my SPD. Aside from that potential nightmare, this attrition list will perform admirably.



Control

For my control list, I again find myself pondering two different warlocks to build my army around: Saeryn, Omen of Everblight and Vayl, Consul of Everblight. Both are spell slingers with devastating feats and plenty of board control. It is a hard choice but in the end I decide to go for Vayl, as I find her theme force to be both incredibly powerful and a lot of fun to play. It's always good to have at least one theme force within your faction that you practice competitively, in case you find yourself wanting to play in a Steamroller event using the *Theme Forces: Tier [X] Required* variant.

When building a theme force army, I like to review exactly what I'll need for each tier and consider the most efficient way to get there. Looking at the Machinations of Shadow theme force, the tier 4 bonus immediately caught my eye. While getting Advance Deploy on my solos and +2 SPD on my flying warbeasts is nice, a 1-point reduction on all heavy warbeasts in a faction with as much fury efficiency as Legion has is amazing.

To get to tier 4 I'll need to include a Spawning Vessel unit, three flying warbeasts of any size in Vayl's battlegroup, and three heavy warbeasts in Vayl's battlegroup. Combining the need for flying warbeasts and heavy warbeasts won't be too difficult, as I enjoy using both the Angelius and the Seraph.

I start building my list with the Spawning Vessel unit, though I'll want to take an infantry unit later to make the most of the Vessel and to ensure I'll generate at least one or two lesser warbeasts throughout the game. Next I'll turn to my battlegroup, keeping in mind the theme force requirements I'll need to meet. Vayl has a powerful spell list that will allow me to play a hit-and-run style and keep a ton of pressure on my opponent. With both Admonition and Refuge at my disposal, a pair of Angelius warbeasts are a solid choice. This gives me two of my three heavies and two out of three flying warbeasts required for tier benefits. With Vayl's support, I can play both of these warbeasts aggressively while keeping them safe from my opponent. To finish out the theme force requirement for my flying beasts I decide to add a Harrier, as I want to spend more resources toward non-flying heavies—especially considering the point reduction benefit from tier 4.

With Vayl, my plan is to maintain board and tempo control. I want to threaten my opponent from multiple angles and cut his infantry off from accessing specific sections of the board while keeping my forces safe from retaliation. With this in mind, I'll add a pair of Ravagores to my battlegroup. This completes my theme force requirements and puts me to tier 4. Getting a 1-point discount on all of my heavy warbeasts means I now have even more points available to finish out the list.



CONTROL: 50-POINT LIST

Model	Point Cost
Vayl, Consul of Everblight	+6 WB
Angelius x2	8 each
Harrier	2
Ravagore x2	9 each
Throne of Everblight	9
Blighted Nyss Shepherd x2	1 each
Spawning Vessel	3
Blighted Nyss Legionnaires (6)	6
Total	50



I'll step away from adding to my battlegroup and pick an infantry unit, both to function as a tar pit and to get the most out of the Spawning Vessel. I want something cheap, relatively sturdy, and capable of tying up my opponent's infantry, so the Blighted Nyss Legionnaires are a great choice. With Vayl's Occultation spell I can deliver them where they're needed on the battlefield without too much worry about them being torn to shreds by gunfire on the way in. With the Legionnaires in place, I'll once again add a pair of Shepherds. I just love these solos!

Here is where I'll make a bit of an unorthodox call regarding my 9 remaining army points. With the heavy warbeast benefit I could easily take a third Ravagore, or perhaps a Scythean and a Spell Martyr to help Vayl threaten the enemy with her spells. Having already received a 4-point discount I don't feel I would be wasting an opportunity by not taking another heavy warbeast, so I'll take a Throne of Everblight instead.

So what does the Throne of Everblight gain me that another heavy warbeast couldn't? It's more about the versatility the Throne offers, while still being a great board-control piece to add to Vayl's arsenal. The Throne gives me a model capable of dealing magic damage to pesky infantry only Vayl would normally be able to handle, such as Blackbane's Ghost Raiders or Holy Zealots under Greater Destiny (by spraying a larger model behind them).

The Throne gives me an awesome potential arc node, since a huge base and circular vision means I can sling spells all over the battlefield by using Vayl's Spellbound ability. The Throne provides me with a way to remove living models from play, three per turn, comparable to what a Scythean could do (even though the Scythean can remove non-living models from play as well). Finally, the Throne offers me another solid damage dealer that requires none of Vayl's time or resources. She will have enough of her fury dedicated to casting spells and animi and to keeping her beasts in check.

With this final choice, my control list is done. This list is incredibly adaptive and can handle almost any threat that comes its way. I can keep pressure on my opponents at almost any point in the game while also denying their strengths and forcing them to play the game on my terms.

Conclusion

The three lists I've constructed are about as different from each other as possible, yet each is incredibly fun to play and quite competitive in a tournament setting. Whether I'm raining down a cloud of arrows on my opponent, choking his forces with a horrific wall of blighted ogrun, or shutting him down with one of the best pure spellcasters in HORDES, I know I'm going to have a good time playing these lists!



QUICK SHOT SCENARIO

IMMORTALITY

BY MICHAEL G. RYAN & MATT GOETZ • ART BY SANG HAN & BRAD WRIGHT • MAPS BY ED BOURELLE

PART 1: UNDEATH METAL

Immortality is a six-part adventure scenario for use with the *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game*. Each part is built on those that precede it, and the whole adventure is designed to be easily integrated into a Game Master's existing campaign as a standalone adventure. It builds on the machinations of the central villain,

Vladislav Abrosim, as established in the adventure *Spirit in Steel* (No Quarter #44), though it is not necessary to play that adventure to enjoy *Immortality*.

"Undeath Metal" is designed for 3–5 Hero-level characters between 0 and 6 XP each. It takes place on the road and in a wooded area outside a small Khadoran town, although the location can easily change to suit the Game Master's campaign. The specifics of the town itself don't come into play during this adventure, allowing the Game Master to adapt it to suit the needs of his game.



SCENARIO SYNOPSIS

In “Undeath Metal,” the PCs thwart a seemingly simple robbery, only to find themselves at the center of an insidious plot to steal select human souls and use them to fuel research into achieving immortality. To escape—and to free innocent townspeople who are also targets of the plot’s designer—the PCs must destroy a machine milking their souls for life-giving energy and confront the machine’s villainous guardians.

FOR THE GAME MASTER

Makar Iokav, a charismatic researcher secretly serving as a lieutenant for a former Greylord who has turned to evil acts of necromancy, has used his charm and influence to wrest control of a small cell of fringe Cyriss worshippers spurned by the core Convergence faith. Iokav has cast out the cell’s chief optifex, Kasparovik, and used fell engineering to make the cell’s stolen and makeshift Convergence technology functional, draining and containing souls. The cell had been actively pursuing transfiguration, the placing of a soul in a waiting vessel, and Iokav has made this possible for them. The purpose of capturing and storing those stolen souls, however, remains a mystery to them. To date, Iokav has targeted local townspeople who have shown either physical or mental strength, believing such souls are more valuable to his master’s work.

Iokav works for Vladislav Abrosim, once a member of the Greylords Covenant who has become obsessed with achieving his own immortality, regardless of the cost to himself or others. Iokav operates under the belief—perhaps ill advisedly so—that Abrosim will elevate his many lieutenants with him once the Greylord achieves his nefarious goal.

In general, Iokav has been blinded by his devotion to Abrosim, by the former Greylord’s overwhelming charisma and intellect, and by the strong allure of the promise of immortality. Iokav’s own charm and aggressive nature made him an ideal candidate for Abrosim’s machinations. Further, Iokav’s magnetism made him perfect for matching up with a vulnerable temple of Cyriss worshippers Abrosim discovered.

THE SOUL SIPHON

The machine the fringe cult cell built to house energy from souls for Abrosim is a combination of the limited Convergence designs the cell could obtain and elements drawn from Bowden Haightly’s work with the *Librum Mekanecrus* (from *Spirit in Steel, No Quarter #44*). It is both unique and horrific. It uses parasitic converters—thin metallic silver collars that are virtually unbreakable and can only be removed by an exceptionally talented arcane mechanic—to drain a host’s life essence and transmit it via geomantic flow from the point of origin directly to the machine. Once the life essence is fully drained, the subject’s soul is captured. Further, the containment chamber within the soul siphon is easily removed for transportation, replacement, or drainage. The soul siphon itself is impossible to shut down without utterly destroying it.

VLADISLAV ABROSIM

Once a high-ranking member of the Greylords Covenant, Abrosim is now a renegade, pursuing necromantic secrets and tomes of forbidden knowledge in his pursuit of immortality. While still a Greylord, he established secret laboratories across Khador to further his research into Orgoth, Cryxian, and other black magic, but once these were exposed, he established operations all over western Immoren. Now he is served by a host of lieutenants who gather technology, artifacts, knowledge, and souls to further his dark goal: to live forever, even if it costs the lives of hundreds—or thousands—of others.

The fringe cult cell, the Temple of the Essence, has already been rejected by the core of the Convergence and possesses only scattered knowledge of the Convergence’s inner workings. Remote and technologically far removed from where it had once hoped to be, the temple was not privileged with the Convergence’s transfiguration secrets, making it susceptible to Iokav’s misdirection. Abrosim provided his lieutenant with the right verbiage—specifically, promises to address their missing knowledge of soul transference with necromantic procedures—eventually influencing the cell into following along with his master’s plan.

The soul siphon is of Abrosim’s design, built by the fringe cell using what little knowledge they acquired from their brief association with the Convergence of Cyriss. Iokav oversaw its construction, and he is both proud of its success and dismissive of the immorality of its function. He sees it as a necessary evil, a means to an end, and he assumes it will ultimately be used for his own benefit as well. Its destruction would not distress Iokav much, however, provided that he is able to first extract the souls he has collected for Abrosim.

GETTING THE PLAYERS INVOLVED

The adventure begins outside a small Khadoran village called Volkovar, far enough away that the PCs won’t be able to rely on locals for assistance and, when coming upon the Satsiyann Inn, which is a coaching inn that serves as a minor trading post, they won’t be able to reach the village until extremely late. Game Masters can choose to have the PCs en route to Volkovar after hearing about an unexplained rash of disappearances that might include an NPC ally of the PCs. Alternatively, they may have been summoned to the village by someone with family among those who have vanished.

If players have completed the earlier adventure, *Spirit in Steel*, they may already be on Abrosim’s trail—they may be pursuing him after attempts on their lives or at the direction of the Order of Illumination, fleeing or avoiding him as they guard their copy of the book *Librum Mekanecrus*, or perhaps even trying to find his agents in order to work with him. If the PCs are already aware of Abrosim’s plots, the revelation that Iakov works for him should have additional significance.

The simplest way to get the PCs involved is to have them arrive at the inn during the course of their normal travels, without any foreknowledge of the disappearances. Regardless of how they reach the inn, they arrive just in time to thwart an apparent robbery. See **Scene 1: Inn Trouble**.

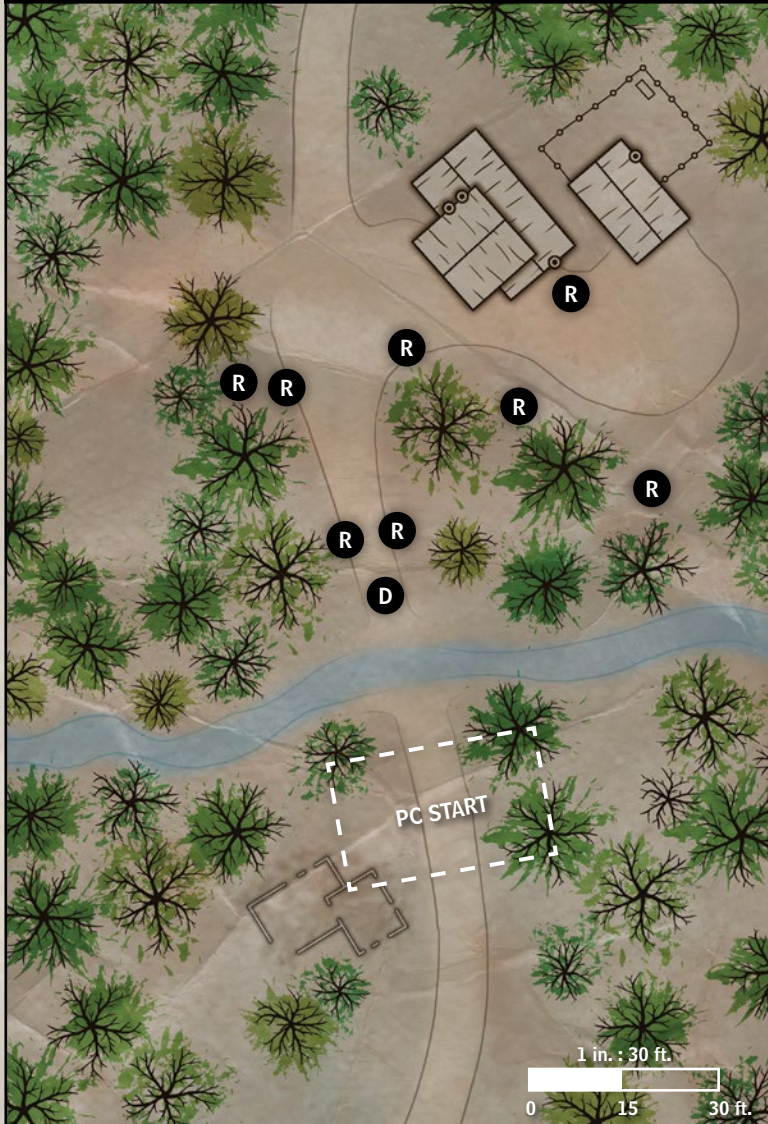
SCENE 1: INN TROUBLE

COMBAT/ROLEPLAYING

The adventure begins when the PCs approach the Satsiyandar Inn as the sun is setting. Whether they are deliberately bound for the local village or come upon the inn by chance during their travels, the scene unfolds the same way.

The robber sees you and opens fire. Drawn by the gunshot, seven other men come barreling out of the inn behind him. All are scruffy and armed with firearms and edged weapons.

ROBBERY AT THE SATSIYANAR INN



The initial shot misses no matter what, as this “robbery” is staged for the benefit of the arriving PCs and Andrei, a mercenary who just checked into the inn. The older man—Dominik, the owner of the inn—is a member of the Cyrissist cell Makar Iokav took over, and he is always on the lookout for likely candidates for the soul siphon. A traveler’s response to the “robbery” gives him information about that traveler’s character and strength, as Iokav seeks only those brave and strong of will. The old man has performed this ruse numerous times over recent months and has become proficient at deception. In order to determine something is amiss, a character can make a Detection skill roll against a target number of 14. If the roll succeeds, he feels something is not quite right about the robbery but cannot put his finger on exactly what.

As the fight begins, another man bursts from the inn. Unlike the thugs, he is partially dressed, naked from the waist up, barefoot, hair and beard wet as if fresh from a bath, but armed for battle with a distinctive mechanical pistol. He immediately attacks the thugs from behind, joining the fray. This is Andrei, a mercenary soldier who took a room at the inn a few hours ago. Like the PCs, Andrei believes he is helping to thwart a robbery.

TERRAIN

The encounter has the following terrain features.

Stream: A portion of the road to the Satsiyandar Inn is washed out by the Volkovar Stream overflowing its banks. The stream is shallow water with a depth of two feet.

Ruins: The ruins are all that remains of the ill-fated Leskov Trading Post. The ruins are rough terrain. The walls of the ruins provide solid cover.

ROBBERS’ TACTICS

After the first shot, all seven robbers move quickly to engage the PCs before they can intervene on behalf of the old man. Three of the robbers take cover behind trees near the inn or at the corners of its walls, while the remainder gang up on the PCs in melee. The robbers try to take advantage of their Defensive Line and Gang bonuses whenever possible.

Once half of the robbers have been killed or incapacitated, the survivors abandon the fight and attempt to flee into the nearby woods. (The Game Master can adjust the number of robbers to account for the number and strength of the PCs.) The desired outcome is for the robbers to flee the scene, escaping into the nearby woods.

As the PCs approach the inn, read or paraphrase the following:

Ahead, a small coaching inn and stables stand by the side of the road in the long twilight shadows of the neighboring woods. A weathered sign identifies it as the Satsiyandar Inn. As you approach, you hear the crack of a gunshot. A thin older man bursts from the inn’s main door, pursued by a long-haired, bearded thug armed with a pistol. The older man sees you and cries out for help, running in your direction. “I’m being robbed!” he cries.

ROBBERS

PHYSIQUE	PHY	7
SPEED	SPD	6
STRENGTH	STR	4
AGILITY	AGL	4
PROWESS	PRW	4
POISE	POI	4
INTELLECT	INT	3
ARCANE	ARC	—
PERCEPTION	PER	3



PISTOL			
RAT	RNG	AOE	POW
5	10	—	10



AXE OR SWORD		
MAT	POW	P+S
6	3	7

INITIATIVE	INIT	13
DEFENSE	DEF	12
	(Armor -1)	
ARMOR	ARM	13
	(Armor +6)	
WILLPOWER	WILL	10

VITALITY: 7

COMMAND RANGE: 3

BASE SIZE: SMALL

ENCOUNTER POINTS: 6

EQUIPMENT:

Ammo bandolier, axe or sword, custom battle armor, pistol, ammunition for ten shots, d6 + 3 gc.

The robbers are all male, mostly middle-aged, armed with similar weapons, and are ruthless in their aggression toward their enemies, though once engaged in battle, they lose nearly all interest in the weaker target, the old man. Their intent in combat seems to be more to incapacitate than to kill.

AFTERMATH

If the PCs take one or more of the robbers prisoner, the innkeeper Dominik attempts to either free the prisoners or poison them, whichever can be accomplished without drawing attention to himself. The robbers attempt to resist interrogation, imposing a -3 penalty to any Interrogation attempts. They know very little about the reasons for the disappearances—they were hired via messengers to kidnap predetermined people, and they were sent this morning to the Satsiyanar Inn to “attack at dusk.” They assume they were sent to kidnap Dominik himself.

When the battle is resolved and the robbers have escaped, died, or been driven off, read the following:

The old man, trembling with relief, shakes hands with each of you in turn, including the half-dressed man who joined the battle late. “You are my saviors,” he gushes, introducing himself as Dominik, owner of the Satsiyanar Inn. “Your rooms, your food, your wine—please, it is all free. You’ve paid with your bravery. It would be an honor to serve you dinner.”

The half-dressed man grins, looking down at himself as he twirls his mechanical pistol and holsters it smoothly. “I’m not dressed for the occasion, but I can always afford free.” He introduces himself as Andrei, and hesitates for a moment before lowering his voice and asking, “You’re headed for Volkovar, I assume. There’s nowhere else to go out here. My niece disappeared from there, a week ago tomorrow. Who are you looking for?”

If the PCs were not originally aware of the disappearances (either before the adventure began or as a result of capturing and interrogating a prisoner), Andrei is eager to recruit them to help him find his niece. He promises to fill them in over dinner, and he then excuses himself to dress.

If the PCs still believe the attackers were robbers, an observant PC may note that the robbers did not manage to steal anything from

ROBBERS

ABILITIES:

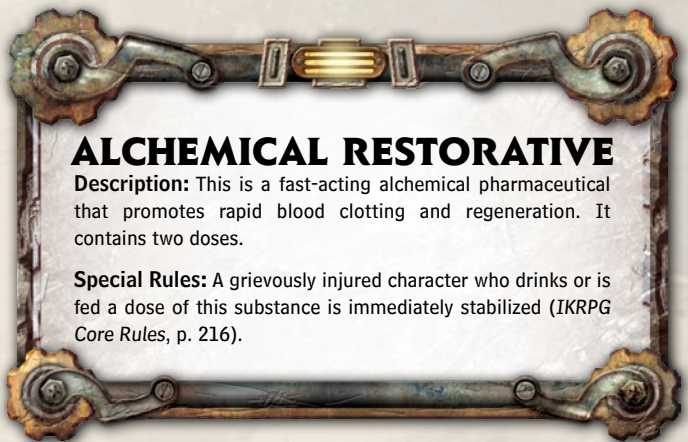
Gang – When making a melee attack that targets an enemy in melee range of another friendly character, this character gains +1 to melee attack and melee damage rolls. When making a melee attack that targets an enemy in melee range of another friendly character who also has this ability, these bonuses increase to +2.

Defensive Line – While this character is B2B with one or more friendly characters, he gains +1 ARM. While the character is B2B with one or more friendly characters who also have this ability, the bonus increases to +2.

SKILLS:

NAME	STAT	RANK	STAT + RANK
Detection		PER	2 5
Gambling		PER	1 4
Hand Weapon		PRW	2 6
Intimidation		SOC	2 *
Pistol		POI	1 5

Satsiyanar Inn. A thorough search of the inn itself, which Dominik fully supports (as he knows what there is to find), reveals supplies seemingly left behind. Dominik indicates they belonged to the robbers. Characters who search the gear will find, among an assortment of common traveling gear, a vial of clear fluid they can identify as an Alchemical Restorative without a skill roll.



ALCHEMICAL RESTORATIVE

Description: This is a fast-acting alchemical pharmaceutical that promotes rapid blood clotting and regeneration. It contains two doses.

Special Rules: A grievously injured character who drinks or is fed a dose of this substance is immediately stabilized (IKRPG Core Rules, p. 216).

Whether the PCs search the inn or not, Dominik warns them of the dangers of the road ahead—including the possibility that the robbers are waiting for them or might return to the inn to take revenge on Dominik for bringing in help. Further, he has no other means to pay them than with his hospitality. He hurries to get them a room and arrange dinner for them in his dining room.

TABLE TALK

When the PCs enter the dining room of the inn, read or paraphrase the following:

The dining room is small with old curtains on one window, candles, and faded paintings on the walls. The innkeeper Dominik has pushed some smaller tables together to account for your party and for Andrei, who is seated and dressed in casual attire. He bears no indication of his loyalties, but he carries his mechanical pistol and a Khadoran sword, both of which he has handy in case the inn is attacked again. He greets you, and Dominik begins to pour wine even before you’re seated.

Andrei is open and social with the PCs, whom he sees as comrades in arms. He explains that “in a past life,” he was a mercenary with little commitment to anyone or anything. As Dominik brings meat, potatoes, and wine to the table, Andrei explains his presence and earlier comment about his missing niece.

Read or paraphrase the following:

Andrei takes a long drink of wine before speaking. “My niece. I got word from my brother in Volkovar that Evelina disappeared from the field where she was working. Sixteen years old, beautiful dark hair, blue eyes. Outspoken and not at all shy about defending herself, let me tell you. Just disappeared without a trace. And it’s not the first time, I found out. A half-dozen so far, all from Volkovar or the outlying farms.”

He takes another drink. “I’m coming to find her. And kill whoever took her.”

If the PCs did not previously obtain the idea by capturing a “robber,” Andrei wonders if they were trying to take the innkeeper. Dominik stresses over this, fretting about the missing locals.

Both Dominik and Andrei attempt to recruit the PCs to help find the missing locals, Andrei by stressing he could use help—he’s one against many, in all likelihood—and could afford to pay a little for that help, and Dominik by underscoring the PCs heroics in fighting the robbers and emphasizing Volkovar’s need for comparable heroics.

If the PCs agree now, Andrei suggests that tomorrow morning after breakfast they travel together to the village to speak to law enforcement officials. Dominik says he can close the inn long enough to join them. Both men retire to their own rooms.

If the PCs elect to move on from the inn instead of staying the night, they realize just a short way down the road something has been slipped in their meals or their wine that is sedating them. If they don’t return to the inn quickly, they black out on the dark road to Volkovar, now certain they’ve been tricked.

SCENE 2: TAGGED

INVESTIGATIVE / COMBAT / ROLEPLAYING

Whether the PCs retire on their own or black out on the road to Volkovar, they wake up in the morning in a room in the Satsiyonar Inn, each with a silver collar locked around his or her throat. If sentries were posted when the PCs went to their room, they too black out due to the influence of the elixir slipped into their food and wine.

The collars seem to have no latches, locks, or other means of removing them. Experimenting with them reveals that, if a PC attempts to remove one by force, sharp electrical charges from the collar stun the wearer for one round, rendering him Stationary for the duration.

A PC with the Mechanical Engineering skill can roll to discover the following.

- **Target Number 13:** The collars are the work of extremely advanced mechanical engineering. (Note: Only a talented mechanical engineer familiar with Convergence technology can remove the collars.)

- **Target Number 15:** The collars are drawing energy from the PCs, but the energy doesn’t seem to remain contained in the devices; in some manner, it is being siphoned away.

A character with Connections (Convergence) can recognize the collars as the product of altered Convergence engineering by making an INT or Mechanical Engineering roll against a target number of 12.

If the PCs search the inn, they find Dominik’s room empty. Blood is on the sheets, the window forced open, and its lock is broken. The PCs can discover the following by making a Forensic Science skill roll against a target number of 13.

- The blood is human. On a roll of 16 or higher, it proves to be more than 24 hours old, too old to have been spilled in the night.
- There are no footprints outside the window. On a Forensic Science roll of 16 or higher, the character discovers that the lock was actually broken from the inside.

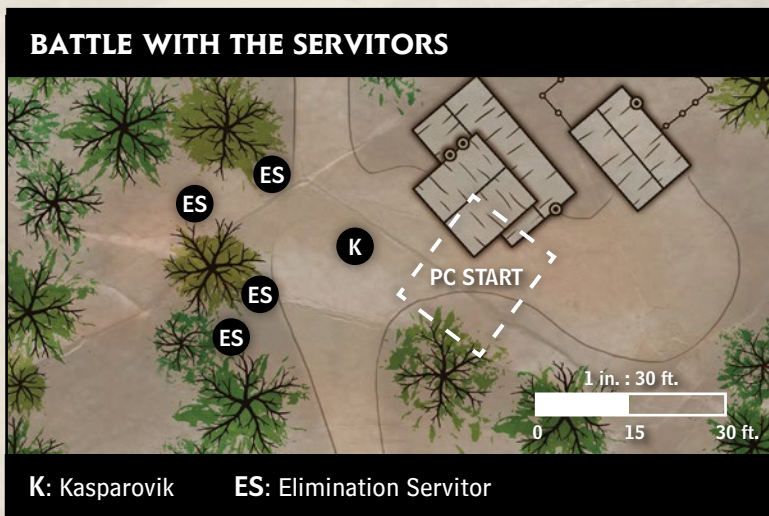
In fact, Dominik has returned to the temple facility where Makar Iokav took over. His task of luring candidates to have their souls stolen has been accomplished for the moment, and he has constructed the scene to avoid inculpating himself in the PCs’ eyes.

The mercenary Andrei is gone as well. The door to his room is ajar, a blood trail leading from the hallway outside his room out of the inn. His bed is unmade and his equipment is gone. The distinctive smell of gunfire lingers in the air—a sound the PCs clearly slept through, though whether it was someone else or Andrei himself who fired, they can’t tell.

Andrei woke not long after Dominik placed the collar around his throat, and he fired at Dominik as the innkeeper fled with a pair of the returning thieves, injuring Dominik. Andrei then gave chase into the predawn darkness. If the PCs refuse to follow Kasparovik (see below), they can follow this blood trail back to the Temple of the Essence by making a Tracking skill roll against a target number of 12.

When the PCs have discovered both Dominik and Andrei are gone, read or paraphrase the following:

From the woods beyond the inn you hear a crashing sound, as someone barrels through the underbrush. A figure bursts forth—a middle-aged man, his hair



and eyes wild, his limbs thin, his skin sickeningly pale, dressed in ripped golden robes and barefoot. He staggers toward the inn, then collapses in a heap. You can see a silver collar that matches your own around his throat.

As the PCs approach, the man will begin to weakly gesture a warning toward the woods, holding a bloody wound in his side. He degenerates into an uncontrollable coughing fit.

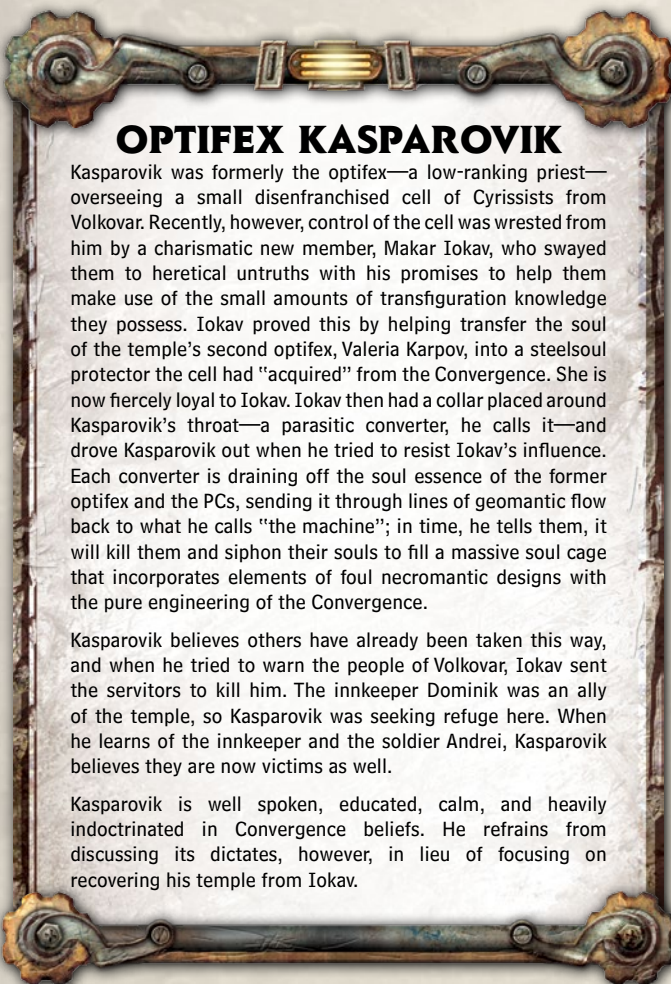
When the PCs reach the man, read or paraphrase the following:

Ominous shadows emerge along the man's trail from the woods. Four floating metallic machines, each as large as a man's head, each with three bars of light on its hull and a mechanical appendage armed with a set of savage-looking spikes. They pivot to scan the area, and upon detecting the fleeing man, move to attack.

Elimination Servitors' Tactics

The attackers are elimination servitors, weapons developed by the Convergence of Cyriss. These particular servitors are dented and look to have been haphazardly repaired, but their spike ejectors are armed and ready to launch. Their primary target is the man, but if the PCs do not step aside, the servitors target them as enemies as well. Because he is severely wounded, the man is unable to assist the PCs in the battle.

The servitors attempt to target the injured man, but they will attack any PC between them and their target. The servitors attempt to stay out of charge range if possible, constantly shifting in an attempt to



OPTIFEX KASPAROVIK

Kasparovik was formerly the optifex—a low-ranking priest—overseeing a small disenfranchised cell of Cyrissists from Volkovar. Recently, however, control of the cell was wrested from him by a charismatic new member, Makar Iokav, who swayed them to heretical untruths with his promises to help them make use of the small amounts of transfiguration knowledge they possess. Iokav proved this by helping transfer the soul of the temple's second optifex, Valeria Karpov, into a steelsoul protector the cell had "acquired" from the Convergence. She is now fiercely loyal to Iokav. Iokav then had a collar placed around Kasparovik's throat—a parasitic converter, he calls it—and drove Kasparovik out when he tried to resist Iokav's influence. Each converter is draining off the soul essence of the former optifex and the PCs, sending it through lines of geomantic flow back to what he calls "the machine"; in time, he tells them, it will kill them and siphon their souls to fill a massive soul cage that incorporates elements of foul necromantic designs with the pure engineering of the Convergence.

Kasparovik believes others have already been taken this way, and when he tried to warn the people of Volkovar, Iokav sent the servitors to kill him. The innkeeper Dominik was an ally of the temple, so Kasparovik was seeking refuge here. When he learns of the innkeeper and the soldier Andrei, Kasparovik believes they are now victims as well.

Kasparovik is well spoken, educated, calm, and heavily indoctrinated in Convergence beliefs. He refrains from discussing its dictates, however, in lieu of focusing on recovering his temple from Iokav.


get an angle of attack on their target. The servitors' target is knocked down, and thus has DEF 5 against ranged attacks.

If they successfully attack the injured man, he is immediately incapacitated and automatically suffers the Spitting Blood result on the Injury table. Unless stabilized with a successful Medicine skill roll against a target number of 14 within 6 rounds, he will die.

Once their target is eliminated or they have fired all of their ammunition, the elimination servitors immediately move to flee the area. They head directly back toward the Temple of the Essence.

ELIMINATION SERVITOR

PHYSIQUE	PHY	6
SPEED	SPD	6
STRENGTH	STR	3
AGILITY	AGL	3
PROWESS	PRW	3
POISE	POI	3
INTELLECT	INT	1
ARCANE	ARC	—
PERCEPTION	PER	3



SPIKE EJECTOR			
RAT	RNG	AOE	POW
5	9	—	—

A character hit by this weapon automatically suffers 1 damage point.

INITIATIVE	INIT	12
DEFENSE	DEF	12
	(Armor -1)	
ARMOR	ARM	13
	(Armored Hull +7)	
WILLPOWER	WILL	7
VITALITY: 6		
COMMAND RANGE: 1		
BASE SIZE: SMALL		
ENCOUNTER POINTS: 3		

Equipped with advanced computational engines, the elimination servitor's primary directive is to hunt down and eliminate any it does not recognize as an ally. Sophisticated visual sensors and response algorithms allow the elimination servitor to quickly assess the battlefield and select targets amid the chaos.

Once the PCs defeat the servitor, Kasparovik outlines for them his former role in the cult cell and Makar Iokav's coup, Iokav's machine, his banishment from the temple, the purpose and dangers of the collars called parasitic converters (which he does not know how to remove; they are recent inventions of Iokav), and his attempt to warn the people of Volkovar that precipitated the arrival of the elimination servitors. He is aware of the "disappearances" in Volkovar—and knows that Andrei's niece, Evelina, was one of those taken.

ELIMINATION SERVITOR

ABILITIES:

Close Shot (Spike Ejector) – A servitor does not suffer the –4 penalty on ranged attack rolls with the Spike Ejector while engaged.

Construct – This character is not a living character and never flees.

Pathfinder – The character can move over rough terrain without penalty.

Return Fire – Once per round when this character is missed by an enemy's ranged attack, immediately after the attack is resolved the character can make one normal attack against the attacking enemy.

Steady – This character cannot be knocked down.

SKILLS:

NAME	STAT	RANK	STAT + RANK
Detection		PER	2 5
Sneak		AGL	1 4

Kasparovik is straightforward with the PCs: the parasitic converters will ultimately kill them as their life essence and finally their souls are drained away into Iokav's machine. He tells them how his own flesh has grown weaker since he was collared. The only way to stop it is to destroy the machine in the cult's hidden underground temple, but Kasparovik is too weak to do so alone. If they work together, however, they can stop Iokav and save themselves.

Kasparovik proposes to lead them to the temple to save Andrei, the innkeeper Dominik, the people of Volkovar, and themselves. The machine's destruction is the only way to survive—it will kill them via the collars if they don't destroy it. And he doesn't know how long they have; he feels weaker by the hour. Even as he speaks, the PCs collectively suffer a wave of coughing, nausea, and weakness that, when it ends, leaves them each with a noticeably ashen pallor.

SCENE 3: SOUL SURVIVORS COMBAT

Kasparovik leads the PCs to the temple, first along the road to Volkovar, and then deep into the surrounding woods off the road. En route, Kasparovik suffers another bout of coughing and nausea, one that leaves him briefly unable to move. The PCs should have a strong sense of urgency to reach the temple as soon as possible: while Kasparovik is unconscious, they are helpless to proceed, as they have no idea where they are going without his guidance.

The temple's hidden entrance is little more than a pair of metal doors in the ground; Kasparovik leads them to it and gives them the code they need to gain access. Once the doors are open, they reveal a flight of metal stairs that disappear down into a metal corridor lit by dim white lights.

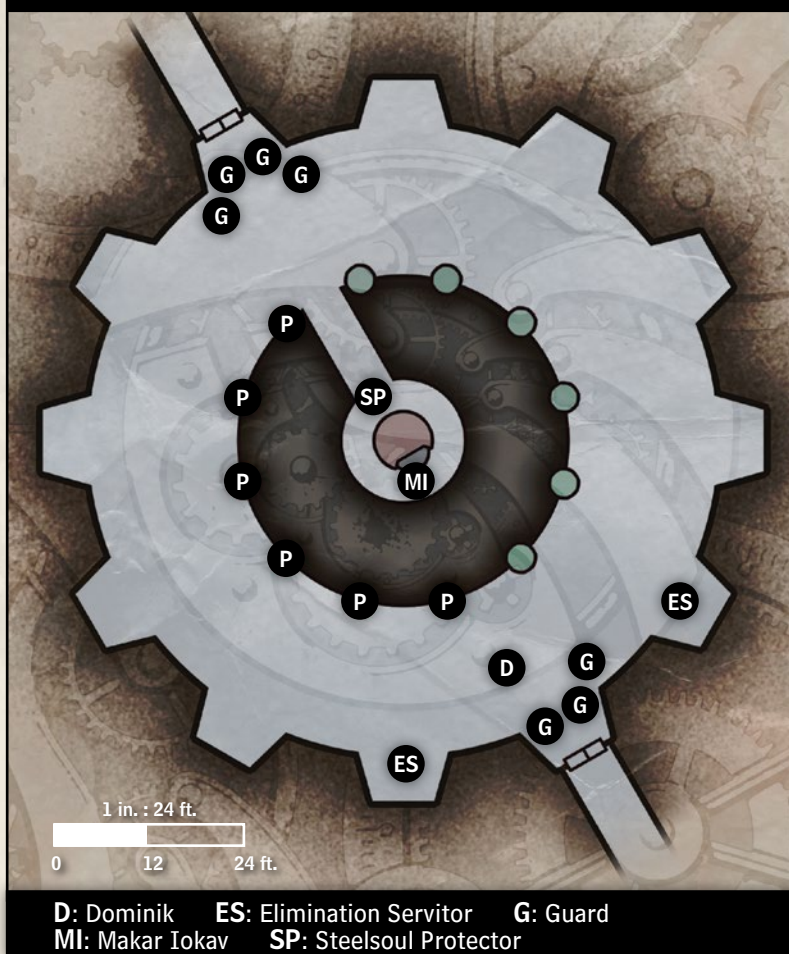
When the PCs descend the stairs into the temple, read or paraphrase the following:

The empty corridor you stand in is polished metal, dimly lit, and show signs on both sides of recent construction—as if new walls have been erected. Kasparovik shudders. "They are closing off the engineers' quarters. And where are the guards? Iokav is killing my followers. My temple."

He directs you ahead, past dead-end corridors, past walled-off chambers, past empty recesses that he identifies as abandoned guard stations. All the while, a low thrumming sound begins to grow from somewhere below. The corridor twists and turns as it slopes downward, but there's no sign of any life...until you at last see brighter lights coming from a corner ahead and the sound of desperate, pleading voices reach you. Kasparovik cautions you as you approach: "I think we will soon find the missing guards."

The PCs need to approach carefully so as not to be spotted by Convergence guards positioned in the temple's large central chamber beyond. A PC can attempt a Sneak skill roll against a target number

CONFRONTING MAKAR IOKAV



of 14 to approach the chamber undetected. If the roll succeeds, he can enter without being noticed, gaining surprise on the guards. Otherwise, the guards notice his approach and are ready for battle.

The central chamber has two entrances, the second directly across from where the PCs enter. At each entrance are four guards, their faces covered by metal helmets, who are focused on the activities in the chamber's center. The cell's new optifex works his fell machine: Makar Iokav stands at a control station where bright blue flashes throw shadows all across the chamber. Near him stands a lithe steelsoul protector, Valeria Karpov, her long iron glaive held at attention.

Makar Iokav is tall and thin, seemingly unarmed, dressed as if for travel. He is clean-shaven with a hawk-like face and slick blond hair. Once he observes the arrival of the PCs, he takes no chances they might interfere with his work—he begins working the controls while keeping one eye on the unfolding battle.

Around the circumference of the chamber's central circle are lightweight metallic cages, locked to the floor. Of the dozen cages, six currently hold prisoners—people from the village of Volkovar and the prefect of the temple, Edik, who refused to follow Makar Iokav. Among them is a dark-haired, blue-eyed teenage girl the PCs recognize as Evelina, Andrei's missing niece.

ANDREI'S PISTOL

Ammo: 1 (light round)

Effective Range: 60 feet (10')

Extreme Range: 300 feet

Skill: Pistol

Attack Modifier: 0

POW: 10

AOE: —

Description: Andrei's pistol is worn but well maintained. It has small silver inlays in the grip delicately engraved with flames. It is powered by a clockwork capacitor set in the grip.

Rune Points: 3

Special Rules: While the weapon has power, it causes fire damage, and on a critical hit the target suffers the Fire continuous effect. The character wielding it can attack with the weapon normally or can give the weapon AOE 3.

The guard bearing Andrei's pistol tears off his helmet to reveal his face—Dominik, the innkeeper. His eyes are crazed, his features dripping sweat. He levels the pistol at the PCs.

"Thanks for saving me, heroes," he hisses as he opens fire.

TERRAIN

The encounter has the following terrain features.

Pit: The center of the temple chamber is an 18-foot (3') pit, its bottom filled with a complex network of interlocking gears. A character pushed, slammed, thrown, or placed in the pit suffers falling damage (*IKRPG Core Rules*, p. 205). During each of his turns, a character in the pit must make an AGL roll against a target number of 12 to avoid being caught in the gears. If the roll fails, he suffers a POW 14 damage roll.

GUARDS' TACTICS

Use the Robber stats from **Scene 1: Inn Trouble** for the temple guards and Dominik. Increase their ARM by 1.

Dominik has +1 MAT and RAT and the following ability:

Feat Points – This character starts each encounter with 1 feat point. He is allocated 1 feat point at the start of each of his turns. He can only have up to 1 feat point at a time.

The temple guards move to intercept the PCs before they can reach Iokav. Dominik holds back, attempting to shoot unengaged PCs with Andrei's pistol. He primarily spends his feat point to Walk It Off, Parry, Heroic Dodge, or purchase additional attacks with his mechanoflail.

Each of the prisoners has a parasitic converter collar around his or her throat, and each has a skin tone similar to Kasparovik's—deathly white.

If the PCs are discovered, the nearest guards immediately attack. If the PCs do not retreat in short order, the steelsoul protector in the chamber moves across the small bridge joining the outer rim to the central machine to attack as Makar Iokav extracts a slender, silver device from the soul machine—a vessel containing the collected souls of all the victims to date.

If the PCs are able to observe the room undetected, they recognize one of the far guards carries a distinctive mechanical pistol—the one that belonged to Andrei.

Whether the PCs are discovered and attacked or remain unnoticed long enough to begin planning their own attack, Kasparovik suddenly collapses in a coughing fit, either betraying their presence or eliminating himself from the fight if it is already joined. He falls to the floor, shuddering, and when his coughing fit comes to an end, his pallor turns ashen grey and he seems to shrink before the PCs eyes, his skin tighter on his bones. His eyes remain open, filled with horror, and his hands curl into fists at his chest as if to contain himself. Kasparovik dies at the feet of the PCs. And when he does, the machine makes a loud hissing sound as it receives his soul.

As the PCs face Makar Iokav's followers, read or paraphrase the following:

Makar Iokav makes no move to join your battle. Instead, he begins to gather bits of equipment from his control station and hastily pocket them. He keeps a watchful eye on the skirmish, however, as he prepares to flee.

"You were chosen!" he shouts. "Heroes! Souls that you should have been honored to sacrifice so they could live forever in Vladislav Abrosim! Now he will live forever—and you will die."

FLAILING ABOUT

Each of the temple guards wields a mechanoflail rather than an axe or sword:

MECHANOFLAIL

Skill: Hand Weapon

Attack Modifier: -1

POW: 5

Description: The mechanoflail is an ingenious clockwork weapon designed to spin its flail heads at high speeds to greatly increase striking damage. The weapon must be rewound after prolonged use.

Special Rules: Attacks from mechanoflails ignore ARM bonuses from bucklers and shields.

Once during his activation, a character can spend 1 feat point to make an additional attack with a mechanoflail against a target he has previously hit that turn with this weapon.

After making ten attacks with a mechanoflail, a character must spend five minutes rewinding it before it can be used again.

STEELSOUL PROTECTOR'S TACTICS

The Steelsoul Protector contains the essence of Valeria Karpov, the second optifex of the cell. Extremely devoted to Iokav—he did for her what the Convergence would not—she will fight to the bitter end to defend him from attack.

When the PCs defeat the guards, the steelsoul protector Karpov moves to defend Iokav's retreat as he flees the chamber with the soul vessel, which now includes Kasparovik's and Andrei's souls. In his wake comes a pair of elimination servitors. The steelsoul and servitors engage the PCs when the temple guards are defeated, assuring Iokav's escape.

VALERIA KARPOV (STEELSOUL PROTECTOR)

PHYSIQUE	PHY	8
SPEED	SPD	5
STRENGTH	STR	8
AGILITY	AGL	4
PROWESS	PRW	4
POISE	POI	3
INTELLECT	INT	4
ARCANE	ARC	—
PERCEPTION	PER	5



IRON GLAIVE

MAT	POW	P+S
6	4	12

This weapon requires two hands and has reach.

INITIATIVE	INIT	12
DEFENSE	DEF	12
	(Clockwork Vessel -2)	
ARMOR	ARM	17
WILLPOWER	WILL	12

VITALITY: 21

COMMAND RANGE: 4

BASE SIZE: MEDIUM

ENCOUNTER POINTS: 14

EQUIPMENT:

Iron glaive

The lithe and powerful clockwork vessels of the steelsoul protectors allow them to act as bodyguards for the priests of the Convergence of Cyriss, a role that one of the former optifexes of the Temple of the Essence, Valeria Karpov, has taken on with fierce commitment. Her devotion to Iokav for giving her the body of a steelsoul protector is unflagging. The shell of her vessel is light enough to allow her to move swiftly while remaining tremendously durable. Her entire body is a shield against the harm intended for the priests of the Maiden of Gears—in this case, Iokav.

AFTERMATH

Once the guards, the steelsoul protector, and the elimination servitors have been defeated, the PCs need to destroy the machine in order to free themselves from the parasitic converters.

This can be done in a variety of ways—repeated blows to the panel at Iokav's control station, magical attacks or explosives, or using a mechanic's toolkit to literally dismantle the device. Once the machine is disabled, the collars emit a faint click and fall open from around the PCs throats.

If Dominik survives the battle—either wounded or taken prisoner—he is eager to cooperate with the PCs. He divulges what little he knows about Iokav: that he works for a man named Abrosim; that he gathered both stolen souls and stolen

VALERIA KARPOV (STEELSOUL PROTECTOR)

ABILITIES:

Clockwork Vessel – A clockwork vessel is a construct (see *IKRPG Core Rules*, p. 219) that provides a soul token when destroyed. Despite being a construct, a character inhabiting a clockwork vessel does not automatically pass Willpower rolls.

Defensive Strike – Once per turn, when an enemy advances into and ends its movement in the character's melee range, this character can immediately make one normal melee attack against it.

Feat Points – The character starts each encounter with 1 feat point. It is allocated 1 feat point at the start of each of its turns. The character can have only 1 feat point at a time.

Shield Guard – Once per turn, when a friendly character is directly hit by an attack while within 2" of this character, this character can choose to be directly hit instead. This character cannot use Shield Guard if it is incorporeal, knocked down, prone, or stationary.

SKILLS:

NAME	STAT	RANK	STAT + RANK
Great Weapon	PRW	2	6
Detection	PER	2	7
Lore (Cyriss)	INT	2	6
Mechanical Engineering	INT	2	6



CLOCKWORK VESSEL INTERNAL DAMAGE TABLE

When a character's clockwork vessel suffers 5 or more points of damage as a result of a single damage roll, a roll must be made on the Clockwork Vessel Internal Damage Table to determine if any internal systems are also damaged. If the vessel suffers the same effect on a subsequent roll before the previous effect has been repaired, it suffers no additional internal damage.

D6	RESULT
1–2	No internal systems are damaged – No additional penalty.
3	Arm Damaged – One of the vessel's arms is crippled as a result of the damage suffered. Randomize which arm is damaged. Until the damage is repaired, the character suffers –3 to attack rolls made with the damaged arm.
4	Loss of Power – The vessel's internal power flow has been compromised, resulting in a severe loss of power to the clockwork vessel. Until repaired, the character suffers –3 STR.
5	Movement Damaged – The vessel's movement systems have been damaged. Until repaired, the character suffers –1 SPD and DEF and cannot run or charge.
6	Essence Chamber Damage – The vessel's essence chamber has been damaged, resulting in reduced control over the vessel. Until the vessel is repaired, the character suffers –1 INT and PER.

secrets of the Convergence for his master; that he was tasked with joining another of Abrosim's lieutenants, who is currently gathering information in Volkovar nearby; and that Iokav will likely go to the man now to deliver the vessel he took from the machine—containing the souls of Kasparovik, Andrei, and five others from the village.

CONCLUSION

With the destruction of the machine and Iokav's escape, each prisoner and PC's skin begins to return to a normal hue, and the PCs are able to free the prisoners from their cages. The cages are easily unlatched from the outside once the machine no longer functions.

Edik is extremely grateful to the PCs for driving off Iokav, and he encourages the PCs to pursue him to recover the stolen souls, saying he may be able to restore Kasparovik by placing him in a clockwork vessel. If they bring back Iokav alive, he notes, the odds of this succeeding are much higher if they can force him to help. If Dominik was killed, Edik can give the PCs a general amount of the information about Iokav and Abrosim, overheard in conversations between Iokav and Karpov.

Evelina, Andrei's niece, displays leadership qualities among the villagers who were prisoners, gathering them to return to Volkovar, but she separates herself long enough to talk to the PCs about helping them find her uncle. Andrei's soul, she says, is now in Iokav's possession—she witnessed his capture—and she offers the PCs room and board in her mother's home in Volkovar if they will only allow her to help track Iokav.

She tells them that while she was a prisoner, she overheard Iokav talk of an alchemist he had been investigating—apparently at his master Abrosim's command. She heard the words "Crucible Guard" whispered. She knows only that they are "north" of here, but close enough that Iokav seemed to feel he could get to them with relative ease. Why he was interested in the alchemist, she has no idea, but it is likely to be Iokav's next destination.

The rest of the survivors are eager to return to Volkovar, and the prefect Edik is eager to escort them out of the temple via the entrance in the woods where the PCs came in. Once they are outside, elimination servitors appear behind Edik as a silent warning to the villagers to be on their way.

Outside the temple in the woods, as the PCs either prepare to escort the villagers back to Volkovar or as they prepare to go their own way, they see a sizable black raven in the trees above. Its eyes glow with an unnatural green light. It calls once with an ugly croak before launching itself into the sky, shedding many feathers and swooping north over the trees.

Pursuing Iokav

The PCs may choose to pursue the unnatural raven, return to Volkovar with Evelina and the other villagers, or even return to the Satsiyana Inn in search of additional clues. For the moment, all of these lead to dead ends—Iokav seems to have disappeared with the souls of innocent people, but no matter where they go next the PCs see dozens of ravens circling in the distance.

They are being watched by their newfound enemies, who are biding their time before making the next move against the PCs.

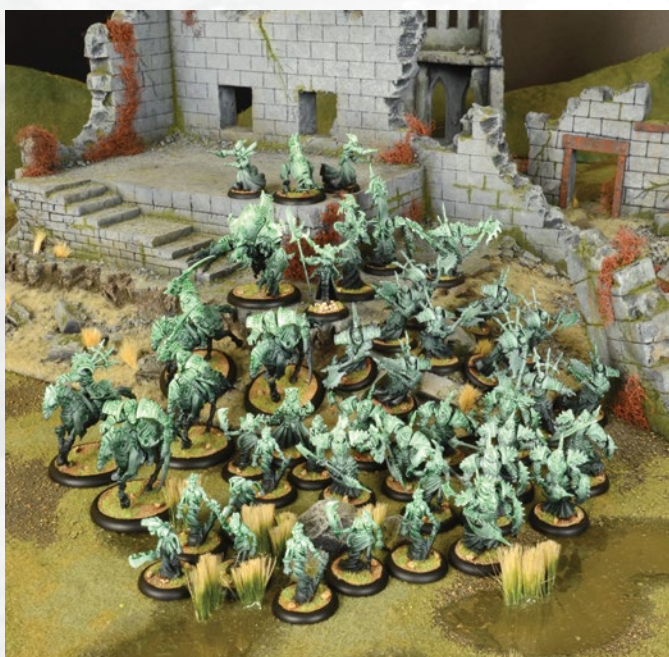
STAFF GALLERY

FOSTER'S GHOST RAIDERS

BY CHARLES B. FOSTER III

Charles B. Foster III had a few minutes between painting projects to put together a massive army of Cryxian ghosts for this issue's staff gallery. He also read War and Peace, wrote a treatise on why tabletop gaming will take over the world, and successfully explained the theology of the Convergence of Cyriss to a third-grade audience.

A few months back I decided to paint up the Cryx holiday bundle in an attempt to lock in on a faction for a while. After finishing the holiday bundle, I wasn't sure what I wanted to paint next—everything in the faction looked awesome! Did I want to jump in and paint a Kraken or perhaps another unit? I had wanted to paint up Blackbane's Ghost Raiders for a while, but why stop there? Why not a whole ghost army? Here are the results...



One of the biggest problems with using Bane Thralls and Bane Knights is that sometimes your opponents can run away faster than you can catch them. Bane Riders, however, overcome this with their high SPD 7 and Reach and, on top of that, Curse, which adds an additional 2" inches of movement. This just proves, as Bane Lord Tartarus said, "Nothing can outride death."

What better to haunt your opponent's army than with a nearly 12-foot-tall, seven-ton warjack! What a Nightmare! With its Imprint: Ghostly and Stealth Affinity to Deneghra, this is the perfect complement to Wraith Witch Deneghra and her spectral army.



JOE'S ~~SCOTT'S~~ LEGION

Gen Con Master Craftsman winner Joe Scotta (whose name is not Scott; see No Quarter #51, page 66) was quite good-natured about being mistakenly identified a few issues back. As a way of making it up to him, we wanted to feature him in his very own Player Gallery.

I started my Legion of Everblight army in early 2011 with the battlegroup starter. Eleven warlocks and 305 points later, only Thagrosh, the Messiah and four Shredders stand between me and a fully painted collection! The most challenging part of the journey was painting thirty-four Blighted Nyss Swordsmen units for my Rhyas Weapon Master list. *That* was a test of endurance. The most rewarding models to paint were both Vayls and Annyssa; I loved getting the faces just right. I hope they inspire you to get painting!

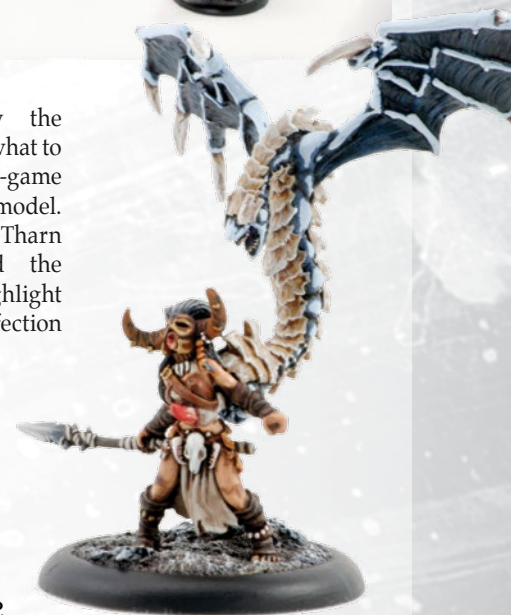


How many times has Typhon incinerated swaths of infantry? Or assassinated a warcaster with those three beautiful blighted blasts? Two Ravagore balls of fire helped me visually display why Typhon is so feared at on the tabletop!

When I first saw the Afflictor, I knew just what to do to illustrate the in-game mechanics of the model. An unfortunate Tharn Bloodtracker offered the perfect pose to highlight just how nasty the Infection special rule can be.



Check out page 112
for the new
No Quarter
Painting Challenge!



NO QUARTER PAINTING CHALLENGE

Since 2007, *No Quarter* has called upon our talented readers to meet a series of precise challenges in modeling and painting. We've seen a lot of fantastic conversions and awesome paint jobs over the past six years, but with this issue a new era of competition begins.

The new *No Quarter* Painting Challenge has now removed nearly all restraints on your creativity, limiting it instead to a single theme and broadening the challenge to include all Privateer Press models within that theme. Simply paint your model, take a few publication-quality digital photos of it, and send those photos to us.

Once we receive your pictures, Studio Director Ron Kruzie will judge your work by the same criteria used in the world-renowned Formula P3 Grandmaster Painting Competition held each year at Lock & Load GameFest and Gen Con. Models will be judged individually on their own merits. Top entries will be published here in the pages of *No Quarter* and awarded either gold or silver honors, and winners will receive an extremely limited-edition *No Quarter* Painting Challenge Coin, in gold or silver coloration, to proudly display alongside their model.



This issue's theme:

SKORNE WARBEASTS

To submit your entry, fill out a submission form from the address below and send it, along with digital photographs of your model, to submissions@privateerpress.com. Before entering read the rules and submission guidelines at: privateerpress.com/no-quarter/no-quarter-challenges

So prep your models, dip your brushes, and start painting. The thrill of victory, the accolades of your peers, and a shot at a *No Quarter* Painting Challenge Coin await you!

ENTRIES DUE BY 4/17/14

**NEW
RULES &
REWARDS**



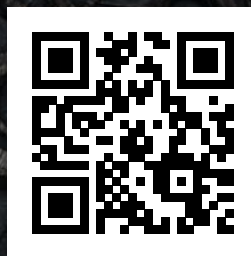
UNCOVER THE DARK ORIGINS OF
THAGROSH, PROPHET OF EVERBLIGHT.



MUTAGENESIS
BY ORRIN GREY

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