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EDITORIAL

By John Foody

Welcome to issue 12 of Warpstone. For various reasons it's been a particularly tough haul this time, but here we are on time. (And yes in reply to a reader's comment – we are looking terribly punctual these days. Very unbecoming I must say.) Not only that, but we've got plenty of excellent material to get your teeth into and we're pleased to have received some correspondence for the letters page. More please...!

Marienburg: Sold Down the River has finally washed up on the shelves, a year after our special issue dedicated to the city. Lost at sea and all that, but was originally timed the issue for a simultaneous release. Still, it looks very impressive indeed and we do give it a thorough review. Hopefully it marks the beginning of Hogshead's true revitalisation of the WFRP line. Hogshead did save WFRP (not simply by re-releasing it, but by doing a quality job of it) but it is time for regular new supplements. Of course, on a similar note, in the grand tradition of WFRP, our articles on Slavery and Talabheim haven't materialised in this issue as promised. Bar the end of the world on New Years Eve, Slavery will turn up next issue and the Talabheim series will begin in issue 14.

Just as Hollywood stars who have spent years striving to be famous spend many of their interviews moaning about being famous, I intend to be a "successful" fanzine editor moaning about being a "successful" fanzine editor. (Successful being a very relative term of course – we produce a regular product players buy, read and, for the most part, liked. Hey! A success!) Perhaps 'moan' is a bit of strong word, but nevertheless I'm going to discuss Warpstone's policy on submissions.

We love 'em, and we just don't get enough!

Warpstone wants as much input from readers as possible. A diversity of voices can only strengthen the magazine. Quite simply, it gives us more material to work with, which is always a good thing! Currently we have a core team of writers, bolstered by those who submit the occasional article. But this is not a closed club – we want more members!

Once an article (these comments apply to art, too) has been submitted and read, we always reply with constructive criticism. Virtually no Warpstone article has been accepted without reworking. Such a dialogue between editor and author can involve numerous drafts. However, many writers feel put off by this initial rejection and never resubmit their work, which is a real shame, particularly after the effort that has clearly gone into preparing them.

Let's make this clear: asking for improvements or even re-writing is not some sort of rejection by another name. If we aren't interested in an article we will tell you so, and tell you why. The process is simply a way of getting the most out of a piece, so that the final article really fulfils its potential – be it a 500 word story or 20,000 word scenario. And it's not a one-way process, either. I often have back-and-forth discussions about the minor details of a career (whether an advance should be +10 or +20, or if a skill is appropriate) or a single point in a location description. So if you intend to submit to Warpstone be prepared for more work than you perhaps expected.

While on the topic of submissions, its worth talking about articles based outside the borders of The Empire and Kislev. It is a difficult topic to balance. We are more than happy to cover other areas of the Warhammer World, but are careful to maintain the overall atmosphere. Any article must be firmly placed in the context of what has gone before. We would therefore turn down a career based solely in Lustria, but would look at an article or a scenario based somewhere on the continent, particularly if there were good reasons why existing PCs might end up there. We also take care with articles on topics covered by forthcoming official sourcebooks. For example, there is little point publishing an article on Magic when *Realms of Sorcery* is on the way and might well make the piece obsolete. Of course, after the sourcebook has been released, things are entirely different. At that point, both we and our readers will view the article in the same context – even if the article aims to ignore or re-write it!

The message from this? All those who have submitted, and promised to come back to me with a revised draft – go for it! We'll be waiting to hear from you.

INFO





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SUBMISSIONS

Version 1.5 – July 1999

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

Payment

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

How?

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

Art Submissions

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

Article Submissions

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

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

Regular Articles

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

Comment Articles: We are always looking for articles where you put across your point of view on a particular subject. *Cameos:* Brief encounters and adventure outlines. Don't include character profiles, only descriptions. *Scenarios:* Full length, detailed adventures. We are especially interested in scenarios that do not include hosts of creatures, lots of magic or loads of Chaos cultists. When these are included, they should be integral part of the story. A tribe of goblins with +1 swords all round will prove the adage that 'the editor's red pen is mightier than the sword...'. *Short stories:* Set firmly in the Warhammer World. Same guidelines as Scenarios.

The Article List

If there is an article you would like to see developed but don't want to write it then please let us know. We'll add it to our list. Similarly, if you see something on the list you'd like to write, tell us. We'll check that no-one else has asked to do it, and will remove it from the list in future issues. From last issue we are looking for careers based on the ideas raised in *A Job for Life?* and *Foundation & Faith*.

ETC.

"Where is it?" wailed the editor of the blasted journal known to the majority not at all. The portrait painter had failed to appear, again! "They have no sense of time these painters." The snivelling scribe decided to try and apply reason although he fondly remembered old Otto, the last to try such an approach. His pleading words could be heard for days after the master bricked him up in an unused alcove. "Marktplatz is notoriously busy at this time of day. Maybe..." "QUIET WRETCH! Your tongue would make a fine ornament on the mantelpiece!" The scribe knew better than to utter another word, let alone breathe. Bowing continuously, he exited the room. Opening the forbidden Tome on the exquisitely carved plinth he thumbed through the well-used pages until he found what he sought. "Hmmm, let life become art, poetic justice I think and a far better ornament for over the fireplace."

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ABBREVIATIONS

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

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REVIEWS

Warhammer Armies: Vampire Counts

Published by Games Workshop

Reviewed by John Foody



Before I begin, it's worth stating the intentions of this review. Examining a Games Workshop product for *Warpstone* is not a straight forward task. Although both are nominally based in the Warhammer world, we are reviewing a product for a purpose it wasn't created for. Simply, this review examines if *Vampire Counts* is a useful product for *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* not to mention a good product for *Warhammer Fantasy Battle*. And there is a difference.

With previous Warhammer books, many WFRP players have held their hands up in despair as the background is

changed and in some cases ripped apart. Bretonnia (reviewed in *Warpstone* issue 7) is certainly the most extreme example of this. Many of the books, and this one is included, also has the problem that the army seems to dominate the World in its impact with minimal influence from other cultures and races.

The latest *Warhammer Armies* book follows the others in offering army lists, painting tips and background on its chosen subject. *Vampire Counts*, written by Tuomas Pirinen and Alessio Cavatore, looks at the undead within the Old World. These are led by the Vampire Counts, four families (bloodlines they are called here) that rule Sylvania. As an easterly province of The Empire (ruled by the elector in Stirland) it is of potential interest to WFRP players. Vampires themselves are popular bad guys and they have never been fully detailed for WFRP. Of course, there are many sources both in literature and cinema and it was going to be interesting to see how Games Workshop integrated them into the Warhammer world. In fact Games Workshop had rejected a WFRP Vampire sourcebook in the past as the writer, a well known WFRP author, had made some of them sympathetic characters. However, due to a change of 'vision' at Games Workshop they were no longer canon. Although Vampires dominate the book, there are liberal helpings of Zombies, Skeletons and Ghouls amongst others.

The book itself is in the style of the previous Warhammer Army books, eighty pages long with the middle sixteen in colour plates. Unusually, the cover art is garish and poor. This leads the way for the internal art. Although dark in style it is poor and generally lacking atmosphere, although a few pieces rise above the rest (One of these is shown and gives you an idea of the book's tone).

**But first on Earth, as Vampyre sent,
Thy corpse shall from its tomb be rent;
Then ghastly haunt thy native place,
And suck the blood of all thy race.***

The first quarter of the book is dedicated to the background and history of the Vampire Counts. Although heavy-handed in parts (do they really need to march hordes of skeletons and zombies to Altdorf at the drop of a

femur?) it is good, atmospheric and evocative. Certainly, some of the background is useable for Warhammer roleplay. Yes, a GM may need to treat it as an exaggerated history but even this feels right for the material. You can imagine peasants sitting around the fire telling these stories, the tales growing with each generation.

A few Undead associated Old World locations are mentioned, Mousillion among them. However, it is Sylvania that dominates the legends of the Undead and the book. A map of the province is given but this is pretty basic and not much use. The description of the area is also sparse, but scattered throughout the narrative are enough stories, descriptions and history to flesh the area out. The book obviously nods to Transylvania but the Vampires within are more obviously inspired by Bram Stoker's own inspiration, the bloody 15th Century Warlord Vlad the Impaler, rather than his own creation Dracula. Certainly, the suave, sophisticated Vampires of Anne Rice and Hollywood aren't much in evidence. Much of the area's history is told through the stories of the most famous of these Vampire Counts. Legend has it there are seven Vampire bloodlines but only four are known, and thus described here, the von Carsteins of Sylvania are the most famous and feared. Each of the four has a different personality and it is very tempting to see the influence of White Wolf's *Vampire* background here. Finally, a number of tomes containing knowledge of Vampires and the necromantic arts are discussed and there is enough detail for expansion should you wish to use these.

Following this background are the game rules. Rules for counts, necromantic spells, collecting and painting an army, as well as army and character lists. The background for the rest of the Undead is useless and you will get far more inspiration and detail in the WFRP rulebook itself. The final part deals with famous vampire characters but this sketchy and all the interesting information has been dealt with before.

Vampire Counts does have some benefit to WFRP players although GMs will have to work with the information to get the most out of it.

There is little subtlety in the background, and there are simply too many huge battles consisting of hordes of Undead against hordes of Imperial Templars and the like. As far as Mousillion and Sylvania are concerned, it also depends if you like the idea of an area being ruled by Vampires. Of course as I said, it could just be stories. However, there are nuggets of information within the book that can be used to enhance a WFRP campaign.

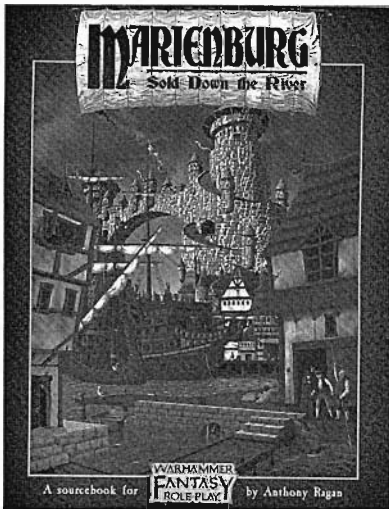
In the end though, the cost of the book compared to its influence means I cannot recommend it to WFRP players. If you are desperate for some ideas on Sylvania, then borrow a copy. However, the tone of the book does offer some comfort to those who despair of Games Workshop's history of publishing Warhammer books that disregard what has gone before in the Warhammer World.



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Marienburg: Sold Down the River

Published by Hogshead Publishing
Reviewed by John Foody



Weighing in at 160 pages comes this impressive looking city sourcebook from Hogshead. It builds on articles originally published in *White Dwarf* magazine. However Anthony Ragan, the author (and co-author of the original articles) has chosen not to use all this material and rewrite the parts he does. *Marienburg: Sold Down the River* is a major release for Hogshead, the first truly original publication since the partly Marienburg based *Dying of the Light* and in many ways far more important. It is the first release to expand on the background of the Warhammer world. In fact due to Marienburg's nature as the principal port in the Old World it means there are snippets of information from around the world.

The city of Marienburg is located in the Wasteland and the only population centre of note. In fact, it is also the largest city in the Warhammer World. Once part of the Empire, it proclaimed independence some seventy years ago. Now it controls access of goods into its former ruler and many prominent noble families are in debt to the rich merchants who rule the city. The ten richest of these form the Directorate and control the city although many claim it is a democracy. Of course not all is equal and in the streets the ultra-rich rub shoulders (not to closely though) with the destitute of whom there are many. Marienburg has tended to be seen as a city for political scenarios and intrigue but does the new sourcebook manage to carry this off with success? Of course, it is similar in intent to *Middenheim: City of Chaos* and thus needs to be compared with this. After all, do you need two city sourcebooks in your collection?

Heralded by a nice logo the cover art initially looks excellent. However, a closer examination tempered my enthusiasm for it. There is lots of going on, and some nice touches but it looks too clean, too computer generated. Attached to the back cover is a city map. Actually, it comes in a rather nice envelope which is rather a good idea (Although this was due to the Marienburg map originally being stuck into the back on *Something Rotten in Kislev* by mistake). Ralph Horsley's map looks great but it isn't of much use to GMs, instead it works best in giving players a feel for the city. The map in the book itself is much better for the GM. Inside, Horsley's illustrations are the best of an excellent set of atmospheric pieces. Not that they're all good though. Some are average and some are just plain poor. Overall though, they give a feel for the city. There is a lot of text for your money and the layout is nice and clean. Quotes are scattered through the book and these are fun and nicely illustrate the attitudes of those in the city.

The city background and history is covered in some depth, also looking at the geography of the Wasteland and the population outside Marienburg. Inside the city politics, history, law and religion are all detailed. Ragan constantly fleshes out the descriptions with anecdotes and pieces of history, all ready supplies for plots and scenarios to be developed from. He succeeds in making Marienburg a city with a distinctive atmosphere of its own. This comes through in all these background aspects, whether it the attitude of the people, the political structure or the nature of religious worship. In Marienburg, Manann and Hædryk are the two strongest cults, representing the sea and money respectively. Included in a WFRP book for the first time is the notion of Sainthood, here being given a strongly political dimension. The other unusual aspect of Marienburg is that it contains a community of Sea Elfs. These hold a lot of power in the city and Ragan manages to convey the mixture of fear and respect they inspire with confidence.

The bulk of *Sold Down the River* is devoted to detailing the various areas of the city. Here it takes a different approach to *Middenheim*. Instead of giving an overview of each district, a few are covered in depth. Eight areas out of a possible thirty are given this treatment. The others are simply named and given a one-line summary. The author stating his intent is to allow GMs to develop these areas themselves.

Each area detailed follows the same format. Firstly, quotes give the locals' thoughts on the area. A map, a cut away from the larger pullout map, shows the important locations. This doesn't work as well as it should. The maps are stylish but more detail would have been welcome. Locations detailed in the section are shown, but others

mentioned in passing are not. The background, atmosphere and locals are examined first. After these, various locations are covered in detail, including an NPC in each. A number also have descriptions of NPCs not associated with a particular location.

The Suiddock area is the centre of Marienburg, sea-faring ships docking here and the Import-Export Exchange, home of the Mercantile Guild dominating the area. However, it is also the centre of the criminal underworld. Ragan spends a lot of time detailing this important area, describing ten locations and eleven characters. So for example, the Stevedores' and Teamsters' Guild covers a description of the building, who would be found there, some history on the guild itself and mention of recent conflict with the Elfs. Lea-Jan Cobbuis, Master of the Guild, is then described with a full profile. As part of this, his connection with other characters is given an overview. Under the description of the Import-Export Exchange details are given on making deals and how the market works.

The seven remaining areas have around six locations described within each. Some give an example of a kind of area, in much the same way as the Suiddock is a working class location. Others are more unique like Elftown or Rijkers's Isle. All these areas are well described with inherent numerous scenario ideas.

The next section is a collection of fifteen Adventure Seeds. Each is one or two paragraphs long and gives an idea for a scenario within the city. These are a mixed bunch, generally strong, and as is their nature, need some work. A full-length scenario, *The Lustrian Bubble*, written by James Wallis follows. This set out to highlight the way the city works and does business. It is a very low combat scenario, ideally pitched for Marienburg. It is a good scenario although short and it could have been stronger, especially at the end.

Sold Down the River finishes with seven appendixes and some notes on the map. The first gives details of the gods Hædryk and Stromfels, the latter being the god of the dangers of the sea. Both are detailed and useful. Stromfels, especially is well done. An evil and outlawed god, but one with interesting twists that adds to the idea that religious doctrine is all politics, something Ragan explores at a number of points within the narrative. Indeed, as all the best WFRP products have done, the author manages to successfully avoid splitting everything into good and evil, most characters have solid motivations and morally grey areas abound.

The next few appendixes hold summary information; standard NPCs, encounter tables, a gazetteer and trading rules (a synopsis of those found in *Death on the Reik*). Also here is a Wastelander modified version of the character generation table and a huge list of typical Wasteland names. The former is a good idea while the latter is very useful indeed. Finally, a history is given for the map bundled with *Sold Down the River*. This is entertaining and it has to be asked, is the author trying to tell us something about Ralph Horsley?

Marienburg: Sold Down the River is an excellent sourcebook and one that gives future publications a very high target to aim at. The book is written with humour and a thorough appreciation of the game world. Anthony Ragan has managed to make Marienburg feel like a living city, one with countless facets to explore. The atmosphere is strong, and it is not just a *Middenheim* clone. There is a huge amount of information, leaving the reader with numerous ideas to get the most out of the book but there is also enough space to expand the city if desired. Chaos is also regulated to a low rung in the city, and where it is present is subtler, allowing GMs that so desire to bring it to the forefront in their plots.

I have few criticisms with the wide sweep of the book but some of the details are not to my taste. Magic is a little too trivialised. Whereas the Elfen sorcery rightly inspires fear, I don't like the idea of a magic shop that makes self-cleaning bedpans (Why buy this when a servant will do the job at a fraction of the price?). On a similar vein there are a few too many Bags of *Middenheim*, rings of protection and the like. Can't say I'm too keen on the credit card idea either. These are minor points easily changed, but there is one larger area of concern. Simply, nearly everyone detailed has got a large skeleton in the closet. Again, not a problem but more could have been made of lower-key problems and situations.

I feel the brevity of descriptions on the other areas in Marienburg is a loss. Even a paragraph on each would have given a solid base for GMs to work from. Other pieces that would have strengthened *Sold Down the River* would have been an index (there is a lot of information) and a players introduction sheet (as provided in *City of Chaos*, although *Warpstone* did publish a Marienburg version in issue 9).

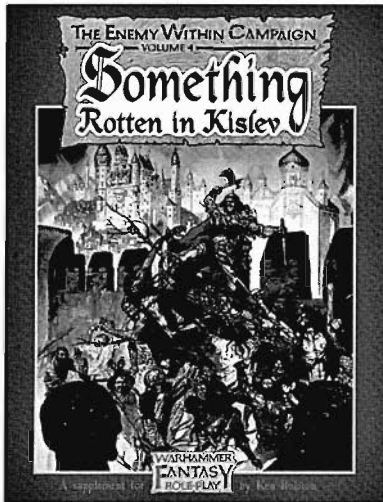
As many of you will have noticed there has been some delay in getting Marienburg released. After all *Warpstone 9* was originally tied to coincide with it. However, the delay has not been due to a weakness in the product. Marienburg is well worth adding to your collection but does it replace *Middenheim: City of Chaos*. No! Instead, they both offer very different views of their respective city. I would go as far to say Marienburg is for more experienced players, while *Middenheim* makes the better introductory location. Marienburg is the better of the two, but simply, the two sourcebooks complement each other.

Marienburg: Sold Down the River is highly recommended for those looking for a somewhere new to explore, and makes a welcome addition to the slowly growing pile of WFRP literature.

Something Rotten in Kislev

Published by Hogshead Publishing

Reviewed by John Foody



Something Rotten in Kislev, the fourth part of *The Enemy Within* campaign, takes the PCs away from the Empire and previous plots. Indeed, it has been accused by many of breaking the flow of the whole campaign. Hogshead have defended this aspect of the scenario, saying, "It shows what's going on in the rest of the World...and it lets things develop in the Empire, out of sight of the characters."¹ Therefore, in many ways, it sets itself up as a standalone adventure. Thus it should be considered on two levels: as a standalone scenario and as part of *The Enemy Within*.

Ken Rolston was bought in by Games Workshop as a 'big-name-writer' to appeal to the American

market. Graeme Davis, one of the game's original authors, joined him. Rolston was also the writer of *Realms of Sorcery* and *Realms of Divine Magick* (both of which were rejected by Games Workshop, but are currently available unofficially on the Internet). I had GM'ed *Something Rotten in Kislev* some years back and my players and I considered it to be the weakest part of the *Enemy Within*. Re-reading it, I was looking to give it another chance and perhaps see where it had gone wrong.

This reprint keeps the same cover and internal art as the original. I don't like the cover picture but the interior art is some of the strongest in the campaign.

The book starts with notes on how to introduce PCs, both within and outside the context of *The Enemy Within*. However, the campaign notes are somewhat lacklustre and most GMs will end up having to change them. This is especially true if you're not playing the campaign straight through. However, the device used to get the PCs involved (membership of a certain organisation) is nice and players enjoy it no end.

An overview of the geography, people and history of Kislev follows. Far more could have been made of this – although as it stands, there is just enough for GMs to work with. Let's be clear about this: the book clearly isn't a Kislev sourcebook. Most players, however, will want *Something Rotten in Kislev* for the scenarios. There are three in the book, the last two being linked.

The first finds the PCs on the trail of a group of marauding beastmen. The scenario introduces the concept of spirit (not the Vodka type) worship to the players. These encounters are quite atmospheric, but the scenario is let down by a poor ending including some badly thought out NPCs and situations. Yes, GMs can tweak as they see fit, but it's a real shame that they need to in order to salvage the adventure.

The second scenario introduces the Hobgoblin Hegemony, providing an interesting slant on goblinoids. They are given motivations and personality other than that of psychotic children, as so often shown in other Games Workshop literature. The PCs find themselves thrown into a Mexican stand-off and must play off the opposing sides to achieve their goal. However, there is little opportunity for interaction: players are given little to do except observe the scenery. Again, the climax is a let down, and relies upon the introduction of the second of the book's two 'gimmicks'. This one works better than the one in the last scenario but both remain just that: gimmicks. However, to an extent, weaknesses in this scenario can be forgiven as it is intended as a scene-setter for the final part.

The third and largest scenario involves sending the PCs on a spying message to the rogue town of Bolgasgrad, which has declared itself independent from Kislev. The central idea is strong but it is poorly executed. More could have been made of the various dilemmas that face the players, but is all sacrificed in favour of a poor dungeon bash. Indeed, once more, the ending is very weak. There are elements in this scenario that really should not have been allowed past the editors. There is only one realistic outcome to the scenario, despite the writers' notes, and it will leave players distinctly annoyed.

The book finishes with some recommended experience rewards, some pregenerated characters and the player handouts. The characters aren't too bad and could be quite useable as NPCs. The player handouts are adequate, and fulfil their purpose. However,

these are mixed up with 'GM's reference sheets'. A pointless idea - these should just have been placed in the main text of the book.

Overall, *Something Rotten in Kislev* is a disappointment. It has lots of good ideas, but too few are carried through well enough to really work. Reading the scenario brought to mind a comment made by Phil Gallagher, describing the author as "Ken 'Way-Too-Many-Ideas' Rolston."² A number of interesting and well set-up moral ambiguities are raised, but the PCs only get to watch; there's little opportunity to get involved. Indeed, players are likely to feel somewhat helpless and dragooned if the GM isn't careful. Feeling like tourists does not make players happy. The Russian storytelling tradition of immortals is alluded to, but it's not made to fit within the scenario itself. This highlights another problem. There is also far too much exotica for my tastes. Among some overpowered magic items, there are even truth potions. Ugh!

If you intend to run *Something Rotten in Kislev*, you will need to be willing to work on it. It is not a scenario that should be run without considerable deliberation as to the outcome of certain situations. This is especially true if it is being run as part of an ongoing campaign, not least because the inevitable outcome for the PCs will involve follow-on adventures or high-powered, specialist support to avoid making the remainder of the campaign unplayable. In summary, re-reading *Something Rotten in Kislev* has not changed my opinion of it much. It stands better as a standalone scenario. Certainly, it remains the poorest of *The Enemy Within* adventures, and there seems little reason to count it as part of the campaign. With the planned rewrite of the Empire in Flames, we can only ask why *Something Rotten in Kislev* wasn't given the same treatment.

Marienburg author, Anthony Ragan, tells us why *Something Rotten in Kislev* is a great supplement.

I don't just like Ken Rolsten's *Something Rotten in Kislev*, I love it. I think it is the second best WFRP supplement ever written, bowing only to Graeme Davis' brilliant *Shadows Over Bogenhafen*. Not only does it provide valuable information about a setting outside the Empire, it also provides the GM with three excellent adventures. That must be better than rat-on-a-stick...with mustard.

But SRiK isn't loved by all. In fact, some absolutely despise it. They think it goes over the top and violates the 'spirit' of WFRP. Well, they're wrong. And, because they're happy to sell tickets to a good fight, the Warpstone editors have offered me a bit of space to argue why I think you should love SRiK, too.

The controversy doesn't lie with the source material: most will say the background on the land of Kislev is good and useful. The three adventures are the bones of contention, here. Critics advance three arguments: they're too linear; they're too "high fantasy" (magic and undead are too common, in other words); and they abound with dumb jokes.

Too linear: bunk. The PCs are playing a role. Assuming one is following on from *Power Behind the Throne*, the PCs are agents of the Graf of Middenheim, on detached service with the Tsar of Kislev. As such, they are expected to obey the Tsar's orders. This is a hierarchical, class-ridden society, after all. The 'middling sorts' are expected to obey their betters. But, within each assignment, the PCs are free to do whatever they wish. This includes running off to Cathay, if they want! Like a traveller caught in a thunderstorm, the PCs have little control over their circumstances, but they can react however they wish.

Too 'high fantasy': this really means "there's too much powerful magic floating around." Well, yes and no. SRiK's great strength is that it takes the players' assumptions about the setting, built-up over three previous adventures, and turns them upside-down. It forces the players to ask questions and think about the world. Dwarves are all dour Engineers? Elves are all good?. Magic should be rare?. Dealing with Chaos is bad? And Undead are evil?

Too many dumb jokes: okay, this is a matter of taste. But, consider the setting. WFRP is an earthy game, and bad jokes have been part of it since the day it was issued. Nor is it inappropriate. People alleviate bad situations by making jokes, even dumb ones in poor taste. It's completely fitting for the people of Bolgasgrad to crack bad jokes about zombies – it's a defense mechanism used to keep from going insane in a nightmare situation.

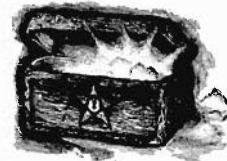
I think certain characters are funny (what can I say but one's a variation on a character seen in dozens of Warner Brothers cartoons?), but I'll grant that others may disagree. They take the game too seriously.

In short, SRiK presents the characters with situations that challenge their assumptions, and challenge the players themselves as roleplayers. I applaud it for standing WFRP's conventions on their head. It isn't the author's fault that GW then overdid the powerful magic and immortal character routine in later products. Standing by itself, SRiK presents the exceptions that highlight the 'rules' of the WFRP setting. Every setting needs its moments that break the rules, just to keep the players from getting too comfortable. SRiK provides one possible instance for a GM's campaign.

And I like the dumb jokes!

WARPSTONE FRAGMENTS

BRIEF REVIEWS AND NEWS FROM THE WORLD OF WARHAMMER



The WFRP Mailing List Goes On!

For a decade now, the WFRP Internet community has been served by the WFRP Mailing List. The WFRP Mailing List gives WFRP players and GMs direct access to each other and some of the games' creators via email. As such, the WFRP Mailing List is an invaluable tool for serious WFRP players. All things WFRP are fair topics for discussion on the list. Discussions have ranged from basic questions over the rules to history, politics and religion in the Old World. The list generates about 50 new messages a day and the conversation is lively. Fortunately, unlike many other Internet mailing lists, the conversations remain civil and on-topic.

Currently, the WFRP Mailing List can be found at wfrp@employees.org. To subscribe, send an email to majordomo@employees.org with the text of the message reading *subscribe wfrp*. The WFRP Mailing List also comes in a digest format. If you wish to receive the digest format, use this subscribe command: *subscribe wfrp-digest*

You will receive an authorisation email from the mailing list asking you to confirm you want to subscribe. Follow the instructions and send the correct authorisation code back to [majordomo](mailto:majordomo@employees.org) and you will immediately be on the list. You can find the list archives at <http://www.warhammer.net> (Clay Luther)



Things have been quiet with Hogshead since the release of the well-received *Marienburg: Sold Down the River* in August. Mostly this is because a lot of time has been taken up preparing for and attending conventions in the UK and America, but also because James Wallis has been side-tracked by his day-job, a new monthly magazine about the internet, called *Crazynet*.

Things have, however, been moving along. *Doomstones 3* nears the end of its editing, and *Realms of Sorcery* nears the end of its writing. The much-vaunted 'before the year 2000' launch is now impossible, but they're aiming to get it out as soon as they can.

Hogshead celebrate its fifth anniversary on 23rd October. So Congratulations! Sadly there are no new releases to help it celebrate, but it has announced the signing of a deal with Robin Laws (of *Shadowfist*, *Feng Shui* and *Doomstones 3* fame) to produce a new RPG, *Pantheon*, as part of the *New Style* series. Meanwhile, they say they are "deep in negotiations with a group of creators about a project it really can't talk about". They hope to announce details soon.

PUPPETLAND



Hogshead's latest *New Style* product is written by John Tynes. At twenty-four pages long the book also includes a second game *Powerkill*. Written by John Tynes, *Puppetland* finds the players playing puppets in a storybook land with a Lake of Milk and Cookies and a Candy Cave. However, this once happy home to many puppets is now a land of fear.

The evil Punch has killed the Maker and installed himself as a despotic tyrant. From the Maker's skin he has fashioned evil henchmen, backed by the nutcrackers: an army of vicious puppets. This atmospheric background brings to mind the styles and films of Tim Burton and Jan Svankmajer, something highlighted by the art of Raven Mimura. Tynes says in his notes, "The world of the game is a world of innocence that has been corrupted." It is an atmosphere he has achieved this perfectly.

A freeform game the players are expected only to say what their characters would say. Indeed, the simple rules go a long way to bringing the game to life. The game is in fact a campaign, one with a definite end. However, the length is left to the referee to decide. Some example adventure ideas are given. However, the only real omission in the book is the lack of a longer scenario to get referee's started.

Powerkill is only four pages long. Basically it is a critique to the nature of roleplaying dressed up as a game. It may have worked in a magazine but here it is a waste of space.

Puppetland is highly recommended and makes an excellent game to play from time to time. A word of warning, if you own the version previously published in *arcane* then there is nothing to be gained from buying this new edition.

\$BIG MONEYS

Games Workshop Profits

Games Workshop announced a profit of £12.6m on a turnover of £72.6m in their end of year profits. This is a rise of 12% from last year. They also celebrated the opening of their 200th store and their first sales in Japan. Tom Kirby the Chairman stated, "The intention is to build markets for Games Workshop in every one of the worlds major economies. The UK is our most developed territory and we use this to judge just how far we have got to go in all the others. Against this measure the US operation is currently operating at one fifth of its potential and the German operation at one quarter." You have been warned.

Elsewhere in the report it stated that all major products were now launched in line with an eight year product cycle. If they stay to this it should reduce the criticism they change the background every couple of years.

Hasbro buys Wizard of the Coast

Making Games Workshop's figures look small Hasbro have announced they are to acquire Wizards of the Coast, the world's largest publisher of hobby games. The purchase price is approximately \$325 million. Wizards are best known for *Magic: The Gathering* collectable card game, although they themselves bought TSR a couple of years ago. Hasbro already own a host of other famous names in the toy and games industry, Milton Bradley and Parker Brothers among them.

Alan G. Hassenfeld, Hasbro Chairman gave some idea of the future when he said, "There is no end to the opportunities we see from cross-fertilisation of our respective game portfolios, including the fast-growing areas of interactive software and on-line gaming." The Wizards' current management team will continue to run the company.

It was also announced the RPGA (Role Playing Gamers Association) and the DCI will be organised under an Organised Play division, since they both deal with issues related to organised play of Wizards of the Coast games. This has led to worries among RPGA members that the role-playing side will be left playing second fiddle. Jim Butler of TSR looked to soothe fears, stating "What we are looking to do is to create a global club that allows all of its members to enjoy the benefits of club membership and camaraderie."

It will be interesting to see how the roleplaying side of the company will fare in this new set-up.

GAMES MAGAZINES

Mythic Perspectives

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

Carnel

An A5 fanzine that covers RPG's in an entertaining way, usually in a discussion style. It has been irregularly printing the Oriental WFRP 'supplement' Tetsubo. Contact Robert Rees at Flat 9, Oakfield Mansions, Oakfield Grove, Clifton, Bristol, BS8 3BN or e-mail carnel@talk21.com. Issues 1-10 50p per issue, Issue 11 onwards £1 (Plus an SSAE). Issue 13 is out now. Website can be found at www.bits.bris.ac.uk/rrees/carnel

Games Games Games

Concentrates on boardgames, especially European ones, but does have some RPG coverage. £2.50 for the latest issue from SFC Press (GG), Freeport BR2522, Littlehampton BN16 1BR

Games Gazette

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

imagine

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

*** Visions the independent gaming magazine we mentioned last issue announced its closure while issue 3 was about to go to press. Lack of subscriptions and a badly handled launch were blamed for its failure. See page 9 for comment on this. We have just heard that Visions will now continue as an on-line magazine. It can now be found at www.Visions-mag.com/index.html *** The 1999 Orgins' Awards saw Mythic Perspectives win the award for best amateur magazine, so congratulations to them. Meanwhile Hogshead's Baron Munchausen lost out in the best new RPG category to the new Star Trek game *** Hogshead, along with various members of the Warpstone team enjoyed themselves at both Gencon UK and GamesDay. Both events were characterised by short staffed demo teams exhausting themselves. Gencon UK saw Gavin Birch win the tournament, playing the Richard Iorio II and Alfred Nunez Jr. scenario 'A charge of Faith'. Games Day saw Hogshead running a Pit-Fighting game (inspired by our article last issue we're told). The final saw fifteen players and three referees (shouting themselves hoarse, the fourth referee already having done so) squeezed around the bloodbath on the table before three lucky winners carried off various WFRP products. *** Meanwhile at Gencon UK, Warpstone artist, Richard Martin, was to be seen impressing all and sundry with his talent in the artists studio. *** Note Warpstone has a new website address, see inside front cover for details. *** We are offering you a chance to win a free issue of Warpstone, each and every time it is published. All you have to do is mark each article in the issue out of ten and send it to us. Just remember to add your name and address. Whether this by e-mail, post... OK! You get the idea. Only very few replies for last time, thanks to those who replied. Colin Mitchell runs away with the free issue. ***

MADMAN OR PROPHET?

Thoughts on Dreams and Omens by John Foody

"I have seen darkness spread across the land. Warriors with warped minds and weapons at its head. They will be at our gates in two nights, unseen by us till then. Ulric has granted this true-sight and in his name tomorrow we march."

Court Seer Alexis Oneyeich before leading the army to Sneyok Hill

"You must listen to me. The one you think sees with true-eyes is blind. Can you not see? Power has blinded him and he looks to repay those who have granted him this warped boon! In my dreams he kneels at the feet of the Changer of Ways."

Ivan, Beggar

"... the army is routed, most of the men dead, the baggage train lost and the Marshall captured. They knew we were coming. We stood no chance. We are lost but you must prepare for battle! They will be at the gates before dawn."

Captain Otto Radivich after the defeat of the Erengard army

Dreams, omens and prophecies are reasonably common devices in literature, especially fantasy and mythical stories. However, in roleplaying games they are rather more abused and generally disregarded. Published scenarios are usually designed to be played straight through and thus any dream or omen tends to have an affect in the immediate future. Thus a vision warning of a merchant who will betray you at the cross-roads, immediately sets alarm bells ringing when you met him two hours later. However, in campaign play so much more can be made of these events. Indeed, the Old World has a god (Morr), who is associated with dreams. This article looks to give some ideas on how dreams and prophecies can be incorporated into campaigns as potent but unreliable forces.

Throughout the article I use the word vision to covers dreams, omens and visions. Most of the comments apply to all these events. Simply though, dreams are had when the character is asleep and they may be misremembered or partially forgotten. They are seen as the least significant of all these events. However, dreams may also be seen as a vision or omen, thus becoming important. A waking vision is seen as very significant and usually involves a sight of a future event or words of warning from a Saint, old friend, etc. An omen is more vague, and is as likely to be a real event given portentous meaning. This could be comets, an eclipse, arrival of the characters at a remote village, birth of three-legged chicken etc.

An important benefit of campaign play is that events can be planned with plots stretched out over many weeks or months. Thus preparation becomes important. PCs in Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay are unique individuals, blessed with fate points, perhaps set aside by the gods for some legendary task. Hence it is not too much of a step to have them guided by the gods, no matter how subtle their influence. However, gods being gods, their actions don't have to make sense. Therefore dreams are clouded in symbolism, granted years before they are relevant or perhaps completely misleading. After all, does the god who grants the PC his dream have their interests at heart or his own?

Let us take as an example the dream of the merchant's betrayal. A PC awakens suddenly in the middle of the night, sweating from the horror of the dream. He remembers a merchant betraying him, a crossroads and his death at the hands of hooded men. However, the relevance of the dream may not become significant until many sessions later when the character is years older. In this way it is open to much more interpretation. Was the betrayer a merchant? Someone disguised as a merchant? A merchant disguised as someone else? Even more simply, which merchant could it be? Does the crossroads represent a physical crossroads, an inn named the crossroads or a stage of the characters life? Does the character ignore the dream or worry about its significance and thus perhaps use it to his advantage. Of course when the dream is given to the character the GM might have some idea of its meaning or none at all, waiting to add something later or ignoring it.

The relevance of dreams and omens is going to depend on your style of campaign. Granting them needs a bit of forethought. If the characters pay lip service to the gods, then it won't be so effective. Of course, the importance of a vision will depend on who is receiving it. A Cleric of Sigmar who receives a

vision of a dwarf or comet will give it a much greater significance than a halfling. How they react to it is of course another matter. Of course, if the vision warned of impending doom, then the Cleric is more likely to be taken seriously. Granting the same dream or vision to a *group of characters* is a very effective way of getting them to do something but it must not be overused. Also, be wary of placing too much significance in a vision. You don't want to tell them the solution to a scenario only to have them forget when it comes to the crunch. They should suffer for it but the scenario should not grind to a halt. Alternatively, a dream can remind characters of a clue they have missed or forgotten.

Once you have decided to grant your character a vision you need to decide on the form it will take. Whatever you chose it should be full of symbolism and open to interpretation. When you grant a PC a vision take them aside and describe what they see and hear but don't allow them to write anything down or ask you to repeat what you have said (although they may ask other questions). The elements and ideas you use in a dream are dependent on what you want to get across. Another alternative is to pick up a cheap book that pertains to dreams and their interpretations. To give a random example, the character dreams of entering a square in the morning and seeing open doors leading to a Cathedral and a riding school and must decide which to enter. Being a knight, he chooses to enter the Riding School at which point he awakens. When he awakens he seeks out a Seer to interpret what he saw. The Seer tells him the clear morning hinted at the approach of good fortune but the square shows a journey must be made first. Not entering the Cathedral showed the dreamer would become unhappy in wanting for what he could not have, while the riding school foretold that a friend will act falsely. Thus the choices made in the dream influence the waking hours.

Visions are likely to be extremely important to religious characters and they will pay more attention to them. Again vagueness will allow multiple interpretations. Morr is the god of dreams and thus all dreams are granted through him, but he chooses to cloak them in hidden meaning. However, all the gods may ask him to grant a dream to a follower. Thus Ranald petitions Morr to warn a follower that he is being hunted by the law. Thus, the dream given by Morr has the thief dreaming of a deer running through a forest pursued by hounds, waking just as they leap for its throat. If the thief heeds the dream he will have time to escape before his pursers crash through the door.

An omen is even more difficult to interpret, open to those with training or strong beliefs. However, different groups are also likely to have set beliefs of what certain events means. A pit-fighter coming across a dead calf may think nothing of it, to a farmer it is a bad omen for the calving season and a Druid may believe it signifies future disturbances in the area. Some omens will hold great power over many; a two-tailed comet will be associated with Sigmar to those in and around the Empire. Some leaders and Cults are likely to employ those that can read omens, ready to forewarn of disaster. Also, considering the nature of the world there is also likely to be books full of prophecy, predicting all manner of disasters. All these are widely open to interpretation.

A PCs reactions to these events is what makes them interesting. Although characters may think they know their meaning, they may to decide to seek out those who understand such signs. I recommend making Clerics of Morr the experts in this. They already gain access to the *Divining* skill and this should be made specific to dreams. This of course would be the official face of divining. However, seers (and of course Charlatans) would offer a similar service. Why would people visit Seers instead of the Temple? Maybe they dislike the association with death, distrust the reaction of the Temple (seeing them as 'The Establishment') or perhaps they are cheaper. These reasons would help make these function of the cult a preserve for the wealthy. However, perhaps for reasons of resources, the Temple discourages people coming to them. The other side of the coin would be the sheer amount of information made available to them.

Dreams, omens and visions add another aspect to the Warhammer World. Used sparingly, they make a powerful tool for the GM. They also add to the feeling that the gods are everywhere, and that the PCs have been set aside by destiny. Their real effectiveness will come in campaign play where, with some planning they can be designed to worry players or occasionally even give them hope.

THE CORRESPONDENT

Women in the Old World by Tim Eccles

The two scrolls Theodor managed to read last night had left him confused. Perhaps he should inform on Father Kretheim. No, that wouldn't be fair, the old priest had been good to him, looking after him like a son. He would have to read more of the correspondence. Only then would he make a decision...

Introduction

WFRP gives mixed messages about the treatment of women in the Old World. Although the rulebook allows for a high degree of equality when creating PCs (and throughout the rules system), the same isn't true for descriptions of the Old World. Certainly, there are exceptions (such as Shalyir Moonhand in *Lichemaster* and Annalise Kessler in *The Affair of the Hidden Jewel*), but the vast majority of women in published scenarios and campaign backgrounds are mothers, wives, sisters, home-keepers, whores or priestesses of Shallya. This may well stem from the quasi-historical nature of the game; however, it is both a fantasy and a game, and at the start of a new millennium this situation needs a little more analysis.

What follows considers only the place of human women within human society (particularly The Empire). It may apply to halflings in that they are also Imperial citizens, but Dwarfen, Elven and Gnomic societies would probably be radically different. As a general rule, when travelling The Empire, non-human females would probably be even rarer than their male counterparts and subject to a double prejudice on the grounds of race and gender.

A History of Women

The implicit sexism in WFRP draws from the social model used to create both The Empire and the Old World. I do not propose to develop a potted history of the place of women in society over time, but it is perhaps worth mentioning some basic issues in order to illustrate the situation.

The role of a woman was restricted to being a (good) daughter, wife, mother and grandmother. They had few rights and many obligations. A woman was expected to keep the house, make clothes, feed the men folk, bear and raise children, and tend the garden (which was a prime source of food for the family). Most women were married by the time they were sixteen. Bearing and raising children was considered to be the most important activity they undertook; with a high infant mortality rate women were often pregnant. A most damning thing for a woman was to be barren. Widows inherited only after sons, and would be expected to marry again if they had wealth worth obtaining.

A Woman's Role

What follows is an explanation of three models of the possible treatment of women in WFRP (Old World) campaigns. The three models I wish to examine can be referred to as Patriarchy, Paternalism and Equality.

Patriarchy: In a patriarchal society, men hold all positions of power, and women are seen as naturally inferior. They are weaker, less intelligent, irrational, etc. I do not really think this is a viable option for a WFRP campaign. Firstly, it is unlikely to be popular with anyone who enjoys playing female PCs, women gamers, or (I hope) most modern players. Opting for such a rigid and reactionary position is very difficult. Secondly, this model does not conform to the rules or scenarios, which clearly allow some important female characters. At best, any such women would have to be automatically portrayed as outcasts and/or outlaws.

Paternalism: There is a simple, but important, distinction between patriarchy and paternalism. Whilst societies operating under each principle may look identical, they are not. Under paternalism women are seen more as children

than clear inferiors. Thus, it is quite possible for a woman to rise to a senior position but there will be strong social pressures and individual prejudices to overcome. This society is an example of women having to be twice as good to get half as far, but at least gives them *some* chance to demonstrate their ability.

In my view, this is the position assumed by most current scenarios. There are female characters, but it is largely a male world. I can recall few important female characters in positions of power, strength or skill in comparison with the number of male characters. Strong female PCs are a novelty, to be treated politely but not taken seriously. As a GM, one could have great fun letting NPCs assume certain things about female PCs: that they are there as "company", that they make camp meals etc. However, as in reality, this will wear thin after a while. Why, when we are creating a fantasy game, do we allow our own prejudices (most of the WFRP designers/writers are men) to take over the game? In order to involve everyone, and make a more vibrant world, I suggest that we create a more equal world.

Equality: This is very simple. Both sexes are naturally and socially equal. If one so desires, this equality can be tempered by racial and social considerations. I am not advocating a "perfect" Old World social system, merely a more generally tolerant one. Child rearing and motherhood can still be regarded as norms, but so can Captain of the Watch, Magistrate, Boatman, Noble etc.

I do not think that this position requires much tampering. It in no way alters the gothic apocalyptic nature of the Old World. In many ways, it reinforces it. In a world so massively under threat from Chaos as the Old World, it seems ludicrous not to have 50% of your possible defenders ignored due to social prejudice. Even had this been a position pre-Chaos, the atrocities of the Wastes invasion would surely have changed the situation.

Women in The Empire

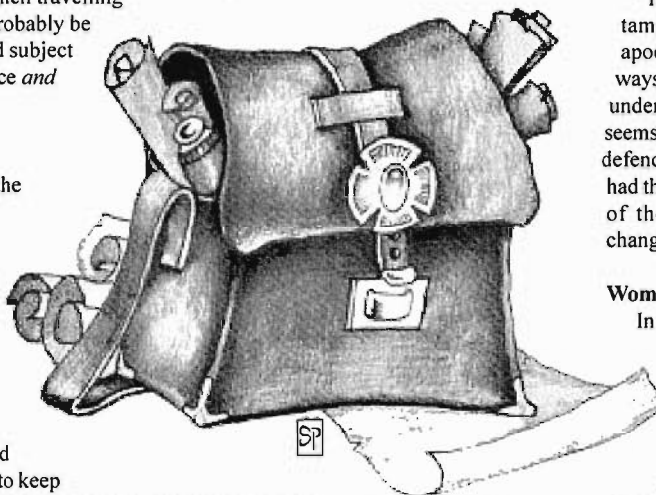
In principle, I am not asking for fundamental changes. Simply, next time your PCs run foul of a Watch Captain, are hauled before a Magistrate, are hired by a rich merchant, or uncover a powerful villain, make it a woman.

And do so as if it is nothing unusual. However, in order to add flesh to the issue of equality, the following are offered as particular examples on attitudes within The Empire.

A woman's place is in the home. Perhaps. Certainly, in the Old World it is almost universally true that care of children and domestic management is a female role, and only the richest can afford domestic help. However, it is not necessarily assumed that women must marry or have children, although this is still normal. It should also be noted that motherhood is respected in the Old World, and that Old Worlders are bound by both religious doctrine and social conditioning to assist mothers in whatever manner they are able. There is no particular stigma about parenthood (one parent family or otherwise) or the lack of it.

Women need men. Untrue. Whilst marriage is the normal state of affairs in The Empire, only certain Lawful cults would tend to enforce this type of stricture, on the basis of biological inter-dependence. Young unmarried mothers would bear some stigma on the basis of wantonness, but in a world of danger and disease many families may quite easily be broken up by death. Single women will not be deemed to be in need of a man, although it may be assumed that they would not turn away the right man.

Men are stronger than women. True, at least on average. The average man may be stronger, but there are a large number of women who are stronger than the average man. Therefore, the stereotypical warrior is a man, but there are large numbers of women warriors. Certain units still refuse admission to women, but this is on the grounds that they deem them bad for morale, and are likely to



cause distractions due to relationships between soldiers. This attitude is prevalent within knightly orders, but most others simply take the best fighters whenever they find them. There is also the example of the cult of Myrmidia, which inculcates a belief in martial equality. Note also, though this is beyond the scope of this article, that same sex regiments do not preclude relationship formation, be this sexual or otherwise.

Women are better scholars. Perhaps. In the field of learning there is a high level of equality. If there are more men in senior positions, it is perhaps only because a woman must dedicate her life to reach the senior positions of the wise, and thus not have offspring. On the other hand, wealthy intellectual women can afford childcare, and may be affected less by children.

Women are more caring. Perhaps. In some ways, people in the Old World tend to have a healthier respect for the opinions of women, because they are seen as offering better common sense and with a level of empathy for the balances being considered. The Old World is not a particularly rational world, and is apparently ruled by the whims of the gods, the winds of magic and folk beliefs. Science does not offer logical decisions, and so intuition is more prevalent. Therefore, the Old World does not have the same disregard for intuitive and empathic decision-making structures deemed to be both feminine and subordinate to rational neutrality in much of our own world. This can be illustrated in rural villages where the elderly women act as "village mothers", advisors on all aspects of farming and life. This can often be formalised into their acting as initiates or lay preachers of Rhya and Shallya.

Women cannot inherit. Untrue. Within The Empire women legally inherit on the death of their husbands, and may hold property. However, whilst this is technically true, it is only a relatively recent change, and in many areas a woman would have to be able to enforce her rights in the face of those who know better. A will is a legally enforceable document, but in reality few are able to afford them. Therefore, women are likely to lose their rights to other family members, or to be forced into stewardship arrangements.

Women are different than men. No comment. Except that women from areas where malnutrition is common may be able to disguise themselves as men. History is full of stories of women joining armies, monasteries and other male groups without discovery. Purportedly, there has even been one female Pope. In the Old World, the Katthar sect believed that Sigmar was a woman, and were excommunicated and hunted down to extinction by the year 2342 – but why, if their proposition was so ludicrous? And what if a few escaped ...?

Aridani*

It is possible for any woman to declare herself legally a man, and gain all the rights and privileges therein. The original practice dates from the times of Sigmar and was purportedly founded by his wife. (However, most scholars refute the suggestion that Sigmar was ever married.) What is not in doubt is that a

woman was allowed to *declare herself Eagrel** (an ancient *Reikspiel* term) by simply walking into a council of the menfolk and doing so. She had to be prepared to defend her right by trial of arms, and if she lost, had to submit to her victor. Women of *this period* were described as being of their father's *spindle-side*, but a successful declaration transferred her to his *spear-side*. This distinction was often carried upon shields, and effigies on graves of spindle or spear are commonplace. The modern Empire is too civilised, of course, for such barbarity, and the place of women is such that it is not necessary. However, it is still possible within a court of law to bring a case of *Gleichgestellte** and have oneself legally declared a man. Given the cost of the legal system, this tends to be an act taken by the widows of rich nobles or merchants seeking to take over their dead husband's affairs for themselves or to protect the interests of their children. The use of the spindle or spear effigy is still widely used.

In Conclusion

I think the Old World as portrayed in WFRP is latently gender neutral, given the portraits accompanying some of the careers. However, much of the development of WFRP in published scenarios and the unofficial internet resources tend to assume a much more male-orientated Old World. This can be quite easily solved at a game level by wider use of NPC females in positions of power, and I see no reason for not doing so. The issues of patrilineal inheritance of noble position are a little harder to ignore, but are of relatively little importance to most players.

It should also be possible to use some ideas herein as scenario backgrounds. The whole concept of widows and/or daughters, wicked uncles and/or stepfathers, and inheritances has formed the basis for stories for centuries. Using the concept of the *Writ to Eagrel* offers excellent backgrounds for evil NPCs and women (pretty or otherwise) in distress. If such evil "guardians" remain undiscovered, such an idea can form a long-running additional complication to PCs who think they are dealing with a different adventure scenario. They may even be hired by the guardian, who assumes they are unable to defeat his other hirelings and devious plots.

So the next time you're writing or running a scenario, and feel the need to throw the players up against an authority figure, keep them on their toes – make him a her.

He rolled the third scroll closed. Unsigned, he had recognised the handwriting as Milius of Nuln. Again, the words were scandalous and perhaps dangerous. Nevertheless Theodor, somewhat afraid, could see the truth in the thoughts. He took a bite from the apple, stolen from the gardens, and reached for the next scroll.



NEXT ISSUE
HUMAN MERCHANDISE
Slavery In The Known World

A FOUR LEGGED FRIEND
Taking care of your faithful steed

KIM NEWMAN INTERVIEW
A man named Jack

A COMPLETE SCENARIO
& ALL THE USUAL STUFF

OUT
MARCH
2000!

OFF THE SHELF

A Fragments Special on the Death of Visions and the Future of Independent Roleplaying Magazines By Paul Evans and John Foody

So Visions has gone under after only two issues. The latest in a long line of independent Roleplay magazines to go to the great newsagent in the sky. However, we have just heard they intend to relaunch as an on-line magazine, following the successful example of Pyramid. Nevertheless, it is the lack of an independent magazine, particularly one that will sell on a newsagent shelf that means the UK hobby once more lacks a centralised voice.

So, why isn't there a role-playing magazine in the UK? Of course, many would argue we do not need one. We contacted a number of those involved in the hobby to give us their thoughts on this. First though, we asked what went wrong with Visions?

Visions was a glossily produced magazine, with work by some well-known RPG authors. However, it didn't impress many. Paul Mason, editor of imagine was one of these "Visions failed, briefly, because it failed to offer anything significantly new, and more effort was put into presentation than content." Chris Baylis, editor of the long standing Games Gazette agrees, "Visions had no substance as such and it could be said it also had no real vision" but there was worse "it was too expensive and the authors/editors didn't understand the UK role-player" Pretty damning problems for a new magazine. Perhaps though it could never have succeeded. James Wallis, Hogshead supremo, highlights the problem, "a certain cynicism [has] crept into the UK market in the last few years, which seems to hold that a British RPG magazine should exist in principle, but all the ones that try it aren't worth buying."

Of course, many point to the Internet as killing any real market. A point of view given little time by Paul Mason "The Internet is virtually irrelevant, and its significance is constantly overstated". Scott Haring, editor of the on-line Pyramid e-zine points out the facts, "problems with gaming magazines predate the Internet. Look at the long, distinguished list of dead magazines - Space Gamer, VIP of Gaming, Gateways, Arcane, Sorcerer's Apprentice, Different Worlds, Imagine, The Familiar, White Wolf, Shadis, Fire & Movement, The Gamer — I could go on, but it would get too depressing." Red Giant, Last Province, Games Master, GMI; it does indeed make depressing reading.

Let us make the question more specific: why isn't there a professional, independent, regularly-published, UK-produced, role-playing magazine on newsagents' shelves? Lots of people have tried, but no-one has yet succeeded. James Wallis said we have become "cynical" but are readers expectations too high for it ever to work? Most disagree. According to Scott Haring "Every one of these magazines had a core of dedicated readers who loved what they were doing and breathlessly anticipated each issue. The problem was there wasn't enough of them. That doesn't mean the industry is weak — it's just not very big. There's a difference."

The first question any would-be publisher has to ask is who will buy an RPG magazine. Well, us, for a start. And you; and people like us! That is, people who play RPGs and are prepared to spend the dosh. But RPG players come in all sorts of shapes and sizes. To start with, we've got tabletop players and live role-players. Live Role Playing splits into live-action and 'freeform' (or interactive fiction). Within LARP you've got fantasy and vampire. And this is before we start listing all the different



role-play systems there are. And what about play-by-mail role-playing games? And computer 'games'? So what should can a magazine offer to make it attractive. Paul Mason, "I believe what they [the readers] want, [is] for a magazine to be personally relevant, ... Simply featuring the most popular games isn't much better because then you admit that you are limiting your market. The specific nature of the content then becomes an albatross. People talk about 'system-specific' as the

great solution, but it's little better than generic, because it's so exclusionary. Material doesn't have to be 'system-specific' to be personally relevant." It's a tall order. One Paul Sawyer, editor of White Dwarf agrees with, "The problem is that they try to be all things to all men and if you look at the market leader, Dragon magazine they only cover two or three systems. This addresses more than one problem - when I buy an RPG magazine I'm only interested in the system(s) I play so all the other material is a waste of space to me."

A further complication is the insular nature of the hobby. We discover role-playing with a group of friends and play with them - outsiders have a hard time joining the group. There are clubs, of course, but it's amazing how quickly a club becomes a bunch of mates and how easily - if unconsciously - newcomers are put off by the shared experience of the group. EuroLoG has discovered just how difficult it is to get clubs to link together - or even tell anyone they exist! It is an opinion echoed by Paul Mason, "[readers want a magazine] having a 'community' spirit or feeling that makes them feel that reading the magazine makes them a part of the wider society of role-players." It seems an ever-more unlikely prospect.

The bottom line is that RPG players make up a fragmented market. Both because we tend to be interested in just a few systems (or even one) and because we don't see ourselves as part of a larger whole. So do we need an RPG magazine at all? "I think we do." Says James Wallis with certainty, "The British RPG hobby doesn't have any kind of core at the moment, which makes it easy for people to drift away because they feel that they're the only people left. While a magazine wouldn't solve the problem immediately, and wouldn't reach all the people it needed to for quite a while after it started, it would provide a useful forum for players to find out about shops, clubs, conventions and new games... in that order of importance." We leave to Dan Joyce, ex-editor of Arcane, to ask the big question, "A magazine is the public face of the industry - without one, wither the industry?"

An obvious solution for the publisher is to concentrate on one system - as Mythic Perspectives, Tales of the Reaching Moon and Warpstone all do. This has the advantage that you are producing just what your readers want and, with luck, you can contact the players through the publisher of the game. The disadvantage is that you're only getting to a segment of role-players: a limited group within a limited group. At the other extreme, you can try to cover everything. This has the usual consequence: you may have something for everyone, but no-one wants it all. The in-between solution is to cover the mainstream most of the time with occasional forays into lesser-known backwaters. Given that many (most?) of us play more than one system anyway, this seems the best option.

So what does an independent RPG magazine need to offer to enable

it to succeed? Paul Mason highlights earlier answers, "I think it would be nice to have one... a magazine which helped role-players feel they were part of a community (something that White Dwarf, like it or not, has always done, and TSR's *Imagine* also excelled at for a while) would make it easier for new players to get involved, and would also help various fan-based activities." Paul Sawyer thinks the populist route is the way forward, "I think that to succeed an independent needs a core of material based around popular systems and maybe augment it with articles for lesser systems. For me this is an obvious demographic - the popular systems have more gamers and therefore an independent magazine will gain more readers if it concerns itself mainly with those systems. Once established the mag could branch out into more obscure systems but one problem with some of the long dead magazines is they tried to cover lots of minor systems who have relatively little customer base." It is a point of view which James Wallis agrees with "I'd make sure that the cover of every issue specifically mentioned AD&D, Vampire, Rifts, the Star Wars RPG, Deadlands and whatever happened to be the big hit game of the moment — the top sellers, in other words." Meanwhile Dan Joyce approaches from another angle. "Arcane's big reviews section was a definite plus - reviews of games is really the only reason why you have to buy an RPG mag." And he sums it up simply, "It's not enough to produce 'a magazine'; you have to produce an excellent magazine, time and again, or readers won't bother coming back to it"

This brings us to the second problem: who's going to pay for a magazine? As with most hobbies, the old question of time versus money comes into play. Most of us discovered role-playing in our student days when, arguably, we had plenty of free time to play. But little money. As we get older, we may have the money, but our leisure time is limited by the demands of our working and social lives. So, the magazine either has to be cheap enough to be accessible to all or, again, limit its market to those who can afford it. As a related issue, most of us have seen magazines come and go and so are always sceptical when a new one appears. We aren't going to part with our cash for a subscription when the odds are the thing will fold after a few months and we won't get a refund. Chris Baylis echoes these sentiments, "I do think it's very hard to get readers to part with a years subscription (or get companies to advertise) when they don't believe the magazine will last more than 5 minutes. It's a vicious circle, the magazines need subscriptions and advertising to succeed, and the readers/advertisers need proof of the safety of their investment."

Which brings us to the commercial side of magazine publishing: revenue and costs. Essentially, the money comes from subscriptions, adverts and news-stand sales. It is spent on origination, production and distribution. It is a rule of thumb in magazine publishing that the basic cost of getting the magazine out should be covered by the revenue from advertising. Another problem in the RPG world is the small number of companies who can afford substantial advertising — a reason why *The Power* quickly morphed into a lifestyle mag and a factor in the demise of *arcane*.

That's the cost of running the magazine, but there's also the cost of starting up. Its already mentioned that we are a sceptical bunch, waiting to be sure before we commit to a subscription — *arcane* had just 600 subscribers when it folded. Another big factor is persuading a news distributor to carry the magazine reliably and newsagents to put the magazine on the shelves — much easier if you are an established magazine publisher. This means that you have to print 20-30,000 copies of the magazine and will get 89-90% of these returned. But if you don't produce these numbers, the magazine won't get on to the shelves; if it's not on the shelves, then no-one can buy it; if no-one buys it, then you don't have the readership to gain advertisers and you don't get much revenue.

The result of all this is that you can expect a new magazine to need a year to begin to get established. Once it's been running for a year it has some street cred: with games companies, players and news distributors. But for that first year — and probably into the second year — it will be making a loss. A big bullet for any would-be publisher to bite! This is

why the magazines that are around — other than the amateur publications — are produced by an organisation that can spread the costs over its other operations. The magazine may be one product in the range produced by a games publisher, or it may be one of a range of magazines published by the same company.

We're talking about what a magazine needs to do to enable it to succeed, but which magazine has come nearest to getting it right. Many of those we spoke to mentioned White Dwarf and Dragon, while opinion is sharply divided over Valkryie's worth. The authors of the this article list *Arcane*, *The Last Province* and *Casus Belli* (a French magazine. It too has just announced it is finishing.) In fact, it was *Arcane* that people had the highest opinion of. We shall let Dan Joyce elaborate, "Of course, I'm going to say 'arcane, issues 19 and 20', because I edited them, and they were closest to what I wanted *arcane* to be. Even they weren't quite on the money, but they weren't that far off. *Last Province* was also a damn good mag. *Valkyrie* and *Role Player Independent* were (and are) rubbish. Having said that, *arcane* wasn't as good as it could have been. In an industry as fickle as roleplaying, you can't afford to produce a magazine that is less than excellent. To date, that is exactly what everyone has done. Even me."

So, do we expect to see a UK RPG magazine on newsagents' shelves? Chris Baylis believes that UK Polyhedron (currently free to RPGA members) may be the best hope. However, overall the answer is no! Magazines that cover a specific company or system and lots of amateur/fan publications, distributed through the hobby shops are more feasible. Few disagree with this opinion, including James Wallis: "I think that publishers will continue to go into it with their expectations too high, and will balls it up again. Meanwhile, the potential market will continue to shrink. We think a successful general RPG magazine that's distributed only through games stores (possibly on both sides of the Atlantic), subscriptions and internet sales could work. But newsagents? Not unless something spectacular happens to bring the RPG hobby back into prominence and general favour." Paul Mason offers just a pessimistic a view, "Statistically speaking, someone will probably have a go. Again, statistically speaking, it'll be just like previous ones and it will bomb." We would like to think that there is wide support for an independent, professional, UK, RPG magazine, but the hard evidence of many years is that the market just is not big enough to support such a publication. With their established position as a publisher of glossy magazines for specific niches, Future Publishing had the best chance of succeeding. If they can't do it, who can? According to a perhaps tongue-in-cheek Dan Joyce, perhaps there is a lifeline, "[A] wealthy benefactor bequeaths a load of money to a publisher, with the express instruction that it be used to fund a roleplaying mag."

Chris Baylis is editor of *Games Gazette*, the long running review fanzine. Full details on page 5.

Dan Joyce edited *Arcane* for its final two issues and believed by many to have begun to turn it around before the plug was pulled.

James Wallis is in charge of Hogshead Publishing (you know who they are!) www.hogshead,demon.co.uk. He has also been on editorial teams of various other magazines and is currently editing *CrazyNet*, a new magazine about the Internet.

Paul Sawyer is editor of *White Dwarf* (www.games-workshop.co.uk).

Paul Evans was editor of *Games Games Games* magazine for over twelve years. Details on page 5.

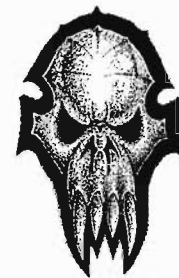
Paul Mason is the editor of *imagine* magazine. Details on page 5. He is also a past deputy editor of *White Dwarf*.

Scott Haring is editor of Steve Jackson Games' on-line e-zine *Pyramid* (www.sjgames.com/pyramid/) and previously editor of *Autoduel Quarterly* and *The Gamer*.

The editors of *Visions* did not respond to our requests for their comments. The on-line version of *Visions* can be found at www.Visions-mag.com/index.html



THRALLS OF DARKNESS



THE GODS OF CHAOS AND THOSE THAT FOLLOW BY VIDAR EDLAND

"Now, there is peace. Many of you will return to your hearth and family to rest. We have won many victories together in Sigmar's name, but remember these things: the faces and names of your comrades who have fallen. The Empire for which we fought and that the Gods of Chaos are not yet beaten and will rise again. Tell your children these things and when the blasphemous ones come again there will be armies to hold them back and destroy them all."

Magnus the Pious

"Sword and axe cut at the infection that is chaos, and it retreats. For a time. But then it returns once more, for there are those amongst us for whom it offers answers. Men and women who have nothing else, victims of poverty, disease and desperation. Until we have something to offer these people, the forbidden ones will continue to take our children."

Sister Helena Mattel, Cleric of Shallya

Chaos is the underlying theme in Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay. It threatens to corrupt everything that is pure, enslave all that lives, and even destroy reality as we know it! Eventually it will succeed! At the very heart of this power sit the gods of Chaos, the embodiment of destruction and personification of evil. This article will take a close look at the Powers and their flocks (the Thralls of Darkness), both the cults and the individual chaos followers. It will also discuss where the Gods of Chaos recruit their followers from, and which tactics they use to win dominion over the world. This article is not always consistent with what has been published in official WFRP material, but offers another perspective. In the end it aims to make the gods and their followers a frightening and realistic force within the Warhammer World. It concentrates on mankind's view of the gods, particularly from the Empire's slant.

Chaos is held back from the borders of mankind by the brave and resourceful. Sometimes, this is through the efforts of great armies, following their own gods or simply serving King or Emperor for a day's pay. Other struggles are fought by heroes and adventurers fighting alone or in groups. Great battles are fought against the followers of chaos: the beastmen, mutants and demons. Many of these remain unrecorded. The greatest single struggle in the Empire's history took place during the last great incursions of Chaos, when Magnus the Pious led his armies to victory. However, humanity is not always strong. Even the best of men is open to the malign influence of Chaos, corrupting any sliver of weakness. There are many who welcome its power, and even seek it out. Man has many weaknesses, and Chaos seeks to exploit them all – be it greed, sex, violence, fear or other failings too numerous to list. Those who succumb to the Chaos gods' insidious whispers may not be kings or warriors, but could just as easily be clerks, beggars or merchants. Chaos welcomes them all. It is these fallen individuals that truly threaten civilisation. For the enemy within sow the seeds of destruction deep, and they flourish in dark places.

However, even those who fall to the temptation of the dark gods try and impose some semblance of order on their lives. Cults are formed, ranks are assigned and

laws are made. Thus is the human face of Chaos. Chaos offers power to the weak, reason for the lost and promises to all. Many believe that they can take what they want and then leave, but once started, the path is perilously short. The reasons for following a god are varied and often mundane; there is rarely a shortage of recruits.

Four gods of Chaos rule supreme: Khorne, Nurgle, Tzeentch and Slaanesh. Each exploits and tempts followers in their own way, often under different names and guises. Indeed, some scholars hold that each race sees a different image of the Powers of Chaos. The gods do not mind. In the same way, their followers are different and diverse. It suits them to allow others to believe that they are simply one-dimensional, with Slaaneshi cultists permanently indulging in orgies or followers of Khorne nothing but murderous, frenzied fanatics. Of course, the truth is somewhat different...



NURGLE

THE GOD OF PESTILENCE AND DECAY, THE PLAGUE BEARER, LORD OF THE FLIES, THE CARRION CROW, THE HUNGRY EARTH, THE LORD OF DECAY

Nurgle is the embodiment of decay. However, he is not a mere plague god, but a god of both physical and mental entropy. It is because of him that things wither and die. Everything aged, weak and decayed belongs to him. He wishes to gain dominance over the world by causing everything to wither and decay. When everything is old and weak, and nothing new is created, he will have total control. As the last thought fades, as the last emotion ends, as the last organism dies, Nurgle himself will cease to exist and nothing will remain, not even emptiness. Being the god of all that ends, Nurgle is the contrast to Tzeentch (the changer of ways and spawner of new life).

Nurgle recruits his followers from amongst those overcome by despair and hopelessness. He approaches them with the offer of doing something important, joining something great, in order to make their lives meaningful and significant. Many accept him, as Nurgle seems to be the only one who feels and cares for them. They worship him as a parental figure and love him for his kindness and care. Although they are often plagued by diseases and pests they never blame Nurgle for their sickness, but rather praise him for his willingness to accept them and care for them despite their physical deterioration. They do not see him as the cause of their sufferings, but rather the patron of all who suffer.

Beggars and the mentally insane are the most common followers of Nurgle, but other people also find their way into his corrupting arms. In general, people who have lost their loved ones, their home and job, or their faith are prone to become subjects of Nurgle. Followers of Nurgle are fanatically loyal, and they refer to him as He, The One, or Father. Followers of Nurgle hate and fear the servants of the goddess Shallya. They usually avoid confrontation, preferring to stay hidden.

When roleplaying followers of Nurgle, the GM should try to convey the feeling of hopelessness and melancholy. They are not just filthy disease ridden cultists, but people who have found peace and meaning in chaos and decay.

Organisation: Cults of Nurgle are never large, consisting of a few individuals living together as a family. Organisation is not their strength, and there is little or no contact between cults. However, unlike cults of other chaos deities, the cults of Nurgle seldom fight each other, regarding each other as distant relatives. More circumspect than other cultists they wear few outward signs of their affiliation to the plague god. Their robes are usually dowdy shades of greens, browns and yellows. However, they always go hooded; this type of garb helps them to inspire dread, mask diseased skin or simply stay hidden. A Patriarch (or Matriarch in the rare cases of a female cult head) usually leads cults of Nurgle. They lead their flock to the will of Nurgle, and individual followers will obey their leader's words to the letter. They are loyal to the point of being suicidal, often being happy just to have something to die for. Seers and Mages have special functions and roles within the cult. They are rarely leaders themselves, acting as the cult's advisor and fortune-teller, with direct contact to Nurgle.

Notable Cults: There are few notable cults of Nurgle, as these groups tend to be rather passive, waiting for the end of all that is. Nurgle war-bands are another matter, however, for they try to destroy life in a more direct manner. Within the Empire, the cults of the Running Sore, the Family of the Maggots, Internal Embrace and the Fetid Cauldron have been noted as being particularly threatening.

Chaos Gifts: Gifts of Nurgle almost always take the form of progressing physical or mental decay. His subjects often age quickly, carry pests, and suffer diseases. Although mutations are one form of physical decay, these are not as common among followers of Nurgle as among other chaos followers, for mutations are the trademark of Nurgle's eternal enemy, the chaos god Tzeentch. The greatest gifts Nurgle can bestow upon his subjects are to be impregnated with a Nurgling, or to receive the plague of all plagues, Nurgle's Rot. To suffer from such a dreadful disease, his followers reason, surely must mean that Nurgle will care for them and give them special attention.

"Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law"

Alister Crowley

SLAANESH

THE GOD OF PLEASURE, PAIN AND TERROR, THE PRINCE OF CHAOS, THE GREAT SERPENT, THE BEGUILING WATER

Slaanesh is by far the most attractive chaos deity (in every meaning of the word), and has the largest number of followers. At the same time the cults of Slaanesh are amongst the least powerful of all the cults, for they have little interest in the pursuit of political or martial power. To an individual, however, the cult of Slaanesh poses a great threat as they tend to kidnap, rape and terrorise people on a regular basis. Their goal is to strike fear and terror in people, and to corrupt that which is pure. Many scholars believe the High Elves were the first to worship Slaanesh, an act with grave consequences for the entire Elven race. The philosophy "do as thou wilt" is one that very much appeals to these Elves and many are still said to join the Cult of Pleasure, an outlawed group of hedonists. Slaanesh's goal is to conquer the world through the domination of mortals. By winning control over all sentient life, Slaanesh can shape the world and reality to its liking. Slaanesh promises an existence free of moral scruples, regret, and responsibility for others. "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law" is a saying that very much represents the philosophy of the followers of Slaanesh. Followers of Slaanesh see it as their right to do as they please, to take what they want, and to exploit others as they see fit.

Slaanesh appeals to the darkest traits of self-preservation and self-interest, and many fall subject to Slaanesh without realising it as they practise self-indulgence and priggishness. They are sadistic, masochistic, and perverted; indulging in orgies, drug trafficking, torture, molestation and the exploitation of others. Followers of Slaanesh often organise and/or finance children's homes and mental institutions to exploit and abuse those most fragile members of society.

Whereas Nurgle appealed to the poor and powerless, Slaanesh often finds a home among the noble and wealthy. It finds fertile ground in those men and women who are looking for new experiences - jaded by normal life. Not every hedonist who drinks, has sex or takes drugs is a cultist - not yet, at least; but Slaanesh has an eye on them.. With many important members drawn from this stratum of society, the cults do hold influence. However, it is usually used to allow them to hide their work or their gatherings.

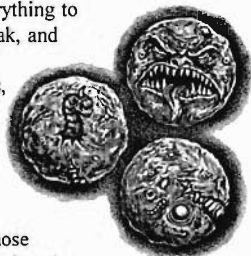
Slaanesh should not be portrayed as a comical sex deity, nor should the followers of Slaanesh be portrayed as an amusing comical band of sexual deviants. Fear and terror should be the central piece in any adventure involving the cults of Slaanesh. The GM should keep the images of fright and horror of the Hellraiser movies in mind when roleplaying Slaanesh followers.

Organisation: Cults of Slaanesh are little more than groups of like-minded individuals who practise orgies, gang rape, torture and terrorisation. They are led by a cult head (almost always a woman) called by names like Queen, Mistress, and Mother. Beyond the occasional grand sex rites (where several cults join) there is little contact between the cults, and coordinated scheming and plotting is extremely rare. Members often refer to each other as Shem, a mixture of the male and female, which represents a particularly desired state. This hermaphroditic ideal is also present in cult regalia. During ceremonies, followers are often made up to confuse their gender, although the multi-coloured and garish robes usually expose the right breast.

Slaanesh is also worshipped by witch covens who work to exploit and terrorise people in a more subtle manner through the use of spells and crafts. A witch coven ideally consists six or thirteen witches led by a head-witch, often called the Dark Queen or Mistress of Darkness.

Notable Cults: Cults of Slaanesh are seldom interested in politics as such, and therefore few cults gain a reputation worth mentioning. The Hellfire club and the Order of the One who Comes are exceptions, although even these are overshadowed by the Jade Sceptre. This was once the largest Slaanesh cult in The Empire, and gained a reputation not through political achievements but through the sheer size of the cult (rumoured to have had as many as three hundred members at its prime). Today their numbers have dwindled considerably, and a few dozen followers remain.

Chaos Gifts: Followers of Slaanesh rarely receive mutations from their deity, but tend to practice self-mutilation instead, inserting hooks and nails, inflicting



cuts and burns upon themselves, skinning parts of themselves, and perform amputations. If a mutation occurs it is almost always related to sex or sensuality, such as making the cultist hermaphroditic, crossing the cultist with a animal related to sensuality (the snake for instance), or making the cultist terrifyingly beautiful. Magical power is also fairly common among the followers of Slaanesh, and their spells are mostly related to mind control, domination, emotional control, and fear and terror. Some Slaanesh Mages also learn demonologist magic, in order to be able to summon Slaaneshi demons to take part in the cult's unholy sex rites.

"Blood for the Blood God!"

Khornite Battle Cry

KHORNE

THE BLOOD GOD, THE SAVAGE
HOUND OF WAR, THE FIRE THAT
DESTROYS, THE FRENZIED BEAST,
THE HUNGRY ONE

Khorne is the Chaos God of war and conflict. He is the embodiment of destruction and the power of conflict and strife. His goal is to physically conquer the world by military might, to place himself as the ultimate tyrant of reality. His methods are direct and brutal - conquer and kill. He scorns deception and stealth.

The followers of Khorne have a reputation as mindless bloodthirsty berserkers with no sense of tactics or strategies. This is far from true however, as many of Khorne's Champions are great military commanders. Nevertheless, Khornites are zealous and devoted warriors who honour only martial power and might. They fight to the death in battle, in the hope of pleasing their god so that he will grant them continued existence in his own demonic realm. However, although Khorne does have many berserkers amongst his subjects, these tend to be the ones for which Khorne has no plan. Their orgies of slaughter act only as a temporary gratification for the proud god.

Those most prone to fall victim to Khorne are those that seek great martial prowess, particularly those without the patience to acquire it through experience and practice. These are people with a burning anger and hunger for vengeance, warriors who just *have* to be the best of the best or military commanders who have become addicted to victory and the fame brought by successful campaigns. Often a captain will fall subject to Khorne's influence without his men noticing it. He will then work to corrupt the soldiers under his command to follow him into slavery.

Khornites should be roleplayed as proud warriors who exist only to prove themselves for their god. They are not always frenzied berserkers who kill everything in their path, but just as often are calculating and tactical soldiers. However they are always ruthless, skilled and determined.

Organisation: Cults of Khorne often take the form of military organisations and councils working to pit forces against other institutions or cities, provoking wars among nations and regions. They are organised as militaristic units, following a rank system similar to the armies of men. Leaders are called Marshals, Commanders, High-Commanders, and Generals, while lesser cult members are given other ranks such as Lieutenant, Sergeant, Corporal, and Soldier. Promotions are gained through challenging others.

In any cult of Khorne it is always the strongest and/or those with tactical superiority who lead. The commander leads the cult with harsh training and strict discipline, and with no room for pleasure or comfort. Communication

and co-operation between cults is rare, as each is fiercely independent. Within the cult, communication is often quite open and public (to avoid scrutiny from non-cult members), but heavily coded and sometimes even publicly classified (but could still be read by non-cult members of high rank).

Notable Cults: The Crimson Sickle, The Flame Bearers & The Bloodied Axe.

Templars of Zahomet: Originally a small order of monastic Templars of Myrmydia, they converted to the worship of a blasphemous entity called Zahomet during a crusade in Araby. These knights had an unusual, and highly secret, way to prepare themselves for the blasphemy and horror they believed they would encounter in the Demon-ridden land of Araby. Among other things they mocked the statues and symbols of human gods by trampling and spitting on them. They reasoned such acts would prevent them being shocked if they witnessed such sacrilege during their crusades. If this sowed the seeds of corruption in the Templars, or if their leader had already begun stumbling down the path of darkness, remains unknown. One thing is certain: when they

returned from Araby they where no longer followers of Myrmydia, but had become warriors of chaos. Exactly what Zahomet was is unknown. Some say that he is an aspect of Khorne, while others believe that he was the ruler of the order, horribly transformed by the powers of chaos.

The Harbingers of Armageddon: This small cult of Khorne, made up of military commanders from many of the major forces of the Old World, work to provoke war and inspire hatred between neighbouring nations. Their goal is to start an all-consuming war where all nations are involved, a war of a scale such as the world has never seen before - a world war.

Chaos Gifts: Followers of Khorne are divided into two camps when it comes to receiving chaos gifts and attributes: those who Khorne has no specific plan for and those who Khorne has chosen worthy to promote his great cause. The rank and file followers of Khorne are often granted obvious mutations and psychological instability as gifts. Khorne's more important followers are granted chaos attributes such as improved strength and combat skills, the ability to rouse people (not necessarily Chaos followers) to battle, demonic weapons and armour, warriors and demonic steeds for their armies.



"So we have killed the Arch-Magistri. A reason for celebration? Perhaps for the moment, yes. However, the Changer of Ways also delights in our victory. We have cut away the head and three will grow in its place; fighting, squabbling and plotting. Whose victory is that?"

Otto von Hassbrook, Witch Hunter

TZEENTCH

THE GOD OF SCHEMES, POWER AND FATE, THE CHANGER OF
WAYS, THE GREAT EAGLE, THE INCONSTANT AIR, THE GREAT
MUTATOR, THE MASTER OF FORTUNE, THE GREAT CONSPIRATOR,
THE ARCHITECT OF FATE

Tzeentch goes by many titles, as befits his want. A master of destiny, intrigues and plots, his countless schemes woven into each other in complex patterns touch every living thing. Tzeentch is the embodiment of intellect and wisdom, the master of political power and magical might. He is an all-seeing and all-knowing god, knowing the hopes, dreams and desires of all men and nations, and he uses this knowledge to win control over the living. He feeds on the desire for change which all life displays in its striving towards a better

existence. All hopes and dreams of the living are to Tzeentch as pieces of a puzzle that will secure him domination. He weaves the threads of all potential futures, and by influencing mortals he steers history in the direction he wants.

Tzeentch works to win control over the living through political schemes and intrigues, by luring people into his power with deception and promises of political and/or magical power and wealth. He manipulates every living individual and thereby influences the course of history. Those who worship Tzeentch are under his total control, not only mentally and spiritually, but also physically, even down to their genetic makeup. Tzeentch is the master of mutations and he can change the course of evolution in the blink of an eye. When Tzeentch wins control over the world and reality, he will change the living into unimaginable forms so that each individual life-form is different from the others. The living existing in a state of constant change.

Mutants form the main body of Tzeentch's followers, and many are those who turn to Tzeentch for protection and power when they have been expelled from their communities because of their mutations. Other followers of Tzeentch include the power hungry and the politically or magically ambitious. Many mortals sell their soul to the Changer of the Ways for a quick and easy way to political power or magical might.

The GM should always portray the cults and schemes of Tzeentch as incredibly far-reaching and influential. Adventurers should never be allowed to fully comprehend or expose the cults of Tzeentch and their work. The players should always be left with a feeling of uncertainty and confusion, as if maybe, just maybe, this was what Tzeentch really wanted all along...

Organisation: The cults of Tzeentch are numerous, and wield vast political power. Some argue that they are the most influential cult in the world, with representatives in almost every ruling or advisory council of the Old World's



cities and nations, and every inner circle of powerful organisations and guilds (*"the enemy within!"*). Their greatest drawback, however, is their lack of co-operation and toleration of each other. Many cults of Tzeentch openly oppose or even fight each other.

Leaders of the cults of Tzeentch give themselves ancient Classical and semi-Classical titles like Princep, Imperator, Augustus, Magistri, Magnus and so on. The rank-and-file are also likely to give themselves grand titles. The leadership strictly controls promotion through the ranks. Cermonial robes tend towards the outlandish, usually in colours of pink or purple, often with elaborate headdresses and others badges of office (maces, daggers etc.). Many followers wear symbols and colours of Tzeentch in their everyday clothes, subtly and skilfully blended into their more mundane materials. Some cults are also known to use tattoos to instil loyalty. The tattoo is drawn as part of the initiation ceremony, and thus, once so marked, there is no turning back. There is no way to deny their involvement, and no hope of gaining the trust or support of anyone but their fellow cultists.

Notable Cults: Cults of Tzeentch come and go, for stability is not something associated with the followers of Tzeentch. Cults are destroyed by witch hunters or inter-cult rivalry, or they are absorbed by other cults, or disbanded as the cult's leader dies. Throughout history there have been many notable cults of Tzeentch, but all have vanished in time. Current rumours speak of the Cult of the Twisting Serpent and the Third Eye as powerful emerging groups.

The Purple Hand: This cult (sometimes also called the Purple Palm) is the most influential cult of Chaos in The Empire. It works to infiltrate positions of power to overthrow the Imperial government and leave the Old World in anarchy. They have agents in all towns and cities, many of whom are influential people like Bürgermeisters, Electoral advisors, religious authorities and Guild masters. They have actively sought to promote fellow cultists into positions of power, thus strengthening their hand.

The Red Crown: Another notable Tzeentchian cult but unlike the Purple Hand, they are more interested in recruiting Beastmen and mutants than infiltrating positions of power. To this end the cult has done little of notice, spending its time arming and training its members for the day when they are to pour from the forests to overthrow The Empire. This cult is likely to form the spearhead of any large incursion of Chaos in the future.

These two cults of Tzeentch are fierce rivals, attacking each other on sight.

Chaos Gifts: Obviously, gifts from Tzeentch often take the form of mutations, but more visible followers are given mutations that are easily concealed. However, as befits the god's nature, his gifts often have no rhyme or reason. Often a cult's real leader is a horribly mutated mastermind but he hides behind other lesser cultists (with less visible mutations) who appear to occupy the positions of power that the cult controls. Another common gift is magic.

These four deities are seen as mankind's greatest threat, both external and internal. Where a cult is uncovered it is usually dedicated to one of this cursed quartet. Thus they have become the most feared. However, there are also a number of lesser-known enemies, some weaker, but others more insidious and more threatening. Some of these lesser gods may be aspects of the others; some are demons of varying degrees of power. Others of these entities are unknown outside their handful of worshippers.

THE HORNED RAT

THE DEITY OF SKAVEN, SPREADER OF DECAY, THE EYE OF THE NIGHT

The Horned Rat is the chaos deity worshipped by the Skaven. He combines many of the traits associated with the four greatest chaos gods: the bloodlust of Khorne, the diseases and plagues of Nurgle, the horror and fear of Slaanesh, and the magic and mutations of Tzeentch. (The assassins of Clan Eshin, the Plague Monks of Clan Pestilence, the Slavers and Beastmasters of Clan Moulder & the Warlock-Engineers of Clan Skryre could be said to represent each of these aspects.)

However, his motives and goals are very different from those of the four chief gods. Whereas the other Chaos Gods ultimately wants the

complete destruction and annihilation of life and reality, the Horned Rat works to corrupt the world, not to destroy it. He wishes to make it ready for his slave-race, the Skaven, to overflow and dominate in the same way as rats dominate the under-cities. To this end they recruit men and women with promises of salvation from the coming apocalypse that they will bring. These human servants act as their spies and operatives. They are sent to kidnap sacrificial victims, murder troublesome officials or anything else that advances the plans of their Skaven masters.

Skaven are best roleplayed as a hidden enemy lurking beneath the surface of the cities of men, waiting patiently for the right moment to overtake the upper world. Adventurers will most likely only encounter Skaven when they somehow interfere with a Warpstone search-party. Their human followers are generally weak-willed but fanatical. Although many appear normal, their close association to the Skaven increasingly unbalances them. Thus they are completely loyal to their masters and ready to die for them. Those in positions of power are often targeted, and they are used to prevent social improvements, sewer repairs and other activities the Skaven see as detrimental to their plans.

Organisation: The cults of the Horned Rat and the society of Skaven are one and the same. Their Seers are the closest thing to a clergy in the Skaven society. Human cults usually work in tandem with the Skaven, the Skaven acting as direct leaders. More rarely their presence is kept hidden, and is limited to a point of contact with the cult's leader.

Notable Cults: There are few human cults of the Horned Rat, and they are of little influence. Their activity relates to supplying and spying for the Skaven. They worship in the hope of benefiting when the Skaven pour forth and conquer the world. Of course, few can tell how successful their work is for no one knows the true motivations of the Skaven. The Poison Claw cult has been encountered by a number of chaos-hunters. Its members seem to be tough human warriors, acting occasionally as spies but more often as muscle.

Chaos Gifts: Since the Horned Rat is worshipped by an entire race he has little need of securing his power by granting his followers gifts. However, his most loyal champions and Grey Seers are sometimes granted gifts such as magical power and mutations. He sometimes offers prophetic visions to his Grey Seers, Plague Monks and Warlock-Engineers. His human followers rarely receive gifts; instead they are used and dispensed with once their usefulness is at an end.

MALAL

THE RENEGADE CHAOS GOD, THE MASKED ONE, THE MAD ONE, THE UNNAMEABLE ONE, THE CORRUPTER OF EVIL

Malal is the most difficult chaos god to understand, his motives often self-contradictory and self-destructive. The most chaotic of the Chaos Gods, he seems not to have any ambitions for himself, but works only to foil the plans of the other Gods. Malal is also the least well known of the Chaos powers, for the living (other than followers of other Chaos deities) have few dealings with him. For those touched by the corruption of Chaos, he offers solace. Those who have been affected by Chaos' plans or even suffered mutations turn to him, for they seek revenge on the other chaos gods.

Malal is the only Chaos God who does not seem to want total annihilation. He seeks to oppose the other Chaos Powers in every way possible, taking advantage of all conceivable weapons and tricks. He has no fixed honour, no favoured tactics, and no one strength. His actions are said to be to erratic and unpredictable even when compared to the plots of Tzeentch.

Roleplaying the followers of Malal is not easy. They are unpredictable and rarely choose the most logical and straightforward ways of acting. The GM should try to predict how the players expect Malal's followers to act, and then let them act in a completely different manner. Only when the players begin to expect the unexpected should the GM let the follower of Malal act in the most logical way.

Organisation: The followers of Malal (often called "the Doomed Ones") are as enigmatic and unpredictable as the deity they worship, and many are ex-followers of other chaos deities who have converted to the worship of Malal. This gives the followers of Malal a great advantage, for they know many of the weaknesses of their enemies. The Doomed Ones could perhaps be best described chaotic witch hunters.

Cultists of Malal share knowledge and secrets about other chaos cults whenever they meet; however, this does not happen very often, for the cults of Malal are rare, and when they do appear are small and scattered. They sometimes post wanted posters and notices, with hidden and/or coded messages, on notice boards in large cities and towns to arrange meetings or to convey information.

Notable Cults: No cults of Malal have ever achieved any reputation worth mentioning among the mortals, and few survive long enough to secure a name for themselves within the realms of chaos.

Chaos Gifts: The gifts bestowed by Malal upon his subjects are as unpredictable as the god himself. However, he often fashions and moulds his followers (and thereby their gifts) with specific goals in mind. Whereas Tzeentch for example might shower his followers with any mutations that appeal to his whims, Malal always chooses the gifts of his followers with great care.

KHAINED

LORD OF MURDER, THE SCORPION, THE BLOODIED BROTHER

Morr's brother, and patron of murders and cut-throats. Khaine is not technically a Chaos god, although many would argue he is but an aspect of Khorne. Of course, this is a somewhat heretical suggestion, and only ever whispered by scholars. He is the more personal and underhand face of murder, and thus worshipped by many assassins and footpads.

DEMON PATRONS -INDEPENDENT CHAOS DEMONS

Not all followers of chaos worship the four Powers; some turn to lesser demonic entities such as Greater Demons and Demon Princes (including the Baalrukhs) for power and favours. Demonologists are especially prone to becoming the slaves of such powerful demons. Demon-worshippers seldom possess any political power worth mentioning, but can be dangerous in their own right. Most often the Demon worshippers practice their religion in solitude, although some cults do exist. Often a demon, unknown to its worshippers, may represent one of the chaos gods, thus twisting them to its master's aims.

Ambitions, power, organisation, and the methods of solitary worshippers or cults vary wildly depending upon the demon they worship. Likewise, the gifts offered by demons vary. However, for the individual worshipper, it is often easier to obtain gifts and favours from Demon Patrons as they are not as powerful as the Chaos Deities and therefore have to gain and secure loyalty by granting their followers gifts.

There are no fixed rules about roleplaying individuals or cults of demon worshippers, for their behaviour depends upon the individual or cult and the kind of demon they worship. Many share traits with followers of other Chaos Powers, while others combine the traits of two or more Chaos Deities. Possible demon worshipping cults include Death Cults (sharing traits with Nurgle, Khaine and Khorne), Madmen, Spider Cults, Snake Cults (especially popular in Araby), Monster Worshippers (worshipping giant animals or other monsters), Blood Cults (sharing traits with Khorne and possibly other Chaos Powers), and Worshippers of insanity and madness (sharing traits with Slaanesh, Nurgle and possibly other Chaos Deities).

THE WAYS OF CHAOS

To understand Chaos is not easy, and to understand why someone would worship it is even harder. Chaos however, does not represent complete *disorder or confusion*, but rather disorganisation and unlimited freedom of choice. It offers a chance to choose one's form, to choose a route through life, death and rebirth, and to influence one's surroundings, time, space, and all other aspects of existence. Chaos offers an existence free of responsibility and caring for others, but also free of loneliness and fear.

It is a paradox however, that the worship of Chaos Powers grants followers few choices. A Chaos follower lives a life of obedience and frightful worship, and will need to display considerable responsibility towards his fellow cultists. The worship of chaos brings everything *but* disorganisation, freedom of choice, and a life free of fear and influence from others. Chaos is if anything, self-contradictory and unpredictable.

Live by the Book

Libraries and Librarians in the Old World

By Richard Torio II

Attached to any large university, temple or guildhall you will find a library, where much of the knowledge of an organization is kept. You will not only find books, but rare maps, archived ledgers, copies of contracts, and other forms of written information. To keep a library running you need two very important people: clerks and librarians. These roles are well defined and offence will probably be taken if they are confused.

Shelving books, and the daily running of the library falls on to the shoulders of the clerks. They are the people that library visitors come into regular contact with. Next to the librarian they are also the only ones who understand the classification system. Librarians are the most important people, because they are the ones who developed the classification system. As a result of this they are usually the only ones who know where everything is. More importantly librarians know how to use the collection to research a topic. This article will introduce libraries to the *Warhammer Fantasy Role Play* world, and give ideas on their use.

Regardless of the type of library, all have the following in common. None are public; with exceptions, a person must either be a cleric, guild member, student or university professor to gain access. Once in the door, most of the collection will be *chained*. A chained book is what the name implies: it is physically chained to the shelf. What the librarian does is drill a small hole near the spine of the book. Then a fine chain is threaded through the hole and the end is then locked to the shelf. If the books are not chained, then the library usually employs *closed stacks*. A *closed stack* is a collection that can be accessed only by the library staff. No patrons are allowed to walk among the shelves, and the books they need are brought to them. There are some libraries that employ *open stack*: no books are chained and the patron is allowed to pull what they need.

No library, university, or guild allows their patrons to check-out materials. There are some groups like *The Order of the Illuminated Reader*, that loan books to their members, but the penalty for not returning the book is very high (for more information on the Order see *Dying of the Light*). Since most libraries prohibit their collection from being checked-out there are many attempts to steal books or even worse to remove pages from books. To discourage this, most libraries hire guards to watch the doors and wander up and down the aisles. If a patron is caught stealing a book the penalty is usually a stiff fine or jail.

For a patron caught cutting pages from books, the penalty depends on the type of library. For a university or geographical library the punishment is prison as well as being stripped of all university privileges. Guild libraries tend to lean toward imprisonment, and the stripping of guild membership as well. However, there have been some reported cases of the guilty party being sold into indentured service to pay for the damage. Religious libraries have a modified form of punishment, usually involving the offender working off the damage for a number of years. If a book thief or vandal is caught in a magical library, justice is swift, lethal, and permanent.

There are two types of libraries in the Old World: academic and specialist. Academic libraries, are attached to a University, for the use of students and

professors of that university. These libraries tend to be large and imposing buildings crammed with books on numerous subjects. Specialist libraries, are smaller in both size and scope than the academic type. They are geared to a small subject and the librarians are very skilled in their area of expertise. The following are libraries that player characters will come into contact with regularly.

University Libraries

By far the libraries that are the most wide spread are the ones associated with institutes of higher learning, catering to the faculty and student body, and thus their collections are broad and diverse. It is due to this diversity that many researchers tend to stay away from these libraries. It is one thing if you are trying to get biographical information on a prominent figure, but if you are trying to find a copy of a medical book from Bretonnia or map of the Southlands you will not find it there. Subject coverage of a university library is a mixture of history, literature, anthropology, philosophy, archaeology, chemistry, astronomy, physics, mythology and sometimes music.

All university collections are chained and open stacks are employed. The collections are open to all registered students and faculty. The general public are sometimes allowed in if they can prove they can read (usually by filling in an application form) and are able to pay the 10 Crown admittance fee. These libraries are large, with generally up to a dozen librarians and three dozen clerks. Librarians in the university setting are usually underpaid and overworked. They are viewed by faculty as failed scholars, and surly guardians of the books by students.

Geographical Libraries

These are the most specialized of all libraries and their collections reflect this. A geographical library collects and preserves maps, charts, atlas, navigation aids, and star charts. Such collections might also include journals from explorers and ship logs. These collections are typically small and are often attached to a university library or to a guild. There are only three publicly known libraries of this type, but many others may exist. One is located in Aldorf and connected to the university library there. The other two are located in Marienburg and both head librarians are fierce rivals.

Borris Gunderstein runs the library attached to Baron Henryk's College of Navigation and Sea Magick's in Marienburg. This collection is historical in nature and the scope of it is very good. Geovoni Pachelie runs the other library, funded by the Navigator's Guild. Though the collection is smaller, it is more accurate and better organized. Both of these gentlemen are rivals, and they would go to any length to discredit their rival. Indeed, Geovoni has been known to hire students to vandalize certain maps in Borris' collection, while Borris, has been said to hire thieves to steal certain pieces from his rivals' shelves.

Due to the smallness in size and the narrow collection, these libraries tend to be better organized than university collections. Generally there 1d4 librarians and 1d12 clerks are available, yet the norm is double this. These libraries operate closed stacks. To prevent theft the policy in place is that patrons are seated in the reading room and are allowed only one piece of paper for notes and a pencil. If the patron needs more paper to take notes, then another piece is provided. Geographical libraries are open to either students or guild members.

Guild Libraries

Perhaps the most secure of all libraries are those belonging to the guilds, usually located in the guild hall. Not all guilds have libraries, and the ones that do are either for medicine or law. As mentioned above the Navigator's Guild in Marienburg is the only guild of that type to have a library. Only guild members are allowed entrance, as it is a benefit of their guild membership. Unlike other libraries the stacks are open and the books are not chained but still, nothing is allowed to leave the confines of the library.

Due to the nature of the collection, patrons will find only information specific to that type of library. Thus, a patron in a law library will be able to find copies of

local laws and reported cases. Do not expect to find a book of Bretonnia love poems in a law library! Because of the small collection and narrow focus these libraries have only a handful of librarians. Staff are helpful and friendly, and this is due to the guild members paying their salary! The only (legal) way non-guild members will gain access is through a current member. However, this should not be easy and the member would need to either be bribed, fearful or have complete trust in the PCs.

Religious Libraries

All major temples regardless of faith have a library of some type. These libraries have one purpose: store and preserve the important writings of the faith. The librarians view themselves as keepers of their faith's teachings. If searching for the writings of a priest, a church library is the place to go. Clerics take their libraries very seriously, yet there is one faith that takes the role of the library as a way of life. That is the Cult of Verena.

Verena libraries often have collections equal in size to university libraries. Not only is theology and law covered but so are the subjects of music, art, philosophy, geography and history. These libraries are open to the faithful, but anyone can use their resources provided a small 'donation' is given to the church. The Cult take their dedication to knowledge very seriously, and as a result they are always looking to add to their collection.

Their collections are large and open to the public, but no check-out is allowed. These libraries are very well staffed and there are typically 4-6 librarians and 10-12 clerks. Stacks are open and patrons can take the books they need. Unlike other libraries Verena libraries are very well organized and this is due to the development of Hugh's Classification system.

The Verena priest Hugh von Kranz created this system in 2340. His system assigns each book a specific number, and then the book is placed on the shelves by their number. By checking a card catalog patrons find the book they want either by subject, title or author. Thanks to the system research time in a Verena library is reduced by half.

Outside the Cult of Verena, church libraries are understaffed and very small. Generally there are no rules stopping a priest from taking a book to study in their own rooms. You will typically find only a small number of librarians and clerks in a temple library, and this staff is typically priests. They are closed to non cult members.

Magic Libraries

These libraries are centers for magical study and are always present at either Wizard's Colleges or Wizard Guilds. If the topic is magical, chances are the answer can be found here. The largest library in the world devoted to magic is believed to be located in the high elf realm of Ulthuan. Here, the Loremasters here have dedicated their life to the study of magic. Yet this collection has never been seen by a non-elf, and the majority of the world does not know of the library's existence.

The largest publicly known magical library is located at The Wizard's & Alchemists Guild in Middenheim. Wizards who want access to this collection pay a yearly fee of 50 GCs, and must prove that they are members of the guild. The yearly fee does not include research, and all research done by a librarian must be paid for. Students enrolled in the school have limited access to the collection and for them the collection is *closed*.

Magical library collections cover the subjects of astronomy, chemistry, zoology, alchemy and magic. For purposes of spells, consider magic libraries to have all Battle Magic of Levels 1 to 3 and Petty Magic spells available. Elemental and Illusion spells are available but it will take 1d12 hours to find one spell.

All non-magical works are available in the open stacks. A patron simply pulls out what they want and then takes them to the reading room to study. Alchemical and magical texts are kept in the *closed* stacks, and a patron must request these books. Only full wizards (1st level or higher) are allowed access to these works. All non-wizards are turned away at the door.

Magical libraries are staffed by 1d6 librarians and 1d24 clerks. Unlike other library staff they are well trained and most have some magical training. Most head librarians tend to be unsuccessful former wizards who have moved to the academic field. Clerks are typically failed wizard's apprentices who, though were adequate apprentices, had no aptitude for full fledge wizardom. Magical libraries are very effective, very organized and generally very well supported. Most magical libraries have adopted Hugh's Classification System and works can be found more quickly.



Using Librarians

Librarians offer many possibilities as both NPCs and as PCs. As well as assisting in research librarians can be a source of employment for poor adventurers. Indeed librarians are always looking for new books to acquire, or tracking down book thieves. Add to this that most librarians have access to rare information, they may often hire groups of adventurers to track objects discovered in a book. Adventurers who come into contact with books during their adventuring, will often find librarians anxious to buy what they have. NPC librarians tend to be quiet and aloof. They would rather conduct their own research, since they find the interruptions from patrons to be an annoying distraction. Another trait of a librarian is that they tend to view the collection and the library as their own. Librarians are possessive of the books and once you enter the library you have stepped into their.

Sometimes a librarian will grow tired of being among books, and only reading about the wide world. These librarians seek to experience life, and see if what they have read is true. Unsurprisingly those who takes to the open road will often find that what he reads was not entirely true. Player character librarians are adventurers. They seek to uncover lost knowledge and experience the events they have only read about. Though they are not the best of fighters, they use their knowledge to solve problems.

As a source of knowledge libraries are essential to literate PCs who can get in. By using the collection or paying for the services of a librarian, a PC can track down information. Librarians are experts in research, and can quickly locate what the PC is looking for. However research is long and expensive, and only the most wealthy can afford to hire the services of a trained librarian. Costs are not cheap and if the librarian is a specialized one, the price will be even higher.

Cost of Research

This table gives some guidance on the cost and time of research.

Type	Price in Gold Crowns		Hours to Find Answer	
	Librarian	Clerk	Librarian	Clerk
University	5	2	D12	1D20
Geographical	5	3	D6+2	2D6+2
Law / Medical	6	4	D6	2D8
Religious	7	5	D4+10	D10+10
Magical	10	6	D4	D12

¹ Temple's of Verena take only 50% of the time.

Research Time can be halved by the introduction of a second librarian (with payment)

The detail for the type of information the librarian finds is left up to the individual GM. Yet it should be noted that not all answers can be found in the library. Only give the players enough to get on the right track, never do all the work for them.

When a PC enters a library make them feel uncomfortable. Just because a PC is in a hurry does not mean the clerk is. If the PCs happen to meet a librarian they will feel even more out of place. Librarians are secure in their position and suffer from a superiority complex. Libraries of Verena are friendly places, and all visitors are made to feel welcomed.

New Skills

Book Repair—A character with this skill can repair and preserve scrolls, maps, charts, books, and anything else made of paper. Dexterity tests are made with a +10% modifier when a librarian is trying to repair or persevered something of paper. If the roll is failed the object is badly damaged and may in fact be ripped.

Library Research—A character with this skill knows how to use books and other written materials to conduct research. Intelligence tests are made with a +10% modifier, failure indicates that it takes the character one extra hour to conduct research, while success indicates that it takes the character an hour less to conduct the research.

New Careers

The two major careers present in libraries are clerks and librarians. Clerks perform most of the daily duties of keeping a library working, and as mentioned most PCs will come into contact with clerks when they visit a library. Librarian's run the library and they are the ones who keep the collection in repair, develop the classification system, and perform research.

Clerk (Academic Basic)

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
-	-	-	-	-	-	+10	-	+10	-	+10	+10	-	-

Entries: Initiate, Scribe, Student

Exits: Charlatan, Initiate, Librarian, Scribe, Student, Wizard Apprentice

Skills: Blather, Book Repair*, Read/Write, Super Numerate; 25% Secret Language Classical; 25% Linguistics (* new skill see below)

Trappings: Eye Glasses, Writing Kit, 1d20 Forms and Petitions, Dagger, 2 Gold Crowns

To run a library it takes many people. From processing new items for the collection, to reshelving and repairing books, and managing the funds of the library, many people are required. Clerks are more than just a scribe; they are assistants to the librarians and the first person the general public meets when they enter the library. Where a scribe simply copies and drafts documents, a clerk aids the librarians in research and even conduct research on their own. Clerks are also trained in book repair and help in the repair and maintenance of the collection.

Librarian (Advanced Career)

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
-	-	-	-	-	-	+10	-	+20	+10	+30	+20	+20	+20

Entries: Cleric, Clerk, Explorer, Lawyer, Scholar, Scribe, Student, Wizard

Exits: Charlatan, Cleric, Lawyer, Scholar, Wizard

Skills: *Book Repair, Evaluate, History, *Library Research, Linguistics, Lip Reading, Read/Write, Secret Language—Classical. (*new skill see below).

The following skills are available to specialist librarians. It does not cost any extra experience points to be a specialist librarian. All it requires is employment in one of them;

Geographical Librarian: Astronomy, Cartography, Navigation

Law Librarian: Law, Super Numerate

Magic Librarian: Magical Awareness, Rune Lore, Secret Language—Magick, Scroll Lore

Medical Librarian: Herb Lore, Surgery

Religious Librarian: Scroll Lore, Theology

Trappings: Reading Glasses, Writing Kit, 1d4 Books on Various Topics, Book Knife (treat as improvised weapon), Spool of Bundling Twine

A librarian is responsible for the running of a library, supervising a number of clerks who shelve, repair and manage the collection. The librarian will have developed the library's cataloging system, and generally they are the only one who know where anything is. A status they fight to maintain.

Scholars see librarians as nothing more than failed teachers. Students and patrons on the other hand see them as enforcers of silence and the guardians of books. Librarians disagree with these views, and they see themselves as the caretakers to the past. A book or scroll, they argue, is a window to history and this window must be preserved. Librarians will always seek out new materials for their library's collection, and will protect the collection as if it was their own.

It is rumored that recently the secret order known as *the Ancient Order of the Illuminated Readers* has started hiring librarians to work in the Unseen Library. The reason for this is that members of the order are finding it next to impossible to find anything in the stacks.

TOMES OF MAGIC

by Vidar Edland

From the time when the gods gave mortals language and script, man has recorded stories, ideas, and events from their experiences, to better understand and remember them, and to preserve their wisdom for others. Mages in particular are fond of recording what they know and learn, for their science is hard to flawlessly recollect. The tomes of these powerful individuals are rare and treasured possessions, and thus jealously guarded.

Tomes of Magic are more than mere Grimoires. They are volumes of arcane lore, and many contain secrets that mortals were never meant to know. Tomes contain not only recipes for learning spells, but other types of knowledge (skills), and many also teach initiations into, and the secrets of, various Schools of Magic.

However, a tome is not some kind of textbook that one can simply read in order to obtain the knowledge within. The knowledge in a tome cannot be learned, it must be understood. The reader must study and analyse the tome and compare it with other sources to fully understand it.

Tomes offer knowledge and power, often of the type not easily available elsewhere. A wizard may prefer to study such a tome instead of looking for a mentor. He may even have been expelled from the wizard's guild, leaving this as the only option available to him. However, the pursuit of knowledge can invite danger, for the tomes themselves may twist the mind. Many though, choose to ignore such hazards.

To read these tomes take discipline, patience and skill, for although the author can write, he is not necessarily very good at it. Tomes of Magic are often clumsily scribed by eccentric and preoccupied (and sometimes mad) Mages, and many are hand-written in a horribly cramped script. It may not even be written in known letters, but rather in an occult cipher that must be decoded before it can be read. Inevitably, there are no indexes, glossaries or tables of contents, and there may not be chapters, paragraphs, breaks between words, or even punctuation of any sort. The author is likely to have written for a specific audience, and have employed strange terms and ideas without explaining them. In addition, the book might have been translated from or into a language in which the writer was not fluent.

Finally, the study of such difficult manuscripts is very tiring, and one easily grows bored. A character may not study a tome for more than a couple of hours a day.

Hidden Knowledge

When an character has been studying a tome for 30 days, he may make a Intelligence test (modified by *Complexity*) to see if he has discovered any useful information. If the test succeeds, roll on the book's contents table to see exactly what the adventurer has discovered (re-roll if the adventurer already knows the information). The adventurer may then spend the required experience points and make a further Intelligence test (again modified by *Complexity*) to try to learn the skill or spell discovered. A failed roll means that the adventurer was unable to learn the skill or spell, but the experience points are not expended. Note that if the adventurer starts to study the book again before learning the discovered information, he loses the chance of learning that

skill or spell(s) until the next time it is rolled on the contents table. These texts are too convoluted to simply remember how the diverse, scattered references to a particular topic all fit together.

A tome may contain almost any kind of academic (intellectual) skills, although skills related to magic are the most common. Magical Awareness and Magic Sense cannot be learned from a tome.

Some tomes contain such an extensive description of a subject that a skill can be purchased more than once. The maximum number of times the skill can be bought will be noted in the details for the tome. The effect of this, when appropriate, is to provide a cumulative +10 modifier to any Intelligence test concerning the skill.

Example: A character studies a book that allows the Astronomy skill to be purchased twice. When she has purchased the skill twice, she cannot purchase it again until she finds another book which allows the skill to be purchased more than twice.

When the contents table lists a School of Magic (Wizardry, Illusion, Alchemy etc.), use the following formula. Each time the School of Magic is rolled, the character reaches a given stage of enlightenment in that school. The example below is for the School of Illusion:

Stage 1: The reader learns the Arcane Language - Illusion Magick skill, if not already held.

Stage 2: Paying the normal experience point costs, the reader gains (or advances) a level of Illusionist.

Stage 3: The adventurer discovers an Illusionist spell (roll on the Spell Level table on page 183 in WFRP to find the spell's level, but note that the spell's level will never be higher than the current level of the adventurer). Once the adventurer has obtained two spells of their current level (from any source), he proceeds to stage 4.

Stage 4: There is an equal chance of gaining further experience to spend on level advancement (see stage 2) or another spell (see stage 3).

Other Schools of Magic follow the same formula, but the number of months of study needed to become a level 1 Mage of that School varies as follows:

- Alchemist (1D2 months)
- Demonologist (1D4+1 months)
- Elementalist (1D4+1 months)
- Necromancer (1D4+4 months)
- Wizard (1D3 months)

To study the School of Petty Magic takes 1 month. To advance to level 2 (and higher) takes 1D3 months of study (per level) for all Schools of Magic.

The format of Tomes

Tomes of Magic are described in the following format:

Background: Describes the author of the book, the year it was finished, and other relevant background and legends.

Description: Describes the dimensions of the book as well as the cover, the style of the script, the quality of the paper etcetera. The book's encumbrance rating is also listed.



Language: The language the book is written in. Note that many books are written in Classical, but the reader must still know the appropriate Magic language to learn any spells or to study insights into Schools of Magic from the book.

Complexity: This represents how difficult the book is to read, and how well the author presents the information. When reading the book the adventurer suffers the listed penalty (-0 to -30) when testing against Intelligence to learn from the book. The GM may grant a bonus for academic characters of between +5 (scribes etc.) and +20 (Dwarf Loremasters), if they consider this appropriate.

Insanity Rating: This number represents how often (in days) the adventurer must test against Cool while reading the book. Failure means that the adventurer immediately gains an Insanity Point.

Disorders: If an insanity is gained from study of the tome, this describes the most common disorders associated with the book.

Contents: Roll on this table to see what information the adventurer has discovered.

Below are a list of tomes which the GM might incorporate into his or her campaign. The books *The Necronomicon* and *Liber Ivonis* are taken from the *Call of Cthulhu* RPG, but have been modified slightly to suit the *Warhammer* world.

The Private Manuscript of Etelka Herzen

Background: This tome was written by Etelka Herzen, a evil sorceress and ‘sleeping’ member of the Red Crown Chaos cult. She is a major villain in the adventure *Death on the Reik*, and this tome may replace the grimoire found in the study at her home (see *DotR*, page 29). This tome may serve as a guide for the GM on how to convert Grimoires found in published scenarios into Tomes of Magic.

Description: It measures 7.5 by 11 inches. The leather cover is not dyed, but the letters on the covers are blood red. Its encumbrance value is 50.

Language: Magic

Complexity: -5

Insanity Rating: 30

Disorders: *Anthrophobia* (*fear of people*), Stammer.

Contents:

D100	Lore
------	------

- | | |
|---------|--|
| 01 - 20 | Either Demon Lore, Herb Lore, or Scroll Lore |
| 21 - 60 | 1D2 randomly generated Petty Magic spells (may only be spells that Etelka knows. See page 20 <i>DotR</i>). |
| 61 - 90 | 1D2 randomly generated Battle Magic spells (may only be spells that Etelka knows. See page 20 <i>DotR</i>). |
| 91 - 00 | School of Petty Magic |

The Necronomicon (*The Book of the Dead*)

Background: This huge tome is translated from an Arabic text of the 13th century named *Kitab Al-Azif* (*The Book of the Howlings of the desert Demons*), which was written by an Arabian Mage, philosopher and poet called Abd al-Azrad (*the worshiper of the great devourer* - a local Arabian deity, believed to be an aspect of the Chaos god Tzeentch). He was later known only as ‘The mad Arab’. Before writing the book he spent several years wandering the deserts of Araby and the Badlands, visiting ruins of lost temples and cities and learning many secrets hidden in the sand. When he finally came out of the desert he settled down in a small nameless city, and spent the next several years composing his great work. Shortly after the book was completed in 1266, Al-Azrad was seized and devoured by an invisible monster in broad daylight while walking the streets of the city.

The Classical version of this text was translated by an unknown Tilean Cleric of Verena who took no credit for his work. It has been banned

several times, and many copies have been confiscated and destroyed. However, from time to time new copies and versions surface, and many people would pay good money to get their hands on a copy.

Description: The book varies in size from copy to copy, but many measure 18 by 11.5 inches and contain a little over 800 pages. Copies bound in Human flesh and written in Human blood are rumoured to exist. It has an encumbrance value of 100.

Language: Classical

Complexity: -30

Insanity Rating: 4

Disorders: *Astrophobia* (*fear of the stars, the moons, and Astrology*), *Alignment Change* - One step towards Lawful (*you atone for your sins to prevent corruption of your soul*), *Alignment Change* - One step towards Chaotic (*you have seen the powers wielded by the Mages of ‘evil’ and you believe that the so called ‘good’ people have spread false propaganda and lies about the people, powers, and deities of ‘evil’*). *Evil is in the nature of man, and one should live by one’s nature and instincts*), *Delusion* (*you believe that while reading the book you have let a demon loose upon the world*), *Depression*, *Hallucinations*, *Necrophobia* (*fear of anything dead*), *Nightmares*.

Contents:

D100	Lore
------	------

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 01 - 15 | School of Necromancy |
| 16 - 45 | School of Demonology |
| 46 - 65 | One of the following skills that the character does not already have (choose randomly): <i>Additional Language: Ssissyl’k</i> , <i>Astronomy</i> , <i>Demon Lore</i> (<i>may be purchased thrice</i>), <i>Divining - Astrology</i> (<i>may be purchased twice</i>), <i>History - Ancient Araby</i> , <i>Identify Undead</i> . |
| 66 - 85 | 1D3 randomly chosen spells (roll D10: 1 Petty Magic; 2-5 Battle Magic; 6-8 Demonic Magic; 9-10 Necromantic Magic). (Level 1 to 4). |
| 86 - 00 | School of Wizardry – maximum level 3 |

Magical Wards and Rituals of Protection

Background: Written by Master Simon Zauberer of Altdorf in the year 2390, it is a study of the protective values of Magic. The book also discusses how to employ and produce scrolls.

Description: Bright yellow cover with brass bindings. 7.5 by 11 inches. It has an encumbrance value of 50.

Language: Magic

Complexity: -5

Insanity Rating: None

Disorders: None

Contents:

D100	Lore
------	------

- | | |
|---------|--|
| 01 - 35 | Scroll Lore |
| 36 - 45 | Manufacture Scrolls (cost 200 Exp.) |
| 46 - 00 | 1D3 randomly generated Battle (random level) or Petty Magic spells that have to do with protection such as Auras and some Zone spells. |

The First Step

Background: Master Hergard of Altdorf wrote this tome on commission from ‘The Society of Esoteric Wisdom’ (the Mage’s Guild of Altdorf), and he completed it in 2496. It was intended to be a book that would help promising initiates of the Guild to study the basics of magic on their own. It has proven very useful, and is a highly prized tome. It is not for sale and can only be studied at the guild (by guild members, naturally).

Description: It measures 10 by 15 inches. The cover is black with golden letters. Its encumbrance value is 50.

Language: Classical
Complexity: 0
Insanity Rating: None
Disorders: None

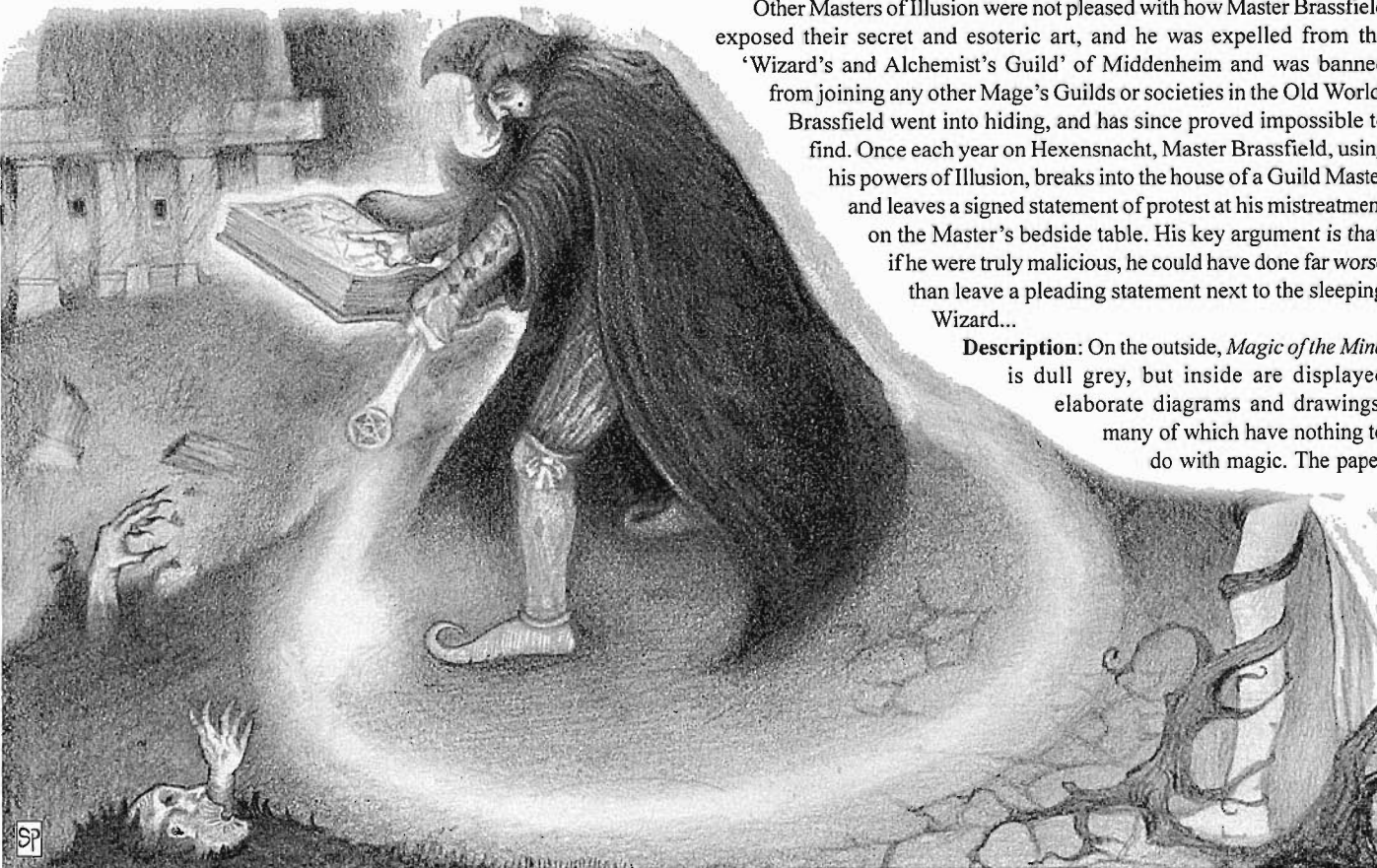
Contents:

- D100 Lore**
 01 - 15 Either Arcane Language: Magic, or Scroll Lore (equal chance of each)
 16 - 50 School of Petty Magic
 51 - 75 1D3 randomly generated Petty Magic spells.
 76 - 90 1D3 randomly generated Battle Magic spells (Level 1).
 91 - 00 School of Wizardry - maximum Level 1

Liber Ivonis (*The Book of Eibon*)

Background: The book is a translation from a much earlier parchment written by a powerful Slann Sorcerer named Zsathoqua. It was translated in the 15th century by a Sorcerer and Scholar of unknown origin named Eibon. Although Eibon was a skilled Demonologist, it is generally believed that he was not an evil man, at least not as evil as the Demonologists of the present time. Eibon was betrayed by a rival Mage, and charged with heresy. According to legend he managed to escape by building a magical gateway to one of the moons (which moon is unknown), and there he was worshipped as a god.

There are no known surviving copies of Eibon's original manuscript (the version presented here), but several lesser copies circulate, including a Breton version (*Livre d'Ivon*) written by a Bretonnian Sorcerer and Alchemist named Gaspard du Sud. This Bretonian translation is only slightly less informative than the Liber Ivonis, but lack the skills Arcane Language - Old Slann, and Manufacture Magic Items. In addition, in



this version, Demon Lore and Divining - Astrology may only be purchased once, and the School of Battle Magic can only be studied up to Level 3.

Description: The book measures 20 by 12.5 inches. It is over 500 pages long, and has an encumbrance value of 90.

Language: Classical
Complexity: -20
Insanity Rating: 5

Disorders: Anorexia (*Great Mages have no need for food*), Astrophobia (*fear of the stars, the moons, and Astrology*), Bibliophobia (*fear of books*), Heroic Idiocy (*You are so powerful a Mage that nothing can harm you*), Insomnia (*Great Mages have no need for sleep*), Megalomania (*You are among the most powerful Mages of all time*), Paranoia (*everyone wants your secrets*).

Contents:

- D100 Lore**
 01 - 15 School of Demonology – maximum Level 2
 16 -35 1D3 randomly generated Battle Magic spells (any level).
 36 - 50 1D3 randomly generated Demonic Magic spells (Level 1 or 2).
 51 - 75 One of the following skills that the character does not already have (choose randomly): Arcane Language – Old Slann, Astronomy, Demon Lore (*may be purchased twice*), Divining – Astrology (*may be purchased twice*), Manufacture Magic Items, Manufacture Potions, Manufacture Scrolls, Scroll Lore.
 76 - 00 School of Battle Magic

Magic of the Mind

Background: The book was written by Master Brassfield of Middenheim in the year 2509. It reveals the secrets of the illusionist's art and also teaches other ways to trick the mind. Master Brassfield also stresses the usefulness of Petty Magic, and claims that Mages who underestimate it are exceedingly foolish.

Other Masters of Illusion were not pleased with how Master Brassfield exposed their secret and esoteric art, and he was expelled from the 'Wizard's and Alchemist's Guild' of Middenheim and was banned from joining any other Mage's Guilds or societies in the Old World. Brassfield went into hiding, and has since proved impossible to find. Once each year on Hexensnacht, Master Brassfield, using his powers of Illusion, breaks into the house of a Guild Master and leaves a signed statement of protest at his mistreatment on the Master's bedside table. His key argument is that, if he were truly malicious, he could have done far worse than leave a pleading statement next to the sleeping Wizard...

Description: On the outside, *Magic of the Mind* is dull grey, but inside are displayed elaborate diagrams and drawings, many of which have nothing to do with magic. The paper

of the book is pure white, and each chapter is written in different coloured letters, and ends with a terribly bad poem. It has an encumbrance value of 45.

Language: Magic

Complexity: -10

Insanity Rating: 15 (due to its confusing contents)

Disorders: Hallucinations, Pathological Lying, Absent-Mindedness.

Contents:

D100 Lore

01 - 35 1D3 randomly generated Petty Magic spells.

36 - 45 1D3 randomly generated Illusionist spells (Level 1 to 2).

46 - 60 School of Illusion - maximum Level 2

61 - 00 One of the following skills that the character does not already have (choose randomly): Divining - Dice, Divining - Tarot, Hypnotise, Meditate, Palmistry

Using Tomes of Magic in The Game

There are many ways in which Tomes of Magic can be used in a Warhammer campaign. The search for these precious books can be a quest on its own right. However, tomes like The Necronomicon and Liber Ivonis should be used only as a plot device by the GM and should not end up in the hands of the adventurers.

There are several reasons for this. Firstly, these tomes are extremely rare and very valuable. Adventurers owning such a book would experience assassination attempts, burglary, threats, muggings, and sleazy merchants

wanting to buy the book. Secondly the disturbing contents of these books would soon drive an adventurer studying it into insanity and madness. Furthermore, adventurers are unlikely to have the quiet and comforting surroundings or the perspective needed to study such tomes safely. Of course, lesser translations of these tomes (see the Liber Ivonis for ideas) might be found and used by the adventurers if the GM wishes. However, tomes such as The Necronomicon and The Liber Ivonis (and even simplified versions of them) should only be hinted at, so that they remain mysterious and enigmatic. (For example: the Evil Sorcerer villain who has reputedly studied the Necronomicon is not so frightening and impressive if the adventurers themselves possess the original copy of the Necronomicon).

The GM may still use these tomes in their campaign by letting the adventurers discover excerpts from them that give information vital to their current situation. Maybe the long dead wizard who lived in the castle copied a section from the Necronomicon for easy reference, which describes how to banish the demonic guardian in the cellar. Perhaps the previous owner of the map studied the Liber Ivonis to decipher the Slann pictograms written on it and wrote down his translation in his journal before turning mad from reading the book. Such excerpts will do nothing to help the adventurers learn from the Tome, but can be used to progress the plot.

This article was inspired by the works of HP Lovecraft and other Mythos authors and the game Call of Cthulhu. Next issue we look at some non-magical books and the knowledge they contain.

GM's SECTION

The Master has Returned

A hunched old man has recently arrived in the capital. He appears to have significant magical power, although he has yet to do anything with it. He claims to be the ancient sorcerer of legend, Eibon, returned to take his place as the greatest Wizard of the World, demanding all the Mage Guilds and Societies accept his authority. This has caused great turmoil in academic circles, and Mages all over the Old World cry heresy and fraud. Who is the old man? Is he really the great wizard Eibon? Or is he only a crazy old man unable to distinguish reality and fantasy? Perhaps he is member of a Chaos cult, trying to create a diversion so that the rest of the cult may carry out a particularly significant mission unhindered...

The Cursed Tome

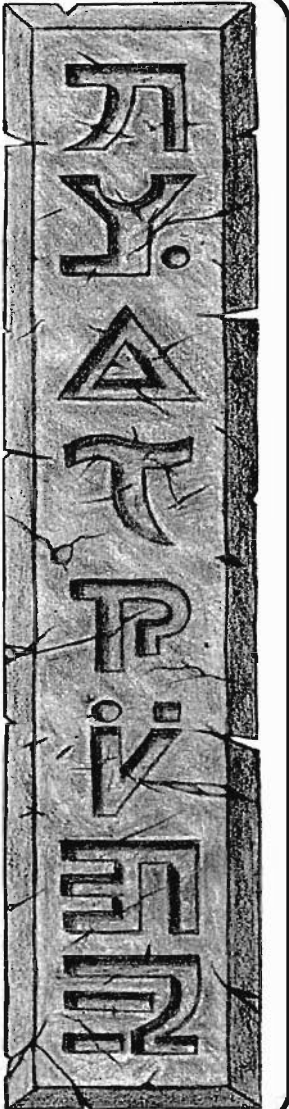
The adventurers are travelling on a familiar road, perhaps one that leads to their hometown or city. As the night draws in, the adventurers reach an inn that they have visited several times in the past. However, the inn now lies in ruins, and there do not seem to be any survivors. As the adventurers investigate, they find that the ruins contain no bodies either. Everything has been smashed, but in the midst of the rubble lies a heavy tome with a black leather cover and brass bindings. When the adventurers open the book they find themselves unable to read the text, for the words and letters twist and writhe about on the page. In the margin of several of the pages the author has drawn human faces which twitch and scream in terror and pain. Some of these faces look distressingly similar to the staff of the inn; the adventurers must make a Cool test or else gain an Insanity Point. What has happened at the inn? Where are the staff and clientele? What has the tome to do with the destruction of the inn? If so, will the adventures find out what to do with the book before they themselves falls victims to the curse of the tome?

Stop the Thief!

The adventurers are hired by a Wizard's Guild to retrieve a tome (maybe *The First Step*) stolen by a lesser member of the Guild. The thief has long since fled the city, and the adventurers must track him down. Why did the guild member steal the tome? Is he in financial trouble? Who will he attempt to sell it to? Perhaps he plans to use the tome to start his own Magic coven. Whatever his motive, before long, the adventurers should face an even more worrying problem: just why did the Guild representative hire them, rather than entrusting this task to one of their own number...?

The Treasure Hunt

A Wizard (perhaps an adventurer's Master, or a figure for whom they have worked in the past) has discovered a passage in a tome that hints of a magical treasure hidden in the ruins of an ancient and forgotten Wizard's Chantry somewhere in the mountains. The adventurers are sent to try to find the treasure. But all is not as it seems. Why was the Chantry abandoned? Is there really a treasure, and if there is, is anything still there guarding it?



Ring-a-Ring of Cultists

A complete scenario by John Foody



"... a champion shall arise from blasted flesh and he will be a herald for the coming wind of death"

Ring-a-Ring of Cultists is set in Altdorf and uses major locations there. However, these have only been described broadly, if at all. A map of the city and some background can be found in *Empire in Flames* (to be republished by Hogshead as *Empire in Chaos*) but this is not essential to running the scenario. With some work the scenario can be set anywhere.

This is the first scenario in *Warpstone* for a while to feature chaos cultists. Indeed, it is something we have deliberately avoided. However, they are an essential part of WFRP and we can't keep them away forever. The Clerics of Shallya article in *Warpstone 10* is recommended reading before running this scenario but is not essential. The Disease article from issues seven and eight is also referred to but again is not essential.

The Fetid Cauldron

This scenario concerns the plans of a sect of Nurgle worshippers, known to themselves as the Sacred Quorum of the Fetid Cauldron. Unusually, for Nurgle cultists they are widespread and have grand schemes. Their bible is the blasphemous tome known as the Mousillion Plague Texts. Within its pages it prophesies the coming of the time of Nurgle, an event heralded by divine signs. A sorcerer and ex-priest of Tzeentch founded the group thirty years ago. Stricken with disease he turned to Nurgle for salvation. The dark god led his new follower to the location of the Plague Texts, a book of human skin containing the word and ceremonies of Nurgle. Within he discovered a grim prophecy. It would be heralded by three events in a time to be told by the stars. His calculations told him this time was at hand and he began to prepare.

However, his name is no longer spoken, his memory deliberately despoiled. The sorcerer was murdered by his apprentice and protégé, Masken. Ever growing in power, Masken toiled to prepare the world for the beginning of his master's coming. Masken hunted out worshippers of Nurgle and began to gather them together in an informal network. However, he was never to see his plans completed. Killed by a group of adventurers, others were forced to take up the task. The first stage of the prophecy is about to come to pass.

The first part of the prophecy (Canto CXIII), as translated by Masken, said;

*On the last days of the memory of our enemy's victory
At the Eagle's Seat, the mirror of the dove
A champion shall arise from blasted flesh
And he will be a herald for the coming wind of death*

The cultists who heeded his word are ready to bring the plan to fruition. They have spent months building a temple to Nurgle, a corrupted version of the Cathedral of Shallya in Altdorf. On a holy day of Shallya, they plan to create a warrior of Chaos to lead them to their new world.

appointed destinies.

Acting as representatives of various Bretonnian mercantile interests they are conducting talks with the Altdorf Guild of Merchants. Oskar Nilde, a mid ranking member of the guild, has volunteered to look after these three distinguished visitors. However, his plans to keep them entertained have gone astray and he needs the PCs help. If the PCs have contacts in the city, then perhaps one of them recommended our intrepid heroes.

The Merchant

It is late at night when the PCs are approached by Oskar

Nilde, a nervous middle aged merchant. Obviously tired and worried he begs their help, nervously whispering his pleas. He refuses to elaborate, saying he will explain all in his coach. Outside his coach and driver, Piotr, await. If they clamber aboard he thanks them sincerely, offering them a good amount of money for resolving his problem.

He tells the PCs that three very important merchants are staying at his house. They are here for talks at opening lucrative trade routes into Bretonnia. Negotiations will take place tomorrow and tonight he was to keep them entertained. With no expense spared, he bought in girls and drink. They had a wonderful time and they are now



Prologue
Bad Eggs



This section is a brief cameo for the PCs. It has no direct relevance to the scenario except to introduce a non-essential clue that will come into play later. If you choose, it can easily be ignored or even played as a standalone encounter. Three wizards and champions of Nurgle have arrived to play their part in the prophecy. Under the guise of merchants they have come to the capital to await their

asleep. During the evening, he noticed one of the men wearing an expensive necklace. However, it now seems to be missing and he believes one of the girls has stolen it. Nilde is terrified the merchants will be upset at the loss and pull out of the negotiations. If that happened he would be ruined.

Nilde is right, one of the girls did steal the necklace. In the shape of a dove, it was made of silver and tastefully decorated with small stones. Nilde is an expert in jewellery and guesses it was well made, perhaps worth 25GCs. In fact he is lying and it is worth three times that amount. Such necklaces are dedicated to Shallya, unusual as the bird hangs upside down, allowing the wearer to kiss the bird in devotion. It believes to be very old as such a style is no longer made. In essence these details are true. However, various cultists of Nurgle wear these upside down symbols to insult Shallya, and they spit upon them when in prayer.

The house is in the mercantile area of town, near the Merchant's Guild. One of the servants is awaiting Nilde's arrival, holding a hooded lantern. The three 'merchants' are asleep upstairs, very drunk. None of them have any indication they are wizards or cultists. Profiles are given at the relevant stages in the adventure. If the PCs ask, their names are Phillippe Currie, Oiliver Le Gard and Alain de Gleinhan.

The two household servants are both present and have been all evening. Piotr is a laconic man in his thirties, a bitter, ex-soldier, a bad leg wound reducing him to servitude. It is obvious he dislikes the visitors, seeing them as decadent and nasty. In fact, he hates them simply because they are wealthy. He saw one of them beating the girls and this is more ammunition to substantiate his feelings. It was Piotr who hired the three prostitutes, collecting them in his coach from Emmanuelle's House of Kultured Ladies.

Klaus meanwhile is usually the very picture of servile happiness. He has served Nilde for thirty years and his father for ten before that. Currently he sports a cut lip from being struck by Alain de Gleinhan. Out of loyalty, he is wary of making trouble for his master. He stays silent during any questioning but looks nervous if asked if he knows what happened to the necklace. In fact he saw one of the girls take it. He remained silent. If pushed he describes her as "pretty and sweet, too young for such a life."

The Brothel

Emmanuelle's House of Kultured Ladies is discreetly located within the Merchant district. At night the area is quiet; many of the traders being wealthy enough to live elsewhere. An over made-up woman in her forties, Emmanuelle inherited the house from her mother, the original Madam. She treats her prostitutes like cattle. While they make money, they are cared for and protected; otherwise they are discarded. When the PCs knock at the house, she is very angry. She claims two of her girls were beaten, and one of the clients had the pox. "She'll be useless to me now", she says without compassion. She denies her girls stole anything. If the PCs can convince her they aren't with the watch, she will let them talk to the three girls for money.

Tended to by an elder woman, the three are recovering from their ordeal. All are extremely shaken, two of them badly bruised. A character with Heal Wounds examining them will diagnose broken ribs for one. All are very nervous of the characters, especially once they ask about the necklace. Hilde, the most experienced of the three denies any of them took anything. She claims the merchants were evil and perverted. However, threats of the watch and a witness will cause the youngest to break down. Just fifteen, Stella was forced into prostitution two years ago. She has suffered greatly since then and turned to Laughing Powder (Middenheim: City of Chaos page 91) to block out the pain. Addiction followed; her craving met by the brothel guard Maus. Stella claims

she took the necklace from the man in retaliation for the beating. After confession to drugs and stealing, Emmanuelle grabs her by the hair and unless restrained throws her into the street. She won't risk having her 'good name' smeared.

A sly and cowardly man, Maus makes much of his imposing size. Acting as an in-house guard for the brothel, he is making money supplying some of the girls with drugs. In return he demands payment and sex, the amounts increasing as they become more and more dependent. On duty, he waits in the background in case of trouble. Currently he is to be found playing cards in the cellar with three others. Money, bottles and glasses filled with spirits cram the table as they bet over a game of Three Emperors Bluff. Two of his opponents are local servants, Maus's regular cronies. The third is Leo Phillippe, a Bretonnian duellist making his living playing cards.

The PCs enter the dim cellar just in time to see Phillippe gather his winnings, including the necklace, to him. The foreigner's winning streak is putting Maus into foul temper. Phillippe can see this and is enjoying winding him up, confident he can handle him if he turns violent.

PCs are welcome to join the game but it will take money and skill to win the necklace back. Phillippe refuses to allow them to purchase it (he has evaluated it successfully) but is willing to play or accept a challenge in competition for its ownership. He will even accept a duel for it although he considers this rather unimaginative.

Leo Phillippe

A Bretonnian dilettante, he has spent most of his adult life in The Empire. He finds it much more fun than his homeland. The son of a minor noble he is skilled at all games and lucky with it. Over the years he has also developed enough skills to prove his innocence when unfairly accused of cheating. Flamboyant in dress, manner and speech he does not pursue money for its own sake, rather for the thrill of the chase.

As long as they haven't made an enemy of him, Phillippe can be used later in the scenario if the PCs are running into difficulty. Perhaps after some thought he recognises the necklace's significance, or happens to be in the right place at the right time. You could even have him turn up dead with a clue in his pocket.

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I
4	49	55	4	4	9	52
A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	FeI
2	38	47	58	69	42	37

Careers: Duellist, ex- Gambler,

Skills: Disarm, Dodge Blow, Etiquette, Gamble, Luck, Marksmanship, Palm Objects, Specialist Weapon-Fencing Sword, Specialist Weapon-Parrying Weapons, Specialist Weapon-Pistol, Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure

Equipment: Left-Hand Dagger, Long Sword, Fancy clothes, cloak and hat. He has no Pistol as he recently sold it to gamble with ("An investment!"), hidden purse with 13GC 17/9

Rewards

Nilde is very pleased to have the necklace back happily paying the agreed price. Mercenary PCs can even get him to pay over an extra 50% at this stage if they make him squeal a bit.

The Merchants

If the PCs investigate the merchants at this stage there is little to learn. The three claim to be representing various Merchant interests based in Parravon. They have been sent to conclude lengthy negotiations concerning trade routes across the Grey Mountains. They arrived yesterday carrying official documents, signed and sealed by Master Guildsman Alberto Le Nugat. They were expected and had competently begun talks. Indeed one of three, Alain

de Gleinhan, is a Merchant. The others have been briefed enough to be able to back him up.

The Festival of Blessed Healing

The raising of the Chaos warrior will take place at the end of the three-day festival of Shallya, known as The Blessed Healing. The Sacred Quorum of the Fetid Cauldron intend to ruin the first two days ceremonies and then hold a rival ceremony of their own. However, an initiate of Shallya began to unearth the plot. He was discovered and ceremoniously killed. It is his death which will draw the PCs into the plot.

The Festival of Blessed Healing celebrates the time when a young initiate named Reges came to the dying Emperor Theodor V. A plot to kill him by Nurgle cultists had stricken him with a mysterious illness. The senior clerics of the cult of Shallya and the Empire's greatest physicians could find no cure. After receiving a vision from the Goddess, the young girl made her way to the Palace. The guards would not allow her entry until a host of doves gathered around her. Entering the bedchamber she dismissed the attendants and knelt to pray, remaining so for two nights. On the third morning the Emperor awoke from his delirium, completely cured. Theodor spent the rest of his reign as a patron to the Cult, beginning the construction of the current cathedral.

Soon after, Reges began a pilgrimage to Couronne, escorted by the head of The Empire's cult. They never reached their destination. She had been greeted by huge crowds in Carroburg, healing many of the sick brought before her. They left quietly next morning and were not seen again. Many legends are attached to her disappearance but no-one really knows. Her popularity is strong in the Empire, especially amongst initiates. They see her as an example to follow. Sainthood has been discussed on many occasions but never any more than that. She is now referred to as the Blessed Reges.

Prior to the first day of the ceremony, characters are likely to see decorations springing up in various locations across the city, especially in the cathedral vicinity and the processional route. These are mostly fresh flowers, often in the shape of doves, tears or hearts.



**Day One
Blessed Reges'
Journey to the
Emperor's Side**



The first part of the festival doesn't begin for the public until early evening. However, in the temple initiates have spent the day fasting and praying. One of the younger initiates takes on the role of Reges and she leads the procession of the entire Cathedral staff (both clerical and secular) towards the palace. Here she asks to be granted entry and is admitted, alone, to the Emperor's presence.

For whatever reason (perhaps Nilde hired them to deliver a package) the PCs are in one of the city's plazas. It is the home to the offices of Four Seasons Coaches. A portly old lady (not rich looking in any way) has just arrived from Ostwald. Laden with a huge wooden chest, she is looking lost and confused by the big city. The coach drives off and leaves her. If the PCs ignore her she will ask them for help. Introducing herself as Eda it is obvious she has never been to the big city before. If the PCs wanted to trick her out of her goods she would be any easy target. Eda has come to Altdorf to visit her grand-daughter (whom she raised) Gurtrude. She proudly informs the PCs that Gurtrude is taking part in the Festival in the role of the Blessed Reges. This is a great honour for any initiate. If they don't volunteer, she asks the PCs to point her towards the Cathedral. She makes a huge drama of her heavy chest, hoping they will carry it for her. The chest contains gifts from the village, for Reges, of clothes and food. On the way, she can answer any of the questions the PCs have about the festival.

On arrival at the Cathedral, Gertrude thanks the PCs gratefully and from her chest hands them some fruit cake

wrapped in cloth. After introducing herself to a Cleric, she is led inside. The Cathedral is a huge hive of activity as clerics arrive and servants run errands. Wagons filled with food are arriving for the Great Feast for the Poor on the third day.

The Cathedral of Shallya in Altdorf is the centre of the Cult in The Empire. The building itself is impressive, although fallen into disrepair. Emperor Theodor died when it was only half finished, and the cult struggled to complete it. Each additional story was plainer and cheaper than the one below it. The grounds are always busy, filled with the poor and sick, and bustling clerics exhausting themselves rushing to-and-fro.

As the PCs are leaving a young cleric, Tous, beckons to them from a side door. Obviously nervous, he begs the PCs help. He says two men dressed in clerical robes, entered the Shrine of Her Father's Way (a shrine to Morr located within the Temple) to pray. The usual clerics are busy preparing for the festival and he was put in charge. However, a little while later, he heard breaking stone and crept in to the shrine. He saw the pair opening one of the tombs. He doesn't think they are armed and doesn't want any blood spilt.

Alex and Quint are a pair of no-moral tomb robbers. After hearing rumours that the bones of important clerics of Shallya could be sold for use in healing potions, they decided to steal some from the Cathedral. They waited until the festival, knowing the Cathedral would be both busy and full of strangers.

Dealing with the pair won't be too much of a problem. They are detailed below.

Festival Procession

The procession takes place an hour or two before dusk. Gertrude/"Reges" exits the Cathedral through the main door dressed in a simple tunic. A large crowd has gathered to observe and an unusual silence descends over them, handicapped and sick people are brought to the front. PCs looking at the crowd will notice a number of armed men from The Merciful Knights of the Hospitals of Shallya scattered around. Nervously, Reges begins the walk towards the palace. A number of children throw white petals before her. Behind her exits the main procession, all the Clerics and staff from the Cathedral. They are all dressed in white robes. Margret Gronemeyer, the acting head of the cult in

Altdorf leads the group in prayer. The leader of the cult in The Empire. Kristen Dolben, although usually stationed in the Capital has recently travelled to Nuln to deal with a number of matters there. Some carry dove standards, the rest holding a dove in their hands. A number flick blessed water from the spring at Couronne into the crowd.

The procession passes a group of spectators and many of them join in behind. PCs observing the procession will see the young cleric Tous walking with an older, distinguished Cleric. Tous points at the PCs and the man nods a greeting. Eda is also in the procession and gives them a happy wave.

After an hour Reges arrives at the Palace, where she kneels some distance from the main gate. From the wall hangs a large black flag. This will not be removed until the end of the festival. As the main procession reaches the gate the clerics form a large semicircle around her. The clerics stand in silence for a little while before the gates open and a unit of Reiksguards march out. Impressive in their full ceremonial armour they come to a stop in two long lines. Between them, the Khamberlin of the Gate strides forward and raps on the ground three time with his ceremonial mace. Reges stands and after stuttering announces, "I ask for entry to the Palace of his Imperial Emperor. I come as a messenger of Shallya, mistress of devotion and healing to tend his Imperial majesty against the machinations of the foulest Nurgle. I ask that thou pay heed to my lady's words." The Khamberlin raps the mace again. "You are expected Reges, daughter of Shallya. Enter." Gurtrude steps forward nervously and stops. The Khamberlin nods at her encouragingly and she continues on slowly. The Clerics begin to sing a hymn as they all release their doves into the air.

Just as she reaches the Khamberlain a man dressed in rags pushes through the surrounding clerics. Haggard and tired he has a long knife in his hand and charges at the girl, "It must stop!" he cries. Reiksguard are on him immediately, and at the first hit he dissolves into a sea of maggots. The clerics cry out in shock, while many of the crowd bless themselves against evil. The Khamberlain quickly escorts Gurtrude into the Temple, followed by Margaret Gronemeyer.

If the PCs investigate the identity of the man they will have nothing to go on. No one in the quickly dispersing crowd recognised him. The man was a cultist of Nurgle,

rotted and destroyed by the god he worshipped. He was sent to kill Reges but his failure does not concern his leaders. The Ceremony has been interrupted and was therefore a good omen for them. The entire city is unnerved by what has happened. Entry to the Cathedral is strictly forbidden, Knights Hospitaller forcibly guarding every entrance.

Unseen

During the night, unseen by good folk, Alexis Rimbraud is killed. A young initiate of Shallya, he was investigating the Fetid Cauldron and was uncovered. He was murdered in the Temple of Decay and his body dumped in the sewer. Washed into the Reik it is discovered in the early hours of the morning by two boatmen. By the time the PCs become involved many are saying that a dove guided the pair to the corpse.

**Day Two
The Ceremony of the
Blessed Water**

The second day of the festival is a closed ceremony for the Clerics. While Reges prays over the Emperor, Holy Water brought from Coroune is added to the font for another year. The font lies at the centre of the Cathedral both physically and ritually. The water is added and each cleric is anointed while many initiates are made full clerics at the ceremony. The Fetid Cauldron plan to infiltrate and interrupt the ceremony. They indeed do achieve this by infecting the font with the corrupted blood of a Beast of Nurgle.

The Superior

On the morning of the Ceremony, a breathless Tous (the initiate they helped previously) tracks down the PCs. He says Brother Augustine has invited them to the Cathedral. Characters may be tempted to think they are coming to be rewarded. Of course they are! Just not yet, but let them feel happy for a short while. If asked Tous will say he doesn't know why but said Brother Augustine said it was very important.

At the Cathedral Tous brings them past the Knights and deep into the heart of the building. Leading to a door, he knocks and Brother Augustine answers. Thanking



Alex

A small, stocky man with a mean attitude. He always wears a hat, and dresses in dark leather, sewn together where it has spilt. Spending much of his youth in prison, he has made his living robbing tombs and graves, usually for the treasure within. Although, he is not averse to dealing with necromancers. Quint makes a good partner, not that he trusts him.

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
3	33	29	3	3	6	34	1	32	30	36	35	28	29

Skills: Concealment Rural, Concealment Urban, Evaluate, Secret Language-Thieves' Tongue, Secret Signs-Thieves', Silent Move Rural, Silent Move Urban, Spot Trap

Equipment: Sword, leather jerkin, 3 GC 7/6

Quint

A vicious, not too bright, but certainly cunning, thug, Quint dislikes everyone. Abandoned as a child for his Orcish blood, he has never known kindness. Making his living on the edge of society, he soon fell into robbing graves. His partnership with Alex means he gets away without having to think too much. Most of his money goes on drink and women.

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	40	32	4	3	7	28	1	27	28	26	29	33	20

Skills: Concealment Rural, Concealment Urban, Evaluate, Silent Move Rural, Silent Move Urban, Spot Trap, Strike Mighty Blow,

Equipment: Sword coated with manbane, second dose in bottle, chain shirt, 3/24



Tous, he invites them in, looking up and down the corridor before shutting the door. Augustine is a senior cleric of the cult and his room is filled with icons of Shallya and medical charts. In his late fifties, he has a well-tended white beard and compassionate face. However, this is currently dominated by a worried look. He tells the PCs he has invited them here to ask for their help and hopes they will at least listen to his problem. Once they have agreed he will begin.

"Alexis Rimbraud, a promising young initiate of ours was found dead this morning. A pair of boatmen found his body in the Reik. It is doubly tragic as he was due to become a Goodman [fully fledged cleric] at the ceremony today." Augustine looks nervous, sighing before continuing. "There is cause to believe it was suicide. A woman was found crying at the gate earlier. One of the sisters took her home. It seems they were... having a relationship and this girl broke it off yesterday. She said he had threatened to kill himself if she left him. However, she didn't take him seriously. It seems he was not at the procession and his friends had no idea of his whereabouts. Highly unusual! I have reason to suspect that other forces may be at work here. I wish to ask your help in bringing this matter into focus. This woman, Marie, can be found at 11 Rubenweg by the east wall on the north bank. Also, Sister Serene may be able to highlight the problems here. If you have any further questions, please ask Mother Winifred. She was responsible for Alexis' welfare? Can I rely on your help?"

If anyone raises the issue of compensation, Augustine asks if it can be sorted out once they have completed the task. He looks hurt if they doubt his honesty. And no, if anyone asks they haven't got any healing potions lying around.

Initiate Sauber

Waiting for the PCs further down the corridor is Sauber Kanberg. He says he is to show them to where they want to go, "Sister Serene's is this way". If fact Sauber is guessing they are on the way to see Sister Serene. If challenged he says he wanted to help as Alexis was kind to him. He claims not to know anything about Alexis' death but he did hear Axel threaten Alexis once.



Sauber Kanberg

A tall and gangly youth, his hair greasy and long. He is awkward and seems lonely and eager to please. Joining the cult three years ago he has failed to qualify as a cleric, consistently failing to grasp the basic principals. This scholarly ineptness soon gave way to bitterness and frustration and an approach by a member of the Fetid Cauldron yielded results. The promise of power led him in deep, the cult pleased to have an insider in the Temple. Sauber has kept a low profile, planning for the desecration of the ceremony of Blessed Water. In truth Sauber hated Alexis and it was his idea to recruit his brother to the Cult. However, this lead to Alexis' investigation. Sauber only heard of Alexis' death after the event and realised that the involvement of the PCs could bring problems. He hopes to divert them long enough for the ceremony to take place. He has no way of getting a message to his comrades.

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I
3	28	22	2	3	6	33
A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	FeI
1	29	25	21	35	21	24

Skills: Hide, Read/Write, Scroll Lore, Secret Language—Classical, Silent Move Urban, Theology (Shallya)

Sister Serene

Serene is usually to be found working in the basement of the temple, watched over by a small shrine to Morr and a

sorrowful ceiling painting of Shallya. Unusual in style she is depicted playing a pipe, easing the passage of those entering Morr's kingdom. Two servants run around the room, dominated by five stone slabs in the centre. The whole place smells of embalming fluid and pipeweed. It is located near the Shrine of Her Father's Way. Serene is currently not here and the servants say she will be back in a little while. Have the PCs investigate some of the other clues before they talk to Serene.

Serene is an aged and dignified sister. Her long hair is still red but thinner than it used to be, pulled back in a ponytail. When she can she will light up her pipe, her one true indulgence. She is very experienced having also served time with Clerics of Morr, learning many of their arts. Age forced her into a more settled temple career but she is still full of life. Any physician will recognise her name as the author of a dozen medical papers that were very well received, although sometimes radical. She has little time for most people, thus appearing abrupt and rude. Many of the initiates are scared of her but she has the respect of all the clerics.

She is immediately favourable towards the PCs if they stopped the tomb robbers the day before, offering them some pipeweed. This shocks one of the servants so much he runs into a wall. Tutting loudly she beckons the PCs over to one of the slabs. Here she pulls back the sheet covering Alexis's body. She immediately dismisses any thought of suicide, "Much as Augustine prefers to believe it." Taking Alexis' arm she says that his wrists are bloodied, indicating he was probably tied up. More importantly though he had a penny shoved into his throat. "Usually goes into the mouth but they didn't want it found this time." Throwing the penny to a PC she tells them it is from Mousillion in Bretonnia, The City of the Damned. These coins are used by Nurgle's followers to bring speedy decay to bodies. Indeed, the body seems to be badly decayed. More so than the day he was missing would allow for. She also passes on the rumour "he was getting above himself". She declines to say who she heard it from and says they should remember its just a rumour.

Any character with Herb Lore passing an Initiative test notices a subtle but strange colouring of the lips attributed to 'Sewer Mushroom'. This is a poison brewed from various sewer-growing fungi. Serene will agree with this conclusion, annoyed she didn't spot it herself.

Goodwoman Winifred

A middle-aged woman who is responsible for the welfare of the initiates. She is greatly upset by Alexis death. She joined the temple as an initiate but didn't have the aptitude to become a cleric. Instead she stayed on as a matron eventually earning the honorary title of Goodwoman. Thus most people do not realise she is not a cleric. In her late fifties, she is sprightly and dedicated to the protection of her charges. She feels personally responsible for Alexis' death.

She is happy to talk about Alexis as Augustine warned her the PCs might visit. Alexis was seventeen years old when he died, and had been an initiate for two. He grew up in the poorest part of the city and he and his brother were orphaned at nine. His sister and parents died in a typhoid outbreak. He came to the Cathedral three years later and carried out basic duties. It wasn't too long before his dedication became obvious. He was very well liked by the other initiates. However, he had drifted away from his studies in the last two or three months, even with his approaching ordination. She had suspected he was seeing a girl, but he denied it.

She will introduce them to other initiates if requested. If asked about Sauber Kanberg she says he is a hard worker but has little aptitude for healing.

The Fake Lover

As the PCs leave the Cathedral they see six wagons have pulled up by the side of the building. Servants are unloading barrels from each, guarded by Knight Hospitallers. Each barrel is wrapped in a white sheet and

handled very carefully. This is the holy water from Couronne.

Questions about the girlfriend Marie leads to Anges a young kitchen servant. When the woman came to the cathedral claiming she was Alexis' lover Anges decided to follow her, trailing the woman to a house on the edge of the Mercantile district. When questioned by the PCs she says something about her didn't seem right so she followed her just in case. The young woman was pretty, with red hair and bright green eyes. Marie is a fake name. In fact she is Sybil Kalzone, an actress currently working in the city. She was hired by Tuomas Kluge, one of the Fetid Cauldron cultists to deflect suspicion from the order.



Under the shadow of the east wall, 11 Rubenweg is a small, crumbling house. The door is answered by a woman matching the description given by Augustine but older. Sybil is her sister and she pretends not to know where she is. The PCs will need to convince her Sybil is not in trouble or come up with another good cover story. If they cannot then after they have left she will go to warn her sister. She will be easy to follow.

Sybil is currently staying at the 'Sun and Moons' inn after an argument with her sister. It is quiet except for a group of twenty having dinner. While the others eat they take turns to get up on stage. If they wait long enough Sybil will get up and dance. She doesn't look like a woman in mourning. The group are a troupe of travelling actors, playing in Aldorf during the festival.

Sybil was paid good money by Kluge and he warned her that people might come and ask her questions. She is therefore ready for the PCs and will carry on the story she was given. If approached she will burst into tears and tell how she met Alex (she thinks this was the name) a few days before falling deeply in love. However, when she told him she had to leave he broke down and cried. He said he would kill himself if she went. She didn't believe him and left. However, if challenged, she cannot substantiate the story. She only has a cursory description of him and knows little else. She doesn't know the name of the man who hired her. He was well dressed and refined, a professional of some sort she guesses. His hair was bright red and he was fat.

Friends

Six other initiates could be described as Alexis' friends. The following information can be gleaned:

- It is obvious they all liked him.
- They say that he had withdrawn from them lately.
- One may suggest he was worried about his brother.
- A couple will say that he thought he was above them, spending time with Brother Georg.
- They say he hasn't slept in the dorm some nights.
- They have all heard Axel threaten Alexis at times but admit Alexis picked on Axel at times.
- If asked about Sauber it is obvious that they don't like him.
- All of them are shocked he was seeing Sybil/Marie, as they were all aware he was seeing Ruth, another initiate.

They will all try and cover this last fact but they do it badly. They simply protest too much. "No he wasn't seeing Ruth no matter what you heard."

Ruth

A year younger than Alexis, Ruth is to be found tending the poor. She is obviously upset at any mention of Alexis' name but if gently coaxed will talk. They had being having a relationship for a year, managing to keep it secret from the Brethren. It is obvious she cared for him. They used to talk about everything but in the last six months he had withdrawn from her a little. At times he was scared but wouldn't say what of. She is convinced he wasn't seeing anyone else.

She knows Alexis had a house in the lower class area

by the docks, although he would never take her there. His brother still lives there and he visited him often. She once saw him talking to a grubbily dressed man with no nose. It looked like they were friends but when she asked who it was he said "No one". She also thinks Alexis "had somewhere he would go to hide". The last time she saw him alive he was searching the main hall. This was the day he died. Again, he refused to say what he was doing, storming away from her.

The Dorm

There is nothing here except a bronze key tied to the back of his bed. No one knows what it is for.

Axel

A hunchbacked young man with no hair, Axel is very shy, nervous and a bad communicator. He has lived in the Cathedral grounds since the age of five, doing all kinds of menial jobs, eating and sleeping in a shed. Currently he is cleaning the outside of the Cathedral. He has a huge crush on Ruth, something she doesn't mind but Alexis did. He had told him to stay away from her. Every-time they saw each other from then on Alexis would threaten Axel, shaking his fist. His shed is filled with pictures of Ruth he has drawn with charcoal. It is obvious he is talented. They are hidden under a blanket and he will be very embarrassed if they are found.

If the PCs mention Alexis to him he looks worried. If he thinks he is in trouble, he takes them to The Garden of Repose. Here he tries to convey the fact Alexis buried something in the corner. Once the PCs have got the message, he digs up a bush. Underneath is revealed a large tome bound in oiled leather. When it is opened, pieces of straw fall out of it. The front cover has the symbol of Nurgle burnt into it. It is made from stiff leather, the writing in a scrawled Bretonnian. It is a copy of the Mouissillion Plague Texts (Details below, see Tomes of Magick on page 19 for further details) Alexis buried it here for safekeeping. He had managed to steal this copy and this had led him to unearth the prophecy. He believed the garden would be the last place anyone would look for it but Axel spotted him burying the book.

Mouissillion Plague Texts

Background: The Bretonnian city of Mouissillion is often spoken of in whispers. Crumbling and decaying it has earned the title the City of the Damned. It was here over five hundred years ago that champions of Nurgle gathered to record the knowledge that had been passed down to them verbally by their own mentors. Why they decided to do this is unknown but their task was successful. The tome was filled with spells, prophecies, ceremonial instructions and the words of Nurgle himself. Three copies were created and two remain unheard of to this day. The third was carried into The Empire. Here it was copied and mass produced, spreading far and wide. Now Witch-hunters often find a copy when they uncover followers of Nurgle.

Description: The original three copies were believed to be bound in the skin of a plague bearer, the pages also of stiffened skin. The words written in blood from the champions themselves. It measures 20 inches tall by 16 inches wide, thick and heavy. Copies tend to be parchment bound in leather and are smaller.

Language: A somewhat archaic version of Bretonnian. The original also has much in Classical.

Complexity: Original -20 / Copies -10

Insanity Rating: 3 / Copies 10

Disorders: Drug Addiction, Hatred (Followers of

Shallya), Depression, Phobia (Diseased people), Allergy & Shaking. Also Alzheimer's and others disease may optionally be gained instead.

Contents:

- D100 Lore**
- 1-30 Theology (Nurgle)
- 31-45 Scroll Lore, Arcane Language – Magick, Demon Lore, or Herb Lore
- 46-60 1 Randomly generated Demonology Level 1 or 2 spell (Nurgle Demons only)
- 61-70 ID2 Randomly generated Battle Magic Level 1 or 2 spell
- 71-80 Cult Magic (Summon Beast of Nurgle etc.)
- 81-95 Speak Additional Language (Dark Tongue)*
- 96-00 Summon Greater Demon of Nurgle*

* Only available in original versions. Alexis' version was copied from the original and thus has these.

it unlikely that Alexis was following Nurgle. However, he knew Alexis suspected someone in the cathedral was a follower, but wouldn't reveal who without proof. On the day he died he had hinted that he intended to investigate certain dockside warehouses and depending on what he found, tell Georg the details.

Shifting through piles of papers Georg pulls out a parchment. Alexis told Georg to show it to people he trusted if anything ever happened to him. "I guess this as good as any time. It is taken from the poem The Candle by the Claudio von Dakham written in the twenty-fourth century. Short, but not very good. A favourite of students I believe. I don't know what significance it has. Frankly, I am not sure there is any. As you can tell, Alexis was very secretive but I think now it may have been because he was truly scared. Perhaps I should have done more. To the poem;

Through doors and glades,

I walked for days,

Lifted my candle to guide me,

And as I walked 'ward the east,

The river of wax did show me"

Georg will give the same information as Sister Serene about the Mousillion pennies.

The Pilots

Any local found working at the docks will be able to point the PCs in the direction of the two Pilots who found Alexis's body. Many will bless themselves in Shallya's name saying the pair were guided to the body by a dove.

Hugo and Ingo are a double act. Having worked together for years they are great friends while annoying each other constantly. A typical example of their conversation goes; Hugo: "We found the body over by the North side warehouses. It was..."

Ingo: Shaking head and muttering. "I don't know. Can't even..."

Hugo: "Something to say have you."

Ingo: "No. No. Carry on."

Hugo: "Well it was just after the bells struck eight."

Ingo: "Seven. It was. Seven."

Hugo: "Eight I tell you."

They go on like this and getting any information from them is painful. Early this morning they were heading out to bring a barge into dock when they saw crows ("A dove? Hah! Don't be daft.") gathered around what seemed like a bundle of clothes. Rowing over they discovered the body. If taken back to the site both will be able to estimate which sewer outlet he was flushed form. Ingo also thinks he saw

the dead boy recently talking ("fore he were dead, of course.") to a young man with no nose along the docks. The discussion was quite animated.

If PCs ask around the docks for rumours of other similar murders they will find a few such stories. A couple of out-of-towners have been dragged out of the Reik recently. Some rat catchers have joined them. This has led to rumours among the poor of a chaos creature stalking the sewers. More educated locals reckon they were caught in flash floods or more likely, plain drunk. Their bodies have been buried in paupers graves and are unlikely to be found. The watch can offer no further information and aren't really interested.

The Neighbours

Investigating Alexis' background is another possible step. He came from the poorest part of town. The area is a slum, streets filled with rubbish and filth, houses crumbling to pieces and with the Watch unconcerned, criminals control much of the area. The streets are busy, diseased and



The Scholar

An old man Brother Georg gave up the practical life of being a cleric and dedicated his life to study. His life's work is a history of the cult of Shallya in The Empire. Thin and wiry he is still full of energy and will be happy to talk to the PCs. He lives in a room on the top floor of the cathedral so he can get some peace and quiet. When the PCs enter his room they find him feeding doves on his windowsill. The room is packed with scrolls and books, the bed in the corner looking like an afterthought.

Alexis had come to him some time ago and asked what he knew about Nurgle. He said he couldn't reveal why but that it was important. He had informed Sister Kristen Dolben but they agreed to wait and see what would happen. The pair spent many hours studying and Alexis seemed interested about everything but especially protective chants, cauldrons of corruption, the powers Nurgle granted his followers and his plans. He always seemed dissatisfied with what he found. He had no idea Alexis had found a copy of the Plague Texts. He believes

impoverished people sit on steps and watch the world go by, while traders push wagons full of cheap goods (second hand clothes, slightly rotted food, cheap and nasty alcohol) along. There is a community here, one the PCs are not a part of. Healthy PCs in good clothes will look out of place, certainly if they're wearing armour. Although they are resented people will talk to them for a few pennies, but not always truthfully.

In his street everyone knew Alexis and his family. The adults all remember the typhoid outbreak that killed his parents. They all lost someone close. Apart from Ruderger he has no other relations except an aunt. She didn't want to know them and no one knows where she lives. The clerics of Shallya are spoken of with great reverence. The people are proud that Alexis joined them, although they shake their heads in practised amazement, "Can't believe it! Alexis becoming a Cleric. I remember him causing such trouble with the Scum Runners. Never thought he had it in him." The Scum Runners are a local gang of Punks, Alexis joined for a short while.

The Brother

Alexis' old house is, if possible, in a worse state of repair than those around it. Tiles are missing from the roof, windows are broken or shuttered and the wooden walls are warped. As they approach the front door two men are leaving. They are richly dressed for this part of town and ask what the PCs want. From the look of their clothes the PCs will guess they are merchants. They are obviously nervous of the PCs and will leave unhappily. If questioned they are evasive, especially about giving their names. They claim to be representatives of a charity working with the poor and sick of Altdorf. They are making a regular visit to Ruderger Rimbraud to leave food. In truth they have delivered food for Alexis's brother but not out of any charitable emotion. The pair are Fetid Cauldron cultists, as is Ruderger.

Ruderger Rimbraud was always a weak child. Polio and typhoid ruined his body but somehow he managed to survive both disease and poverty. Alexis looked after him and cared for him, even after he joined the temple. However, Ruderger became bitter and angry about everything. The brothers would argue for hours over whether Shallya had deserted them. Two years ago the chaos champion Masken personally recruited Ruderger to the worship of Nurgle. Masken believed that Ruderger was the chosen champion to become the Herald of Nurgle's time. Even after Masken's death, Ruderger remains idolised by the other cultists as their saviour.

Alexis began to suspect that something had happened to his brother and slowly began to uncover the truth. However, he believed Ruderger was an innocent, or at least a misguided, party. Through following and listening to the cultists he began to uncover the truth. Knowing the time of the prophecy was at hand he tried to convince his brother to save himself. It was a course of action that led directly to his death.



The door to the house is open and from inside floats the smell of burnt rosemary covering something unidentifiable and rotten. Inside the main downstairs room Ruderger lies in the middle of a double bed, his body wasted and weak. A tattered blanket is thrown across him, hiding open bedsores. Any character with *Heal Wounds* will estimate he is not far from death. Talking to him is difficult. He is willing to talk to the PCs and his bitterness about life is obvious. He appears uncaring about Alexis' death except that it means he won't be there to look after him. Players should feel Ruderger is a nasty person although perhaps they should have some sympathy for his circumstance. If players choose to kill Ruderger now or later they will have no difficulty.

The house is a mess. Floorboards are bare and there is little furniture of any description. The only item of any interest downstairs is the bed. Upstairs is much the same. However, in one of the bedrooms the surface of the wall has been smashed away. Studying the broken wooden

planks reveals something was once painted on them in white paint. Putting it together reveals a rune with a tear at the middle. This is a protective rune of Shallya. Any character with *Rune Lore*, or one of the Clerics from the Cathedral will be able to identify its meaning. It is used to protect against the corruption of Nurgle.

The Scum Runners

A local group street gang. They act tougher than they are although they are prone to violence especially if they have been drinking, as they are now. The PCs find them sitting outside a house, talking and abusing passers-by. They won't freely give up information but money or a show of violence will get results. None of them particularly remember Alexis. However, they all remember a man with no-nose. This is Ched, an ex-member and local rat-catcher.

The Ratcatchers

The ratcatchers of Altdorf are a difficult bunch to track down during the day. They are all working in the sewers and only come out towards dusk. They can be tracked down at dockside inns or bringing their catches to the Public Kommission of Health. The Komission is an understaffed and under funded department of the city, mostly dedicated to maintaining the sewers. They are located in a grim building surrounded by derelict houses. Here the catchers are paid 1 penny for each rat they bring. The carcasses are thrown on a pile and burnt. The clerk is an unhappy man and simply shouts at the PCs if they ask him any questions. However, questioning the rat catchers proves a more simple task.

Almost without fault the rat-catchers are more than happy to talk to the PCs. They have a hearty sense of humour and a cultured sense of smell. Most have small dogs that will 'playfully' nip the PCs' ankles. They can all confirm the stories of their comrades being found dead. Four of them have been pulled from the river recently and another has gone missing. Three of the dead were badly mutilated. All had disappeared during the daytime. There is a rumour that a member of the watch who pulled one of the bodies out of the river died from Green Pox. This cannot be verified by anyone. Most are scared but not enough to risk their livelihoods staying away from the sewers.

All of them know Ched by name and description and can point them in the direction of his home. He isn't to be found at the Komission today. Instead, he went straight home to get drunk in memory of Alexis. Ched's hovel is enlivened by a pair of overexcited dogs, both of which look as if they've been bred with rats. Inside, rats' tails hang from the wall. Ched is a young man but with no-nose (bitten of by a rat) and slightly wild eyes make him look older. He has a hat, tied round with rat-tails, permanently on his head.

He remained friends with Alexis although they didn't meet much. Six months ago Alexis came to him and said he needed somewhere private and isolated. Ched knew of such a place and arranged the hire of it from the owner (who he will not identify). He will show them the room if asked. He did suspect his friend was in trouble but Alexis refused to admit it.

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I
4	39	42	3	3	6	31
A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
1	37	27	24	33	32	24

Skills: Animal Trainer-Dog, Concealment Urban, Immunity to Disease, Immunity to Poison, Set Trap, Silent Move Urban, Specialist Weapon-Sling, Spot Trap
Equipment: Ratters pole, Sling, knife, 4 animal traps, two dogs (Rip & Torn)

The Room

Ched will lead them through the dank, dark, damp and

smelly sewers until they reach a thick wooden door set in a recess. The door is locked (CR-15, T5 W7) but is opened by the key Alexis hid behind his dormitory bed. The room is the cellar of a house but the stairway was bricked off. Various criminals have used it over the years. In fact Ched now owns it himself. At Alexis' request, he never visited the room. Inside stand a desk, chair, brazier, straw bed, some food and a stock of lamp oil. Hanging from the ceiling is a rusting lamp.

The desk, the kind scribes use, has seen better days and is currently badly nailed to the floor. On top a candle is stuck in the inkwell. In fact it too has been nailed in and one side has been scored away slightly. A bottle filled with ink stands next to it.

If the candle is lit (or its path guessed) the wax runs down the table and drips onto one of the flagstones by the desk. The flagstone must be pried away. On the bottom of the flagstone is a ward against chaos. Inside the newly revealed hole are some scraps of paper. The main two contain notes taken from the Plague Texts, as follows (Player Handout One);

*signs and portents are important.. even if they have to create them?
 they want to desecrate goodness, probably the divine lady - perhaps the festival
 is it true, is it?
 priests arrived... It must be
 yes the fest, to culminate at same
 what part to play.
 three days, three desecration's... Lay a trap.. can't trust them
 march... water.. healing - first two yes
 from blasted flesh will come the herald.. And plague
 will sweep across the land Canto XXI
 cauldron.. Where does it fit?
 can't trust them...
 have they made one - A Temple of Decay, they must have
 Stefan Svenson - ??
 must be found - is DH involved
 trial?*



A separate piece of paper (Player Handout Two) contains a rough drawing of the Emperor atop a Gryphon. Below it is written "The Griffon, Herr Currie?" This shows an inn sign. If the players don't work it out, give them an Initiative test. If passed they recognise as similar to the sign of an inn near the Cathedral.

Optionally, the players also find a dagger inscribed with another rune. This will cause 2D6 damage to any follower of Nurgle it hits, regardless of armour or Toughness. This rune disappears after one use.

The Gryphon Inn

A large inn near the temple, this caters for poorer merchants or the staff of richer travellers. It is a stone building that has seen better times. Downstairs is dominated by a huge common room built around a fire, adjoined by service rooms and staff bedrooms. Upstairs are twenty or so bedrooms including two large ones with ten beds a piece. By the time the PCs reach The Gryphon it is well after dark. When the PCs make an appearance the place is comfortably full, smoke hanging thickly in the room. The staff know the name Currie ("Herr Currie? You mean Brother Currie.") as one of their current visitors and point the PCs upstairs.

Phillipe Currie is a Fetid Cauldron cultist posing as a visiting cleric of Shallya with retinue. He explained that he was here for the festival and was happily accepted by the staff. In fact Currie is one of the Champions of Nurgle encountered earlier. With rank-and-file cultists he has gone to the ceremony to interrupt it. Disguised in Shallyan robes they walked to the Cathedral and were admitted by Sauber Kanburg. They plan to pour the diseased blood of a Plague-Bearer into the font after the blessed water has been added. They then intend to try and make their escape. Currie has



Player Handout Two

convince the others that the Clerics will not be able to harm them.

The PCs are in luck. One of Currie's 'initiates' has remained behind in their room to pack up. At the last minute the cultist was too afraid to take part in the attack (he said he felt sick - heh, heh!). Currie didn't want to risk forcing him in front of the other men. Instead he let him drink the sacred blood. Now, the poor young man is dying a horrible death. His body is covered in weeping sores, and his bones are bending and warping. The PCs won't catch anything from him (but they aren't to know that!).

In addition to the young man, the locked room contains two chests stamped with a dove. Both contain various clothes and other items for travelling. One holds seven plain white robes (the cultists are now wearing ceremonial white robes), one ceremonial robe and other Shallyan paraphernalia. One of the chests has a false bottom which is currently empty.

Scattered around the room are clothes and various personal possessions belonging to the cultists. A hat has been placed on the floor and filled with nik-naks including a small purse filled with pennies including six from Mousillion and a knife. On one bed a good coat has been neatly laid, in the pockets of which is a Merchant Guild seal. In another good quality coat (made of fur) is a gold locket with the pictures of an old man and woman painted inside and a silk handkerchief. If the diseased cultist is asked about these items he only knows about the pennies. He and another cultist travelled to a house on Aabelstrasse to collect a message. They were met by a man (fat, with ginger hair (matching the description given earlier by Marie) leaving a large house. He passed over the coins and said "A gift, my friend. I have more than enough."

The trapped cultist is more than happy to talk. He is hoping that if he helps then the gods will take pity on him. He will try and convince the PCs he is an innocent. What he can tell the PCs is useful. He explains that a real cleric was going to make sure they got in, but if their plan had been revealed they would have risked rushing the door. Weapons had been hidden inside ready for them to collect. He knows the ceremony is to be tampered with but has no idea how, although he thinks that something is in the font. The group is six strong led by Phillippe Currie, a powerful wizard from Bretonnia.

The Ceremony of Blessed Water

The Ceremony is only open to clerics of Shallya. Holy Water from Couronne is symbolically blessed, ensuring good water will be available throughout the year. It is held in the great hall and many clerics are there. All the doors are locked and a few Knights Hospitaller and Templars of Myrmidia stand guard. For the four hours of the ceremony they simply keep people out.

In the hall, the following procedure happens after all the clerics have gathered. Accompanied by chanting, the spell Detect Nurgle is cast. As he has done before Sauber has contaminated the ingredients and thus the spell fails to work. This is unknown to those present. Secondly, the font is filled with blessed water from the barrels. Initiates, who then retire to the rear of the hall, carry these. Two hours of prayers and hymns are then lead by the senior cleric of Shallya, in this case Margret Gronemeyer. She then leads the blessing of the water. After this is finished the senior clerics daub each cleric's forehead with water. Another hour of prayer takes place and then they retreat to fast for the remainder of the night.

Meanwhile, the cultists remove the weapons from a storeroom and join the congregation. This is carried out easily as the most of the rooms of the Cathedral are empty, with all the clerics in the Main Hall. The plan is to pollute the water after it has been blessed. The wizard is guarded by two of his men and the others are scattered around. As the prayers begin they push their way forward until stopped then all the cultists begin to fight, causing as much confusion as possible. They attempt to reach the font and pour diseased blood into it (supposedly from a Plague Bearer). The unarmed clerics try and stop them using the spells in their power (Sleep, Hand of Shallya, Aura of Resistance and various heal spells). After their task is complete the wizard leads his men in a run for the roof. Here he intends to cast a Fly spell, an ability the others don't know about.

Approaching the Cathedral on the night of the Ceremony is an impressive sight. Blue flames have been lit around and on the Cathedral, casting a shimmering light across the area. Outside a horde of beggars and

handicapped people are gathered hoping the a miracle will happen to them on this holy night. The guards are watching them carefully, making sure none get in. Occasionally one gets over keen and is shoved back into the crowd.

The Main Hall is just as impressive tonight. Blue flames illuminate it, the soft chanting giving it an otherworld quality. The hall is the centre of the Cathedral, here most of the ceremonies are held. It has been designed in the rough shape of a dove in flight and at its centre lies the font. Round, it stands on a stone platform in the shape of a heart. Hanging above it from the ceiling is a large silver receptacle in the shape of a tear, three chains suspending it from the ceiling. When filled with water it is designed so it will gently weep.

The PCs are going to have a tough time stopping the attack. They arrive before the cultists make their move. Gaining entrance to the Cathedral is not a huge problem. That is, if they have Shallyan robes on (perhaps from the Gryphon?), no noisy armour, no shields, no large weapons, dwarfs or halflings with them. Otherwise they will have to convince the guards they are serious. Sneaking in is also an option if a competent distraction is employed. Rushing the doors could also work but will certainly alert the cultists, forcing them to make their move. If the PCs make it in quietly, they will have to try and identify the enemy.

How you use Sauber in this encounter is up to you. The PCs may spot him and try to enlist his help. Else he may sneak up behind an unsuspecting character and stab them in the back.

Phillipe Currie

Currie had the potential to become a gifted sorcerer but Nurgle chose him early. Those around him began to suffer from lesions of the skins and horrified he realised he was the cause of their affliction. His mind snapped and he soon became dedicated to the god who choose him. Travelling to Mousillion, it was not long before agents of the Plague Lord recognised him. His training began under the watch of Masken himself. Since his mentor's death he has searched out the meanings of the Plague Text prophecies.

Currie retains his handsome features but usually hides them behind under a hood. Tall and thin, he has learnt the basics of the mercantile trade, enough to pass as a

*signs and portents are important.. even if they have to create them?
they want to desecrate goodness, probably the divine lady - perhaps the festival
is it true, is it?
priests arrived... It must be
yes the fest, to culminate at same
What part to play..
three days, three desecrations... Lay a trap.. can't trust them
march... Water.. healing - first two yes
"from blasted flesh will come the heratd.. And plague will sweep across the land"
cauldron... Where does it fit?
cant trust them...
have they made one - A Temple of Decay, they must have
Stefan Svenson-??
must be found - is DH involved
tryal?*

respected member of society. He wears thick gloves unless he is ready to pass on his gift. Even under torture he will never reveal the plans of the Fetid Cauldron.

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I
4	41	25	3	2	7	60
A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
1	43	43	43	43	24	25

Careers: Wizard Level One, ex-Wizards Apprentice
Skills: Arcane Language-Magick, Cast Spells-Battle Magic Level 1, Cast Spells-Petty Magic, Evaluate, Haggle, Identify Plants, Magic Sense, Numismatics, Read/Write, Rune Lore, Scroll Lore, Secret Language-Classical

MP: 20

Spells: Curse (1), Produce Small Creature (Rat) (2), Aura of Resistance (2), Flight (3), Hand of Pestilence (as Hand of Death) (1), Flight (3)

Chaotic Gifts: Touch passes on black lesions on skin (cancer). These do not appear for a month. Currie has become expert at touching people with just three figures so the resulting lesions appear as the symbol of Nurgle.

Equipment: Ornate flask containing blood of a Plague Bearer (if touched, a Toughness test must be made, failure resulting in a roll on the Class 1 disease table. See *Warpstone* 8 page 25), ingredients, amulet (upside down dove of Shallyn – as rescued earlier), short sword.

The Cultists

By all accounts a sad bunch of individuals. All have different reason for following the plague god, all not truly appreciating the penalties to be paid. They are generally unskilled for combat.

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I
4	33	25	3	4	8	30
A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
1	34	28	33	30	32	29

Skills: Various. One of the two escorting Currie has Strike Mighty Blow, the other Dodge Blow

Equipment: Short Swords



Aftermath

If the Cultists manage to pour the Plague Bearer's blood into the font then it bubbles and steams violently, spilling out onto the floor. After a minute it subsides and the water is as pure as it was before. This therefore is not enough to disturb the ceremony. However, the spilling of blood in the sacred hall is seen as a more serious matter. Clerics may be wounded (not a problem here!) or dead while cultists are likely to be both. The ceremony is cancelled and the PCs escorted from the hall

to an anteroom. The senior clerics retire to consider this turn of events and question any prisoners. The PCs are summoned to give their version of events. After they have spoken, the group deliberate for another hour. Margret Gronemeyer decides that the Cultists will, if at all, try and strike at Reges. The Imperial palace is seen as too well guarded for any attempt but they are to be informed. They are determined the ceremony will be finished successfully.

Talk of a Temple of Decay is dismissed as exaggeration. They believe, such an undertaking could not have taken place in the city without some indication. Their attitude is frustrating to the PCs but there is little they can do. Gronemeyer asks them to come back with proof.

Any cultists captured will be handed over to the authorities at the palace. Here the Imperial torturers set to work on them. Currie won't talk and the others know nothing. They will be executed the following morning.


Day Three
The Miracle of the
Blessed Reges


The final day of the festival begins early. Reges is taken from her chamber at dawn and given an audience with the Emperor. He kneels before her and she places a hand on his head. Retiring to a chapel of Sigmar (a sore point for some Shallyans), they pray for two hours. After this the Emperor is 'cured' and thanks Reges, offering her any reward. She refuses.

The initiate is then escorted back to the Cathedral by a unit of Reiksguard. Here she is placed into the care of the clerics. They then retreat into the main hall for more prayers. At midday she appears on the steps of the Cathedral and announces to the crowd "At Shallyn's hand the just and divinely appointed Emperor has been saved from the ravages of the Unclean One. May her mercy descend upon you all." The main doors are opened and a huge feast is given in the hall. The poor of the city flood in to eat. Food, donated by the Emperor, is served along with gallons of weak wine. Thus the Festival ends in rejoicing and happiness.

Meanwhile, Below Town.....

Deep in the lost tunnels of Altdorf's sewer system the Scared Quorum of the Fetid Cauldron have built their Temple of Decay. The fruition of Masken's plan; it is to be the location of the birth of Nurgle's herald. Here Rudger Rimbraud has been taken, ready to become a champion of Chaos. The group is happy with the disruptions of the Shallyan Ceremony and plan to coincide the final stages with Reges' healing of the Emperor.

The Temple of Decay is built to the same scale and dimensions as the centre of the Shallyan Cathedral. The Temple is a dark mirror to the Cathedral, a deliberate perversity. It has been a staggering undertaking. Masken found an area of the sewers that had been sealed of centuries ago, replaced with better designs. Within was a huge chamber where different tunnels came together. Drawing together the expertise he arranged the Temple's design and construction. Stefan Svenson, an architectural expert, was conscripted to design it while Duval Helden was hired to build it. Helden and Masken, overcame the problem of labour by tempting outsiders to the city and enslaving them. The cultists have themselves delivered supplies and the few ratacatchers who chanced upon the area were killed. Now it is finished, awaiting the task for which it was built.

The Fetid Cauldron's ceremony will begin in the Temple sometime before dawn; Rudger is lowered into the font at the centre of the temple.

The blood of diseased victims is poured upon him until he is covered and the cultists call for Nurgle to look upon him and raise him up. With dawn, tired and exhausted, they return to their homes. They will return at a later time. One of the

Brettonnian Wizards and a few cultists stay to guard the temple.

At what stage the PCs enter the temple depends on how fast they uncover the clues and at what stage you wish for them to interrupt. At any stage past dawn, they face the possibility of facing Rudger Rimbraud, reborn as a champion of chaos and a herald for the coming of his god.

The PCs will probably suspect that something is awry in the sewers but they have little clue as to exactly what. However, they do have some clues to go on. The most important one is the description and address of a man, possibly a cultist. The other is a locket belonging to one of the men who attacked the Cathedral. The scribbling of Alexis may also come in handy later.

Make them aware the Shallyan ceremony will be over come morning and thus they may well be on a time-scale. This presents another problem, it is night-time and their investigations will take place in a city asleep. It is possible they may come across footpads or perhaps the Watch, wondering what such a suspicious group of characters is doing out at this time of the night.

The Physicians

The house described by the dying man in the Gryphon lies in darkness. It is located on the edge of the wealthy section of town, a large well maintained building. The only occupant is an old housekeeper. As her employers are both physicians she is used to being woken at all hours and therefore not annoyed. Indeed she is helpful. She does not recognise the people in the locket. The description of the man is met with recognition: "Ah! You mean the Doktor, he has gone out for the evening and not yet returned." She replies. When asked where she replies, "Why Doktor Kluge has gone to visit the theatre with Frau Wyder, although I would imagine the play is over now." Kluge and Wyder have gone to see *The Pied Piper of Talabheim* showing at the Imperial Theatre near the palace.

As they are leaving she worriedly calls after them, "Oh! Do you mean the other Doktor Kluge? He has gone to visit Herr Krielkin." It seems the Doktors are twins, still living together.

Searching their rooms finds no incriminating evidence. The house-keeper knows Wyder is the wife of a respected member of the Merchants Guild and they live on Strasstrasse. She has met her once before but never Herr Wyder himself. She suspects the pair are having an affair but will not tell the PCs such.

Merchant Guild

The Merchant Guildhall also lies in darkness. A few clerks and merchants are working into the night but the Night Watchmen won't let them in. He has a bell mounted on the wall, which he will ring for the Watch. However, he happily talks to them through the grill mounted in the door. For a few coins he will pass on some information. He knows Herr Wyder lives nearby on Strasstrasse and his office is located with his warehouse on the Waterfront. If asked, he says the man in the locket does look similar to Volk Wyder. He has no idea of the Merchant's whereabouts this evening.

Volk Wyder

Wyder is a respectable merchant and as now, rarely at home. He inherited his father's trading concerns and consolidated them over the last two decades. Much of his business takes place in Marienburg and therefore he spends a lot of time there. While he is away his brother Heinrich nominally runs the business. In reality it falls to his trusted lieutenants. Ten years ago Volk married Helene, a young society girl and fanatical Nurgle cultist. The marriage was never happy and they try and avoid each other. Heinrich took part and perished in the attack on the Cathedral.

The large townhouse is home to a half-dozen servants. The butler that answers the door is in his nightgown is



not amused. He says both his master and mistress are out. Herr Wyder will be back in some weeks and his wife (he is obviously very disapproving of her) will be back when she is back although it will not be tonight. Frau Wyder has gone to the theatre with Doktor Kluge. He recognises the locket as belonging to Heinrich, whom he disapproves of too. The portraits inside are the brothers' late parents.



Warehouse

Volk Wyder's warehouse is quiet but noises can be heard inside. Through the boards of the walls, men can be seen loading a wagon with crates. A side door leading to an office is unlocked. The clerk inside jumps with fright as they enter. He is very, very nervous, sweating profusely. Heinrich Wyder has been using his brother's company as a front for smuggling illegal artifacts and forbidden tomes. A select group of workers have been well paid to partake in this operation. Although they suspect, they have been quietened by good pay and more recently the disappearance of one of their number.

Six men are loading a Hofbauer-Bodelstein Trading Company wagon, bound for Nuln. Four of the men work for Wyder the others Hofbauer-Bodelstein. Each of the crates is filled with cheap ornaments, and packed with straw. All the crates have a false bottom, however, these are currently empty. Open crates are filled with tools of various descriptions, most for mining and building work. They are stamped with both Hofbauer-Bodelstein and Helden Construction markings. One box is marked for the attention of Stefan Svensson at the University. It contains various books concerning medical and architectural matters.

The office contains little incriminating evidence, although there is a letter confirming payment for services made out to Duval Helden. An address is given for his offices.

Local Rumours

Due to the time, finding rumours is difficult. However, it is not impossible. Various taverns are open and night watchmen are glad to talk. Thus information can be obtained for the price of a flagon of ale. Local rumours about Hofbauer-Bodelstein say they are bringing in cheap labour for Helden Construction. Helden Construction is run by Duval Helden, a local businessman who many are afraid to cross. He is believed to have many powerful criminal and political connections. A story tells of how he nailed a rival to a post (literally) but wasn't even spoken to by the watch. He has been violently at odds with the labour guilds, using manpower from outside the city and guilds. Some of these men are staying in tents over by the site of a new inn Helden is building.

Labourers

Camped by the foundations of what will be a new inn are a half dozen tents. Four braziers burn around them keeping a collection of armed labourers warm. They are nervous and twitchy as the PCs approach, believing them to be Guild members. Once the PCs placate these fears they are quite happy to talk to them, offering them some herbal tea. All are from the countryside forced to come to the city by lack of work at home. They are being paid half of what a guild labourer normally gets. None have noticed anything suspicious although many of their friends have been sent on other jobs recently, and not seen since.



The Theatre

This grand building is adorned with gold leaf and statues

of past Emperors who were patrons of the theatre. By the time the PCs arrive the place is closing up. A couple of young stagehands are cleaning the building and are glad of a break. The Doktor and Frau Wyder were here and sat in Duval Helden's private box. They saw the pair leave and know that the doorman called them a coach but he did not hear where they wanted it to go. They did not see Helden leave.

The Good Doktor

Hans Krieklin lives with his wife in an unassuming house, outside of which he lays a table to ply his trade. A Herbalist by trade he is an old friend of Doktor Kluge. The duo are playing chess this evening, an activity that goes on late into the night. Kluge does not know his brother's whereabouts. If the PCs offer hints about what they are up to they look guilty and sheepish. With some prodding from the PCs Krieklin encourages Kluge to talk. Both realise they are taking a risk talking aloud to strangers.



"My brother Tuomas has been acting strangely for sometime now. It began some months after he began doing some work for a builder named Duval Helden. Helden is involved in all sorts of shady dealings, protected by the councillors he has in his pocket. Tuomas was asked to look after the poor villagers they brought into the city to perform cheap labour for Helden, thus undercutting the Guilds. Many of these desperate creatures had been beaten up by the Guilds but we, my associates and I, started to suspect other dealings. It seems that a large number of these workers have gone missing. We have no idea how. There is more we suspect but it not my place to say it."

In fact Krieklin and Kluge are two members of a close knit group of old friends and acquaintances. In the last few months the group have been slowly investigating Helden and Kluge's activities. They have made some progress but have not realised their opponents are cultists of Nurgle. If the PCs wish to hear what they have to say, Krieklin awakens his son and sends him to gather the others. The three others take some time to arrive, each

excitedly asking about what has been said. A couple of hours later (Krieklin rustles up some food and drink) everyone is squeezed in to the drawing room. The new arrivals are Heidi Kannicher, a scholar from the university, Erich Treuer, a Cleric of Verena, and Icee Var, a Seer. They ask for the PCs to tell their story which they interrupt with various intelligent questions. Play them as a group of slightly eccentric but very sharp old men and women, each enjoying this moment of drama. They all take the plot seriously but are wise enough to have a sense of humour about the whole thing. A likeable bunch in truth.

When they finally get to passing on what they have found out, they all speak together. Anecdotes about how they came across the information mix with in jokes and other gossip. However, the following facts will be passed on;

- Helden has been dealing with various groups known to associate with slavers. Nothing can be proved but it seems certain he is both buying and selling human merchandise.

- He has been building underground. Men and boats have entered the sewers under armed guard, usually at night. The group investigations revealed no clue to their destination. In fact nothing remained of their passing, leading to the conclusion that magic was involved. The group hired a ratcatcher to follow them. He turned up two days later, maggots crawling from his mouth. The tunnels they used to enter the sewers changed each time.

- Helden, sometimes with Kluge, has been seen talking to the scholar Stefan Svensson. Stefan is a recluse, living in the roof of the university. He is an architectural genius and the university hierarchy overlooks his peculiarities, as his work has many supporters. However, there is nothing to suggest he is involved in the conspiracy.

- The Hofbauer-Bodelstein Trading Company have been used to smuggle items into and out of Altdorf. These are always well guarded. The one box the group managed to get hold off (a piece of label swapping they are proud of) had a false bottom but sadly nothing inside.

- Three Bretonnian merchants came to town recently, and were met by Frau Wyder and Tuomas Kluge. They guessed they were slavers.

- The Hofbauer-Bodelstein Trading Company have been used to smuggle items into and out of Altdorf. These are always well guarded. The one box the group managed to get hold off (a piece of label swapping they are proud of) had a false bottom but sadly nothing inside.

The Scholar

Access to the university is not a problem. Either they have Heidi Kannicher with them or the guard is asleep, a bottle of *kvas* standing empty by his snoring head. Stefan Svensson lives locked away in a small, smelly and dirty room in the attic. He never allows anyone access

(Helden and Kluge are exceptions, the PCs aren't), his door barred and locked. Food is left outside by the frankly scared university staff. The PCs will need to force entry and such an action will leave Svensson nearly catatonic.

Svensson was a brilliant man, and he pushed back boundaries in mathematics and chemistry. However, his real passion was architecture. As a young man he designed buildings full of brilliance and style. Sadly he was never to reach his full potential. Always a nervous personality he was mentally unbalanced after being attacked by a group of beggars. Worse, he developed (unrelated) Typhus soon afterwards. He recovered but remains subject to fear of people, especially poor people. He believes that they will all give him disease. He turned to the worship of Nurgle to keep the disease away. Retiring to his room he has only ventured out once since. Through sheer force of will he sought out a statue of Nurgle as a focus for his worship. His actions brought him to the attention of the Fetid Cauldron.



It is this individual they are faced with. A quivering, dirty, hairy wreck, covering on his bed. Little can be gained from him as he laughs and shrieks. If Nurgle is mentioned he cries, "He is coming soon! A herald will be born to lead the way. Beware the plague, beware the plague!"

The Scholar's room is piled high with books and scrolls. Most are related to architecture, a few to medicine and disease. Behind a badly concealed panel is a squat statue of Nurgle, flies crawling from its mouth. It is a particularly ugly piece of art. The only relevant information is a large scroll containing an accurate set of plans for the Shallyan Cathedral. Symbols in the Dark Tongue are drawn alongside the right side.

Duval Helden

Helden is not a believer in Nurgle but he is being paid more than enough to build their temple and secure his silence. A greedy individual his only desire is to accumulate money and power. He has taken Handrich's ideals to the extreme. A short middle aged man, turning to fat he is obnoxious and self-important. However, he is blessed by a brilliant business mind. His trade stretches from the Estalian Kingdoms to Marienburg, but is concentrated in the Empire. He confronts the guilds by using cheap labour where he feels he can get away with it. He has survived more than one attempt on his life.

The offices of Helden Construction are located in the centre of a courtyard surrounded by an eight-foot high brick wall. Inside tools and supplies are laid in neat piles.

Four dogs (WFRP Page 235) patrol the grounds. The offices' windows are boarded up and would need to be broken open for entry. The door is locked (CR-20 T5 D8) and also trapped. A crossbow has been placed in the ceiling and will go off unless the key is used, firing straight out the door (BS 33, S4). If you are feeling particularly mean, it could also be poisoned.

The office consists of desks for the scribes, piled high with accounts and paperwork. Plans of various buildings are pinned to the walls. Apart from a stock room, Helden's personal office is the only other room. Somewhat out of place, it is lavishly decorated, dominated by a huge desk made of beech. Players whose avarice gets the better of them can carry off 50GCs worth of golden ornaments between them. A locked desk drawer (CR-10) contains a set of modified plans of the Shallyan Cathedral. In ink, roads have been marked at the side and parts of the Cathedral building have been crossed out. An Initiative test will confirm to the players that the roads around the Cathedral aren't like those shown in the plan, although not that they are actually sewers. Anyone with a knowledge of the sewers such as a local ratcatcher will be able to recognise the location.

Helden's House
Located in the centre of the richest part of town, Helden has made many friends amongst his aristocratic neighbours with gifts of considerable value. He has done his homework in finding out which are in the worst financial difficulties and thus many owe him favours. The PCs will need to be careful to avoid the frequent watch patrols.

As they approach the door a woman dressed in a tattered shawl steps out of the shadows. Holding back the tears, she asks them to help her. Her husband Otto was recruited to work for Helden. This was over a year ago and she has never heard from him again.

Helden's butler, a loyal servant, answers the door. He looks through the keyhole sending the kitchen boy to fetch the watch. They will arrive in ten minutes. He says Helden is out of town at the moment and will not be back for some time. He will not volunteer any further information. Searching the house reveals no further clues. Arrest by

the watch will result in incarceration before being pulled before the magistrate some time in the morning for an appropriate punishment.

Once more...

Locating the Temple of Decay is easy once they have possession of the map. It is not enough proof to convince Margret Gronemeyer. However, should the PCs need the help, a junior Cleric is sent along with them. The route to the Temple is difficult; pitch black, slippery and involves wading through thick sewage. The smell seems worse than ever, and unless a Toughness test is passed characters unused to the smell will be sick. The entrance to the passage leading to the temple, although clearly displayed on the map, doesn't seem to exist. In fact it is an illusion and once this is realised, a successful Will Power test will reveal its location. If no PC succeeds then some minutes of searching reveals the entrance. The tunnel is crumbling, cobwebs covering the ceiling. As they traverse it the smell of rot becomes more and more pronounced. Some minutes later they emerge into a more open space to be faced with a horrendous site.

The entrance to the Temple of Decay is monumental in its conception. A statue of Nurgle stares down, fires lit in its eyes. He sits on a throne in which the entrance has been built. A bridge leads across a pile of bloated naked bodies to the doorway. These are the remains of the labourers that have built the Temple, tossed into a sewer pit. There are so many maggots and flies on them the whole thing seems to move in the flickering light. If you wish, have the players make a Cool test. Failure means they are badly unnerved by the sight and gain 1D3-1 Insanity points. If an insanity is gained, Fear of Nurgle and his servants, Nightmares or Claustrophobia might be suitable.

From inside comes the foul, obscene chants of those devoted to the plague god.

The Temple of Decay

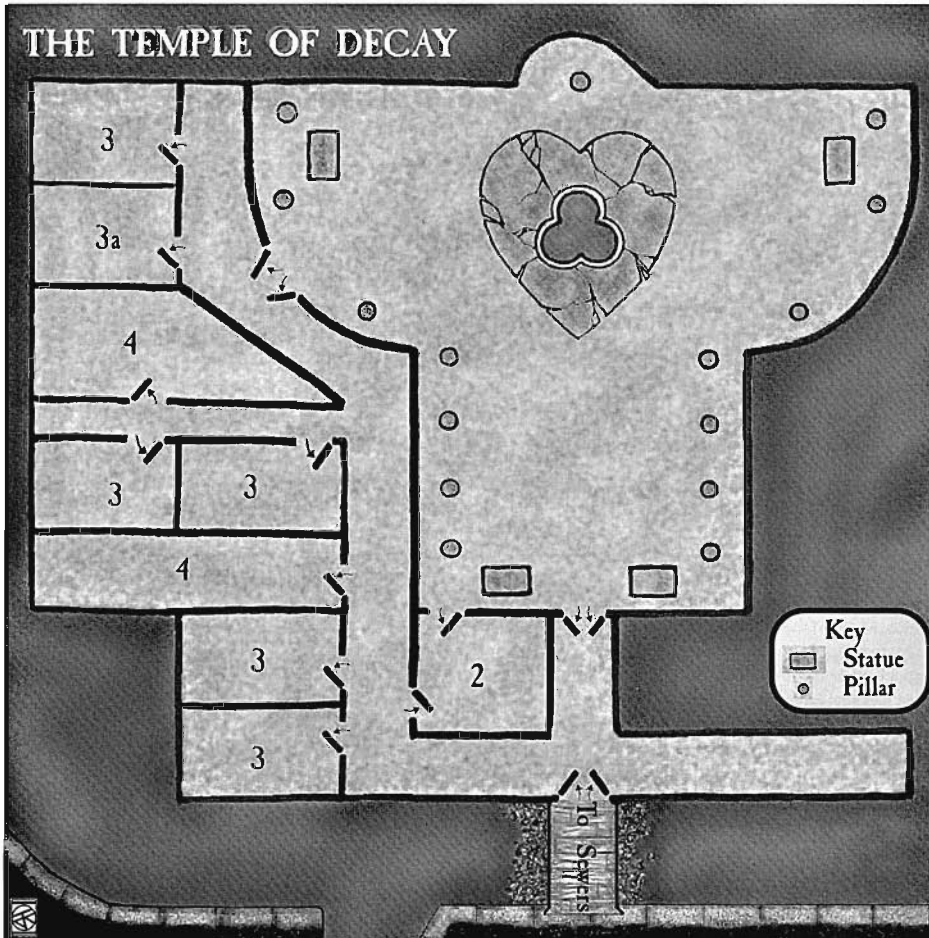
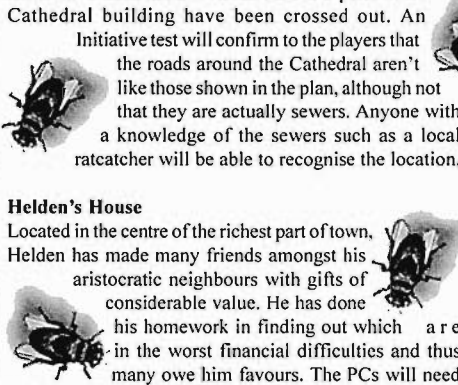
The brick of the temple is dark and damp to the touch. The smell of rotting flesh pervades everything. Without warning flies may suddenly be crawling over nearby walls or the floors be covered in maggots or rats. Although they have tried to duplicate parts of the Shallyan cathedral they have not completely succeeded. Thus props are scattered around, ceilings are lower or higher than they should be and floors are uneven. However, they only serve to make the players believe they have stepped into some nightmarish distorted painting.

Entrance: A short tunnel leads to a pair of stout wooden double doors, each carved with symbols and icons of Nurgle. This leads to the main hall and the heart chamber. A passage way leads off to either side.

Side Rooms: Purely functional. Only certain rooms of the Shallyan Cathedral have been replicated. One (2) is a robing room, others (3) bedrooms for those that need to rest (one (3a) may hold Rudergr Rimbrud (if discovered immediately before the ceremony), whilst the others (4) hold equipment and supplies.

Main Hall: An almost exact replica of the Cathedral's main hall, even down to the stained glass windows. However, there are differences. Where the windows should show scenes of compassion they show violence and decay. Those represented have now been made followers or victims of Nurgle, diseased and corrupted. Statues of saints and the goddess herself have been similarly changed or replaced by the Plague God himself.

As with its Shallyan inspiration the focus of the hall is the heart at its centre. Here though it is misshapen and broken. Symbols of Nurgle have been cut into its surface. The font at the centre is also present but has been carved to resemble the diseased symbol of Nurgle. An equivalent to the Tear of Shallya is not present.



The Ceremony

Depending on how quickly the PCs track down the Temple dictates at which stage they interrupt the ceremony. This is of course dependent on what stage you want them to interrupt it.

Before the ceremony: Unless they are very quick the PCs are unlikely to reach the ceremony at this time. If they do they will have little opposition. Oiliver Le Gard, one of the wizards is present, preparing for the ceremony. He has with him two cultists. Ruderger Rimbraud is in a sideroom, lying weakly on the bed. Other cultists slowly begin to arrive.

During the ceremony: A dozen cultists arrive for the ceremony, all dressed in green and yellow hooded robes. Le Gard leads them in their incantations. Six adjourn to a sideroom and after an hour return with caskets filled with blood. This is poured into the font. Ruderger Rimbraud is then brought forward to the Hall door. However he is forced to make his own way to the font, a slow laboured crawl. Once he reaches the dais he is picked up and ceremoniously laid in the font, completely submerged in the blood. The ceremony continues, rising in pitch and tempo, the atmosphere in the room becoming more and more charged. One cultist dies of a heart attack, another collapses covered in boils and sores ecstatically thanking Nurgle for his gifts.

The ceremony reaches a climax some hours later. The heat in the room is unbearable, as is the smell. The atmosphere is heavy and impressive but electrifying, the blood in the font boiling madly. Suddenly it reaches a plateau. The ceiling cracks with a huge retort, a cultist collapses exhausted, another explodes in a host of maggots while Oiliver Le Gard mutates horribly: boils erupt over his face, and his skin seems to melt, the lower half of his body turning into sludge. He screams and suddenly it is over.

A moment later Ruderger Rimbraud arises from the font, horribly deformed and warped. Armour has grown from bone and he wields a sword that seems to pulse with a life of its own. He groans with painful pleasure before growling, "The time of the plague god is hand, you will all be rewarded with his favours." With this he sinks back into the font. If the PCs killed Rimbraud then a replacement will have been used, however he won't have the same strength.

After the ceremony: Happy, the cultists leave the Temple until summoned again. Le Gard stays to tend to the newly born Chaos Warrior helped by two cultists. In the font, the champion of Chaos, the name Ruderger Rimbraud forgotten, grows in strength.

The Worshippers

The number and strength of the cultists is for you to decide. Rimbraud has two different profiles, the first is for when he is first reborn the second for when he grows to full strength.

Cultists of the Fetid Cauldron

As before (see page 30).

**Oliver le Gard
Champion of Nurgle**

Into middle age Le Gard has been a loyal follower of the plague god since he was a teenager. Born in Mousillion he grew up on the streets surrounded by death and despair. Nurgle offered him solace and after joining a like minded group his ability in magic was soon recognised. Apprenticed to an unknowing wizard, he learnt the arts. In time he was mentored to other wizards of Nurgle, eventually becoming one of the most

senior. He was a loyal follower of Masken and has taken over his mantle to some extent. Fortunately he does not have the same personality. A tall man, he is shallow skinned and limps badly. His voice is a wispy rasp, a side effect of throat cancer. In fact he carries a number of diseases (Scabies, Hepatitis, Small Pox and Cholera).

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I
4	43	40	3	4	9	51
A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
1	43	36	43	39	40	29

Careers: Wizard Level 1, Ex-Wizards Apprentice

MPS: 21

Skills: Arcane Language-Magick, Cast Spells-Battle Magic Level 1, Cast Spells-Petty Magic, Identify Plants, Magic Sense, Read/Write, Rune Lore, Scroll Lore, Secret Language-Classical

Spells: Aura of Protection,

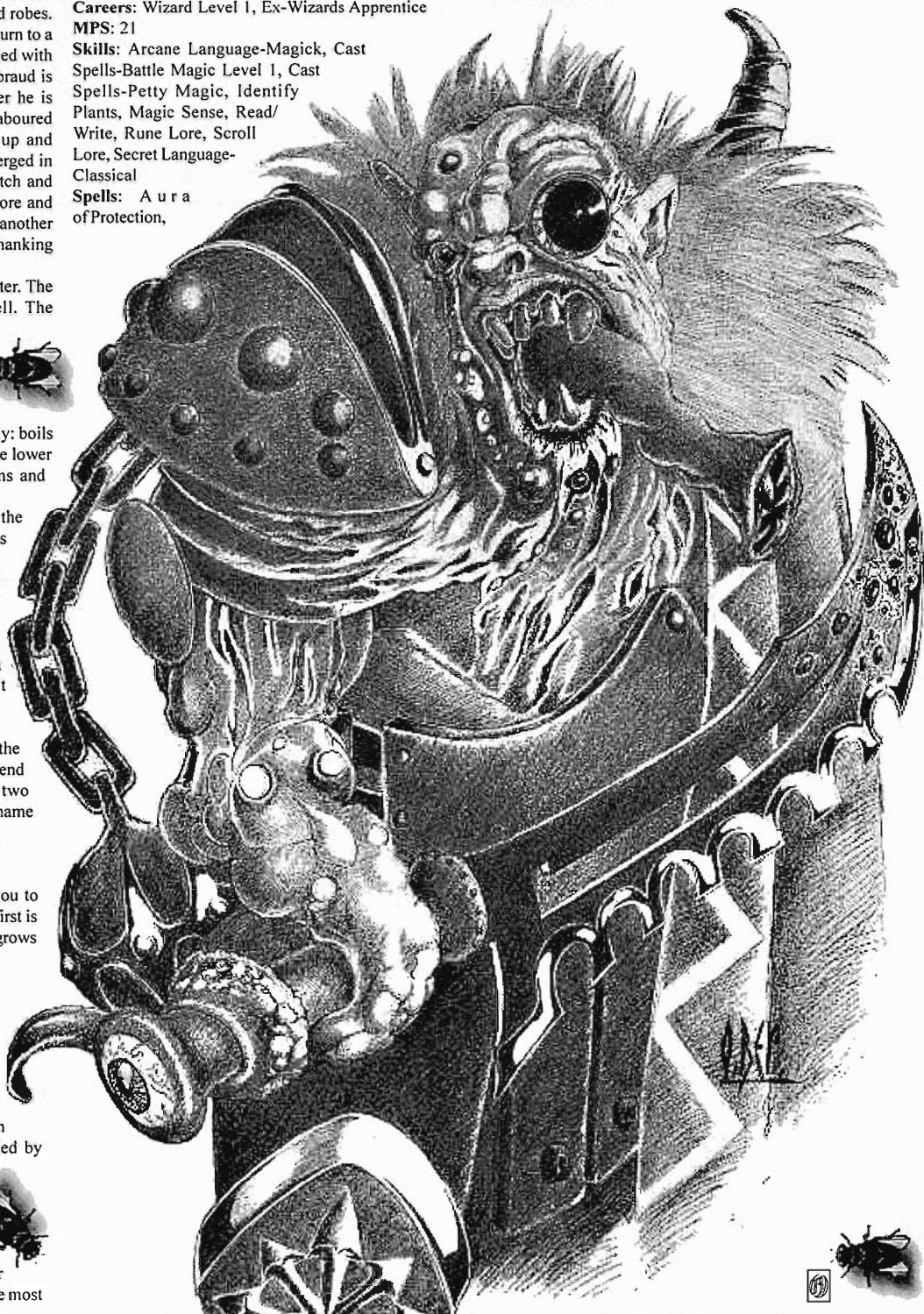
Curse (1), Hand of Decay (1), Steal Mind (4), Strength of Combat (1), Summon Beast of Nurgle, Summon Swarm of Flies (2)

Equipment: Spell Ingredients, Staff, upside down dove necklace (this is the one the PCs found in the scenario prologue)

Notes: If involved in a fight he will summon a Beast of Nurgle to protect him before casting Aura of Protection. Although he will attempt to avoid combat, he will cast Strength of Combat to increase his Wounds by 1D6+1.

Beast of Nurgle

See WFRP rulebook Page 318 for more information on these creatures.



M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I
3	33	0	3	5	15	30
A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	FeI
D6	-	-	-	-	-	-

Special Attacks: If a wounded opponent fails a Poison test they are paralysed.

Special Rules: Leaves a trail of slime. Anyone slipping on it receives 1 wound and has a 5% chance of contracting Nurgle's Rot.

Rudger Rimbraud
Chaos Warrior, Herald

If Rudger Rimbraud was not used to give life to the Herald then the profile is reduced by -1/-10.

When newly born his armour seems less solid, his body insubstantial and not yet stable.

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I
3	49	20	3	4 ¹	7	50
A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	FeI
2	59	20 ²	50	50	50	2 ²

Once he is fully formed Rimbraud is a formidable opponent. Until he reaches this stage some twelve hours after his birth his profiles slowly increases to these maximums.

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I
4	69	30	5	7 ¹	13	65
A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	FeI
2	89	29 ²	89	89	89	20 ²

¹ Rimbrauds armour is included in his toughness ratings.

² Both 89 in respect to worshippers of Nurgle.

Each wound he causes has a 75% chance of causing Infected Wounds plus a 25% chance of causing a random Indirect Class 2 disease (Warpstone 8 page 25).

Skills: None

Trappings: Two handed Sword (I-10, D+2)

Notes: Cause Fear

The Wizards Room

At some point the PCs will return to Oskar Nilde's house. However, the wizards are long gone. He is greatly upset and fears their departure will be blamed on him, ruining his career. In the room they were staying there is little evidence of them. In the fire is are parts of a scroll and a cover of a book survive. This is *A Goodly Guide to Trade on the Reik and its Divers Towns* by Augustus Brillite. The scroll is badly burnt and heavily coded, needing a cipher to translate.

What this scroll says is up to the GM to decide. Does it leads to other batches of cultists? Give clues to the location of Alain de Gleinhan? Or perhaps give clues to the plans of the Fetid Cauldron?

Outcomes

There is a couple of possible outcomes that will flow from the scenario. Most others will be variations on a theme. If the players have the Mousillion Plague Texts in their possession they will certainly find cultists coming after them trying to steal it. It may also give Witch-Hunters the wrong idea.

If the PCs fail to stop Rimbraud becoming a Chaos warrior then they have failed in their mission. The principal players are likely to realise they have been uncovered and disappear. The Temple is destroyed and cleansed. The PCs are blamed (unjustly perhaps) for not bringing the matter to the attention of the authorities.

Rimbraud begins to fulfil his mission. Escorted by various cultists he begins to pass the word of Nurgle's coming to his worshippers. Slowly they gather to him becoming more organised than before. Multiple scenario ideas can spring from this as they track Rimbraud across the country. Whether the prophecy is true or not is up to the GM to decide.

The death of Rimbraud and the destruction of the Temple of Decay is a complete victory for the PCs. However, Alain de Gleinhan has

escaped for the moment. This will probably be forgotten as the PCs are congratulated by the clerics of Shallya and given any reward you see fit to throw at them. However, they soon find it is a limited victory. The cult of Shallya has decided the affair must remain secret (the cult hierarchy is embarrassed at their failure). Any captured cultists are tried and hung within days, their bodies burnt. Anyone else implicated in the plot has their property seized, staff and family questioned and warrants issued for their arrest. The PCs are given any reward you see fit to give and sent on a mission well away from Altdorf.

If the PCs tried to get help from the Cult of Shallya and failed, Margret Gronemeyer retires to a retreat on the return of her superior. Perhaps she leads an expedition of Shallyan penitents, escorted by the PCs in search of Reges' resting place.

Experience Points

Experience rewards are given as you see fit. Good investigation work in uncovering the Temple of Decay, the cult members and the involvement of Duval Helden are to be well rewarded. Bravery and quick action at both the Ceremony of the Blessed Water and the Temple should also garner experience points.

Inner Circle of the Fetid Cauldron

Thanks to Masken the Order has gained an outwardly respectable membership in addition to a group of two dozen or so rank-and-file taken from the poorer sections of the local population. The inner circle of the Sacred Quorum of the Fetid Cauldron in Altdorf consists of Volk Wyder, Helene Wyder and Tuomas Kluge. The inner circle and most of the other cultists are at the final ceremony, only Volk Wyder is elsewhere. The inner circle know the identities of all the cult members and the prophecies relating to the coming of Nurgle.

Volk Wyder

Wyder is a respectable merchant, his business built on the success of his father. However, he found it an empty life and tried to fill it with drink and women. After a brief, obsessive, relationship he married Helene. She convinced him to join the cult and soon he was in too deep to leave. However, he was not wholly dedicated to the god. Not until he heard Masken speak. After that he strove to promote the cult. However, he sensed the ceremony to raise the Herald was flawed and arranged to leave town at the time. He convinced his brother Heinrich to join the cult and keep an eye on events.

A thin, muscular man in his late thirties, he is wracked by a vicious cough. It is not helped by constant smoking of pipeweed. He dresses simply but well, recently taken to going hooded when he can.

Helene Wyder

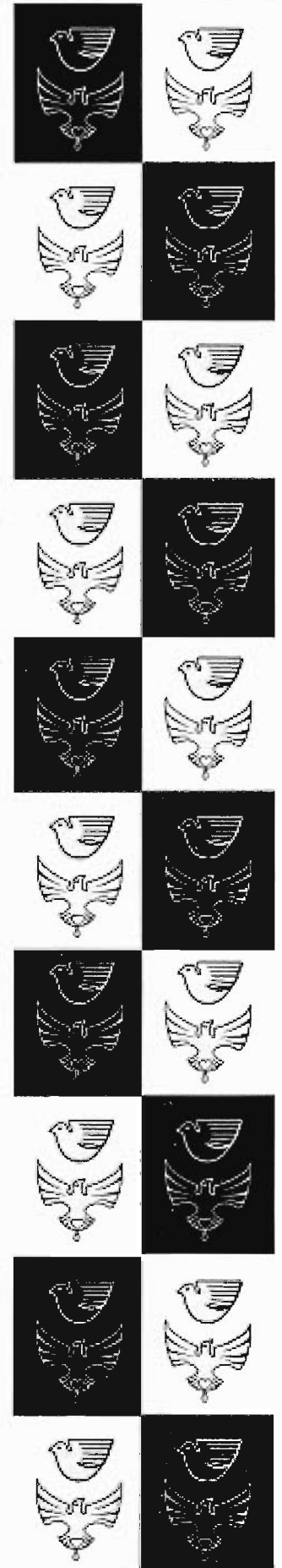
Both Helene's parents were cultists and she was bought up amongst a group of them. As a teenager she was placed on the streets as a prostitute, both to earn money and spread disease. However, the hardships left her physically, if not emotionally, unharmed. In fact she became something of a beauty, in time attracting the attentions of an old noble from an ancient family. She became his mistress gaining access to high society. Years later she set out to capture Volk Wyder with her charms. The cult, now under Masken's guidance, wanted access to his broad trade network. This would enable them to smuggle goods easily.

Now in her mid thirties she is still good looking but to some her eyes seem to be cold. She hates her husband and has been having an affair with Tuomas Kluge for some time. However, she is dedicated to Nurgle and would give her life for the god.

Tuomas Kluge

Like his brother, Kluge was a dedicated and compassionate Doktor. However, he was also jealous of his twin's, in his eyes, better skill and intellect. He set out to become an expert in the field of disease, inspired by the suffering he saw around him. When he could he travelled into the poorer districts, healing and comforting those he could. It soon led to frustration as he realised he could do nothing to help most of the people. Here he was seen by Helene Wyder. Over time she convinced him that there was no hope except to embrace Nurgle. Believing it offered him the chance of forbidden knowledge he accepted. His fate was sealed.

Kluge is a large man, huge of girth and with chubby features. He has a shock of red hair, some tumbling across his face and he constantly pushes it aside. After any effort he is out of breath, sweating profusely, forever wiping his forehead with a handkerchief.



THE FORUM

“this degree of realism strike me as being quite depressing”

Ashley Southcott: Issue ten is probably the best so far. My comment on the scenario’s playability in my imazine review (issue 31) [mentioned in last issue’s editorial – ED] comes from the lofty ivory tower of roleplaying; I’ve not played for about five years so I can only assume from your group’s play and others comments that they do indeed play okay. I was pleased to see Phil Gallagher make it clear that while GW views WFB5 and WFRP as separate games (and indeed as separate backgrounds), GW has no intention of sidelining the game via its changes to the WFB5 background. Since WFRP isn’t a viable proposition for GW to publish directly I’m glad that whatever changes it does make will have little impact on the game background as it stands, which I think is better off being expanded by fans.

I’ve seen stuff like ‘The Passing of Time’ in previous zines, although they usually commented on the weather conditions that PCs might have to face. For campaign play some sort of seasonal calendar is pretty much essential since journeying into the mountains or even among the Empire’s forests with winter approaching will have a bearing on their money, food supplies, clothing, animal care, transport, etc. The necessity for urban characters to winter in towns also potentially impacts on their next choice of career change. Are many characters, particularly rural ones, really likely to change career in a radical direction in the grip of winter when employment is slacker?

Nonetheless I like seeing aspects of life in the Old World beyond its inhabitants’ control influenced by religion; it lends some realism to those events by borrowing from real medieval approaches to seasonal changes.

‘Foundation and Faith’ went even further by encouraging direct comparisons with real medieval times and the Old World, particularly the Empire. I’m uncomfortable with this since I want my roleplaying to be deliberately fantastic (I want believability rather than realism). Probably its most important message to adventurers is that ‘real life’ imposes quite severe constraints on what they can do and eat, where they can go, and what their behaviour towards others must be, given the greater social divisions inherent in those times. It also implies that adventuring is frowned on by many in society. Unfortunately, games emphasising this degree of realism strike me as being quite depressing to play in.

The upside is that communications are poor and a good deal of the world remains unexplored by humanity. Elves and Dwarfs have explored further, having had a longer period of history in which to do so, but are restricted from continuing this or from sharing many of their experiences with mankind by their own decline.

I disagree that specific cults would frame laws requiring people to attend worship. In remote areas during winter, bad weather would be just one of a

myriad of excuses not to turn up to the temple/shrine when demanded. I’ll concede that the urban cults - particularly those of Sigmar, Myrmidia and others associated with a particular nation - have a measure of political power, but to use that power to force people to attend worship verges on totalitarianism, and would be pretty unworkable. Peer pressure serves as a better motivator to attend worship; if one’s neighbours are visiting the local Temple of Sigmar every fortnight, why aren’t the PCs, if they are not infidel unbelievers? I also suspect that were attendance made a legal obligation, the forces of Law, which would certainly support such a move, would be considerably more powerful than they actually are - which would only stir massed civil unrest among the populace.

Re. Anthony’s brief comment on millenarianism; I’m not convinced it should be a part of WFRP as it seems inextricably bound up with the idea of one God. WFRP is a game background with whole pantheons-of gods; the fear of millennial intervention by one god would be countered by the belief that cults neutral or unfriendly towards it would likewise intervene to counter its actions.

In ‘The Alternative Troll Slayer’ I was pleased to see the concept of absolution for Slayers expanded on. The idea you proposed, i.e. that Dwarfs should somehow atone by satisfying some Slayer guardians (at the Cave of Black Skulls) doesn’t appeal since I think Dwarfs would try to atone by showing society that their atonement equals or outweighs their original crime; a private admission of shame any subsequent atonement doesn’t really do this. But advanced Slayers would most likely be sufficiently mentally unhinged to reject any other kind of atonement other than death.

“PCs do like to have a string of honours”

Mark Austin: Having just read Tim Eccles article on Battles in the Warhammer World I found his comments on medals interesting. With PCs starting to get medals as rewards from Power Behind the Throne and Something Rotten in Kislev I think this is an area that could be expanded.

I do limit the use of any bonus conferred to the PC needing to be wearing the medal (assuming the person he is talking to recognises it) or is speaking to someone who knows the PC has been so honoured. This means that on social occasions the medals are useful but in general adventures make little difference and PCs do like to have a string of honours recognising their deeds.

“have slagged GW off for too long”

Sam Stockdale: The interview with Phil Gallagher was very enlightening; it was good to see a Games Workshop point-of-view. I think perhaps followers of WFRP (myself included) may have slagged GW off for too long and too hard. The article on the priesthood of Shallya is the kind of the thing I have been trying to write myself (but

have failed miserably). It helps to clarify some of the ambiguities concerning the priestly careers. Can we expect similar treatment to be given to the other cults? I do hope so.

Ed(JF): *Yes we do have plans to publish similar articles on other cults. Originally We did intend to generally stay from them as Hogshead we’re planning to do Realms of Divine Magick at some point. However, this looks being some way of yet and as the demand is there we will do the others. In fact, we plan to cover the Cult of Sigmar in the near-future.*

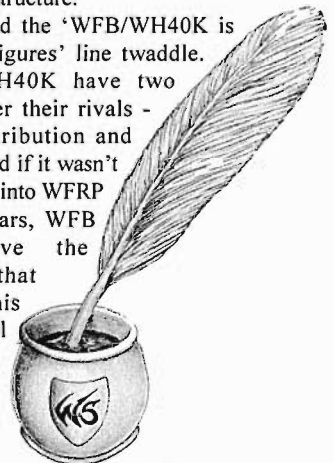
“is in danger of believing his own hype”

Tim Eccles: I would just like to make a few comments with regard to Phil Gallagher’s interview with Warpstone, and some of his remarks.

As a general point of commerce, he appears to be suggesting that every GW product has to maximise its own income stream. If his view of retailing was correct, why do supermarkets sell bread for 7p; it is not the aim to maximise profit on each line, but the whole purchase basket which is important. The issue is to bring customers into your stores, and then keep them. It is interesting to note in that regard, that in response to your question concerning GW’s decision to stop selling other company’s products, he states that “we weren’t very good at selling these things”. Not very good at selling wargames products? Hmmmm...

Without wishing to be provocative, or nail my political colours in the open, I find the line summarised as ‘we have to act in the best interests of our employees’ ironic management double-speak. It is not that their employees wargame, I would suggest, as much as it is that they advertise vacant posts to wargamers, in the hope that they will accept less of a wage to work for GW. They no longer advertise salaries (indicative in itself), but when they did, their salaries were considerably less than alternative retail positions. Someone also recently posted on the WFRP Mailing List, that staff were forbidden to publicise salary levels, which if true (and that is a big if), further queries the GW salary structure.

I also found the ‘WFB/WH40K is about selling figures’ line twaddle. WFB and WH40K have two advantages over their rivals - marketing/distribution and background. And if it wasn’t for the work put into WFRP in the early years, WFB wouldn’t have the background that allows them this colourful backdrop for the figure battles, nor the material to



rewrite Army Books at £15 each. Most WFB stories in *Inferno* and *Warhammer Monthly* are more WFRP than WFB.

Take those two things away, and Raven or Fantasy Warlord or Havok or Full Thrust (or any one of a number of alternatives) would cause them severe problems. However, this "background" is not found in a blister pack with a price on it and a 200% mark-up. I also suspect that the recent museum was more someone's pet project, than a purely financial decision. Does the museum really hope to make an annual return worthy of the risk on the capital invested? I would suggest, then, that it was more the perceived direction and will of GW management than simple economics. Similarly, in what way is a "Warhammer skirmish game" - or even Warhammer Quest - going to sell masses of figures; indeed, what is the difference between a RPG and a skirmish wargame? Does GW believe that a skirmish game has more potential than a RPG? Assuming this is to be Mordheim, are either the figure sales predictions to be higher, or the rules system more expensive than WFRP?

I don't want it to seem that I am a rabid anti-GW zealot, because I am not. They are very successful, and I am by no means an elitist who assumes that popular has to mean low-brow. I own more GW games than I can recall. However, Mr Gallagher has clearly occupied his corporate mansion for too long, as he is in danger of believing

his own hype. The RPG companies he quotes went out of business because they also believed their own publicity outputs. Look at the quality of many of the products put out in the latter years by such firms; they were almost universally awful. Even the fact that most RPG firms are small does not negate the principle that RPGs are profitable, and firms could be of GW's size. The point is that they would have to be realistic in creating their product, marketing it and supporting it. After all, GW is hardly a single product line company, as it has diversified into computer games, books, comics, a "museum" etc. Indeed, it is both a "manufacturer" and a "retailer".

The days of expensive head offices and extensive directly-employed staff may be over in the RPG industry, but it is still valid in many other areas from banking to communication to manufacturing. "Flexible labour practices" are here to stay. "Streamlined" organisational structures are facts of life to the thousands released by large firms cutting overheads and physical size. Computers have changed the way we live and work, not simply how we game. But, I do not see anything inevitable about the nature of RPGs or the firms that produce them.

"a sense of mud, blood and guts!"

Jerome McKee: I have been reading with interest the whole debate on how poor the magic system is for WFRP, and on the various things that can be

done to improve it. I do agree with James McGraw's comment in issue 8 that magic is better off in the hands of powerful NPCs anyway, but for those voices in the near-deafening clamour to have the system revised I say - why bother?

The Old World is, "a grim world of perilous adventure". It evokes a sense of mud, blood and guts! The whole setting of humanity under siege from an eternal torrent of Chaos inspires thoughts of the adventurers using their swords to save the day, not their spell books.

I would urge that even a second edition of WFRP should keep the size of the magic system as it is currently, lest we find ourselves in the middle of an AD&D spell-fest. Perhaps the general magic rules need tweaking, but I am against the idea of a massive spell list for WFRP.

This game is not high fantasy. The spells available should be just as gritty as the setting itself.

Ed(JF): I agree that any expansion of the Magic system brings with it a danger of going overboard. However, there is too much interest, and dissatisfaction with the current system, for things to be left as they are. It is also a moot point. At some point Realms of Sorcery will be with us. All we can hope is the book isn't just list after list of new spells but fits seamlessly into the wider Warhammer background. We continue to await with interest...



MARIENBURG RESOURCES



Compiled by John Foody & Alfred Nuñez Jr.

With the release of Marienburg it arguably becomes the prime city for players to adventure in. In addition to the rulebook there are a number of other sources for locations and scenarios. This article looks to bring them together.

White Dwarf

Marienburg first appeared in White Dwarf. The following lists the relevant issues and the location they covered. Those sections marked with an asterisk(*) appear in the sourcebook although generally in an amended format.

- WD 118 Marienburg Intro*
- WD 119 Suiddock Intro and Map
The Pelican's Perch*
- WD 120 The Suiddock Temple
The Stevedores' & Teamsters' Guild*
Granny Hetta*
Haagen's Wharf
- WD 121 The Brotherhood of Seamen & Pilots*
The Riverman's Association*
The Wasteland Export-Import Exchange*
Cult Description of Handrich*
- WD 126 Introduction to Potion Square
The Marienburg Home for Foundlings
van Arzneider's Floracopoeia
The Edelmoed Temple
- WD 128 Kluger's Emporium
Wilhelm Rotkopf, Alchemist
Lisette's Leather Goods

- WD133 The Watch-House
Doktor Markus Puttlangs
Old Mother Crumhorn
- WD 135 Hassan's
The Sign of the Quill
Dagblad's Wholesale Leathers
Loewijer's Tannery
- WD 138 Social Level (appears in Apocrypha Now)

Warpstone

- Issue 9 Player's guide to Marienburg
Whaling (The Golden Harpoon, Whaler Shrine & Kolbie & Karringheim Associates)
Templars of Manann
Scenario ('Once Upon a Time in Marienburg')

Hogwash

- Issue 4 Scenario ('Bad Tidings')

Website

www.rpghost.com/Marienburg
An independently produced website devoted to supplementing the Marienburg sourcebook - a constantly expanding GM resource containing background, locations and NPCs.

A Little of This and a Bit of That

The Basics of Warhammer Chemistry by Spencer Wallace

"Well," growled Karl as he glanced around the common room. "Will it do what you said?" He hated meeting in places like this for business, but Gregor had insisted. Why the smelly little troll even wanted to be seen in public with a face like his was a mystery.

"Oh, yes. Yes indeed," said the smaller man from the shadow of his hood. He opened the wooden box sitting on the table and turned it for Karl to inspect the contents. Inside, nestled in a rough bed of hay, were two small bottles with glass tops. Tiny bubbles rose slowly from the yellow liquid contained within them. As Karl plucked one of the bottles from its bed a barmaid walked up with two tankards of ale and slammed them on the table. Karl started and dropped the vial.

"Be careful, you fool!" Gregor nearly screeched. "Do you want to end up like me?!" His head jutted forward from the hood like a turtle's from its shell, revealing the scabrous ruin of his cheeks. Thankfully, this time he had put a leather patch over what was once his nose.

"Shallya's Tears!" gasped the barmaid, stumbling away.

"Sorry." Karl retrieved the bottle and held it up to the light. Gregor was still yammering, but he no longer listened. This would be perfect—all the evidence dissolved away. He flicked the bottle gently in an effort to shake loose the bubbles from the sides, but they persisted. He flicked it harder.

"Now you must be extremely careful with this vitriol," said Gregor droning on like a schoolmaster. Karl frowned at the bottle — all those damned bubbles. "This compound is extremely volatile."

Karl tapped the bottle on the tabletop. "You must take care not . . .to . . ."

Tap. Tap. Tap.

Gregor seemed to finally notice what Karl was up to. ". . .upset the . . .contents. . .What in Sigmar's name are you doing!"

Tap. Tap. Tap.

"Hmmm. What were you saying, Gregor." Karl looked up and saw that his companion was sliding his chair slowly back. He also felt the bottle getting warmer. He glanced back down and saw that the liquid was bubbling quite merrily now, almost boiling. Damn bubbles.

Tap. Tap.

BOOM!

Welcome to Chemistry 101

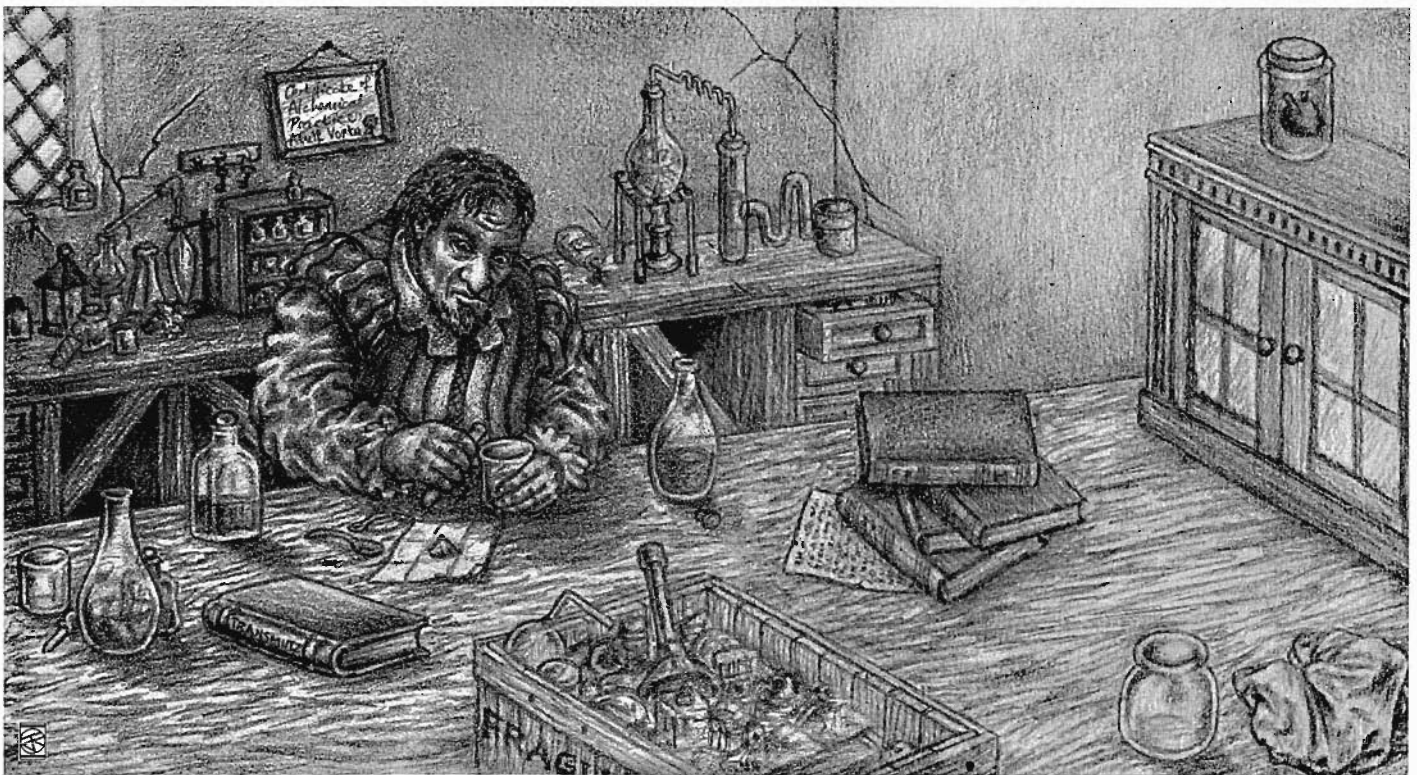
In a world where potent magic is as rare as it is expensive, adventurers often take whatever they can get to recreate its effects. The compounds produced by skilled chemists can seem quite magical, even to those who produce them, and are understood in alchemical terms rather than scientific ones. Many wizards and other practitioners of the Art scoff at such "low magic," as they term it, but a dab of phosphor or a little Ghost fire can prove at least as effective, and a lot cheaper, than many spells. Besides, wizards tend to be irascible at the best of times, and can be positively impossible if one catches them in the aftermath of a failed bit of research. Who ever heard of a bottle of acid giving attitude? (Just be sure not to treat it too roughly. . .)

Complete understanding of many chemical processes is beyond the scope of all but the most well-trained individuals, but most chemists and their apprentices manage to acquire a working knowledge of the area with only a minimum of catastrophe. Those that do not are usually marked with wounds and scars that any seasoned mercenary would be proud of.

Any city (and even some of the larger towns) will be home to chemists, many of whom once aspired to carrying out great research, but who have for one reason or another failed to penetrate the deeper mysteries of alchemy. Also, many pharmacists and doctors received chemistry training while learning their practice, and could be persuaded to do some work on the side — for the right price. While most established alchemists rarely waste time on these sorts of projects, their time being consumed by their own important experiments, they always have apprentices hard at work on them, both to learn the basics of the trade and to help pay the bills.

Compounds

The following compounds cover a range of usefulness without becoming weapons in themselves, although many can be used quite creatively. Included in the description of each of the following substances is the test required for successful production. Each item known to pose a risk to its creator is so noted, and failures must be checked against the Injury table.



The prices listed with each item reflect the cost of production in materials only. The laboratory is another matter all together! When selling their wares, most chemists at least double the cost for each item and may even charge as much as four times the cost for particularly hazardous compounds. The term 'measure' is used to mean an amount equal to one use of a substance, usually about the volume of a small, glass vial.

Matches

Cost: 2/- per match

Ingredients: Phosphor, Wax, Potash of Chlora

Test: Intelligence -10%

The user must strike the match against a prepared surface, kept with the matches, making a successful Dexterity test to avoid breaking the match. The match will burn for 2 rounds, providing light equal to a candle. Matches are ruined if they come in to contact with water or excessive dampness, so they must be kept in a well-sealed container.

Invisible Ink

Cost: 8/- per ounce

Ingredients: Various Juices, Horse Urine

Test: Intelligence

Many varieties of this substance exist, from crude fruit juice mixtures to true invisible ink, which can be read briefly while it is being used to write a message. After it dries, it can only be revealed by the use of another agent, which is prepared along with the ink mixture. This substance breaks down quickly upon exposure to light and air, so messages written in invisible ink will only remain readable for d6+3 days, and newly purchased ink will last d6+3 weeks.

Glue

Cost: (6/- per measure)

Ingredients: Amber or Resin

Test: Intelligence

This extremely viscous material must be kept in an airtight container and will be spoiled by premature contact with air. When applied, this glue will set in d3 rounds, needing a Strength test (with a +1 bonus) to break, and it will harden within d6 turns. Once hardened, the bond becomes quite strong, requiring a Strength test at -2 to break it.

Ghost Fire

Cost: 2 GC per pint

Ingredients: Oil, Bitumen Substances, Naptha, Sulfur

Test: Intelligence (Refer to Injury table on failure)

Hotter and much stickier than burning oil, Ghost Fire causes 2d4+3 wounds per round of exposure. Immersion in water does not automatically douse these flames. Consider immersion to reduce the damage by 6 points.

A slight alteration to the formula results in a more viscous version, which can be used to coat weapons. They will burn for d6+1 rounds, causing additional damage as if they possessed the enchantment, Flame Attack. When the flames die, roll a d6. On a 1 the heat ruins the weapon's temper, and it will not hold a sharp edge, from then on causing 1 less wound in combat. This effect is permanent but will not harm magical weapons.

Acid

Cost: 2-5 gc/measure

Ingredients: Flowers of Sulfur

Test: Intelligence -10% (Refer to Injury table on failure)

Acid, or vitriol, as it is commonly called, may be prepared in varying concentrations, from relatively weak mixtures capable of destroying only wood or cloth, to more potent and dangerous sorts. If used sparingly, a vial of acid can

last for some time, enough for example, to destroy 2-3 locks of moderate size. If a full vial is poured on living tissue, the effects can be quite deadly, depending on the type used. If anyone carrying a vial of acid suffers falling damage (for example, failing a Risk test whilst riding) or suffers a Critical hit to the location where the vitriol is stored (e.g. the back, if in a backpack) then they must make a Dexterity test, or the vial will break, and the individual will take damage based on the type of acid. The following table is for one measure:

Type I Dissolves 8 ounces of organic materials in d6+1 rounds (d6+3 Wounds to flesh).

Type II Consumes up to 1 pound of organic material in d3 rounds, and pits 6 ounces of lesser metals in d6 rounds (d6+4 Wounds).

Type III + 10 on injury table. Dissolves 6 ounces of lesser metals in d6 rounds, weakens 6 ounces of iron (d6+5 Wounds to living targets).

Type IV + 20 on injury table. Dissolves 3 ounces of iron in d6+2 rounds (Causes d6+6 Wounds).

Smoking Paste

Cost: 1 gc/pint

Ingredients: Charcoal, Oil, Gunpowder

Test: Intelligence (Refer to Injury table on failure)

This compound is usually kept in small urns or pots, with a fuse at the top, and must be placed then lit to function properly. If thrown, a smoke bomb will break 50% of the time and fail to work. The bomb creates a cloud of whitish gray smoke with a radius of 6 yards, which persists for d6+1 rounds, obscuring sight. Weapon Skill and Ballistic Skill are at -30.

A somewhat more complicated (Intelligence -10% to create) version of this compound does exist, and costs twice as much to produce. It consists of 2 small vials of liquid, which when mixed produce a slightly smaller cloud of smoke (4 yard radius) as well as a minute explosion, little more than a loud bang. The 2 vials containing this second formula are usually kept attached to each other with wax, twine or something similar, because to work effectively, they must break at the same time in the same spot. This compound is extremely unstable, and will be set off prematurely if the vials are shattered (following the same rules outlined for vitriol, above). Failures should be checked against the Injury table. Despite its volatile nature, this mixture will not make an effective weapon.

Acidic dissociation, class, is the process by which immutable such as wood, iron and living tissue are rendered inconstitute by means of elemental subversion, the vector of which is the vitriol you see before you. I shall now demonstrate.

Professor Johan Witzenberg, Nuln University

Flash Paper

Cost: 5/- per paper

Ingredients: Vitriol of Sulfur, Paper

Test: Intelligence

A favourite of magicians, flash paper produces a bright spark and puff of smoke when crushed or torn. It cannot cause any damage and will not ignite any but the most flammable of substances. However, it can be used to frighten some animals and nocturnal creatures. To successfully use flash paper as a stage prop, the magician must also pass a Palm Object test. Most urban people will be too savvy to be fooled into equating a flash of light and coloured smoke with a powerful wizard, but a clever magician can dupe rural folks with aplomb.

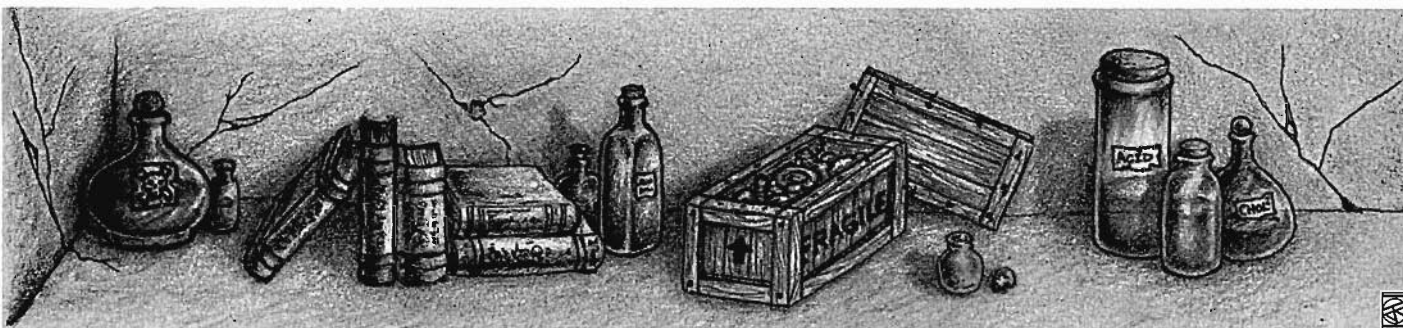
Sneezing/Blinding Powder

Cost: 10/- per oz

Ingredients: Ragweed, Hay and Pepper/Glass Powder

Test: Intelligence

Both of these powders are quite similar in both preparation and dispersion. An



ounce must be blown into the target's face from a range of one yard or less. Alternatively, two ounces may be thrown as an improvised weapon from a range of 3 yards or less (this penalty can be negated by use of a blowpipe and the specialist weapon skill). The target gets an Initiative test to dodge the effects. If the target is surprised then the test is at -20%.

Blinding powder Affected person cannot see for d3+1 rounds. Weapon Skill and Ballistic Skill are at -40%.

Sneezing Powder Target is allowed a Toughness test to resist. If that fails, then the target is overcome with a sneezing fit for d3+1 rounds, and all actions are at -20%.

Smokeless Torch

Cost: 2 gc/measure

Ingredients: Phosphor, Oil, Salt of Firefly, Ammonia

Test: Intelligence

This compound is stored in two separate containers, a small vial filled with a bluish liquid and another larger one containing translucent crystals. The user must pour the liquid from the smaller vial into the larger one and shake the mixture gently. After one round the crystals will begin to glow a faint green, producing light slightly more intense than a candle. The light will last for d3+1 turns before failing. If the crystals are saved they may be used d6 times, provided more of the liquid is available.

Gunpowder

Cost: 5 gc/measure

Ingredients: Charcoal, Sulfur, Salt Peter

Test: Intelligence (Refer to Injury table on failure)

Gunpowder is a relatively simple mixture which is not particularly useful on its own, with the possible exception of being used as a long fuse or as a component for other compounds. Three distinct grades of powder exist, each grade for use with a particular type of weapon: firearms, cannon, and bombs. Firearm powder is of the finest quality and powder for bombs the lowest. Gunpowder of one type should not be used in any of the other weapons; if it is, it will prove even less reliable than usual. Treat any roll of a double (e.g. 44, 77) as a misfire, not just those which exceed the users' BS.

Injury

When a chemist attempting to prepare a dangerous compound fails his Intelligence roll, then consult the following table. While only three of the ten described compounds have a chance of causing injury, the GM may impose the risk of injury for any endeavour performed under less than favourable conditions. The numbers reflect the amount by which the chemist failed the roll.

Failure by 1-20% Noxious Gas - Individual must pass an Initiative test or be sick for d6 turns. All characteristics are at -10%.

Failure by 21-35% Ahhh! My Eyes! - Chemist must make an Initiative test or be blinded for d6 hours. If the chemist fails this test by 30% or more, then he must make a Toughness test or the blindness is permanent.

Failure by 36-50% Hideous Burns - Caustic fluid sears the chemist for d6+3 damage to a random location. Unless treated immediately by a surgeon, the burns will scar flesh horribly. Chemical scars to either arm lower Dexterity by 5% permanently, and a splash to the face indicates the chemist must pass a further Initiative test or be blinded as above, and will lose 5% from Fellowship permanently.

Failure by 51%+ Ka Boom!! - A powerful explosion hits the chemist full-blast, causing 2d6+4 damage. He may dodge for half damage on a successful Initiative test.

If this Phosphor solution turns bright blue and starts to boil in the beaker, then you have heated it too quickly. You have about five heartbeats to throw it out the window.

Master Alchemist Adolphus Bormann to his apprentice, One hour prior to the Great Fire of Altdorf

Tests and Procedures

In addition to producing a wide range of compounds in a laboratory, a skilled chemist can perform some useful tests both in and out of the field. Simple analyses such as the Litmus test for acidity require only a minimal amount of equipment, while determining mineral content from an ore sample necessitates an alembic or retort, glassware and a heat source at the least. Any attempt to identify a magical potion or other complex concoction must be performed in a well-stocked lab.

A wise chemist will always work with a small sample of an unknown compound, to minimize both the personal risk as well as the loss of material should any unfortunate incidents occur. This sample is usually only a tiny fraction of the total substance. With magical potions, the sample must be at least a quarter of the volume, which may be returned to the original contents. However, if the sample is ruined during analysis, the potion will suffer a loss in efficacy at the least, and may function in unpredictable, possibly dangerous ways, at the GM's discretion. Precisely what the chemist is able to discern from a given sample is up to the GM, but as a rule information about potions and other exotic substances should remain sketchy at best.

Chemists may also attempt to isolate and extract chemicals from other compounds. The most common task of this sort is to extract minerals from ores, a somewhat more difficult and time consuming procedure than merely identifying them. A chemist can extract 8 ounces of a given mineral per day of work, 16

ounces if he possesses the Metallurgy skill. These numbers reflect a single chemist in a modest laboratory. A larger facility with scaled-up equipment may be capable of refining much greater amounts.

The table below reflects the chances for a chemist in his laboratory. The roll should be lowered by as much as -20% if the attempt is being made in a difficult location, such as a mine, or if the chemist has limited access to equipment.

1. Litmus Test (Intelligence +10%)
2. Locate/Identify Ore (Intelligence -10% (Intelligence +10% if used with Mining skill))
3. Isolate Mineral from Ore (Intelligence -10% (Intelligence +10% if used with Metallurgy skill))
4. Analyse Simple Compound (Intelligence)
5. Analyse Complex Compound (Intelligence -10% + Injury)
6. Analyse Magical Compound (Intelligence -20% (Failure by 30% or more destroys the sample))



The Tools of the Trade: A Basic Chemistry Set

In order to have any reasonable chance of successfully preparing a compound, a chemist must have access to proper facilities. This does not mean a fully-stocked laboratory filled with gurgling retorts and gleaming glassware; any well-lit, undisturbed room will do. One could even set up shop in a room in an inn, provided the landlord remained in the dark. As no one wants the roof to be blown off their building, proprietors tend to be less than enthusiastic about scientific breakthroughs occurring in their rooms. The contents of a modest chemistry set include each of the following items, in varying sizes and amounts. While the size of these objects does not prohibit moving from one location to another (two large trunks should cover it), the glassware must be packed carefully. Even the smallest crack in an alembic could cause an explosion!

Beaker (16 fluid ounce volume)	3 gc
Pestle and Mortar	10/-
Balance	2-10 gc (cheap balances' lower tests by 5%)
Tongs	8/-
Vial (8 ounce volume)	90/-
Brazier/Burner	9 gc
Alembic (sealed distillation device)	10 gc
Retort (distillation device)	5 gc
Crucible (for refining ore)	5-20 gc (depending on size)
Glass Blowing Equipment	50 gc

THE GOOD DOCTOR

Gregor Lakenschnoz is an NPC who, due to his inherent mobility, may be used when adventurers decide they might be interested in obtaining chemical compounds. Of course if they are in a major city, then they probably will have



several alchemists from which to choose, but established guild members tend to be a bit on the pricey side, and as adventurers are usually counting every gold piece, Gregor could be — if you will pardon the pun — just what the doctor ordered.

Despite his unpleasant appearance, Gregor Lakenschnoz, or Doctor Lakenschnoz, as he likes to be called, is a very skilled chemist who has learned well from some disastrous failures early on in his career. Fifteen years ago Gregor was a student

of mediocre promise in the Medical University in Nuln, but his parents were fairly well off — enough to keep him enrolled in school despite poor performance. They had always wanted a doctor in the family.

“You’re going to blow your face off one day.” His tutor in the pharmacy department had always chastised his lack of precision in measuring. How was he supposed to know it would really happen? The explosion blasted his cheeks and completely dissolved his nose, leaving a slimy, gaping hole in his face. He usually keeps it covered with a modified eye patch, but he will dispense with such niceties if he wants to intimidate someone.

After a long stay in the University’s hospital he decided to return home to find a safer line of work. Unfortunately, his father had recently lost a great sum of money in a bad business deal and owed even more to some unsavoury individuals. Realizing that he would never make it as a doctor, but needing to earn money fast, Gregor set up a laboratory in his home; this time pursuing his studies with more care. He had learned very quickly that certain compounds, while pernicious to prepare, could fetch a stupendous profit.

Although he progressed rapidly and without mishap, he failed to come up with enough gold to satisfy his father’s “business” partners. One night his dear old dad went out for a drink and never came back. The next day a group of thugs showed up and informed Gregor that he would be working for their boss now, and that he and his mother would be coming to stay with them.

A murderous rage seethed at a low simmer within him for weeks as he slaved in the basement of a mansion he was never allowed to leave. His mother, still a beautiful lady, became an unwilling paramour to the Boss. He only saw her at the evening meal they shared, and the things she told him filled him with a rancour more bitter than the Sulfur and Bitumen he used in his researches. Then one evening, she failed to arrive at dinner, and Gregor was informed that his mother had met with a nasty accident involving a fourth story window.

That was it for Gregor. In a rage he mixed and poured, distilled and mixed again. He knew that he could never get to the Boss himself, so he prepared a very unpleasant surprise for his “employer.” He nearly failed in that as well. His captors apparently became suspicious at his frenzy and probably saw revenge in his eyes. Half a dozen men burst into his laboratory as his project neared completion. Although he was a small, weak man, Gregor fought with a berserker’s fury, and the room became a sea of broken glassware and spilled chemicals.

To this day Gregor cannot remember what actually caused the explosion. He had been working on a poison gas which should not have been volatile, but with all those chemicals mixing on the floor — who knows. He only recalls stumbling out of the burning house and fleeing into the darkness.

Today Gregor is something of a travelling salesman. He moves from city to city, setting up shop in an inn, a tent or even out of his own wagon for a time, then he moves on, always looking over his shoulder for the pursuit that is never far behind. For unfortunately, his explosion while powerful, did not kill the Boss, and he made a determined enemy that night. The two have had numerous encounters and near-misses over the years, but Gregor has never learned the identity of his nemesis and in fact has only seen him once, just after he and his mother were kidnapped.

Gregor has perfected his craft over the years, becoming as skilled as any alchemist in matters chemical, but he is extremely paranoid. Anyone dealing with him must be prepared for his elaborate precautions and “cloak and dagger” attitude. He frequently moves about in disguise, often posing as a doctor because of his limited medical knowledge, but he has been known to slip into the role of a trader, a scholar and even a wizard.

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
3	41	38	3	5	9	52	1	43	23	56	30	36	21

Careers: Charlatan, ex Pedlar, ex Pharmacist

Height: 5’ 4” **Weight:** 136 lbs **Eyes:** Gray **Hair:** Brown (thin and lank)
Age: 36

Features: Both cheeks heavily scarred, and his nose is completely gone

Skills: Chemistry, Read/Write, Heal Wounds, Secret Language - Classical, Manufacture Drugs, Herb Lore, Evaluate, Haggle, Sixth Sense, Disguise, Wit, Palm Object, Charm, Acting

Trappings: Horse and covered wagon, d6 Pieces of each kind laboratory equipment, d6-1 of each type of chemical compound, Crossbow and 14 quarrels, Dagger, 250 Gold crowns, Clothing to fit his various disguises, d6 Tomes on alchemy and medicine, 2d6 Bottles of medicinal drugs, At least one week’s worth of travelling supplies

Adventure Hooks

You picked the wrong business partner friend. . .

The players, needing either medical supplies or some chemical, have heard of Gregor and locate him at an inn or tavern, where they are able to conduct their business with no apparent problems. Unfortunately, the Boss’s agents have also tracked the good doctor to the same place, and observe the transaction. Afterwards they follow the adventurers as well as Gregor, but he becomes aware of his shadows and manages to evade them. The players are not so lucky.

The next time they sleep, the Boss’ men will attempt to kidnap one of their group. If successful, they will leave a note telling them to Bring Gregor Lakenschnoz to such and such a place at a specific time if they want their friend to be returned unharmed. The individual kidnapped can expect some rather intense questioning, but may find an opportunity to escape. What the players do when and if they find Gregor could make them some powerful enemies or allies.

Details on the Boss and his organization are purposely vague, as he is a shadowy underworld figure. This should mean that GM’s can tailor him to any campaign — perhaps even as an NPC that the PCs have already encountered, perhaps in some other guise. He is still based in Nuln, and has recovered from the disaster fifteen years ago very nicely. He now runs a fairly well organized smuggling operation, and has agents in most of the larger Old World cities. He also has a special group of people devoted to tracking down Gregor Lakenschnoz; he never got over the sting of that one defeat, and besides, leaving such business unfinished is never good for your reputation.

You want us to go where?

Another of Gregor’s enemies has decided to come after him, but being the local chapter of the Alchemist’s Guild, they are somewhat more civilized about their pursuit, hiring a professional bounty hunter instead of thugs. This bounty hunter happens to be an associate of one of the players and asks his or her assistance in tracking down this nefarious threat to honest people. The Guild has told the bounty hunter that Gregor was once one of their number but became seduced by the forces of Chaos, as evidenced by the obvious stigmata on his face.

The bounty hunter’s investigation to date has shown that Gregor bought provisions and supplies for an underground expedition, probably to search for long buried evils, warpstone, or something unpleasant like that. He also purchased a map to an abandoned mine a day or so from town. If they hurry, the group can catch him before he finds what he is looking for and leaves the area.

In truth, Gregor is simply looking for reagents to use in producing his compounds, as he has trouble of late purchasing such items in town (due to the Guild’s interference). The mines were abandoned for a good reason — something evil now dwells there. If the players go to the mines they will undoubtedly encounter the creature or creatures, perhaps saving Gregor in the process or even needing his help to survive. Then comes the decision of what to do with him. The bounty hunter’s opinion is obvious, but the issue may not appear so black and white to thoughtful players.



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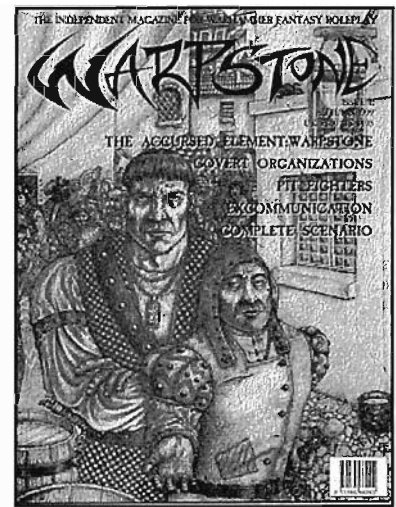
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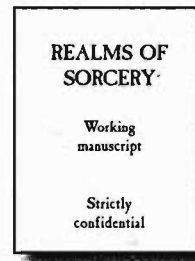
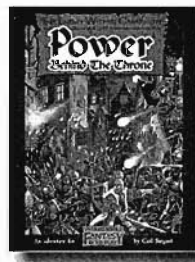
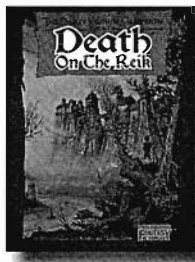
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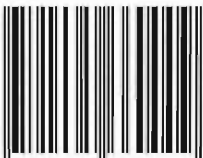


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