

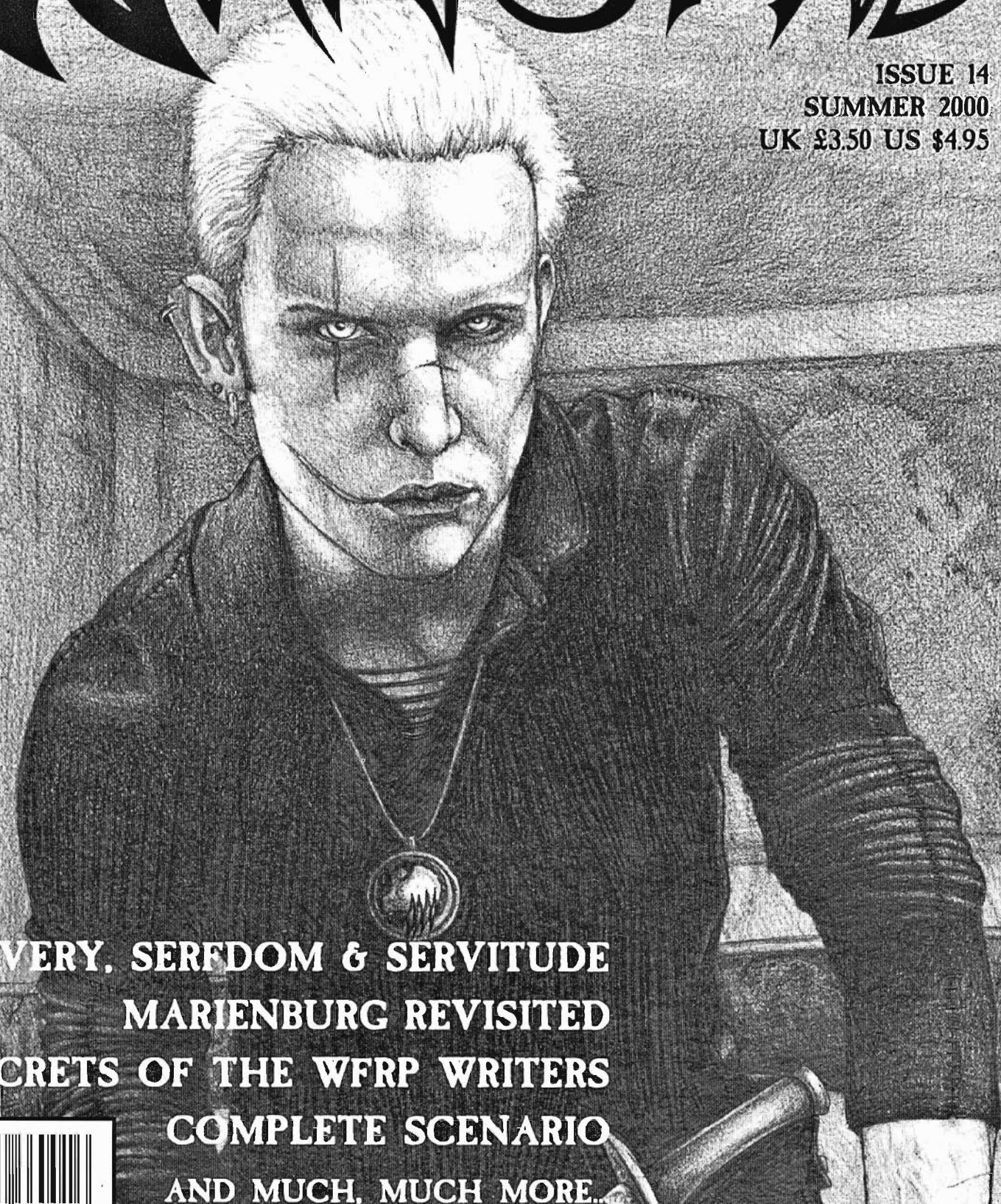
THE INDEPENDENT MAGAZINE FOR WARHAMMER FANTASY ROLEPLAY

# WARTSTONE

ISSUE 14

SUMMER 2000

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**SLAVERY, SERFDOM & SERVITUDE  
MARIENBURG REVISITED  
SECRETS OF THE WFRP WRITERS  
COMPLETE SCENARIO  
AND MUCH, MUCH MORE.**



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## EDITORIAL

By John Keane

IT'S BIG!!! Well, bigger! Eight pages to be precise. I guess someone read my editorial last month! So what's going on you may ask yourself, seeing the almost constant changes in the magazine recently. I am of course referring, in the main, to the glossy interior of issue twelve and the non-glossy interior of issue thirteen and this issue. As we have stated before on many occasions we have attempted to continually improve the magazine. Some of these improvements have been hardly noticeable whilst some have been pretty dramatic. In 1999 we signed a contract with Hogshead Publishing, publishers of Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay (and various other titles), which effectively transferred all printing and distribution under their control. Since then we have had a few teething problems (Issue 13 did prove very unlucky for us being beset by non-stop problems) meaning various delays along the way. However, things are finally settling down now.

Our mission statement, if we had one, would probably start with something like "To boldly go, where no..." (sorry!) "Content is more important than style." As such, we have managed to increase the page count (hence more content!) at the cost of a more professionally stylish glossy interior. If however you see the contents page opposite shinning back at you with a lovely glossy coat, then we've managed both. But don't hold your breath!

*Talabheim: The Eye of the Forest*, our background of the city, its culture, history and people has been pushed back (again!) to issue sixteen. It is looking impressive and looks like it may well be the largest background to a WFRP city yet published. This huge source material for the city will be appearing in three parts. Part one will take almost half an issue, and will be continued in two further issues by locations and more information. It's a project on a grand scale and has involved many talented writers – we hope you will think it worth the wait!

Just to whet your appetite, some future articles that are in the pipeline are The Cult of Sigmar, some background on Lustria and non-Chaos Secret Societies. However, this is really just the tip of the iceberg. The extra pages we now have will enable us to really expand the WFRP world in directions we have not been able to before. So look for some unusual stuff on the way. On that line we are on the look out for humorous and not-quite-serious articles on WFRP or gaming as a whole. If you've written one or have an idea for one, drop us a line. We're not planning on turning the magazine into a WFRP version of *Mad*, we'd just like to incorporate the odd easy reading article – so go on, make us chuckle!

You will notice (or not) my absence from the next issue of Warpstone, due to a new arrival in the Keane household – and no, it's not a new sofa! I'm hoping to be back on staff for issue sixteen, but as they say "the best laid plans..." and all that! So, I'll see you then!

Meanwhile, Gencon UK is hurtling towards us at some speed now and, whilst I will not be able to attend, some of the Warpstone team will be there. So, if you've got any views on how to improve the magazine or ideas for new articles go and see them – and sign up for the WFRP Tournament! If this isn't enough you can catch us all at *Dragonmeet* in November. Yes, you heard right: *Dragonmeet*. More details on page five. Over the pond we won't forget to mention Gencon itself. Although Warpstone haven't managed to convince Hogshead to charter us a plane yet, you can catch up with them there.







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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

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

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

## ETC.

"It is time to depart. We must be deep in the Wastes when the hellspawn arrives." reiterated the bookish chaos follower for the third time, but he made no account of himself. "The time draws near and there is no time to do it all." "I know, worm." screamed the chaos warrior, tired of his incessant mutterings. The creature within turned once again as if to reinforce the worm's statements. "We must go now, I must return before the moons have passed four times, no time, no time!" "Then make time!" She picked up the weasily scribe with one mailed fist and threw him out the window. Unfortunately they were only on the first floor - the fall would not kill him. But there was plenty of time on the journey ahead. The chaos champion watched as they departed and knew that when they returned all hell would come with them.

## REPORTS FROM THE HEART OF CORRUPTION

### Reviews

2

We take a look at two new fantasy RPGs and the out-of-print *Death's Dark Shadow*. "7th Sea offers not only a worthwhile alternative, but also a potential replacement"



### Head Hunters

23

A complete scenario, set in Talabheim, that proves how important it is not to lose your head. "He is a living legend, and many still tell of his deeds"



### The Correspondent

5

A Gazetteer style look at the people of Ostland. "Ostland is a province within the Empire, which regards itself as the most advanced nation in the world"



### Elf Slavery

34

An insight into the history of slavery within Elven Society. "the Elves of old simply viewed slaves as inferior beings"



### Taking Horses for Granted

8

Some good reasons to take care of your trusty four-legged friend. "Without specialist knowledge, though, it is all too easy to be sold a lame horse"



### Marienburg Revisited

35

We return to Marienburg to expand on some locations mentioned in the sourcebook. "Nothing like it in the Old World. They work with the poor unfortunates of Marienburg to better their lot"



### Between the Lines

9

Fresh ideas for those thinking that Old World libraries were useless. "besides being a source of adventure seeds, books can be used as a source of new skills"



### Strange Events in Marienburg

41

Two Cameos to amuse and confuse players. "Perfectly natural, albeit weird, occurrences can be misunderstood by the population and interpreted as omens from the gods, spirits or, of course, Chaos"



### Slavery, Serfdom and Servitude

13

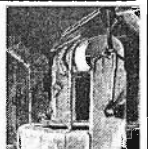
An in depth look at the different types of slavery prevalent in the Old World. "Old World societies are built upon social inequalities. The weak live to serve the strong"



### I Know Not...

43

Part one of a three part story introduces us to our hero. "Men, and pieces of men, lay sprawled alongside beasts and beasts that were almost men"



### Secrets of the WFRP Writers

21

Graeme Davis shares his insights into the creation of Warhammer and the jokes within. Part One of Two. "it is possible to run faster than you ever thought possible if there's a clear threat to life and limb"



### The Forum

48

Only one letter this time round. "the rank smell of 'how many of this issue's articles can I get in here?'"



### ABBREVIATIONS

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

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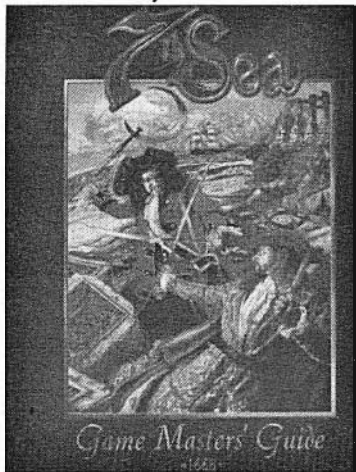
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# REVIEWS

## 7th Sea

Published by AEG

Reviewed by Tim Eccles



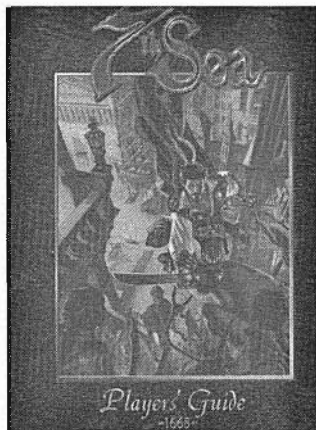
*Warhammer is dead;  
Long live Warhammer!*

I think it necessary to state at the outset that 7<sup>th</sup> Sea is not cheap. Two books are required to play: The GM's book and the Player's Book (...sounds vaguely familiar?) at a cost of £19.95 (\$29.95) each. As WFRP, gamers we are used to paying over the odds for our products, but it is worth bearing in mind that for that sort of money one can buy the entire Talislanta range, huge swathes of Earthdawn material, or system bargain packs offered by everyone from Avalon Hill to White Wolf. The prices

begin to sound even more excessive when one then examines the GM's Screen at £12.95 (\$19.95) and the various campaign supplements. On the other hand, it is clear that 7<sup>th</sup> Sea is being well supported, with one of the products even offering membership of a fan club.

So, what is 7<sup>th</sup> Sea? As I have tried to imply in my opening statement, it is, to me, Warhammer for the year 2000. The basic premise of the game is the campaign world, called Theah. "While she isn't Europe's twin sister, she is certainly a distant cousin," says the player's guide [p15]. Like the Warhammer World, the setting is the Renaissance (specifically 1668), and all the old favourites are here: England (Avalon), France (Montaigne), Spain (Castille), Italy (Vodacce), Germany (Eisen), Russia (Ussura), the Ottoman Empire (Empire of the Crescent Moon) and China (Cathay). Each setting uses both pure history and fantastic creation to make them believable. One of the problems I have always had with WFRP is its poor use of history in developing the setting, a complaint that I cannot make about 7<sup>th</sup> Sea. For example, WFRP ruins excellent opportunities within the timeframe to develop realistic and current (to the PCs) military settings such as the siege of Vienna, the fall of Byzantium, the Prussian Crusades, the Thirty Years War, etc. For a game based upon WFB this is quite peculiar. Worse, all the footnotes of history that are forgotten. Where are the various theological disputes? (Did Jesus own his clothes?) The political and religious groupings, from Cathars to Cammorists? The unfathomable legal meanderings of the Vehmgerichte or the Ukase? All of these would stand ready for use if plucked from the pages of history.

From my readings of 7<sup>th</sup> Sea, the game is much richer in its milieu. Since the world is a fantastical version of the Earth in 1668, it should present no difficulties to gamers in acclimatising themselves, particularly if they are hardened WFRP players. The similarities are inevitable given the same basis for each game - a warped and sometimes humorous Renaissance earth. The Empire is Germany is the Holy Roman Empire is Eisen. Ussura is Russia is Kislev. Simple. The title, "7<sup>th</sup> Sea", is derived from the fact that Theah has six seas, and the seventh is a fable. It also suggests that the game is



essentially concerned with swashbuckling pirates on the high seas, but this need not be so. Certainly much of the two books look in depth at role-playing on the seas (useful in itself), but it is quite possible to base games in the well-detailed nations of Theah. In any event, much of the piratical activity seems centred as much on lost civilisations, mysterious islands and port carousing, as it is on ship combat and life at sea.

The rules also appear to take the WFRP system into the next Millennium. Firstly, PC generation uses a points system, allowing each player to develop the character they wish to role-play. Secondly, generation reflects your PC's culture. For example, the Avalonians have more resolve (English stubbornness) and the Castillians more finesse (Spanish style). Thirdly, players create backgrounds and advantages to add more depth. Specific skills fall into two categories: the pre-determined (reputation, wounds and wealth); and traits, skills and knacks. PC characteristics are known as *Traits*, and consist of Brawn, Finesse, Wits, Resolve, and Panache. *Skills* are divided into a number of *Knacks*. For example, the Courtier skill allows the basic knacks of dancing, etiquette, fashion, oratory, and the advanced knacks of diplomacy, gaming, gossip, lip reading, mooching, politics, scheming, seduction, and sincerity. Each has a rank of 1 to 10. Skills are classified as civil or martial.

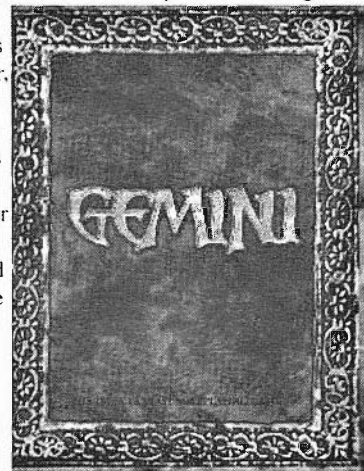
A rules system is, in my view, a simple mechanism to facilitate role-playing. For this reason, the flaws in WFRP have never really bothered me, since what matters is playing in the Old World. For similar reasons it seems to me that AD&D, whatever its edition, will always be flawed as it was never embedded in a single gaming world, and thus flails around without a context. However, I have to say that 7<sup>th</sup> Sea has definitely made me look again at the WFRP rules, for it is clear that good rules can increase one's ability to play the part. 7<sup>th</sup> Sea clearly encourages the flamboyant buccaneering spirit, the need to defend one's code of honour and the zeal to explore an unknown and anarchic world order.

In conclusion, if you enjoy WFRP (and as you are reading this I am assuming you must), 7<sup>th</sup> Sea offers not only a worthwhile alternative, but also a potential replacement, with more modern game mechanics and a well-detailed world outside the capricious whim of another company. Perhaps I can persuade John to set up another magazine...?

## Gemini - The Dark Fantasy Role Play Game Orschild (Supplement) Both Published by Cell Entertainments AB Reviewed by Slev

Gemini is a new role playing game, set in a world in total, constant, stellar eclipse. It began when the Iron Gate was opened, allowing the Darkness to re-enter the world. Standing against the Darkness is the Church of the One. However, the church lost much of its power when the world's hereditary rulers, the Sovereigns (who were expected to join them), rebelled and seized power for themselves. Not all the Sovereigns' people have resisted the darkness, and neither has the church, for one of its leaders, Marquis Lazarus, has fallen to the Darkness.

The dwarfs would help, but for hundreds of years, the different Kin of the dwarfs have



been divided by mistrust. The elf's stand aloof. The Humans have betrayed them before, and they are a dying people. A full quarter of the Queen's people are in exile, following the treachery of one of the Humans. Another full quarter, the children of Malachdrim, followed their father into servitude of the Darkness, following his conversion by Marquis Lazarus.

The only true hope of salvation lies in a young child, who is the living embodiment of the One. The child is guarded by Dantero, a blind priest. However, the child is accompanied by a twin, the embodiment of the Darkness.

Gemini definitely lives up to its title as a Dark Fantasy game; its background being reminiscent to that of *Diablo*. The machinations of the Darkness move in ways that make even the schemes of chaos seem overt. The Darkness lost the last war by relying on an overt attack, and has learnt its lesson. It seeks to win this one by covert seduction.

Gemini's system is similar to several recent major RPGs (such as L5R and its ilk) in terms of skills and combat, but is pulled off with far more flair. The system is broadly skill based, but not to its detriment, unlike games such as Rifts are. The magic section is most ingenious, combining an organic system, similar to Mage, with clear and simple rules and simple-to-follow structure.

The book itself is exquisite, with atmospheric art and plenty of colour images. It also lives up to the "All in One Book" philosophy, incorporating an adventure and all the necessary rules and guidelines. Cell Entertainments are also currently supplying free scenarios to anyone online who might request them.

Gemini's first supplement examines the province of Orschild. Traditionally the home of freedom (from the Church mostly, but any freedom will do), Orschild is being torn apart from within and without by various factions. The book details the politics, peoples & geography of the province, and is an absolute joy to read. It breathes real life into the place, and even summarises pertinent information to save you from needing to reference the original book for even the most obscure information. It gives enough details to be useful, while still leaving everything wide open for GMs to use.

Gemini is well worth buying as a game in its own right. However, for WFRP players, it shows just how subtly the forces of Chaos should be played. Its interesting and alien spin on elf's and dwarf's might also prove inspirational. The sections on Magic might be useful for GMs wanting to expand the WFRP system in a new way, and the sections on demons & exorcism, as well as the channelling of divine energies, really do deserve a home in WFRP.

## T I M E W A R P R E V I E W

### Death's Dark Shadow

Originally Published by Flame Publications in 1991  
Reviewed by Luke Twigger

Despite Hogshhead doing the best they can to reprint previously released material, they have not yet been able to reproduce the entire WFRP back-catalogue. A number of books have 'fallen by the wayside' and it remains to be seen whether Hogshhead will see fit to reprint them. These 'lost' books include *The Restless Dead*, *The Lichemaster* and *Death's Dark Shadow*. Fortunately there is still a ready supply of these old supplements available from second hand bookshops.

The book deals with a small town called Kreutzhofen in the southern Empire. This town has the virtue of having direct transport links with the Empire, Bretonnia, Tilea and the Border Princes! It is described in great detail: virtually every building and NPC has a section of dedicated text. Also provided are a large number of scenarios, cameos and such like. The centrepiece is *The Curse of the Reichenbachs*, a fifteen-page scenario. Finishing off the book are statistics and brief details of several NPCs found in the Warhammer Novels.

The general location is a bit contrived. It seems improbable that this single small town lies on major trade routes to four separate countries, particularly since the trade route to Tilea is via an underground river that runs all the way underneath the Vault Mountains! The other trade routes are via mountain passes to Bretonnia and the Border Princes, and along the River Soll to the Empire. The underground river to Tilea through Dwarf caverns is hard enough to swallow but the main road to Bretonnia leading directly through the Loren Forest is thoroughly implausible. The fact that this forest route was opened up by Marc Oppoleaux (wince) 'who was trusted by the Elves more than any other human' is the final straw! The town's location is too remote for my own gameworld, but may be of use to you, depending on where your campaign is based. However, whether you like this aspect of the background or not, there is so much other material here that can easily be converted to alternative settings that the book is still very useful.

The scenarios consist of four mini-adventures, six outlines, three optional locations and the main scenario mentioned previously. *The Curse of the Reichenbachs* has been written in such a way that it allows you to run any or all of the smaller adventures within it to make a larger campaign out of it. Most of the town locations and NPCs are drawn into the plot in

some way as well.

The mini-adventures are straightforward enough, generally in the region of four pages each. Each revolves around one of the town's NPCs and shouldn't take more than an hour or two to play as presented. Without giving too much away, Giscard the pig in 'Dangerous Delicacies' is a star and deserves a special mention!

The adventure outlines will require some effort on the GM's part to turn into useful adventures. They generally have a more surreal and bizarre feeling to them than the rest of the book. The 'Murder Mystery' is highly contrived and I doubt that many players will solve it thoroughly.

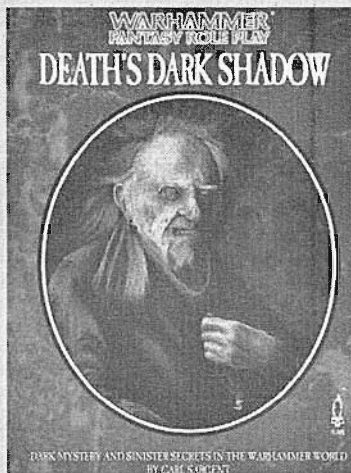
The optional locations are more useful from a general point of view. Introductions have been provided to link them to Kreutzhofen but they can be slotted in almost anywhere. They are essentially little more than 'dungeon' locations but can come in handy for any restless fighters you have in your group. With a little effort they could be drawn out into longer adventures.

*The Curse of the Reichenbachs* contains no real surprises; the storyline is fairly stereotypical but should keep your players busy for a couple of nights. It would benefit from having the smaller adventures woven into it to bulk it out a bit and to prevent the plot from being too linear. It makes a good scenario for fairly new characters and players, but those with more experience may find it less of a challenge (although GMs will be able to match it to the players' level fairly easily).

The last section deals with the so-called 'Fiction Heroes'. This chapter is little more than a series of profiles and skill lists for several characters portrayed in the various Warhammer Novels. A paragraph accompanies each with some (fairly feeble) reasons why they might be in the area of Kreutzhofen. Unless you are desperate for your players to meet Gotrek Gurnisson, Felix Jaeger, Genevieve the Vampire or Johann von Mecklenburg, then this section is generally best avoided.

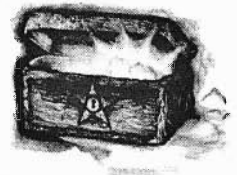
Finally, the presentation throughout the book is of a high standard, with lots of useful maps and handouts to accompany the adventures. There are also floorplans for some of the buildings and these may come in handy for almost any inn, watch house, etc.

Overall I would recommend the book. It is stereotypical in places and the location seems contrived but in terms of sheer volume of adventuring scope it can't be beaten. With a little work to expand on the material, this book could easily provide months of entertainment, and there's the added bonus that the majority of material can be converted for alternative locations fairly easily.



# WARPSTONE FRAGMENTS

BRIEF REVIEWS AND NEWS FROM THE WORLD OF WARHAMMER



## HOGSHEAD NEWS

*Dragonmeet* and *Realm of Sorcery*: It could be 1986! There may have been few releases from Hogshead in the last months but things have certainly been moving behind the scenes. In addition to WFRP and other new products news, Hogshead are one of the major players in a reviving an old name. First WFRP.

The big news is the progress on *Realm of Sorcery*. The second-draft edit was sent to *Games Workshop* in April and given tentative approval. However, it was ordained that after a few small corrections had been made, the text should be seen by the Imperial Council (GW's name for the three-person team that oversees all aspects of the continuity and consistency of the Warhammer world), which is almost certainly what's happening as you read this. However, an optimistic Hogshead team went to GW to scour the art archives for suitable pieces for RoS, and are hoping that if all goes according to plan, the book will be out this year. However, this is *Realm of Sorcery* - nothing ever goes to plan.

*Doomstones 3* has been hit by production delays concerning its cover, and its release date has slipped to July. It will now come out narrowly before *Apocrypha 2*, which should be out in early August, containing some reprints of classic *White Dwarf* material and the much-requested *Character Pack* booklet, plus new material from writers including Graeme Davis, Ken Rolston and Anthony Ragan. Not to mention artwork from Warpstone stalwarts John Keane, Rik Martin and Ralph Horsley.

On the staff front there has been a few changes with Matthew Pook leaving, to be replaced by Marc Torley, Sales and Marketing (the job is sexier than it sounds), and Production person Clare Stephens.

Hogshead is also heavily involved in the organisation of a one-day convention in central London, *Dragonmeet*, to be held at Conway Hall in Red Lion Square WC1 on Saturday November 25th. Much WFRP activity is guaranteed. Early rumours are talking of a number of rooms dedicated to various games (no Pokémon!) and other activities we can't mention yet.

Outside of WFRP, Hogshead has acquired the rights to publish the RPG *Nobilis* in a deal similar to that of *SLA Industries*. Simply, Hogshead do the distribution while the creators keep creative control. *Pantheon*, the latest in the New Line range of games is also in its final stages and should be out for *GenCon*.

## Workshop Slump at 25

So who would have thought a yellow furball and its mates would defeat the might of the Imperial Army. Nevertheless Games Workshop blame a slide in sales on Pokémon, the craze draining pocket money from their customers. The announcement caused 25 percent to be wiped off its Stock Market Value. Workshop have tried to limit the damage by releasing news of a forthcoming on-line game and a cartoon series set in the Warhammer 40K universe. Nevertheless, celebrations for GW's twenty-fifth anniversary took place in shops around the country.

## Mordheim - City of the Damned Reviewed by Lukasz Zagrodzki

The latest Games Workshop product set in the World of Warhammer - Mordheim brings a sparkle of hope to those watching with concern the drift of Warhammer towards high-fantasy. In this game there are no Good & Brave Knights wearing shining armour.

Instead there are just bunches of mercenaries ready to trade warpstone in order to get some gold, Chaos cultists, lots of different Chaos creatures and Witch Hunters willing to burn almost everyone. This includes the Sigmarite Sisters for heresy. This all to a background of a post-apocalyptic vision of a city destroyed by a comet. Whilst the rulebook contains strange, symbolic illustrations to sustain the mood of madness. This is not forgetting the wonderfully wicked story about a witch hunter, which creates an inspiring setting, bringing back the memories of the long-gone 'Realms of Chaos'.

Mordheim is a skirmish game set in the ruins of Mordheim - City of the Damned. While the rules are quite universal and could be used to play skirmishes like Dark Elf/Lizardmen in Lustria, it's the setting that makes for the strongest part of this game. The city, placed at the river Stir in Ostermark, near Sylvania, has been hit by a comet, in fact a huge piece of warpstone (called wyrdstone here). This has resulted in the complete annihilation of almost all citizens, changing the city into a real hell on earth. In spite of this, the small chunks of valuable wyrdstone scattered throughout the city drew lots of strange types to search for it. Now these warbands search the ruins, fighting monsters lurking there as well as each other.

In the Rulebook we have eight warbands described: Three are mercenaries hired by the contenders for the throne of the Empire: Grand Prince Siegfried of Reikland, Count Manfred Todbringer of Middenheim and Lady Magritta, supported by the secret Marienburg Freetraders association. Next is a secret Order of Templars and these guys are no other than the well-known Witch Hunters. They have been sent by the Grand Theognist himself, to recover wyrdstone for the Temple of Sigmar (officially to get rid of it in a safe way, but some claim he is looking for the Emperor's throne himself). Another religious

warband are the Sisters of Sigmar - probably the only female order of Sigmar, who are trying to recover the wyrdstone to hide it deep beneath their own convent. Although both in service of Sigmar they don't like each other any more than Khorne and Slaanesh do. As for the bad guys we have servants of yet another contender for the throne - Vlad von Carstein from the Vampire Counts Army Book. No need to tell you why he's keen on getting wyrdstone in his hands. There's also the Cult of the Possessed - Chaos cultists serving the mysterious Shadowlord. And last but not least the Skaven Clan Eshin - masters of murder and infiltration.

The question is how much it is of use to an average WFRP Game Master. Unfortunately, not as much as you might think, since the game's action takes place some five hundred years before the standard WFRP campaign, during the period of the Three Emperors (as you might have already guessed from what's written above). At the time of *The Enemy Within*, the great wyrdstone search ceased after Magnus the Pious finally razed the ruins. Nevertheless such a great corruption wouldn't pass out so easily, so it might be a good idea for a campaign to send the players there.

The Mordheim Rulebook is a great source of knowledge for those interested in the history of the Warhammer World, giving many previously unknown facts about the XX/XXI Century. One of these being the fact, that practice of magic in all its forms has been considered a heresy by the Cult of Sigmar. Although in this aspect as with many other GW products, the history is a little different from the one published in the *Enemy Within*. The creators of Mordheim also make one grievous mistake - it looks like the last five hundred years has seen no improvement in technology, including powder weapons, as there are duelling pistols, blunderbusses and long rifles available.

The intent reader can glean lots of small, but useful information. Unfortunately, this can usually be interpreted in different ways. For example, from the description of the secret Order of Templars of Sigmar (commonly known as the Witch Hunters), it looks like these guys are the Sigmarite Inquisition. Also, many of Sigmar's priests claim that women have no right to teach the holy word of Sigmar, so it's quite possible there are no more Sisters of Sigmar today. The mysterious Shadowlord is also mentioned as a lesser Chaos god, former ruler of Morrslieb. So who knows what happened to him after razing the ruins of Mordheim? This could make an interesting campaign.

So considering all this, is Mordheim worth buying? I'd say no, unless you're going to play it. The GW prices can really give someone a headache and you can't buy a Rulebook without buying the whole game. Nonetheless reading a Rulebook should be strongly encouraged.

## GAMES MAGAZINES

### 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](mailto: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](http://www.bits.bris.ac.uk/rrees/carnel)

### 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.

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## VOID

Whilst not related to WFRP, those who are interested in Warhammer 40K, or science fiction generally, might be interested to know that a new company, i-kore, has launched a set of what one might term (unfairly) 40K-clone rules and a range of miniatures for it. i-kore seems to be related to the collapsed Target Games, and might be worth watching. They have been offering the rules free to anyone e-mailing them at [info@i-kore.com](mailto:info@i-kore.com); it might be worth trying to see if the offer is still valid.

## GEMINI

Those of you intrigued by the Gemini review on page 2 can join the new Gemini mailing list by sending an e-mail to [geminirpg-subscribe@e-groups.com](mailto:geminirpg-subscribe@e-groups.com)

# THE CORRESPONDENT

## Ostland: A Gazetteer by Tim Eccles

Theodor looked in despair at the pile of papers Father Kretheim had asked him to study. However, concentration was difficult. His master had hinted he knew of Theodor's late night visit to the study and examination of the scrolls. But why not just punish him? Worried, he pulled the top paper to him: one marked with Ostland's Coat of Arms...

In my previous article (The Correspondent Issue 13), I described the use of prejudice in WFRP campaigns, particularly with regard to regional and local xenophobia. In my opinion, WFRP would be well served by the creation of an Empire Sourcebook to develop such ideas. This article provides a sociological analysis of one region of the Empire, Ostland, in order to develop ideas about regional diversity. It will give a description of the natural, social and political geography of the area. As a small part of the wider context, I will look at prejudice and its effect on the region and its people as outlined in the previous article in this series.

### Ostland: A Synopsis

Ostland is a harsh and dangerous land, mostly covered by gloomy pine forests. The Forest of Shadows is well named, and harbours many dangers to the human inhabitants of the province. Raids by Orcs and Beastmen are by no means uncommon, and certain extremists accuse the Kislevites of arranging them, given the apparent ease with which they pass through there.

People of Ostland are a dour, conservative lot. Its army perfectly reflects the nature of the place, and is known as tough and tenacious. It has a reputation for stubborn determinedness and a refusal to surrender. They also reject ostentatious uniforms, and typically wear black and white. The Ostland army consists primarily of infantry, who are better equipped for service in the deep forests; it also reflects the inability of Ostland to maintain cavalry and siege trains. Paradoxically, Ostland relies on mercenary units when needed, some of which are Kislevite, who would normally be excluded from the province.

Grand Duke Hals von Tasseninck, based at the regional capital in Wolfenburg, currently rules Ostland. Historically the family has been loyal to the Cult of Sigmar and the Emperor. This might seem surprising given the geographical and political position of Ostland, which is surrounded by Ultricans. Whilst Ostland is often regarded as an irrelevance to the central and southern Sigmarite heartland of the Empire, it is important as a bastion of the cult of Sigmar. Whether GMs view the von Tassenincks as rural hicks or as powerful border march lords, the region offers interesting possibilities for any campaign.

### Ostland: Views from the Rest of the Old World

Ostland is a province within the Empire, which regards itself as the most advanced nation in the world. Ostland glories in this image, but its reality is rather different. What follows is an attempt to sketch viewpoints from within The Empire and within Kislev.

**The Empire:** The rest of the nation regards

Ostland as a rather backward region. There is some justification for this, although not to the extent normally imagined by those outside the region. Ostland simply has a bad image that has stuck. Ostlanders are seen as the archetypal bumpkins. This is doubly true for Ultricans who see Ostlanders as too dense to follow anything other than a state religion foisted upon them. However, even Sigmarites regard them with a disdain that they only shed when offered an alternative Ultrican target. The Empire is a fractured series of states, cities and Electors crammed full of petty bigotry; Ostland is the bottom of the pile in any system of ranking. A typical term for Ostlanders includes hemp-munchers, and many jokes revolve around the three stereotyped characters of the Altdorfer, the Middenheimer and the Ostlander.

Those who reside in the north and east of the Empire are usually regarded as old-fashioned or backward compared with those more urbane to the west and south. It is certainly true that they have slightly different views on life and ways of expressing things. People in Ostland are far more conservative than other parts of the empire, and so are far more likely to take issue with any 'new ideas' including fashion (length of skirt, wearing hats) and religion.

A particularly old-fashioned custom still in practice involves referring to weight as its monetary worth. Weights are often referred to in terms of money. For example, throughout Ostland, nail sizes are referred to in pennies ('d') such that "16d nails" means "16 penny nails". They are described that way in reference to the way they are customarily sold, such as: 16 pennies for 100 nails, 3 1/4 inches long (the size of a 16d nail) and 8 pennies for 100 nails, 2 1/4 inches long (the size of a 8d nail). Obviously, it is unlikely that PCs will involve themselves with the purchase of nails (though one never knows), but the GM can use this system should the PCs ever decide to buy anything by weight.

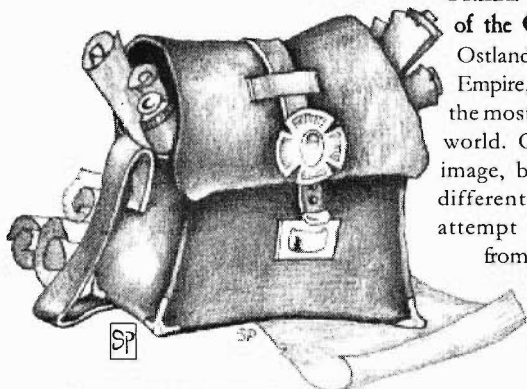
**Kislev:** Many sophisticated Kislevites, especially those in the south, regard the Empire as a model of modern culture and civilisation that they would like their nation to follow. It is by no means infrequent that young Kislevian nobility are sent to the Empire to be educated. However, they see too much of their own failed attempts to modernise reflected within conservative Ostland, and tend to visualise Altdorf, Middenheim and Nuln as their objects of desire. In addition, the Ultrican Kislevites hold little respect for what they perceive to be the paranoia of the Sigmarites in Ostland. Recent political manoeuvrings by the Grand Duke have done nothing to ease tensions, and whilst certain Kislevite nobles might consider some form of confederation with the Empire, blatant militarism will be opposed.

### Characteristics, Peculiarities and Beliefs of Ostland

**Ants:** It is known that a particularly aggressive species of ant is born inside the trees of the northern-most forest stretches. There is disagreement about which particular species of tree houses this insect, however. There are also folk tales of an Ant-King who rules these ants in a vast insect-empire.

Old Worlders believe that insects are born from wood, earth or corpses. They are unaware that they are born from eggs laid in those substances. It is true, however, that the ants in the region can be aggressive, especially in defence of their nests. The GM may decide that there is some particular reason for this, such as the influence of chaos, or that it is simply natural. Use the Swarm in the WFRP bestiary section, and stress the painful nature of ant bites, which cause -1 *Intelligence* and -1 *Cool* per bite for 1-2 days, or until treated.

Hunters have seen what they believe to be the Ant-King on three separate and well-publicised occasions. In reality, they have each



mistaken a Giant Beetle for the king. Whether the Ant-King really exists or not should be determined by individual GMs.

**Armchairs:** It is rare in The Empire for anyone other than a rich head of household to sit in an armchair. For most, benches and stools are the best seating that can be hoped for. In conservative Ostland, this necessity is regarded as an ideal, and only the most senior nobility will be seen to use an armchair. Sitting in Ostland can almost be as uncomfortable as the rest of the place. Certain rich merchants, of course, refuse to be bound by such ridiculous social norms, but do so only in secrecy.

**Beer:** Most beer throughout the Empire is brewed in local town breweries or in individual roadside taverns, and Ostland is no different. The quality of such beers is extremely variable, but Ostland beers are regarded as particularly poor elsewhere. Two breweries supply much of the area.

The first is the von Tasseninck Brewing Company of Wolfenburg, which was set up by the Grand Duke, allegedly to help finance his political ambitions. It has a virtual monopoly locally, and is seen as the politically correct drink by Ostlanders, who will defend it against complaints from outsiders. The Ordinary is foul, whilst the Duke's Select is only marginally better.

The second brewery, based in Ferlangen, is the Dwarf brewery Bugman's. Unfortunately, it is not Joseph Bugman's brewery, but that of his brother Samuel, who produces a drink that is not much better than von Tasseninck's efforts. Local Dwarfs know to stay clear of the drink, but travelling Dwarfs have been known to become rather irate with the inn-keeper who dares to serve them a Bugman's that tastes like sewer outflow. Indeed, Samuel Bugman is an outcast from Dwarf society, and a number of Trollslayers are known to have taken a vow to exterminate this abomination to Dwarfdom. Samuel Bugman's Best is the worst, whilst Bugman's Beardtangle is reasonable for human palates.

**Bread:** A staple diet of peasants throughout the Old World, the bread of Ostland is traditionally rectangular and very dark brown. However, it is possible to obtain black bread that is extremely tasty and nourishing, and comes in a circular shape. Bread can be kept for some time, and stale bread is frequently served at inns where the innkeeper believes his patrons will not complain.

**Burial:** Ostland retains the burial practices from the times of Sigmar in the main, despite the best attempts of the Church of Morr to modernise the practice. In Ostland, with the exception of the nobility, it is still usual for the dead to be cremated and not interred. The remains are then placed in a funeral urn and buried in a circular hole, over which a marker is placed. Such burials are not allowed in urban areas, but take place either in sacred groves or by the side of roads and tracks. Thus travelling along a road in Ostland, one frequently encounters a series of stone plaques along the roadside. These markers are of varied quality and design, but are meant to persuade the traveller to remember the deceased in some way. This method of the burial is said by some to extend back to the beliefs of the Old Faith or Taal, and is one reason for the Church of Morr to be encouraging modern burial rites. Others point to the functional sense of such burial in an area traditionally harried by the evil of Undeath and the Vampire Lords of Sylvania. However, they do so quietly, as the Church of Morr regards disbelief in the efficacy of their own burial rites as heresy.

**Dwarfs:** The few Dwarfs to be found within Ostland can best be described as expatriate, in that they are culturally and economically removed from their cousins who still live in the mountains and nominally serve the High King. These Dwarfs are identical in most respects and attitudes to ordinary human Ostlanders in their views, and have similar careers and skills. Many work in the brewery trade, but few are engineers, miners or similar, and they are removed from any association with the

Craftguilds. Native Ostland Dwarfs have rarely met Imperial Dwarfs, and thus have little but racial memories with which to refer to their Dwarfen heritage. Some adopt particularly overt Dwarf attitudes based upon their misperception of how Imperial Dwarfs act, but all will appear culturally sterile in their adopted humanity to true Imperial Dwarfs. Indeed, Imperial Dwarfs actually look down at their brethren in Ostland as not being "true Dwarfs". GMs may wish to treat Ostland Dwarfs as suffering hatred of Elves as indication of their attempts to mirror the traditional racial animosity, or ignore the animosity completely to reflect their ignorance of Dwarf history.

**Food:** Typical foods can be used to keep the PCs mindful of the foul place they have visited. Common meals, aside from bread, are limited to porridge, cake (unleavened bread), soups, stews, berries (and apples), vegetables (cabbage, carrot, potatoes), and some meat. Ostland is relatively poor, and thus not geared up to dealing with visitors with advanced palates, except of course at noble tables. Individual peasants have only hearths (not ovens) and rely on the Guild of Millers to produce all their finished baking products. Hunting animals is expressly forbidden, with the exception of vermin; unfortunately, local nobles have a peculiar view upon what is vermin.

**Hemp:** One of the primary claims to fame of the region is that it grows the best hemp within the Empire, and possibly within the world. The length and stringiness of Ostland hemp provides perfect raw material for a variety of clothing and, of course, rope. Ostlanders claim that their hemp, known as Ostivandica in the Classical tongue, was a gift from Sigmar who gave each region of The Empire a source of economic wealth on his apotheosis.

**Jokes:** Certain Ostlander jokes would not seem funny to outsiders, and revolve around the very strong and highly introverted bigotry of the place. For example,

*"Did you hear about the Ulric Priest who wasn't hung?"*

*"Why didn't they hang him?"*

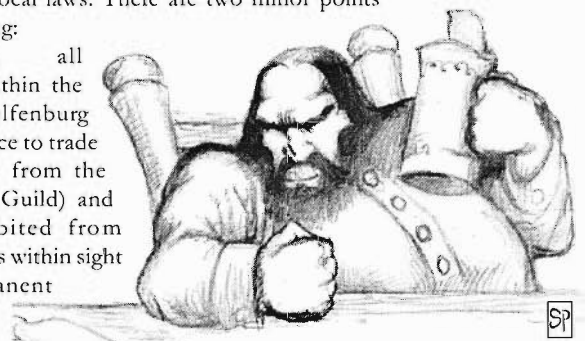
*"Cos he was in Middenheim..."*

Basically, if it is offensive to Ulricans, Kislevites, or (failing that) strangers, then it can be regarded as a joke.

**Kairds:** This is how the Ostlanders term their neighbours in Kislev. It is a term of abuse, being an ancient word for travelling tinkers or thieves. Ostlanders tend to see the Kislevites as idle drunkards and thieves. The fact that most of the Kislevites worship Ulric does not improve this image. In general, anyone who is of apparent Kislev origin will be dealt with very harshly, from "we don't serve your sort here" up to and including physical attacks. Anti-Kislevite racism is rife. The term can also be applied indiscriminately to any outsider (including PCs of course).

**Laws:** Whilst there is a nominally uniform Code of Law throughout The Empire, there are still many local customs and laws. In some cases, this is simply because these have yet to be officially overturned, but like many other things within the Empire, it is often politically impossible to over-write local laws. There are two minor points worth noting:

Firstly, all peddlers within the City of Wolfenburg need a licence to trade (obtainable from the Merchants Guild) and are prohibited from selling wares within sight of a permanent





dealing in the same items. Such rules are, of course, common throughout the Old World. However, it is not only an offence to sell goods in either case, but also to buy. Therefore, if purchasing from a peddler, one should ensure that they have a licence and are not in sight of a shop. Ignorance of the law is, of course, no excuse, and any PC can view the City's bylaws at The Office of the Komission for Public Service Standards during normal office hours. The Komission is located in the basement of the City Watch Barracks.

Secondly, Ostlanders still believe in the Judicium Sigmar, the ultimate appeal to Sigmar. Thus, convicted felons may opt for trial by ordeal as a final attempt to prove their innocence. It is not permitted to use a Judicial Champion should trial by combat be determined. The people of Ostland reverently believe in Sigmar, and the power of Sigmar, and lack the cynicism that may be found in certain more urbane parts.

**Money:** In the Old World, most cities and provinces mint their own money. Ostlanders are very wary of money minted outside the province, particularly in areas that are seen as devout to Ulric. It is up to the individual GM whether they wish to introduce variable values of GCs minted in different places, but, at the least, PCs should realise that their money may draw attention to them. Licensed moneychangers are quite happy to convert money at official rates; after all, business is business. No one will accept Kislevite coinage, although some moneychangers may agree to melt down and re-cast the coins. Whilst this is technically illegal, everyone in Ostland would regard this as a worthy fate for such coins.

**Monsters:** There are three monsters rumoured to haunt the forests in the north of Ostland. These are the *Calopus*, *Monoceros* and *Parandrus*.

The *Calopus* is reputed to be a hound-sized predator, which is feline in looks. In essence, it is a big cat with two serrated horns on its head.

The *Monoceros* is a large creature of varied descriptions, but generally described as having a horse-like body, great flat feet and the tail of a stag. It has a terrible howl, but appears to be a herbivore. A travelling scholar, on hearing its description, claimed that such beasts inhabit Lustria. No one has yet explained how such a creature may have arrived in Ostland, nor (in fact) confirmed that such beasts do inhabit Lustria. That would spoil the story.

The *Parandrus* is a stag, but is able to blend in with its background by its innate chameleon ability.

Whether such creatures exist as stated, whether they have some mundane explanation, are chaotic beasts, or simply the product of a fevered imagination, is up to the GM. They are, however, useful plot devices for worrying PCs and reinforcing the unknown and sinister nature of much of the Old World. Most people in Ostland know of these creatures, and will warn PCs to beware. There is also a 100GC reward outstanding for the capture (20GC if dead) of a parandrus by the Grand Duke. Obviously, no one has yet collected the reward, though one person was hanged for attempting to forge such a creature.

**Pewter:** The only industrial craft within the region worthy of any note is the manufacture of pewter kitchenware. Pewterers form a powerful guild within Wolfenburg, and Ostland moulds are respected outside the province.

A pewterer owns a workshop, typically employing a journeyman and an apprentice. The latter's family will pay for his training while so engaged. The workshop is a place of manufacture, and whilst some also act as shops, most items are sold at fairs or by door to door salesmen.

Decoration is carried out by an iron punch, wrigglework and engraving, or through incision by lathe. It is in the area of wrigglework, whereby a pewterer creates linear devices via a chisel, that Ostland pewter is known.

The industry is not particularly successful, given the quantity of

high-quality wood utensils, the rise of pottery and competition from Dwarf artisans. Since even well cared for pewter utensils last only about 10 years, and must then be melted down, there is a high degree of competition in materials. Ostlanders, however, have a tendency to jingoistically support their own industry and buy pewter, regardless of the relative merits of the alternatives.

**Religion:** Ostland is devoutly Sigmarite, and extremely anti-Ulrican. To this end, they have even adopted the worship of Shallya and Myrmdia simply due to the fact that the two southern Old World deities are particularly disliked by Ulricans.

**Spell Ingredients:** Ostland and the North are not well served by the suppliers of magicians. It is well away from major transport routes, which increases cost and causes degradation. Preservatives such as vinegar, salt, ice and formaldehyde are used, but are far from perfect and add further to the costs. There is also a known forgery problem in Ostland, of which any guild member would be aware, so PCs should check their components carefully in case they are not quite the article they were deemed to be. In addition, the conservative Ostlanders (and particularly innkeepers) are very likely to take exception to those strolling around carrying dead animal pieces, or pungent components such as sulphur.

**Street Games:** Ostlanders play a game they call Ostland Football. This is a non-lethal form of Bloodbowl. However, it can be painful to unsuspecting PCs walking around corners. In addition, a common prank amongst urchins is to bang on a knight's armour or helmet, and run away - very fast. Any well-armoured individual will do, since they are all knights to these young scallywags.

**The Wolfenburg Imp:** According to legend, a chaos lord sent his imps out to play, and the wind blew one down from the Chaos Wastes to Wolfenburg. At first, it was so awe-struck by the splendour of the Sigmarite Cathedral that it was terrified. However, it saw a priest entering the church, and swooped down to steal his prayer book, and tear it into pieces. It then proceeded to fly around the church doing damage. "Come down and stop that at once", demanded the Arch Lector (who happened to be visiting). "No," shrieked the vile imp, "you will have to stop me if you can". At which, the beloved of Sigmar turned the imp to stone as it sat over the altar, and where it can be seen to this day.

It should be noted that the Kislevites claim that the imp was fleeing a Winter Priest of Ulric, and that the Solkanites claim it was fleeing a Witch-hunter. In, each case, the tellers maintain that it was their priest who vanquished the imp.

The imp is a carved figure, half human and half beast. It appears to be feathered, and has bovine legs. The work is exquisite, and of ordinary (if very fine) stone.

## Conclusion

The aim of this article was to try and bring one particular region of the Empire to life, to show how it was viewed from other regions of the Old World, and how an Ostlander would view those same regions. For a GM, the region will be run very differently depending on the PCs who visit it. Whilst all might dislike the food, fall foul of regional laws or have difficulties with their money, reactions to transgressors will vary depending on whether they are (say) a Sigmarite Reiklander or a Kislevite Ulrican. Have fun, but remember variety can be dangerous.

**Not somewhere I want to go, thought Theodor, warming himself against the fire. He looked out the window across the roofs of Altdorf and relaxed. His reverie didn't last long, for seconds later he heard the tread of his master's footsteps from the door outside...**

# TAKING HORSES FOR GRANTED

by Peter Moore

All too often in roleplaying games I have seen characters treat horses as an invisible partner. An item which they buy and then ignore, simply considering it as a means of getting from A to B faster, maybe carrying a little bit more in the process. Well, that's all about to change.

Before we get too wrapped up in all this, though, a note on game mechanics. These have deliberately been avoided. It's easy to improvise tests if you want them, perhaps using risk tests or giving a 5% chance of rare problems cropping up; however, I recommend that the ideas in this article be used simply as parts of the narrative, to be dropped in wherever and whenever they're needed.

I have prepared this for GMs and players who want characters to think more, both about their journeys and their flesh-and-blood transport. Of course, the attitude to animals, including horses, is going to be very different in the Warhammer world than it is in our own. They are very rarely viewed as pets; they're far too important for that. A farmer who owns one has a distinct advantage in his work. For roadwardens, coachmen and knights, they are essential to their livelihood. A good horse is worth looking after. The livelihoods of a good many people rely on their mounts.

Let's start by looking at how a character can obtain a horse. Horses can usually be found at blacksmiths', army barracks or a Lord's home. Additionally, from time to time, horses can be found for sale at inns where adventurers and travellers have not been able to afford their bill, or have disappeared whilst on some treasure hunt. Inn keepers are well within their rights to do this. However, the most common place to find a mount is at the marketplace. Without specialist knowledge, though, it is all too easy to be sold a lame horse. There are a hundred ways to disguise such a problem (poking the horse with a long needle is one) so it doesn't come to light until later. And when you go back for your money, you can be sure that the trader will be gone. (They'll have ridden off into the sunset, no doubt!) A character with *Animal Care* will be able to notice such a scam on a successful Int +30 roll, and those with the *Ride* skill will smell a rat if they pass an unmodified *Intelligence* roll.

Another way to get a mount is to be given one as a reward. Jobs carried out for rural nobility, or for village communities, may often involve being paid in kind. After all, a horse is a fine gift or reward, and has the added advantage for the nobles that they don't have to part with any hard cash. After all, they can always breed another horse, and it isn't as if they're likely to give away a thoroughbred. Surplus mounts with no breeding value are often little more than a cheap source of meat in the lean winter months.

The final way to get a horse is to steal it. Horses are usually branded, and stealing one is considered one of the worst crimes imaginable. Horses are expensive, and will tend to be guarded or locked up. Convicted horse-thieves will end up on the end of a rope. You have been warned!

Magic-users may have a particularly hard time trying to find a horse they can ride. Horses are very sensitive, and can sense the magic force of a character. The higher the power level of a character the more difficult it will be for them to find a horse which will let them mount it. A wizard going to buy a mount from a blacksmith with ten horses may still find himself walking away empty handed.

Purchasing a trained horse (or training one yourself) may be essential for an adventurer. A trained horse doesn't necessarily mean a war horse, but one that remains calm and always obeys commands. For example, being ambushed on an untrained horse when the rider is unskilled will cause the horse to buck and the rider to lose a melee round, and possibly to be thrown from the saddle. Situations like this occur all the time, particularly if the horse is affected by a fear test.

One major problems with horses is that they throw their shoes. There

are a number of ways this can happen: the back shoe hits the front shoe, riding through a marsh (the suction pulls it off), a bad diet causes the foot to become brittle, or simply that the shoe was badly fitted in the first place. Throwing a shoe may be rare, but it can certainly cause problems.

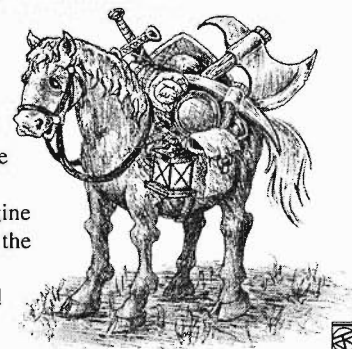
Can a horse be ridden with a thrown shoe? It all depends on the surface of the ground. On grass it would be possible, although this would quickly start to damage the horse's foot. If this happens it will be impossible to refit the shoe, which means buying a new horse. As a result, any time a horse throws a shoe, characters will have to dismount and lead their horse, or risk destroying their most valuable investment.

Horses need a special diet to keep their feet in good health. However, I have never seen a player buy horse feed. It's far easier to assume that the horse just eats grass during your journey, but in fact they will need proper food at least four times a week. 7/6 buys enough fodder (hay, straw etc.) for a day.

A horse will need checking every four to six weeks by a blacksmith (or any character with the Smith skill). This will reduce the chance of the horse throwing a shoe, and means that any wear and tear can be attended to. When getting your horse shod it's best to find a blacksmith near some army barracks, since they'll regularly have to carry out this kind of work, making them far more dependable than a blacksmith in the middle of nowhere.

Another necessary expense is to tip the stable boy a few pennies, even if you're only leaving your horse overnight. They rely on such tips for their income, and being generous will mean that they're far more likely to treat your horse well, feeding it properly and tending to it. Characters who are unfamiliar with horses and their ailments (in other words, anyone without *Animal Care*) may well rely on stable boys to find out if there's anything wrong with their mount.

So, how will all this affect your game? For a start, it can make players realise what a valuable resource their mounts are. It'll also add plenty of colour to your games, and could become the perfect excuse to slow down a party or divert them from their route. And you can imagine the discussions that will arise when the party's mission is delayed or prevented simply because some fool didn't take proper care of their horse...



## HORSE ARMOUR

By Gareth S. Evans

The following information allows characters who wish to armour their horses to do so.

Type of armour	Cost	Encum	Avail	Area/s covered
Chamfron	80GCs	75	Scarce	Head/Neck
Front barding	100GCs	100	Scarce	Front body/Fore limbs
Rear barding	100GCs	100	Scarce	Rear body/Hind limbs
Head caparison	15GCs	40	Average	Head/Neck
Front caparison	30GCs	80	Average	Front body/Fore limbs
Rear caparison	30GCs	80	Average	Rear body/Hind limbs

Barding and chamfrons are metal armour affording one point of armour over each area covered. Caparisons act as leather armour.

# Between the Lines

## Books and their use in *WFRP*

by Richard Jorio II

Two issues back we looked at the role of librarians and magical tomes. This time round we examine their more mundane brethren, and find that although their role may be more humble, there is plenty to be taken from their pages.

How many times have you included a library in an adventure? And how many times have you had a player say they are looking at a book and want to know what it is about? The general response is simply to give the player a quick title and move along. Yet books can, and should, be important. They offer the players a chance to learn a new skill, or perhaps a way to make a quick profit.

Books should be used to give colour and texture to the game world. Controversial books can be published and adventurers can find themselves looking to arrest the author or to protect him from a hoard of Witch Hunters. But besides being a source of adventure seeds, books can be used as a source of new skills. Generally by studying the books for a few hours each day over 1d4 weeks, and spending 100 EPs, a PC should be able to learn one skill. Most books will only be able to teach one skill.

### The availability of books

In terms of availability, there are three types of books: *Common*, *Uncommon* and *Rare*. Common books are recent publications that have been mass-produced and hence are widely available throughout the Old World. Uncommon books are 10 or more years old, or may have been printed in small numbers. Rare books are one of a kind, including handwritten journals and the like. Rare books also include volumes that have been banned or destroyed.

Prices depend on the age and type of the book. Examples of prices are given, but GMs should modify these as seems fit given the nature of the book. A *Common* book can be bought for around 3D10 Crowns, and will be available in most major Old World cities. An *Uncommon* book sells for 1d12 x100 Crowns. These might be found in large libraries, or the oldest bookstores. *Rare* books cannot simply be shopped for, and are generally only available in well-stocked libraries or private collections. Prices for a *Rare* book, when they do become available, are 1d12 x500 Crowns. The most common collectors of such works, namely universities and temples, tend to acquire them as donations, as they will not be able to afford them.

### Selected tomes

Below are examples of books that you can introduce into your ongoing campaigns and can be used as examples when creating your own material.

#### RAMBLINGS FROM THE EDGE

Written in 2013 by the wizard Pascal Varennes, *Ramblings* is surrounded by controversy. Varennes claimed the book contains visions of the future and many have interpreted this literally. They believed that Varennes was a powerful seer, and so have tried to link these predictions to current events.

Each passage consists of four or five lines, and most are so vague that a wide range of meanings can be given them. For example, passage #93 says:

*The city on the hill will dwindle.  
Rot will rise and destroy life.  
The raven rises in the East.  
Its flight will take it to the corpse.  
A feast will be had on the dead.*

In all, there are over 200 passages similar to this.

Many have said that Varennes predicated the exact date of the end of the world. However, due to the ambiguous style, the debate still rages on about whether this was supposed to happen 500 years ago, or will be arriving shortly.

The book measures 7" x 3", and the cover is of brown leather. The 100 hand written pages are sewn to the spine. The work is written in an archaic version of Breton. It is possible to translate this, but this will be time consuming. There are no markings on the cover, and the spine simply bears the word, 'Varennes'. The title given to the book was the idea of Albrecht Mack, who published a version last year in Nuln. This new version is remarkably close to the phrasing of the original work, which resides in Marienburg's Unseen Library. How Mack got hold of a copy of this (as opposed to one of the less accurate transcriptions that occasionally turn up) is unknown.

**Historical Note:** Pascal Varennes was rumoured to be mad, but not thought to be a real threat. He claimed that he could hear voices and that 'spirits' haunted him. There are royal accounts of Varennes petitioning the King to look into this. Varennes was found dead in his study in 2017, hanging from the rafters. The official story was that he committed suicide, but one report claims a message was found. Written in blood, it simply stated: "He knew the truth." Varennes' continued notoriety is largely the result of this apocryphal legend.

**Game Note:** This book can be used by a GM to give players cryptic descriptions of things to come. The accuracy of the predictions is up to the GM, but probably the best way to use the work is to omit all specific details (names, dates etc.) and then let the players draw their own conclusions. To read the work the PC will have to be able to *Read/Write - Bretonnian*. However, due to the uncommon dialect, they will have to take an Intelligence test to translate the passages accurately. The Bretonnian version is a *Rare* book; however PCs will be able to purchase the newly translated edition, which is *Common*.

#### GIOVANNI'S NOTEBOOK

Composed between 2320 and 2325, this is the personal notebook of Giovanni Vitti, a Tilean inventor. Gio, as his friends called him, was a man of many talents, whose brilliance was recognised in fields as diverse as science, art, music, botany, engineering, alchemy, and magic.

The pages reveal the hidden thoughts of man whose interests ranged over anything and everything. There is no order to the entries; Giovanni apparently wrote at random. Fortunately, he dated all entries. Within, a reader will find designs for 'water walking shoes,' sketches of flowers, half finished musical compositions, thoughts on the forces of magic, numerous inventions, and even a recipe for pizza.

What is remarkable about this work is the sheer brilliance of the man: His ideas and theories were years ahead of his time. The few spells contained in the work (only four can be deciphered) are noteworthy for their power and simplicity.

The volume also contains a rather lengthy essay on the effects of magic on the human body. Giovanni gives medical evidence indicating that prolonged use of magic causes damage to the body. He also hypothesised that the seductive nature of Chaos is simply a side effect of magical energies on peoples' minds. In his theory, magic is viewed as a flow of energy that passes through the mind of the caster. Just as a river can accentuate and erode the channel it runs through, magic can alter the caster. However, as with water, a strong and durable channel will not be significantly affected. In other words, the influence of Chaos is only a threat to the weak of mind.

The work measures 15" x 10", and has 500 hand written pages sandwiched between thin wooden covers. The pages and covers are held together with three wooden clasps. This looks nice, but means that the book is actually quite fragile. The cover consists simply of plain wood, inscribed with Giovanni's name and the code, "2320-24. #14", carved into it. It is thought that this notebook is part of a larger set, although the exact number of volumes in the series is unknown.

**Game Note:** Written in Tilean, there is enough information contained in this journal to allow a PC to learn the *Herb Lore* skill. This is a *Rare* book.

There are a total of twelve inventions in the notebook, and players

may choose to have their character build one. To do so a PC will need the following skills: *Carpentry*, *Engineer*, *Numismatics*, and *Read/Write - Tilean*. It will take 1d4 months to build a device, and several tests will be required. These include *Intelligence (Read/Write & Numismatics)* and *Construct (Engineering & Carpentry)*. A failure on any of the rolls means that the invention does not work.

The precise nature of the inventions is left to the GM's imagination, but all are of a practical nature and focus on problems of everyday life. Water walking shoes (actually little more than buoyant, hollowed blocks with straps, which are extremely difficult to balance on!) and a self-propelled coach are just two examples.

#### THE RISE AND FALL OF THE REMEAN EMPIRE

Written by the historian Gunter Gutman, this work quickly caused a stir in academic circles when published in 2510. It discusses a civilisation that Gutman claims rivalled The Empire in size and scope – yet little or no accepted evidence exists to prove his claims.

Over seven volumes, Gutman writes about the beginnings of a tribe of humans who built an empire that encompassed all of what is now known as Tilea and the Border Princes. This Empire was responsible for the developments of roads, the arch, and a lost form of magic. According to Gutman, the Empire's capital was the city of Remas. From here, he contends, the Remeans ruled most of the Old World – and possibly beyond. Gutman also states the city of Remas is built on the ruins of this ancient capital. (It is a fact that Gutman has never left the city of Altdorf, and his first hand accounts of walking the streets of Remas are false. Anyone familiar with Remas will spot this immediately.)

Gutman claims the downfall of the Empire was due to inbreeding among the ruling class, compounded by mental weakness brought on by the use of lead pipes! His theory is that the lead pipes the Remeans used to bring water into the homes caused the population to turn slowly mad and dwindle away. At the same time, the ruling class did not want to pollute the royal blood, so it was common for brothers to marry sisters, etc.

As if such fancies were not enough, Gutman gives a timeline of the supposed reign of this Empire. His rivals claim that none of the dates add up, proving that his history is simply a fiction. Furthermore, they point out that some of the events mentioned in this work were previously unknown and are not supported by any current evidence.

The distinctive blue binding has given this work the epithet of the *Blue Tales*. The books measure 12" x 7", and their binding is solid and sturdy. Each volume contains just under 300 pages, and an index is provided in the seventh volume.

**Game Note:** It will take 1d3 months for a PC to study this work. Once read, 100 EPs can be spent to allow the PC to learn the skill, *History - Remean*. The work is written in Reikspiel, and is *Uncommon*.

#### THE BATTLE OF PRAAG

This is one of several folios containing work by the Talabheim playwright, Wilhelm Spears (2429-2499). Wilhelm wrote a total of 40 plays during his lifetime, of which this is his most famous.

In five acts, the play deals with the events of fall of Praag to the forces of Chaos in 2302. With over 25 characters, this account gives a surprisingly accurate portrayal of the event. When first performed in Talabheim in 2476, the audience was moved to tears over the tragedy and the bravery of the Kislev warriors' plight. Many scholars consider "The Battle of Praag" to be Spears' best work and the highlight of his career.

What distinguishes this from other folios of Spears' works is that this contains the original script. The folio is 120 pages long with stage directions included in the margins. The pages are kept between two wooden sheets and a simple red ribbon secures everything in place. Through the years numerous copies of Spears plays have been printed. In fact, he holds the distinction of being the most reprinted author of the day. Currently all 40 of his plays are available, as well as two books of poetry published after his death.

**Game Note:** Like all of Spears' works this play is written in Reikspiel.

No skills can be gained from reading this work. However, a PC can use this script to put on a production of the play.

Other works are also available, as listed below. These can be used to provide background colour as events going on in the background of adventures. The folio described above is *Rare*; reproductions without the stage directions are available, and are considered *Common*.

There may be more, as yet undiscovered, poems written by Spears, and a **Plays:**

1. Vsevold's Folly (2429)
2. Magnus the Pious (2450)
3. Margritta (2450)
4. By this hammer I rule (2451)
5. The Drunken Elf's Folly (2452)
6. Monet Castello (2452)
7. Luis and Genevieve (2453)
8. Ulrich's Caress (2454)
9. Fall of the House of DeBray (2455)
10. Tall tales of the Moot (2456)
11. The Drunken Sailor (2456)
12. Ludwig (2456)
13. Otillia IV (2457)
14. Otillia V (2458)
15. Ludwig VI (2460)
16. Rudolf (2461)
17. Dreamer, Dancer (2462)
18. Feast of Saints (2462)
19. Siegfried the Significant (2463)
20. The Taming of Petra (2463)
21. Merchant of Marienburg (2464)
22. Thomas the Wander (2466)
23. Midnight in the Garden (2466)
24. The Blizzard (2467)
25. The Glutinous Halfling (2468)
26. Beatrice the Bloody (2469)
27. Holding of Karaz-a-Karak (2470)
28. Time and Time Again (2471)
29. Manfred Skavenslayer (2472)
30. Oscar (2473)
31. On Wyven Wings I Fly (2475)
32. The Battle of Praag (2476)
33. Sailing the Seas of Life (2477)
34. Rise of the Merchant Prince (2477)
35. Battle of Grovod Forest (2478)
36. Vlad von Carstein (2478)
37. The Foolish Priest (2479)
38. The Last Days (2479)
39. The Four Wizards (2480)
40. Life of the Poet (2480)

#### Books:

1. *The Poetry of Spears*, edited by Holger Rack, 2500
2. *Glimmers from the Mind: The Rediscovered Prose of Wilhelm Spears*, edited by Ricardo E'oreo

GM may want to have the players find a collection of them in their adventures. If a PC finds these *lost works* they can sell them to a scholar for 1d6x100 Crowns. However, if the PCs decided to publish them themselves they could see profits of 1d10x100 Crowns each year for 1d4 years. Alternatively, they could find themselves the victim of rival publishers or thwarted academics seeking to ruin the PCs, either to further their own business interests or to prevent these gems from being devalued through circulation to the ignorant masses.

#### GRETA'S COOKBOOK

This large book was the personal cookbook of the famous halfling chef, Greta Pottstuffer (2430-2510). Like the chef, it is large and imposing, showing the culinary arts of one of Mootland's greatest cooks.

Greta is best known for opening a chain of restaurants called 'The Halfling's Pantry.' These are famed for their inventive menus and being one of the few places to serve an authentic halfling dinner (13 courses, usually spread over 4-5 hours). Their success led Greta to publish the first publicly available cookbook for people to buy (published by Reitz & Reitz, Talabheim, 2489). This caused controversy amongst fellow halfling chefs, who felt the recipes should have been kept a secret. Greta's response was simply to say that the recipe was only half the story; the real trick was the years of skill with which the food was made.

Unlike the mass-produced cookbook of the same name, the volume described here is the chef's original handwritten book. It measures 20" x 15", and contains over 400 pages. In addition to the recipes, this volume contains Greta's notes on spices and herbs. What is also surprising is the inclusion of a section dealing with poisons, and on how to mask their use in cooking. All of this is written in Greta's own hand, and raises serious questions about Greta's past.

**Game Note:** Both versions of this work are written in Reikspiel. PCs who use this work will gain +10 to all *Cooking* tests. If the original work is studied, the PC will gain the *Prepare Poisons* skill as well after 1d4 weeks and 100 EPs are expended. The original work is considered *Rare*, yet the widely available work without the notes on poison is considered *Common*.

#### THE JOURNALS OF OTTO NIGHTBANE

Twenty volumes of the personal journals of the Witch Hunter Otto Nightbane (2353-2402). A cleric of Mðrr, he left the clergy to carry on a personal war against the Undead and Chaos. These journals record his life from the first day in the clergy to the day before he died, painting a picture of a dedicated, if not obsessed, man.

The reader is in for a surprise with this work. Not only does one read Nightbane's personal thoughts, but is also treated to a wealth of information on topics better left unknown. Detailed information on all manner of Undead are presented here, as well accounts of necromancers and cultists that Nightbane brought to justice. Still more shocking is the journal dealing with the years of 2398 and 2399.

Nightbane writes about his crusade against a cult of Kháine worshipers who had infiltrated the cult of Ranald. His first hand accounts are chilling and surprising. Otto muses over how the Kháinites managed to infiltrate the Ranald cult. What is shocking is that Otto speculates that the two faiths are more closely linked than they admit.

Nobody knows how Otto died, but his body was found in a dark alley in Marienburg. The journals arrived at the Unseen Library last year, accompanied by a note that read, "add to your knowledge."

The journals are all 9" x 6", bound with a soft leather cover, the pages glued to the binding. Each book contains 150 pages with a small leather strap that keeps the work securely closed. The entire collection is handwritten and dated, the entries are written in Classical and Reikspiel. **Game Note:** This work has enough information that, if studied for 1d6 months and 100 EPs expended, the PC will gain the skill *Identify Undead*. PCs will need to be able to read both Reikspiel and Classical to decipher the text. This work is considered *Rare*.

#### THEORIES ON PRE-SIGMAR TRIBAL RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

A recent work, published in 2513 in Marienburg, *Theories* was written by the reputed theologian and scholar Henrick von Bresburk. Though recently banned in The Empire, the work is available in Marienburg, Estalia and Tilea. This is a critical examination of many of the myths and fables surrounding the deification of Sigmar. Yet Sigmar is only part of this work, which also deals with deification of other tribal leaders.

With archaeological evidence, including cave paintings and sculpture, von Bresburk describes three chieftains that predate Sigmar by 500 years. These chieftains were worshipped as gods, and if the evidence is to be believed, shamans were able to perform miraculous feats in their name. However, the key passage that led to the banning of the book and forced von Bresburk into hiding reads as follows:

*"Thus it was through political connections and strong arm tactics that the cult of Sigmar slowly reached the position it enjoys today. Unlike other cults, which sought to increase their numbers through conversion and persuasion, the Sigmarites used fear and intimidation to prop up a collection of fables and legends that supported their leaders' political agenda."*

The reaction from Sigmarites was predictable. Some have gone as far to accuse von Bresburk of being a minion of Chaos, intent on sowing discontent within the Empire in order to prepare the way for the insidious forces of his masters. Even the Ulricans have publicly denounced the work, although many are secretly delighted at the havoc and upset this book has caused. The Marienburg authorities have assured the Imperial Ambassador that everything possible is being done to find all copies in the city. However, in reality little action has been taken.

The work measures 8" x 6" and is bound in a simple black leather cover. The pages are glued to the spine, and the 300 pages are typeset and easy to read. Although it has only recently been published, no copies are known to exist in The Empire. A few copies have been found in bookshops in Tilea and Estalia, however, and many bookshops in Marienburg have the book for sale.

**Game Note:** This work adds nothing but background colour to a campaign. However, PC's could be contacted by von Bresburk to protect him from a pack of Witch Hunters - or by Witch Hunters enlisting aid to

track the miscreant down. This work is considered *Uncommon* outside of the Empire, and *Rare* inside the borders of the Empire.

#### THE LOG OF THE SEA SPIRIT (2466-2469)

This large tome is the three-year log of the Estalian ship, The Sea Spirit. Written by the ship's captain, Jose Jimenez, it gives a good insight to life onboard a merchant ship. Normally a ship's log would be of interest for the weather and astronomical data it contains. However, this one is different for it deals with the ships voyage to and back from Lustria.

This lively account is fascinating reading. Within one learns that Jimenez was hired by the Estilean merchant house Dominguez & Vergara to voyage to Lustria. Once there he was to obtain anything that could be sold in the Old World. The log contains notes on the preparations for the journey and a complete roll call of the crew. Also included are star charts and navigational aids used to arrive at Lustria. The cartographer's skills are quite good, and the map of the northeastern coast of Lustria is surprisingly accurate.

Also in the log are a number of accounts of clashes with the natives. There is also a description of a city teeming with frog-like creatures and their minions, and of a run-in with a group of pirates who attempted to seize The Sea Spirit's cargo. In all, it took Jose and his crew three years to complete this journey.

The journal is a large tome, measuring 20" x 14", covered with a deep, rich red leather. The binding is good, the 1000 pages are both glued and sewed to the spine. The work is written in Estalian, in a flowing script. There is an intricate silver clasp on the front cover, which locks.

**Historical Note:** Jose voyaged towards Lustria a second time, and was last seen in 2472 sailing out of the harbour of Los Cabos. Jose and the Sea Spirit were never seen again.

**Game Note:** This log will offer PCs enough information to voyage to Lustria. The charts and maps are accurate, and a navigator will gain a +10 to all *navigation* tests undertaken during the journey. As to the accuracy of the content, Jose and his crew only saw a little of Lustria and there will be many surprises in store for the PCs. The work is still usable without knowing the language, due to the accuracy of the navigational aids. However, unless the PCs can read the text they will have no idea what they are about to face. This work is considered *Rare*.

#### THE JOURNEY OF LOMMEL & CLOOS

Published in 2479 in the city of Marienburg by the noted biographer Alfons van der Steen, this two-volume work details the overland journey of the explorers Lommel and Cloos. Unlike the other works of van der Steen, this account is very accurate, for several primary sources were used in its writing. However, some academics argue that it is little more than fiction.

Marius Lommel (2325-2401) and Wilhelm Cloos (2331-2392) were explorers and adventurers based in Nuln. In 2364 the pair left the city with a party of fifteen and embarked on a ten-year journey to the Far East. The group arrived in Cathay and Nippon and took part in the war between the two countries. They were captured in Cathay in 2366 but managed to escape after six months of imprisonment. With only seven of the crew still alive, the survivors managed to make their way to Nippon. In Nippon the crew were treated well, but viewed as oddities. They helped the armies of the shogun defeat an invasion from Cathay. This act of bravery propelled the group to fame, and they were viewed as heroes. Lommel, because of his rescue of the Shogun's daughter, became close friends with the leader.

The group eventually decided to return home, arriving in Nuln malnourished, sick and close to death. Once recovered, both Lommel and Cloos told tales of their journey, displaying many of the trinkets that they brought back.

Alfons met the two explorers when they arrived in Marienburg in 2377, and began working on an account of their expedition. He was given access to maps, journals and any information that he needed to compose the work.

The original printing is a two volume set that numbers 2000 typeset pages. Each book measures 14" x 10" and is covered in green leather,

tooled with intricate Eastern patterns based on drawings made by the explorers. Also included in the work are a number of coloured plates, depicting drawings and scenes of Cathy and Nippon. There are also reproductions of the numerous maps that the group drew during their expedition. Only 1000 copies of this work were published, and a few copies can still be found in antique bookshops and in University libraries.

**Game Note:** The primary use of this text would be to allow PCs to undertake their own journey into the East. If they attempt to do so, anyone who has studied the book should be allowed Intelligence tests (at the GM's discretion) at key points on their journey. A success will turn up a passage recounting a similar situation, and the consequences of the actions of Lommel and Cloos. This guidance should give a bonus (between +5 and +20, again at the GM's discretion) to tests such as *Fellowship*, *Observe*, and so on. The book is written in Reikspiel and is easy to read.

#### ARS MUSICA

Published in Tilea in 2483, *Ars Musica* was written by the singer, composer and conductor Marisa Cirina (2443-2509). This is the first, and some argue the best, critical examination of musical theory. The work covers music in all forms and even includes well-researched chapters on Elf and Dwarf styles. Also included are numerous arrangements and scores ranging from operas to solo instrumentation. Yet the best section is undoubtedly the one that deals with Tilean musical styles.

*Ars Musica* is a 5-volume set, each volume numbering 1500 typeset pages. Scores and arrangements are included, mostly in the 5<sup>th</sup> volume (which forms a kind of musical appendix). The work is written in Tilean, and no known translation exists. It was first published in 2473, and revised once before Marisa's death. Currently her son, Leonardo, is preparing a 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, and this will be published both in Tilean and Reikspiel. However, when the work will be finished is unknown. It took Marisa 20 years to finish the 1<sup>st</sup> edition, and many speculate it will take Leonardo as long to compile the 2<sup>nd</sup>. *Ars Musica* is required reading for all students of musical theory and composition. Many others have tried to write a more comprehensive work, but Marisa's remains the definitive text in this area.

Each volume measures 10" x 8", bound with simple brown leather, the title tooled into the cover. The pages are sewn into the spine, and have been known to fall out. The work has been reprinted a number of times, but no corrections have been made to the text. The work published in Luccini by the publishing house of Bonetti & Seratto has not been updated since 2496, when the revised version was printed.

**Game Note:** A number of skills can be gained from studying this work. A PC can learn: *Art - Conducting*, *Art - Musical Composition*, and *Art - Tilean Music*. Each requires 1d4 months of study and 100 EPs. In addition to these, characters can learn a number of musical compositions (the work contains 500 of them). Learning a short musical piece will take 1d6 days and a successful Intelligence test (+10 for the *Musicianship* skill). If successful, the PC has memorised the piece; otherwise, they will have to practice for a further 1d6 days before taking the test again. Longer or more difficult pieces may, at the GM's discretion, take up to 1d6 months to master. This work is *Rare* in the Empire, selling for 1000 Crowns in the Empire, but can be purchased in Tilea for a meager 400 Crowns. When the 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition is eventually published, it will be published in both Tilea and the Empire, and should be more affordable as a result.

#### DIARIES OF THE PLAGUE

This small tome is a work of the most vile. A handwritten diary by an unnamed priest of Nurgle, the 5" x 3" book is bound in a sickly green leather. The 500 pages, each made from human skin, are sewn into the binding. The writer, though debased, writes elegantly. These are not the rantings of a madman, but of a well-educated, thoroughly evil, genius.

The work describes the rites and rituals of the faithful of Nurgle. It appears the diary was written between the years of 2300 and 2304, due

to the inclusion of first person accounts of the IncurSION of Chaos in Kislev. These passages possess too much detail, and describe events that only the foremost scholars know.

There are no spells included in this work, although there are many descriptions of cult rituals and practices. The passages are horrific to read, but offer a clear view of the beliefs of this group. They make fascinating reading, especially the chapters dealing with the siege and sacking of Praag. Other sections deal with the demons that serve Nurgle, and are filled with so much first hand knowledge that some readers argue the author must have been a high-ranking priest in the cult.

A few of the librarians that have handled this work have contracted *Nurgle's Rot*. Consequently, the book is now kept stored in a lead box, only handled in times of great need, and even then with the utmost caution.

**Game Note:** The work is written in *Dark Tongue*. If a character reads this work, they will gain 1d4 Insanity Points. However, they will also be able to gain the skill *Theology-Nurgle*. This is a unique work, of which no full copies exist.

Reading the work may give the PC *Nurgle's Rot* (WFRP, pg. 318). For every week spent studying, the GM should secretly make a Willpower test for the character. Failure indicates that the PC contracts the rot.

#### MALAL - THE LOST AND MISUNDERSTOOD GOD

This rare work was published in Tilea during the year of 2488. This scholarly treatise concerning the Chaos God Malal was written by Nunzeo de Beppo. Through exhaustive research and archaeological evidence, de Beppo presents a picture of the God that conflicts with the more commonly accepted view.

In the work, de Beppo presents the doctrines and beliefs of the Cult of Malal, tracing these to the first appearance of the cult, claiming that its origins can be found in the Wasteland. According to de Beppo the first known temple to the God was erected 2283, when worshipers prayed to their saviour to protect them from the forces of Chaos! Also troubling are claims that many who were fighting the forces of Chaos during the IncurSION prayed to Malal to protect them from their enemy.

However, de Beppo's troubles really stem from the appendix, in which he translated many of the cult writings and teachings into Tilean. These translations do not present the god in his usual light; instead, they depict him as an enemy to Chaos. What damned the scholar in the eyes of the Witch Hunters was that his translation names Malal as the savior of mankind, a force for good rather than evil - and his text makes no effort to contradict this. In fact, he directly argues that Malal could protect humanity from Chaos' touch.

*"Malal is not of Chaos. This propaganda has been spread by the established cults and by the very forces of Chaos. Malal is a threat to all, because he is a force of nature that can deliver the masses from the dangers of Chaos!"*

Soon after publication, de Beppo was publicly executed by a group of Witch Hunters known as 'The Brothers of the Light.' After the scholar was killed, all known copies of the work were burned, and the publishing house torched. The group even killed the workers who printed the text and everyone associated with the publishers in order to cleanse the land of their chaotic taint. Very few copies of the work survive, and no one will admit to owning a copy.

The 400-page work is bound in blue leather. This is perhaps one of the best printing jobs ever seen. It is a shame that the printing house Rittaze & Sons was destroyed, because they could have offered much to the world of printing.

**Game Note:** Written in Classical, this work is accurate and contains numerous cult documents. A PC who studies this work will be able to gain the skill *Theology - Malal*. They will also gain 1d2 insanity points. This work is *Rare*.

As an aside, the Marienburg printing house of Nieawkop and Associates publishes books in a similar format. Even their paper stock watermarks and end papers designs bear a strange resemblance to Rittaze & Sons...

# SLAVERY, SERFDOM AND SERVITUDE IN THE KNOWN WORLD

by the Rev. Garrett Lepper

## The Nature of Slavery and Servitude

The WFRP world is a harsh and relentless place, where everyday life is fraught with danger, and the weak are at the mercy of all manner of predators. Bretonnian Anarchists and the like may offer visions of some future utopia, but the truth is that Old World societies are built upon social inequalities. The weak live to serve the strong. Many have willingly surrendered their freedom to the strong for safety and security, while others have had their freedom taken without their acquiescence. Most people in the known world separate their society into nobles and commoners, but that division neglects to expose the differences existing amongst the common folk. For not all commoners are freemen, artisans, and traders: the power and prestige of the well to do is built also upon the labour of slaves, servants, and serfs that make up the great majority of society.

## Slavery

Slavery is an institution that has never attained much popularity in the Old World, being more popular on the fringes of the Known World, Araby, Norsca, and the Southlands. Many countries in the Old World have outlawed most forms of slavery, and frown upon the practice in other lands. In the Old World and elsewhere, slavery is a social relationship based on ownership. Because the slave is the possession of its owner, this institution invariably includes a number of features:

- Since the slave is considered the property of its owner, the slave is entirely dependent upon their lord or owner for everything, including food, housing, and an education.
- Since the slave is a possession rather than an individual, thus slave cannot expect the same rights others enjoy, or the same privileges under the law. The only law slaves know is what their master tells them. To disobey their lord means to suffer whatever punishments the master deems deserving. Few can intervene. In societies where a slave-owner has a liege or lord, the liege may choose to exert their influence and punish or pass judgement on a slave-owner who is accused of flagrant misconduct.
- A slave that chooses to run away is considered stolen property, and any that house, aid, or abet a runaway slave face severe condemnation and punishment. The escaped or rebellious slave is subject to all manner of punishment, up to and including punitive amputation or scarring.

The means by which an individual becomes a slave are varied, and depend upon the culture of the slave and its owner. Most commonly slaves are taken in wars or raids. Also relatively common are slaves who have voluntarily surrendered themselves into bondage due a monetary or honourary debt, such as their owner saving their life. In hierarchical societies such as Araby, many are born into slavery, and their children will be slaves as well. Although the period of slavery can be for life, a generous (or exhausted) slave-owner may give a slave their freedom. However, frequent use of this power is condemned by one's peers and superiors.

## Servitude

Most Old Worlders look with distaste upon the institution of slavery, horrified

by the loss of freedom, yet blind to the inequalities existing within their own societies - for the Old World relies heavily upon servants. Prevalent practices include indentured and contract servitude, in which an individual surrenders freedom and legal rights in exchange for food, shelter, minimal pay and in some cases training.

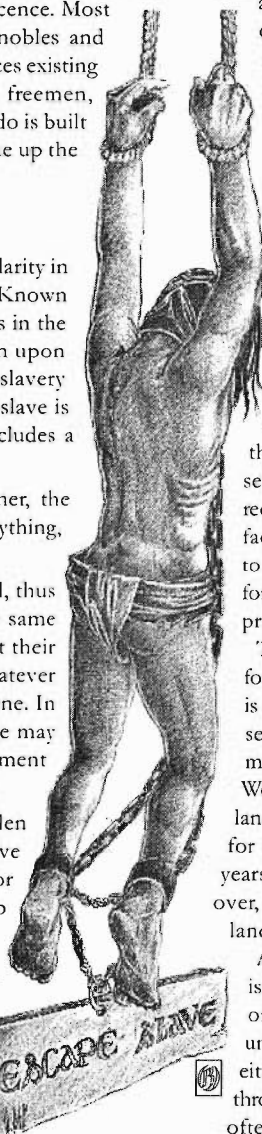
There are three main forms of servitude: domestic servants, apprentices and indentured servants. Domestic servants are common in castles, manors and town houses. In return for being bound by a common law contract to perform domestic chores, they receive room, board, and a small remuneration. The degree to which the domestic servant is contractually obligated depends on the prevailing attitude of society.

Another widespread form of servitude is the apprenticeship system that artisans, artists, and craftsmen the world over employ. In the apprenticeship system, an artisan will take in a young child, usually from a family that has too many children to care for. Artisans usually prefer to train their own children, but high death rates in towns and cities leave many childless and willing to take in other people's children. The obligations of becoming an apprentice are considerably more complex. In exchange for the apprentice's labour, the artisan must teach their apprentice their trade by the end of the apprenticeship, which is typically a pre-arranged date around their sixteenth birthday. Since one's craft is considered a trade secret and an integral part of their livelihood, apprentices are required to keep their training secret. Any who abuse this confidence face severe repercussions. Furthermore, apprentices are compelled to practice their trade elsewhere, so as not to compete with their former mentor, or their mentor's offspring or relatives, who also practice the trade.

The third category is not necessarily voluntary. Whereas the other forms of servitude require some commitment, indentured servitude is covered by a plethora of laws and written contracts. An indentured servant surrenders their sovereignty in advance in exchange for money, land, or transportation. An example of is this is the Old Worlders who sell themselves into indentured servitude to landowners along the New Coast of the Southlands. In exchange for transport, they offer their services for a period of around seven years, becoming the property of the landowner until their service is over, after which they are given a pre-arranged amount of money or land.

A less common (but greatly feared) form of indentured servitude is debt servitude. There are always those who, through negligence or ill fortune, find themselves unable to pay their debts. These unfortunates are sent to debtor's prison, where they are held until either their family or friends pay their debt off, or they do so through their own labour. In debtor's prison, the jailed debtor is often allowed to continue their trade or practice. The fruits of their labours are given to those they are indebted to, typically at a greatly reduced value. It is frequent that a debt that could be paid off by one year's work may be extended up to a decade by the greatly reduced value that their lender places on the debtor's labour.

There is one last form of servitude, which is poorly defined and which exists in a grey area of legality: maritime service. During times of plague and other crises, trade often comes to a halt, since trained sailors can hold out their services for greater pay, vexing merchants and nobles



©

alike. Furthermore, the fact that the transient lifestyle of sailors are beyond the feudal duties that subjects owe their lords irks many nobles. To remedy this, the concept of compelled maritime service was devised and justified as a subject's duty to their lord. Under this law, any unemployed resident at a port may be called upon by their liege to fulfill their *corvée* or feudal duties.

What this means in practice is that any captain working under contract for the local lord, or any merchant who has purchased the right from the local lord, has legal recourse to use press gangs. Accompanied by a stout group of sailors and marines, the captain scours the wharf-side taverns and inns for additional crewmen. Anyone with ship's papers, proof of employment, or enough money can easily avoid being pressed into service. Those who have none of these deferments may often find themselves serving for up to five years on a ship. Once a subject has served this, in theory they never need serve again. However, many press gangs eagerly round up those newly released from service, simply claiming that the service release papers are forgeries! The only time a captain is likely to intervene is when the gangs accidentally take someone with influence, wealth, or power, rather than preying on the weak. Many captains have ended up in debtor's prison after pressing a powerful merchant's domestic servants into their employ!

The use of press gangs is not commonly used except in times of real need, since the threat of violent resistance is quite real. Also, captains prefer to rely upon skilled and voluntary crewmembers, since the chance of mutiny is much greater when the crew has been forcibly dragged from their family or favorite tavern, abducted, and compelled to work hard for little pay for the next couple of years.

## Serfdom

If anything in the Old World resembles slavery, it is the practice of serfdom, popular in both Bretonnia and Kislev but practiced almost everywhere. A serf is the subject of a lord; contractually bound to the land, which is owned by a landlord. This landlord is invariably a noble, whose claim to the land also applies to its tenants. The serf and his lord are bound into a tight relationship full of obligations:

- A serf is bound to work the land and usually must surrender half of his crop to the local lord.
- A male serf must serve in the militia or as a man-at-arms if so called upon by his lord, and is expected to come armed at his own expense.
- All serfs must work and harvest their lord's land before their own plots.
- Serfs may be called upon to fulfill their *corvée*, the Breton term for

mandatory labour. The serf is unpaid for their work, and may have to work either for a week or up to a month each year, depending on local traditions.

In return for the labour of their serfs, the noble is expected to provide the following services, although in practice few truly abide by all their obligations. The noble must:

- Defend his serfs and their land from any dangers, and must assist them in times of natural disaster, from his own coffers if need be.
- Preside and mediate over a local court, or appoint someone to do so. This court will resolve legal and territorial issues arising between serfs.
- Provide food and shelter for those serving their *corvée*. During harvests, the lord must also provide meals.
- Ensure that the spiritual needs of the people are met by inviting clergy to practice in the area. Note that the noble does not have to bow to public opinion, and may invite clergy of their own faith. So long as there is some clergy visiting the area, the noble has fulfilled his obligation.
- Coordinate any civic projects, such as communal mills, the construction of shrines, or the maintenance of roads. The noble does not have to pay for the projects, but at least has to approve, organize and coordinate them.

The burdens on the serf are multiple and onerous, and their existence tends to be a poor and unhappy one. The best most serfs can pray for is a negligent or absentee lord who leaves them to their own devices. Caring and compassionate nobles do exist - including those who have a vested interest in their serfs and take their obligations seriously - but such remarkable individuals are few and far between.

A serf who fails to obey their lord is subject to all kinds of penalties, fines, incarceration, and even death for treason or rebellion. On the other hand, a noble who fails to meet their end of the bargain rarely suffers any consequences, since serfs have few legal means of compelling their lord to uphold his responsibilities. Those who do resort to legal means quickly discover that the presiding judge or magistrate in the serf's case against their landlord is typically the landlord himself, a member of his family, or a paid retainer!

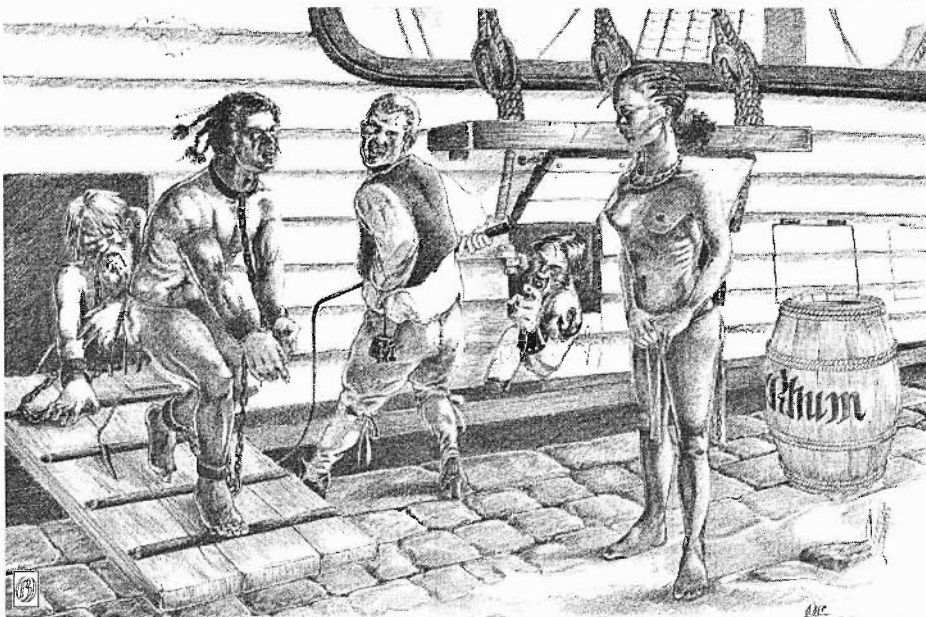
Although a serf can take his case to his landlord's liege, challenging a lord's judgment is costly and requires legal expertise. This situation is aggravated by the fact that noble courts always seem to favor their noble vassal rather than an upstart serf, since they are implicitly challenging the authority and sound judgement of all nobles!

The nature of serfdom varies by the lord, common law, and country. In some places it is draconian and monstrous. In others it is a weak system, in which the serfs may eventually buy their land, and where their obligations have been eroded over the centuries.

Serfdom is less widespread and influential now than it once was, mainly due to the influence of towns and cities, where these rules have never been enforced. In addition, some landlords retreat to the cities to live in luxury, paid for by the taxes of their serfs - but since serfdom requires constant monitoring by the lord, such exploitation cannot be sustained for long. Further erosion has been caused by lords selling their lands to merchants and the like. In such situations, the serfs become tenants and are no longer bound by this ancient code.

## Rights, Laws, and the Subjugated

There are laws protecting those in slavery, serfdom, or servitude from exploitation or harm, but the existence of such laws provides little reassurance. The legal system in the Old World is not concerned with the lofty ideals of justice and equality, but





rather the practical means of upholding the existing social order. Judges and magistrates ruling over cases of abuse are likely to have domestic servants at home, and their employer (and liege) probably has serfs on their estate. Understandably, such officials are less sympathetic with the lower class litigants, who appear to them presumptuous and dangerous. These officials habitually side with the servant's employers and social betters, whom the judge or magistrate probably knows well, and may even be related to by blood or marriage! It is exceedingly rare for any case to go against a noble or merchant. The exceptions to this rule are occasional cases of excess or gross misconduct where the offending noble or merchant has long alienated their peers and superiors. In many rural areas, the only person that can judge the case is the accused noble, or one of his hired magistrates, giving the litigant no chance at all of success.

## Consequences of Slavery and Servitude

The idea of having near-absolute power over another human being may seem appealing, but having servants, slaves, or serfs brings with it a plethora of problems, issues and conflicts. These make the institutions burdensome and a source of potential division within society.

The first and most dangerous issue is hostility. Whether they are a captain with a press-ganged crew or an Arabian vizier with a palace full of slaves, the truth of the matter is that they will both have surrounded themselves with unhappy, unwilling, and possibly hostile subjects. Both will live in fear of mutiny, and this stress can wear on master and subject alike. A master can treat their subjects kindly, risking seeming weak and being taken advantage of, or resort to fear and violence and face the very real danger of revolt, rebellion, mutiny or murder.

For those who have servants or apprentices, the risks are less, but problems remain. The principal of these is intimacy, allowing an outsider to be exposed to the inner workings of a household. The family hosting the servant or apprentice may be subject to blackmail, or have gossip spread by the servants. An even greater concern is of intimate relations. A male member of the household may try to take advantage of female servants - a disapproved of but sadly common event. An artisan is often loath to leave his apprentice at home with his wife or daughters while traveling. This constant tension, fear of infidelity, and the inevitable unspoken recriminations can tear a household apart.

Hosting an outsider also gives the servant or slave access to the wealth and precious belongings of the family, and theft is an ever-present fear. Unscrupulous family members sometimes steal with little fear of exposure, since the recriminations are inevitably directed at servants or slaves first.

It is because of this exposure to a family's secrets and wealth that there are so many laws and customs regulating the behavior and freedom of slaves, servants, apprentices, and serfs. The ultimate and real danger behind this relationship is that the poor are exposed to the wealth and inequalities inherent in their society. For this reason, those in power have implemented laws to assure that their subordinates remain in their place.

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## SLAVERY AND SERVITUDE IN THE KNOWN WORLD

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### Araby. The Caliphates of Araby

Few places are so closely connected in the imagination of Old Worlders with slavery as Araby. A large percentage of its population is enslaved, and its slave markets are famed around the world for the diversity of their wares. Although this image is close to the truth, the reality is more complex than the exaggerated rumors of Araby's decadence suggest.

Araby can be divided up into two parts: the desert nomads, and the urban Caliphates. Slavery in Araby first began with the desert nomads. They possess an intricate genealogy bonding them to certain tribes and marking others tribes as unrelated, and thus potential enemies. Over the centuries, long standing enmity has grown between tribes, and fighting is commonplace. Enemies from opposing tribes who are captured are tortured and killed immediately, but those who are not blood enemies are taken as slaves. Some are sold to the Caliphates along the coast; others are taken into the desert. Those that survive the first month are no longer

considered slaves but family. The hostility of the desert does not allow for constant division and stress within the tight-knit tribe. A former slave is not allowed to leave the tribe or band, but are otherwise treated as an equal. Those leaving the tribe are seen as rejecting the hospitality and magnanimity of the tribe and are killed for their unforgivable betrayal.

When the desert nomads began to settle along the coastline and build the cities that now comprise the Caliphates of Araby, they continued to keep slaves. However, over the years the institution transformed into its current form. Their society became hierarchical, concerned not with equality but with the maintenance of social order; eventually those who were slaves remained slaves for the rest of their lives. Everyone is a subject to the Caliphs of Araby and their noble subordinates, and slaves represent the lowest tier of society. Most are resigned to their fate, since to one degree or another everyone is subservient to the autocratic power of Araby's nobles. The most famous of Araby's slaves are the mighty Eunuch warriors who strike fear in the hearts of their enemies, so great is their ferocity and disregard for their own lives.

Another factor in the popularity of slavery in Araby is that their society is monotheistic. Their fervent devotion to their faith results in them viewing non-believers as "infidels" and worthy of nothing more than slavery. The history of the crusades has further embittered Araby's nobility and clergy, and justifies their taking of Old Worlders as slaves.

The absolute power exhibited by Araby's nobles and caliphs is supposed to be tempered by a dignity and magnanimity that, in truth, few nobles possess. Having lived their whole lives in privilege, they are entirely blind to the plight of those below their social station. Egregious abuse of their slaves and conduct unbecoming of a noble will lead to reprimands, but only if it is exploited by a rival or enemy, or the noble oversteps their boundaries, thus offending their liege.

### Brettonnia

Imperial nobles constantly remind their subjects how fortunate they are to be Imperial rather than Bretonnian subjects. Although their treatment leaves much to be desired, the gloating of the Imperials has more than a grain of truth. Bretonnian nobles have a well-deserved reputation for cruelty, negligence, and frivolity. Almost the entire rural population of Bretonnia is comprised of serfs, who pay extortionate taxes that maintain the Bretonnian nobility's carefree lives of indulgence and caprice. While their impoverished serfs slave away to meet the ruinous taxes, the nobility arrive powdered and bewigged to another ball filled with intrigue and the mandatory clandestine and erotic rendezvous with a lover other than one's spouse.

While nobles frolic in the mirrored and gilded hallways of castles and mansions, their overseers and stewards ensure that their costly lifestyles are funded. By resorting to whip, beatings, threats, and long periods of incarceration, they drain the serfs of all they are worth. As one overseer is reported to have said, "You can't squeeze blood from a turnip, but you can from a serf!" When the absentee noble does arrive at his or her country estate, things usually worsen. One of the most hated of Bretonnian traditions is that of "jus primae noctis", a privilege that allows a Bretonnian noble to spend the wedding night with the newly married wife.

Brettonnia's serfs are little better than slaves, and the domestic servants fare little better than their rural counterparts. They are subject to beatings, murder, summary dismissals, and of course seduction. What comes as a surprise to many is the active role servants take in the liaisons, conspiracy, and manipulation that comprise Bretonnian politics. Capable and favored servants can become powerful, but the presumptuous and over-grasping are killed and disposed of discreetly.

### The Empire

Imperial nobles, for all their contempt of Bretonnia's decadence and excess, are themselves guilty to a lesser degree of privilege. Slavery is not legally accepted in the Empire, and serfdom is weaker here than in either of its neighbors, Bretonnia and Kislev. In areas like the Reikland where there have long been established estates, feudal obligations remain strong.

But in frontier provinces like the League of Ostermark, where most people are squatters who move on when they choose, the nobles have to resort to more unorthodox methods of rulership. Despite its strength in some area, most scholars predict the continued erosion of serfdom, due in particular to the growing urban classes that buy and manage land more efficiently than most nobility.

The growing urban populations of the Empire have spurred a dramatic increase in the number of servants and apprentices in the Old World. Nearly all merchants have a few domestic servants, and the ever-growing cities demand more and more skilled artisans. As a result, more rural folk than ever are leaving the country to take up work or apprenticeships in the cities.

Despite laws against and widespread contempt for slavery, the Empire does have a dark secret: slave trading does exist and is often ignored by authorities. Many are smuggled in by the Norse, through Marienburg or the Empire's southern borders. Most slaves do hard manual labour such as working in mines, but some whisper that the fate of many slaves is quite grim, sacrificed in rituals to dark gods. Other nobles, in defiance of the law, treat their serfs as slaves. Life for these poor souls is oppressive.

## The Estalian Kingdoms

Although Estalia is fragmented, all Estalians are opposed to the enslaving of their fellow countrymen, since over the centuries Araby's Corsairs have carried off countless of them to Araby's slave markets. In Estalia's two great cities, Bilbali and Magritta, there is almost no serfdom in the area surrounding their cities, since the land is owned by merchant-nobles who prefer more efficient methods of control. The cities themselves are full of servants and apprentices, and both institutions prosper. However, the most common form of subjugation is enforced maritime service. Pressgangs wander the quays and docks more frequently here than in any other cities. These cities do not tolerate slavery within their limits, but they have no objections to the exploitation of natives in Estalian colonies abroad.

Outside of the cities are the Irrana mountains, the holding of large and fierce clans. These areas have never adopted a serf system, relying upon familial means of production.

## Kislev

While Bretonnia has long resorted to a strict and oppressive form of serfdom in order to provide for their nobles' sundry excesses, Kislev resorts to an equally oppressive form of serfdom out of necessity. For their land is cold and violent, and the dangers are numerous. With the exception of nobles and a few freeman, the great majority of Kislevites are serfs with the same duties and responsibilities as serfs elsewhere. However, Kislev may be the only place in the Old World where the institution of serfdom is gaining power and credibility. Unusually, however, during any of the holidays and festivals, a peasant (as serfs are known in Kislev) can leave his lord for another. However, over the last century or so this freedom to choose one's master has been the subject of several tsarist decrees, laws, codes, and proclamations, so that such movement is now greatly restricted and regulated.

The smaller number of merchants and their lack of power in Kislev keeps serfdom strong and unchallenged, while limiting the number of domestic servants. Since most Kislevite communities are self-sufficient, artisans are rare in the countryside. Most peasants know enough about enough to get by without specialized craftsmen. Most domestic servants are maintained by nobles, with a few by the wealthier merchants and traders. In Kislev, slavery is closely associated with the "barbarous nature" of the nomadic horsemen and goblinoids, and rejected by the same people who vigorously endorse and defend serfdom. (For further information, consult *Something Rotten in Kislev*.)

## Marienburg & the Wastelands

Marienburgers consider themselves a fairly enlightened and liberal people, a fact much belied by the suffering of the poor and crippled in their

streets. Since trade is the life-blood of the city, and people from diverse and different lands come to their markets, they are quite tolerant of differences. For this reason, Marienburgers, who do not practice slavery, are tolerant of those who do. The number of slaves permitted into their city is supposed to be limited, and slaves are supposed to be confined to merchant quarters. Those holding slaves in Marienburg cannot seek long term residency in the city as long as they keep their slaves with them. However, in practice, the story is quite different, and those wealthy enough can do as they please with no objections from the authorities. There are of course large merchant companies who are rumored to be involved in this trade, and with the potential profits, it would be unlikely if one or more was not.

Servitude is a far different story, and is widespread throughout Marienburg; no wealthy household is without a small army of servants. Although present elsewhere, it is in Marienburg that the strangest form of indentured servitude thrives: pit fighting. The prospective pit fighter enters into a contract for training and "exhibitions", and the successful can buy their freedom. Many pit fighters are slaves brought to Marienburg, but immediately entered into a pit fighting contract, which then makes them indentured servants. These ex-slaves are particularly fierce fighters, knowing that they are fighting for their freedom.

## Norsca

The Norse have long raided the coastlines of the Old World, leaving burning homes and untold misery in their wake. They have long brought captives home from their raids, whom they call "thralls". These thralls have a status somewhere between slave and servant, acting as menial servants but treated like lesser members of the clan. The Norse prefer to bring back small children, since they are more impressionable, less socialized, and unlikely to harbor as much resentment to their abductors as an adult would. Over time, the thralls generally accept their place in the Norse clan structure, and many even join their clans in raids, sometimes on the very places where they were taken from!

Norse who have fallen out of favor and renounced their own clan may choose to join another clan as bondsmen; akin to indentured servants. As time passes, a bondsmen may be invited to join their newly adopted clan as a full-fledged member. Another type of bondsmen exists: those who are unable to pay a debt to their lord or have committed some crime that has robbed them of their full place in the clan. For these people, losing one's prestige in a clan is a humiliating fate: they act as a servant for their relatives, and this is never forgotten by their clan. After their time of servitude is over, many of these humbled bondsmen leave their clan to become bondsmen elsewhere, where one day they may receive the acceptance their original clan was unable to offer.

## Tilean City-States

The divisive nature of the Tilean City-States makes broad generalizations about their social order difficult. There are, however, some general patterns. In rural areas where nobles rule there is a tendency for strict serfdom to be implemented. The area around the merchant-controlled cities tend to be run on a tenant-landlord basis, although many merchants resort to serfdom like practices to milk their tenants for all they are worth. It should be stressed, however, that practices vary greatly between neighboring cities, or even estates.

Servitude in all of its various forms is practiced widely throughout all Tilea. There is a great demand for apprentices, and merchant houses usually have more servants than family members, a situation similar to Bretonnia (except that servants stay far from politics unless they are spies for a rival merchant family). Tilea has the largest number of debtor's prisons in the Old World, and indentured servants are hired from the prison and usually treated little better than slaves.

Slavery is not accepted or practiced widely in Tilea, with one exception: Sartosa. Outside of Araby, Sartosa has the most active slave markets. The pirates range far and wide, seizing captives and returning them to Sartosa for sale. Such a fate is truly appalling. While many spend their lives in

abject humiliation and debasement on Sartosa, most Old Worlders would be horrified to discover how many slaves are actually purchased and shipped to areas where slavery is not normally permitted or accepted. This secret slave trade brings in considerable wealth to Sartosa. Many of these Sartosan slaves find their way into Tilea, with some unfortunates serving secretly in bondage only a few miles away from their homes!

MARIO ARALLANO AND ASSOCIATES

Mario Arallano - Tilean Slaver

One of the most feared men in northern Tilea is Mario Arallano, who is reputed to have ten arms since he has his hands in every sordid and criminal activity possible. Extortion, drugs, selling proscribed texts, kidnapping, intimidation, gambling, assassination, prostitution, and countless other crimes. He maintains his control through his careful pandering to the rural nobility who use his resources to enrich themselves. He is a man of considerable power and wealth, and all in Tilea fear him.

Crime however knows no borders, and his activities routinely spill into the southern Empire. One of his pursuits does particularly well in the Empire - slavery. Mario specializes in selling young and attractive women, caring little for anything else. Before selling his "goods", he prefers to sample the wares. He purchases these unfortunates from the pirates of Sartosa, and then sells them in the Empire so as not to compete with the pirate's own markets in Tilea. These slaves are then drugged and shipped through local labourers' guilds, and sent to the southern Empire through the underwater waterways leading between Campogrotto in Tilea and the River Soll in the Empire. He has many associates working in the sindacistas, or boatmen, that ship his goods. Once brought to the Empire, they are sold through local crime associates and slavers. His slaves go for extravagant prices, often sold to rich and domineering nobles or the nouveau riche. (See *Death's Dark Shadow* for further details about this trade route.)

Mario is often under pressure from the authorities in Tilea, a situation which isn't helped by his hands-on approach to crime. His need to constantly develop contacts in the Empire means that he spends almost a third of his time there, where it is possible for PCs to meet him and encounter his operation.

Success has treated Mario quite well, and his girth has grown in relation to his power and influence. He is heavyset, with dark brown hair and eyes with a cruel and arrogant countenance. He is always well dressed and accompanied by a handful of bodyguards and other associates.

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
3	49	55	3	5	12	41	2	35	66	62	51	36	44

**Skills:** Bribery, Evaluate, Gambling, Intimidate, Luck, Manufacture Drugs, Palm Object, Sixth Sense, Speak Additional Language-Reikspiel, Specialist Weapon-Firearms, Specialist Weapon-Fist, Specialist Weapon-Incendiaries, Specialist Weapon-Thrown, Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure, Strike to Stun, Super Numerate, Wit

**Trappings:** A pair of engraved and gilded dueling pistols, expensive jewelry (worth d6x200 GCs), 4 concealed throwing knives, 150 GCs, concealed garrote, and an Amulet of Thrice Blessed Copper.

THE ESCAPED SLAVE

Ogono Maikome: Escaped slave & wandering mercenary

Ogono hails from the grasslands of the Southlands. A massive and powerful warrior, he led many of his people's raids on other clans' herds of cattle. Eventually his wildly successful raids earned the enmity of the well-established clan leadership, who became threatened and

envious of his deeds. He was politically ousted by his clan and exiled. During his exile he was captured and drugged by his enemies, who then sold him into slavery aboard an Estalian slave ship.

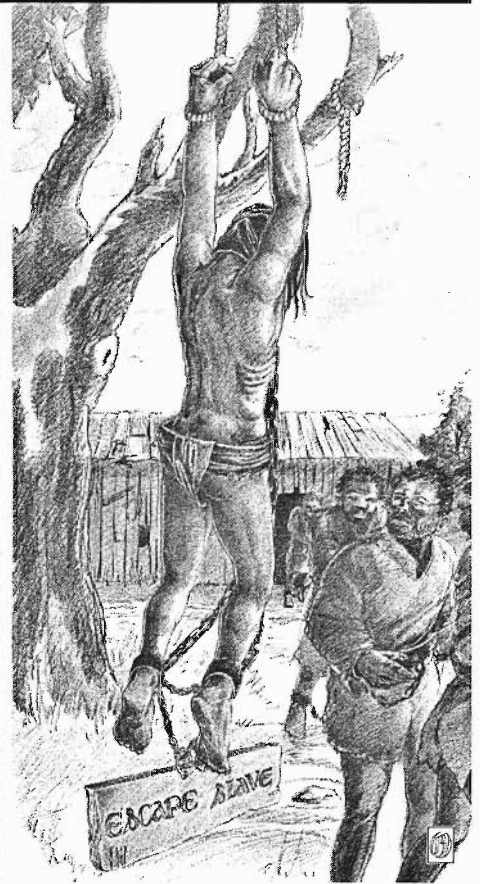
The voyage was a long one, and the drugs used to subdue him ran short, so the ship's surgeon decided to reduce the amount - a fatal error as it turned out. Ogono was able to shake off the effects of the drugs, and during the surgeon's next visit, the enraged and fully conscious warrior snapped his chains and used the surgeon's body to batter his way through the trap door of the hold. A melee ensued on the deck, the ship caught fire, and Ogono was driven into the ocean. Unable to swim, he struggled - only to drop beneath the waves. To his surprise, he awakened on a beach.

Since his escape, he has wandered the Old World exploring this new place. He has a vague notion of returning to the Southlands, but his strong dislike of ships has prevented him from doing so. Furthermore, Ogono has always craved attention, and his unusual size, ritual scars, body adornment and skin colour ensures that he stands out - a situation he quite enjoys, towering over bewildered Old Worlders not sure what to make of him. Being highly intelligent, motivated, and curious, he has used these to his advantage and is able to command absurd sums as a mercenary and bodyguard.

Ogono stands over six and a half feet, is dark complexioned like his fellow Southlanders, and is massively built. His arms and chest are covered in an elaborate series of scars that serve to protect him from the spells of his enemies and allow him to draw upon the strength of his ancestors. Due to the cold, he wears considerably more clothing than most Old Worlders. He is always wrapped up in a heavy coat that serves to make him look even bigger than he is. He is quite friendly and outgoing, but entirely intolerant of those who appear prejudiced or bigoted. Ogono is an extraordinary individual and quite likely to encounter and join adventurers in any endeavors, particularly those involving slavers or slavery, since Ogono harbors a fierce resentment since his incarceration.

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
5	58	54	7	5	11	53	2	39	54	47	42	28	37

**Skills:** Animal Care, Concealment Rural, Disarm, Dodge Blow, Frenzied Attack, Secret Language Battle Tongue, Secret Signs Tribal, Silent Move Rural, Speak Additional Language: Old Worlder, Specialist Weapon-Thrown, Street Fighting, Strike Mighty Blow, Very Resilient, Very Strong, Wrestling



**Trappings:** Spear, heavy wool cloak, sword, dagger, pair of throwing swords, backpack, bedroll

**Note:** Ogono is Barrel-chested (giving +1 to Strength) and very tall. He has developed a phobia of ocean-going vessels and drugs.

### ADVENTURING AND SERFDOM

The following are all suggestions or examples of how to integrate these social institutions into your own campaigns.

**Bloody Uprising!** The PCs arrive in an obscure area in the corner of the country they are in, to discover that discontent is brewing against the nobility. The adventurers can attempt to assist, mediate, or escalate the conflict. The players may arrive shortly after the uprising. The nearby castle is burned, the peasants are quiet and unhelpful, and will say that Beastmen attacked the castle. Guilty about their misdeeds and not wanting word to leak out about the recent events, they may attempt to kill the PCs.

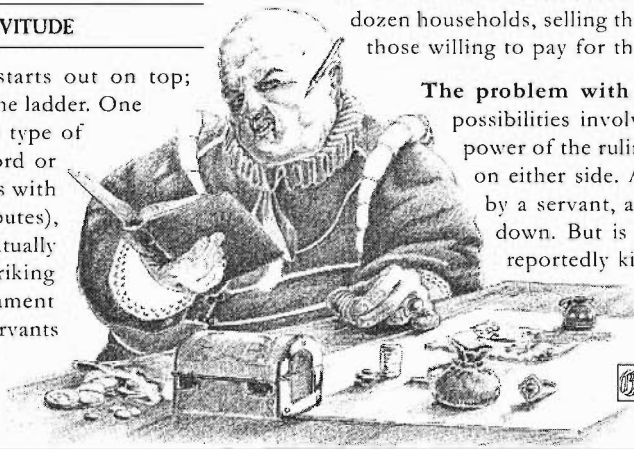
**Let them eat cake!** This is particularly effective for those campaigns with noble and other well to do characters in their party. The characters are enjoying the hospitality of a noble friend or family member when they become aware that the serfs are disgruntled. Their host will act cavalier and nonplussed about the events, ordering the men at arms to disburse the crowd out front with oil and fire, which may very well create further resentment. The characters may discover the castle being stormed and even find themselves fighting for their lives against peasants with genuine grievances against their oppressive landlord. Peasants will be very unwilling to listen to any stories the PCs may have.

**The Seven Sell-Swords - A classic tale:** The impoverished adventurers are approached by a poor man and a small child, who ask to speak to them privately. They describe their dire plight. A whole village oppressed by a cruel and bloodthirsty landlord who rides down the old and decrepit who can't flee fast enough from the path of his racing coach. A landlord who whips the poor mercilessly, throws the leaders in his dungeon, and refuses to hear the pleas of the villagers. The old man may hint that the noble is a servant of chaos, a vampire, or has some pact with dark powers. The villagers can't offer much - a few gold crowns, their overwhelming gratitude, and some honest work. This is of course the story of Kurosawa's Seven Samurai, The Magnificent Seven, and the WFB scenario The Magnificent Sven. Naturally, the characters will then have to deal with the fallout of organized rebellion against the just ruler.

The GM may devise a few variations to this. Maybe the noble is not that bad at all, and the old man is an agent of a rival noble who wants to do away with his enemy. Perhaps the old man doesn't know the depths of the noble's depravity. Maybe dark gods or doppelgangers are involved, and the PCs get in over the heads very quickly.

### ADVENTURING AND SERVITUDE

**Lowly beginnings** - Not everyone starts out on top; someone has to start at the bottom of the ladder. One or all of the PCs may have been some type of servant at one time or another, to a lord or rich merchant. Through their adventures with the family (trade wars or political disputes), they discover their calling in life, eventually leaving behind their employer and striking out on their own. Making a small tournament adventure, with the PCs being various servants to a noble is a wonderful opportunity to introduce players to the intimate and complicated world of nobility.



**His butler did it!** It's possible PCs may become wealthy and lazy, buying townhouses and filling them with servants. To some degree, the players are responsible for the actions of their servants, and can become embroiled in various problems as a result of the actions of their lackeys. A PC's servant may be accused of murdering another noble's servant or trusted aid, and the insulted party threatens heavy legal action, fines, or hires murderers to redress the suspected wrong. Whether or not their servant is responsible is something the characters will have to discover for themselves. In the search for answers, they may find themselves caught up in a twisted tale of rivals, faked murder, secret investigations, and surprise witnesses in a court.

**Waiter, there's poison in my soup!** Those with wealth, influence, and authority earn the envy of those around them, and their hold can be quite precarious. If the PCs are such individuals, the might be targeted by their foes for assassination. One of their servants, or a servant of an associate, may be hired to kill them through the use of poison. The servant may turn on their employer and inform the PCs, allowing them in turn to turn on their enemy. However, if the PCs treat servants shabbily, the servant may happily fulfil their end of the bargain with the plotters. Even worse, an assassin could pose as a servant, resulting in a murderous late night attack by a highly trained assassin with poisoned weapons.

There is the possibility that the PCs are not wealthy, influential, or have any authority at all. In this case, the PCs may be the ones hired to do the job. They can attempt to infiltrate a household, or bribe existing members of the household's staff to do the dirty work. A clever GM can devise all sorts of obstacles for the PCs to overcome in the execution of their task.

**Shhh...the walls have ears...** - Similar to the idea mentioned directly above, this situation involves more passive but just as deadly espionage. No matter how close knit and loyal relatives are, every noble family has a weakness: the paid outsiders that serve in an intimate yet menial role. Exposed to such wealth, it is likely that servants will harbor some resentment towards those wealthier than themselves, resentments easily used against the family by those meaning them ill will.

In a noble or merchant house, there is no such thing as a secret. If it transpires within the family, the servants will hear of it, and since many people pay the hired help no attention at all, dismissing them as menials, their security is quite lax. If the PCs are employed by a noble family, it is quite likely that the noble family's rivals are aware of their employment, and possibly the terms of employment. PCs who have servants must always be cautious to ensure that their servants are loyal and silent.

PCs can use this aspect of servitude in their favor, hiring the scullery and laundry maids to keep an ear open. Maybe a servant contacts the PCs in secret, telling them that something is afoot in the family, something terrible and dark, and the PCs are to meet him later on. However, when they get there, the servant has been murdered and the PCs accused of the murder! The players may have spies in half a dozen households, selling the information to the underworld and to those willing to pay for the knowledge.

**The problem with hired help** -There are a plethora of possibilities involving outsiders privy to the wealth and power of the ruling elites, and PCs can become involved on either side. An important family heirloom is stolen by a servant, and the PCs are hired to hunt the thief down. But is it a simple matter of theft? A servant reportedly kidnaps the family heir and the PCs are called in. This however is more complex than it sounds, taking into account the other siblings vying for the head of the household, enemy rivals, and disgruntled servants. A good GM can devise any number of

secret and complex household events based upon the relationship of the poor serving the rich.

### ADVENTURING AND SLAVERY

**Salvation!** After a long night of drunken debauchery, the PCs discover themselves chained aboard the rows of a ship, and told they've joined the local navy. Maybe their camp is attacked in the World's Edge mountains and they find themselves in a slave caravan heading for an Orc hold, a Chaos Dwarf mine, or the lands of the Hobgoblins. Or the PCs succumb to a dozen poisoned darts fired by an assassin, and find themselves on a Dark Elf ship headed towards Naggarond. An encounter with a beautiful woman leads to a drugging, and the next thing the PCs are in slave market in Sartosa.

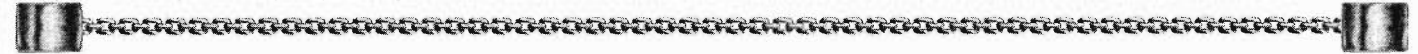
There are a number of feasible means for the players to become slaves themselves. Robbed of their weapons and wealth, they must outsmart their foes and escape. This can range from a cunning escape at night to leading a revolt in the heart of an orc stronghold, the ground awash in the blood of their masters.

Players may be hired to save someone who has been taken slave. Maybe a Tilean prince was seized by a Skaven warband, and a daring raid into the tunnels of the Skaven has been organized by the desperate family. A rival city or family may attempt an assault on an Estalian or

Tilean slave base in the Southlands, and the PCs are hired to provide extra muscle. Regardless of the motivations, the PCs will have to deal with the hard realities of bringing a band of half-dead prisoners to safety.

**But it pays good...** Not all PCs are considerate or compassionate. Hard times may demand PCs to harden their hearts. A merchant asks for a discrete and undiscerning band to transport some cargo overland into the Empire in exchange for a tidy sum of money. This cargo may or may not be revealed to the PCs. If it is, the slaves may be described as escaped convicts to be returned to justice, or some similar cover story. The GM could then have the players listen to the sad and heart rending tales of the slaves, whispered to them when the merchant is asleep. The PCs may run afoul of the law as well. The potential for trouble is quite limitless if players decide to respect the laws and popular morality.

**Need the money...badly...** Some people are quite deficient in regard to morality. The players may decide for themselves to become involved in the lucrative slave trade. They may set about acquiring slaves or simply transporting them. This takes the game to a larger scale, with a large secret compound somewhere, a hired and bloodthirsty band of associates, and sailing ships. Before long, they will be caught up in skirmishes with rival slavers, the unhappy local populations, and authorities trying to clamp down on their illicit activity, not to mention the resistance of the slaves themselves.



## ULNAR MORGAN'S SHIP OF FOOLS

The following is an example of one of the more successful of the Empire's secret slave traders. The ingenious method of transport and cover for his operation ensures that Ulnar Morgan's misdeeds will go undetected for some time by authorities.

### Ulnar Morgan - Slaver and Merchant (Ex-Jailer, ex-Boatman, Ex-Slaver, Merchant)

Although slavery is illegal in the Empire, like many other prohibited pursuits there are those willing to risk breaking the law for the potential profits. Ulnar Morgan is such a man. Ulnar sails his barge the *Annabelle* up and down the waterways of the Empire, selling slaves in the heart of the Empire, with none the wiser. Ulnar's methods are so effective that none have come close to discovering the dark secret of the *Annabelle's* holds.

The story of the *Annabelle* goes back ten years, to before Ulnar owned it. A minor noble hired the barge in the southern Empire to take his deranged son to a Shallyan convent in the north of the Empire. As the ship proceeded north, others paid for their own troubled or troublesome family members to be taken to the convent. Upon arriving, the owner, Udolf Stern, discovered that the convent had been destroyed in a Beastman raid, and its occupants hauled off into the forest for some dark rites or feast. Udolf turned south, but none would take his human cargo. He discovered that by pulling into a wharf, the town would pay him to move on, and for the next few years he traveled the waterway with his disturbed cargo, receiving payment every time he stopped. His ship became known as the Ship of Fools and was a common sight on the waterways. Over time, he developed a circuit that he followed along the Empire's rivers, and people were all too eager to provide charitable donations to move Udolf and the Ship of Fools to some other place.

Udolf tired after a few years of this, and his cousin Ulnar Morgan offered to take command of the ship. So Udolf retired with the charity money he had been hoarding. Ulnar had spent time as a jailer, and saw the opportunity to travel and receive regular tribute as an easy way of making a living. He also enjoyed the power over his fellows, and being positively sane and well off in relation to his traveling companions. Within a month of taking control of the ship, a man

approached Ulnar late at night in Nuln, offering to pay him a hefty sum to have his "half-wit brother" released. Ulnar accepted. Next time in Nuln, the same shadowy figure informed him that he had onboard three more of his "half-wit brothers". Ulnar turned these over as well. Soon, Ulnar was selling his insane cargo. It was a just matter of time before he decided that selling sane and competent people would be even more profitable.

Now Ulnar sails the rivers, picking up the insane, whom he does not normally sell, since they provide cover for his excursions along the river. But in a locked hold in the bottom of his ship he keeps the slaves that he sells up and down the waterways. He meets slavers at three points on the river. In the north he meets slavers operating out of Marienburg, and then turns south. After reaching the southernmost point of the Soll he deals with smugglers from Tilea, and at the end of the Reik he deals with smugglers from the Border Princes and the Black Mountains.

He then travels the river under the cover of a floating mad house and meets those who know what currency and goods he deals in. There is a shadowy web of connections throughout the Empire. Some know the source of his slaves, but most do not, and this ensures the secrecy of his operation. He often works through local contacts in the criminal underworld. He usually carries between six and a dozen slaves in his hold, and most of these will be sold by the time he next contacts his suppliers. His ship has three additional crewmembers that also serve as orderlies on board the ship. All are loyal, and are involved in Ulnar's illicit activities.

Slaves are secured below in the hold, chained and drugged. In the few times when authorities have come on board, they easily accept the story provided by Ulnar, that they are raving lunatics and a danger to everyone if released. On one occasion, one of these slaves had escaped and was discovered by the authorities. Ulnar approached the noble, explained the role of his vessel and that this was simply a delusional passenger who hadn't cared for his accommodations. Ulnar then suggested that the noble was more than welcome to care and provide for the poor mad soul. The noble promptly handed over the screaming and frantic slave back to Ulnar. Even if someone were to listen to the tragic tales of those in the hold, they can easily be dismissed

as the ranting of feeble minds. So his Ship of Fools continues its illegal and shameful trade with no interference or suspicion by anyone. Few care what happens on the Ship of Fools, as long as it moves on swiftly to someone else's town.

What is Ulnar's motivation for selling his fellow men and women? Money is not even half of the answer; Ulnar is simply elated and invigorated by the trade. He enjoys the secrecy of it, the power that it gives him over his fellow citizens. And on those occasions when the merchandise below have been bad he can vent his aggressions, laying about with a whip and his boots and watching their bodies cower before him. Ulnar assumes the role of a kind and compassionate man assisting the mentally ill, but in truth he is a monster with a barely suppressed cruel streak. He ignores the insane on board his craft, and after years of being with them pays no attention to their antics on board the ship. His only interest in keeping them on board is to provide an effective disguise for his slave trading operation.

Ulnar has also begun transporting and selling rare and illegal artifacts and spell ingredients. This is mostly a side trade, since he knows very little about such things, but has decided since he has such a remarkable cover and freedom to operate that he might as well take full advantage of his unique position.

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	54	58	5	4	11	51	1	34	55	62	55	38	27

**Skills:** Blather, Boat Building, Drive Cart, Evaluate, Fish, Haggle, Heal Wounds, Immunity to Disease & Poison, Manufacture Drugs, Orientation, Palm Object, Read & Write, Ride, River Lore, Row, Sailing, Secret Language-Thieves' Tongue, Silent Move Urban, Speak Tilean, Specialist Weapon-Flail, Strike to Stun, Super Numerate, Wrestling

**Trappings:** Annabelle (also known as the Ship of Fools) – a large riverboat (see *River Life of the Empire*, in *Death on the Reik*), blackjack, dagger (concealed in boot), stout wooden club, 15 manacles, ship's axe, whip. Has access to drugs and poison, additional weapons, and considerable amount of wealth. Also has a chainmail shirt that he wears in times of need.

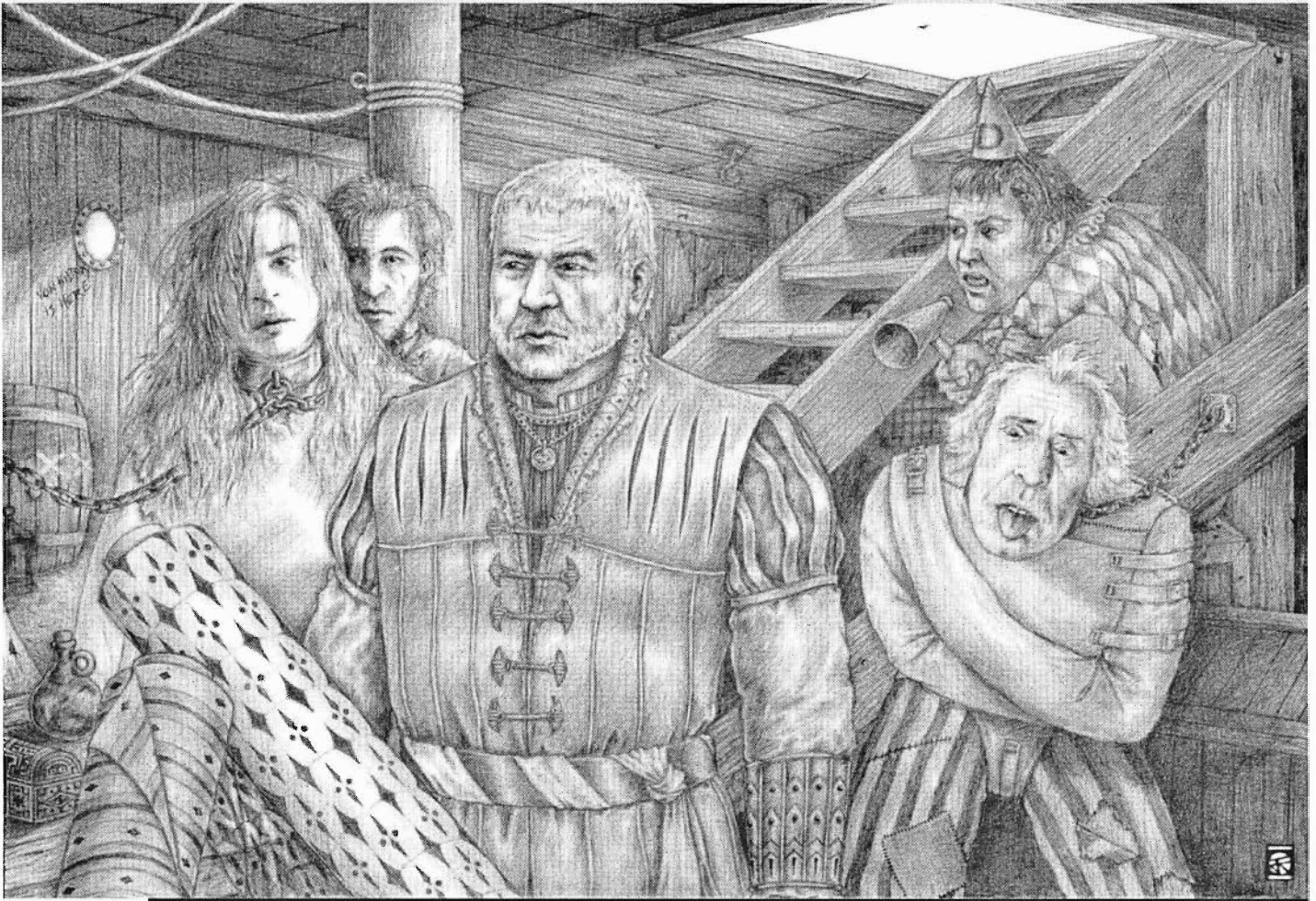
**Rudi, Stephen, Kurt: Barge Crew and Orderlies**

These three serve as orderlies, assistants and crew. They are all big and imposing fellows who exude a tough air of competence. All are willing to use violence to resolve an issue, and are capable of taking care of themselves. Ulnar expects them to do much of his dirty work, which they enjoy. All are loyal to Ulnar, well paid, and happy with their jobs. They are quite experienced and professional, having a history as enforcers for the underworld. The following is an average of all their stats and skills. The GM can feel free to alter and add to the following to make them a bit more distinct.

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	44	42	4	3	8	41	2	39	43	29	44	28	27

**Skills:** Conceal Urban, Dodge Blow, River Lore (Rudi only), Row, Sailing (Rudi and Kurt), Secret Sign-Thieves, Secret Language-Thieves' Tongue, Silent Move Urban, Specialist Weapon-Fist, Specialist Weapon-Flail, Specialist Weapon-Net, Street Fighting, Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure, Strike to Stun, Wrestling

**Trappings:** blackjack, d3 concealed daggers, garrote, knuckle-dusters, leather jack, stout wooden club. They have access to swords and daggers, poison, nets, and other weapons as well. Most of these are kept in a hidden locker below decks.



# Secrets of the WFRP Writers: Part 1

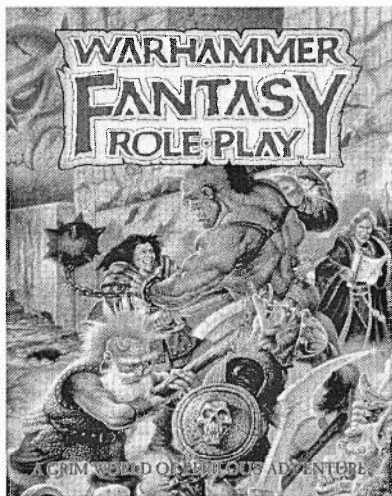
## by Graeme Davis

Back in issue six I delved in the hidden jokes and references behind much of the art in the various WFRP books. I promised then that I would eventually turn my eye to uncovering the secrets contained within the text of these self-same books. Of course, these are just the references I know about. This issue I will look at *The Rulebook* and *Shadows Over Bögenhafen*, leaving the other books until next issue.

### The Rulebook

#### Careers

WFRP's career system is one of its most distinctive features, and many players have said that the large number of colourful careers is among their favourite aspects of the game. Some of this colour came right from the fevered imaginations of the design team, but many careers were actually inspired by the street life of Nottingham. Agitators, Bunko Artists, Jugglers, Pavement Artists and even the odd Seer could be found on the streets and squares of Nottingham in the early 80s – I've no idea if they're still there, but I've never seen such an



assortment and concentration in one place.

#### Skills

*Flee!* allegedly originated when Richard Halliwell discovered (outside a nightclub, so the story goes) that it is possible to run faster than you ever thought possible if there's a clear threat to life and limb bearing down on you. I have no idea if this is true, but Hal did seem to have a rather interesting life at that time. You'll recall that in *Secrets of the Warhammer Artists* I mentioned that the picture of the Bawd is based on him.

#### The World Guide

The *Chariots of the Frogs* joke with the Old Slann has passed into legend, but there are plenty of other quips in the World Guide – mostly in the place names. Rick gave free rein to his rampant xenophobia (defined, in his case, as a deep-seated distrust of anyone not born in Lincolnshire), and the results are there for all to see – if you know how to read them. This is what I can remember of the gags that are hidden in the World Guide – there may well be more.

The River Ois, for example, is based on the Nottinghamshire dialect word *wazz*, which means... well, what dogs do to trees. And *Bordeleaux*, when pronounced with a mock-French accent, becomes *bordello*, as befits a city noted for its dens of vice. Somehow, this and other details about Bretonnia's dark underbelly failed to make it into the WFB Bretonnia army book released not so long ago – but despite the outcry this produced on the WFRP Internet mailing list and elsewhere, I don't think it causes too much of a problem. If you think of the army book as the way the Bretonnian upper classes see themselves (or would like the rest of the world to see them), and the

WFRP World Guide as representing the experience of the country's lower classes, it works pretty well for me.

The river *Morceaux*, of course, is named after the French word for pieces – don't ask me why – and *Sannez* looks like it might have something to do with sanitation, but I don't remember Rick telling me anything about it.

*Estalia* fares little better. The name of *Bilbali* is loosely based on *Bilbao*, but owes more to an old music-hall song titled "Won't You Come Home, Bill Bailey" – that's a strange one, even for Priestley. *Magritta* takes its name from the *Margarita*, and the *Abasko* mountains take their name from *Tabasco* sauce – though what the Spanish connection is there I couldn't tell you.

A few changes had to be made to *Tilea*. The *Pirate Isle* was originally called *Mafea*, but that seemed a little too obvious so it was changed to *Sartosa*. And *Miragliano* was originally called *Gauno*, but so many people didn't notice the anagram and read it as *Guano* that we decided to change the name. And as many people already know, *Remas* was named (with a little misspelling) after the brother of *Romulus*, who gave his name to *Rome*. So far as I know, though the "Reman Empire" never sprung to mind – we had a vague notion that there was a classical empire to go along with the Classical language, but that was all.

And so to the Empire. The Imperial capital also had a change of name. It was originally called *Carlsburg* – not a million miles away from a well-known brand of lager – but that name was also canned as too obvious. *Middenheim* made it through, though – *midden* being an archaeological term for a refuse heap or pit. Here's a bit of meaningless trivia for you – Rick, Nigel Stillman and I were all archaeologists before moving into games. What that says about archaeology, games or the three of us, I shudder to think.

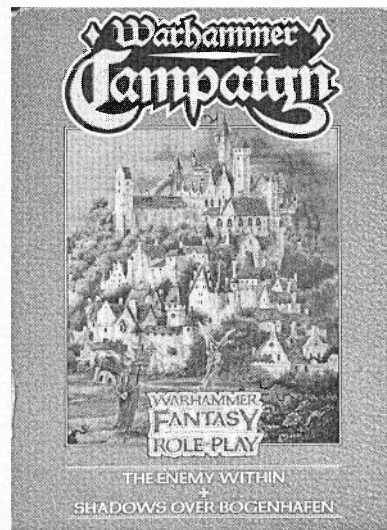
*Moot* is an Anglo-Saxon word for a meeting, especially a council meeting or county court, which made it an easy candidate to replace Tolkien's *shire* as a name for the halfling homeland. The name of the *River Reik* is obvious – too obvious, perhaps, with hindsight.

#### The Oldenhaller Contract

This is where the WFRP tradition of bad NPC names started, with *Grolsch van Eyke* in the very first scene. The name of the *Reaver's Return* is taken from the *Rover's Return*, the local pub on *Coronation Street*, Britain's longest-running soap opera. The *Deutz Elm* is named after Dutch Elm disease, and based on the message boards that Hal saw while youth hosteling round Europe. I don't think any of them had ads from people wanting to hire mercenaries, though.

#### Shadows Over Bögenhafen

Hang on a minute – what about *The Enemy Within*, or *Mistaken Identity*, or whatever it's called? Well, when *Shadows Over Bögenhafen* was written, there was no *Enemy Within* campaign – in fact, the rules themselves hadn't even been finished. That's partly why



it's the way it is, with lots of NPC interaction and not too much in the way of combat or other rules-heavy situations. Another reason was Bryan Ansell's brief to me to write, in his words, "a bloodless Call of Cthulhu adventure for Warhammer." Call of Cthulhu was very popular at that time; it had set a trend for investigative scenarios and started a backlash against that hack-and-slash style of roleplaying adventures typified by AD&D.

The plot was the easiest thing to decide on: WFRP had a fantasy-Renaissance setting, with the infiltration of Chaos into society as one of its major themes, and I had instructions to write a Call of Cthulhu style adventure. So it just had to have a demon, and a group of cultists, and something unspeakably bad that would happen unless the Evil Plot was foiled.

I decided to go back to primary sources and swipe the plot of Faust, which is the classic deal-with-the-devil story. There were a couple of things about the story that had always bothered me, though. First, given the supposition that demons, devils and the like are ancient and immortal beings, it seems logical that any mortal who tries to make a deal with one will probably lose. After all, the poor mortal will be up against centuries if not millennia of experience, and couldn't hope to match a demon for cunning. Secondly, I never understood why Faust agreed to hand his soul over after seven years, and never seemed to think of the consequences until the final scene when the time comes for him to be dragged screaming down to Hell.

So I put in a couple of plot twists to cover these problems. Gideon the demon, I decided, had to have a very particular need for a soul in order to promise seven years of service for it. This was where Call of Cthulhu came in handy - I decided that the soul was to be used to open a dimensional gate to allow Tzeentch into the material world, a service for which Gideon might expect to be richly rewarded.

As for Teugen, he had to be intelligent enough to look for some kind of let-out clause after his seven years, and that's where the cultists of Ordo Septenarius came in. By the way, when I went to a game convention in Sweden in 1988, I was flattered to discover that someone had named a gaming club after the Ordo Septenarius. I still have the T-shirt, but eleven years on it no longer fits me as well as it did... I also thought the cultists needed a rational motive for getting involved in the whole business. Since the whole adventure was to be an investigation, insane followers of Chaos would stand out a bit too much in a small town like Bogenhafen. That meant that they had to be no different from the normal run of merchants and traders. Playing on their greed, Teugen tries to save his own soul by getting them unknowingly to sacrifice theirs in a ritual that they think will control the market by sorcery and make them all rich. But there are lies within lies, and the ritual will actually open a gateway to the heart of Chaos.

A fable for the Yuppie era if ever there was one - as befits an adventure written in 1986.

The opening of the adventure, with the Schaffenfest and the three-legged mutant Goblin, started as a wild improvisation in the first playtest session. The game's rules hadn't been finished, and I was nowhere near finishing the adventure. The best idea I had had for getting novice players into the adventure was to stage a fair at the town, where many people would be looking for employment. Charlie Elliot's character, a socially challenged Dwarf, was showing an unhealthy interest in the livestock, and the fair got the name Schaffenfest ("sheep festival," as far as my school German held out).

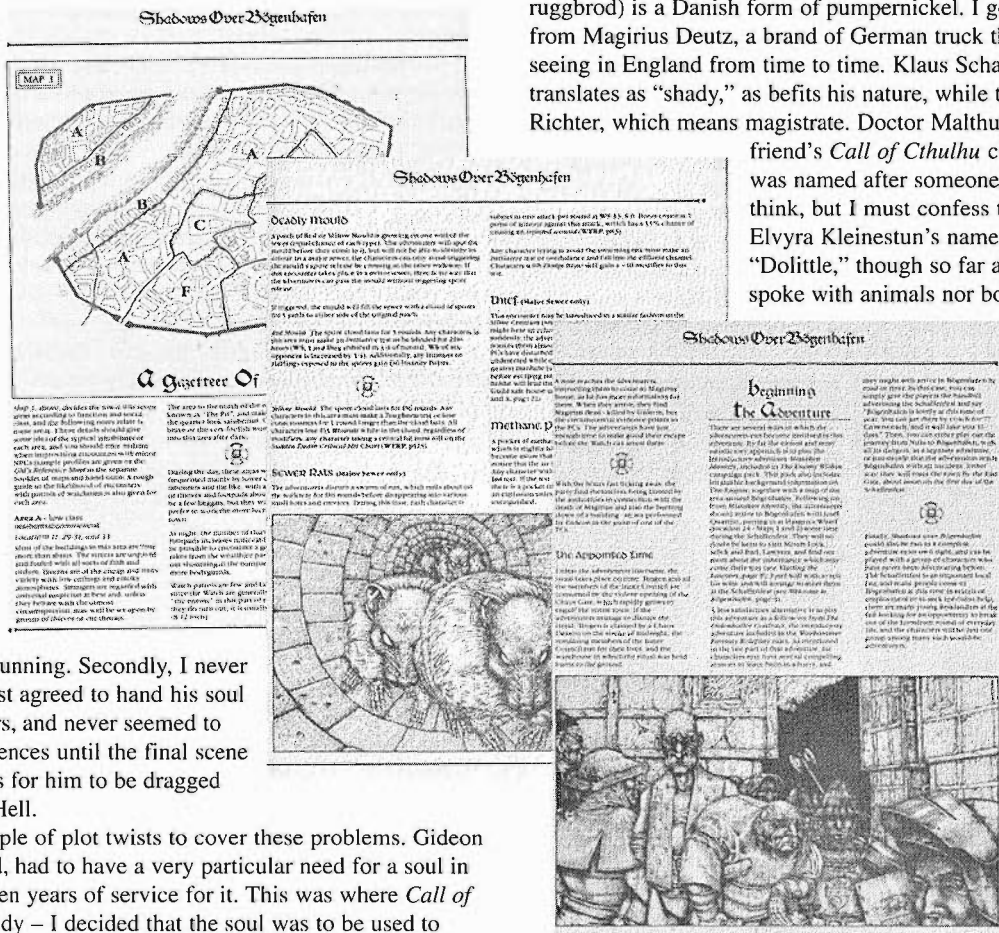
And of course, there were the obligatory dodgy names. I tried not to be too obvious: Steinhager is a brand of schnapps that I became well acquainted with on a visit to Germany. Ruggbroder (or at least, ruggbrod) is a Danish form of pumpernickel. I got the name Magirius from Magirius Deutz, a brand of German truck that I remembered seeing in England from time to time. Klaus Schattiger's name translates as "shady," as befits his nature, while the magistrate is called Richter, which means magistrate. Doctor Malthusius was named after a friend's Call of Cthulhu character, who in turn was named after someone moderately famous I think, but I must confess to ignorance there. Elvyra Kleinestun's name literally means "Dolittle," though so far as I know she neither spoke with animals nor bombed Tokyo. Jim and

Phil wrote her in later as a link into Death on the Reik.

The street names in Bogenhafen are more literal. Handwerker Bahn means "street of the artisans", Hafenstrasse means "dock street", and so on. I couldn't resist calling a street in the metalworker's quarter Eisen Bahn (literally "iron road"; it is German for railway), or calling the town square Dreiecke Platz ("triangle square" - I never did well at geometry), but that's about it. The idea for calling the watch barracks on the west bank Fort Blackfire came from an old movie called Fort Apache - the Bronx.

As for the name of Bogenhafen itself, I intended it to mean something like "the port at the bend of the river." On the trip to Sweden I mentioned earlier, I found out that with the umlaut above the "o," to Swedish eyes it read as something very different indeed - "the port of the buggers" would be a fair English translation. Well, I can't help that - in Reikspiel it means "the port at the bend of the river" and that's the end of it!

That's part one over. Next time Death on the Reik. The Enemy Within and Power Behind the Throne amongst them. Phil Gallagher will be joining me to search our memories for your entertainment. See you then...





# Head Hunters

A complete scenario by John Foody

This scenario is set in the city of Talabheim. It is an investigative scenario with few opportunities for violence - unless the PCs decide to be very rude to people that is. In some ways, it will give you a flavour of Talabheim and uses locations to be found in our forthcoming series on the city. However, this information is not required to play the scenario. Depending on their actions the PCs could end up with some powerful friends or enemies. No profiles have been included with the scenario, but if they are required use comparable ones from *Shadows over Bofenhagen*, *Middenheim: City of Chaos* or *Marienburg: Sold Down the River*.

## Background

In Talabheim, the name of General Karl Reuter is spoken with reverence and respect by almost all. He is a living legend, and many still tell of his deeds. Although there are those from outside the city who say his fame far exceeds his actual deeds, voicing such an opinion in Talabheim is a sure way to find trouble.

Thirty years ago, there was yet another dispute with Middenland over territory. This time, the disputed area was Korltheim, which consisted of rich farmland to the north of the city. While diplomatic arguments raged, the area was forced to endure raids by bandits, with both sides accusing the other of funding them. A young Commandant by the name of Karl Reuter managed to capture and kill a group of these raiders.

Unfortunately, amongst them was Lord Artis von Bildhofen, nephew

to Elector Grand Duke Freidrich von Bildhofen. Enraged, the Elector sent an army to secure the area. The two armies met at Korltheim, and the ensuing battle was bloody. However, Reuter's heroism carried the day, with a heroic charge that he led smashing the centre of the enemy and leading to rout. The Middenlanders broke and fled, and Reuter returned in triumph, promoted to General in honour of his victory.

It wasn't long before the Middenlanders raised another large force and attempted to push their claim once more. Six months later they were marching on the border. This time the General decided to split his forces, ready to ambush the enemy as they entered the valley leading to Korltheim. The second force was under command of Lucas Reuter, the General's brother, who had made a name for himself as a renowned mercenary captain. Sadly, Lucas had been bribed to betray the army and led his force into an ambush. Most of the men were wiped out or captured, surprised by the suddenness of the attack. A single scout made it through to Karl and warned him to what had happened. Believing his brother dead and not yet aware of his crime, Karl led his outnumbered force through the night to Klarfeld, where he fooled the opposition into a rout. He ordered his troops to harass the routing Middenlanders and among them was found the traitor Lucas laden down with gold. Karl was stricken with grief and guilt, knowing that his misjudgement had led to the massacre. Because he blamed himself, Karl may even have let Lucas go free, but he had no choice in the matter. Dragged behind a horse, Lucas was returned to Talabheim and brought before the Peer House for



judgement. Found guilty, he was executed three days later in front of what seemed to be the whole city. Several months and many wounds later, the general was forced to give up campaigning by his injuries. However, before he left active duty, Middenland signed an agreement not to dispute the area of Korltheim again, the ransom for a dozen nobles that Karl had captured.

That much of the story is public knowledge. However, the truth of the matter is a little more complex. When Lucas was imprisoned in the infamous Tarnhelm Keep to await his execution, he was visited by Karl who wanted to know why he betrayed his own brother. This opportunity was too good for the wily Lucas to miss. He overcame his weakened brother, stealing his clothes and then calling out the alarm, claiming he had been attacked. Karl lay unconscious until morning, and when he awoke, his attempts to protest his innocence and true identity were dismissed as a weak, desperate ploy to avoid punishment. Thus it was that Karl was taken to the block to be beheaded, with Lucas looking on. As Karl stood upon the platform he swore, to the jeers of the crowd, that he would return to haunt Lucas. Annett, Karl's wife, pleaded that he should just accept his fate – even she had been taken in by the deception. Karl refused to reconsider, but did promise that he would never haunt her.

Lucas' deception was simple enough, but it had fooled everyone. It helped that they shared a very strong family resemblance and similar colouring; this, combined with grime from the cell and bruises from the fight, made it very difficult to tell who was who. Moreover, they were both insular people by nature; neither had been particularly close to anyone. Even Annett, who was pregnant with Karl's child, had not known him long. Through most of the two years of their marriage Karl had been away on campaigns. She noticed the change in mannerisms, and occasional lapses of memory, but put these down to the horrors of war, and believed that the death of his brother had changed him. At first, she was wary and suspicious, but eventually they grew close, and two more children were born.

The deception seemed complete, until Lucas fell into alcoholism in his middle age, and admitted the truth to Annett. She was distraught and angry, and prepared to reveal him for what he was. She told her eldest son Siegfried the truth, asking for his support. However, Siegfried convinced her to stay silent, for to do otherwise might ruin the reputations of all her children and of Karl's memory. However, the weight of this burden was too much for her to bear. Suffering from a nervous breakdown, she retreated to bed and simply waited for death. It took five years to arrive. During this time Lucas pulled himself out of his stupor and cared for her as a loving husband should, simply because he had indeed grown to love her. In spite of his care and devotion, she never spoke to him again.

After the funeral, Lucas himself collapsed from exhaustion. He had invested all his energy throughout the last five years looking after Annett, and now he was spent. However, he was to find no respite. That very night Karl, true to his word, returned to haunt his brother. He appeared as a headless ghost, and has returned each night since. There is little that can be done to help Lucas; in order to maintain his deception, he will not say who the spectre is. The whole situation is being treated as a mystery to be kept secret in case it damages his reputation.

Siegfried, the eldest, has refused to acknowledge Lucas for years and has no idea what is happening. However, his younger siblings, afraid for

their father's life, have decided to hire investigators to discreetly discover why this ghost haunts their father. The youngest son is an initiate of Mórr who returned to tend his mother's funeral and must soon leave. However, if he were to delay his return or become visibly involved in any investigation, suspicion and rumour would run rife, damaging the family name. Normally, he would be prepared to run this risk, but his elder sister (who is a career-minded local bureaucrat) wishes to keep the matter as discreet as possible. Consequently, the two have begun to look for capable help to solve the problem.

### A Plot about a Plot

The premise of the scenario involves the PCs looking for the head of the ghost, believing it will lay the restless spirit to rest. However, the head has been on a long journey (although it had nobody to go with! Sorry, couldn't resist. Uh-hmm... back to the plot then). While searching for the head, they will discover the dark deeds behind its removal. Once they have the head they must decide how best to handle the information at their disposal. If all goes well, they will have to decide whether or not the best course of action involves revealing the truth or protecting innocent lives.

The ghost of General Karl Reuter can be laid to rest by having the body and head buried within the walls of the city. At the moment, he is buried in Traitor's Copse, located in the forest outside the crater. To dig up the body they will need permission from the Temple of Mórr and the Peer House. To even stand a chance of getting such permission, they will need a very good story indeed.

### Poster

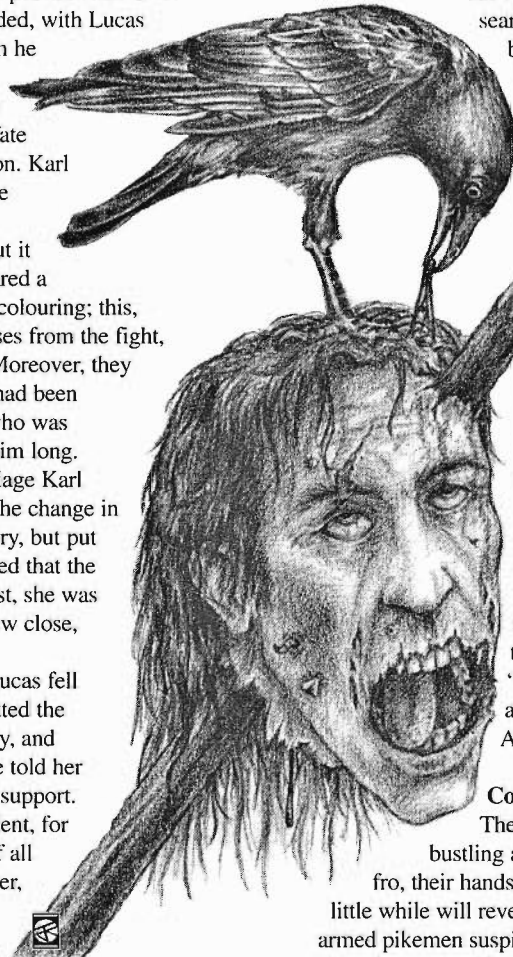
If the PCs have any favourable contacts in the city, or perhaps a patron, then they are recommended to Councillor Albeheim. Otherwise, they will come across a poster, newly nailed to a tree outside the inn they are staying at. Short and to the point, it says, "Wanted: Adventurers of Good Character, Ability and Intellect. Good Pay. Respond to Councillor Albeheim at the City Hall."

### Councillor Albeheim

The City Hall, known to locals as Marble Hall, is bustling and alive, full of uniformed clerks running to and fro, their hands full of papers. However, examining the scene for a little while will reveal how inefficient the whole thing is. A pair of armed pikemen suspiciously eye the party as they enter the small reception area. Along the left wall are three busy-looking clerks, seated behind a long table covered in papers, parchments and pens, with their heads buried in thick books. If the characters approach any of the clerks, they will be told to wait until they can be seen.

Opposite the clerks is a row of chairs placed under a portrait of General Karl Reuter, who can be identified by a gold plaque at the bottom. It shows the General in a heroic pose standing against the hordes of Middenland. He is a stern looking man, seemingly young for such a command, but handsome and courageous. After a few minutes, the characters are asked their business and names (not to mention address in Talabheim, usual address, reason for visiting the city, membership of guilds and any other questions you want to use to annoy your players). Once these formalities are out of the way an elderly and slow clerk will take them to meet the Councillor.

Albeheim is a nervous middle aged man, and will take a bit of time to understand what they are going on about. When comprehension finally



dawns, he takes the characters further down the corridor to another door. Here he will knock, and he waits until a woman's voice announces that he can enter. Albeheim shows them into the chamber with the words, "Councillor Reuter, these people have come about the poster." She thanks him and gestures for the PCs to sit. She waits for Albeheim to close the door before she begins to speak.

### **Two Children**

Andrea Reuter is in her late twenties, dressed in conservative robes. The resemblance to the portrait of her father in the entrance hall is clear, as is that of her younger brother Magnus, who sits in a chair by the wall. He is dressed in the robes of an initiate of Mórr. Andrea is a good councillor but got the position thanks to the family name. She is very proud of her father although they don't always see eye-to-eye. Friendly and outgoing, she has an ambitious streak, which will be obvious to anyone dealing with her. Magnus is quiet and thoughtful, almost shy. He joined the Cult of Mórr two years ago and is just reaching the end of his training. He nods when introduced and, when with his sister, will only speak if he is spoken to.

Andrea will break the ice by asking the PCs questions about their past deeds. She subtly interrogates them to ensure they are telling the truth and to check that they are of sound character and judgement. Looking towards Magnus, she will ask them if they have ever encountered the Undead before. If they answer yes, she asks how they dealt with the matter in some detail. All of these questions are asked in a perfectly relaxed manner. It may be that the PCs ask why Albeheim's name was on the poster. If they do, she will inform them that "putting the name of Reuter on the poster may have only brought unwelcome attention. The Reuter name is well known and respected in Talabheim, but we prefer to keep our affairs private when we can."

When she finishes her questions, she looks somewhat apprehensive, but begins, "We were forced to resort to looking for outside help to resolve an urgent matter. I wish you to investigate the problem to its fullest degree and resolve it satisfactorily. If you do, you will be well rewarded and earn our sincere gratitude." Before continuing, she walks over to a cabinet and pours herself a drink of Vodka. She won't offer any to the PCs but if they are bold enough to ask she will pour them a glass. She carries on talking while staring out the window. As she starts, her voice is shaking with restrained emotion. "It started three days ago with the death of my mother. She had been ill for some time and Magnus returned to hold her funeral service. My parents were very close; while my mother was alive, they never left each others' side. On the day she died, my father took to his bed in grief. That very night a spectre came to visit and terrorise him. It has returned each night since. We have both observed this apparition. My brother has some learning in these matters of course but we are unwilling to be seen investigating the occurrence."

If any the PCs look to Magnus at this point, they will see that he looks decidedly uncomfortable. In fact, he is extremely unsure about neglecting his duty (as he sees it) by not investigating the matter. However, he has bowed to his sister's wishes. Andrea wants her father to be free of the ghost, but is careful about her position and career. She will not do anything to endanger these, unless she has no other choice. Neither believes that their father deserves to suffer this haunting.

"This apparition is a headless man, manacled at his hands and feet. My father seems to recognise him but will not tell us any more. Perhaps he is too afraid to. My brother informs me that such as a spectre will appear when not laid to rest properly, so perhaps this ghost wants his head back, which of course he hasn't got. We believe that doing this will enable the soul to be placed into Mórr's care, and will release our father from this torment. Perhaps the apparition believes my father has his head. We wish you to solve this riddle and allow our father to sleep. First, though, you will need to observe the ghost."

### **Spook**

The PCs are taken to the Reuter house by Magnus, who meets them at

Werner Platz after dark. Arriving at the house, he leads them into the basement and asks them to wait in the kitchen. The Reuter household stands in the Goldstrades district on the edge of Blutberg. Theirs is a large house, well-maintained and filled with expensive furniture and ornaments, many of which are gifts from admirers. Anyone thinking to ask will notice the distinct lack of military apparel. In the drawing room is a formal picture of the family (the General, Annett and the three children, painted when the children were still young).

The wait is made bearable by the offer of some fine food from the cook. She will be careful not to say anything untoward to the PCs, and silences the chambermaid with a glare if the PCs try to talk to her. Both witnessed the ghost's appearance, and dread the thought of seeing it again. They think the PCs are very brave to confront it. Both are a little wary of the General, but they liked Annett and were upset at her death. The Cook has been with the household for thirty years and is thus a good source of information. She was Annett's handmaiden as a girl and came to her married home after the wedding.

The General retires to bed after eleven, having drunk half a bottle of brandy to calm his nerves. Once he is asleep Magnus will fetch the PCs and bring them into the main house. If asked the reason for all this secrecy, he tells the PCs that his father would not tolerate their presence if he knew. Upstairs the house is quiet, lit by low burning lanterns in the hall. The PCs can wait wherever they wish downstairs, for this is where the ghost first appears.

Soon after midnight, the temperature seems to drop slightly. Any PC who is awake will feel chilled – but not just from the cold. The apparition walks through the front door (although anyone outside will see nothing). The ghost is headless, his neck cleanly cut. He is clothed in a dress of a noble, his hands and ankles shackled with heavy iron manacles. When alive he would have been a powerful man, and although the manacles force him to shuffle, he stands erect. Just inside the door he walks over to a small alcove in the wall, filled with boots and coats, touches something that is not there and pauses for a moment. He turns and walks along the corridor and up the stairs, entering the General's room through the door. In the room, he stops at the end of the bed and the General awakes with a start. Completely terrified, he will sit there staring at the ghost, paralysed with fear. He ignores any PCs crashing into the room. For a minute, each stands still. Then the ghost raises his hand to the General before disappearing. Seconds later, the General crumples, sobbing and muttering incoherently. Magnus asks the PCs to leave the room while he and the cook comfort him.

A little while later, the tired Magnus will come out to talk to the PCs. "You have now seen the spectre with your own eyes. I hope you can free him of its presence. I will meet you at your residence tomorrow morning to discuss these matters further. Goodnight." Magnus refuses to talk now, preferring to stay and watch over his father.

### **Magic Weapons**

Well-armed PCs may want to dispel the ghost by leaping in with magic weapons and spells. If this happens, the ghost will disappear for the night as soon as he is hit this way, thus making it a very short-term solution. Additionally, Magnus is not happy with this method of solving the problem. Something is clearly wrong here, and although violence may eventually destroy the spectre, he wants to understand why this is happening and ensure that all concerned are treated justly. He wants the troubled spirit properly laid to rest, by solving the reason why it remains tied to the mortal plain.

### **A Morning Meeting**

Magnus and Andrea will come and visit the PCs at their inn the next morning. They will ensure that the PCs are fully aware of what their task is. They also insist that they do not talk to the General. The PCs will probably want to investigate the General's history, and there are a number of avenues to follow at this stage. Eventually, however, they will get on

the trail of the missing head.

Magnus and Andrea know the basics of their father's history, although they have far more knowledge of the life he led since his glory days. He was always too modest to talk about his early life and refused to do so when asked. As a result, what they know is based on the stories of others, which (of course) are usually told with a gloss of hero-worship. After retiring through injury, their father took on training and organisational duties in the army. He also acted as an escort on diplomatic missions where he was used to impress hosts with tales of his exploits. The two are only vaguely aware of the story of Lucas, as people have tended to avoid talking about it in front of them. Neither knows what used to sit in the alcove in the house's hallway where the ghost stopped.

### The Cook

Martha Kratchett has been with the Reuter family for over thirty years. She worked in the household of Annett's family before her marriage to the General. The pair were of a similar age, and although they were not friends they liked each other. After the marriage, Martha went with her mistress to the General's home. She has been with the family ever since and is loved by the children. She has three children herself, all of whom live in the city. Her husband of twenty-two years died through illness five years ago.

She won't discuss the General's or Annett's history through loyalty. She will claim not to remember any incidents. However, she will talk about the alcove in the hallway. She says there used to be small household shrine to Ulric there. She remembers part of it was a small statue of a wolf, where offerings were placed. It was removed about twenty-five years ago although she doesn't remember why.

Martha is completely correct in her remembrance. Karl Reuter had a small shrine wherever he lived and when he entered or left he would stroke the wolf's head. It is a habit he has continued in death, believing that the shrine is still there. Lucas removed it because it reminded him of his brother, had no particular devotion to Ulric and felt he could start making changes as he felt fit.

### Siegfried Reuter

Andrea and Magnus haven't spoken to their elder brother Siegfried for three years, outside of nods of greeting. Neither are sure why, and although they know he argued fiercely with their father they don't why he ignores them. Siegfried Reuter is a Captain in the standing Talabheim army. Again, he reached this position on the name and reputation of his father. However, he has shown that he is the son of the father. He is a skilful warrior and keen tactician, and a man of fierce honour. He does expect others to reach his standards of honour and morals, finding it difficult to forgive others if they let him down. The reason he has not reached a higher rank is this intolerance of idiots, which has given him a reputation for being judgmental and difficult. He has never really had a chance to fully prove himself. Although he has nothing against his siblings, he finds himself angry every time he sees them and fights hard to control himself.

Usually to be found at the barracks dressed in armour and Talabheim livery, he will see the PCs if asked for by name. He will be on the defensive, and under no circumstances will he impart any information about his father. The PCs will get the distinct impression that he is trying to hide something. If they approach him after discovering the deception, he will warn them against tarnishing the good name of the family. Siegfried Reuter is, potentially, a very dangerous enemy.

If you so choose you can have Siegfried act as a bit of a villain, although his motivations are not necessarily bad. He can have the PCs followed to keep an eye on them, attacked if they gather any evidence or even thrown a jail for a short while on nothing more than his word. The man has influence, and isn't afraid to use it to protect his family's name.

### The Temple of Verena

The Temple of Verena is full of enthusiastic people, but has few useful records. They know Lucas Reuter was found guilty of treason after being captured by his brother. He was executed at Brandorf Platz 30 years ago. The initiate who the PCs speak to says that Kook Taidorf has been responsible for building the execution platforms for years and may be able to help further. He learned the trade from his father, and is always keen to tell stories of the men that have "used his services".

### Stories and Rumours

Wherever they ask in the city, they will hear nothing but good things about the General. Since his great victory at Korltheim he has done nothing to alter peoples' perceptions. He appears in public from time to time, and this keeps him in the peoples' minds. Most of what is known has been detailed earlier. There are a few additional stories and rumours that you can include. All are reasonably common currency, but decide for yourself which are best suited to the people the PCs are talking with at any given point.

- ✦ "I heard The General and his eldest son don't talk anymore. Some say there's a dark secret there."
- ✦ "I remember Lucas getting chopped. Too good for him it was. Even when he was about to meet the axe, he was threatening the general. It was only 'cause the Lady General asked his mercy that he relented."
- ✦ "He was a great man. My brother fought with him. Said the Middenlanders didn't know what hit them. He did say the General cried when he heard his brother betrayed him, but I don't believe that."
- ✦ "A friend of a friend heard that Lucas was only the General's half brother. Supposedly, a tainted one raped their mother. It would explain a lot, wouldn't it?"
- ✦ "Sure I remember the execution. I was only ten then and I couldn't see a damned thing. Ended up reading about it all a few years later from a pamphlet about the general. Don't have it now, though."
- ✦ "I saw him a few years ago at a parade for the Grand Duchess' birthday. He may be old but he looked like the mighty warrior he is. They should never have forced him out of the command. That's what I heard. Sure, he has some noble blood but they didn't like him, as he has no title. Showed them up."
- ✦ "I was talking to one of his troops in a tavern a few years back. He said the General was lucky to have survived the battle at Korltheim. He got an axe in the guts that nearly killed him. Still lead the charge though. Ulric's blood runs through his veins."
- ✦ "It wasn't his war wounds that forced him to retire, it was the attack of the assassin. When old Grand Duke Freddy of Middenland was about to meet Morr himself, he decided he would kill the General. He hired the three top assassins in The Empire. He managed to get all three of them, but not before they wounded him so badly he couldn't fight again. It's typical of those cowardly Middenlanders you know. My sister's married to one of them and he's as yellow as egg yolk."
- ✦ "My brother was in the cell next to Lucas the night before the execution. It's true! He told me that the General came to visit the night before and the pair of them ended up fighting. He heard shouting and screaming and then the guards came and broke up."



SP

### Old Comrades

There is no easy way to track down the General's old comrades, especially those from his most famous campaigns. Most of the higher ranks are dead, and few records were kept of the rank and file. However, the General's aide-de-camp on the Kroltheim campaign, Lieutenant Fredrick von Manzel, is still receiving a pension from the army. This information can be obtained through the Army or the Hall of Records. If the PCs are struggling then some bribes to various soldiers may get them a rumour that von Manzel still drinks in taverns the soldiers frequent, trying to sponge drinks on the General's name.

### Lieutenant von Manzel

In his fifties, von Manzel is a bitter old drunk. Unshaven, smelly and owner of a huge beer belly, he squanders his little income in various taverns located around the barracks. He ends up sleeping in the streets many nights, but this is only slightly worse than the room he rents.

He will be happy to talk to the PCs about the General for the price of a drink. The only difficulty they will have is keeping him on track, as he tends to ramble off at a tangent. He proudly tells them that he fought in both Kroltheim campaigns with the General, serving as his aide-de-camp in the second. Their friendship (in his mind the friendship ever grows) came to an end after the execution. Two nights later von Manzel was badly stabbed in the street. When he finally recovered the General refused to see him and he was discharged from the army. Rightly, he feels betrayed.

The attempt on his life was organised by Lucas, clearing up loose ends. By the time von Manzel recovered Lucas was firmly established as the General and Lieutenant was no longer a threat to him.

### Tarnhelm Keep

The keep is a dismal, dark prison set into the wall of The Old City. This is where many condemned prisoners spent their last night. Getting into the prison is not that difficult, for money opens most doors. Only one person will be in any position to help the PCs, but this won't stop others making up stories if they think there's money in it for them. The guard Kampschen has been there for thirty years. He is a wiry, middle aged man with cruel, bitter eyes. One side of his face is badly scarred from burns. He received these from a fire that burnt down the guardhouse the night of Lucas' execution. Nobody is sure how the fire started, but two guards died: an old hand named Regear and a young spotty man whose name Kampschen can't recall.

He remembers Lucas being in the Keep, but he didn't guard him. Regear and the young man guarded him that night. Apparently, Regear had complained that the traitor kept going on about all sorts of strange things, but Kampschen was never told what they were. Regear was a quiet, not too bright type who had been in the prison years. If asked, Kampschen remembers the General visited his brother the night before the execution. Lucas had attacked the General but the guards help beat him off.

After the execution Lucas learnt that Regear was telling people about the "traitor's strange words". Lucas was worried that somebody might eventually believe him. He bribed his way into the prison and killed Regear. He then torched the guardhouse and escaped in the confusion.

### Kook Taidorf

The PCs find Taidorf building a platform in the shadow of Tarnhelm Keep. There are a couple of executions due tomorrow, and a number of guards will watch the area tonight. Taidorf has been kept in business due to the fact all the platforms he builds are torn down after use. The authorities believe it is better that they do this rather than give the mob the opportunity to do it, which is what used to happen. The executions are held in public to act as a deterrent to the residents of The Old City, to help keep them on the straight and narrow. Taidorf is an old man who does little but supervise nowadays. He is training his two sons to take

over the business and they are busy working with a pair of young apprentices.

Taidorf will be defensive when the PCs approach him. He is well used to relatives and friends attempting to garner his help to free the condemned. In his forty years in the trade he has never been bought or threatened into helping people escape. He does enjoy reminiscing about the past, however, and so will be happy to talk to the PCs once he knows what they are here for.

He clearly remembers the General's brother, although not the name. The man had caused the deaths of over two hundred soldiers, and had almost been lynched when he was brought back to the town. However, the General stopped the mob, insisting that he was put on trial. The people loved the general so much they listened to him. He was put before the Peer House, "which just goes to show how serious the matter was", and found guilty.

On the day of the execution he was taken from Tarnhelm Keep and brought to the block. He was to be publicly executed in Brandorf Platz. "Hardly ever build platforms there. It's only for the traitors, you see. Had to work overnight to get it finished and there was already people waiting". The General's brother was bleeding from the head, where the guard had struck him to keep him quiet. He remembers the General and his wife watching from the balcony. He doesn't know who the axe-man was (no-one does) but when he asked the traitor for his last words, "He goes 'I'll haunt you, brother.' And the General's wife goes, 'do not do that sire! You are the traitor.' And Lucas says, 'You are right, I have already wronged you and Talabheim. I shall never haunt you.'" When the traitor's head was about to be cut off he shouted, "Long Live the Grand Duke and the Emperor." This, Taidorf explains, was pretty unusual – normally, those who are about to die admit to their guilt so that they won't carry their treason over with them into Mórr's realm.

Taidorf's memory of the event is somewhat awry, which is not to surprising really. He will be able to direct the PCs to other witnesses. He is friends with Alberto, who used to drive the cart taking prisoners to execution. He has retired now, but Taidorf knows where he lives. He also remembers seeing a pamphlet about the execution, although he doesn't know what it said as he can't read. He thinks it was the attending Magistrate's scribe who recorded and published the events of the day. He is not sure, but he thinks the author's name was Plundervich, and that he may still be a magistrate. He has no idea of the name of the Magistrate attending the execution, or where the PCs could find a copy of the pamphlet.

### Hall of Records

If the PCs approach the Halls of Records to find information on any aspect of the case they will be asked to fill in a chit. This is a request to discover if the information is available. The search will take two to three weeks. After this, it can be procured, which will take a similar length of time. Even Andrea Reuter will not be able to get them to move any quicker. This is Talabheim's bureaucracy at its most monolithic.

### Trial Records

The records of the trial of Lucas Reuter are completely unavailable to the PCs. Lucas was tried at the Peer House by the Peers, with the judgement passed down by the Grand Duke. He defended himself as no Peer would speak on his behalf and no Lawyers are allowed at this highest of courts. The records are kept by The Record Keeper in the House, and not even Peers have easy access.

### The Courts

Looking for a Magistrate named Plundervich is a matter of searching through the courts of Talabheim asking if anyone knows him. The more money offered in bribes the quicker they will track him down. Eventually, someone knows him and points the PCs in the direction of the Lower Court in Eldenstadt, one of the poorer parts of town.

**Magistrate Franco Plundervich II**

Although a well respected magistrate in the Lower Courts, Plundervich keeps himself to himself. By hanging around the court in Eldenstadt, however, the PCs will be able to encounter him. He will not have any interest in talking to the PCs unless they mention the pamphlet. Then he will cautiously listen and if they coherently explain what they're after invite them to his home after the close of court.

Plundervich lives with his housekeeper in the Goldstrades area. A tall, dignified man with a head of silver hair, he always dresses in sober black. In fact, Plundervich is a sad, worn-out individual. He became a magistrate to please his father, when all he wanted to be was a writer and artist. He also dislikes the whole court system of Talabheim. The only piece he ever had published was the pamphlet named *The True Tale of Brave General Karl Reuter of Talabheim and his Traitorous Brother Lucas*, which was based on the events of the day and on the stories of witnesses. He freely admits he did not take an objective point and perhaps even got caught up in the excitement.

He owns a single copy of the pamphlet (*Player Handout One*) and suspects it is the only one left. Taking it from a velvet lined box, he will happily let the PCs read if they are careful. Printed on brownish rough paper, the Pamphlet contains an exaggerated version of the Reuter story, enlivened by jingoistic rants. The exchange between Karl and Annett is recorded word for word. The final words of the condemned man read as follows:

*"The Magistrate asked if he had last words and he said "Brother. I will haunt you to your grave as you have wronged me." The crowd booed but his wife spoke. "I ask you Lucas, we have done you no wrong that you have not brought upon yourself, and deserve your revenge." Lucas looked sad and said "Annett, I have loved you for so long and my brother has wronged us both. I will never haunt you."*

This should give the PCs the reason why the ghost has returned now and perhaps also who the ghost is. Plundervich knows that Lucas Reuter was tried in the Peer House Court; an unusual "honour" for a commoner, but it showed how high emotions were running at the time. There was no chance he would be found innocent and he was sentenced to death by beheading, spending his last nights in the fearsome Tarnhelm Keep. The Magistrate that presided over the execution was Lord Schenk. "A vicious bastard, and better off dead," according to Plundervich.

**Alberto**

Alberto (he doesn't ever remember having a last name) was the driver of the cart that took "Lucas" to the platform. He was employed by the prison for this task and for various other odd jobs. He is retired now, living at home with his extended family. He is a kind, simple man who always has grand-children playing around him.

He remembers the day of the execution clearly. The streets were crowded with jeering people, and he was hit by rotten fruit being thrown at the traitor. Lucas was trying to tell Hans the guard something throughout the journey (which Alberto couldn't hear over the noise) but as they got near the Platz, Hans hit him hard and told him to "shut his lying mouth". It got a big cheer out of the crowd. After Lucas was taken from the cart Alberto brought it back to the prison. It was too crowded to wait and Alberto never liked executions much.

Alberto knows Hans the guard was killed in an alleyway brawl two nights later. It didn't surprise him much as he was always fighting. Alberto remembers it clearly, as it was the night after the fire in the prison guardhouse. The fire killed two of the wardens (including Regear, if the PCs ask).

After the execution, Alberto brought the cart back for the body. He and two guards put the body on the cart under the supervision of Krel, a cleric of Mórr. They then took it to the temple of Ulric where Krel placed the head on the stake by the main gate. The body was taken to

Traitors' Copse and was buried in an unmarked grave. Alberto heard the head went missing soon after, but isn't really sure what happened to it. Over the years, he occasionally met Brother Krel and one of the soldiers who was on guard at the execution, Captain Farr.

**Soldiers**

Captain Farr is a member of the city guard. A hardened veteran, he was wounded a decade ago and cannot walk without a cane. He now spends his days training infantry. The PCs will either find him on the training ground or in a nearby inn. If the PCs have made an enemy of Siegfried Reuter, Farr will refuse to speak to them.

Captain Farr remembers the execution clearly. He was a new recruit and had been ordered to guard the platform. He doesn't remember hearing any of the prisoner's last words but he does remember Lucas went to his death bravely. Many prisoners struggle at the platform or soil themselves, but he didn't. If asked he does recall Lucas had been badly beaten, but that it was only to be expected. After the execution, they were ordered to take the head and make sure the body was placed in the hands of the Cleric. This was Krel. They took the head to place on the spikes at the Temple of Ulric and it was there for a month before they went to take it down and lost it. Farr wasn't there, but he heard there was some sort of riot, and that's why it went astray.

The second guard that day was Stefan Shawtz, a friend of Farr's. He died a few years later in Kislev from a gangrenous wound.

**Krel**

Still an active man, the PCs meet Brother Krel while he is busy embalming a corpse. In his fifties, he is completely bald and has put on a lot of weight since his days as an initiate. As soon as the PCs ask about the execution, Krel becomes very embarrassed, his head turning a beetroot red. He will want to know why the PCs are investigating, but will be satisfied with any answer at all. If the PCs mention the ghost then they risk involving the cult (a choice for the GM) and if they mention Magnus Reuter then they put him in risk of being censored for his actions.

Krel is embarrassed because he lost the head of Lucas Reuter (something his peers still rib him about). He was an initiate then, and it was his first test of responsibility. After the execution, the body was taken to the shrine to await the head. The body would then be buried in Traitor's Copse outside in the forest. However, when he and a couple of soldiers (whose names he does not remember) went to remove the head from the Temple of Ulric's gate, they found a huge crowd had gathered, mostly made up of local apprentices. As Krel removed the head from the spike the crowd surged forward and knocked the ladder. The head flew out of his hands and into the crowd. The apprentices grabbed it and they ran into The Old City. The soldiers accompanying Krel saved his life, grabbing the ladder before he was thrown from it. The apprentices then proceeded to have a huge game of football, using the east and west gates as goals.

This huge match has turned into something of an annual event and the apprentices use the rallying cry of "heads up" whenever they gather. Krel attended the match for the first few years but the head had been replaced by a pig's bladder. A few years later the temple heard that the head was on display in the house of a Pedro Calope. They travelled to the Old City and searched his house but to no avail. There was no sign of Calope or the head. Krel remembers the house was near the Old Peer House, but not where exactly.

**Rumours of a head**

The Old City is the most run down and feared part of Talabheim. Few but the poor inhabit it, living in and between the grand buildings of that square mile the used to be the city of Talabheim. The walls that surround it give strangers a real feeling of being closed in. In the day, it seems like any other poor neighbourhood, but at night, it is a place to fear.

The head of Lucas Reuter is something of a legend in The Old City, and many of the older people still remember stories about it. Aggressive or Noble PCs will not get far with their questioning, but PCs dressed and acting like these poor citizens will be able to draw them forward to talk. Some common rumours and stories circulating the streets are:

- ✦ “The head of Lucas Reuter, eh! I heard it was stolen by a necromancer. It’s true! He stole the traitor’s body out of the ground and put him back together again. He’ll lead an army against us one day – mark my words...”
- ✦ “It was when I was a boy. I saw them put it on the spike at the temple. I don’t mind admitting it now but I had nightmares for days about its eyes. They stared right at me. My father went to see it later at the house of some Tilean bloke, but I wouldn’t go. He had put it on display and they said it spoke. Can’t say its true, but I won’t say it isn’t, neither.”
- ✦ “The Tilean had it, but he sold it to some Seer. A woman it was - I saw her at the house myself. Did the head scream? Oh yes. No, I never heard it myself. Anyway, she was a pretty young thing. Madame something or other. I heard rumours the Tilean was in trouble, soon after, so he got out and hasn’t come back since.”
- ✦ “The traitor? Yes, they had his head on a table. Did I see it myself? No, no, but I heard it from a reliable friend of a friend. For a shilling a time you could go in and look at it. For a crown you could place your hand on its head and swear an oath. If you were lying it would scream. It would send shivers right down your spine.”
- ✦ “Pedro or something his name was. Foreigner anyway. He had the head but I heard he was murdered for it. It brings bad luck, does that head. Should have been buried under Mórr’s protection and been done with.”
- ✦ “Well it was the apprentices that took it, them and their bloody football. I heard one of them stuffed it and put it on display.”
- ✦ “I heard the General himself came and took it back. Don’t know what he done with it. Maybe gave it to his dogs.”
- ✦ “My mother saw the head. Every year on the day he was beheaded it would float through the streets, flaming and cursing. It would attack anyone it saw. I think they brought in someone to stop it. Must have worked, mustn’t it.”
- ✦ “Sod off. People have got better things to do than talk rubbish about missing heads. Yeah, course I heard of it.”
- ✦ “I heard some village outside the crater had it. Use it as a spit bucket probably.”
- ✦ “I’d put money on one of those artisans having the head. Would have been an apprentice then of course. Don’t have any respect those apprentices, I tell you. When they become masters though, it all changes doesn’t it. La-di-da this, la-di-da that.”
- ✦ “Pedro. Used to drink with him. Made a pretty profit out of that head. He sold it on when he went back to Tilea.”

**Pedro Calope**

Calope was a Tilean who lived in the city at the time of the execution. Seeing a quick profit, he found his own “head of the Traitor” to display. He waited until things had died down and then put it on display for a penny a time. In time it became a strongly held belief that if the head was held while an oath was sworn, it would cry out if the oath taker had no intention of fulfilling the oath. Whether this is true or not is another matter. However, few remember where he lived and there are differing stories as to what happened to him. Some say he went back to Tilea,

others saying he was murdered or arrested. In truth, he was a small-time charlatan and thief whose past caught up with him and he had to leave Talabheim. Before he left, he sold the head to Madame Kreltir, a local seer and mystic.

Asking around the streets will garner the above rumours. Persistence will lead to Pedro’s street where they will point out the house of Old Ma. A rundown townhouse, Old Ma is a wizened old woman who rents her rooms out. She will talk to the PCs but if you feel mean have her send them across the city for something trivial (a pickled egg or jar of honey). She confirms Pedro lived at the house for a while but moved out somewhere to show the head. He was back later though, running scared. He sold the head to Madame Kreltir he who had been trying to buy it for weeks.

**“Is anyone there?”**

Seers, mystics and astrologers are popular in The Old City and many have made a home here. Asking around will turn up a few female seers, many called Madame. With some persistence they will eventually find Madame Kreltir, an ancient and wrinkled looking woman. Frail and ill, her daughter looks her after. A sitting costs 2/6 per person and her daughter won’t allow anyone to enter without paying. Kreltir’s room is full of supposedly mystical paraphernalia, all intended to impress but without the remotest occult significance.

Madame Kreltir is a genuine Seer, albeit of limited power. She has some ability to commune with the dead and see the future. She is also canny and experienced enough to only tell people what they want to hear. She bought the head from Pedro for gold and some spiritual help (her advice on the best way out of the city). She wanted it to commune with, but discovered it was not actually Lucas but a common thief named Marko. She found this out by communing with the dead spirit, which added that Karl Reuter had much to tell yet from beyond the grave. She has no idea what happened to Lucas’ head although she heard a rumour the apprentices had it.

**Respectable Citizens**

The city’s artisans are concentrated in the Silverstrades and Goldstrades districts. Now masters in their own rights, plenty remember the incidents of thirty years ago. Those that were not there all know someone who was involved with stealing the head. Many are somewhat embarrassed by their hell-raising past. (Having the PCs question artisans just after scolding their apprentices for being rowdy and not doing their jobs properly may well bring blushes to their cheeks.)

All of the ones who were there tell roughly the same story. Hearing the head was to be taken from the Temple spike, they all rushed there after work. Someone started to push and they found themselves with the head in their midst. Somewhat spontaneously, a game of football began, teams forming around the apprentices from the Silverstrades district against those from Goldstrades. Although they called it football it was more like rugby, with the ball being carried around. Somehow, the east and west gates (the Temple of Ulric) of the city were chosen as goals. However, before the first goal was even scored the head went missing. It was thrown into a garden with high walls. A young apprentice was elected (“you’re small; up you get!”) and dived in after it but could not find it. He came back with the bladder of a pig, stolen from the house’s kitchen. Some heard it was later displayed in The Old City by a Tilean.

The apprentice in question was Fredrick Pohl and he currently works in the Silverstrades district.

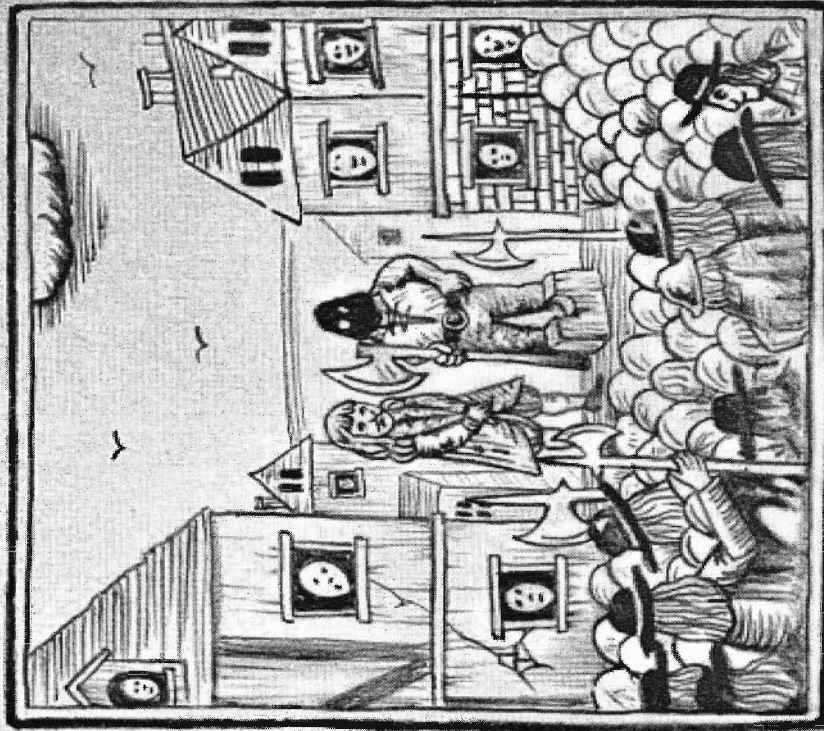
**Fredrick Pohl**

A Potter by trade, Pohl has his own shop on the main thoroughfare where he does good business. A small wiry man, he is a good potter and an exceptional salesman. His technique does not involve a hard sell, but relies on his innate friendliness. He is a jolly looking individual, dressed



# The True Tale of Brave General Karl Reuter of Talabheim and his Traitorous Brother Lucas

Transcribed by Franco Plundervich *FF*



In one heartbeat happiness turned to hate, for dragged through the streets behind a horse was the traitor Lucas and his followers. How could one mother birth two such different siblings, one blessed by Ulric while the other suckled blood from Khaine? His face held no remorse for the two-hundred whom he had killed for nothing more than the blood money of the Middenlanders.

Even though he should have been killed like a rabid dog, his brother insisted he be tried fairly by good men. Outraged by his evil, sentence was proclaimed in Ulric and the Grand Duke's name. Verna's axe was to strike his head from his shoulders and make him Morr's.

Taken from Cantor prison the next morn, the cart brought him to Brandorf Platz. For all that long journey he was mocked and abused by the people he betrayed. Entering the square, he saw the General and spat rude insults at him until the guard laid a stroke on his noggin. Hauled to the platform, the Magistrate asked if he had any last words, and he said:

"Brother. I will haunt you to your grave as you have wronged me." The crowd boomed but his wife spoke. "I ask you Lucas, we have done you no wrong that you have not brought upon yourself, and deserve your revenge." Lucas looked sad and said "Annett, I have loved you for so long and my brother has wronged us both. I will never haunt you." Then, in the sight of the gathered crowds and of all the gods, the sharp axe of justice fell upon his neck.

Thus Kortlheim remained in the rightful borders of the Grand Duchy of Talabheim, and the traitor was punished. Away in Carroburg the Grand Duke cowered like a child, afraid of the greatest hero ever to come from Talabheim, General Karl Reuter. Would the interlopers ever come again, he knew that this great man would bloody their noses.

All I have told you is true; this I say in sight of Ulric and Barrer. May they protect Talabheim, our beloved Grand Duke and General Reuter. May you tell this dark tale to your children, and may they tell it to their children, so the blood spilt is not forgotten and Talabheim remembers who its enemies are.

Printed by Lechner & Karlov, of Talabheim in the year 2474 at the  
sign of the Three Quills

In honour of the most brave General Reuter and our leader, beloved of Ulric.  
Grand Duke Valgris *XX*

And so it was in the year of the Empire 2473 that Grand Duke Friedrich von Bildhofen of Middenland once more sent his army to invade our justly established borders, taking what is rightly established as ours by the divine wisdom of Ulric. Duke Middenland, his nose wanted and his sword hand shaky, sat in Carroburg and looked greedily towards Korltheim.

Could his memory be so short, his advisors so foolish, his brain addled with too much cheap Carroburg ale to have forgotten that we had defeated his army at Korltheim but twelve moons ago? Our hero of that day was Commandant Karl Reuter, defender of Talabheim, beloved of its people. It was he who personally slew Lord Artis von Bildhofen in single combat. The cowardly Lord, who shared the family trait of warts with his uncle the Grand Duke, acted like a common handit not a goodly knight whose actions should be dictated by chivalry and honour. It put paid to the Grand Duke's lies that he knew not of these raids.

The blood of the Lord stirred the Grand Duke's cold heart and he summoned an army to take Korltheim. They came, ten thousand and one strong, promised our land in reward for their dark deeds. Our men, brave soldiers carved from the Grater, the Eye of the Forest, stood to face them. At their head stood Commandant Reuter and he showed no fear. Then from the woods ran a wolf, and he knelt before the Commandant in honour. All could see whom Ulric favoured that day. The battle was bloody; the crows feasted for many days. Still, Morr welcomed them all to his kingdom, for they were not too many. At the height of the battle, Lord Jugeheim saw Reuter's left flank was weak and attacked there. However, the General had laid his trap well. He led his men into the centre of Middenland ranks breaking them in twain, scattering men to the winds of Morr. The Middenlanders ran home with their tails between their legs.

But Grand Duke Middenland did not learn from our victory at

Korltheim. Again he sent his men to death. A year had passed and again two armies marched to meet each other. General Reuter, for he had been so raised by the people, marched out again to defeat the foolish foe. His army was split into two halves, part of a cunning tactic to fool the slow-witted Middenlanders. At the head of the second force marched Lucas Reuter, brother of the general.

But though of the same loins, the men were moulded from different casts. Lucas had sold his soul for a bag of gold, each coin cast with the head of Grand Duke of Middenland. Every good Talabheimer will spit at his name for evermore. Lucas the traitor led the brave sons of Talabheim, born in the Grater of the Sun, into an evil ambush. Few escaped this dastardly deed, leaving their fallen comrades behind them, robbed and mutilated by their cowardly enemy. Laden with gold that Handrich would not touch, Lucas scurried away.

Into the General's camp came these survivors, carrying with them the burden of their grim betrayal. Hearing their tale Reuter swore vengeance on his brother, telling his army that Lucas would be swinging on a gibbet within the week. Guided by the light of Mannsleib he travelled through the night and launched an attack on the Middenland camp. For each son of Talabheim killed in ambush, three of Middenland were taken in revenge. Before the sun rose, they ran for the forests. Running most slowly of all was Lucas Reuter, weighed down with bloodied gold. As the new day rose on the General's victory, the cursed traitor was brought before the General.

So the triumphant army returned to Talabheim, led by the heroic General Reuter at the head of his brave men. Widows cried at the roadside for their loss, but made thanks to the gods their husbands had fallen in defence of Talabheim and the Empire, in the name of Ulric and Sigmarr. Those men who did not join the General's cause could only hang their heads in shame. Much rejoicing was had that the Middenlanders had been defeated and their swords blunted.

Continued from page 30

in a clean apron and looking very well groomed. Standing by his wares outside the shop, he will engage the PCs in conversation about the weather and the latest news, while subtly complimenting them. He will happily stand and talk all day but as soon as the head, General or Lucas Reuter is mentioned, he looks nervous. He will then invite the PCs into his shop and tell his two (now happy) apprentices to lose themselves for an hour.

Pohl looks relieved to be telling the truth about the head as he has thought on it much recently. Thirty years ago, when he climbed into the garden he quickly found the head but hid it and stole the pig's bladder. Later that night he sneaked back with a sack and retrieved the head. Unsure of what to do with it he kept it in a trunk. In the end he took it to Klarfeld, his hometown. His brother had died in the ambush because of Lucas' treachery and he didn't want Lucas' body ever to be laid to rest. There he handed it to his father, Wilhelm, who kept it. Since his father died twenty years ago he has not returned to Klarfeld. He has no idea if the head is there now.

### Klarfeld

The village of Klarfeld sits within the crater, and makes its living from farming. Much of its produce travels the short distance to the city to be sold. Inhabited by a small, close knit community, the death of five young men in the Korltheim ambush was a major blow, leaving most of a generation destroyed. General Reuter is a hero here. The centre point of the village is the alehouse, which is surrounded by a dozen or so homes and other assorted buildings. Cows and sheep roam the area freely and a small crowd of children and barking dogs greets the PCs.

If they arrive in the evening when most people are in the alehouse, they will be warmly greeted. If they arrive in the day they will be met by a young mother and invited indoors for some thin cabbage soup. Wherever the General's name is mentioned it is toasted. If Lucas' name or the subject of the head is raised, frosty silence will descend. Whatever happens, the PCs will soon be approached at the inn by Watch Sergeant Emmerich who asks why they want to know. He is the only representative of the law here but was previously a Sergeant in the city (he also farms the land).

When the PCs come out and ask where the head is, Emmerich will admit that it is in the village. Every year it is taken out, tied to a mule and paraded through the streets while everyone shouts abuse and spits at it. It is their revenge on Lucas, a way of remembering the dead and an excuse for a good drink. This festival is in two days time and Emmerich hints that perhaps it may go astray afterwards. As the skull has been traced to the village Emmerich knows it is better to let it go instead of brining any trouble here. The PCs may see the skull if they so desire. It is hidden in a stout, wooden box in Emmerich's house. They are invited to join the festival, which will be a rowdy, drunken affair.

If Emmerich should be made aware that the skull is that of the General he will be devastated. He will give it to the PCs immediately, telling them that they must do the right thing as quickly as possible. Emmerich has a deep loyalty to the General, serving as one of his men for many years. Previously he had served under Lucas while he was a mercenary.

"The General was brave and clever," he begins his story, "and cared for us, his men. However, after the death of his brother he changed. He never again led us from the front and was cautious in the extreme. His tactics were still good, and he could still inspire his men, but in the end, his injury was just too much for him to bear. He blamed himself for

Lucas' death. I think he thought he should never have given Lucas command. He was a mean man, Lucas, who hated Karl. He blamed him for a wound from a crossbow bolt he took to his shoulder. It was meant for Karl, but hit him by mistake. His arm was never the same after that. I don't think Karl ever realised how much Lucas hated him."

This statement contains the clue that will allow the PCs to prove Lucas has been masquerading as Karl. For Lucas still has the scar from this wound. What the PCs can do about it is another matter.

### "We have the head"

By the time the PCs leave the village they should have the missing head in their possession and realise it is actually that of Karl Reuter as opposed to his brother Lucas. There are a number of possible directions from here.

If they choose to do nothing, the ghost continues to haunt Lucas and he dies, having been driven insane, within the year. However, this does lay the ghost of Karl Reuter to rest. It also means the PCs won't get paid and may well have earned the enmity of the surviving family. The PCs could give the family the head, tell them the story and let them deal with it themselves. In this case, Andrea decides that she owes no loyalty to Lucas Reuter, even though he is her real father, and decides to leave him to his fate. She hides the head, the PCs get paid (the amount is left for the GM to decide), and once Lucas is dead she will arrange for her brother to conduct the necessary ceremonies to give the head a decent burial.

The only way to actually lay the ghost to rest without Lucas dying first is for the head and body to be removed from Traitor's Copse and buried in the city cemetery. However, this will entail a certain amount of problems. The main one is retrieving the corpse. No one outside of the cult of Mórr knows its exact location, and they will not give this information out freely. To obtain it, a member of the Peer House must give permission. To convince a Peer and the Cult, a good explanation of why they should accede to such a request needs to be given. If the PCs have most of the facts and can present them coherently, then they can probably persuade one or more of the Peers to back them, giving them a good chance of obtaining permission.

However, this solution brings problems. Telling the story means revealing the secret of The General. The Reuter children will be against this, but they do not have the power to get the body moved

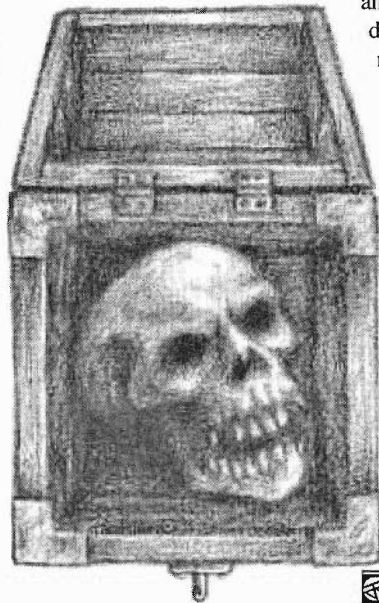
themselves. If the PCs can find someone discreet, convince them of the story and work within Magnus' circle of contacts, they may be able to contain the rumours and still get the body buried in the city. The restless spirit will be laid to rest, the family's and General's reputations will be unscathed, and his children can live their lives as normal. In such a situation, the PCs will have gained allies in (or at least be owed a favour by) Andrea, Magnus and to a lesser degree Siegfried Reuter.

The route that is guaranteed to upset everyone is to make the knowledge public. This is a bad idea, as the PCs will not be believed and they will suffer greatly for their actions. However, doubts will be sowed about the truth and the General's reputation will have a shadow cast across it, one that will affect the three children more than anyone else.

Finally, what of Lucas Reuter? Should the ghost be laid to rest, he recovers but is only ever a shadow of his former self. He withdraws from the world, dying a few years later. If Watch Sergeant Emmerich ever hears the true story, he will track down and murder the General within a few months.

### Experience Points

These are left to the GM to allocate.



# Elf Slavery

## by Ashley Southcott

*My Dearest Stefan,*

*I enclose the following papers from Professor Reier van de Rhecnen: I was luckily able to intercept them from a courier of the Ancient Order of Illuminated Readers before they could spirit them away to Foyle's Rock. I know I place you in some risk by sending them to you, as the late professor's researches are controversial to say the least. By removing them from Marienburg I hope to avoid repercussions from the Order before they discover the remainder of his works. My advice is to hide them amongst the papers in your master's library, where he is least likely to look. I will write in a few weeks to advise you further.*

### The history of slavery amongst the Elves

Prior to the Dwarf-Elf Wars, and the Ulthuan Civil War with the Dru Perim (starting in -2753 IC), High Elven society routinely endorsed slavery. Unlike present Old Worlders and Arabians, who generally view slavery as a condition condoned by their gods, the Elves of old simply viewed slaves as inferior beings. They represented a method of utilising labour for farming, shipping and mining work without having to do much of it themselves. High and Sea Elves were then very expansionist and far more numerous, making exploratory voyages all over the southern hemisphere, particularly along the Lustrian coast where colonies yielded iron, silver, emeralds and timber for shipbuilding. Of course, native humans were usually enslaved or ousted from the lands the Elves conquered. Colony slaves were hobbled and put to work in their mines or in forced labour companies clearing forests as a prelude to building coastal settlements. Slaves exported to Ulthuan from these colonies either ended their days in Caledorian iron mines or toiled on the estates of High Elven noble houses. We shall never know whether slave ownership was of the contributing factor in the increasing friction between Dwarfs and Elves. No Dwarfen chronicle states that this was the case, but perhaps such chronicles were lost in the Time of Woes. Certainly, no major Dwarfen community has ever owned slaves, mostly because of their introspective nature and isolated circumstances. It may also be argued that they never owned slaves because, although they too viewed humanity as inferior, they were too proud to allow their inferior work to taint their holds.

The earliest rebellion by slaves against Elven masters was recorded in -2641 IC. The Hromundarei colony on the Lustrian coast was overthrown and several stolen Elven vessels set sail for the south to escape retribution by the then Phoenix King, Caledor the Conqueror. Due to this and several successive rebellions - all of which were put down - an alliance of several Sea Elven clans mounted a series of debates in the Royal Court. This initiative aimed to reform the slavery laws in an attempt to improve conditions, thereby hoping to avert future rebellions. Perhaps this increasing opposition to slavery derived from the tolerance they developed from their contact with more developed human cultures. Equally, however, it may have arisen from the fear that the slaves - who by this time significantly outnumbered colonial Elves in many settlements - might 'humanise' Elven culture to an irreversible extent. Hardline noble houses in Lothorn, opposed to any proposal to abandon slavery on economic and cultural grounds, did their best to minimise the time allocated to debates. The reliance on slave-derived income from Lustrian colonies at the time, in combination with vociferous opposition from the kindreds of Caledor and Morvael, led to the quashing of any attempt to reduce the Elven emphasis on slaves in their culture.

### Taking sides

The Sea Elven clans were divided by the Phoenix King's decision. Those that increasingly opposed slavery on racial and

compassionate grounds were made less welcome in Lothorn by the High Elven nobility. Perhaps this consortium of clans were better able to see the potential of humanity, or maybe they were simply motivated by fear of future rebellions by superior numbers of slaves. As if to underline the dissension in the alliance, severe storms lashed Sea and High Elven communities on the Lustrian and western Ulthuan coasts in spring -2548 IC. This resulted in the loss of thousands of lives and hundreds of Elven homes. In the end, the eruption of the Civil War (in which thousands of fleeing slaves previously under High Elven thralldom fought on the side of the Naggarothi) decided the matter for them. After the final expulsion of the renegade Elves from Ulthuan in approximately -2219 IC, the High Elven nations found themselves trying to round up and re-enslave thousands of renegade fugitives. Many Elves that had previously supported slavery were either dead or themselves subject to the will of new High Elven masters (a result of the re-allocation of lands to surviving kindreds after the war). In an effort to restrict the influx of yet more humans into a land that had seen much destruction at their hands, legislation was passed that outlawed the Ulthuan slave trade. To the anti-slavery alliance's shock, he further ordered a pogrom against all remaining fugitives. This reduced the influx of slaves into Ulthuan to a trickle: within a few years, no more than a few hundred human slaves existed on the continent.

The remaining colonies in Lustria were dismayed by the Phoenix King's ruling. Having already suffered badly from disease, persistent storm damage and raids by Dark Elven pirates throughout the civil war, many had simply died out. The edict now meant that their income from slave sales and slave-derived timber production was cut off. Several minor houses in Lothorn who were linked to the colonies rebelled against the ruling and were ejected from Ulthuan. Whether they still spend their days on the Lustrian coast, or whether they migrated elsewhere, is unknown.

In -2498 IC, further legislation was passed that required slavery to be phased out during the next thirty years. Many houses took a policy of not replacing dying slaves; others were more active, freeing the humans. During this transition period, freed slaves were rounded up and forcibly returned to Lustria, whether or not they had previously come from there. All slaves remaining on Ulthuan were deported in -2468 IC.

Whilst this stance continued to attract opposition from some noble houses, a quarrelsome nobility was the last thing anyone wanted after a civil war that had come so close to shattering Ulthuan. As a result, the matter was never challenged openly. Once the dissident Sea Elven clans were ordered by the Phoenix King to patrol the coast for slavers, the chances of anyone secretly importing slaves into Ulthuan were reduced to virtually nothing.

### Modern Old World attitudes

The Sea Elf clan in Marienburg, Sith Rionnasc'namishatir, is very much against slave trading. In late 2191 IC they insisted that a clause be inserted into the Treaty of Amity and Commerce outlawing all slave trading activities in the city. Certain trading families rebelled against the loss of income arising from the clause, culminating in the Isstvan family successfully inciting one of the earliest anti-Elf backlashes in 2192. The rioting was quelled by the Black Caps and soldiers belonging to the then Baron of Westerland, after the clan conceded to allow inspections by the Black Caps of their shipping whenever suspicions arose of slave-trading among their own community. Those Isstvan members found guilty of sedition were imprisoned until 2201.

# Marienburg Revisited and Other Assorted Miscellanea

by Alfred Nuñez Jr

Additional Material Anthony Ragan & John Foody

With the release of Hogshead's WFRP sourcebook *Marienburg: Sold down the River*, I thought it was time to dust off some descriptions I wrote when all the WFRP community had was the original articles in *White Dwarf*. The three descriptions are intended to add depth to what has been published. I've also added some information (including an NPC description) to flesh out the Marienburg Gentlemen's Club.

## THE BROTHERHOOD AND KNIGHTS OF PURITY

*"The Brotherhood of Purity? A grand organisation. Nothing like it in the Old World. They work with the poor unfortunates of Marienburg to better their lot. Even run soup kitchens and flop houses for those wretches. Name me one group of wealthy patrons in the Empire who would give much of themselves!"*

*"Bloody dogs, those gets! Youse think that we wouldn't know how to relieve ourselves without their bleedin' help! If it wasn't fer their soup kitchens, me 'n me friends would think nothin' of shakin' down those snot-nose fools."*

*"You need to be careful. There's more to the Brotherhood of Purity than meets the eye. On the outside, they're a charity. But there are rumours. Seems that they have a secret group who root out and expose those who disagree with their view of what's right. So, watch what you say."*

The Brotherhood of Purity is one of the influential social clubs of Marienburg. Its ranks are composed of like-minded well-to-do people who wish to devote time or donate money to help those less fortunate than themselves; mostly widows and orphans. To this end, the Brotherhood operates a number of soup kitchens and flophouses for the poor, chiefly in the southern wards such as Suiddock and Kruiersmuur. The organisation has a good reputation in the city; amongst the rich and poor alike. Indeed, fundraising social events are often held in its name. PCs are likely to come across them when they visit the poorer areas of the city. However, there are rumours that all is not as it seems with the Brotherhood.

Though secret, the membership of the Brotherhood includes some of the more important and respected individuals in Marienburg. Albert Loodemans (M:SdtR, page 58), Guildmaster of the Brotherhood of Seamen and Pilots, is one such member, as is Nadia van Onderzoeker, the younger sister of Director Thijs "the Lesser" (M:SdtR, page 30).

The headquarters of the Brotherhood of Purity is located near the Prince's Rest and Marquandt's Escorts in the Goudberg district. Aside from the coat of arms hanging above the main entrance, the slate grey, two-story building lacks decoration of any sort. Inside the large oaken double doors, a guard sits in the foyer ensuring only members and their guests are admitted. A double door on the opposite wall leads to the large meeting room where members gather once a month to drink Bretonnian cognac and discuss the organisation's business.

Two other doors, one on each wall adjacent to the double doors, exit the foyer. The one on the right leads to the reception room, dining room, kitchen, and guest quarters for visiting dignitaries. Only the upper echelon of the Brotherhood is permitted through the left door. This stout door (T6, D12, CR50) is usually locked and only those who have secured permission to enter carry keys. Not even the foyer guard has a set for that private door.

The restricted door opens to a small room with another door and stairs. Behind the door is a shrine dedicated to Solkan, the god of retribution, vengeance, law, and discipline. The stairs lead to the upper floors where the seven leaders of the Brotherhood have their private quarters and meeting room. The latter is where the real business of the organisation is discussed and plans formalised.

The Brotherhood is, in reality, a front for the semi-secret vigilante group known as the Knights of Purity. The Knights' self-proclaimed mandate and long term objective is the eradication of all mutants and anyone with the slightest taint of Chaos. Unfortunately, the Knights of Purity tend to see such taint in anybody who looks different.

As a means to this end, the Knights conduct night-time raids upon locations believed to be harbouring mutants or other servants of Chaos (such as cultists). These raids generally take place in the poorer

sections of Marienburg. Some of their victims may not have obvious mutations, but that doesn't matter to the Knights, who will be more than certain that these victims were tainted.

The Knights of Purity have a secret base in the Doodkanaal district from where they conduct their raids into the southern slums of Marienburg (the Doodkanaal, Kruiersmuur, and Suiddock districts). The League of Gentlemen Entrepreneurs takes a particular interest in any Knights of Purity activity in the Suiddock, especially since rumours abound linking the Knights to the Marienburg Watch.

In conjunction with mutant raids, the Knights of Purity have taken steps to infiltrate both the Marienburg Watch and Judiciary. While the membership of this body rarely exceeds 20-30 people, the influence of Knights is disproportionately high. All members are united in their desire for law and order, not necessarily the justice embraced by the weak of heart. They also use their influence to protect those members who run afoul of the less vigilant Watch.

Though few have heard of them, the Knights of Purity do have their enemies. These include judges, magistrates, and the few uncorrupted Watchmen in the city who oppose the Knights' vigilante activities. There is also opposition from the Merchants' Guild, as vigilante acts are bad for business. In addition, the hierarchies of the cults of Verena and Shallya oppose the Knights' efforts.

Although not truly xenophobic (but very close), the Knights of Purity are very distrustful of outsiders who keep to themselves. In particular, Arabians, Cathayans,



Indics, Kislevites, Nipponese, and Sea Elves are viewed as potentially disruptive to the order the Knights of Purity hope to achieve. Some critics even claim that the Knights seek to achieve racial purity in the cosmopolitan city. Further, the Elves are resented for the clearly preferential treatment they received in the Treaty of 2150 I.C. This allowed them a settlement outside the jurisdiction of Marienburg, and hence beyond the reach of the members of the Knights in the Watch.

**JOHANNES RECHTBINDER**

**Judge, Cleric Level 3, ex-Student, ex-Lawyer, ex-Initiate**

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	38	37	4	4	10	50	1	52	64	76	66	67	53

**Alignment:** Law (Solkan)

**Magic Points:** 36

**Skills:** Arcane Language-Magick, Cartography, Cast Spells-Clerical 1, Cast Spells-Clerical 2, Cast Spells-Clerical 3, Demon Lore, Etiquette, History, Identify Undead, Immunity to Disease, Law, Magic Sense, Magical Awareness, Manufacture Scrolls, Meditate, Numismatics, Public Speaking, Read/Write, Scroll Lore, Secret Language-Classical, Secret Signs-Lawyer, Speak Additional Language (Breton), Theology, Torture

**SPELLS: Level One:** [Battle] Cure Light Injury, Detect Magic, Fireball, Steal Mind, [Demonic] Dispel Lesser Demons, Zone of Demonic Protection, [Elemental] Hand of Fire, Magic Light

**Level Two:** [Battle] Lightning Bolt, Smash, Zone of Sanctuary, [Demonic] Zone of Demonic Nullification, [Elemental] Resist Fire

**Level Three:** [Battle] Dispel Magic, Cause Instability  
**Trappings:** Sword, Amulet of Protection (1AP all over), Judge's Wig and Gown, Lawyer's Wig and Gown, and Purse (4d10 Gu, 5d10 shillings).

**Quotes:** "In the final analysis, it is the letter of the law that must prevail. The intent of the individual is of little consequence."

"The only way to defeat Chaos is to root out the cancerous group of its followers, even if that means removing the innocent dupes who protect them."

"Harbouring miscreants such as mutants is an offence to all Divine Laws. We, therefore, petition the Courts to fulfil their obligation to the good people of Marienburg. Execute the mutant and sentence the defendant here to a life of hard labour on Rijker's Isle."

**Appearance:** Johannes has been the Lord Protector of the Knights of Purity for over 20 years. The 55 year old priest stands 6 ft., weighs 175 lbs. with short grey hair, clean shaven face, and piercing ice blue eyes.

**Personality and motivations:** Once a formidable prosecutor in the High Courts, Johannes has sat on the bench as judge during the last 10 years. Many are the prisoners on Rijker's Isle who can thank this humourless, hard-hearted judge for their current lodgings and other accommodations.

Johannes has come a long way since his lowly beginnings. His father was a Suiddock stevedore, his mother died before his second year. Early on he learnt his father would spend some evenings attacking immigrants in the area, "those scum who take our work." He followed his father in the job at the age of twelve, but by then, he had taught himself to read. His intelligence and leadership qualities brought to the notice of one of the Guild Leaders and he was brought into work as a dock clerk, acting as a go between the guild and the men.

Moving slowly up the hierarchy, he married the daughter of one of the Guild leaders, and they had a son. This young talent with forthright views brought him to the attraction of a Cleric of Solkan, a High Court Lawyer. He made him an initiate of Solkan, and soon a clerk in his Law firm. A year later his wife and son were dead, killed in a street robbery. A pair of Tileans were caught and executed, but this random act of violence tipped the balance of doubt in his mind; Johanne's resolve was now set.

Convinced that society's morals were in decline and that the surly criminal element was increasing (some of whom, no doubt, were followers of Chaos), Johannes became more active in the cult of Solkan. He moved his way up the cult hierarchy swiftly. Now as the highest ranked priest of Solkan in the city, Johannes can rely upon the followers of Solkan to wholeheartedly support the Knights of Purity in their holy cause.

As set forth in the charter, Johannes maintains that outward good works and charity must be coupled with a more active role in eliminating the influence of Chaos

from Marienburg society. Naturally, he is extremely active in planning the Knights' activities with an eye to both detail and overall strategy. Johannes is also extremely concerned about security within the organisation, as several recent raids did not achieve the capture of mutants and arrest of their sympathisers as he expected. Clearly, Johannes suspects that there may be a spy in the organisation and is formalising plans to flush out the unfaithful. Once uncovered, the fate of the individual will be determined by the will of Solkan.

**Connections:** Johannes is well known among the pillars of power in Marienburg. None – including his peers on the bench of the High Court - suspect that the solemn judge is anything more than a strict, unyielding, and incorruptible jurist.

The Lord Protector gets along well with Arhennius Vogt, High Warden of Rijker's Isle, who sees Johannes as a disciplinarian much as himself. In fact, Johannes believes that Mijnheer Vogt is better qualified to run the fortress-prison than the foppish Governor, Ludwig de Beq. However, he is undecided about the merits of recruiting the High Warden into the Knights.

Waldemar Duisterjager is Johannes' second in command and one of the more fanatical followers of Solkan. Johannes has no doubts about the Witch Hunter's loyalty, and entrusts him to carry out the most discreet and dirtiest assignments for the Knights of Purity. In return, the Lord Protector uses his considerable influence to ensure Waldemar's ability to operate freely. This allows Waldemar to conduct the Knights' business with little interference from misguided legal constraints. Other Knights find it safer and saner to avoid Waldemar, if possible. The Witch Hunter suspects everyone other than Johannes as possible dupes of Chaos. The scantiest of evidence may be enough for Waldemar to take swift and often summary action.

Johannes also recently elevated Maria van Reeveltd to the inner order of the Knights after she demonstrated her commitment to their cause and principles. Since then, Maria has become one of Johannes' most trusted aides.

**MARIENBURG SECRETARIAT FOR TRADE EQUITY**

"I tell ya, don't mess with the Lord 'Arbormaster. 'E'll get ya one way or another. If ya don't pay the taxes to 'is Excise boys, the Patrol will lock ya up in the Brig. And that place is rat infested, believe ya me."

"It's bad enough they charge 1 Guilder per foot of boat, but they charge you the extra foot if it's just a fraction longer than you claim. It's robbery I tell you."

"The daft part about it is that if most of your body is over the water, you're subject to Port Law. If most of your body is on land, you're answerable to that Ward's laws and its Watch. If you're exactly in between, you can be dragged into both sets of Courts. There's no way to come out on top... lest you're one of the rich."



Located next to the Niederbrug Bridge on Hightower Isle, this office is located in the Admiralty Building, a large, three-storied, green painted set of offices with white trim. The Secretariat is the centre of all activities relating to the functioning of the Port of Marienburg. It is also the domain of the Lord Harbourmaster, who is responsible for collecting all duties and docking fees from ships, as well as enforcing Port Law. Additionally, the Lord Harbourmaster doubles as the Commandant of the River Watch and has jurisdiction over anything and everything waterside.

Anyone desiring to meet the Lord Harbourmaster will be in for a disappointment as Odvaal van den Huister only makes time for members of the Directorate or their representatives. Demanding characters will have to bluff their way past one of the four Captains of the Harbour Watch, which is very unlikely. The range of personalities of the Captains vary from the literally useless, self-serving Edwin Kaardscherp to the coolly competent, incorruptible Johannes Zeewanden.

In theory, the four Harbour Watch Captains work closely with the Magistrate of the Excise, Konraad van Goot. Van Goot is the taskmaster who ensures that the scribes reporting to him record the arrival and departure of all ships conducting legitimate business in Marienburg. Particularly dedicated scribes are elevated by van Goot to the Honourable Chamber of Auditors. The tasks of this worthy body include the compilation and maintenance of tax records, auditing of funds received to ensure proper accounting, and perusal of receipts to verify collection from the Excise. The centre of the dreaded Port Excise is located on the first floor of the building below the offices and suites of the Lord Harbourmaster and his Captains.

Various taxes are levied on goods and people entering the city. Some of the more common are listed below, but others come and go for economic and political reasons.

- One Guilder (Gu) for every foot of length of a boat berthing in port (rounded up to the nearest foot).

- 2% tax on estimated value of cargo arriving in Marienburg, 10% for those arriving at Fort Solace.
- Five shillings per leg for those entering the city via the Gisoreux Road (Westenpoort Gate) or the Middenheim Road (Oostenpoort Gate). An additional Gu is levied on carts and wagons.
- Five shillings road toll per person collected at Fort Bergbres (on the Westerland/Brettonian border) and Wouduin Tollstation (on the Westerland/Imperial border). Duties on specific Bretonnian and Imperial goods are collected at the appropriate border locations.

The Admiralty Court - where violators of Port Law are tried - is located on the ground floor. This is the personal fiefdom of Ludwig Nauzicht, Chief Magistrate of the Port Judiciary. Ludwig has two senior and five junior magistrates with whom he shares the caseload. In addition, seven lawyers specialising in Port Law are subordinate to Ludwig. This could easily be seen as a conflict of interest in cases where Ludwig is the presiding magistrate. One should be careful with levelling such a charge, however, as Ludwig takes such opinions as a personal affront. The Chief Magistrate considers his objectivity as being beyond reproach. Opposition lawyers who are brazen (or foolish) enough to put forth such a charge find themselves serving a few days in the Brig for Contempt of Court. This much-feared prison lies beneath the Courts, and all those with a date in the Court wait here. It is damp (water often rises to a couple of inches), dingy, rat infested and filled with fear.

The main River Watch has its barracks near the docks. There are anywhere between two to four patrols operating at a single time. Although the crew in the Suiddock is twice the size, each River Watch patrol normally consists of four to six Marines and one Sergeant. Like the neighbourhood Watch Houses on land, the River Watch maintains small boathouses and offices in the other islands of Marienburg. There are only eight of these and they are generally manned by a single patrol of Marines.

There may also be a novice priest of Manann stationed at a particular boathouse. Their role is two-fold:

- 1) To constantly seek out information pertaining to the outlawed cult of Stormfels
- 2) To deal with any problem which the typical River Watchman is not equipped to handle, such as abusive Wizards.

All Manann priests so assigned report to Kaspar Gollfied, the highest ranking priest designated to aid the Lord Harbourmaster.

**EDWIN KAARDSCHERP, ASSISTANT TO THE LORD HARBOURMASTER, CAPTAIN OF THE HARBOUR WATCH  
Merchant, ex-Gambler, ex-Charlatan, ex-Exciseman**

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
5	38	36	4	4	10	54	1	55	58	62	53	47	56

**Alignment:** Neutral (Too self-centred to worship anyone)

**Skills:** Blather, Charm, Disguise, Embezzle, Evaluate, Gamble, Haggle, Law, Luck, Magical Sense, Mimic, Numismatics, Palm Object, Public Speaking, Read/Write (Breton, Reikspiel, and Tilean), Ride, Secret Language-Guilders, Seduction, Speak Additional Language (Breton and Tilean), Supernumerate, Wit

**Trappings:** Hand Weapon, Deck of Cards, Town House, Warehouse (on Stoessel), and Purse (8d10 Gu, 3d10 Shillings).

**Quotes:** "Don't bother me with details. I have other, higher priorities on my mind."

"Look, I don't care if a ship has run aground near the mouth of the Bruynwater Kanaal. Nor do I care if it is snarling traffic. I have more important things like closing this business deal now before I lose another 100 Guilders."

"If you don't like it, see my superior. I'm late for another appointment."

**Appearance:** The blond hair, blue-eyed Edwin is a conceited ass of the highest order. Somehow, the 6ft 2in, 202 lb. miscreant was appointed to his post over the strenuous objections of Odvaal van den Huister.

**Personality and motivations:** Edwin is concerned with nothing other than his own advancement and enrichment. As is obvious to those who admit knowing him, Edwin grossly overrates his skills as a merchant and his worth as a human being. It is even common knowledge to all but Edwin that the courtesans at "Hændryk's Beauties" in Guilderveld charge him thrice the normal rate.

**Connections:** Rumors have it that Edwin is a relative of one of the powerful merchant families that run Marienburg. In fact, he is a second cousin to Crispijn van Haagen, heir to that family's fortune. As a businessman, Edwin is an utter failure, although he continues to posture as a success. Edwin can be found at some of the plushier Gaming establishments, such as "Three of a Kind" on Elfgate Bridge, during his off-duty hours. Usually his stay is a short one since Edwin has an uncanny way of annoying

even the most tolerant person.

At heart, Edwin is still a gambler. Although born to a privileged life, he was the only (and very spoilt) child in the family. He spent much of his youth hanging around disreputable gambling dens making a name for himself as an easy source of funds and an unbearable twit. It wasn't that he was a bad gambler - he just never knew when to give up. His father could not turn a blind eye to his son's activities, and sent to study in Tilea. Soon bored, Edwin joined up with another expatriate named Serena. They made a fine team, conning local nobles into supplying funds to help "Countess" Serena regain her family home.

Edwin escaped with his life after the ruse was discovered. However, he decided not to tell Serena that their plot was unearthed. He is unaware whether she is alive, dead or in prison. Returning to Marienburg, his uncle insisted he take a proper job instead of distracting his son Crispijn. A post in the Secretariat was arranged, with strict orders not to reveal his family connections. To do such would mean the removal of his small monthly payments. Thus, Edwin finds himself indignantly trapped until he "turns things around."

Edwin's relationship with the Lord Harbourmaster is best described as a very strong and mutual dislike for each other. His peers have little, if any, respect for Edwin and probably wouldn't mind seeing something untoward happen to him.

However, Edwin does have one close ally. Klaus Rathold, one of the excisemen under his command, has decided loyalty to Edwin offers his best prospect of advancement. Edwin loathes him but finds him useful as a manservant. However, Klaus's dogged desire to please has currently placed Edwin in a difficult position. Klaus recently found a parcel of Ranald's Delight on a boat and decided to give to Edwin. Now it sits under Edwin's floorboards while he worries about it. On one hand he knows it will make him some good money, and perhaps friends, but on the other hand, someone out there is missing a small fortune in addictive happiness.

**JOHANNES ZEEWANDEN, LORD HARBOURMASTER'S ASSISTANT, CAPTAIN OF THE HARBOUR WATCH  
ex-Marine, ex-Sea Mate**

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	64	59	5	5	13	48	3	54	66	55	57	47	64

**Alignment:** Neutral (Manann)

**Skills:** Animal Care-Parrot, Boat Building, Consume Alcohol, Disarm, Dodge Blow, Law, Numismatics, Row, Sailing, Secret Language-Battle Tongue, Speak Additional Language (Breton), Specialist Weapon-Fencing Weapon, Storytelling, Street Fighting, Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Stun, Swim.

**Trappings:** Mail Shirt (1AP body), Rapier (I +20, D -1), Dagger (I +10, D -2, P -20), and Purse (with d6 Gu, 2d6 Shillings).

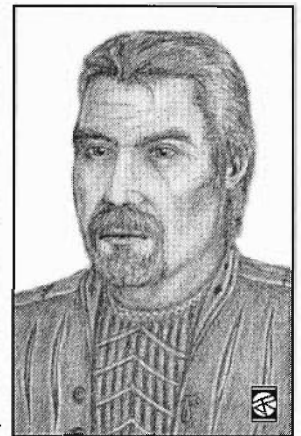
**Quotes:** "So you want to know about the Lady's Pride? What's your business with the ship? Owner, you say? Do you have the bill of sale or certificate of ownership? No? Do you know the Captain's name? Let's see... no, that's not the name. What's your name again?"

"How's that? Information about the arrival of ships in the Suiddock today, and their cargo? That's rather privileged information, sir. Let me move that weighted bag for you so I can make room for the daily log."

"You want to offer a contribution to the River Watch of 5 Guilders? That, sir, is attempted bribery of a public official. You're lucky that I'm in a good mood tonight. I'll grant you a choice: pay a fine of 20 Guilders or spend some time as our guest in the Brig. I'll even throw in a date with the Courts if you pick the second choice. So, what's your pleasure?"

**Appearance:** Johannes has medium brown hair, with a touch of grey (he's 41) and pale-grey eyes. He stands at 5ft 7in and weighs 187 lbs. He speaks in a calm, even voice unless he is pushed to anger. He then speaks slowly in a deep voice that indicates to any, but the most obtuse, that they have stepped over the line. Quick, intelligent people will recognise that this is the time to make amends before they are thrown out into either the streets or the Brig.

**Personality and motivations:** Johannes is the only assistant to the Lord Harbourmaster who is not a political appointee, which explains why he is the only one with night duty (late evenings to dawn). Relative to other city officials, Johannes is considered incorruptible. This doesn't infer that he cannot be bribed. Fact is Johannes will sell the type of information that will not put his command and position at risk. These are



typically minor bits such as directions, ship arrivals and departures, and the place of registry of any specific ship. The only requirement Johannes has is that any attempt at bribery be discreet. He will easily recognise clumsy and obvious attempts at bribery, which could land the briber in the Brig with a date to visit the Port Law Courts.

After spending his early life eking out a living on the streets of Marienburg, Johannes believed the tales of wealth to be gained at sea and became a Marine. Putting his talents for brawling to use, he joined a small trading company sailing to Bretonnia and back. He proved himself a loyal crewmember, and was promoted to the position of First Mate. In Marienburg he had made friends with Odvaal van Huuister, then a Lord Harbourmaster's Assistant, after they found themselves on the same side in a barroom brawl. The friendship almost put his life in danger. By accident, he discovered his captain and some of the crew were smuggling in various heavily taxed items. In truth, it didn't bother him much. However, he soon learned they planned to put him out of the way. He approached van Huuister with the information. However, van Huuister convinced him to sail with them one more time, in order to fully uncover what they were up to. The scheme worked, and various crewmembers are still rotting in prison. The newly promoted van Huuister rewarded Johannes with his current position.

**Connections:** Johannes is a long-time friend and confidante of Lord Harbourmaster Odvaal van Huuister. Together, they work to minimise the damage caused by Edwin Kaardscherp's ineptitude and callousness. Johannes also gets the task of being the liaison with the Suiddock Watch and Captain Graveland. Johannes grudgingly finds himself respecting Graveland, despite the fools and incompetents the Suiddock Captain has under his command.

Currently Johannes spends much of his spare time trying to track down a particularly vicious smuggling ring. He believes they are smuggling slaves out of Marienburg through a number of the bigger Mercantile Houses. He suspects the recent deaths of two of his men were a result of this investigation. Officially, the investigation is outside his jurisdiction and he has been publicly reprimanded once. However, he has the private support of the Lord Harbourmaster to continue the operation.

**SUIDDOCK WATCH BARRACKS**

*"Jes' be careful by the Barracks. Them Watch are some o' the meanest cusses ya'd ever come across in the whole Suiddock. 'Ave to be, to survive there."*

*"Captain Graveland knows how to take care of his men. Look at them. They're better armed than some of the private militias."*

*"If they were any good, why is there still lots of crime in the Suiddock? I think they've been bought out by criminals. Where else would they get the money to equip themselves so? I doubt that the Stadsraad would authorise more money to them than the Watch gets in the Guilderveld. Mark my words, I think Captain Graveland is probably as corrupt as the rest of them."*

The Suiddock Watch Barracks is a large, bluish-grey stone building situated on the northern bank of Luydenhoek Isle across from Hightower Isle. A stone stairway leads up to a set of heavy oak doors (T 7, D 15, CR 50) six feet above the street level. The windows of the raised ground floor are nothing more than arrow slits while those at street level are small and barred by a heavy grate. The Marienburg coat of arms hangs over the top of the stairs.

Inside the double door is the lobby of the Suiddock Ward Barracks. At all times, two Watchmen are on duty at the receiving desk handling all sorts of people - ranging from spouses and lovers of the accused, to lawyers of same, to witnesses giving statements. There are two doors at opposite ends of the lobby. One leads to the barracks and meeting rooms of the Watch, while the other leads to stairs descending to the six holding cells and interrogation room. Each cell usually accommodates four people, although more can be crammed in if needed. Water seeps into the cells during high tide, making things rather uncomfortable. Only severe flooding poses any threat to prisoners.

Lieutenant Vincent van Prim is typically the man in charge, as Captain Theophilus Graveland is often making the rounds in the Suiddock. Vincent is not a happy man. He prefers cracking heads of lawbreakers to dealing with the whiny merchants who feel that the understaffed and underpaid Watch should do more to protect their interests. To make matters worse, Vincent must answer, in Graveland's name, all Commandant Escottus van Haaring's snivelling replies to these same complaints.

Several Watch Sergeants can be found at the Ward Barracks or leading patrols nearby. One of these, Wilhelm Hoogtoran, is an informant for Loretta Wakker of the Marienburg Gentlemen's Club. Wilhelm is smitten by her and foolishly dreams of the day that they can escape the dreariness of the city together. Unfortunately for the Sergeant and his criminal associates, Captain Graveland is well aware - as are his trusted Lieutenant and Sergeants (except the vicious Reiner Kuypers) - of Wilhelm's duplicity. After all, he's not that good a spy. Graveland keeps Wilhelm preoccupied with other matters, assigning him the more time-consuming and unimportant tasks.

The Captain even intentionally feeds Wilhelm misleading information from time to time, knowing the Watch Sergeant will pass it along to his other masters.

Unlike the Watch of other districts, the Suiddock Black Caps have their own resident Wizard, Astrid Sterstaren. Once a member of the Suiddock Watch, Astrid came into the services of the Wizard Theodosius Mistivinger. Theodosius was a crotchety old man who needed some protection, as he made enemies without much effort. He recognised her latent magical abilities and took Astrid as his apprentice. Within a few years, Astrid was a Wizard in her own right, a member of standing in the Wizards' and Alchemists' Guild. As stated in her dead master's will, Astrid inherited all of Theodosius' possessions and townhouse.

In time, Astrid became bored with her existence and jumped at the chance to rejoin her old Sergeant, Graveland, when he approached her with a substantial offer a year ago. In addition, the donation Captain Graveland made to the Wizards' and Alchemists' Guild was more than enough to overcome any objections they may have had about Astrid's involvement with the Watch. Her skills have better enabled Captain Graveland to deal with the more difficult situations that arise in the Suiddock.

Some believe that the Suiddock Watch are readying themselves for an armed struggle of some sort. Rumours of a possible gang war in the northern section of the city (M:StdR, page 36) may be giving Graveland the jitters. After all, gang wars in the past have spilled into the Suiddock no matter where they originated. However, some misguided merchants assume that these changes are the result of their frequent complaints to the Stadsraad. The resulting political pressure on the Watch Commandant may be forcing Graveland to act at last. Those that spread these tales point to the circulating gossip on the street that the Watch Captain is more tense and short-tempered than normal. No one knows the reason for sure, however, since there are very few, if any, who would dare ask Graveland directly.

Whatever the cause of tension within the Suiddock Watch, its effects are telling on some of the lowly Watchmen. Lodewijck Breedveld has taken to hanging around with Alicia Louter, one of the barmaids at a Stoessel dive called "the Gull and the Mermaid." Ambitious and domineering, the relatively delusional Alicia sees Lodewijck as her meal ticket out of the seedy dive and away from her lecherous (drug dealing, and sometimes even slave trading) landlord, Sjef Huisman. In turn, the self-styled Doktor Huisman prepares "medicine" to relax and quiet Lodewijck's nerves. The medicine is addictive and will, in time, bring the Watchman into Sjef's service as an unwitting spy within the Suiddock Watch.

**REINER KUYPER, WATCH SERGEANT, SUIDDOCK DISTRICT  
ex-Watchman, ex-Mercenary Sergeant**

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	57	54	6*	4	11	53	2	42	45	39	46	42	38

**Alignment:** Neutral (Solkan- Not Devout)

**Skills:** Consume Alcohol, Dodge Blow, Gamble, Secret Language-Battle Tongue, Street Fighting, Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Stun, Very Strong\*

**Trappings:** Mail Shirt (1AP body), Shield (1AP all over), Sword, Club, and Purse (2d6 Gu, 5d6 Shillings)

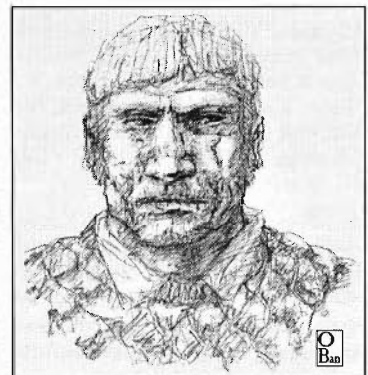
**Quotes:** *"Once he wakes up, he'll talk. Take my word. His words will likely be a bit garbled though. What's that? If he didn't want his jaw broke, then he shouldn't have bit me."*

*"Just so you understand, slime, I don't like you. If I see or hear that you laid another hand on this woman, I will make your life miserable. Understand?"*

*"You want to know how I can eat this sausage surrounded by the carnage in this warehouse? Actually, it's easier than you think."*

**Appearance:** The 6ft, 185lb, blond-haired Reiner has a very craggy face with a scar across the left cheek. His blue eyes are intense. His gaze looks to people as if he is memorising his surroundings as if they are the features of someone who crossed him. Generally, Reiner's demeanour is very stoical. If he shows any expression at all, it's most likely a sneer rather than a smile.

**Personality and motivations:** Reiner is as mean and tough as any Watchman under Captain Graveland's command. Reiner is so completely dedicated to his job that the blond haired, blue eyed, 35 year old doesn't have any outside interest. It is a rare event for anyone to see Kuypers off duty and being semi-social, unless it's when he





is in the company of Captain Graveland at the Pelican's Perch.

Reiner seems to get his pleasure from goading suspects and criminals in the hope that the fool will take a swing at him. In this manner, the sadistic Reiner has the excuse to beat the living daylight out of the fool. Should a suspect or criminal ignore the goading, Reiner will tire of the game after a couple more choice comments. Few are those who try to retaliate later, as most fear the resulting retribution from the Suiddock Watch.

Kuyper is a Watchman through and through. His father was one before him and his father before him. His father was killed when Kuyper was only five and he has idolised him ever since. His life is the Watch and the Suiddock. He lives in a single room in the Suiddock, looked after by his elderly landlady.

**Connections:** Reiner and Captain Graveland have grown to be close friends, as both have survived the hardship of living and working in the Suiddock. Reiner thinks that Wilhelm Hoogtoran is a little too spineless to be an effective Watch Sergeant and doesn't know that his comrade is a snitch for Loretta Wakker of the Marienburg Gentlemen's Club. Should the truth become known, Hoogtoran's continuing health wouldn't be worth two shillings.

Reiner detests the River Watch and will find ways to annoy them or get in the way of their business. Thumping them is an excellent way of resolving territorial differences. Reiner is also very wary of the League of Gentlemen Entrepreneurs and their lackeys, the Stevedores' & Teamsters' Guild. Still, he's a realist and knows the dangers of being caught tangling with either of the two "rulers" of the Suiddock.

**GRUNNI "HOT IRONS" SNAGGLEBEARD, TORTURER**  
ex-Jailer, ex-Ratcatcher

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
3	50	32	6	6*	11	32	1	32	49	39	62	69	19

**Alignment:** Neutral (Grunni)

**Skills:** Animal Trainer-Dog, Concealment Urban, Consume Alcohol, Heal Wounds, Immunity to Disease, Immunity to Poison (Beastbane, Manbane, and Spider's Venom), Mining, Palm Object, Set Trap, Silent Move Urban, Smithing, Specialist Weapon-Flail, Specialist Weapon-Sling, Specialist Weapon-Whip, Spot Trap, Torture, Very Resilient\*

**Trappings:** d10 Knives, Whips (to hit -10, D -2, Parry -20), Irons, Set of Keys, and Purse (d3 shillings, 2d6 pennies).

**Psychology:** Gallows humour.

**Quotes:** "Pay attention now. Fer this round of questioning you 'ave a choice, thumb screws or 'ot irons. What's yer pleasure?"

"I think you should stop 'anging around doing nothing. Perhaps you would prefer to lay down and stretch awhile. Or, maybe you want to go fer a dip with some furry critters. Kind of makes yer skin crawl, eh?"

"Sorry, you lost any water privilege. Better 'ope for a 'igh tide."

**Appearance:** Unkempt. Not fit for proper company. These are some of the polite words and phrases used to describe the 4ft 9in, 155lb Grunni. More accurately, the 87 year old bald, brown eyed and bearded Dwarf is just plain filthy. This lack of hygiene is what one would expect from someone with Grunni's choice of career.

**Personality and motivations:** What the caustic and sarcastic Grunni does excel in is performing his role of Jailer and Interrogator for the Suiddock Watch. Most people would describe Grunni as a sick Dwarf. In contrast, the Jailer/Torturer considers himself as a Dwarf who likes his job and appreciates its lighter moments. Around the Barracks, Grunni is known for his humour, though not all appreciate its finer qualities. In these moments, Grunni's boisterous laughter can be heard well before the smellier aspects of his being are noticed.

No matter how one views Grunni, he is effective and efficient at extracting information from those given to his care. When dealing with the more stubborn suspects, the Dwarf is joined by Sergeant Kuyper in a team effort they call "Bad Torturer, Worse Cop." Often, the teamwork of the two breaks the suspect down rather quickly, although the suspect is usually worse for the experience. This method does occasionally lead to unfortunate accidents.

To ease the time between interrogations, Grunni devises little tortures for any prisoner who annoys him. This could be something as cruel as "accidentally" spilling their bowl of gruel, scraping it back into the bowl and handing it to them. He may



even give them a mixture of salt and fresh water to slack their thirst. If he really dislikes someone, Grunni may wait until the coldest part of the night and force them to strip for a time when no one is around.

**Connections:** None. Most people stay away from Grunni for reasons of good sense and overpowering smell. Even other Dwarfs go out of their way to avoid Grunni. It is a situation Grunni is happy to maintain. He refuses to discuss his past and will get angry quickly if anyone persists in asking him. Captain Graveland has heard rumours that a Dwarf Merchant tried to investigate Grunni's history but it seems he got nowhere.

**THE MARIENBURG GENTLEMEN'S CLUB**

Described in *M:SdtR* (page 67), the Marienburg Gentlemen's Club is the nerve centre of the criminal organisations in the city. The first thing people notice upon entering this "typical" Riddra tavern is the monster of a man behind the bar. Olaf Thurgansson is a huge Norscan who doubles as the Gentlemen's Club barkeep and bouncer. Despite his size, Olaf is talkative with customers about unimportant topics, like the weather, stories from his homeland, and other mundane matters. In contrast, he is very tight-lipped about the establishment and its owners. Annoying, overly aggressive, or prying customers get to learn the less pleasant aspects of Olaf's personality first hand. Many of these chaps are barely able to crawl away and find a safe haven to heal.

Ranging in age from mid-teens to late 20s and in appearance from pretty to homely, several barmaids work in the common room serving customers their drinks, drugs, and whatever else strikes their fancy. A couple of semi-private booths to one side of the common room offer additional opportunities and a sense of privacy. The only requirement imposed upon the barmaids is that they do not enthrall a customer to the point of financially ruining them, as it's bad business. Better to provide them with a service that renders them addicted and brings them back for more.

However unlikely it may be there is a small chance that bumbling adventurers may find their way into the Club and live to tell about it. Of course, that's also assuming that adventurers can survive their journey into and out of the slum-infested, crime-ridden part of the Suiddock where three-penny bridge and this establishment are located.

PCs with roguish backgrounds may want to walk boldly into the Gentlemen's Club to join the League of Gentlemen Entrepreneurs, or "The Guild We Never Heard of." While brash enough to initially impress with one's boldness (or foolishness, depending upon other circumstances), it's not the typical way one tries to join the League (more fully described in *M:SdtR*, pages 36-37). Two other audacious and potential more successful methods are described in "Behind the Scenes" (*Warpstone* 11, pg. 8-9). Apart from local patrons, only League members in good standing and long service are permitted to the Gentlemen's Club without previous approval by either Adalbert Henschmann or Loretta Wakker, the Manager.

Loretta is ever watchful for talented individuals who could contribute to the Business. Anyone, even PCs, walking into the Club will be quickly sized up. If Loretta likes what she sees, she'll continue to observe the stranger. She may even approach them and engage in idle conversation, all the while appraising them as if they were a gem in the rough. If they continue to impress her, Loretta will arrange for them to be followed and observed for three to five days. Once all her concerns have been answered, Loretta will personally arrange for a contract assassin to meet with the individual to offer them a position with the League. Should the individual turn down the offer, then the assassin has the leave to ensure that the declining individual is unable to tell anyone that they were ever approached.

Another way to gain membership of the League is through one of the other significant members. In particular, Miguelito Nuñez (*M:SdtR*, page 36) is looking for some imaginative and ruthless individuals with a predisposition for violence (sounds like the typical PC!), in the event that his ambition leads to hostilities with Guan Lo Fat (*M:SdtR*, page 36). Other League leaders may be coerced into preventing such recruitment as they seek to prevent the onset of a bloody gang war.

**LORETTA WAKKER**  
Spy, ex-Bawd, ex-Thief

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	52	50	4	3	9	58	2	54	51	54	63	45	63

**Alignment:** Neutral (Hændryk- Not Devout)

**Skills:** Act, Bribery, Charm, Concealment- Urban, Cryptography, Dance, Disguise, Etiquette, Evaluate, Gambling, Linguistics, Luck, Mimic, Palm Object, Prepare Poison, Pick Lock, Read/Write, Secret Language-Thieves' Tongue, Secret Signs-Thieves', Seduction, Shadowing, Silent Move-Urban, Sixth Sense, Sing, Specialist Weapon-Fist, Specialist Weapon-Parrying, Street Fighting, Wit

**Trappings:** Sword, d3 Hairpins (treat as a dagger for wounds, ignore any armour points for mail if a natural 6 is rolled for damage (this indicates that the hairpin/stiletto was able to slide past the chain links), Knuckledusters, Dagger, Codebook &

Disguise Kit

**Quotes:** "I know that you would like to spend some quality time with me, sweetmeats, but I don't mix business with pleasure. And you are definitely on the business side of things."

"Sir, if you can't behave yourself, I'll throw you out."

"Let's get something straight. I don't like you in the least. So, I have this proposition for you: leave immediately and live. Otherwise, I won't be responsible for Olaf's behavior."

**Appearance:** Manager of the Marienburg Gentlemen's Club, Loretta Wakker is a tall, fine-looking woman in her late thirties with a medium build, startling blue eyes, and long blonde hair. She often wears her hair in the latest fashion, using hairpins to hold it up. These same hairpins are so sharp that they double as stilettoes (see above). She wears makeup to cover a long scar on her left cheek.

**Personality and motivations:** The relationship of Loretta to Adalbert "Casanova" Henschmann (M:SdtR, page 67) is purely business. She has his complete confidence and therefore can "remove" problems and enforce other solutions without his permission. She is an excellent judge of character and Henschmann is known to ask her advice on occasion. She is intelligent and quick-witted, possessed of a sharply sarcastic sense of humour.

Loretta is a cold-hearted woman who has lied and cheated her way to the top. That is not to say she has no talents. She does, and uses them ruthlessly when necessary. She has killed in her time but wouldn't directly involve herself anymore now she has reached the heights of her ambition. Her high profile means she has less opportunity to. She is loyal to Henschmann, in that she knows her fortune is tied directly to his. Loretta sees little need for personal relationships and spends most of her life at the club. She loves the dealing and scheming of the criminal underworld and would fight tooth and nail to protect her position. Perhaps her greatest gift is the ability to have people trust her. Thus she has gained the loyalty of hundreds over the years, and through these contacts gathers a lot of information.

The only daughter of a disgraced merchant, the family found themselves living in the Kruismuur district. Away from the life she knew, she soon became estranged from her family. In time, she allowed herself to be recruited as a prostitute. A little while later she murdered the brothel's madam and tried to take over the business herself. However, neighbouring pimps saw their chance and moved in, and Loretta

only just escaped with her life. Back on the streets she found life as a thief was a profitable one. Here she first met the ambitious Henschmann and he recognised her talents. She performed a number of tasks for him and he grew to trust her. Only later did she realise he was grooming her. She was trained in the skills of the spy and the rituals of a noble lady.

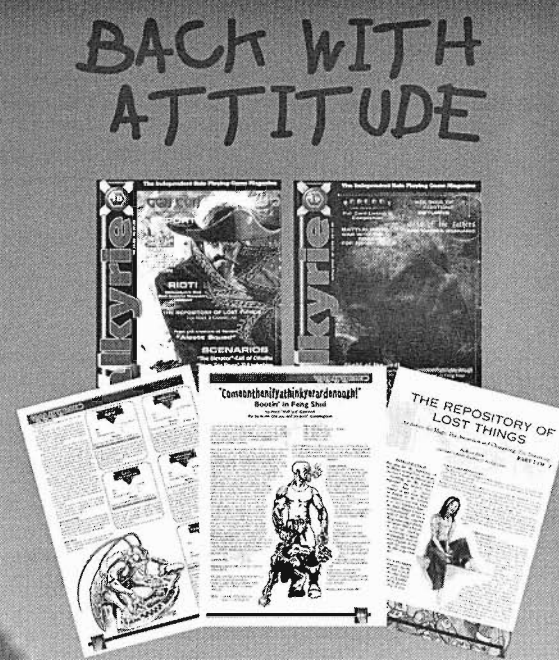
Henschmann positioned her to attract the attention of Hugo Delftgruber. Captivated, the League master fell under her spell and soon she had a measure of control over him. Information was passed to Henschmann and, under her influence, Delftgruber made a number of bad decisions. His control of the League was slowly weakened and infighting began. It was then that Henschmann began to make his move for control of the League. The bloody war came to end with the capture of Hugo Delftgruber, tempted from his hideout by Loretta.

Her part in the victory was widely known and Henschmann rewarded her with control of The Marienburg Gentlemen's Club. The belief she was just a "dumb tart" ended after she killed two of Delftgruber's lieutenants a year later when they attacked her in the Club. It was attack that left her with a prominent facial scar. She has now been in charge for fifteen years.

**Connections:** To ensure that the Watch is kept at arm's length, Loretta has compromised Watch Sergeant Wilhelm Hooptoran of the Suiddock Barracks. In return, he supplies her with information on Captain Graveland's activities and warns them of any impending Watch action in the vicinity of the Marienburg Gentlemen's Club. She also knows that a local physician, Doktor Jolle Rietdijk, is infatuated with her and plans to use this and his gambling addiction to extract future favours from him.

As a favour to Adalbert, Loretta is the primary contact for Pieter Malenpad, a Suiddocker alchemist with lusty appetites who serves her by analysing, purifying, and cutting the drugs sold at the Marienburg Gentlemen's Club. Loretta purposely drives the womaniser up the wall by forcing him to wait for some time at the bar. Inevitably, Pieter needs to buy a couple of drinks just to cope with the ribbing he gets from the working women in the bar.





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# Strange Events in Marienburg

## Two Cameos by Elias Bornshaw

As a games master, long investigative periods within a scenario are almost always the most trying part of a game. Unravelling the riddles of a plot is an important part of any scenario, but GMs can spend so much time getting things right that the atmosphere and pace of the game can suffer. As a player, piecing together clues is fun and adds variety and suspense, but such activities are frequently the least imaginative, and awareness of the setting is often lost.

The following 'episodes' were created as tools to be used alongside other adventures. They are designed to build atmosphere, add tension and mood to slower periods of a game, and give players a greater awareness of the setting. Used as subplots within another story they might provide interesting features for a scenario, perhaps a twist in the conclusion, or a hidden metaphor or meaning. However, they don't have to have such intricate subtleties; often their relevance to a plot can simply be chance, or just imagined by the players.

Both the following events are designed to take place in Marienburg. *The Restless Swarm* offers the GM a concurrent theme (in this case, an omen-like presence) that can be applied to periods otherwise lacking weight and intrigue. As a secondary event, it can also be helpful for adding descriptive elements and interesting encounters to add to heavy investigation scenes. *The Monster of Profit* is a scene that could be used to break up a lengthy period of investigation but is more than the normal *encounter roll*. Both 'episodes' have been expanded with plot ideas, so they can be used as individual adventures if desired.

Warhammer is a world oozing with superstition and supernatural paranoia. Omens are found every day. Perfectly natural, albeit weird, occurrences (like in the *Monster of Profit*) can be misunderstood by the population and interpreted as omens from the gods, spirits or, of course, Chaos. Such omens can have an overwhelming effect on people, leading some to commit irrational and often harmful acts. How supernatural these two events actually are depends entirely on how far the GM wants to take them. Either way, both events will increase feelings of paranoia and superstition among the local population. Some may be disturbed enough to publicly announce their prophecies of doom, and many others will be only too willing to listen. Agitators and Demagogues might well take advantage of this tension for their own gains. Meanwhile, the number of attendants at mid-week services will probably quadruple. Tension will also make the locals more argumentative and less co-operative, providing a perfect excuse for a bar room brawl.

### THE RESTLESS SWARM

A vast and varied population of sea birds nest and feed in Marienburg and its surrounding area. The most notorious of these are the murderous pirates, the great black-backed gull and the red-eyed skua. Both breeds have been blamed and persecuted for the disappearance of newborn children and the blinding of livestock. More frequently seen birds of the city include formidable (but still troublesome) species like the black-headed gull, the herring gull and the cautious terns, to name but a few. The locals consider the roguish antics and bad behaviour of these birds as an integral, although unappreciated, part of coastal life. Inlanders, visiting the city, pay more heed of their presence. Not much attention is given to these creatures unless they become a nuisance.

This attitude is about to change.

The swarm first appears on the morning a new investigation begins. The morning sky above the narrow streets and rickety roofs fills with a circling mass of gulls that seem oblivious to the busy rushing life of the world below. They drift in rhythm from fast dart to slow glide and are so tightly packed they can block out the light of the sky when overhead. They remain in the sky all day; even after dark their wings and calls can be heard. With a lantern out of a top floor window, the ghostly grey mass can be just made out when it flies close by.

Rumours spread that the flock didn't settle to rest or feed during the night. For example, one of the local, filthy, homeless alcoholics complains that he was kept awake all night - "That flappin'...Of a thousand wings! All chatterin' an' screamin', they're here to torment me, to never let me rest! p.p, please sit, spare a copper (*bic-u ß*) for an unlucky soul." As the rumours spread so does the feeling of unease. By evening, the people are talking of a dark shadow descending upon the city - and of worse yet to come. That night drunkards, who are leaving the inns and taverns, are seen crossing themselves with 'the gate of Morr' as they jeer and curse up at the cloud of birds heard flying over head.

After the birds have been airborne for several days, the locals are completely convinced that they are here to herald bad times. One evening as night starts to settle, the tiring swarm misjudges the height of a building causing some to crash into the side. Most hit the wall and fall to the ground stunned and injured (food for the stray dogs and cats to howl and fight over). A number of more fortunate birds manage to fly into the house through an open window. Inside screams of terror

are heard as the occupant tries to flee from the 'supernatural' creatures. The occupants are severely injured in the panic as they fall down the stairs trying to escape. Perhaps the house is a gambling den or brothel; a lot of fun could be had with the commotion caused as the adventurers try to rescue a 'maiden' in distress. Helpful PCs will of course be rewarded, but if the adventurers kill some of the birds some locals will avoid them, fearing they may be cursed. Others may even threaten or hound them, convinced that they will have brought bad luck on the city.

During the day, the PCs observe a group of children throwing and catapulting stones at the swarm. One gets lucky and hits a bird. They all rush over to where the bird lands and watch the injured bird frantically flap its wings and die of exhaustion at their feet. If the players don't intervene, a local artisan, who hates children, and whom all the children are afraid of, runs over and almost completely loses his temper. He shouts at them that they had better go and pray for forgiveness for killing a bird sent by the gods. The kids' scarpers half way through his speech and he completely loses his cool, trying to grab one of them for a good thrashing.

### PLOT OPTIONS

The swarm remains airborne and involved in the setting for as long as the GM sees fit. Perhaps the birds don't ever come to rest, and over the week the birds start to fall from the sky dying from exhaustion and starvation. If so, this strange behaviour should make the adventurers very curious. With a little investigation, the PCs may find that the birds were nesting in the trees of a nobleman's gardens (or perhaps on the cliff face of Deedsveld graveyard, or on the tidal salt flats of Backertag) before they took flight. Had something frightened them so terribly that they dare not land again? A little snooping around uncovers some strange goings on and sinister crimes.

If the birds never settle then the following incident may be used when they begin to die. Whilst travelling, the PCs see a bird that had fallen to earth from exhaustion being gutted and eaten by a tramp. The next day, whilst out on the streets, they pass his corpse. He lies dead, with blood shot eyes, a bloated tongue and black feathers stuck in his beard. At first this may not seem all that important (just don't eat the birds!), but when news of the poisoning spreads, a cook, from one of the restaurants that the adventurers had recently eaten at, grasses up his employer. In an effort to increase his profits, the owner made him use the bird meat as a cheap substitute in his recipes. Also, over the next few days all the dogs and cats of the area die off with similar symptoms. Observant PCs also notice the local rat catchers are in unusually high spirits. Without their main predators, and without sea gulls to compete with for food, the rats flourish and breed in the thousands. Almost immediately the rat catchers start getting more work than they can possibly manage. Every house begins to complain about rats in the walls. A month later, hordes of vermin burst from the sewers and over run the streets. (Perhaps this could start an epidemic if you are feeling extra nasty!) If you really wanted to develop this idea, you could even have Sumieren Imlordil of Priceless Friends, Exotic Animal Emporium (SDtR page78) be hired to solve the problem by introducing an obscure animal into the area to control the vermin. It goes without saying that this will go awry in unforeseen ways!

### THE MONSTER OF PROFIT

This little event will work best when the adventurers are desperate for money. This event will certainly give the PCs an opportunity to get known around town, if they have remained in the shadows in Marienburg. They will also learn more about the city and its people. It is a good introduction to the Marienburger's greedy business sense and the desperation of the people who live in the slums. It is also an example of how mystical things are easily defiled or destroyed for profit, even in the most superstitious of times.

On the night of the lowest tide of the year, the Kruiersmuur district is haunted by strange, unearthly cries. It is a gentle and ghostly sound, almost felt rather than heard. The sound is whale song, but only an experienced whaler would realise that. Trying to locate the origin of the sound proves very difficult, its volume varying very little throughout the district. However PCs who persevere will eventually spot a giant, black object in the Doodskanal, surrounded by the lanterns of fishermen who have ventured out onto the riverbed to search for oysters. It is a Ridge Whale (see *Warpstone* issue 9) that has somehow become marooned on a sandbar in the low tide. If the PCs ignore the sound, the following will occur the next morning when they are awoken early by the calls of eager seagulls.

Lying on its side, the whale is at least sixty foot long and twenty foot high. Its dark hide is lashed with light-grey coloured marks of old scars that resemble unreadable runes or hieroglyphs. It is well and truly stuck in the dark, rotting mud of the canal. Its body has formed an organic dam that is blocking the low tide stream. The muddy river is now a rich red brown colour with the blood of the

whale. Its back tail is still trying to push itself free in a hopeless attempt to escape back to sea.

The Whale got here after a narrow escape from the whalers' kitchen by managing to snap the line of the harpoon, which can still be seen stuck in his side. Confused and frightened, he fled outrunning his pursuers, only to find himself among the alien environment of the Marienburg canals. Exhausted, he rested upon the canal bed and was caught in the freakish low tide.

Around 30 people can be seen crawling over it. They have started cutting into the thick skin to free the meat from inside. Locals and characters with a background associated with the sea know that this whale's flesh holds hundreds (perhaps thousands) of guilders in oil (which can be boiled out of its flesh) and spermaceti (scooped out from its interior). Even the skin and bone can make a few guilders. Try to get the PCs curious and involved in a possible opportunity for profit. The riverbed is clogged with mud, so boots will be needed. They will also need barrels or buckets to contain the precious bounty, a cart to carry the strips of flesh and a spade, and a sharp cutting implement (like a Halberd) would be advisable. This equipment will make things easier, but is still only second rate when compared to the tools of professional whalers.

However, the PCs (especially Sea Elf characters) might try to save the whale. This will prove difficult. The people of this area won't give up this opportunity to make money and feed their families. Everyone will be against such action, including the law. Even the Elven authorities won't get involved. Also the whale is very old and won't survive its harpoon wound anyway. The best a compassionate party might do is to find a way of putting it out of its misery, something that no else has bothered trying to do.

Other people have similar ideas of making some trade and, as the day draws on, more and more people wade out to the whale to have a go at cutting out some profit. A wide variety of local people gather at the whale, people from the ethnic ghettos as well as wastelanders. Some mothers from the poverty-stricken slums have come to cut out meat simply to feed their families. When more and more people come along to stake a claim people start to get desperate and aggressive in their attempt at getting more than their fair share of the money and meat. Any character with *Public Speaking* can try to make a Leadership test to organise the people to work together – or at least, not to break into violence. The player will have to make continual checks to keep everything organised.

Word of the whale spreads quickly and the whole event becomes a public spectacle. Crowds of people gather at the banks of the canal to observe the strange creature. Professors and students from the university, merchants, and even ladies and gents from the richer side of town have risked coming over to watch events unfold. Traders with trays of food and drink arrive to feed the observers while later in the day a pair of artists set up their easels to record the event for prosperity. If any of the PCs have taken on the responsibility of organising the disembowelling, they will be in the centre of the audience's attention. Prospective employers, who are looking for confidence and leadership skills, might well single them out for attention.

Groups from the local gangs or whalers (perhaps even those who fought with the whale in the Manaanspoort Sea) come along and attempt to bully and intimidate everyone else into giving up the gold hunt. No one is willing to give up their share, and rival gangs aren't going to let others get first prize. A standoff occurs. The PC's already unstable leadership (if there ever was any) breaks down. Fights start when someone believes they slip on the oily back of the whale, losing their bucket of spermaceti, because they were pushed. All hell breaks loose as people start brawling and others hurriedly attempt to gut the animal of its gold.

The complete disorder that unfolds involves mud-slinging, fisticuffs, heckling spectators and the usual wrestling and rolling around in the riverbed, whale oil and blood. This is not helped by the water occasionally surging around the whale, washing people and boats further down the Doodskannal. The Black Caps will attempt to stop the fight but be unable to break up the mob and end up slugging it out in the free for all. Those fighting on top of the whale will have to occasionally make successful Initiative tests to avoid slipping into holes that have been dug into the whale's side. Once inside they will begin to drown in the warm internal liquids. The only way out of this organic cavern is by cutting a way through the organs and skin - a successful Cool test and *Orientation* roll will be needed to go in the right direction.

When the fighting is just about to get really intense (i.e. weapons drawn and death wishes made) the belly of the whale splits open and tonnes upon tonnes of organs and bodily waters come gushing out (finally killing the whale). The force of the flood pushes those on the floor into the decaying mud while those on top fall off into the stuff from above. Everyone gets covered in oversized organs and gunk. A stream of blood and

bodily fluid flows down the river.

If the party is neither compassionate nor desperate for money, then they will probably be content being observers. If that is the case, then a number of things can be used to get the PCs away from the sidelines and out into the thick of the action. The PCs see (*Initiative* test) a wildly thrown missile of mud striking down a mother, leaving her child unprotected. As the fight escalates the PCs see the unconscious mother and her child are at great risk of being seriously injured, even killed, as the unruly mob becomes a riot. Alternatively, it could be that all this commotion has disturbed another creature(s) in the riverbed, and the adventurers' expertise is needed to deal with it.

Other events among the spectators might involve pickpockets and amateur fences. The clash of classes in the crowds might also provoke some interesting events. It's not everyday beggars and the extremely wealthy, possibly even members of the Directorate, gather in the poor district and rub shoulders.

Due to everyone's greed, decidedly amateur organisation and a general lack of desire to co-operate, most of the whale's valuable liquids will be lost. However, for those involved, this event will certainly raise their reputations around Marienburg. If they handle the situation well, they may find that they receive offers of employment from influential people in the audience. They will also make friends and enemies among the people involved in the gutting. Of course, if they blunder and make fools of themselves they will be joked about in the city's taverns for the foreseeable future.

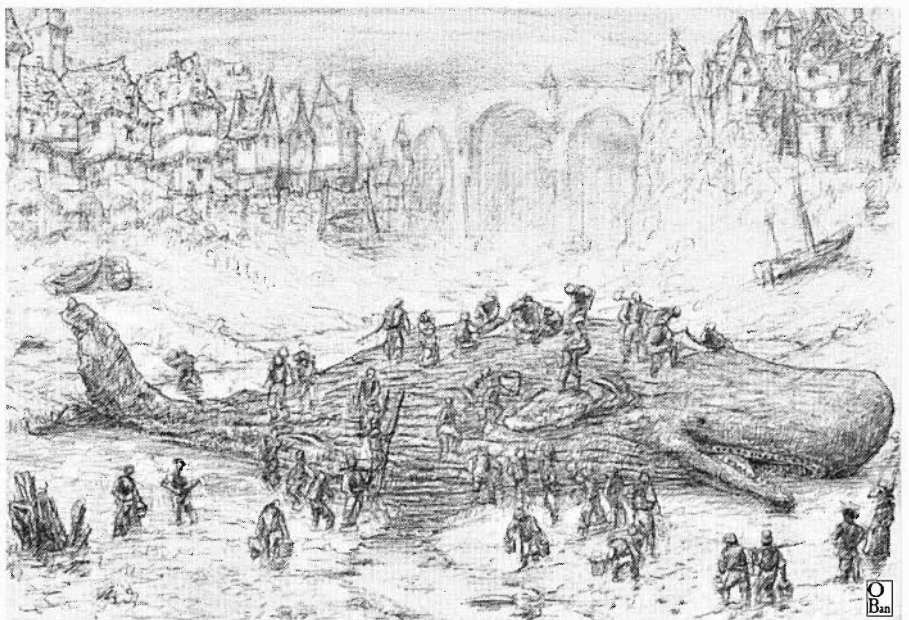
## PLOT OPTION

With an *Initiative* test, the PCs will notice that the inside of the whale's mouth is burnt (from a lightning strike!) and the scars on the skin seem some how unnatural. When the gut spills open, the stomach bursts and the bodies of a semi-digested man and woman spill out, along with the unidentifiable remains of other victims. Both of the bodies have their hands and ankles tied. With a little investigation, following up the origin of the clothes and jewellery, the bodies can be identified as a merchant and his second wife, reported missing some weeks ago. They were sacrificed to the whale by the Stromfels cult, and had been given to the cult as an offering by the merchant's son. He is now helping his older, stupid brother run the family business, secretly using it to fund the cult's endeavours. Linking the cult to the business will take some time and effort, and a lot of snooping into the merchant's affairs. But will they be able to do that before the merchant attempts to get rid of the adventurers?

## FOOT NOTE

For *The Restless Swarm*, Alfred Hitchcock's 'Birds' is a film worth watching, it gives a good idea of how sinister a flock of birds can be. Also, wildlife programmes are recommended, as these will give a clearer idea of how to describe the swarm.

Extracting produce from a whale, which forms the central part of *A Monster of Profit*, is a strange, gruesome and mucky affair. To be done well it needs skilled butchers and specialist equipment. The operation is too lengthy to detail here, but *Moby Dick*, by Herman Melville, gives a full account of this ugly operation. This includes descriptions of its processes, details of whale anatomy, folk tales and a strong feeling for the weirdness of this nightmarish act. (See in particular chapters 65-98.)



# I Know Not, The Birth of Fox Crowe

## Part One of Three

by Ourobouros

I awoke.

Actually that's really over-simplified. I came to be awake like a spark struck to tinder, sizzling and sliding along from inert to aware. Sizzle is probably the wrong word; it suggests too much speed. It would be better to say I awoke like the tide, a slow but steady progress. There wasn't any black-fading-to-light part or opening of eyes as of yet. In fact, the first thing that struck a chord in any coherent part of my soul was the smell. It reeked of death.

Then again, I haven't even mentioned the pain yet. There was a lot of pain. If any other part of me had been severed, I doubt I would have noticed it for the lancet of fire in my head. It was not so much pounding as searing, as if I had thrust it into a forge and left it there to temper. That's when the functioning parts of my mind got together and realized that there were pieces missing. In reality, most of me was missing. Not any limb or feature... just whatever pieces of *me* there were supposed to be in my mind were gone. I searched for me and only found this white cottony cloud where I used to be. I know I once knew my name, I once had a family, friends... At least I hope I once did, but it isn't as if I could know. I had conveniently forgotten myself as I lay in this perpetually dark place stinking of rotting flesh and defecation.

My thoughts then went on a brief sojourn about the disgusting nature of defecation at death. I knew the last thing any creature does is to reveal its last meal through its rectum. To spoil the appetite of whatever is trying to eat it, I'm sure. A kind of final insult... 'Go ahead! Try to eat me with *that* smell following

you around!' It lacks a certain amount of dignity. Then again, I suppose you have to take what victories you can get when you can.

Then, very quietly, the darkness began to press inward. I felt in my brain, past the fuzzy Void that used to be me, two halves. One half was urging me on to madness, wishing to let go of every pain and pressure to the exultation of ennui. The other was dark, sharp and foreboding. It simply sat there and waited until the part of me who wanted madness shut its festering gob. It seized the reigns of my mind and brought me back to the here and now. It was then that I learned a lesson known by precious few men: you choose whether you go insane. It's all a matter of giving up, really. I get the feeling I'm not the giving up type. Now I have confirmed my suspicions - but I am getting ahead of myself.

The first time I moved was to raise my arms to my face and probe my eyes to see if they were still there, as I was having trouble opening them. I got an image of my fingers exploring empty sockets that had been picked clean by crows and my skin was instantly sheathed in freezing ice. My questing fingers paused, afraid of what they might find... then moved again to touch the thick, sticky crust covering both lids. It felt like old spilled paint, mostly dried. I tasted it and it was sweet, metallic and sour at the same time. It was surely blood.

Relief eased the ache across my shoulders as I realized my eyes were just gummed shut. Close behind that sensation was a searing wave of apprehension: *How in Morr's Abyss do I know what dried blood feels and tastes like?*

I didn't remember that I was carrying a canteen, but my hands knew I did.

They grabbed it, and Left poured it in my eyes as Right scraped at the dry, scabby mess. I sat up shakily and pried my eyes open to finally look upon the great stench. The keep's courtyard had become an abattoir. Men, and pieces of men, lay sprawled alongside beasts and beasts that were almost men. Faces screamed at me to remember their names... but the Fog circled in to cut me off. Vaguely something inside squirmed, not at the carnage, but at the fact I could look upon it without feeling ill.

*What kind of man am I?* I stood, pushing the stiff corpse of a man-sized rat-thing off of me. I stared at the empty head whose brains had been removed by hammer or mace.

*And how did I know that? Had I been the one to kill it?* I could not remember ever seeing such a horrific monstrosity before, but here I was, without the fear of *not* knowing of it. I wandered the littered courtyard, groping at the great emptiness within me. It, like a hungry demon, swallowed the bile and sorrow that was trying to well up and consume me. Hundreds of men lay butchered beside the hundreds of evil things that had done it. To say I was aghast would have been a normal reaction. It would also be a lie. I was not happy, or sad, or disgusted. I was afraid. I was becoming afraid of who I was to see such a scene of valiant defeat and be unmoved.

In the center of the courtyard was a man in enameled plate armor. From the ornate battle gear he carried, he was obviously a nobleman. Probably the master of this castle. Now the only people he would feed would be the flies. The only things he would defend would be the maggots crawling over his corpse. He lay headless across a man twisted like a multi-headed snake. Each head joined into the torso, one sprouting from the breastplate, replacing each of its legs and arms with deadly, snapping faces. Something called me to him. The Fog, I think, murmuring to me in voices never fully heard. My feet squelched in the bloody soil as I moved him aside to finally reveal a familiar sight. Its design leapt at me, fitting a hole in the Fog where it once belonged. The weapon was more black than blue, as if corroded by soot. It was flared in the Elven style, and the four-foot blade ended in an ornate crosspiece; an angelic, silver-plated hooded figure, the gold-plated wings spread to make the actual guard to protect the hands. The feet were lost in the robe, blended into the worn elbon wood that sandwiched the ten-inch hilt. Into the phantom/angel, over the chest and in the pommel were heart-cut cats-eye gemstones. They were from the easternmost reaches of the Worlds Edge Mountains... I knew because they were blue, not amber. *Who am I, a prospector?*

A grave silence settled inside me as I contemplated my situation. Perhaps I had been an attacker here, not one of the human defenders! I felt my face, which seemed normal enough. My head, however, was far different. The left side was hugely out of



proportion. It felt spongy to the touch, springy. Of course touching it made the world decide to swirl as if the Mad Painter of the Universe had just dipped the canvas of the castle in vitriol, the colors running into a kaleidoscope of insane visions. I could say I sat down, then again I could say I chose to forget myself in the first place; but it would also be a lie.

I opened my eyes again to dusk... *wasn't it just noon?* The bodies had gathered more fragrance and flies. I vaguely realized my deformation was due to a severe head injury. I had survived the onslaught, but my continued state of living was by no means certain. Clumsily, I gathered the black-bladed bastard sword to my breast like a sleepy child with a favored toy and crawled across the rotting bodies to the keep. I don't remember much except finding a table set for a banquet, most of the silverware spread about the floor. I grasped a full flagon of warm and watered wine and downed it, feeling drunk as drowned flies slipped down my gullet. Still, it slaked my thirst, and I had enough strength to stumble to a nearby pallet of straw.

I knew I had slept in worse places, though I don't know how... oh wait I do. Not a few minutes ago I was sleeping in a field of corpses. My last thought was that I must be a mighty hero to have survived so far. That's when the Fog gave up a chuckle and a dark memory of a bent, toothless man. He was saying in a uniquely cancerish voice: "*Fate cares not if you be a hero, or a fool. She is cruel or kind all the same.*"

Then I truly slept.



I awoke. My head hurt less; the rest of me hurt more. It gave me the feeling that whatever my name was it should end in "The Walking Bruise". I was once again in the company of the Dead, but at least here they were orderly dead. The pallets had been laid out for the few wounded that had been pulled from the quick battle. Now they surrounded me. The empty space I had found was flanked by others like it: hastily constructed beds of blankets over straw beneath dead soldiers. They appeared to be wounded from the fight outside, neatly dispatched by the attackers when they had pushed past here. A priestess of Shallya was pinned to a wooden ceiling beam by a rusty spear like a tortured doll. Like a grisly fountain, her blood had coursed down the shaft of the spear to pool on the floor. Whatever peace and mercy she had in life, I hoped she had so earned in Morr's realm. Her end had contained none of that virtue. I searched the keep to find it all the same: Death and the Dead. Morr's tally room must be full of these people who littered this home turned tomb. A noble lady, a stable boy, the cook... No one had been spared. The attack came without warning, and had probably come through the gate before the defenders were roused. Mayhap a guard was asleep? I found a mirror in the noble lady's quarters where her remains lay in all four corners at the same time. I peered into the glass and searched the stranger's face beyond.

I am a man, a human. Wavy, brown hair, it travels past my shoulders before petering. My eyes are naturally blue, although the whites are stained red with the blood of ruptured vessels. The swelling of my skull is going down—I think at least it looked smaller than it felt—and I know that is a good sign. Some may call me handsome someday (though with a head like a snoball, that's not likely at the moment). I'm perhaps late twenties, early thirties, and my face was masked by at least a week's worth of flaxen beard. Then something struck me: *Why am I dressed all in black?* Perhaps someone I knew had recently died? Considering the carnage outside, if that had not been true before, it was certainly so now.

From head to foot, I was dressed in black suede leather under a scarred curiboli breastplate, edged in iron with matching vambracers and shoulder cops. No wonder my body ached. Sleeping in armor was like fornicating with sheep; a poor way to satisfy something the body needs done. A short fighting knife was strapped to one of my soft leather boots. It was then that I realized I had left my weapon by the pallet where I had slept.

I bounded down the stairs like a man possessed, my heart crashing in my chest like constant thunder. An inescapable dread filled me as I felt my clothes peeled away to expose me completely to whatever dangers still lurked in this house of blood. When I reached the pallet, the sword was still there, clutching its glittering heart. Within moments of retrieving it, the panic faded. The headache that followed made me sit heavily, wishing for some small measure of relief. Relief from the emptiness of real emotion over what I had seen here, or from emptiness of memory, I could not tell. The greatest reaction I had gotten from myself was a bottomless pit of dread over my own well being, and this does not speak well of my humanity. I would have to leave this nightmare, and soon; else the scenes of violence and death would slowly erode my mental walls and I may go mad whether I choose to or not.

I now know how a mouse feels in a tomb. I gathered some preserved foodstuffs and basic equipment: blankets, lamp and fuel, tinder, flint, and hatchet. I would like to have collected some clothes, but something inside

balked at wearing the clothes of the dead. I did manage to find a hefty purse of silver coins in the guardhouse, although the main vault had been sacked. It would appear that the great evil that had been done here was due to greed and not some darker malice. Somehow, that was comforting. I have the feeling that the Fog knows how much worse this could have been and for once I'm glad it won't tell me.

There were no horses in the stables – no living ones, I should say – but there was a set of saddlebags to store my valuables in. I also found two full barrels of siege-oil in the gatehouse. Apparently the attack had come so fast it had never been poured through the murder-holes into the incoming horde. I was generous with it in the main hall, where people getting ready to eat had been summoned to fight for their lives. I bathed the bodies of man and near-man alike in the courtyard. When I left, lit torch in hand, I turned once more on the scene of my recent birth. I was made new, without knowledge of myself or the world beyond. I had no choice but to venture forth and begin again until the Fog lifted and let me know what life was truly mine. Not many men get the chance to do what I was about to, but in my opinion, as wombs go, it left a lot of room for improvement.

The flames caught cleanly, and burned hot, dancing over the bodies of the warped like pink and purple demons devouring their get. Where the fire burned as fire should, a warrior was getting his well-deserved pyre. Once again I vaguely sense, without knowing how, that it really did not matter that they had lost. They had died fighting because they had to. In so doing, they had lessened the burden on the rest of mankind by removing some small part of the evil in it. Still not sure what part I had played in this lightning siege, I watched the flames leap into the nameless keep and greedily lick at the lumber of its supports and blacken its stone with greasy soot. I offered a prayer to Morr that the defenders be welcomed kindly to him. I was frightened that, earnest as it was, it would be an empty gesture. I knew then that I was a practical man.

I tuned from the fires and began along the road. From where, to where, I knew not.

The comforting weight of my weapon pressed on my back where I had tied it with cord, lacking a proper sheath. Taking stock, I tried to remain positive. The Fog murmured that a town should be to the north and west. I knew I would soon need food and well-water not tainted by a soldier's corpse. The Fog assured me I could find it. I did know I needed the attentions of a herbalist for my wounds and a bath to stop smelling like a rotting kill. I also knew I would soon have need of a name. Men do not trust a wanderer without a name.

Again the Fog lapsed into silence...

...*The damned bastard.*



I got my bath in a hot-spring fed pond only a few hours walk down the dusty road. I had followed a deer in the hopes of getting fresh meat, the thoughts of venison moistening my mouth. Yes, I had preserved meat and hard bread... but eating it is like sleeping in armor, and you know how I feel about that already. Then, as it lined up for a perfect shot, I missed badly with my improvised spear. The wood-fired tip shattered against the bole of a tree four full yards from the buck. The deer simply looked at me as calmly as a Dwarf Lord might look at a snotling assassin, then bounded into the brush. There are times where a man can do nothing but laugh at himself, so I did. The pure joyous sound washed over me and filtered through the trees, and I felt small fissures in my fragile self closing. I was vaguely disappointed at myself at having missed, but I comforted myself with the thought that I had recently been subject to a very impolite wound to my head.

I was to find, however, that my hunt was not altogether unsuccessful. On the way back to the road, I came upon a secluded pool not thirty paces from my way. Screened by the massive fir-trees that populated this area, I stripped down to my bare flesh and lowered myself in slowly as men have doubtless done throughout time. This spares the more tender parts of our anatomy from scalding in water that was only pleasantly warm to the hand, another fact of the universe I'll never quite understand.

The water, still steaming, seemed to reach at me with glacier-forged talons. I exited the pool and quickly laundered my leather and silks in it. It seemed the Curiboli breastplate was a loss. It had absorbed the worst of the wear and gore, never to lose the smells of the death and terror. I hurriedly abandoned it because, to tell you the truth, my heart still pained me with its harried pace. I was suddenly determined to leave the pond many leagues behind me before the dark hour of the night was upon me.

I began to dress in leather and silk. This was the dress of a nobleman, as were the rugged yet soft suede boots. Yet my scrip had been empty and none of the rooms of the keep set out in finery seemed to call out as mine. Again, I probed the Void, the mocking Fog that held me as its hostage. Nothing came – no word, picture, nor name. I took up my sword and slung it over my shoulder,

then readjusted it by a fraction. I stopped - all wraiths and dreams forgotten. I shifted the sword back to where it originally lay. There, it sat like a nettle on my skin clawing at me with its misplacement. I shifted it back and, like a well-made glove that has leather touching both fingertip and valley between, it was right.

Without looking I sent my hand behind me at its greatest speed, soul screaming at sinew—

- My hand closed about the hilt as if gently placed there in plain sight. I again took off the aged sword, with its carved angel of death staring at me like a Veronese Judge. The hilt is well worn, the lower folds of the blue-hearted priest almost gone. Who would not wear such an impressive weapon, given a chance? *Perhaps I am a sell sword?* The spongy bruise that made up the side of my head began to throb as the Fog protested my constant probing. I once again decided that sitting befitted me more than falling, and I breathed deeply as the stabbing, searing hurt made my hands shake and my eyes blur. I do not know how long I sat there, caught in the hands of some pitiless phantasm. I can say it did ebb, and I staggered off into the unknown forest, the quickly lightening saddlebag of supplies bouncing on my chest and back.

Little did I know my fate was rushing toward me much faster than I could stagger toward it.

The miles began to blend past me in tones of green accompanied by the hypnotizing scent of pinesap. I imagine there are those of the bored petty nobles who would have loved to have joined my on my grand, epic quest (whatever that was - the Fog had not yet given that secret up).

I couldn't help but feel better, except at certain times where the Fog twisted and turned inside me, threatening to shatter my skull. But yes, other than the skull-shattering pain, the trip was quite pleasant. The woods were becoming friendlier, the light winning against the darkness the further north I traveled.

The dirt path I traversed joined a well-traveled route, large enough to pass two carts abreast. Roads this size lead only to cities, and this heartened me. The ruts were dug deep, but unused for many weeks. The last of the harvests must have come to market a month or two ago. That would make what I had taken to be the early fall be, in reality, a mild early winter. It did not strike me how I knew these things after just a long, measured look. The knowledge was so easy and certain I never pondered upon it. Should I have thought upon it more, I could have saved myself grief later. There should be a god of hindsight, really.

I was pondering the inadequacies of the unfair and uncaring universe when the ringing clamour of battle rudely interrupted me. The Fog parted as easily as the leather cord that held the phantom sword to my back. All of a sudden my feet found bare dirt, skipping past branches and leaves. Of course I didn't notice it; there were other things on my mind. I plunged into the brush, slipping past gossiping bushes into the safety of the wood itself. The going was slower, and meanwhile someone ahead was dying. I desperately wanted to avoid that problem as I had enough loads of my own to carry already. Roots reached to trip me as branches clawed at my eyes, but I was a wraith in their midst, untouchable. I reveled in the exultation that came with action. The pain and the uncertainty? The rush swept them up and I began to burn. It was a furnace of rage, burning away the chaff to leave only behind a cold beast in side of me.

It was the eyes of an animal that peered from the shadowed hearth of Taal.

Fifteen men were assaulting a coach. Three of ten defenders were dead, their entrails, brains and other vital internals conspicuously external. The raiders had swathed their faces in cloths, and fought under no heraldry nor banner. Unlike the attackers of the keep, these were 'pure' men, though you could never tell by the way they butchered their prey. My heart turned to steel as a defender was held by two attackers and savagely worried at by a third wielding a short, spiked club. The rest were merely being kept at bay while the others finished so no one bandit would take on a fair fight.

I knew no one here. Not the defending guards in their white and silver, not the bandits in their varied greens and browns. My heart was not moved by the carnage before me. My soul did not cry out for justice. In fact, the word never occurred to me as I turned away. The forest enveloped me with protective arms as I crept off—

- A crystal scream, pure and resonant, called out. It slammed into me, billowing the Void and obscuring the animal within. It caught in my mind and funneled into my chest where it built up power, echo after echo; shattering the veil of ice within me. My soul emerged red and raw, bleeding and sending shocks through me like acid. It felt like something inside me had been freed from a prison. I sped back; taking stock briefly as five defenders fought ten masked men.

I knew then that I wasn't a hero because a hero steps forth, challenging all comers with sword in hand. I struck from behind without warning or battle-cry. I wanted to live, you see. My blade took the coward, the one hanging back to avoid injury, in the leg. It sheared muscle from its moorings and I felt the grinding slide of the steel across bone seep up my weapon and into my arm. It was a very familiar sensation. The next was sent sprawling as quickly, my sword entering his side just below his ribcage. The blade was held correctly, parallel to the ground, so as he turned he neatly slit his own stomach from back to navel. It's always comforting when they know the steps to your favorite dance.

However, the rest were now aware of me and turned.

My mind can't stop its infernal wanderings, even now. To explain, my arms seemed to know what they were doing. They had no real need of me. I had time to see the woman in the rich, blue dress being released and that bandit come at me on my right side. I had time to see the five beleaguered guards knew what to do when seven dung-headed murderers turn their back on you to face the long-haired wild man who bursts from the bush... *you kill them*. You kill them by striking from the back, the front or whatever side he presents to you. You kill them and you do it without flinching. That is how you will live, and they do not.

I could say I valiantly battled all eight to the death (hopefully theirs), but that would be a lie. I back-pedaled, putting space in between them and I, as the five guards struck, killing three and heavily wounding two. The other three came at me. Then I knew from the whispering of the Fog that there is a special tactic for fighting three armed men... don't. You die. I ran at the one who had been dragging the woman from the carriage by her hair, a few paces away from the others. Just a few paces turned three on one into one on one. For a moment, at least.

It is a well-known fact that once a sword is in motion, it will continue in motion with very little effort lest it meet an obstacle. So I set mine to spinning, my wrist twirling it with minute corrections as I sought a proper strike. It not a well-known fact that idiots who watch stage performers parrying every strike *believe* every strike should be parried, even those that wouldn't ever have hit. It was a simple trick to swing far to his right and he was inexperienced enough to try and parry it. It was even simpler to spin the sword in a vertical arc to take his extended sword arm from his body. That's the nice thing about the arm. Orcs and Beastmen fight on mangled and mutilated, humans tend to stop and scream. He did, and thus lost any interest in harming me. I love simple tricks. I spun, dropping into a crouch and arced my weapon low. Herr Spiked-Club had been aiming for my head. Never aim for the head. Aim for the groin. Heads duck (as I just proved), groins don't usually go anywhere. I was a little high, unable to get the blade to bite into his legs. The shock of the phantom crashing through his ribs like matchsticks and collapsing his lung removed the embarrassment of my slight misstep. Dead, after all is dead. Three, as I had dubbed him, was more cautious. He slowed, having seen his two mates felled in seconds, but was confident he could take me while his comrades watched his rear. His comrades happened to be the ones screaming and dying behind him, but I was too busy killing him to tell him that. The guardsmen held back, making them smarter than the wolf's heads they had just dispatched. Entering a fight was always risky because a back swing aimed at an enemy in front can kill a friend behind as well.

Great Norse sagas tell about warriors trading blow after blow, never slacking in their will to win. I know different; thankfully, so did my arms. Real men parry because blows that kiss flesh hurt. He knew that as well as I. Our blades having met and shaken hands, we circled around to begin our personal war in earnest. He felt me out, and I him, cuts and stabs sidestepped and dodged. He was the inferior with steel; he was the more tired, he had a shorter reach and less powerful weapon with no shield to make up the loss. All the coins tallied in my favor and staring into my eyes, he saw that I knew it, too. Had he come in quickly like his partner, it would have been quick. Now he would have to wait for me to kill him slowly and safely. He knew his business, attacking quickly and cleanly, not like Mr. Spike Club — too eager to kill to live. I could not count the number of inbred bastards who had rushed in to end their life on my blade, too dumb to realize -

*WHAT?!* His steel slid into my vitals, like a firebrand pushed into my belly. I felt wet things once attached slide away from one another in ways that can not be described unless you have had it happen. The Fog had betrayed me, letting an image flit past when most I needed clarity. He began to retreat whirling his blade in a flourish, savoring a victory that was not won...

"I'm still alive, my friend." I lashed out, again and again, a hail of blows like the rumbles of distant thunder. He parried and dodged, but found that there was no where to go. My life was pouring out of me and I knew it.

There is nothing more dangerous than a man who thinks you have just killed him.

My blade batted his aside, sending it arcing into the bush, then swept back to his crown, smashing through the thinking part of the bandit until it rang against his bottom jaw. The phantom sword stuck and when he fell backward, I followed. I was mildly embarrassed again to find I could not find the strength to stand. I heard the guardsmen surround me... I heard the woman whimpering... I smelled her perfume, a scent of lilacs and lace... I felt the pain get very far away, as if racing off on a fast horse... I heard a clear voice that my mind couldn't be bothered to translate into words... I felt my breath leaving me, bubbling up from within to scrape past the bile in my throat.

"I'm not dead." I said. Then I passed beyond pain.

The Fog was still with me, though. A great bear of a man reached out of it and grabbed a younger me, shaking him like a dog with a rat. "eros die, boy! You've got to be better!"

Then even that was swept away by the sound of beating wings.



I awoke. Again.

Yes, again I'm avoiding telling you about the little ball of fangs and claws that was tearing at my insides, the fact that I was still "...The Walking Bruise." and that it would have been much more kind should I not have opened my eyes ever again. Belly wounds do that to a man. The stomach fluids begin seeping into less resilient organs and dissolve them into pudding. It is neither a quick nor a painless death. Lastly, no chiurgeon in the world can save you. I felt an intense desire to open my eyes, though something in the Fog told me to wait. People will speak the truth when they think you can't hear. Then something alive shifted of my chest and my eyes clicked open like a pair of shutters.

He was large and black; his glossy wings folded behind him like a gentleman's cloak. His head turned to spear me with one, bottomless black eye. He was a raven.

I heard a cat voice his distress. I shifted my head—bringing new heights to the ringing inside my skull—and saw a gray cat with a golden collar cowering in the corner. He watched the raven with eyes that were wide, a tail flared to the width of his own body curled in front like a hedgerow. His head twitched left and right, seeking a more secure hiding place from the black bird perched on my chest, but always returned to watch the raven. Morr's messenger shifted to look at me with his left eye, capturing my attention again and in its depthless black orb I saw myself reflected. I was twisted, distorted by the curvature of the reflection. Or maybe it was myself that was twisted. I saw him reflected in my eyes, and myself reflected in his, and him reflected in mine, an infinite number of bent simulacrum spiraling into infinity.

That is when the tent flap opened. I had not mentioned the tent? Well if you had been grievously wounded, then woken with the living symbol of Death itself on your chest, I daresay you would be distracted as well. At this point I could not tell you what was in the tent, other than myself, a cat, and the bird of death. I could not tear my eyes away even to look at the newcomer that gasped. It seemed days before two pairs of heavily wrinkled hands gently moved the Death-bringer onto an offered arm. A voice, soft and yet rough like a summer rain sifting through sand, spoke. "Great Lord of the Dead, if it is your intention to take this one, please do; I know I could not stop you. My patron, however, commands that I help this man. I seek not to defy you, only to do as my mistress and your Daughter command."

The tent flap opened, spilling undiffused light across the floor. The raven seemed to consider her words, studying her with his far eye while his near one was still stapling me to my cot. Then, entirely without preamble or glorious miracle, he took wing out of the tent and out of my life. The old woman left behind was wrinkled and plump, her pear shape accentuating her grand-motherly bearing. Her face, staring out after our visitor, was fixed in such a state of rapture I dared not speak. Truth be told, though, I was becoming less impressed with the raven the further away he went. The cat howled again.

The old woman, cowed in a habit of white, turned to expose a golden heart inset with a single tear of blood picked out in thread on her right breast.

"My thanks for my care Reverend Sister..." I simply trailed off. Her eyes had latched on to me and her face had gone from rapture to disgust. I had imagined I would have to be a corpse, maggot ridden and cold, before eliciting such a response from a woman. I tried to smile, but I don't think I quite succeeded as her countenance only deepened in its righteous fury. The cleric of mercy stalked—stalked! across the tent to hover far above me like a statue of Verena over a gallows.

She knelt down, craning a finger into my face and whispered in a rage-bathed whisper. "Now you listen, blood-shedder, I care for your body because both my oath to Shallya, and my oath to my mistress calls me to. The thought sickens me, but I am trapped in between letting Morr take you and letting Verena send you to him. Do not take too much comfort; I know your secret and if you make any move to harm that girl I will let the guards at you like a pack of wolves."

As you might have noticed, my friends, I am prodigious in my verbosity. However, my mouth failed me. I simply gaped like an air-drowning fish as she rose and turned to the entrance. I glanced about and saw the Phantom/Angel leaning in the opposite corner of the tent. I knew why too. It would have been an irredeemable insult to deprive a soldier of the weapon he had used to save your life. Nonetheless, I know the Cleric had moved it. If it had been in reach, I would have slain her from behind as I had the brigands. I don't know why, other than that the Fog urged me. But more importantly, she knew it too, and probably why as well.

I guess I was still looking like a plate of raw meat that had been dipped in the midden when the princess came in. She stopped in the entry, gazing at my bandage-clothed chest with some amount of flush in her cheeks. As the priestess

of Shallya peered in over her shoulder like a demon of retribution, I decided to pull the sheets up to cover my partial nakedness. If there was anything I did not need, it was more complications. "You are well, sir?" Her voice was like crystal, beautiful but fragile. Apparently, being dragged from the coach by her ladyship's hair did not agree with her—and *where in the hell did that come from?* The venom and callousness simply seethed inside me from some polluted spring. "Sir?"

I had not answered her. "My apologies Milady, I am still addled. Some dreadful creature took umbrage at the shape of my head and sought to remedy it with a blunt instrument."

A small smile cracked her brittle exterior. At about eighteen years, her hair was cut long, held up in a complex design that almost matched the knot-work patterns of her dress. She had never been party to violence or death until now, and the experience did not sit well upon her. "It would seem your bladework was not affected."

"Not to be contrary, Milady, but I would say my bladework suffered immeasurably. I am now dying." My voice cracked because of a jolt of pain from my belly, ruining the care-free tone of my words. It was for the best, though, as the princess was now really concerned. Four princesses beats four clerics in any card game in the Empire.

She turned to her cleric, "Nana?"

The old woman's demeanor smoothed to the placid calm of a still pool before the girl had turned to see. No one gets that good at holding back their emotions from their face unless they have to - a lot. "His condition is severe. His head has been broken along its left side, this is the reason it swells so. The belly wound has pierced his vitals and they are now leaking foul humors into his body to poison him. He has a remarkable strength, but it will not save him. If his wounds were not so severe, I might be able to help. But alas, my talents are not up to this level of mutilation." Maybe it was just me, friends, but she didn't sound as if it was too grievous a loss for her.

The princess turned to me, almost catching my questing eyes. I could tell you I was questing her body in search of an appropriate cave to place my dragon, but it would be a lie. As much as I hate to admit it, I was marking the position of guards outside from the sound of their talking and judging the chances of my escape. The tent was expansive, enough to fit a knight and his page, and it was furnished much better. The candelabra next to me would fetch enough to buy some health from a local spell-caster, if one could be found. The Fog did not give me good odds.

"Then I shall help him."

"Your father purchased that potion at a dear cost for your use, not to be wasted on some wastrel!"

"Nana! How could you of all people deny this man, who has saved me, anything to insure his life?" A silence that weighed tons settled in until the cleric bowed her head, as if in shame. I saw only frustration there instead. The auburn-haired girl came forward and knelt beside me, her red dress spreading about her like a crimson halo. Dipping two fingers deep into her cleavage, she retrieved a silver vial, carved in swirling patterns, stoppered and sealed with red wax. She broke the seal using one manicured nail and uncorked it with the smell of fresh fruit. Leaning in, she exposed a valley of pale flesh to me between her firm breasts as the vial clinked against my teeth. The bottle smelled strongly of woman, and I felt my blood beginning to stir, but I could not watch her. I could not take my eyes off the cleric, who saw me and feared me.

She could not be as afraid of me as I was.

Lethargy stole over me, seeping in to mix with the Fog, seeming to make it bloom and envelop me whole. I'm not against sleep, in fact I quite enjoy it, but enough was enough. When I wake up, I'm not sleeping for a week.

And no birds this time...



I awoke, and this time there were no birds and no hurting. I was grateful, really. The only problem (only problem?) was that Geila, priestess of Shallya, hated me with a passion reserved for blood enemies, rapists and tax collectors. She would not speak to me when alone, and was cool but professional towards me when the others happened in. She had sewn the rent in my shirt and tossed it in my face like it was the shroud of a leper. Most of the Shallyan clerics I have met have been much nicer. All right — to be honest I can't exactly remember, but I'm fairly certain they must have been. I donned the shirt and stretched to test my wounds. My balance was perfect, my belly tender but serviceable. Apparently whatever eldritch concoction the Lady had bestowed upon me, it was enough to bring my battered body back into working order.

As soon as I was fully clothed, I exited the ivory coloured pavilion and found the early morning sun was much weaker than it had been in recent days. Its rays warmed my face, but not enough to take the sting of frost out of the air. My breath made tiny clouds before my face and my cheeks ached as if being



stretched too taut. The oldest living member of the princess' retinue (no great distinction, they were all barely men) was apparently in charge. Just past twenty years, if that, his face unlined and unscarred. That was one new thing I had discovered about myself: the huge amount of scarring present on my body. While my face might be pleasant to look upon, my body was much less so. Thankfully, that was at least one mystery solved to a near certainty. The scars, combined with my obvious talent for making live men into dead ones made me a career mercenary. A very successful one at that, from my dress and ornate weapon. Perhaps not all the men left behind belonged to the keep. Perhaps some were my own mercenary company, joining the defenders in a desperate attempt to hold the lost fort. Mercenaries are often bloodless men, bitter realists who murder for pay. Soldiers get cushy jobs, Mercenaries are too poor to be sentimental. At least that's what they'll tell you. That would go far and explain much... like my lack of reaction at the horror in the courtyard. I had probably seen such many times before, I had just not remembered that I had. Those exposed to violence and death eventually become inured to it, as I obviously had. All made for a nice, clean package, eh? A sensible, logical train of thought. I couldn't have been more wrong. Well, I suppose I could. I have a significant talent for being wrong.

"Ho, Friend! I am Theodemar, guardian of the lady Aelia. I would know the name our savior goes by." Theodemar's beardless cheeks were as red as mine as they stretched into a guileless grin.

"So, would I Theodemar." I flashed a smile, a hollow one that I had carefully crafted to betray both embarrassment and a friendly demeanor. Neither of which I was feeling. In fact I was feeling — nothing. Not a thing. A thrill ran down my spine as I looked at the guardsmen gathering around the dying fire from their appointed tasks of breaking camp. They were just empty bags of blood and muscle, some rated as higher threats than others, but none seemed like people. None were quite real to me. Opportunities and threats... that was all.

*Morr's Gate, what kind of man am I?* Theodemar chuckled and was about to speak when out of the pavilion to my left exited the noble lady. The guardsmen bowed, as did I, though it was an uncomfortable action. I hoped she would take my stiffness as a result of the now-healed belly wound, but I knew it was because the Fog rankled at bowing to anyone. A slight smile graced her heart-shaped face. That could be good or bad. "My dear savior, I expect that your tale would be some entertainment while we prepare to move on to Wolfenburg."

The guardsmen-as-servants took the hint and scrambled back to their work, though none found anything out of earshot that required their attention. Geila exited the tent in which I had rested and entered the princesses' own, exiting a moment later with a folding chair. She sat it behind the princess, who sat upon it without looking. The display of noble efficiency made my teeth itch, though to say I knew why would be a lie. "I am Aelia, daughter of Duke Therin RaubTalabec. It would seem" - her smile took on a cleaner edge - "I am in your debt Herr...?"



Well, my string of good luck was holding. The lady Aelia was quite taken with me now that my head did not look like it was distended by mutation. I just had to ignore the glowering nanny over her shoulder. Perhaps that was it. I mean I did slay three men before Geila's eyes with a good amount of zeal. Within the depths of the Fog, mocking voices told me I enjoyed it, but they were easy to push back with Aelia and Theodemar, her guard sergeant (the lieutenant was dead) hailing me as a hero. "I am truly not sure, milady. I..." Her eyes were the colour of fresh heather, like a tranquil river, for they too ran with a hidden strength. My mouth was open, and the truth began to emerge. She leaned forward, her slightly-too-big nose melding with the rest of her face's perfection to put me at ease. She was not an elf, seemingly carved from marble by expert hands, and was all the more human for it. Her body was sheathed in silver velvet, trimmed in white rabbit fur. A cloak of heavy black wool with a rich silver trim further armoured her from the cold. Her jade earrings were simple and understated, only a wolf-head cameo hung between the curvature of her thickly covered breasts, winking in its silver setting. As I felt the story spill from me, her eyes twinkled knowingly. She had gotten the stories of many men from them, and walls of steel and iron slammed shut within me. Immediately I began sifting the story, leaving out the Animal that had overtaken me in the woods, the way I almost did not help her, how her cleric had treated me, and the odd detachment from other people I was feeling. Once again, she was a threat — and an opportunity. At last, I had finished. "...It was then I heard your scream, and felt I had to come to help."

"You are mistaken my dear man, I would not scream and give the ruffians such satisfaction." Her spine stiffened and her face bore a certain resolution reserved for the rich and ignorant. "It was Geila who screamed in fear of my safety." The Cleric met my gaze, and her stern face clouded for a moment. Her pride was not injured by the revelation, but I think she was trying to decide if I

had lied about my reason to join the fray. She clearly decided I was lying and her face became placid again. "It is grave news you bring. The man you described could only be Sir Walden, Marshal of the Shadow Wood. He was adept at holding back the forces of darkness within the dark pine forest. His death, and the loss of Waldenmere, his keep, may prove disastrous. We must make haste to Wolfenburg so the Emperor and the surrounding nobles might be alerted."

*I had been wandering around alone in the Forest of Shadows? I'm lucky to be alive.* The peaceful journey had been a masquerade; I was safer now than I had been since I had first awakened in the keep.

Her face made it clear she was worrying at the problem in her mind, and seemed genuinely concerned. So, the almost-beauty was not only a woman of the people, but a practical woman at that. "I can say that Walden was known for hiring mercenaries and scouts of the finest quality. He had a great treasury in the castle to pay them and always hired the best for high wages. You, it would seem, would fit his qualifications as a master-at-arms." She turned to her nanny. "Geila, would a head injury such as his have caused such a loss of memory even after his healing?"

I saw the cleric of Shallya pierce me, try to read me even through my Fog to see my innermost being. *Good luck, frau.* Her face screwed up as an inner battle against some conflicting judgments warred. I was startled to find my hand creeping toward the hilt of my sword—I had not even realized I had brought it with me from the tent. Apparently my hind-brain knows me better than I do. "Yes, if he is speaking the truth, he may never retrieve his recollections in any sensible manner."

I felt like cursing and cheering at the same time. She could have poisoned my relationship with the Lady here, but did not. Then again, if she spoke honestly, I might never fully realize who I was. My face, of its own accord, portrayed picture perfect resigned determination. Theodemar came forward from helping harness the horses to the carriage and the lady nodded for him to speak. "Mistress, at our present strength, perhaps an extra sword would not go unneeded if Walden and his fortress has indeed fallen. In any case, the pavilions are packed and we are ready to move."

She set those sparkling green eyes upon me, "Well, swordsman?" I weighed pros and cons and realized there were enough of either I did not know to make any educated guess worthless. Instead, I asked her business in Wolfenburg. "My father has sent me to barter with a Dwarfen mining clan for iron." The shock must have been readily apparent on my face, for she laughed at me. Sending a girl to barter in a far town spoke volumes of her talents in states-craft. This woman would not be easy to... *What? What was I planning to do?*

"Of course milady, I would be honored to ensure the safety such a remarkable woman as you." *Well, I will apparently be protecting a very intelligent and resourceful woman with a gaggle of beardless youths in tow.* I knew I was heading for trouble. Then she smiled warmly at me. It was an honest smile, one that comes from the deepest part of the soul and could make any face shine like a heavenly figure. Somehow, that alone was worth it. The warmth dissolved under the withering gale from Geila's pale, gray eyes. Of course it rekindled when Her Ladyship paid me twenty-five golden crowns, up front, for my work.

The rest of the camp was broken down easily and packed efficiently. Apparently, the soldiers were much better servants than swordsmen. Theodemar deferred to me, showing more sense than I gave him credit for. He also procured for me a heavy traveling cloak that had belonged to his (dead) commander. Basic black edged with fox fur - being a commander in her ladyship's guard paid well. It fitted me well enough, and I thanked him. He was a friendly boy with an easy laugh and I would be a liar if I said that the hollow shell he was in my mind was not being filled with more vibrant colors. He was becoming a man to me. Not a friend, not yet, but a man. Something within me rejoiced, and something inside growled in anger. No, it was fear. The least I can be is honest to myself, whoever I am.

We set off before midmorning and I roved ahead a short distance, hand never far away from my weapon. I could always feel two pair of eyes on me from the carriage, one warm and one cold. When we made camp, one of the boys - no, guards - asked me about some swords tricks he could use to save his life next time he entered battle. Swordsmen who give away their tricks are dead men, because if an enemy knows what you are doing he will anticipate and spit you like a sow. As my heart painted these hollow-youths in with hopes and dreams, bad breath and dirty jokes, I found I could not say no. I felt old doors inside creep open and flush the musty halls of my soul. I began to feel the sinking fear that Morr and his ravens were still stalking me.

It still took most of the night before I told them about the bird on my chest when I had woken from near death slumber. Theo slapped me across the back and laughed so hard the woods echoed back. "Surely, my friend you are as much a fox as he who wore that trimming before you! Even Morr can't land his ravens on you for long!"

And so I had earned my name, bestowed by the boys with whom I would face death: Fox Crowe.

*To Be Continued...*

# THE FORUM

In part, due to the very late arrival of issue 13 (must be the number) we only have one letter this issue. Back in the heady days of issue four we had two pages worth. So come on get writing...

## “the Sun Editor of the roleplaying world”

**Robert Rees:** [Issue 12] itself felt a bit small but the interior layout is great and up to your usually high standard. I think that realistically speaking you've hit a bit of a high with the Warpstone's art and layout and until you think of some way of topping it you won't be able to do any wrong.

Well done with “Off the Shelf” lots of quotable quotes. I did think it was a bit dodgy interviewing your publisher though. Since the Wallis has spoken though I look forward to your “Rifts, Star Wars and Deadlands” articles. I was interested to see a quote from Paul Sawyer, the Sun Editor of the roleplaying world, so he's only interested in the systems he plays? Really? Never!

More seriously I did notice “systems” rather than games, genres or anything else. It's that pathetic association of a game with its hardware rather than its substance that I also noticed in the absolutely revolting interview with Phil Gallagher you published. About which I can only agree with Tim Eccles concise and balanced letter. That of course leads me to wonder what the hell Sam Stockdale found enlightening about it. Prior to reading it did he think that GW board were all game-loving hippies who needed to get their heads out of the clouds and turn a hard capitalistic profit? If anything the interview for me confirmed the worst fears I had about these middle-aged men who “don't play too much these days (unless it's our own computer game)” and bleat on about the importance of keeping the stock price high. You're doing it for the good of your shareholders? Like I'm meant to give a fuck?

Other than that, good to see a letters page. I will now do my best to support it by spouting badly informed nonsense and swearing a lot in an attempt to promote more outraged letters.

“Live by the Book” was... interesting, I do wonder about people who think that libraries have “1d6” staff. It's certainly an interesting employment policy. If you are going to introduce random rolls try and tie them into random events. For example there may be 70% chance of finding a free librarian but I'm pretty sure that the number of librarians a library has is proportional to the amount of books it has.

And then there's the vexed question of a “spell [taking] 1d12 hours to find”. Firstly it assumes that all spells are available if enough time is spent,

secondly it means that the results of searches will soon become farcical. “What is the capital of Venezula?” One hour. “Where is South America?” One day thirty three minutes. This article was exactly the thing that Pratchett was spoofing with the Unseen University back when he was funny (always a good controversial topic calling Pratchett a crap writer I can assure you).

Tomes of Magic was abysmal! If I copy the Paranoia tables and give them some Germanic sounding names and send it to you would you print that as well? I wouldn't have minded copying the format of CoC's blasphemous tomes but the writer stole the bloody names and content as well!

The Chemistry article looked good but boring. I gave up on it to be honest, I was not particularly interested in the subject matter before I started and the style didn't really hook me in so that when the lists appeared I decided that until I needed to know what the medieval/Renaissance alchemist had in his laboratory I'll wing it. Still, good to know it is there on the shelf should I need it one day.

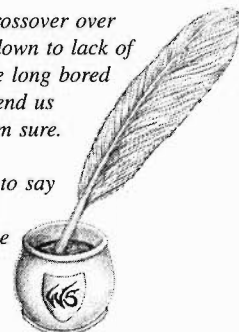
Good regular columns, congratulations there, they are making the zine worth reading outside the WFRP core audience.


And JF's scenario? Well it had the rank smell of “how many of this issue's articles can I get in here?” but despite that was still quite good. Damn you! I think you must be playtesting them because there's too much good stuff here for one man to be knocking off just to meet the requirements of the next issues theme...

Overall then - hey it's great to see you doing so well and it's nice to see that there is a quality RPG magazine you can buy for £3. Carry on, carry on...

*John F:* Yes, next issue will see our WFRP/RIFTS crossover over scenario (Joke!). The lack of a letter page is purely down to lack of letters, not lack of want. I'm sure regular readers are long bored of us feebly muttering the old fanzine battle cry of “send us more letters”. It will be written on our gravestone I'm sure. So feel free to be “outraged”.

As to my scenario; playtested? Certainly. I have to say the versions that appears in Warpstone is better than the one my players have to get through. After all I use them to find all the holes and punch a few new ones. However, they aren't written to fit any theme of the month, although they may be put in for that reason.





## NEXT ISSUE

## OUT

# NOVEMBER

## 2000!

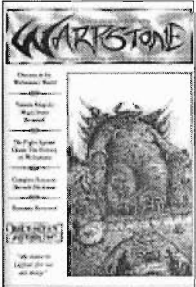
**THE CULT OF SIGMAR**  
History, Hierarchy and Comets

**IN THE LIGHT OF TWO MOONS**  
Gheimnisnacht & Hexansnacht

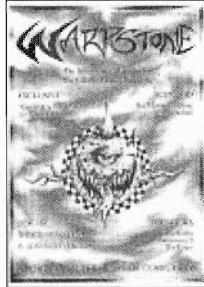
**SECRETS OF THE WFRP WRITERS II**  
Graeme Davis' final instalment

**& WHO ARE THE FEATHERED PRIESTS?**

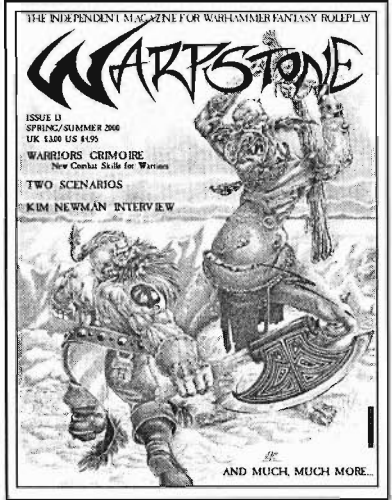
# SUBSCRIPTIONS      ORDERING DETAILS      BACK ISSUES



**Issue Seven**  
 Disease: Part One \*  
 Scenario: Oswald Skeltons \* History of Warhammer \* Magic Items Revisited \* Non-Human Skills \* Bretonnia reviewed \* Games Day 97 Report

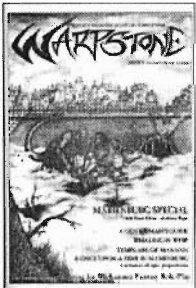


**Issue Eight**  
 Disease Part Two \* Scenario: The Children of Earth \* Witches \* Mankind's Best \* Advanced \* Art Preview



## ISSUE THIRTEEN SPRING 2000

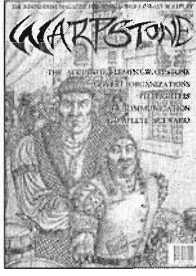
The Warpstone Interview: Kim Newman (aka Jack Yeovil) \*  
 The Road to Damnation: Cults & Cultists \* Remains of the Knight: Scenario \* Sold in the Hills: Scenario \* Warriors' Grimoire \*  
 Reviews \* Fiction



**Issue Nine**  
 Marienburg Special Whaling in WFRP \* Gentlemen's Templars of \* Scenario: Upon a Time in Marienburg \* P... Career \* Fiction



**Issue Ten**  
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**Issue Eleven**  
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**Issue Twelve**  
 Thralls of Darkness: Cults & Cultists \* Complete Scenario: Ring a Ring of Cultists \* Chemistry \* Tomes of Magic \* Librarians in WFRP \* Marienburg Sources \* Dreams and Omens \* Reviews

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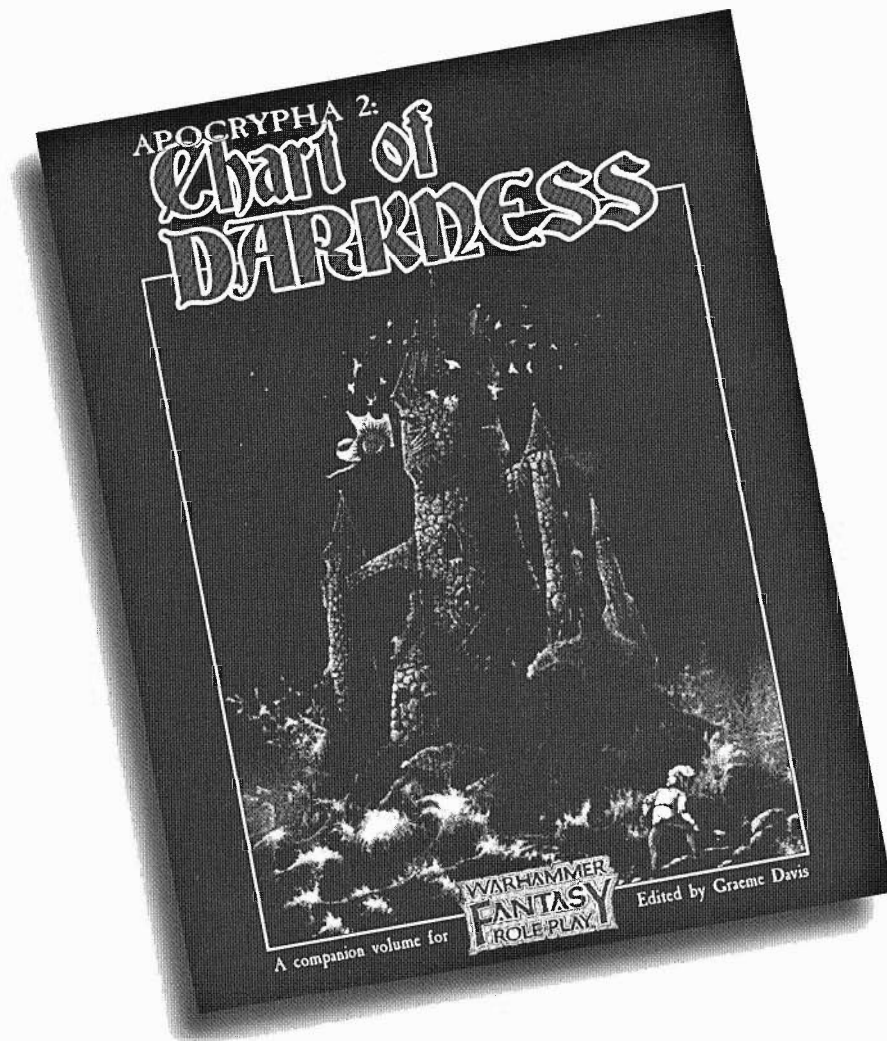
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