

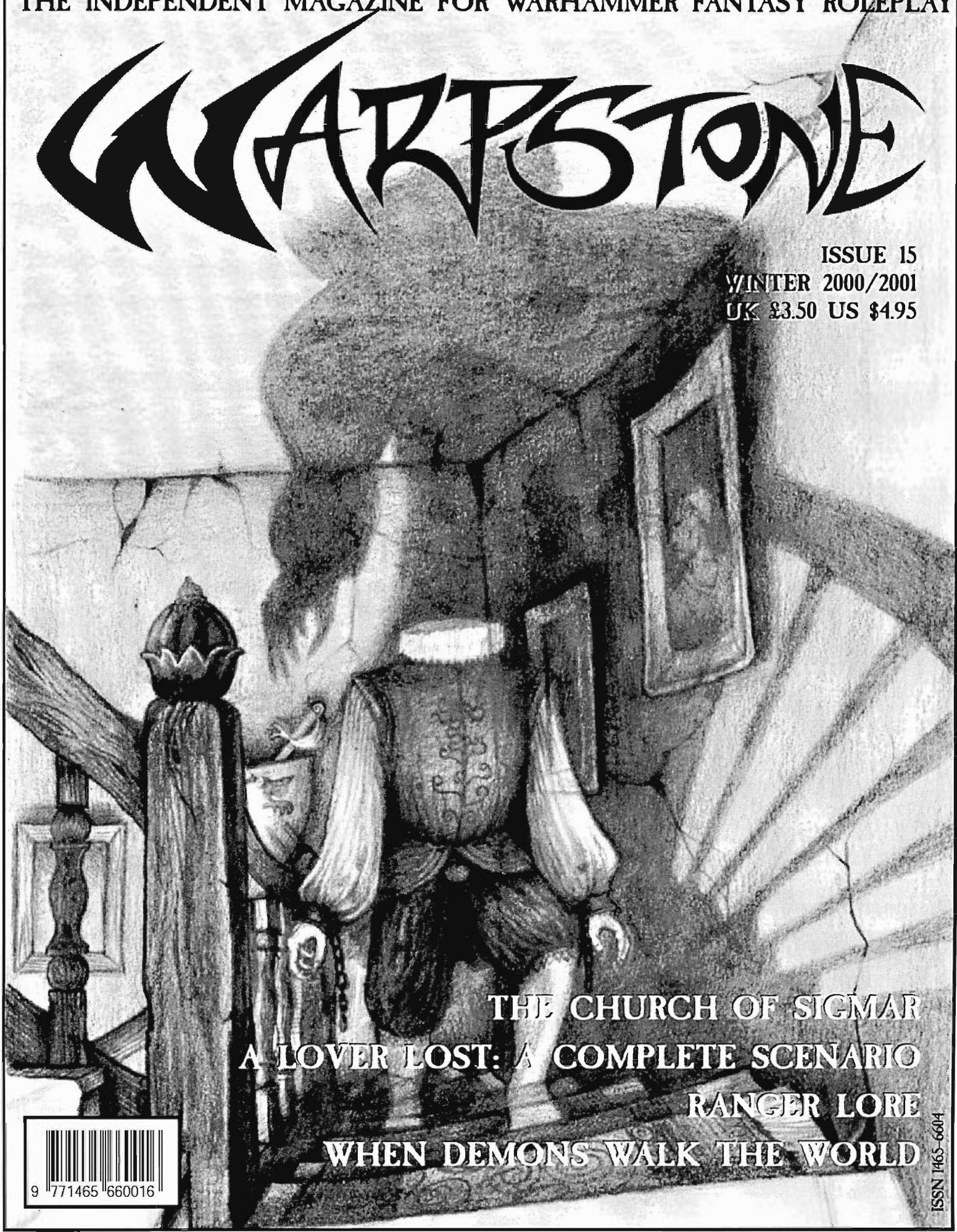
THE INDEPENDENT MAGAZINE FOR WARHAMMER FANTASY ROLEPLAY

WARTSTONE

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THE CHURCH OF SIGMAR
A LOVER LOST: A COMPLETE SCENARIO
RANGER LORE
WHEN DEMONS WALK THE WORLD



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EDITORIAL

By John Foody

Welcome to another issue of Warpstone. For those of you following the saga, the Keane family is now one member bigger, with the birth of a healthy Joseph John Keane. Mother, baby and Warpstone editor are all doing well. Hearty congratulations from us all!

You may well have noticed Warpstone's cover price increase. This took effect from last issue, but it wasn't mentioned in the editorial as it was a very last minute decision. We were asked to make this by the distributors due to rising costs and the strength of the pound; rest assured, there's no profiteering at this end. (Chance would be a fine thing!) Subscription rates remain the same, as do prices in the USA.

However, we're pleased to say that you are getting more for your money. We are having no difficulty filling the extra eight pages, and once again you'll see that we have really shoehorned some articles in. Word for word, we aren't that far off the size of some supplements! We have made a conscious effort to use these new pages to broaden the kind of material we can bring to you. Everything will remain very much WFRP-centric, but you might find one or two surprises. There will be pieces that aren't exactly what you might expect from Warpstone. We won't give the game away, though; just look out for such articles in the coming issues.

This issue we publish a follow-up to issue fourteen's *The Warriors' Grimoire*, which suggested revisions to the combat system based around a number of new skills. The feedback on this (some of which you will find on our letters page) has been very mixed. This is no surprise. Warhammer is seen by most as being a 'rules-lite' game, and Warpstone has deliberately stayed away from articles that have revised the basic rules. In this case, though, we felt *The Warriors' Grimoire* would appeal to players who wanted to add a little something to their combat system. The feedback suggests that for a large number of readers it did just this. However, we aren't ignoring those of you who argued against the article; whether or not we agree, it is simply a matter of different styles - and you just can't please all of the people all of the time!

This issue, we bring you a comprehensive background for the Church of Sigmar. This follows on from the Cult of Shallya piece in issue ten. For a little while, we did put off publishing articles on the main cults as we waited for *Realm of Divine Magick*, the follow up to *Realm of Sorcery*. Although the latter should be with us soon, the former is certainly some distance away.

One problem is that new sourcebooks sometimes trample over what has gone before. In writing and editing articles, we attempt to keep true to the history and consistency of The Old World. It is not always an easy task. Many of Warpstone's articles refer to earlier articles in passing. This isn't a ploy so that the magazine is only useful to long time readers; it's simply a way of making the Old World a consistent and logical place. We do try to ensure, however, that any reference is clearly explained. What this means is that any published article becomes part of the background, as far as we're concerned, and is there to be used as reference material by future writers. This should not put writers off submitting. If the idea is good, it is good. We will help you fill in holes or point you in the right direction if you want to expand a topic. Don't be afraid to run ideas past us for feedback! But also, don't forget that we're happy to get articles that deliberately ignore bits of background, or give an alternative take on a topic - just so long as the writer understands what they have chosen to ignore!

That's it for now. See you next time.

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


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Temple on page 24 based on original by Pelle B. Sorensen.

Thanks to: Tim "Smiley" Eccles, Graeme Davis, Natascha Chrobok, Leif Ulrich Shrader, Morten Krog, Robert Clark, N. Arne Dam, Stephen Cumiskey, Garrett Lepper, Ouroboros, Mike Hill, Marc Torley, Roderic Oswald, James Wallis, Adam, Anthony & Peter.
Thanks & hello to Alfred and Anette.

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 an integral part of the story. A tribe of goblins with +1 swords all round will prove the adage that 'the editor's red pen is mightier than the sword...'**Short stories:** Set firmly in the Warhammer World. Same guidelines as Scenarios.

The Article List

If you want to see any WFRP related article then let us know. We will add it to the article list. Only the following on the list at the moment;

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

ETC.

The three Dwarfs tramped through the snowy wastes full of snow searching for the champion and the child. Their mission was just, for only the champion could free the trapped men - although even this was deemed uncertain, for rumours had it that one of the prisoners was a traitor. Whatever the truth of it, their methods were brutal. No-one remembered their passing, for the road was filled with dead, their throats slit. Many hypocrisies were muttered as they argued about their methods and their mission. The suspicion that they had been sent here because they were acting undwarfishly was occasionally voiced. Of course, it was dismissed: they were Dwarfs, therefore everything they did was Dwarfish. At night they dreamt of gold and goblins, and by day they held their axes tight and keep their beards combed. Still, they knew in their hearts that the Dwarf who had sent them here hadn't told them everything. He was fat, old, tired and overworked, muttering mutterings to himself as he scribbled away. "Find the collector," he said ominously. "Who is the collector?" said the fastest of the three. "He collects things!" came the muttered muttering. "????!" said the dwarfs - and even now, they still didn't understand.

REPORTS FROM THE HEART OF CORRUPTION

Reviews

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We take a look at some on-line WFRP resources and the out-of-print Castle Drachenfels. "It's a case of kill the monsters, search the room for useful items, then move on. This isn't really WFRP is it?"



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The latest news from Hogshead and a round-up of the latest games magazines. "as with all first issues there is room for improvement"



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A look at the role of adventurers in the WFRP world. "We are seeking to adventure, and not role-play pig farming or cattle herding."



Secrets of the WFRP Writers

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Graeme Davis, joined by Phil Gallagher, shares his insights into the creation of Warhammer and the jokes within. Part Two of Two. "I thought there was also a Pissdorf, but it looks like cooler counsels prevailed there."



Pulling the Strings

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Some ideas on using Patrons in Campaigns. "In roleplaying parlance, any character hiring the PCs is a patron (and will often expire seconds before revealing vital plot details)."



The Church of Sigmar

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An examination of the Cult, its aims and organisation. "The Empire simply cannot be played without an understanding of this cult."



Religious History

25

Giving the religions of the Old World some history and context. "around them the frightening, inscrutable elder races carried out their unknown plans."



In the Light of Two Moons

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The Truth about Gheimmisnacht and Hexensnacht. Nights when demons roam free and strange things happen. "Mannslieb and Morrslieb, are full, glowering down at the world beneath them."



Ranger Lore

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A fresh look at rangers and some new skills to help them survive in the wild. "a ranger is often relegated to being the bowman of the group"



A Lover Lost

35

A lost romantic involves PCs in dark deeds in the heart of Nuln in our latest scenario. "Common folk look on outsiders as either a threat, or an opportunity to jack the price of goods and services up a notch."



I Know Not...

42

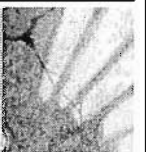
Part two finds our hero uncovering a plot. "The air was quickly turning to frost and Ulric had finally remembered it was time to rule over his brother's kingdom. He had shaken the sleep from his eyes to descend upon the lands of Men."



The Forum

47

The latest letters. Issue 13's The Warriors' Grimoire proved to be a talking point. "This is munchkinism at its worst, and the justification for these needed tricks is laughable."



ABBREVIATIONS

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

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REVIEWS

ON-LINE RESOURCES

Monastic Orders by Natascha Chrobok

Under the Sails by Leif Ulrich Schrader

Norsca by Morten Krog

Reviewed by John Foody

While we haven't been inundated with new WFRP releases in the last few years, there has been a steady supply of free, publicly available new material for the game. It would be nice to believe that Warpstone is at the forefront of this, but what we can publish pales into insignificance (in terms of quantity, at least!) compared to what is available on the Internet. A host of websites (led by the excellent Warhammer Archives) provide material for every facet of the game and the world. As with all fan-based material, the quality of the material is extremely variable - while many of the ideas are good, the execution can be less so.

From time to time a fully-fledged mini-sourcebook springs up. Such manuscripts set out to tackle their chosen topic - whether it be Monasteries, Norsca or Sailing - fully and comprehensively. Their very form shows that they have been written and compiled with enthusiasm and dedication. This review will look at the best of these releases (we have also looked at *The Book of the Rat & Da Book of Goblins* in the past) to see whether they are essential additions to the collection of every WFRP player.

Before I begin to examine each of these projects individually, it is worth stating that each is a work-in-progress. Even as I compiled this review, I was kept informed of on-going changes, some of which were the result of comments made by others online. The versions I read all could have done with varying degrees of thorough proof reading or improved layout, but these are something that will doubtless be ironed in time, and which should not stop anyone from using them. But it is the material that we are here to look at, so let me begin...

Natascha Chrobok's **Monastic Orders in the Old World** is a good looking work, illustrated by photos and pictures of monastery buildings, maps and small character portraits. With these, Natascha sets the feel and tone of the manuscript nicely. The first part gives a general overview of the workings and life of a monastery, or convent, and its inhabitants. She has placed this background in a firmly historical (and, as might be expected, Roman Catholic) context, which makes for interesting reading in itself. This is followed by a list of careers that can be followed in such a setting, including a number of new ones. These are generally well balanced, but most will only be useful for NPCs.

The chapter looking at the Monastic Orders themselves covers four in detail and a further four more briefly. Those looked at closely are the cults of Sigmar, Taal, Shallya and Verena. Natascha examines their history and gives some idea of their place in the Old World. Each of these contains some interesting points, but I don't feel there is enough detail on how they can be incorporated into the game.

The final part gives us an idea of what a typical monastery might be like. Dedicated to Sigmar, the monastery is covered in some detail, with layout, inhabitants and secrets all fully detailed. Some adventure hooks are also given for putting this background to good use. The central conceit at the heart of the monastery and the daily interactions are well handled, and it would be easy to slip this into a campaign.

There is a need for more plot hooks and ideas throughout the text, and I would have liked to have a fuller scenario included. The background is strong, but could provide more opportunities for integrating this material into the Old World itself. Overall, **Monastic Orders** provides good, solid background for GMs looking to include a monastery or players wanting to run a monk PC. With just a little more work, this would be an essential manuscript for every WFRP GM's shelf.

A somewhat bigger text is **Under the Sails** by Leif Ulrich Schrader. Here, the author has taken on the impressive task of looking at naval life in the Warhammer World. There are a number of illustrations throughout the text which provide good examples of the material covered, from types of ships to weapons.

Leif begins with a history of sea-travel, in which he introduces a previously unknown civilisation. This risky gambit doesn't fall on its face, as it kept vague enough to be interpreted in numerous ways. A brief overview of naval culture follows, but this could have expanded upon, forming more of a central focus than it does. Later on, the various important harbours of the Old World are discussed in more detail.

The bulk of **Under the Sails** examines the details of ships and those that work upon them. Life on board ship is examined, looking at superstitions, punishments, religion and the dangers of the sea. The different classes of ships, how they are made, navigated and the various members of the crew are all looked at in detail. This is greatly based in historical research and proves interesting, although as wit **Monastic Orders** it could do with more bias towards adapting it for the Old World. I do like the Sky Map that appears here, containing the constellations of Sigmar's Hammers and Morr's Raven, amongst others.

The section on ship combat is comprehensive but seems like too much effort to use, taking anyway from the roleplaying potential of such situations. However, I think it will fill a need for those who want to undertake this kind of combat. The final part of the main text gives ideas for campaigns at sea. This includes some very sketchy adventure hooks that will need a lot of work to develop.

Finally, there are a number of appendices, mostly consisting of charts giving profiles of ships, lists of prices and various combat related information. A gazetteer lists details of the ports of the Old World, although the garrison strengths seem a little high. This is followed by new careers and skills, the great majority of these being well thought out and relevant to the main text. The final appendix is 'Bloody Murder', a simple and effective sea-bound scenario.

Under the Sails does provide an interesting read, and is a good stepping off point to running a campaign. There is a currently too much focus on the details, however, whilst more could be incorporated on sailing in the Old World itself. Nonetheless, if you are heading seaward, this will give you plenty of good ideas about life on the seas of Warhammer.

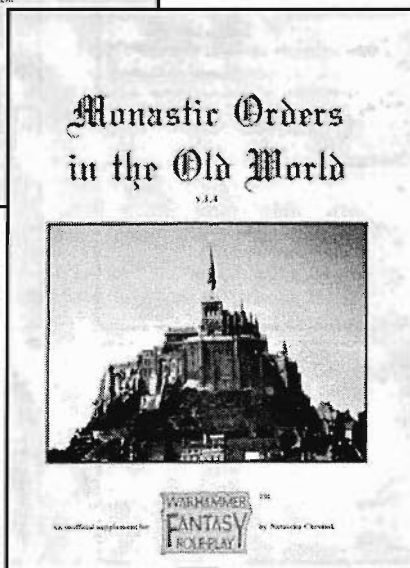
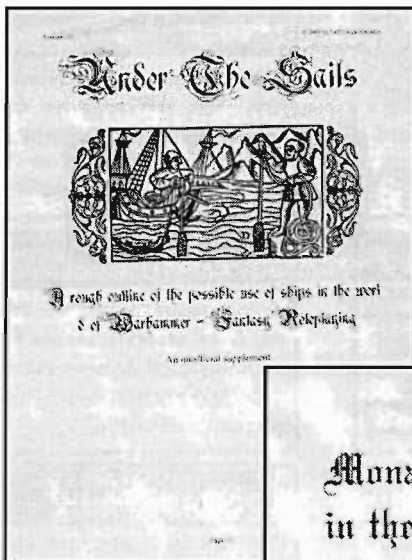
Taking our review ship North, we alight upon the shores of **Norsca** as chronicled by Morten Krog. Here the author has attempted to detail a whole country. The Norscan culture is an old and violent one, only now becoming more "civilised" like its neighbour, The Empire. It is a cold and hostile place, famous for snow and raiders.

The history and geography of the country is briefly but solidly outlined, introducing the beginnings of a conflict with the Elves, something which is not

expanded on elsewhere. The social structure of the country is looked at in some detail, introducing the various levels of nobility, government and obligation (slavery & fiefdom). This gives the reader a good idea of how the country is run. This section is followed by information on the state of relationships and trade with other countries. The Norse alphabet, known as The Futhark, is also introduced.

The section on religion is perhaps the most detailed in the book. Many of the Gods of the Norse are similar to the Imperial Gods. As he does elsewhere, Morten brings myth and legend into the mix, making the text come alive. This kind of detail is welcome, as it is missing from much of the WFRP background.

The monsters of Norsca are also examined, and this chapter is the strongest in the book, with the ideas fully fleshed out. Giants, Trolls, and mutants are looked at, but each is given a Norscan slant; the giants particularly are made to



feel a real part of the country. The same is true of the Ulfvenerar, which are (to a great extent) werewolves. I am not overly keen on some of the Troll subspecies, but they are credible enough.

The new careers introduced here come firmly from the text itself. However, it does seem to simplify Norse society into a much simpler structure than it should be. Two Non-Player Characters are given, but they are too brief to be of much use. The same is to be said of the adventure hook.

Much more than the other two manuscripts, Norsca seems incomplete. Some of the chapters are little more than notes. Morten gives the bare bones of the country and that in most cases these are strong enough to work with. Norsca is given form and feel that makes it stand far beyond the worst Viking clichés. It does come across as one uniform culture, but that could easily be built upon. As it stands, the text would act as a good introduction for players wanting to play Norsean characters. It could easily be interpreted as being what they know, without too much secret background and the like.

Although all three of these manuscripts, to a greater or lesser degree, are works-in-progress, each generally accomplishes the task that the authors have set

themselves. None of them, at present, is strong enough that you would expect to see them in an official sourcebook. However, each succeeds in detailing different parts of The Old World, making them part of the greater whole and the authors. Considering these were written for the love of the game, they are to be congratulated for their efforts. Each is certainly worth the effort to search out – especially as they are free!

Monastic Orders

www.geocities.com/Area51/Labyrinth/8869/warhammer.html

Under the Sails

leifs_domain.tripod.com/roleplay/uts.htm

Norsca (at the Warhammer archives)

www.warhammer.net

❖ T I M E W A R P R E V I E W ❖

Castle Drachenfels

Published by Games Workshop

Reviewed by Robert Clark

Written by Carl Sargent in 1992, Castle Drachenfels was the last WFRP supplement to be released by Games Workshop before the line was dropped. As you'd expect, the book is based on the novel 'Drachenfels' by Jack Yoevil (AKA Kim Newman), and attempts to describe the denizens of the castle. There are a number of possible plot tie-ins to get your party to enter the castle, but the castle is more of a location to be investigated than an adventure in itself. For those of you who haven't read the novel, be warned that this review contains some spoilers. I recommend you read the book first, if you can find it.

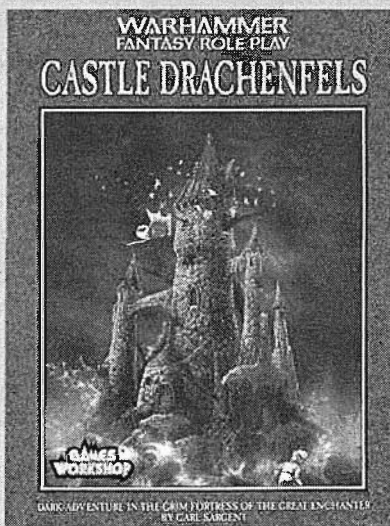
My major gripe with this book – and there are a few – is the whole idea of adventuring in Castle Drachenfels itself. I think the novel is a very good story, a gripping tale that gives a great feel of the Warhammer mythos. At the end of the novel, the castle is destroyed once and for all, yet the sourcebook states that the castle still exists. Obviously there would be little use for a sourcebook if it didn't, but surely this weakens the story and thus the game. The sourcebook also suggests that the castle regenerates over time, and that it has the ability to bring Drachenfels back. In the novel it took Drachenfels centuries to slowly crawl back to life after he was defeated by Sigmar, and to me this owed more to his personal powers than to those of his castle.

The castle itself is rather uninspired, to say the least. The layouts are pretty standard throughout, and contain a whole plethora of Undead to throw at your party. I'm not the most experienced role-player, but even I'm aware that this makes for extremely boring dungeon-bashing. Nearly every room, creature and encounter is a conflict situation. It's a case of kill the monsters, search the room for useful items, then move on. This isn't really WFRP is it? It makes some of the worst sections of Doomstones look mild, especially since there you actually have a definite goal to achieve. Whilst it might be argued that presenting Castle Drachenfels as a location to be adapted for GMs' use means greater flexibility, I found that this meant almost any excuse to go to the castle was used. Even the examples given in the book are half-baked, usually revolving around recovering a magic item or something equally unoriginal.

However, it's not all bad. Some of the encounters are original and rather interesting – for example, the rather surreal encounter with the Chaos bed, or the Chaos Cuckoo. After a while though, it does tend to boil down to, "Watch out, the Chaos toilet! etc. etc.", but taken in isolation there are a few good ideas here. In this sense, the book could be useful as a source of ideas that you could throw into an adventure, but if used 'as is', it becomes humdrum and predictable. It is questionable as to whether the sourcebook remains true to its source, since much of the magic that was encountered related to the Great Enchanter; once dead, the castle was little more than an empty shell. The sourcebook suggests otherwise, and because of this you sometimes feel that the setting is related to Drachenfels in name only.

Take away the names and it could be any generic dungeon.

One of the greatest things about the novel is its atmosphere; dark, even macabre in places. The sourcebook is sadly lacking in this. The Undead minions and lost souls that inhabit the castle seem to be everywhere, and whilst at first this may be evocative of the atrocities Drachenfels has committed, it just becomes monotonous. There are only so many times you can walk into a room to be encountered by the wailing dead and be affected by it. This is its greatest fault. Even without a good reason for going here, players might forgive a scenario if it is enjoyable and exciting. This is plodding and hackneyed. The inclusion of the 'Drachenfels lives!' adventure idea could make it a race against time, but again, the very idea of Drachenfels coming back from the dead so recently after he died is a sell-out of



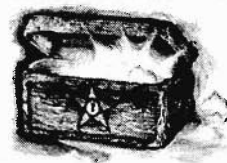
some of the strong material from the novel.

Would you want this book? It really depends on how much of a completist you are. Since Hogshead have mentioned that it is "at the bottom of the pile" for reprints (no doubt due to the points raised above), if you really want it, get it whilst you can. I picked up my copy for £10, and since it appears to be fairly common in second-hand games shops, I doubt it would be priced any higher – not if the seller wanted to get rid of it, anyway.

Sadly, I cannot recommend Castle Drachenfels at all. Hopefully Hogshead might consider rewriting it at some point, perhaps sticking in a proper themed adventure or toning down the proliferation of nasties. As it stands, there are few redeeming features. The setting is over-powered, lacking a true connection with the novel, and is basically a hackfest.

WARPSTONE FRAGMENTS

BRIEF REVIEWS AND NEWS FROM THE WORLD OF WARHAMMER



The Shelf Breaketh

An RPG Magazine roundup



RPG Magazines. Just like buses. Wait for ages for one and then half-a-dozen drop through the mail box at once. There does seem to be a revitalisation on the games shop shelf with a mixture of professional and amateur efforts. But are they any good you ask. In addition to the welcome regulars *G3*, *Games Gazette* and *imagine* this month sees the release of a new edition of *Carnel*. Editor Robert Rees has featured WFRP on numerous occasions in the past. Issue 15 of this A5, plain formatted, no-nonsense booklet is no exception. On top of a review of *Warptestone 12* (nominated as their 'Recommended Fanzine' - Shucks) there is two WFRP scenarios. One is the highly-regarded *Tales of Sylvania* by Michael Anderson (long available on the web) and the second an interesting idea by Robert himself. He does claim "The Secret of Phillip's Farm" is not WFRP but its origin is clear. On top of these are reviews and comments articles. There is also an article by Tim Eccles which acts as a companion piece to this issue's Correspondent (page 5).

Bouncing on the market is the American *Games Unplugged*. Full colour and laden with adverts, it is impressive if initially seeming lightweight. This impression generally proves false, but as with all first issues there is room for improvement. *Games Unplugged* is aiming to concentrate on the industry; reviews, news, interviews and the like rather than having scenarios and directly games related articles. A preview of 3rd Edition *Dungeons and Dragons* doesn't fill me with much hope for it. Everything seems to be concentrated on rules. I quote the most bizarre comment. In reply to the accusation "The new game has changed so much, it isn't D&D any more." Jonathan Tweet, lead designer says, "If D&D is THACO, 18/00 Strength and a longsword is 1D12 damage vs. large creatures, that comment is true. If D&D is rolling to hit on a d20 and hoping you get a 20, the six ability scores ranging from 3 to 18, and a longsword is a weapon of choice for the discerning fighter, then that comment is wrong." Still, lets hope 3rd Edition D&D is a huge success and brings scores of new people to the hobby. We shall see.



James Wallis, Hogshead supremo comes in at 44 in the Top 50 Most Influential People in the Adventure Games Market. Entertaining, but rubbish all the same. The reviews are slightly brief and a Gencon product preview seems like a space filler. The design notes and history of TSR were good reads and it is good to see they are looking at other aspects of the hobby too. The cartoon (all new Snarfquest) is not much good though. *Games Unplugged* has the look of a magazine that will be abroad for some time to come, but then we've made that mistake before. Under the new editorship *Valkyrie* certainly, and finally, seems to be getting back on track. With the emergence of *Games Unplugged*, the news section has been cut down to a much smaller and better size. The reviews section remains the strongest part, although the Feature Review is, like last issues, pitched wrong. The regular articles are of a generally good standard, although the new NPC section starts off poorly. The cartoon remains the weakest part by far. Awful! The bulk of the magazine, the Features and Scenarios are a variable quality mixed bunch. Although it has some way to go yet, *Valkyrie* seems to gaining more of a personality than it has had previously. There is little here to interest the WFRP gamer, but if your interests spread further then give it a look. Issue 20 is more likely to appeal. It is to the greater degree a theme issue for D&D but is a good amusing read in many parts.

I recently picked issue three of *Shred*, a "Parody" RPG magazine. Published by a group of friends (they accept no submissions) whether you like it depends on your sense of humour, although there a few "serious" pieces in there.

On the dedicated fanzine front, *Mythic Perspectives* has had its distribution taken over by Atlas Games, the publishers of *Ars Magica* (and who *Mythic Perspectives* editor now works for). *The Hobbit Hole* is dedicated to *Tunnels and Trolls*, Issue Three bringing a mixture of rules, fiction and ideas. Published by occasional *Warpstone* contributor James L. Shipman, if you are a *Tunnel & Trolls* fan then check it out.



Hogshead News

Apocrypha 2: Charts of Darkness is finally out, being realised to great success at Gencon. We also hear reports that Hogshead virtually sold out of all merchandise at Games Day 2000. Speaking of *Apocrypha 2*, if anyone's wondering why it feels thinner than the first volume in the series... thinner paper. Hogshead say its not the paper the printers were asked to use! "Ah well" Hogshead were heard to say. A review next issue.

The next WFRP release will be a reprint of *Death's Dark Shadow*, the Flame background- and adventure-pack set in the shadow of the Vaults mountains. There will be some minor changes to the book, mostly the removal of six pages of NPCs from the long-out-of-print Games Workshop novels and a new cover, but basically it's the same book. It was never that

GAMES MAGAZINES: THE RAW FACTS

The Hobbit Hole

Frequency: Three Times a year.
Current Issue: 3
Cover Price: \$3.50
Subscription: \$10 USA, \$20 Foreign
In Games Shops?: No.
Address: 2105 Maple Street,
Lawrenceville, IL 62439

Valkyrie

Frequency: Quarterly
Current Issue: 20
Cover Price: £3.50/\$7.50
Subscription: (5 issues) UK £16.00,
Europe £21.50, Rest of World £23.50
In Games Shops?: Widely available.
Address: Partizan Press, 816-818 London
Road, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, SS9 3NH

imagine

Frequency: non-fixed.
Current Issue: 35
In Games Shops?: No.
Address: Contact editor Paul Mason at
101 Green Heights, Shimpo-cho 4-50,
Chikusa-ku, Nagoya 464-0072 Japan or
panurge@tcp-ip.or.jp
imagine is a paper based magazine, it is just
distributed across the net.)

Shred

Frequency: Monthly
Current Issue: 6
Cover Price: \$3.99
Subscription: 1 year, \$38.30
In Games Shops?: Yes.
Address: www.shredmagazine.com

Carnel

Frequency: Non-fixed
Current Issue: 15 (November)
Cover Price: S\$AE (while stocks last), £1
(\$5) +S\$AE for back issues
In Games Shops?: No.
Address: R. Rees, Top Floor Flat, 22
Victoria Square, Clifton, Bristol, BS8 4ES
www.geocities.com/shudderfix/carnel

Games Gazette

Frequency: Bi-monthly
Current Issue: 117
Cover Price: £1.45
Subscription: (6 issues) UK £10
In Games Shops?: In the UK, Yes.
Address: Chris Baylis, 67 Mynchens, Lee
Chapel North, Basildon, Essex, SS15 5EG
At 20 years old, the oldest amateur games
review magazine. Reviews of the latest
games, RPGs, computer, boardgames and
anything else that qualifies.

Games Games Games (G3)

Frequency: Monthly
Current Issue: 146
Cover Price: \$3.99
Subscription: £36
In Games Shops?: Yes.
Address: SFC Press (GG), Freepost
BR2522, Littlehampton BN16 1BR
Concentrates on boardgames, especially
European ones, but does have some RPG
coverage. www.sfcpress.co.uk

Mythic Perspectives

Frequency: quarterly
Current Issue: 10
Cover Price: \$6.95 (Europe)/\$4.95
(USA)
Subscription: \$28.00 (Europe)/\$17.00
(USA).
In Games Shops?: Yes.
Address: Gnawing Ideas, PO Box 276677,
Sacramento, CA 95827-6677, USA.
Winner of the 1999 Origins award for best
Amateur Publication.

Games Unplugged

Frequency: Bi-Monthly
Current Issue: 3 (October)
Cover Price: US \$3.99, £3.00 UK
Subscription: None direct
In Games Shops?: Yes.
Address: PO Box 221, Lake Geneva WI
5314, USA / www.gamesunplugged.com

OTHER NEWS

Harlequin Miniatures is no more. They have been bought out by Icon Miniatures. * *D&D 3rd Edition* was released to a mixed reception at Gencon, selling 10,000 copies * Green Knight, publishers of Pendragon, have released *The Book of Knights*, a mini version of the rules to this great game * *Steampunk* seems to be undergoing an RPG revival with *GURPS steampunk* and the recommended *Forgotten Futures* * 7th Sea won the Outstanding Achievement in Role Playing Design at the Origins awards * *Last Unicorn Games* has been bought out by *Wizards of the Coast* * *Swing Boys Swing!*

well received and Hogshead are reprinting partly due to delays with upcoming supplements and because they want to get another release out in 2000.

Doomstones 3 still "continues to be cursed" but a release in early 2001 seems likely. *Realm of Sorcery* is still with Games Workshop for approval, who do seem to be taking their time on it. Also in the pipe line for 2001 (doesn't that music just keep coming into your head!), is the Dwarf and Skaven sourcebooks, and "maybe, just maybe", *Realm of Sorcery*. James Wallis is also hoping to write some more stuff for release then as well.

Otherwise, they've appointed Carol Johnson as Production Editor and Ian Sturrock as Sales & Marketing Manager, to replace the recently departed Clare Stephens and Marc Torley. They've also got *Key of Delhyread* and *Contract Killers Directory* coming out for *SLA Industries* shortly, and the release of the second edition of the *Nobilis* RPG early in 2001.

THE CORRESPONDENT

The Place of Player Characters within the Old World by Tim Eccles

The aim of this article is to examine the motivations for PCs, and describe the nature of 'normality' in the Old World. Exactly what are the differences between a PC and the typical imperial citizen? In order to do this, of course, it is first necessary to recognise that the PC is fundamentally different from the ordinary citizen. The latter are average stereotypes, fated to follow well-defined routes laid down for them at birth, and buffeted by the whims of fate - from natural disaster to economic cycle. The PCs, however, are independent figures, often radically different to the stereotype of their fellow beings.

It is quite obvious that the normal citizen follows the standard stereotype of the normal person in Western Europe for most of pre-industrial history. We envisage the subordinate and oppressed status of the peasant and the serf, as well as the lowly status of women, as the norm. I think there are two aspects to recognise, however, when applying such history to WFRP. Firstly, the average Old Worlder lives in a fantasy world of magic and divine intervention. Whilst WFRP might be a low fantasy game, such elements are still there. He or she also suffers terrible hardships, particularly from the prevalence of chaos, but also uncaring nobles and general poverty. Some of this might be true of our own history, but some is not. Secondly, because we are concerned with PCs, we are interested in the decidedly unaverage person. We are seeking to adventure, and not role-play pig farming or cattle herding. The typical male of the Middle Ages was a serf bound to the land who almost never ventured much beyond the borders of the manor, and then only with permission of his lord. Even the freeman, whether a rural yeoman or a townsman, rarely ventured more than 10 miles from his birthplace. Our PCs are fated to save the world - or die trying. They are tougher or more intelligent than the typical person is, and they are enmeshed in plots that allow them to transcend normal social rules with (at least) the permission of their social superiors. Characters in FRP are, by definition, exceptional and unusual people who venture far past the typical limits of normal life.

Normality

The basic idea of normality for a typical Old Worlder is going to be difficult to explain, because the Old World is so different from our own modern culture.

Our view of any figure must be based upon some idealised standard of what is normal within the Old World milieu. One of our major problems is immediately the concept of the individual; our own society pays great regard (at least nominally) to the individual, and the power of the individual. The idea of self-identity is much less developed in the Old World. Imperial citizens lack much of the awareness of self that arise from the concepts of individuality and individual worth, which have only arisen in recent centuries. The view we have of ourselves, our individual worth and our identity, is radically different than that of an Old Worlder. Much of their identity is communal in nature, and the notion of privacy is very limited. For example, most Old Worlders will not even have their own bedroom; large families will share a single room for their entire lives. This will clearly affect how they act on a daily basis, since an individual will have no space for privacy and very little ability to keep any of one's

affairs or feelings to oneself, or a few chosen by oneself.

Therefore, communalism would likely create introspective and careful individuals, wary of showing their true thoughts. This is also true of the nobility. In the castle or manor, there is little privacy even for the Lord and Lady.

Servants are almost omnipresent on virtually every occasion; they know when their Lord is in

bed (and with whom), when he is on the jacks, when he is ill. Servants, guardsmen, vassal knights in attendance, Chaplain, scribe - the Lord is dependent upon all these and many others to carry out his order(s) or to satisfy this or that need. In other words, image and public face are very important to the average Old Worlder. Unlike PCs, they cannot simply move on if they make fools of themselves in their current location.

Because image is important, word of honour is to be taken seriously; for once it is broken, one will never be trusted again. Ever. This affects everyone from the lowliest peasant to the richest merchant. All need to be trusted. This is also true of the nobility, clergy and various police groups. They need trust in their words. Even Witch-hunters need trust; the Salem witch hunts did more to set back Christianity than if there actually had been witches, for the people lost faith in their leaders and clerics as patently innocent people were burned. Similarly, I believe that the paternalistic ideals of feudal obligation and the more specific rules of the likes of the Chivalric Code are likely to be tolerably well adhered to, for this very reason. Some will obviously ignore such rules - but they are the villains in the world. The point is that without a normal level of behaviour by most lords, knights or priests, how would trust in such institutions arise? Without trust, no Chivalric Code can exist.

The concept of 'normal' within the Empire is probably an entire subject in itself, but I hope that you will concur with the characteristics described so far: generally poor, geographically limited, close-knit communal ties, with limited concept of self but a well-developed idea of the worth of one's word. None of these apply to the PCs - with the possible exception of being poor!

Why Are PCs Not Normal?

The PCs stand out from the crowd of typical Old Worlders because the hands of fate touch them; they have fate points. They are, in some form, the representatives of the Old World deities in their daily battle to throw back the hordes of chaos. More mundanely, they are unhappy in the daily routine of normality and, when fate offers them a chance to take up a more "exciting" career, they jump at it. They are different, as they have different aspirations.

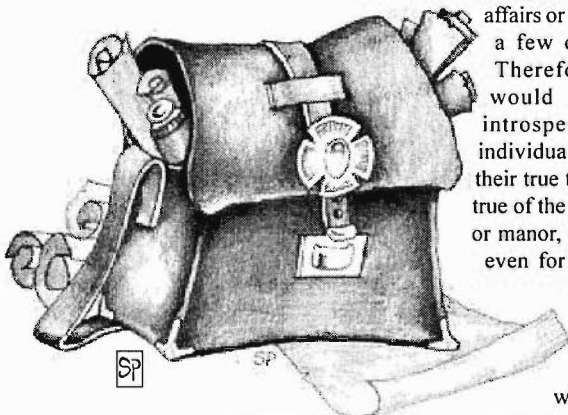
In social terms, PCs stand out because they are adventurers, and this profession transcends the normal social rules of etiquette. Desperate people in grievous need hire adventurers, and the world treats them with the respect (or fear) generated by this dirty job. As PCs become more powerful, it becomes increasingly difficult for "ordinary" citizens to control them, even if they so wished. By their very natures, they are clearly different and will always be treated like this. Only in the most cosmopolitan of areas are they likely to receive anything other than stranger status.

Why Do PCs Adventure?

The simple, possibly naïve, response to this question is because they are heroes. PCs are unusual in WFRP, in that they have Fate Points. These reflect the importance of their roles in the unfolding drama of the future of the Warhammer World, and the fact that they have in some way been selected by the gods opposed to the forces of chaos to fight the insidious incursions into their world. WFRP (p15) states, "fate is the essential difference that marks the character as an adventurer rather than an ordinary run-of-the-mill citizen. Adventurer characters have a destiny, a mission, a definite goal in life ... the character is marked out by the gods to do it". Personally, I think that it is valid to expect the PCs to act as heroes, even within the dark gothic fantasy that is WFRP. I think that the interesting part of playing a WFRP hero is that they are much more warts and all heroes than those found in typical high fantasy games. Our heroes fail (sometimes), they run away (frequently), they are insecure, have vices and foibles, and typically act very differently from a bunch of Lawful Good do-gooders. But they are heroes, and should be expected to act as such - that is their normal (or average) behavioural trait.

Adventurers as NPCs

The extent to which PCs are seen as not being normal, and the degree to



which they can break rules, certainly depends upon their own efficacy and ability to enforce themselves upon their environment. Put simply, PCs who have saved the Empire, or can wipe out the local law enforcement, obviously have an ability to operate outside normal modes of behaviour. The extent that they abuse this power will determine responses towards them. Even grateful emperors can grow tired of bothersome oiks taking them for a ride, whilst, despite its fragmented nature, most regions can expect Imperial aid where serious outlawry is occurring.

More important, however, is the place of NPC adventurers within the Old World. If PCs are simply part of a social phenomenon resulting from the rise of chaos and the fragmentation of the Empire (or at least the replacement of its social ties with contractual ones), then there are presumably (many) other groups of adventurers wandering about. Whilst attitudes towards PCs might then be influenced by the behaviour of the previous group in town, more generally it suggests that adventurers are a more normal part of the Old World's social and cultural fabric. Indeed, one might go further and suggest that adventuring almost becomes a career in itself. In this case, the Empire authorities will seek to try and control adventurers in much the same way as they will try and control Witch-hunters, bounty hunters and the like. Their success in such control is likely to be limited, but it offers GMs some level of influence depending whether warrants are issued by those needing tasks done, can be purchased, or (of course) forged.

Normality and PCs: Some Examples

Carrying Weapons: In the Old World, there is little doubt that its rulers want a peaceful and stable society, or at the very least a malleable one. This means that they are likely to look upon well-armed individuals wandering around their lands and cities with a distinctly unfavourable eye. On the other hand, the reality of the Old World is far from peaceful, and even ordinary people will carry some protection. So, how do the authorities deal with the issue? Middenheim, according to *Warhammer City*, makes visitors "check-in" their weapons and heavy armour on entering the city. This might well be normal. According to the WFRP rulebook, most Imperial villages have fortifications, and most farmsteads are fortified to some extent. Those approaching such a place well armed are likely to be dealt with suspiciously, and prevented or restricted in their entry, unless known in the area.

The question then revolves around definitions of 'armed'. It is likely that most Old Worlders will have access to some form of hand weapon, and this follows mediaeval history where daggers and short swords or axes were not uncommon. It is where individuals wear metal armour, carry serious weapons of war (particularly firearms, crossbows and two-handed weapons) or are on barded war horses that problems will arise, and the authorities will act. There are two basic exceptions to this rule, although even here over-arming will cause questioning and suspicion. Firstly, the Empire as a bureaucratic society will sell permits to appropriate persons operating in appropriate areas. Devious GMs can always sell their PCs fake permits. Devious players can always buy fake permits, which will likely convince most illiterate individuals. Secondly, certain individuals will automatically be permitted use by their station or post. Wearing the livery of nobles or local guild merchants, being accompanied by their representatives or those of an official cult, puts one above commoners. Similarly, soldiers, militiamen, watchmen, guardsmen, roadwardens, Witch-hunters, templars, coachmen and similar public servants are allowed to carry arms as part of their jobs. Those in similar positions, but operating as freelancers, are not automatically excluded from this privilege.

It is also worth stressing the intense xenophobia of the Old World. People from different regions, and this might mean from as little as a few miles away, will be particularly distrusted. After all, they are probably spies from Bretonnia, Ostland, the Cult of Sigmar or the nephew of the ruling Lord. If these people carry weapons then they are even more likely to be spies. This level of mistrust also extends to non-humans. Whilst Dwarfs and Halflings might be respected and ignored, respectively, Elves are rare and wondrous creatures whose very presence is frightening.

So, on entering a city, PCs should have a permit, keep items well packed, or hand them over to an official. And, as a GM, have said officials (occasionally) commit fraud or suffer a robbery. It is worth noting that adventurers should be encouraged to carry a knife with them for general purpose cutting, eating their food and (of course) protection. This is quite

normal, and will be allowed everywhere. In general, though, PCs entering a city had best keep their weapons packed away, or else they will prove to be the first suspects in cases of murder, theft, sedition, and any other plot device a GM can think up. GMs need simply put themselves in the position of some poor guard or roadwarden, who suddenly encounters a group of PCs. What would you think if you rounded the corner, and standing in the street were half a dozen fully armed shady characters?

In general, then, PCs face similar restrictions to most Old Worlders, but PCs have the advantage of seeking temporary employment that allows them to carry weapons. Or they have the money to "obtain" permits. Or the skills to forge them. Because PCs are individuals, run by players, they are quite able to create ingenious methods to circumvent this most sensible and basic of rules - and give themselves a serious advantage in doing so.

Social Etiquette: PCs meet characters from higher echelons of society on a regular basis. And, whilst they might have to bow occasionally, they are very rarely simply beaten up for the hell of it, expected to shut up and put up, dress in the latest court fashions, or regarded as unpaid toadies. These really are most remarkable advantages. This is not to say that such superiors respect PCs, but they often find themselves in need of such professional services, and recognise the need to treat such groups with a modicum of tact.

Responsibility: Unlike most inhabitants of the world, PCs have no responsibilities except to themselves. True, some may create families as background, or even during campaigns, but in my experience this is not usual - and even where they do, their ties are limited by the nature of adventuring. More particularly, there are few social ties. Most PCs seem to ignore their guild duties, except where "contacts" might help an adventure. This gives PCs a footloose and fancy-free attitude, and makes them very difficult to pressure via social conscience, since they have little social contact with the world. Beyond general notions of "doing good", and to neutral PCs this is by no means a certainty, there is little to pressurise them with within society.

Honour: Since PCs are usually transient - and certainly able to travel - they are much more able to break contracts, lie and act shamefully. Unlike ordinary citizens, they can simply move on to the next village/town/city/county/nation/continent. Of course, if their transgression is serious enough, or regular enough, then they may well find they run out of places to hide.

Being Different

It is worth noting that being different is not simply the string of advantages suggested above. Standing out from the crowd as rootless individuals has serious drawbacks.

Firstly, PCs cannot rely upon kith and kin to get them out of trouble. They are reliant upon themselves and those that they can pay. It is unlikely that paid hirelings will be as reliable or forgiving as friends and family.

Secondly, being constant outsiders will mean that PCs are always suspiciously watched. At the worst, this means that they will always be first suspects for any offence, but even being simply stared at and distrusted each and every day should prove very wearing.

Thirdly, PCs can never hide easily. They may leave areas, but hiding out will always be difficult. Someone will always sell them out.

Fourthly, PCs will always make enemies. Whoever they kill or outwit will have kin willing to seek revenge. PCs can never trust anyone, for even a stranger might have a reason to hate them.

Conclusions

I have tried to outline some ideas on the differences between PCs and NPCs, aside from the fact that one group are players. The nature of being a landless wanderer gives PCs certain advantages and other disadvantages. More importantly, for the purpose of this article, is to recognise the difference between the two types of people, since I think it can help in role-playing terms. PCs should develop the habit of moving on regularly, changing identities, watching their backs and spending their money wisely. They should see NPCs as very different from themselves, and GMs should have NPCs react in a similar vein. And remember that paranoia is not a mental illness when it is based upon reality!

SECRETS OF THE WFRP WRITERS

Part 2 (of 2) by Graeme Davis with Phil Gallagher

Welcome to the second part of the history of the jokes and stories hidden within various parts of the WFRP literature. This time around Phil Gallagher joins me. Last time it was the main Rulebook and *Shadows Over Bogenhafen*; this time it is the turn of the remainder of the material released in the Games Workshop and Flame Publications era.

The Enemy Within

Graeme: As I explained earlier, *Shadows Over Bogenhafen* was written before *The Enemy Within*, and Jim Bamba and Phil sketched out the campaign structure, wrote the guide to the Empire, and plotted the *Mistaken Identity* campaign start while I was finishing up work on *Shadows*. For various reasons, which I'll go into later, the campaign was never completed in its intended form. But people seem to like it anyway – I read not long ago that it came in joint first with *Call of Cthulhu's Masks of Nyarlathotep* in a French fan poll as the best roleplaying campaign ever, which is quite an honour.

History

The history of the Empire had been touched upon in the first two editions of WFB, but WFRP made a major addition in the character of Sigmar. We felt that the Empire needed an official deity of its own, and adding Sigmar to the pantheon set things up for a religious schism with the cult of Ulric and civil war toward the end of the campaign.

Phil: The legend of Sigmar was my creation although the inspiration for the storms and comet at his birth came from Shakespeare's Henry IV (a pint to anyone who can remember the name of the mad welshman in that play, whose birth was also accompanied by storms and comets).

Graeme: The Age of the Three Emperors helped to underline that the apparent unity of the Empire was often skin-deep, and foreshadowed future unrest. The beginning of the Dark Ages with the coronation of the Empress Margaritha in 1979 IC was a blatant reference to Margaret Thatcher, who had been in power for seven years by that time and was at the height of her unpopularity.

Names

Phil: What you have to remember is that, when it came to naming things in the Empire – be they people, places, or whatever – we tried to make them as Germanic sounding as possible. But none of us spoke more than pidgin German, and none of us considered how they might actually look to a German audience. So, armed only with a Collins' Gem English-German dictionary, we set out to invent an entire country...

The list of derivations is almost endless. A favourite of mine occurs in the calendar – as far as I'm concerned, *Bezahlttag* means 'pay day'!

Graeme: The names of the noble houses contain a few lame gags – the Holswig-Schliestens are of course based on the real German province of Schleswig-Holstein, and then there is the Untermensch family, which upset quite a few German readers. The term Untermensch (literally "under-person" or "sub-human") was used by the Nazis to cover anyone they considered to be of insufficient racial purity, such as Jews and Gypsies. In hindsight, it wasn't the most sensitive choice of name. At the time we just thought it would be an ironic name to give to a powerful family.

Countess Emmanuelle von Liebewitz, famed for her parties, was named for another Emmanuelle of cinematic renown, whose parties were probably equally as good. We toyed with the idea of having a Slaaneshi cult within the family, but she ended up playing a different role in *Empire in Flames*.

Todbringer means "death-bringer," which we thought would be an appropriate name for the ruler of the city where the Cult of Ulric is strongest.

Phil: Within the names of the Coaching companies, there's 'Castle Rock' – named after a local Nottingham brewer. (Nottingham 'castle' sits atop a huge lump of sand-stone – 'the Rock'.) And then there's the Cannon Ball Express coaching company... But maybe you're all too young to remember Casey Jones, Fireman Wally, and the rest of the crew...

Graeme: Count Bruno Pfeifraucher's name means "pipe smoker," and his name is based on St. Bruno pipe tobacco, which was being heavily advertised at the time.

I have to take full responsibility for the von Saponatheim family name. "Once upon a time" with a heavy fake German accent. It's not one people tend to spot, but they do tend to groan and throw things when it's explained to them.

Place Names

I already mentioned how Atdorf got its name – it means "old village" in German and we needed a quick substitute when its original name of Carlsburg was decided to be unsuitable. Once we got a letter from someone who lived in a real Atdorf somewhere in Germany. I'll have more to say about place names when I come to *Death on the Reik*.

A lot of other names are pretty much straight out of my pocket German dictionary: Grunmarkt means Green Market, Weissbruck means White Bridge, and so on. The Drak Wald owes its name to a typo, which originally said something about "drak forests" instead of dark forests. This amused Hal (Richard Halliwell) enormously and he was on about drak forests for days – so one of the Empire's great forests was called the Drak Wald.

Castle Reikguard, at the confluence of the rivers Reik and Teufel, was named after Right Guard, an anti-perspirant. Still, I suppose it *is* guarding the Reik...

Mistaken Identity

There are the usual amount of silly names here – Gustav Fondleburger, Lady Isolde von Strudeldorf (the place must be famous for its pastries) and Philippe Descartes the Bretonnian gambler. Coincidentally, the French publisher of WFRP is Jeux Descartes, whose logo is a portrait of the famous scientist and philosopher Rene Descartes and whose name is a play on the French for "card games." Groan.

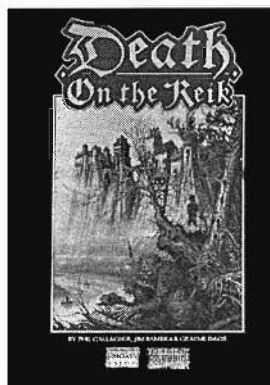
And then there's the law firm of Lock, Stock and Barl, on the fateful letter that sends Our Heroes for Bogenhafen. Better than Sue, Grabbit and Runne, I suppose, but only just. By the way, the calligraphy on the handout is Phil's, except that it's not calligraphy – all his writing looks that way. Amazing. Mine, in case you're wondering, looks like a very irregular ECG, or a stock value chart on a day of heavy trading. No use for handouts at all – none that people are supposed to read, anyway...

And whoever's idea it was to call the barge the Berebeli, it wasn't mine. So there.

Phil: That was Jim's idea. But it was my idea to call the pre-generated PC Johann Dassbut. Anyone remember the German cinematic epic *Das Boot*?

The reference to the Cat and Fiddle inn in "Arriving in Atdorf" comes straight out of *The Archers*, while Max Ernst the protagonist really was named after the surrealist painter. I can't remember why, now – it just seemed like a good name at the time, I suppose.

Death on the Reik



Graeme: Like *The Enemy Within*, this was mostly Jim and Phil's work. They wrote the adventure, and I wrote the *River Life of the Empire* booklet (or section, as it now is). To me, *Death on the Reik* exemplifies much that is good about the *Enemy Within* campaign, and also much that is bad. You get a sense of the scale of the Empire, and have the opportunity to become involved in all kinds of encounters and sub-plots. You also get to see real tragedy in the mutant population of Wittgendorf, who are innocent but have been corrupted by Chaos nonetheless; Ludwig, the cultured, part-cockroach head of the family, is one of my favourite NPCs.

Phil: And he's derived from Kafka's Metamorphosis.

Graeme: The moment where the PCs encounter the Goblin chief in drag (on the logical – if stupid – pretext that he's wearing one of the lady wizard's dresses and expects it to grant him the same magical powers that she has) is one of the definitive "Warhammer humour" moments, to my mind. On the other hand, the Wittgenstein Monster is needlessly derivative.

Phil: Just think Mel Brooks' 'Young Frankenstein' meets Kafka's 'The Castle', and you'll get the idea – hell, I'm with Picasso: "Good Artists Borrow – Great Artists Steal".

Graeme: Additionally the links from *Shadows Over Bogenhafen* and to *Power Behind the Throne* are very crude.

Phil: Still – it was the best we could come up with at the time, given the difficulty we had integrating Graeme's *Shadows Over Bogenhafen* plot into the campaign structure.

Graeme: And, as ever, there are the names, which you either like or loathe.

More Placenames

The town names of the Reikland are worth a look. It's not easy to come up with a hundred or so place names at the drop of a hat, so gags, puns and pure stream of consciousness have played their part.

For example, you'll see the names of a lot of people who were at Games Workshop at the time. There's Anseldorf, Priestlicheim, Halheim and Merretheim – the last being named after Alan Merrett, who was production manager, or some such title. The Hahnbrandt mine is named after Paul Cockburn, as best as my little German dictionary would allow.

There's also a series where someone (not me, but I don't know who) must have been in a very bad mood: there's Braundorf, Naffdorf, Brasthof and Ripdorf; I thought there was also a Pissdorf, but it looks like cooler counsels prevailed there.

Others include Würfel (German for dice), Stockhausen (named after the composer), Sprinthof and Barfsheim, and if you take a German dictionary to the rest you'll find that most of them have some meaning or another.

NPC Names

The NPC names in *Death on the Reik* are not as silly as those in the previous *Enemy Within* adventures. Instead, there's a strong philosophical theme running through them: Wittgenstein is the most obvious, but you'll also find Schiller, Rousseaux, Eysenck and Hegel among the NPCs. There may be more – I never was much good at Spot the Philosopher.

Phil: Frau Blucher – Rousseaux' housekeeper – is named after the mad woman in Mel Brooks' Young Frankenstein – remember her? Every time her name was mentioned, the horses would rear and whinny in panic.

Graeme: Of course, there are *some* silly names. Shiv Doppler, for example, and Anjulls Isebeard the Dwarf Engineer – not a very Dwarven name, but a pun on Isambard Kingdom Brunel. Luigi Belladonna the Tilean racketeer was probably going too far, though.

Phil: Oh, I dunno – he was, after all, a Robin Hood character, which you'd never guess from his name!

Graeme: The Chaos Warrior Ulfhednar the Destroyer gets his name from a group of berserkers I read about in a Norse saga – I think the name translates as wolf's hide, or something like that. Loorbeer and Kuhn, the Purple Hand cultists who meet the PCs at Weissbruck, translate from German as Laurel and Hardy, because I didn't expect the players to take them seriously. It's probably as well that I didn't tell Martin McKenna that – having them drawn as Vincent Price and Peter Lorre is going quite far enough...

I've always been in favour of giving NPCs names that are connected to their professions – after all, that's how we get names like Butcher, Baker, Fletcher and so on today. So Renate Hausier's name means pedlar, and Bernhard Dampfer's name means some kind of ship – a steam ship I think, which is a bit incongruous.

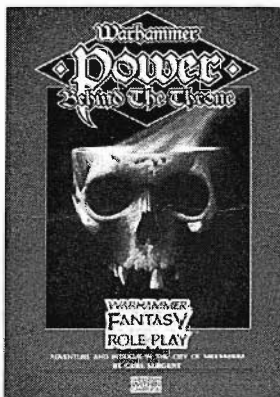
Graf Oriok, the vampire in the encounters section of *River Life of the Empire*, is of course the name of the vampire from *Nosferatu*, even though Martin McKenna chose to draw him as Bela Lugosi's Dracula.

Finally, the Seer Unserfrau (not strictly an NPC, I suppose, since the PCs only see his writings, not the long-deed sage himself) is Nostradamus, translated from Latin to German.

Chaos Cults

By this stage in the campaign, we were starting to worry about the Purple Hand appearing to be the only Chaos Cult in the Empire – ironic, really, considering that this plotline was never satisfactorily resolved. Anyway, that is why there are mentions of the Red Crown and Jade Sceptre cults. By the way, "jade sceptre" is a euphemism used in ancient Chinese erotic literature for – well, use your imagination...

Power Behind the Throne



Did you think that the *Doomstones* adventures were the first to be written for AD&D and adapted to WFRP? Think again. The adventure that finally saw print as *Power Behind the Throne* started out as a 32-page AD&D adventure that Carl Sargent wrote for *GM Publications*. *GM Pubs* was an independent magazine started by Paul Cockburn after TSR Inc pulled the plug on TSR UK's magazine *Imagine*, and before Paul came to Games Workshop along with Jim, Phil and Mike Brunton.

Phil: Incidentally, I worked very closely with Paul on the 4 or 5 issues of *GM Pubs* that ever saw the light of day, but under my Bryan James pseudonym, since I was still technically employed by TSR – I think I've still got a few hundred copies of each issue in the loft, somewhere...

Graeme: At that point *GM Publications* (not to be confused with several other British gaming magazines of about the same era that also had "GM" in the title) ceased publication, with Carl's adventure still on the stocks. Because it involved intrigue in high places, with a tangle of sub-plots and the chance for the PCs to make lifelong enemies and social faux pas, it looked like an ideal candidate for the mid-section of the *Enemy Within* campaign. Carl was commissioned to rewrite it for WFRP, using the city of Middenheim and the religious tension between the cults of Sigmar and Ulric. He did a bang-up job, and *Power Behind the Throne* has always been one of my favourite WFRP adventures.

Those Names Again

Calling the villain of the piece Goebels drew a lot of complaints from German readers, who were not happy at seeing the name of a high-ranking Nazi used in such a light-hearted way, and from non-German readers, who thought it made him too easily identifiable as the bad guy. With hindsight, a better decision could have been made, although I don't recall anyone complaining about Nastasia Hess the spy. Carl originally called the character Paulus Kochbrunn, and Martin McKenna's portrait of him is indeed a fairly accurate likeness of Mr. Cockburn. The savage character description that accompanies the portrait was apparently Carl's revenge for some late payments from *Imagine* when Paul was the editor there. Apart from these two and Luigi Pavarotti, the names in *Power Behind the Throne* are mostly sensible.

Phil: Check again, Graeme – didn't ya spot "Bimbo Wobbulbeli" the halfling historian, or Salladh-bar the Great, the Arabian necromancer?!

Graeme: I believe Carl used the names of athletes from German-speaking countries for his NPCs, though I don't know enough about sports to pick out any specific examples.

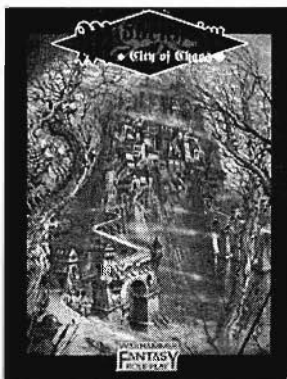
Phil: There's Breitner, Matthaus, and Platini – two German footballers and a French one, and I'm sure Carl used the name of the famous West German woman long-jumper/sprinter, but I couldn't find it when I looked back over the text.

The Puns

Carl's humour usually manifests itself in unspeakably bad, laboured puns, like the "1812 Over-Cure" (a historical event where meat was heavily smoked to disguise the fact that it was rotten) and the Black Pool Illuminations (a magical fireworks display over a lake). The carnival calendar has a few prime examples, too – like the opera "The Barbarian of Seville," for instance, and the Elven champion ice dancer Torvill Undean

Phil: Hey, don't blame 'em all on Carl – I have to take responsibility for the Rock of Mages, Artur and the Holy Gale, and the Wars of the Poses. Not to mention "The Ring of the Nibble Unger Lied" and the "Knight's Midsummer Dream". And then there's the 'Gragh Mar Schoold' (Grammar School?), and even the DHSS. While the wealthy district of Geldmund-Kaufseit-Brotkopf can be literally translated as "money world, buying-time, and bread-head", and the main street running through it is "zellaut strasse" (pronounced "sell-out")... And do we really need to point out the reference to the Slaaneshi D&D'ers (Deviants and Decadents)? And the naming of the cult head as Deviant Master (or DM)? Or the naming of 'young, ambitious perverts' as YAPPIes?

Middenheim



Graeme: Also known as *Warhammer City* and *City of Chaos*. This started off as the background section of *Power Behind the Throne*, and it just grew and grew until there wasn't enough room in one book

Phil: At least that's the excuse I always used when anyone asked me why I was taking so long to edit it. At the same time, we'd been thinking of doing a city book for WFRP – TSR has just released the excellent Lankmar city book for AD&D, and it was clear that city adventures were going to be a major part of WFRP.

Yet More Names

Graeme: The Begierbaden is an obscure pun of mine. I knew the name of the place would end in –baden, since it's a public baths. I was looking for something to go with –baden, and "beg yer pardon" popped into my brain. I suppose I should apologise.

Phil: Yeah – and not before time...

Graeme: Baron Stefan was originally called "Shakin' Stefan" after the singer Shakin'

Stevens, who was popular at the time, but this was ruled to be too tasteless even for WFRP.

Phil: The managers of the Showboat are called Rolf and Elise Rosencrantz who run it on behalf of a certain Guildenstern. Those who know Hamlet (or Tom Stoppard, come to that) will recognise the names...

Graeme: Johann Stallart, the proprietor of the Drowned Rat, is based on Games Workshop sales manager John Stallard. He said he wanted to be made into a WFRP character, but was less than flattered by the result.

Edam Gouda, "the Big Cheese," is without a doubt the lamest NPC name in the history of WFRP, even including the demon Zahnarzt from *The Dying of the Light*. It wasn't my idea; that's all I'm saying...

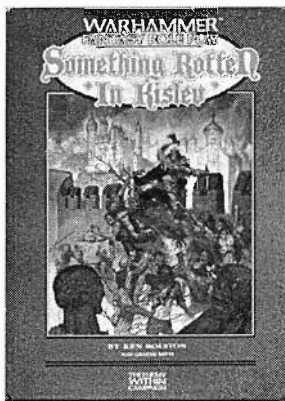
The Windhund Haulage Company gets its name from the German for Greyhound, as in Greyhound Buses. Sallah-bar the Arabian necromancer was swiped from a TV sketch by The Two Ronnies, who sent up the sword-and-sorcery genre with the diminutive Ronnie Corbett playing a barbarian hero named Mudgard the Mighty.

Phil: And for any non-football fans – the Bernabau is the name of Real Madrid's home stadium...

Graeme: Carl takes every opportunity to skewer the mid-80s club scene in this book. "Gorgeous" Georg Mikael, the owner of the Templar's Downfall, is singer George Michael from his Wham days. Cocktails were all the rage in the club scene then, but none of them got quite so extreme as the Hush Puppy. I can't believe that made it into print...

The Alte Geheerentode rum in the Man O'War translates as "Old Brain-Death" – from Wastelander, at least.

Something Rotten in Kislev



This wasn't in the original campaign plan, but Ken Rolston had written some very complimentary reviews of WFRP in *Dragon* magazine, and the powers at Games Workshop thought that having something written by a "name" American author would help sales in the US. We added links to the *Enemy Within* campaign, as well as setting it up as a mini-campaign in its own right, but as time has passed, *Something Rotten in Kislev* has come to be regarded as a part of the *Enemy Within*, even though it does nothing to advance the campaign's plot.

There aren't any real inside jokes in *Kislev*, other than the inclusion of Thrud the Barbarian and his creator Carl Critchlow among the pregenerated PCs, which I mentioned in *Secrets of the Warhammer Artists*.

Phil: And of these, 'Teufelmit' translates as "Devil Shit"...

Graeme: Zuvassin the Undoer was originally Malal, but by this time we'd found out about the ownership issue with Wagner and Grant, and so far as we were concerned, Malal was no longer part of the WFRP canon. So I made up Zuvassin to replace him.

Phil: Of course Tsar Radii Bokha translates from the Russian and means King "Thank God!", while "Chernozavtra" means "Black Tomorrow" and "Zapadryeka" is West River.

Graeme: The nature spirits are all from genuine Russian folklore, although I don't recall the Poleviki as being quite so bloodthirsty.

The tone and humour of *Something Rotten in Kislev* are markedly different from the rest of the *Enemy Within* campaign – possibly something to do with the adage about two countries divided by the bond of a common language – and people seem to either love it or hate it. Rick Swan, in his *Complete Guide to Roleplaying Games*, called it one of the best fantasy adventures ever written. Others have been outraged by the "forget the rules" advice if the PCs are rash enough to attack Sulring Durgul. But then, WFRP is a game where combat is very rarely the best first move, and it's made abundantly clear through the adventure that Durgul is Very Powerful Indeed. Personally, I think a lot depends on the way it is run – the GM owes it to the players to keep them entertained while their characters are being slaughtered, and to give them the opportunity to reconsider once they finally realise that they're up against something they can't handle. Just saying "Durgul kills you all and there's nothing you can do about it" isn't a fault in the adventure – it's simply lazy GMing.

For me, the best thing about *Something Rotten in Kislev* is the way Ken will take a fantasy convention and stand it on its head. Are the bad guys really evil? Is there really anything wrong with creating undead if it benefits the living? Is it possible to deal with Chaos Gods and not become corrupted? The answers seem obvious, until you encounter situations like these. I've always liked the moral ambiguities in WFRP, and in *Something Rotten in Kislev* Ken puts a unique twist on them.

Empire in Flames



As I've said in other places, this is where the *Enemy Within* campaign really loses its momentum. Jim and Phil had other adventures planned between *Power Behind the Throne* and *Empire in Flames*, but WFRP was losing favour with Games Workshop. Despite the critical acclaim the *Enemy Within* campaign was earning, there was far more money to be made by putting the same amount of development resources into another 40K supplement and its accompanying miniatures. It took some pleading even to get Games Workshop to commission Carl to write *Empire in Flames* and bring the campaign to some kind of conclusion; once the manuscript came in, it languished until Flame was set up. Mike did the layout on *Empire* while I was editing the first *Doomstones* adventures, so

although it came out under the Games Workshop imprint, it was a Flame production at least in part. You'll notice quite a lot of the artwork is re-used from other sources, which is another sign of the financial pressure that this title was under.

There are only two gags in *Empire in Flames* that I'm aware of: the steal from *2001*, "By Grungni! It's full of stars!" on the way out of Kadar-Khalizad, and the steal from *Faulty Towers*, "Don't mind him, he's from Barcellon" when the PCs meet Ali and Don Roberto on their flying carpet. There are some very silly names, but you've probably found them already.

Flame Publications

There are very few in-jokes in Flame's WFRP publications, largely because none of them were written in-house and we were too busy trying to keep to our self-imposed schedule of a book a month to insert any gags in editing. (Games Workshop published the books somewhat more slowly than we finished them.) Here are the ones I know about:

Castle Drachenfels

The pregenerated PC Tuinal Streamtrail is named after a drug of some kind. A Cambridge Don with a background in psychology, Carl knew a lot about psychoactive drugs.

Warhammer Companion

Karnos, the Elven god of beasts, is based on the Celtic deity Cernunnos, the Horned One.

Alphonse Hercules de Gascoigne the Gnome detective in *With a Little Help From My Friends*, is obviously based on Agatha Christie's Hercule Poirot. What may be less obvious is that Carl named him after Marc Gascoigne, with whom he had a long writing partnership for *Shadowrun* and other games.

Eberhardt Festschrift, who provides the opening quote for the Dwarf Loremaster, is named after a Festschrift (literally, celebration writing). A Festschrift is an academic volume that has been compiled and dedicated to a prominent academic by his or her peers – a great honour in academic circles. I guess the practice must have originated in Germany, since it has a German name, but it seems to happen everywhere.

Death's Dark Shadow

Carl has a habit of naming NPCs – especially Tileans – after wines. Hence Guido Sangiovesi.

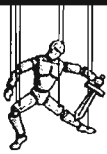
In the mini-adventure *An Affair of Honour*, the barge *Fangio* is named after a famous Italian racing driver from the 50s. The evil Cornuti are named after an Italian term of abuse, and Paulo Prosciutti the Sindicalista leader is named after prosciutto, a kind of cold meat.

Doctor Entesang's name literally means "duck song." The man's clearly a quack... Armand Boulangier's name means baker, which is what he is. Old Mother Eberhauer's familiar, Hetzer, is named after a German WWII tank. Manfred Richtofen, the farmer and balloon pilot, is of course named after the Red Baron. Umberto Siccario, the assassin, is named after the siccarri (literally "dagger men") a group of Jewish zealot assassins from Roman times.

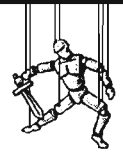
Lichemaster

Hector Brioche, the unofficial headman of Frugelhofen, is named after a type of French roll. Rene de Muscadet looks like another example of Carl's habit of naming characters after wines, but in fact he was from the original battle pack. Heinrich Kemmler's name is not a million miles away from that of SS chief Heinrich Himmler. This was Rick Priestly's doing when he wrote the original *Terror of the Lichemaster* battle pack for WFB. In hindsight, perhaps we should have changed it – though Heinrich is still in the battle game. *Salaud Bleu*, the powerful local cheese that is something of an acquired taste, translates roughly as "blue bastard."

So we come to the end of our trawl through the WFRP literature. I'm sure we have missed some but it was some time ago. One day I'm sure we'll see a part three looking at the Hogshhead books but I'll leave that to Warpstone!



PULLING THE STRINGS



A look at Patrons in WFRP by John Foody

"a patron is a man who watches you drowning for twenty minutes and, when you finally manage to drag yourself to the shore by your own efforts, burdens you with help"

*Tarradasch**

And so begins your latest scenario. Your PCs are approached by a stranger in a tavern, or see a poster requesting help, or are thrust into the middle of something so that they become embroiled in it, or – even better – they set off a chain of events themselves. All are good, generally reliable scenario setters. The first two are somewhat clichéd, and the third is open to characters running in the opposite direction. The fourth is perhaps the best method, but in my experience relatively few scenarios begin in this way. Certainly it is not possible for a published scenario.

In this article I am going to examine another option: the patron. In roleplaying parlance, any character hiring the PCs is a patron (and will often expire seconds before revealing vital plot details). However, I shall look at the Patron as a more permanent figure in campaigns, acting in many ways as an employer for PCs. Although this might seem to go against the idea of wandering heroes, it seems to me to be more quintessentially WFRP.

Historically, patrons are often spoken in the same breath as musicians and artists. Simply, they are individuals who sponsor someone with talent. Thus the individual is free to follow their pursuits while the patron basks in their reflected glory. If a performer composes a fine new work, dedicated to his patron and the Emperor, he is congratulated for his talent. Meanwhile the Patron is praised for his generosity and good sense in fostering such an individual. Of course, the patron will occasionally ask for a specific new piece: a concerto for his wife's birthday or a celebration piece for a local victory, for example.

A group of PCs represents a perfect target for a patron. In The Old World it is easy to find those who will do dirty jobs: visit any dockside tavern and thugs and murderers are ten-a-penny. However, a relationship between PCs and a patron needs to be above this hired-thug mentality. Only certain people will be suitable to act as a patron; in the main, they will be those heavily involved in politics and power-games. Good candidates include councillors, judges, nobles, merchants and other influential members of society. Criminals make an interesting alternative but this is somewhat problematic if the PCs are just constantly asked to do illegal deeds (as opposed to choosing to do them). A good example of a merchant patron is Albrecht Oldenhaller from the Oldenhaller Contract. He is obviously involved in areas outside the law and his motivations are open to interpretation. Also suitable would be a wizard who is in regular need of obscure ingredients or has just heard of a highly desirable artefact that a rival has unearthed.

For GMs, the Patron allows the gives easy access to many scenarios. The PCs can be asked to complete jobs on his behalf, or for an acquaintance. This provides an easy method of introduction, one that doesn't seem so arbitrary. They may well work more efficiently in a city-based campaign, however, which will allow characters to get caught up in the politics and intrigue surrounding them. Also, it makes the patron a more immediate figure who may call on the players at any time, irrespective of whether or not it is convenient for them.

A patron will look to hire PCs as a group of a group of skilled individuals. In doing so, he hopes to gain a reliable, skilled and

discreet unit who he can call upon to solve problems. Above all, he will need to be confident that the PCs are reliable and discreet. Remember that, as a patron, he is likely to wield some power. As a result, his requests may well involve acting either alongside or in direct opposition to hired thugs, the watch or the courts. The other thing the patron will seek will be opportunities for fame. If the PCs can defend a group of other merchants from raiders, rescue a religious item for the local temple or return from an adventure carrying the heads of Beastmen as trophies, his status and standing will increase.

So what do adventurers have to gain from having a patron of their own? In return for acting as his agents they will receive help, protection, perhaps a measure of responsibility and maybe some wealth. Payment may be in gold, goods or services. More importantly, they will have an important contact, one that can provide them with protection. It is likely that patrons will have both money and influence, which – if the PCs remain a valuable asset rather than an embarrassment – can be used on the PCs' behalf.

Not only do PCs provide GMs with a good way of getting PCs involved with a scenario, they can provide plot hooks themselves. These individuals are likely to have skeletons in the closet, some of which the PCs will eventually come to know about. (A few they may put there themselves.) Additionally, PCs will probably be unaware of any hidden agenda their patron may have. He may be acting as a front for someone else, or perhaps be involved in something illegal. When it finally catches up with him, the PCs will be in the firing line. Just as the patron can gain by the PCs' glory, they can suffer from his shame. While both parties hope for loyalty from each other, betrayal is also a real risk. PCs may decide to steal something from their patron or uncover some secret. At the same time, a patron may choose to cut them loose if they continually fail him or become an embarrassment. "Cutting them loose" may involve something sharp, perhaps in the hand of an assassin...

If you choose to use a patron on even a limited basis, it is good to work out a little background on them first. This can be built upon later; at the outset, the relationship between patron and PCs will be a simple one. As it develops, however, it will become more complicated. However, even at the beginning, you should have a good idea of who the patron is and what his aims are. When he sends them on a scenario there must be a good reason for him to do so, and some benefit to be obtained, even if this is as simple as earning a favour or receiving money.

An on-going patron is a less heroic means of beginning scenario than most others; as a result, it may well be more in keeping with the flavour of The Old World. Additionally, it reinforces the players' sense of their characters' position in society – i.e., not having any real power or influence as they are outside political groups and other of society's structure. As employees of some power they are brought a little way back into the fold – they are no longer rogue wanderers with weapons and attitude, and they may even be protected somewhat.

As with all things, a patron shouldn't be overused. Using patrons will give a new slant to many scenarios and even to campaigns as a whole. It takes only a little work to modify pre-written scenarios, and none at all for you own. Give it a go. If it works, it may well make life a whole lot easier for you. And if it doesn't, well, you should be able to get at least one good scenario out of discovering who just assassinated the characters' patron...

IN DEFENCE OF THE EMPIRE



The Church of Sigmar by N. Arne Dam and Tim Eccles



Glutrech surveyed the battlefield. Without doubt they had smashed the goblinoids, and had won an overwhelming victory. This did not surprise him. Men looted the battlefield, killing wounded goblins and aiding fallen comrades. This did not surprise him. Yet, as he watched, Glutrech could barely believe his eyes. The men were helping those who were in need of aid, or comforting comrades as they slipped away. And they were doing so regardless of tribe. Men whose tribes had sworn enmity for generations were openly weeping at the deaths of those who, until scant months ago, had been their foes. He had never believed that such unity was possible, even when his own tribe had sworn fealty to the man who had led them to this victory. But belief and purpose were infectious, the victories tangible. Glutrech knew then that such unity could forge an empire, and must never be forgotten. Nor would it, for without doubt they would crown their Lord as chief of all their tribes. And with him to lead them, they would be invincible. His name? Sigmar.

Introduction

The Church of Sigmar holds a central place in the social, political and cultural make-up of the Empire. The Empire simply cannot be played without an understanding of this cult, and yet official sources of information about it are relatively limited. This article aims to develop a definitive guide to Sigmar, his cult and the varied beliefs of his followers. The article ends with some conclusions on role-playing these ideas, but the basic aim of the article is to simply detail the Sigmarite religion as a matter of information, for each to use as they see fit.

The Cult of Sigmar is the dominant religion in the Empire. The Grand Theogonist, based in Altdorf, heads it. The primary aim of the cult is to create a strong Empire, united in the one faith.

Since The Empire is neither united nor of a single faith, the cult faces many problems. Its most notable problem is the enmity of the Cult of Ulric which is a powerful religion in its own right (especially in the north), and which proudly points to the fact that it pre-dates the Cult of Sigmar by many centuries.




The Organisation Of The Cult

The Church of Sigmar is probably the most hierarchical of the cults of the Old World. The all-powerful leader of the cult (barring extremist groups, of course) is the Grand Theogonist. According to Sigmarite doctrine, the Lord Sigmar has chosen him as the sole true interpreter of His will (see *Tenets of Faith*). This is presented as the reason why the use of Sigmar's divine powers must be learned with the help of superior clerics, leaving the Grand Theogonist alone to bestow use of the most powerful spells on the high ranking clerics he deems most worthy. Understandably, the Grand Theogonist has historically found it easy to control his cult, particularly when compared with the leaders of other cults.

The cult is divided in three main orders, each of which includes specialised offices or fraternities. In addition, there are a number of martial orders attached to the cult. The more interesting of these institutions are detailed below:

Order of the Torch



This order is the main body of the cult, and is larger than the rest of the cult combined. It is the ecclesiastical order, in charge of administrating the temples, officiating at services and taking confessions from the congregations. When you speak of the Church, most people would think of the Priests belonging to this order, from the Initiate of the wayside shrine to the mighty Arch Lector of Nuln, who is second in power only to the Grand Theogonist.

The administration of each province is led by a Lector, each of whom will have been appointed by

the Grand Theogonist himself. The Lector appoints High Priests (for towns and large rural areas) and Capitulars (for smaller towns and rural areas) throughout his province and watches over the collection of church taxes and the upholding of religious law. The High Priest or Capitular then allocates Priests for the temples within his area, with semi-trained Initiates or laymen officiating at the temples of the smallest villages. New Initiates are invariably attached to temples where they can work alongside a fully trained Priest (i.e. a Cleric, preferably of level 2) to learn the basic strictures etc. Consequently, almost all Initiates begin their careers in a town of some size.

Between the Grand Theogonist and the Lectors we find the Arch Lectors of Nuln and Talabheim. The Arch Lector of Nuln is leader of the cult in the southern provinces (i.e. south of River Stir) and nominal leader of Sigmarite expatriates throughout the Border Princes. This is considered the most important office in the cult next to the Grand Theogonist. Of less importance is the Arch Lectorate of Talabheim. This office has control of the eastern provinces and Sigmarites in Kislev. Yet, since Sigmarites in these lands are typically in minority, the post has relatively little influence. Still, the prestige of the office is considerable within the cult, and only Lectors with profound political ambitions would turn it down for the Lectorate of, say, Reikland or Nuln.

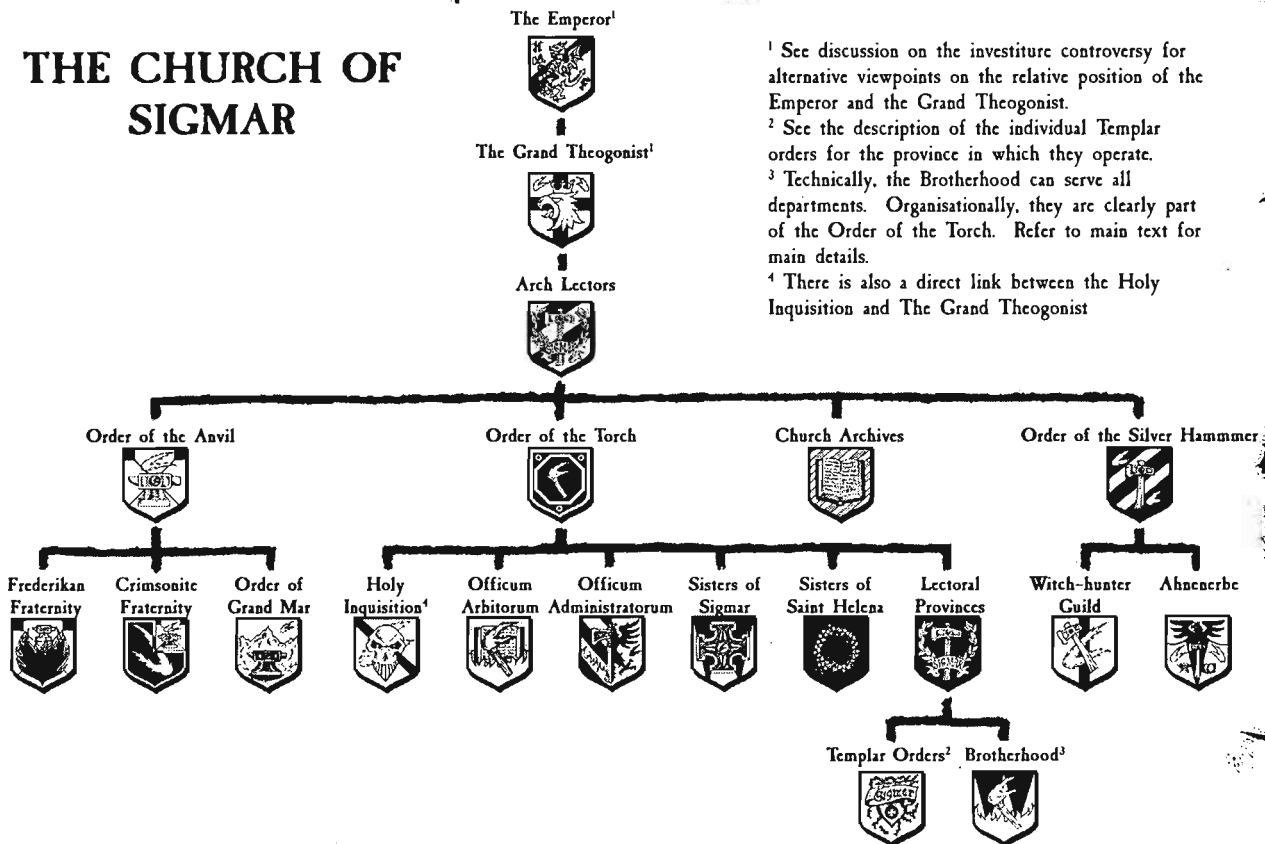
One should note that the Church considers both the Wasteland (see *The Cult Outside The Empire*) and Altdorf to be Imperial provinces, and thus appoints Lectors for them. Since The Emperor's Confessor was elevated to Lector sine muneribus ad administrationem pertinentibus¹ during the era of Magnus the Pious, the total number of Lectors is now 18. They meet once

a year in the Grand Cathedral in Altdorf for debates over questions of faith (and politics as well, most would agree). Occasionally, the Grand Theogonist calls for a Holy Synod when he has been "instructed by the Lord Sigmar" to make major changes to the sanctioned rituals or the tenets of faith. For a Holy Synod, the High Priests of the towns will go to Altdorf

GM Note

Games Workshop has stated, but seems to have changed its mind since, that the Warhammer World is an isolated planet in the Warhammer 40,000 multiverse. This has inspired many discussions on the possible connection between Sigmar and the God-Emperor of Man from WH40K. There have been speculations that: that Sigmar was assisted by the Emperor when he entered the Warp (cf. *Empire in Flames*), that he is in fact a Sensei – one of the powerful sons of the Emperor (cf. the original Realm of Chaos) – or that he is a reincarnation/ avatar of the Emperor. GMs who wish to elaborate on these speculations should consider changing the names of the above offices to their WH40K equivalents, namely Adeptus Arbitres and Adeptus Administratum. The names suggested in the text are meant to emphasise the Catholic Church feel of the cult, and its use of Latin. The WH40K titles are GW-Latin, and perhaps sound rather better to the modern ear. We would like to stress that we in no way suggest the introduction of WH40K technology to the Warhammer World – that would unbalance the game completely! However, much of the gothic imagery portrays the image we have of the Church of Sigmar, and interesting situations could no doubt emerge from a more direct linkage...

THE CHURCH OF SIGMAR



¹ See discussion on the investiture controversy for alternative viewpoints on the relative position of the Emperor and the Grand Theogonist.

² See the description of the individual Templar orders for the province in which they operate.

³ Technically, the Brotherhood can serve all departments. Organisationally, they are clearly part of the Order of the Torch. Refer to main text for main details.

⁴ There is also a direct link between the Holy Inquisition and The Grand Theogonist

as well. Upon the death of the Grand Theogonist, the Lectors and the Arch Lectors will meet in a secret conclave beneath the Altdorf cathedral to appoint a successor.

Attached to the Order of the Torch are the following specialised offices:

Officium Arbitrorum: This small office is the church's "police force". Its remit is the investigation and prevention of crime within the cult. It is purely an internal organisation, without authority beyond the cult; however, in reality, few secular authorities would dare question an investigation by the Arbitrorum. Entry into the positions of Arbitrator, Proctor and Judge are theoretically awarded on the basis of merit as a post becomes vacant, but political patronage exists here as anywhere else. There is also rumoured to be a secret police force, but it is unclear (should one exist) whether it is located within this office or elsewhere.

Officium Administratorum: In addition to the maintenance of spiritual matters, this office is also responsible for the management of the church, its properties and its employees. Some of the senior administrators are lay members, many of whom failed to become clerics for one reason or another, but who became initiates in order to secure a career for themselves. All such lay members are supervised by clerics, however. The office operates primarily in Altdorf, but has departments at the courts of all Lectors throughout The Empire.

The Holy Inquisition: The Inquisition of the Church of Sigmar, or *Inquisitio Sancta Ecclesiae Sigmaris* – most people know it by its classical term – is a highly influential institution within The Empire. It consists of two branches, of which one is part of the Order of the Silver Hammer and will be dealt with there. The other is the Inquisitorial Priesthood. The Grand Theogonist personally leads the workings of both branches of the Inquisitio.

Within The Empire, the official inquisition into matters of daemonology, chaos and religious deviance is carried out by the Church of Sigmar, according to the Imperial Charter of the Guild of the Inquisition (1913 IC, reaffirmed 2307 IC). The Grand Theogonist has entrusted these obligations to his Inquisitorial Priesthood. In spite of its small numbers, the priesthood's power is tremendous. Although other cults are allowed to police themselves internally according to their own doctrines, it is theoretically possible for the Sigmarite Inquisition to investigate them upon suspicion of carrying out proscribed rituals, or at the behest of the Emperor. The practical

ramifications of this are self-evident.

New Inquisitor Priests are apprenticed from the ordinary priests of the Torch Order. They must serve as Acolytes (sometimes known as Zealots) under a senior Inquisitor Priest and can seek to be elected as Inquisitor Priests via a process of examination and practical success after no less than three years. Some continue the training, specialising in the art of exorcism. The Inquisitorial Priesthood is a hierarchical structure with a number of Deacons who manage through a Council and report directly to the Grand Theogonist, who retains direct control of the entire Inquisition. This has led to inefficiency within the cult, as the Inquisition is subject only to the whim of the Grand Theogonist.

The Sisters of St Helena: The Sisters form the only other female sorority within the Order of the Torch. As a small and relatively young special order, it is unusual in that it admits lay members; that is, members do not have to complete the Initiate career before joining the order. More information on the Sisters of St Helena can be found in *Warpstone* issue 6.

Order of the Silver Hammer



Probably the smallest of the orders, the clerics of the Silver Hammer travel the remote areas of The Empire, promoting the knowledge and worship of Sigmar Heldenhammer. Clerics are expected to live up to the example set by Sigmar by defending the faithful from peril and opposing the enemies of The Empire. The Silver Hammer clerics and their associated Secret Brethren are the only part of the cult actively rooting out goblinoids and followers of Chaos, and they frequently act as chaplains in the armies of Sigmarite lords. They are often lonely characters who had difficulties adapting themselves to the methodical lives of the other orders. As stated in *The Enemy Within*, most PC clerics of Sigmar will belong to this order.

The Order is led by the Tribunal of Patriarchs. When one of the eight Patriarchs dies or retires, the rest of the Tribunal appoints a new Patriarch from one of the Chaplains at their next meeting. A Cleric of the Silver Hammer is promoted to Chaplain by a Patriarch for loyal service to the Order or great deeds to the glory of Sigmar. The Tribunal normally meets once a year (Sigmarzeit 26th) in Altdorf, with the Grand Theogonist presiding.

The Silver Hammers' influence is declining, as the promotion of the cult within The Empire has rendered their work superfluous. In addition, their historical obligation to root out heretics has been taken over by the Secret Brethren and lately the Inquisitorial Priesthood. In order to find new areas of interest, the Silver Hammers are considering missionary expeditions to the

Border Princes and the New World. Yorri XV lent support to the order when he stressed the importance of the goodwill with ordinary people that their exemplary actions win for the cult. On the other hand, he has yet to either protect them from further internal politicking or provide them with funding to support a geographical expansion of their remit. Nor has he set aside the Bull of Yorri XII, which left the Silver Hammers subordinate to the Order of the Torch on many issues. In particular, the clerics must still go to the temples and seek guidance with from a Lector of the Torch Order in order to advance in the mastery of divine powers (i.e. advance a level). Before Yorri XII's Bull, the Grand Theogonist invested the power to give



The Sisters of Sigmar: Today the Sisters reflect the post-Mordheim restructuring by later Grand Theogonists and form the major female sorority of the Order of the Torch (see page 16). They are believed to have some secret link to the Inquisitorial Priesthood, perhaps due to the fear that they begin associating with their heretical sisters. Others suggest that the sisters have proven useful secret agents and that a coven of warrior nuns has once again been trained. In either case, the cult's attitude to women in general, and women priests in particular, has eased over the following centuries – probably due to the rise in popularity of important female deities of healing and warfare, and socio-economic shifts within The Empire.

guidance in the Patriarchs as well as in the Lectors. Prominent Silver Hammer Chaplains, and even one Patriarch, publicly advocate annulment of this provision.

The following fraternities are associated with the Silver Hammers:

Witch-hunter Guild: Technically, most cults have what is termed a witch-hunter guild; that of Sigmar is called The Secret Brethren of Sigmar. Initiates and laymen may seek to be inducted into the guild as Acolytes, and be elected to the title of Witch-hunter via a process of patronage, examination and practical success. The head of the guild is entitled the Witch Fynder General, and is based in Altdorf where he maintains close contact with the Grand Theogonist and ranks with the High Priests. Since 2341 IC, the Secret Brethren have been allowed to enter the chapters of the Fraternal Order of Hunters (in Warpstone 8), the dominant organisation of Witch-hunters in The Empire.

The Secret Brethren were originally known as the Order of Templars and were created as a military arm of the church during the crusades in 1455 IC. They have since been reorganised as a distinct organisation within the church. No one uses the old title nowadays, as it is seen as irrelevant to their current purpose and profession. Their most notable success under the old name was in the cleansing of Mordheim approximately 500 years ago, during which they gained the enmity

of the Sisters of Sigmar. They were also the main arm of the cult in the Wizards' War, but with less success. It may seem surprising, but these Witch-hunters are not part of the official inquisition (as described above), which is technically involved with the investigation of theological illis.

Ahnenerbe: The Ahnenerbe is a secret society, initially consisting of captured and "converted" wizards from the Wizards' War who were used to carry out investigations into the nature of chaos and the place of mankind within the world. Even today, this is a highly secret organisation consisting of an elite intellectual cadre. The Ahnenerbe carry out a varied programme of archaeological and theological investigation into divinity, chaos and the origins of humankind. This is then reinterpreted for mass consumption by the laity, or used as part of the Cult's strategies for The Empire and the future worship of Sigmar. The Ahnenerbe also hold and investigate discovered artefacts for cleansing and/or use by the cult, and particularly by their own elite group, the Ordo Malleus, who are essentially daemon hunters and exorcists. Armed with the intellectual and physical might of the cult, they are the ultimate fighting order of the church - a few highly trained individuals who are called in by the Inquisitorial Priesthood when serious chaotic powers are unearthed. Once again, internal politics affect efficiency; the group is not part of the Inquisitio Sancta Ecclesiae Sigmaris, since the cult wishes the group to be beyond the power of the Emperor, who in theory has the ability to control the Inquisition.

GM Note

The institutional inconsistencies and irrationalities between these different groups provide excellent role-playing opportunities for GMs. To summarise, the Inquisitorial Priesthood, run as part of the Inquisitio Sancta Ecclesiae Sigmaris by the Grand Theogonist, function as the official Imperial Inquisition (named the Guild of the Inquisition) under nominal patronage of the Emperor. The Witch-hunter Guild serves broadly the same function, but as a strict cult organisation. The Officium Arbitrorum is a cult police force. Technically, each should work together and defer to the other in the areas of their authority, but each is politically motivated to seek power, prestige and resources within the cult. Note also that these organisations are pawns in the power struggle between the three major orders of the cult.

Imperial unity and strength, in favour of political influence and new converts. They wear the traditional grey robe of the Anvil Order.

The Crimsonites, named after their dark red robes, preach that true peace and the strength of a united Empire will only be achieved when all citizens acknowledge that Sigmar is the "Emperor of all men and Lord of all Gods". They actively support the canonising of patron saints in order to win new converts from the worshippers of the other gods. During the last 100 years, the Crimsonites have been dominant, giving the Church an uncompromising attitude towards the other cults.

A third, smaller fraternity is Gragh Mar (Khazalid for Stone Tablet). This group is devoted to teaching history and law to the people of The Empire, and they run small urban monasteries with attached schools in some of the larger towns of The Empire, the most famous being located in Middenheim.

Church Archives: The Church Archives would, at first glance, be simply either part of the Order of the Torch or a simple library service within each of the orders. However, it is neither. The Church Archives are the information nerve centre of the cult, and also hold some of its senior personnel. Although the Church Archives does indeed involve simple librarians and their libraries scattered throughout the varied parts of the Church, this information is carefully sterilised and standardised for mass consumption. Similarly, at the same time, the various small libraries gather and return information to the Church Archives located in Altdorf.

The Church Archives contains a copy of everything text that the Church of Sigmar has ever found, from archaeological digs to university publications. By law, all printed materials must be provided to the cult, and specialist scribes also copy written and engraved texts. One or two specialists have also been known to model or copy artefacts using stone and wood. All of these resources are catalogued and stored. Needless to say, this is a hopeless task. The Hall of Archives, located beneath the main church in Altdorf, is an enormous maze of halls, corridors and warded rooms, wherein mundane and magical items are stored, analysed and recorded. It is also rumoured to incorporate a maze of secret areas behind that which is known; it is a veritable labyrinth. There is no way of knowing the extent of the archive, since the church is "officially" operating on a 27 year backlog, but this ignores the fact that many items have simply been catalogued as unknown and stored wherever they fitted.

In addition to their information storage and

The Magnæran Heresy

More than one extremist group has been born within the Crimsonite fraternity. One such was the Magnærans, who secretly believed that Sigmar was the only true god. According to their interpretation, the "old" gods were born of Chaos; only the Earth Mother predates the chaotic influence. The idea may have been inspired by the claims of certain scholars and "academic" wizards that all gods originate from the Realm of Chaos. To the Magnærans, Sigmar is the Chosen of the Earth Mother, meant to lead and unite humankind in its battle against Chaos in all forms. Since the other gods are - at best - tainted by Chaos, their worship should be banned, and all should unite in the worship of the one true god. In the popular version, the Magnærans would of course describe the other gods as Daemons, although they did not themselves believe this to be the exact truth. Yet, according to Church strictures, the Taal-Rhya pantheon is acknowledged as pure and should be paid proper respect. So, when the Magnæran beliefs were exposed by the Officium Arbitrorum, the late Grand Theogonist Gludred III saw no choice but to excommunicate the leaders and dissolve the fraternity. Still, some claim that he only did so because of political pressure, and the idea remains a popular one amongst some of the more zealous clergy.

Order of the Anvil



This order of Sigmarite monks has traditionally been the smallest, yet nowadays it is of roughly the same size as the Silver Hammer Order. The monks live in isolated monasteries, where they meditate and pray in order to gain the favour and enlightenment of Lord Sigmar. In addition, several of the monasteries specialise in the study of sanctioned accounts of Sigmar and the early saints. One reason is that when the Church is strong, most Imperial Law is deduced from the acts and commands of Sigmar and his chosen servants (Saints). This has increased the demand for specialists of Sigmarite doctrine, a service that the Church is pleased to supply. As a result, quite a few of the well-trained monk scholars join universities and law schools as associated experts of Sigmarite Law, while the abbots and other masters of the monasteries serve as close advisors to the Grand Theogonist and, to a lesser degree, the Emperor. Abbots and outstanding senior monks of the Anvil often join the yearly meeting of the Lectors in Altdorf, especially when the tenets of faith are debated.

The monasteries belong to one of a dozen of suborders, called fraternities, existing within the Order of the Anvil. They all live by the strictures laid out in the 1,500-year old Charter of the Order, yet diverge rather radically in their teachings.

The two major fraternities within the Order of the Anvil are the Frederikans and the Crimsonites, who both have multiple allies amongst the leading priests of the Torch Order. The former follows the teachings of St Frederik, who believed in peaceful coexistence with the worshippers of the other gods. They preach peace and prosperity as the best way to



RGH

The picture shows four clerics, each showing a different aspect of uniform and dress from across the cult of Sigmar. They are standing at the doors of a temple of Sigmar, the entrance marked with the motif of the two-tailed comet.

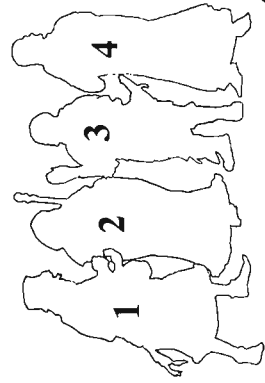
The first is a Priest from the Order of Torch (1), his dress reflecting relatively fashionable clothing. Such dress tends to be found in the richer South West (i.e. Reikland, Stirland, Aveland) of The Empire where tradition is often seen as irrelevant. There is no particular doctrinal reason for a cleric to affect poverty, and many feel that wealthy attire enables them to better relate to their noble and merchant clientele. As long as a cleric pays for his own

attire, the church has no official policy on the issue - although some of the eastern senior churchmen are known to forbid the practice amongst their own disciples. The quality of the clothing is highlighted with expensive fur trimmed topped by a felt. The hammer in eight-sided circle pendant is the outward symbol of his position.

The heavily robed cleric is a Brother from the Order of Anvil (2). He affects a more traditional, or 'old fashioned' look, and wears robes little changed from the founding of the church. Note the Anvil prayer beads, both worn around the neck and carried in the hand.

A Chaplain from the Order of the Silver Hammer (3) stands to his right. As is typical of the order he is armoured, the two-tailed comet prominently displayed on the breastplate. The simple hammer pendant is made of silver. While sporting a beard it is not as 'dwarf-like' as many others in this order.

The last cleric is the most senior of the four, his Chain of office marking him as a Lector (4). On top of his expensive multi-layered silk robes is an outer layer of velvet. Note the two-tailed comet inlaid as a discrete pattern on the sleeves and foot of the robes. His skullcap is also an important part of the uniform, acting as a ceremonial helmet.



management service, the Church Archives form one of the most physically powerful arms of the cult. Whilst members may be simple librarians and other scholars, the group also includes Scribe-Magisters and Exorcists who have studied the ways of magic. In fact, the Church Archives hold a number of secrets, in that they have actively used the forces of chaos in their work in fighting Chaos, and have for many years recruited wizards into their ranks - even when other branches of their church were burning them. There is an intense professional rivalry between the Ahnenerbe and the Church Archives, for the Archives believe that the former should be within their own department. Rationally this would indeed seem sensible, but political in-fighting ensures that the Ahnenerbe will not give up their independent position within the Silver Hammer Order.

Professor Hereberd von Krassten closed his lecture on the origins of The Empire, and began to pack his materials together. He picked up the small payment box, in which each student placed their penny attendance fee, only to find it empty. He then noticed that all his students were still seated, looking towards the doorway. He turned, and there in the doorway was the Faculty Convenor. "Professor, I have some gentlemen in my office to see you. Please follow me."

"Excellent," thought Reikard bitterly, sitting attentively at the front of the class. "That will mean my third history lecturer this term..."

Lay Membership

Apart from the northern Ultrican provinces, the majority of Imperial citizens worship Sigmar. Within this gigantic group of lay members, there are a few organisations that deserve a description. These are generally of martial nature. Whilst membership of these organisations is not restricted to priests, members are bound by religious oaths and are required to obey clerical instructions. In certain military situations, this has caused disagreement between the strategy followed by the military commanders and the requirements of the nominally superior clerics.

Order of the Fiery Heart: This is the all-dominant templar order associated with the Church of Sigmar. The large number of Temple Guards and Knights throughout The Empire are lead by the Grand Master, whose headquarters are part of the Grand Cathedral grounds in Altdorf. The Order is thoroughly detailed in Warpstone issue 3.

Since the death of Boris the Incompetent in 1115 IC, and the end of the line of Sigmar, the Fiery Hearts were returned to the control of the Cult of Sigmar until the "return of Sigmar or his heir". However, the Grand Theogonist was not able to obtain personal control because of the events described in Warpstone issue 3, and therefore the Order is unusual in that its Grand Master is theoretically able to ignore the order of his spiritual leader. This has not occurred, of course. The order has been happy to be seen as part of the church, aware that it could otherwise be brought under control of the Imperial army.

Order of the Holy Unity: In addition to the Fiery Hearts there are about half a dozen smaller templar orders. One such is the Order of the Holy Unity. This is the least martial of the Sigmarite templar orders. In fact, some claim it is just a club for greedy nobles. Although this is not entirely false, the Holy Unity

Knights are typically devout Sigmarite nobles from Reikland and Stürland (nobility is a requirement for admittance!) who have worked ceaselessly to keep The Empire united under the one true Sigmarite Emperor since their founding in 1361 IC. Since the rule of Magnus the Pious, the order has been growing in influence. In particular, it is regarded as a growing political force within the ranks of the Sigmarite hawks that urge the cult to press its political and military domination of The Empire upon those less fervent provinces.

Order of the Purging Hammer: This is another atypical order. Ostland farmers and hunters founded it in 2304 IC, after returning from the Great War in Kislev only to find their families killed and their properties destroyed by beastmen (and worse) from the Forest of Shadows. They founded a small fortress monastery in Grenzburg, near the Kislev border, from where they planned their revenge on the Ruinous Powers. The Grand Theogonist blessed them and put them under the patronage of St. Mikhael, an Ostland martyr from the Great War. Since then the Church has had very little to do with them, apart from the visits of the occasional Silver Hammer cleric, who offers religious services in return for hospitality.

The present day brethren are primitive people, like the founders, and most "civilised" individuals would not consider calling them knights. They are, however, devout fanatics, hardened by a life in the frightful forests of Ostland. In addition, they are invariably fuelled by an unrelenting hatred for the Dark Powers, which have bereft most of them of everything that they loved. As a result, they will stick at nothing in their efforts to fight them. PCs travelling in Ostland or neighbouring provinces are likely to hear rumours of the semi-mythical brethren who scour the Ostland and Kislev woods hunting down beastmen and other Chaotic abominations.

The Brotherhood: In theory all followers of Sigmar are collectively known as his brotherhood. However, in this case, it refers to the informers and spies used by the various divisions of the church. Informers are a prime source of information for the Inquisition, and the Ahnenerbe in particular, who desire to be informed of the actions of members of the community. Both also frequently plant their own members within other organisations, and (of course) other parts of the cult. Practically every organisation within The Empire, and even some outside it, contains an observer for the cult. Both guild wizards and university professors, as an institutionalised joke, now frequently conclude a comment with, "and I refute saying that", knowing full well that one of their esteemed listeners will report any seditious comments - or make up false ones.

Some lay groups are organised into fraternities, with names such as the Brotherhood of the Chisel or Servants of the Hammer. Whilst these are ostensibly simple social groups, it is possible that they provide other services either to the cult or to their members that they may not wish the populace at large to find out about.

One of the most visible groups of lay members of the church are the flagellants. Whilst they might be seen as part of clerical military troupes, or else when piously travelling through the country, there is no official structure or recognition of them. Flagellants are simply zealous (or mad) individuals who are driven by inner demons (literally or not) to religious fury. They are utilised by any charismatic leader capable

THE SISTERS OF SIGMAR

The origin of the Sisters of Sigmar is now shrouded in history. One version describes them as a female Warrior Convent under the orders of an Abbess, located in the city of Mordheim. Another suggests that they administered to the sick and the poor, tended to the needs of orphans, cured the diseased and worshipped a more humble aspect of Sigmar than the usual martial representations. In any event, it is known that the Holy Convent of Merciful Sisters of Sigmar was well established on a craggy island (Sigmar's Rock) in the middle of the River Stir before the fall of Mordheim in 2000 IC. The famed historian Alfred von Nuln of the University of Altdorf posits their founding sometime in the period 1610-1645 IC as a predominantly Eastern Empire order. At one time, the Sisters were regarded as an ideal home for wayward and troublesome daughters of the nobility, but by the end of the Second Millennium they had become unpopular within the cult, even within their eastern heartland. Coupled with the troubles throughout the Empire, the flow of noble entrants dried up, and the sisters increasingly came from humble backgrounds. The Sisterhood had supported the Emperorship of Margaritha, was popular with the commoners (and not with the nobility), they were an eastern cult within a largely western organisation, and were said to have the Gift of Prophecy. The latter in particular infuriated and undermined the Grand Theogonist, who claimed to be the earthly representative of Sigmar. After the destruction of the Mordheim, the Grand Theogonist took the opportunity to excommunicate the leaders of the Sisters for heresy, and turned the Witch-hunters (then the Order of Templars) upon them. They claimed that women had no right to teach the holy word of Sigmar, and that their purported Gift was in fact heretical witchcraft.

The Abbesses of the Sisterhood, having made themselves increasingly unpopular with the hierarchy of the cult by their wealth, heretical (at that time) doctrines, and continued political support for an alternative Emperor to that of the Grand Theogonist, had few allies within the cult. Indeed, many genuinely believed that the fall of Mordheim was punishment for the blasphemy of the Sisters, and mistrusted their initial survival. It is true that the Sisters had foreseen the disaster and retreated to their stronghold after failing to persuade the city authorities of the danger. They were also seen competing for pieces of the wyrdstone that fell on the city, which was taken as another sign of their guilt - in fact, they were attempting to lock the warpstone away in their granite vaults deep under their convent. Attacked by the legitimate forces of the cult's Witch-hunters and the many raiders and beasts that arose from the fall of the city, it was assumed that any survivors were destroyed by the ravaging undead army of von Carstein that razed the eastern Empire ten years later.

Rumours persist that some of the Sisters escaped, and were responsible for the Kathrar sect of Sigmar was Woman. Indeed, it is known within the church hierarchy that two groups survived the fall: those who were absent at the time, and a small number who escaped the hunters and the chaotics. The former were led by a senior member of the Order, who managed to retain a sizeable slice of the order's assets, and is believed to have created a small sub-cult within Ostland or southern Kislev. An inability to involve the local Ostland authorities and the latter's vehement Sigmarite tendencies ironically served to protect the cult. The escapees were also believed to have fled towards Ostland, but their fate remains unknown.

of holding their interest as an expendable force of followers. The church is surprisingly wary of such uncontrolled devotion, and tries to ensure that they are kept out of the way. When not meting out punishment on purported heretics, they are known to indulge in self-mutilation as penance for unknown ills. It should be noted that not all flagellants are necessarily this mad, but the stereotype is one that runs throughout The Empire.

The witch-hunter walked slowly across the Village Square. He was used to seeing fear and contempt in the eyes of the citizens he must judge. But this was different. Had chaos infected this village so badly that these people were terrified of a witch-hunter from the cult of Sigmar - the church to which they all belonged?

"Where is your Elder," he demanded of a militiaman who had been pretending to practice stringing his bow in the hope that the hunter would ignore him.

"H-h—he is dead, sir."

"Dead? But he requested my presence. How did he die?"

"He was burnt, sir," came the reply as the soldier began to tremble uncontrollably. Burnt?

"Who would dare burn a man, given the protection of the Cult of Sigmar?" demanded the witch-hunter, his anger growing at such an affront to his power:

"I would," said a soft voice behind him. The witch-hunter whirled around, blazing in his fury. He stopped, gaped, turned ashen and began to sweat - for before him stood a member of the Sigmarite Inquisition. "Have you a problem with that?"

Tenets of Faith

So, what does a Sigmarite believe in? What are their values? From the WFRP rulebook we know little beyond the fact that Sigmar is patron of The Empire. *The Enemy Within*, vol. 1 offers a little more; Sigmar is "worshipped both for his military might and as the great unifier". This still leaves the question of how Sigmar fits into the polytheistic Taal-Rhyan pantheon rather open. In a world with such evident physical threats to collective safety as the Old World, we find it plausible that the concept of protection from external perils is important enough to "bear its own deity", so to speak.

Thus we see Sigmar as the Lord Protector of The Empire and its People. On the individual level, he is believed to protect the faithful and god-fearing during their mortal life and judge them in the afterlife. On a grander level he is believed to strengthen the Emperor and his loyal subjects in their eternal struggle to keep The Empire safe. It is believed that without his divine aid, the struggle would be to no avail. This belief will naturally have been

refined over the centuries, producing a multitude of tenets. In the following, we suggest a number of central Sigmarite tenets of faith.

The tenets of faith are almost exclusively based on one of two sources: The Canonical Scriptures and

Scholars believe that the two first books (by far the oldest and most important) derive from an oral tradition written down no sooner than the third century, although some claim that the Valayan temple in Karaz-a-Karak contains contemporary chronicles offering important details on the life of Sigmar.

There do exist apocryphal versions of the life and death of Sigmar. Ulrican supporters of the Sigmarian Heresy often refer to the third century Godrech's Testament, to name but one. Godrech claimed that Sigmar was a saint of Ulric, and the first Sigmarites were a heretic faction of the Ulrican Cult that had been thrown out of the clergy. The Church works hard to eradicate these writings, whilst publicly ignoring them.

Derived from these sources, the most important tenets of faith within the cult are as follows:

Johann's Call: The Grand Theogonist is the Lord's Chosen and the only true interpreter of His will. This tenet is from the fourth century, and is based on the final commands of St Johann the Chosen as written down in the Geistbuch. It is the theological reason for the strict hierarchic structure and vows of obedience of the cult.

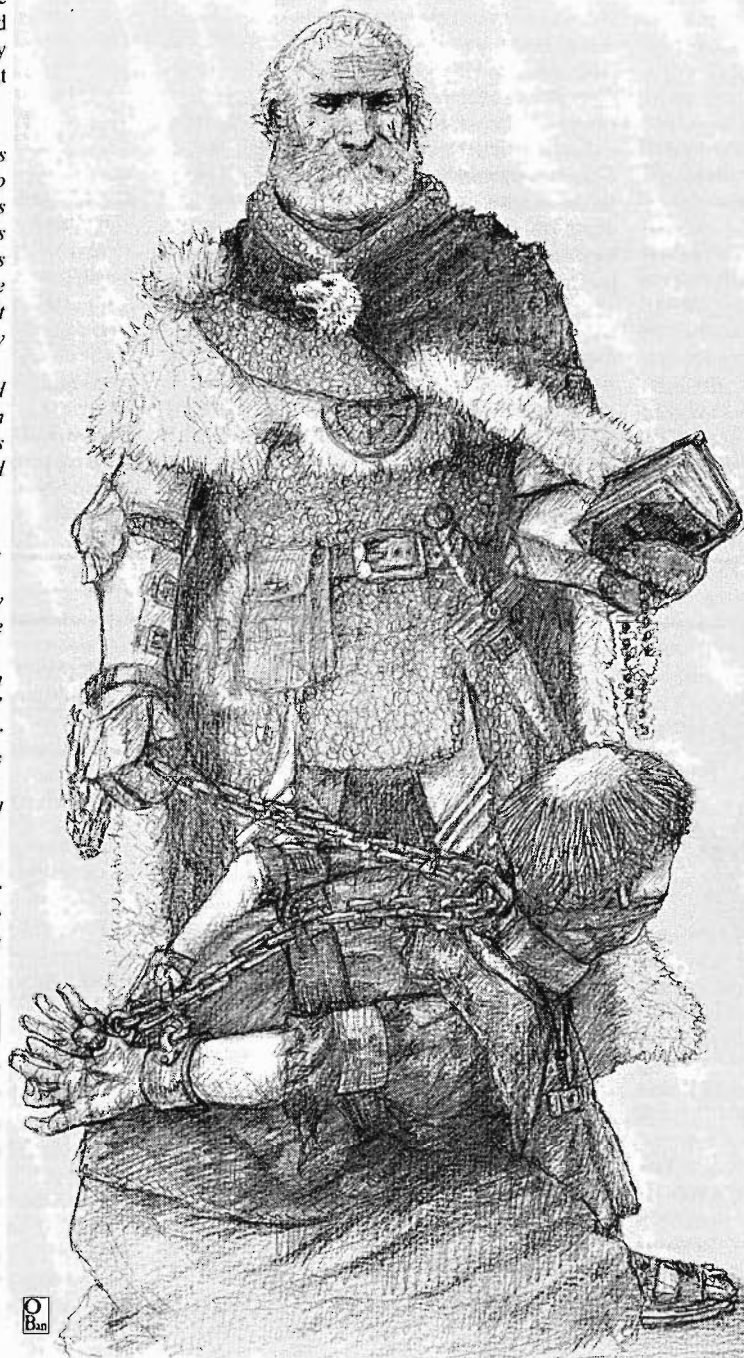
Sigmar's Wall: The Holy Empire of Sigmar must stand united and strong, lest it shall succumb to the Dark Forces that seek the End of Man. The concept of Imperial unity goes back to Sigmar himself. In the days of Sigmar, unity was required to muster the forces necessary to oppose the goblinoid enemies. It found new meaning during the Chaos Incursions and was strongly advocated by Magnus the Pious. The name is derived from a parable in the Geistbuch.

Sigmarite Succession: The Emperor is the True Image of Sigmar and the chosen Defender of His Holy Empire. Since the days of Sigismund II, the Church has regarded the Emperor as the chosen heir to the throne of Sigmar's Empire. He is responsible for maintaining unity and promoting the true faith, and for this he shall receive the unswerving loyalty of all subjects. The tenet first appeared in the Chronicles of the Venerable Ottokar.

Kargan's Pledge: Be strong, and Lord Sigmar shall make you stronger. Be faithful, and He shall protect you from Evils. This is a very popular tenet.

Warriors believe that it refers to martial strength and bids them to never give up, while intellectuals tend to focus on the strength of the mind. The Church happily supports both interpretations.

Yorri's Warning: Ye shall know that he who has pity for the enemies of The Holy Empire is but an enemy himself and shall be judged as such by the Lord



"The persecution of our brothers and sisters has begun. The wolf attacks us in the streets and burns our monasteries."

the revelations that Sigmar bestowed upon the Grand Theogonists over the centuries. The Canonical Scriptures consist of The Geistbuch, a collection of sermons, speeches and conversations of St. Johann the Chosen on the fate and will of Sigmar; the Unfinished Book, the cult sanctioned biography of Sigmar's mortal life; and finally a number of chronicles dedicated to prominent Grand Theogonists.

Sigmar. This is also a very popular tenet. It has been given a martial interpretation (show no mercy) as well as a judicial one: the only right judgement is the one dictated by Sigmar's commands. Hence, one should spend one's time understanding the will of Sigmar as presented in The Canonical Scriptures rather than waste it with thoughts of justice.

Schisms

Opposing interpretations of the central tenets have led to heated debates, and outright schisms, in the Church of Sigmar. Two of the current conflicts are:

The Sigmarite Succession Schism – some believe that the Sigmarite Succession implies that political issues should be left to the Emperor. Others claim that the Grand Theogonist, as Sigmar's voice on earth (according to Johann's Call), should have the final word on all matters, including those which are political. This fundamental conflict is closely connected to the controversy between the Crimsonites and the Frederikans, as well as the political Investiture Controversy, examined below.

The Abbess' Prophecy – during the 20th century's

Sigmarite Sisterhood conflict, the then Grand Theogonist claimed to be the exclusive recipient of omens from Sigmar. In part this reflected the view held by the church that women were either vehicles for corruption or had a greater propensity to become chaotic, a view that many traced to the rise in mutated infant births, and the link between heterosexual intercourse and the creation of chaos. The Grand Theogonist's monopoly has been strongly opposed in later times, and was annulled in 2258 IC. Yet the rather radical strict interpretation of Johann's Call, that the Grand Theogonist has the final say on the validity of all prophecies, is still the subject of many a loud argument, to the extent that certain more radical questioners border on heresy.

Lesser Doctrines

Sigmar Returns: There are a number of varying beliefs in either the return of Sigmar or his reincarnation. Central to the former is the mystery that surrounds his last journey and disappearance, and to the latter is the hope that the legend of Sigmar brings to the embattled Empire citizens. Whilst neither of these notions is a central tenet of faith, in most cases

the idea is harmless and occasionally useful. A more dangerous teaching concerning the return of Sigmar is The Last Emperor, which is linked to a belief that The Empire is fated to conquer the Old World, destroy Araby and cross to the New World, whereby Sigmar shall return in judgement over this single empire. This is an extremely bigoted and offensive doctrine, as it preaches the natural superiority of The Empire and its right to conquer, rule or destroy all others.

The idea of a Reincarnation Myth tends to rise during periods of fear and depression. The Age of Wars (1124-1547IC) and the Dark Ages (1980-2300IC) were both characterised by a marked increase in the level of official approval for the idea, and a number of cases where individuals were touted as possible divinities. Most recently Empire in Flames has also offered a possible example. GMs may wish to use this idea as a background piece for campaigns where the backdrop is a goblinoid, undead or chaotic invasion, and the locals are in desperate need of a hero.

Sigmar as Dwarf: Given Sigmar's affinity to the Dwarfen people and his allegiance with their High King, a number of views have been expressed suggesting that the relationship is rather more than a

FLAGELLANT

An Advanced Career

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	CI	WP	Fel
	+10		+1	+2	+4	+10	+1		+10	(-10)*		+30	(-10)



The Flagellant is a doomsayer; someone who genuinely believes that the end of the world is upon humanity. Given the precarious position of the Old World, this might not seem an entirely ludicrous thesis, but there is little intellectual rigour to their arguments. They simply believe. Frequently, they will band together under the leadership of a charismatic leader, who intends to lead them to eternal happiness. Sadly, the road is often hard and extremely bloody. To most Old Worlders, a flagellant is little more than a madman.

Flagellants invariably suffer from a unique mental disorder termed Religious Fervour. Their minds are so consumed with thoughts of doom and repentance that normal thought is difficult to them. Hence, they suffer a -10 reduction to Initiative when they find themselves involved in conversations on any other topic, or are confronted with problems of just the slightest complexity. As a side effect, they appear constantly absentminded and quite frightening to other people, and hence suffer a -10 reduction to Fellowship as well.

Flagellants are devoutly religious individuals, believing only that a particular path can save the world, and that they are a servant of this cause. Thus they are extremely focussed, and may endure

immense hardships in the service of their duty. GMs should note that PCs who adopt this career are setting their characters along a very particular career path, wherein only death or advanced religious service represent credible career exits. They should also note that a flagellant career can only be entered as an insanity award. (Alternatively, it is a challenging choice for clerics that roll miserably on the Advance Table.) This reflects an event that moves the character to shun all possessions, friends and family for the cause. Of course, in many cases, it is the loss of these that causes entry into the career.

Skills

Public Speaking
 Daemon Lore
 Frenzied Attack
 Immunity to Disease*
 Luck*

Sixth Sense*
 Specialist Weapon – Flails
 Specialist Weapon – Whip
 Strike to Injure
 Stubborn Determination¹
 Theology (flawed)

*These innate skills are allowed to the character at the GM's discretion, as outlined in WFRP. Luck aims to reflect that the gods favour the mad

Special Rule: Career Disorders

Animosity against those who oppose "the cause"
 Heroic Idiocy
 Manic Depressive
 Talking to Self

These Disorders must be adopted once a character

reaches 6 insanity points for each. No WP roll is necessary; flagellants automatically gain a special career disorder on attaining 6 Insanity Points. Should all career disorders be attained, they then revert to the normal method of dealing with insanity. Thus, if a character on entering the career already has 10 points, s/he must immediately take a disorder of choice, and on earning a further 2 points must take a further disorder. GMs need to agree the specific terms of these disorders with players as they are taken. It is important to regard them as part of the flagellant psyche, and not necessarily biological illnesses.

Trappings

Very worn clothing of any standard and quality
 Hair shirt
 Flail or Whip
 Cat o' nine tails

Career Entry

The career is entered as an insanity. Typical candidates are Agitators, Initiates and Beggars, but all people of the Old World are potential fanatics.

Career Exits

None; normally the flagellant will never accomplish their purpose. However, since the Flagellant career is more a mental disorder than a regular career, there is the unlikely possibility that the disorder is cured. Also, it is possible for Flagellants to seek to continue their pursuit via an alternative route. In the latter case, however, the flagellant must complete the entire career, including the insanities. Upon completion, exits include:

Demagogue, Initiate (or Cleric if the initiacy has already been served), Templar, Witch-hunter

Texts from the Canonical Scriptures

The tenets Johann's Call and Sigmar's Wall were deducted from the following texts:

Sigmar's Wall

"As the chief builds a wall around his village for protection of his people, Sigmar built The Empire for protection of all people. If the wall does not remain intact, it is worth nothing. Likewise, The Empire must remain intact to protect its people from Evil." – Geistbuch, VIII, 2-3.

"The strength of The Empire lies in its diversity, not its division. (...) Together, we shall keep our lands free of the hated Goblins, but divided we shall surely fall!" – the Unfinished Book, Ch. 6.

Johann's Call

"The Chosen commanded: Upon my passing the Lord Sigmar shall find amongst Thou one that He shall trust as He hath trusted me; and the Faith Thou have invested in me shall be passed on to him, for he is the Lord's Chosen as I myself have been" – Geistbuch, XIX, 5-6.

simple friendship with mutual enemies. Various, it has been suggested that Sigmar was a Dwarf, the reincarnation of a Dwarf hero or a returned Ancestor God. It should be noted that these are human views and human forms of worship; the Dwarf reaction to them is generally beyond the scope of this article. It is enough to note simply that the Dwarf's notion of religion is completely alien to humans. The general idea that Sigmar was related in some way to the Dwarfs undoubtedly reached its zenith in the Dark Ages when the Dwarf kingdom of Karaz Ankor was seen as offering a beacon of stability and order, although to Dwarf eyes, of course, was but a relic of its original majesty.

The Dwarf as Our Father heresy arose from a small cult who believed that Dwarfs are the remnants of a race that gave birth to the human race. Sigmar is cited as a prophet who recognised this truth, and ended his reign via the journey of fulfilment to Karaz-a-Karak. Occasionally a cultist would turn up at the doorstep of a very puzzled Dwarf king, who tended to regard them as rather pathetic shadows of his own cult ancestor worship. The cult was determined as heretical largely because of the use of the idea by Ulicans seeking to continue their attack on the Sigmarite heresy as they view it.

One view tolerated is that Sigmar was a reincarnated Dwarf king or similar Dwarf spirit. This is linked to the political attempts of the cult to involve themselves with the powerful Expatriate Dwarf communities, where they hope to involve Dwarfs in the worship of Sigmar. Whilst Dwarfs do venerate Sigmar, there is still a great deal of misunderstanding within the cult over the nature of Dwarf worship.

Sainthood

The Church of Sigmar has adopted the use of what it terms saints as part of its campaign to unify The Empire behind its own beliefs. Saints are aspects of Sigmar given another form, be these human followers who have received his blessing in some way or divine remnants of his being left to care for certain regions or occupations. To many of the other religions of the Old World, these saints are little more than examples of other parts of the region's pantheistic deities which the cult has stolen, or a process of deifying humans simply for being good devotees.

Sigmarite saints are created from a number of sources, and the following are not necessarily exclusive.

Religious Saints: These are important figures from

within the cult's theological history, and are used to train and inspire novices in the glory of Sigmar. One important example is St Frederik, a leading historical figure within the Order of the Anvil whose teachings form the core of the Frederikan school of thought.

Patron Saints: These are specialists in areas of business, trade and the professions in the real world, and are used by the cult to introduce the teachings of Sigmar into the working lives of Imperial citizens. Each, whilst initially simply human, earned a form of

divinity through the manner in which they followed Sigmarite doctrine in their work. One such example is St. Andreas, patron of Artisans. He was a devout carpenter who had tremendous success after a modest start as journeyman, working for years on the building of the grand temple in Nuln. The Church preaches that Sigmar granted him success as reward for his devotion. This is believed by many artisans who prays to St. Andreas for success, although one Nuln historian has published his (less flattering) version of why Andreas was so successful. The historian, unsurprisingly, fled to Middenheim.

Common saints are frequently localised heroes, taken up as personifications of Sigmar in order to reinforce the message of the glory that is Sigmar. A good example is St Frederik, the founder of Frederiksburg in Sudenland who was revered as the local icon of strength and valour.

The Church is extremely efficient at incorporating aspects of other deities, minor religions and regional beliefs in spirits, supernatural beings and the like. These are frequently transformed into aspects of Sigmar (oftentimes in form of a Common saint), but are also often linked to a Patron saint. The best known example of the latter is St Helena, who incorporates aspects of Rhya and Shallya, and may be said to be absorbing some of their divinity. Cult policy has tended towards saints as a source of inspiration, rather than viewing them as spirits or demi-gods – such veils are seen as being remarkably naive and backwards.

The Cult And Imperial Politics

As the official patron of The Empire, Sigmar embodies the nation. It is deemed an important part of the mission of the church to ensure that Imperial citizens enthusiastically embrace this spirit on a daily basis. In this sense, clerics are entrusted to manage Sigmar's land and people. Whilst this section examines the role of the religious in the secular business of economics and politics, it is important to note that to the cult there is little distinction between general theology and the pragmatics of running The Empire. To the Church of Sigmar, The Empire is their church. What follows is an analysis of the role of the church within the governance of The Empire; by the fact of its centrality, this follows mainstream teachings, but it is possible for local politics to be coloured by alternative teachings.

The Emperor: Each Emperor is officially regarded

as the chosen of Sigmar. Since Sigmar is thought to have died without heir, there is no claim that he is a descendant of Sigmar. However, the reincarnation myths described below have left the suspicion that Sigmar has blessed certain Emperors. Whilst the Church of Sigmar regards itself as the state religion, and the Emperor as part of its own organisation, it is worth noting that the Emperors themselves have tended to perceive the relationship rather differently. The issue is known as the Investiture Controversy. This revolves around the point that, whilst the church regards itself (through the Grand Theogonist) as having precedence over secular rulers¹ because it is the holy church, the Emperor sees himself as having precedence as he is the divine representative of his people as the chosen of Sigmar. The people throughout The Empire, whatever their religion, owe loyalty to the one sovereign, and do so with a traditional faith in the principle of rulership by divine right. It is rather ironic that the cult's attempts to incorporate the Emperor into the Holy Church alienate many of those believers in the divine right of the Emperor, and thus undermine both the Emperor and the concept of a unified Empire.

Imperial Unity: This ideal is the central facet of the Sigmarite faith, and therefore a prime political goal. However, it has been argued that political attempts by the cult to unify The Empire have failed. The strong regional independence of provinces and electors is compounded at the local level by a varied gentry and nobility, coupled with the rise of the merchant class and the urban guilds. In reality, The Empire may never have been so fractured. Obviously, this is not a view held by the Grand Theogonist. As if this were not enough, the concept of imperial unity technically involves the re-conquest of Marienburg, a proposal that not even the most naïve Theogonist would view with any great hope for immediate success.

The Fight Against Goblins and Chaos: The continued need for eternal vigilance is a constant message of the church, and it argues the need to retain permanent armed forces and create the economic framework to support them. However, the cult is also aware of the problems caused by large regional forces controlled by local Electors, and supports the maintenance of Imperial arsenals throughout The Empire, the most famous of which is in Nuln. However, this system is in itself problematic, as provincial rulers would happily rob these arsenals for their own purposes. Theoretically, they are garrisoned by Imperial troops loyal to the Emperor, and to the Grand Theogonist that makes them Sigmarites. Unfortunately, the idea of an Imperial armoury manned by Sigmarites has proven too much for Ulican rulers. Therefore, by agreement, the Imperial troops are viewed as part of the Emperor's own forces, but are of no fixed religious alignment. Needless to say, numerous spies and attempts to evade this agreement have undermined the efficacy of the garrisons.

The Grand Theogonist: It is clear from Empire in Flames that a successful Grand Theogonist is an excellent political manipulator. Each individual in the role has to deal with complicated trade-offs in order to maintain the power of the cult and The Empire. It is probably true to say that Grand Theogonists have preferred weak Emperors that they have felt able to control, but where this has occurred it has needed a

helpful to the cult.

The Cult And Other Groups Within The Empire

As the Church of Sigmar is the official religion of The Empire, all recognised cults have tolerable relationships with the cult. Whilst the history of The Empire is littered with religious conflict, the modern Empire has attempted to adopt a conciliatory attitude at senior levels of all religious groupings - although this frequently fails. Whilst many lesser cultists resent what they see as the weakness in their leaders to forcefully push their cause, the need to maintain a façade of co-operation for political reasons tends to ensure that the upper echelons of the cult remain loyal (at least officially) to the ideal. The most obvious enmity within official cults is that of Ulric, but most cults have varying degrees of disagreement with the church's overt attempts to gain followers and spread its gospel. This will be examined further under the Cult Politics section, and is not surprising given the relatively recent entry of the god and his church into the divine arena. Proscribed cults hate the Church both in itself and as a force behind their own exclusion.

Shallya: Relations can be said to be cordial throughout The Empire, as Shallya is an ally in the war against chaos. However, the two cults differ in their attitudes towards both the under-classes and conflict. Different orders within the Cult of Shallya disapprove of these excesses to varying degrees, but the extension of Sigmarite teachings into traditional areas through the creation of Saint Helena has created much ill feeling.

Verena: There have been heated debates between the Church and the Cult of Verena in the southern provinces. These are invariably caused by disputes over legal principles. The creation of law is, in reality, primarily a political process, following the precepts of Sigmar and Ulric within their respective provinces. However, in theory, the intellectual and philosophical creation of the legal system reflects the pantheistic religious fabric of The Empire, particularly the specialism of Verena. Periodically, academic convocations are held to debate principles of the law and reflect upon the need for change. Where The Empire follows logical precepts, such as in the reign of Magnus, Verenan leaders have accepted Sigmarite dominance and tried to maintain friendly relations. These are used to influence Sigmarite leaders to ensure at least a minimum of justice in the practice of law. However, when less able leaders pander to Sigmarite or individual clique excesses, relationships between the cults become strained. Certainly, the Cult of Verena dislikes the preponderance of Sigmarite theology within Imperialist law, but it is also afraid of the rise of secularism. Verenans tread a difficult line: on the one hand they wish to maintain the power of theology within the legal process; on the other, they do not wish it to be too strongly influenced by the religious thoughts of others.

Ulric: The relationship between the cult and that of Ulric is widely illustrated in The Enemy Within, and details are available in The Enemy Within. In addition, the Talabheim project (Warpstone 16+) portrays another example, and one in which a Taal-Ulric alliance severely affected the Church over a thousand-year period. Such feelings are returned with interest.

Witch-hunters: The Church is on good terms with

Cult Titles and Levels

	Title	Address	Typical Level
	Grand Theogonist	Your/His Holiness	4
Torch Order (Inquisitio) (Arbitrorum) (Arbitrorum) (Inquisitio) (Inquisitio) (Arbitrorum)	Arch Lector	Your/His Eminence	4
	Lector	Your/His Eminence	3
	High Priest	Your/His Excellency	2-3
	Deacon	Your/His Excellency	3-4
	Judge	Your/His Grace	3
	Capitular	Your/His Grace	2
	Proctor	Most Reverend	2
	Inquisitor Priest	Right Reverend	2-3
	Priest	Father	1-2
	Acolyte	Reverend	1
Silver Hammer Order	Arbitrator	Reverend	1-2
	Assistant Priest	Brother	Layman
Anvil Order	Patriarch	Your/His Grace	3-4
	Chaplain	Right Reverend	2-3
	Cleric	Father	1-2
Anvil Order	Abbot	Your/His Eminence	2-4
	Varies	Father	1-3
	Varies	Brother	Initiate, 1-2
	Initiate	Brother	Initiate

In addition to the normal career progression of cleric, it is possible for a character following the clerical career to adopt another career within their normal level of advancement. This reflects the specialist nature of the various offices within the cult. These careers are taken as normal, but the career exits are changed to reflect the fact that this new line of work takes place within the structure of the cult. Consequently, once the career is completed and the character is ready to advance, the appropriate next level of cleric may be taken (after the normal advancement procedure). Normally, such careers are taken between Cleric Level 2 and Cleric Level 3, but this need not be the case. It is usual to take only one such alternate, but again this is not mandatory, although to gain an official position one must currently be serving the cleric career. Note that all members of the Church must serve at least the initiate career. This includes Witch-hunters of the *Secret Brethren* and wizards in the *Ahnenerbe*.

Additional Clerical Careers Within Cult Offices

Office	Career
Officium Arbitrorum	Bounty Hunter, Lawyer, Watchman
Inquisition	Exorcist, Lawyer, Spy, Witch-hunter
Secret Brethren of Sigmar	Witch-hunter*
Ahnenerbe	Exorcist, Explorer, Scholar, Wizard
Sisters of Sigmar	Assassin,** Spy**
Church Archives	Clerk, Exorcist, Librarian, Scholar, Wizard

* Secret Brethren are in fact Witch-hunters who must serve (at least) the Initiate career

** Assassin and Spy are optional; they provide GMs with the unfortunate opportunity to adopt the WFB warrior-bimbo in chainmail bikini approach favoured by the CW Mordheim game, as implied as a rumour in this article.

Officium Administratum Careers

Exciseman, Herbalist, Jailer, Judicial Champion, Lawyer, Physician's Student, Physician, Scribe, Servant, Soldier

Note that all members of the Administratum have either served as initiates before their current career, or have served the above career and are now enacting the initiate career.

powerful and intelligent Grand Theogonist to prevent a disintegration of The Empire. Certain strong Emperors, whilst apparently relegating the cult and its advice, have advanced the cause of The Empire - and thus of the cult. As a rule of thumb, the Grand

Theogonist is likely to work on the principle that what is good for The Empire is good for the cult. However, GMs need to be aware of the situations that this generalisation ignores; in particular, a setback to Ulrican sections of The Empire could prove very

The Cult Outside The Empire

The Fraternal Brotherhood of Witch-hunters (Warpstone issue 8), although they retain their own Witch-hunters as well. There are two branches of the Inquisitio Sancta Ecclesiae Sigmaris; ordinary Witch-hunters and Cleric Inquisitors; both are described in detail above. In particular, the Secret Brethren of Sigmar are welcomed into Chapter Houses as brothers in the fight against Chaos.

Wizards: A traditional conservatism towards magic means that the church has distaste for all wizards. However, it is clear that the Empire's wizards form an important role in the defence of the nation and the maintenance of social cohesion. The Church's intense hatred is reserved for non-Imperial wizards, who are all assumed to be servants of the Empire's enemies.

Manling religion is like everything manling. It is manling.

The Cult And Non-Humans

Dwarfs: The dwarf ethos generally disregards humans and their beliefs; this attitude is particularly noticeable in religion, where the two approaches to all divine matters are antithetical. Dwarfs certainly respect Sigmar as a Dwarf-brother and great ally, but human assumptions about this respect are misplaced. Certainly, those Dwarfs who dwell in human lands have recognised the god and involved themselves in his worship, but out of simple politeness and as thanks to his past aid. Sigmar is certainly an important historic figure.

Humans have tended to assume that such participation is worship of their god, but this is mistaken. Dwarfs have their own gods and modes of worship. This has not prevented a number of beliefs emerging that concern the relationship between Dwarfs and Sigmar, some of which are outlined in the section on Theology. Nor has it prevented the Church attempting to use their deity's friendship with

GM Speculations

Aside from the details provided above, it is possible to derive a number of speculations from the published material that GMs might like to play around with to develop further ideas.

It is possible that Sigmar himself was an Ulrican, and he must at least have acknowledged the god. This has created an argument that Sigmar is an Ulrican saint. In particular, it is claimed that he was crowned by the High Priest of Ulric, although this could have been ceremonial. The worship of Dyrath persists in his place of birth, so it is perhaps more probable that her worship was a primary one. This still leaves either Ulric, or some martial aspect of the Earth Mother, as the god he prayed to on the eve of his victory at the Battle of Black Fire Pass. It is even possible that Sigmar used the worship of Ulric as one of his means of unifying his Empire behind one god, and away from regional deities. This would, of course, be the ultimate irony.

On his entry into the warp, as described in Empire in Flames, it is possible that he was aided by Ulric, reinforcing their relationship. It is equally possible that he was aided by one of the Dwarf deities, repaying the debt owed by Kargan. It is even plausible that he was destroyed on entry, and the manifestation of the cult is simply a product of human belief interacting with the warp energy to create an entity or power source. Such speculations are for individual GMs to develop - or not, as they see fit.

the Dwarfs for political purposes. (Such friendship should not be underplayed; Dwarf culture has a long memory, and is grateful to Sigmar.) The problem for the Church is that Dwarf ideas on religion are completely alien to human ones, and the two simply have no ground for compromise.

There is, however, one exception to this rule, and a small number of Dwarfs living within The Empire do indeed worship Sigmar. The history of this Cult of Sigmar the Dwarf God dates back to the earliest days of assimilation of Dwarfs within human communities. The Dwarf Hergrist Branedimm established a small following by merging Dwarf rituals with the worship of Sigmar. The cult does not preclude worship of traditional Dwarf deities, but simply adds another (human) benefactor to their pantheon, one whose primary area of responsibility is the protection and empowerment of Dwarfs living within The Empire. Worship of Sigmar is not approved, but nor is it specifically prohibited. It simply seems unDwarfen.

As stated in *The Enemy Within*, the Cult of Grungni can be regarded as the Sigmarites' closest ally. It must be noted, however, that the alliance is largely historical and ceremonial. In reality, the Dwarfs have no desire to become embroiled in the various Sigmarite political and theological feuds. If called upon, the Cult of Grungni is likely to be very unwilling to ally itself in domestic disputes such as the daily problems caused by Ulricans, the independent Marienburg, Bretonnian militarism and the like. Of course, in the face of another Chaos invasion, then the two will work practically as one - but this is also true of the Dwarf cult's relationship with the scatterbrains of the forest. Against the forces of chaos, all non-chaotics are allies.

Elves: Elves tend to be even more introverted than Dwarfs, and bear little interest in any human god. However, those Elves found in Imperial lands, most notably the Laureloralim (those in the Laurelor Forest), have acknowledged Sigmar as the state deity. Elves are able to be pragmatic, and engage in worship should it be required. However, since there is very little intercourse between the Church and the Elves, this is rarely necessary. Indeed, the natural Elven tendency is to favour Taal and Ulric as gods representing nature or the untamed forces of the wilderness. This has led to a tension within the Church's attitude to the Laurelor. In fact, at times, certain sections of the Church have urged Imperial action against Elves as allies of the enemies of the Church, be these Ulrican, chaotic or international.

Halflings: As Imperial citizens, halflings recognise the importance of Sigmar as the founder of The Empire. They offer thanks to him in an annual festival, at which the local Sigmarite priest is invited to officiate. Halflings tend not to worship at human gatherings, because they tend to be stigmatised by the 'big people'.

"Worship Sigmar? Give me 5000 Imperial pikemen to drive the greenskins back across the mountains, and I'll build him a cathedral. Give me food for my mercenary cavalry, and I'll adopt his standard. Otherwise, stick him where the sun don't shine."

Attributed to Faramond of Khypris of the Border Princes.

Araby: Within Araby there are two contrasting doctrines concerning Sigmar. The first is that of Sigmar as Prophet, which argues that Sigmar was some aspect of Ormazd that attempted to convert the North to the One Faith, but whose message has been lost. There is a development of this argument presented by some anti-Sigmarite theologians who argue that Sigmar was an initial attempt by Ormazd to gain worshippers after his exile by the other ancient Arabian gods, and before his later discovery and strengthening of the Bedouins. This whole line tends to be discarded, largely for political reasons, and throughout Araby is currently viewed as heresy; Ormazd has no relationship to the infidel. The current view is of Sigmar as False Prophet, wherein Sigmar is seen variously as a devil, as a servant of Chaos or as a charlatan.

The Border Princes: Many of the Border Princes trace their origins to The Empire, and large numbers of the population are émigrés. Therefore, Sigmar is widely worshipped. Due to the nature of the area, however, there is little formal indigenous organisation of the faith, and much is left to travelling priests and missionaries. Nominally, there is an Arch-Lector for the region, based in Mortensdorf, but this post has never been filled by the cult. However, it appears that the position has recently been discussed in secret at a high level. This might be partly related to the existence of a semi-independent version of the church in Akendorf, and the unwillingness of the cult to force a further division. Akendorf reflects a more traditional interpretation of doctrine, whilst Mortensdorf is more mainstream.

Another reason for the lack of formality is the wish by the rulers of the regions to avoid any form of internal dissension between the followers of the various religions that make up their followings. In addition, they wish to avoid fighting other states within the region because of religious doctrine. This is particularly problematic given that the cult regards itself as a purely Imperial institution, and the presence of an Arch Lector would imply that the region was part of The Empire. Indeed, certain academics have argued that parts of the region (and in the case of the theologian Sigismund, the whole so-called Princedom) lie within their reinterpretation of the constant divine boundaries of The Empire. Finally, given the region's lawlessness and dangers, the need for formal religion is usually replaced by the need for defence, shelter and food.

It should be said, however, that Sigmar is a perfect icon for the region, given his ability to forge a kingdom from warring tribes, and to defeat greenskin invaders. Sigmar is thus a role model for a number of the local princes, and the area is occasionally quoted as a location for the return of Sigmar, as mentioned in the section on Lesser Doctrines.

Bretonnia: The Bretonnians bear no love for The Empire, or its patron god. They do, however, honour Sigmar as a noble individual and recognise his destruction of the goblin menace.

The Bretonnian worship of the Lady of the Lake, together with the legends of Gilles Le Breton and the Fay Enchantress, offer a similar theological framework to that of The Empire. Although this means that mutual worship is theoretically possible, the Church's political aims usually work against this.

Chaos: Where Sigmar is recognised, it is as a puny human who failed to stop the rise of Chaos. Indeed, some claim that he entered the warp and joined with Chaos after realising the futility of struggling against it.

Estalia: This region formally recognises Sigmar as part of the game of politics it plays with The Empire, but offers little more.

Goblinoids: Sigmar is a bogeyman in goblin myth and folklore, but is little more than a shadowy anti-hero.

Kislev: As a predominantly Ulrican land, Kislev does not exhibit a strong interest in the worship of Sigmar. However, the patchwork cultures of Kislev offer a wide range of religious doctrine, from Ancient Spirits to the gods of Law. Some of the southern regions of Kislev exhibit strong Imperial characteristics, and worship of Sigmar is known, if not common. In addition, the weakness of Kislev's central authority makes it politically necessary to be on good terms with the Church of the founding patron of The Empire. Technically, an Arch-Lector is posted to Kislev, but in reality, the post is left vacant as a waste of resources. Some Sigmarite hard-liners still advocate the reconquest of western Kislev, which was historically part of Sigmar's Empire, but are effectively silenced by the Grand Theonist for obvious pragmatic reasons.

Marienburg: The Church of Sigmar has fallen on hard times in the Wasteland. Despite being the official cult of The Empire, it was never supreme in the region, and was shattered by independence as it had backed The Empire and planned to open the gates for Count Zelt's army. In the crisis following the secession, Marienburg: Sold Down the River describes how the cult split between those who remained faithful to The Empire and those who cast their lot with Marienburg. The former call themselves Uniates or Orthodox, emphasising their continued loyalty to the Grand Theonist and his appointed Lector in the Wasteland. The latter has the official sanction of the Stadsraad, and is termed The Reformed Cult of Sigmar.

New World: The spread of the Church of Sigmar follows the path of its proponents. As Imperial explorers visited and colonised the New World, so the worship of Sigmar was introduced to this new continent. Whilst this primarily remains with Imperial colonists, there have been attempts to spread the Sigmarite gospel to the indigenous inhabitants. Whilst these have been unsuccessful to date, the future is likely to bring more forceful methods of conversion. There has also been talk of a new Arch-Lector/High Priest for the New World, should the region ever prove worthy. In any event, immediate concerns are the continuation of the doctrinal squabbles found in the Old World between the varied colonists in this new land.

Norsca: The Norscan's attitude towards the worship of Sigmar is unfavourable, largely for political reasons. In addition, the prime deity of Norsca is Olric, a god variously described as an aspect or a misinterpretation of Ulric (although the latter not within hearing of an Olrican). Thus Norscans tend to favour Ulricans and have inherited their dislike of Sigmarites. In addition, there is a cultural familiarity between Northern

Imperials, Kislevites and Norscans, which reinforces their theological bias.

Tilea: As with Estalia, Sigmar is formally recognised, but only for political reasons.

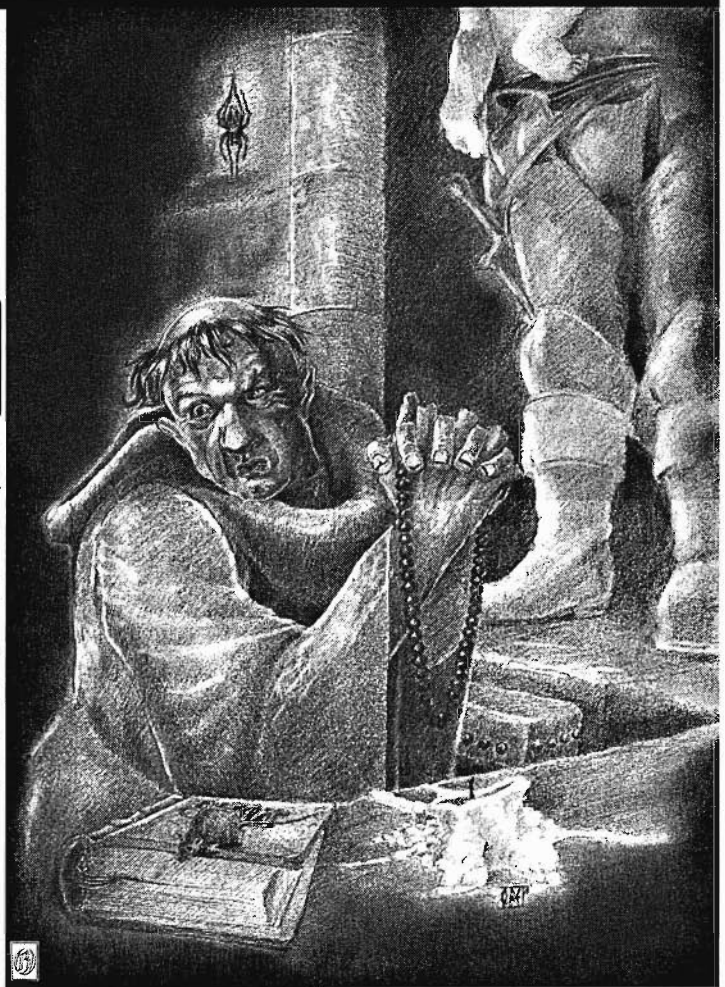
Extremist Sigmarite Groups

Sons of Sigmar: There has always been an insignificant following of the cult of Sigmar known as The Sons of Sigmar who have adopted a tribalist view of The Empire. They claim that Sigmar created The Empire with a ruling class drawn from his own tribe when he created The Empire, and that this heritage was to be continued in perpetuity. They claim that all positions of authority within The Empire should only be awarded to native Unberogens, and that the nobility should remember their racial heritage and not demean their race by marrying those of other tribes. The leader of The Sons is known as The Last Emperor, as they are prime progenitors of this doctrine and believe they are preparing the way for the total victory.

One problem facing the Sons is that their philosophy is historically flawed, in that it is widely known that Sigmar actually created the regional nobles from those region's tribal nobility, and that it is impossible to realistically trace one's heritage even if one should wish to do so. However, this does not prevent them seeking to push the cause of blond-haired and blue-eyed "Unberogens" who resemble Sigmar's representation.

Others: Most other extremist Sigmarites tend to be individuals, or linked to small areas of power. It is difficult within the disjointed Empire for the likes of Glinka's Moral Crusade in the short story collection *Red Thirst* to gain widespread support, particularly as it is likely to upset those within the church who should (theoretically) support such moves. The occasional witch-hunter or group of fanatical flagellants may still, however, prove noteworthy extremists in the path of justice, doctrine - or simply the PCs.

The Arch Lector crumpled the piece of paper. The writing was poor, only semi-literate but clear. He had a son from that liaison in the Border Princes, and he was being sent here. He stared out of the window, and smiled. A ragged group of adventurers were being escorted across



the courtyard. Excellent, here was the expendable help. Now, what could he tell them to convince them to kill a child? And how many of his own people would have to meet up with accidents to complete the eradication of his mistake?

Cult Careers And Titles

Joining the cult: The procedure of joining the Church of Sigmar is thoroughly described in *Middenheim: City of Chaos*, page 13-14. In order to join the cult, the would-be Initiate must go to a temple with a resident Priest (i.e. a Cleric in WFRP career terms). Would-be monks of Sigmar should join the Order of the Anvil at a monastery; the requirements for being accepted as Novice (Initiate) are equivalent to the ones described in the *Middenheim* sourcebook.

Centuries ago, the wandering clerics of the Silver Hammer Order accepted would-be clerics as Initiates (often called Acolytes) to join them on their lonely paths to divine glory. This custom was banned by Grand Theonist Yorri XII, and since then the Silver Hammers are only allowed to gain new members from the Initiates of the temples. Yet, in the remote areas of The Empire, the ancient custom is still practised.

There are technically no restrictions upon those entering the cult. In reality, membership is restricted to humans living within The Empire. However, GMs are free to admit anyone, should they feel it appropriate to the cult. The modern cult operates a genderless admissions policy, although relics of less liberal

attitudes do remain. Again, GMs should feel free to determine the attitude of the cult towards women entrants within their own campaigns, but should note that the Church is no more discriminatory than any other cult - and perhaps less so than others.

Advancing in the cult: Upon completion of the Initiate career, the character must go to the Cathedral of the local Lector in order to be ordained. At the Cathedral, the character should spend at least a week in prayer. Chances for advancing are increased if several weeks are spent in prayer as described in the Middenheim sourcebook (page 14). During the three days prior to the first Festag of every month all potential candidates are entitled to an audience with the Lector, during which the PC will learn the result of the player's roll on the Advance Table. On the following Festag, the Lector himself will conduct a grand ceremony in the Cathedral where all successful candidates will be ordained. Upon ordination (i.e. advancement to Cleric level 1), the character is free to join the Torch Order as a Priest or the Silver Hammer Order as a Cleric. The special rules regarding skills and spells for the different Orders are printed in *The Enemy Within*, volume 1.

By far the most interesting assignments in a role-playing perspective are to be found within the Order of the Silver Hammer, as should be clear from the description of it above. On the other hand, high-ranking Priests of the Order of the Torch are obvious players in high-level intrigue plots. If this suits the style of game, there is much fun to be had from a PC Priest of the Torch Order.

Clerics of level 1 and 2 of the Orders of the Torch and the Silver Hammer must go through a similar process in order to advance a level. The only difference is that they do not have to seek the audience at a specific time of the month. Clerics of level 3 must go to Altdorf for a similar process, but here they must seek an audience with the Grand Theogonist! Initiates and lower ranking Clerics from Altdorf have audiences with the Lector of Altdorf.

GMs need to note the behaviour of those seeking advancement. In particular, whilst the cult allows marriage of its priests their promotion is severely impeded. Indeed, senior clergy are expected to be celibate and must undergo a ceremony whereby they effectively divorce their spouse and children. Such families are found suitable employment by the cult - far away from the priest, and without their knowledge. For this reason, most clergy seeking to attain seniority avoid marital complications. The reasons for such actions are usually regarded as economic, in order to avoid any possibility of the church's assets being claimed by the family of a priest, but have doctrinal support. In fact, this is one disagreement of the churches in Mortensdorf and Akensdorf, since the latter supports children of its priesthood as propagating the followers of Sigmar.

Apart from this rules-based hierarchy, there is the power-based hierarchy that is much more important to the citizens of The Empire. The procedures of who appoints whom to which offices within the Orders have been thoroughly described above. The titles and forms of address used within the Church along with the typical level of a holder of the respective position is presented in the table on page twenty. The positions within the individual orders are listed in order of rank. All levels refer to the careers of Initiate/Cleric as found in the WFRP rulebook.

Role-Playing Conclusions

The above details the Church of Sigmar in its entirety. Our hope is that each GM will use these ideas to develop the cult and its followers within their own games. However, it is worth summarising some of the general principles as a conclusion to the article, and as a start to your own creative thinking.

Firstly, we stressed the importance of the cult to The Empire. Sigmar is its patron god, and the church represents a strong political and social force towards centralising the disparate states within the nation. Some even refer to The Empire as the Holy Sigmarite Empire. There are limits to the idea of The Empire as a single state, given the economic and political independence of each province, but religion has had some unifying effects. Of course, it also serves the opposite effect, in that it tends to drive the predominantly Ulrican provinces away from unity. Within this context, it is conceivable that the most devout of Sigmarites worship within a predominantly monotheistic framework. To them, Sigmar can provide for all the needs of his children, including fertility, weather, calm seas, healing, laws and heaven. The church achieves this by the creation of saints and the absorption of lesser deities. However, whilst this might be the long-term goal of the cult, most Sigmarites would operate within the tradition polytheism presented within the WFRP rulebook. To them, Sigmar is the central god of The Empire, and the others offer ancillary services that are acknowledged on a pragmatic basis.

Secondly, the preponderance of the cult within The Empire means that in most areas PCs will find themselves in the presence of Sigmarites. They need to be aware that wherever they go, and whomever they have to deal with, a respect for Sigmar will prove beneficial, if not necessary. The Church of Sigmar in some way affects most aspects of life within The Empire, from economics to the law.

Thirdly, there will be no uniformity of belief or reaction within either the cult or its followers. What one group believes, another might reject. PCs need to be aware that even working with (or for) the cult does not guarantee them the support of all Sigmarites. Indeed, it may earn them the enmity of other sections of the church.



Wanted: For Heresy, Deception and Outlawry, the self-styled Irwin Todbringer. A reward of 500 GCs Dead or Alive to the person bringing to justice a thief and liar, claiming to be the son of Grand Theogonist Yorri XV, committing acts against the laws of the Emperor, and threatening the personage of His Holiness.

Further Reading

In preparing this piece, we tried to remain as faithful as possible to the various descriptions about the cult throughout the various GW games. This was not straightforward, as GW does not seem overly concerned about consistency across editions or between its games. Obviously, we have used all the relevant WFRP material, and maintained consistency with this. However, other sources were also used. Warhammer Fantasy Battle offers background reading on the Old World. The flagellant career reflects the WFB3 troop type in particular. On a general level, Warhammer 40,000 offers a good deal of colour material for a gothic organisation, and as we have noted in the article, there seems to be opportunity for direct comparison of the Cult of Sigmar and the Imperial Cult. To this end, the first edition Rogue Trader is perhaps more useful, since both it and WFRP are from the same writing team and the same era. However, all editions can provide equally useful ideas for GMs, depending upon individual campaigns. For example, those wishing to develop a martial Sisterhood could do worse than use the recent Codex: Sisters of Battle. In the latter vein, GW's latest game Mordheim was also used in describing the Sisterhood, and also the Witch-hunter Guild. Neither is satisfactory in our view, but, in an attempt to keep WFRP consistent with the history created by Mordheim's destruction, we adapted them as best we could into a more appropriate WFRP tenor.

On more particular issues, the following references offer additional material for GMs able to afford the various publications:

The Church Archives are mentioned in the adventures of Zavant Konniger in *Inferno* issues 10 and 14.

The Sigmarite Inquisition and Witch-hunters are mentioned in various contexts in the following: *Inferno* issues 2/7/12; *Citadel Journal* issues 30/32; *White Dwarf* issues 240/241/242.

The Sigmarite Sisterhood can be found in *White Dwarf* issues 239 and 240.

The Adeptus Arbites are expanded in the *Citadel Journal*, issue 29.

Flagellants are portrayed in the *Dark Omen* computer game, and in *WFB*.

William King portrays the Church of Sigmar with a profound Catholic Church feel to it in the *Gotrek and Felix* novels. A similar view is given within a story set around the cult in *Inferno* issue 9.

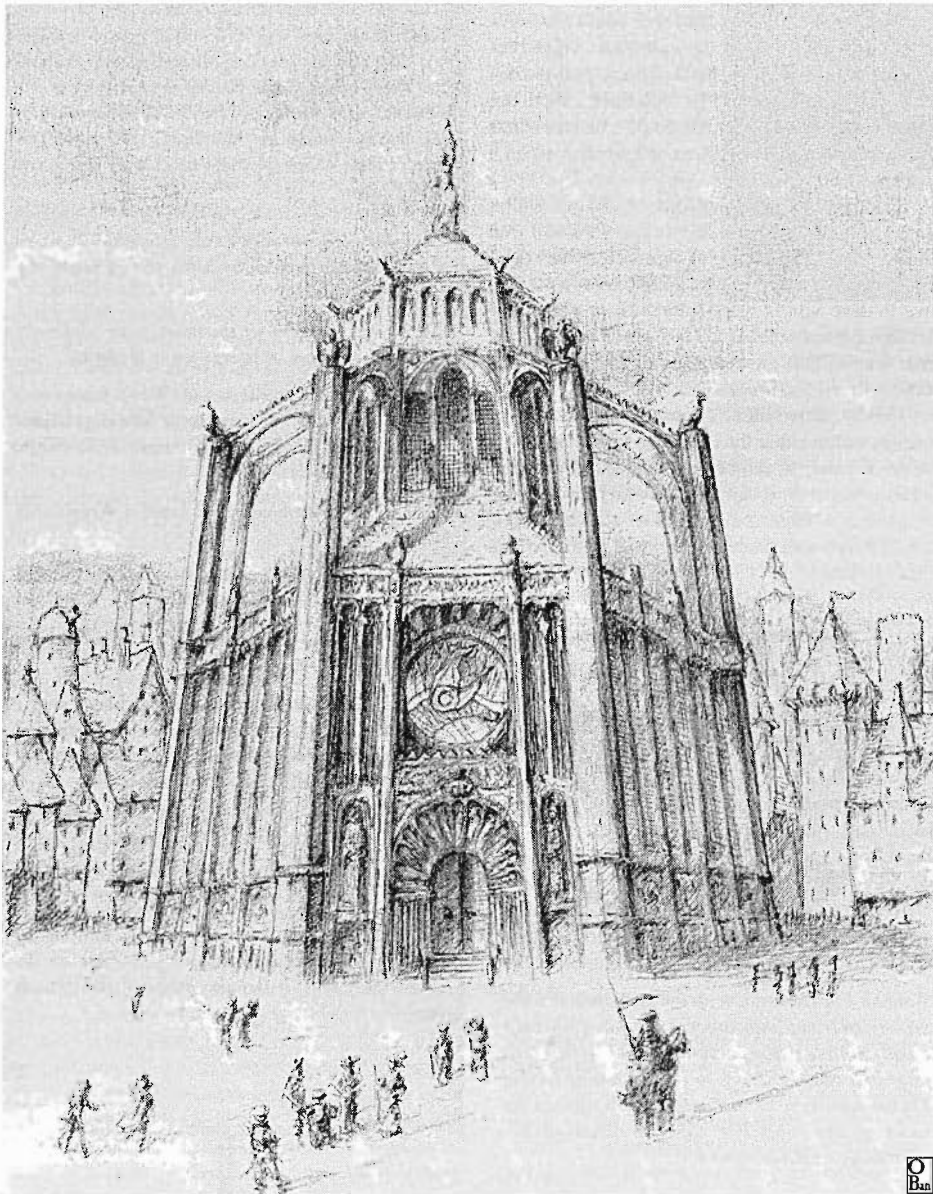
The *Konrad Trilogy* by David Ferring (which is unfortunately not very good to say the least) offers stories of Sigmar and a lover of his which could be used as the basis of Sigmarite myths, canon or not.

The Exorcist career is promised in the forthcoming *Realm of Sorcery*, and is currently available on the *Hogwash* website. It was also published in *Hogwash* issue 2.

Major Historical Events in The Church of Sigmar

Year (Imperial Calendar)

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| <p>50 Sigmar abdicates and disappears on his way to Karaz-a-Karak.</p> <p>72 A hermit appears in Reikdorf and turns Dyrath's Summer Feast into a scandal by claiming that he has seen Sigmar join the gods in a vision.</p> <p>73 Johann Helstrum (later known as the Chosen) founds the Cult of Sigmar and oversees construction of the first temple in Reikdorf</p> <p>118 Gerhard, just elected High Priest of Sigmar, retitles himself <i>Grand Theogonist Kazgar I</i>, thus beginning the tradition of Sigmarite leaders taking Dwarfen names.</p> <p>120 Kazgar I appoints three <i>High Capitulars</i> who are sent to Middenheim, Talabheim and Nuln to oversee the spread of the Word of Sigmar.</p> <p>386 The fast growing cult sanctions the first <i>Canonical Scriptures</i> at a <i>Holy Synod</i> in Altdorf.</p> <p>505 The Cult of Sigmar has gained strength and popularity in Reikland and Stirland. After the successful military campaigns of Emperor Sigismund II, himself a devout Sigmarite, the</p> | <p><i>Order of the Silver Hammer</i> is formed to spread the worship of Sigmar to the other provinces of the Empire. Sigismund II is declared the <i>True Image of Sigmar</i>.</p> <p>530 The rest of the Cult is reorganised in the new <i>Order of the Torch</i> under Grand Theogonist Ottokar III. The <i>Lectors</i> are established as leaders of the new hierarchical Order. The High Capitulars of Talabheim and Nuln are retitled <i>Arch Lectors</i>.</p> <p>666 The <i>Templar Order of the Fiery Heart</i> is founded by Imperial Charter. Relations to the Cult are strained at first, yet improve rapidly.</p> <p>934 Dwarf engineers are invited to lead the building of the first <i>Grand Cathedral</i> in Altdorf, supposed to stand finished in the 1000th year of Sigmar's Empire.</p> <p>990 <i>Order of the Anvil</i> is founded. The first monastery is built in western Reikland. The Grand Theogonist is appointed as Imperial Elector, establishing him as part of the ever more decadent Imperial Court. Decadence finds it way into the upper echelons of the clergy as well.</p> | <p>1360 The worship of Sigmar is outlawed in Talabecland. The now powerful Order of the Fiery Heart protects Sigmarites throughout the Empire, and the <i>Order of the Holy Unity</i> is founded the following year.</p> <p>1365 Grand Theogonist Yorri VI issues the <i>Bull of the Saints of Sigmar</i>, in which he establishes the concept of Sigmarite Saints, the Lord's chosen servants and martyrs. Georg, a Templar of the Fiery Heart who died a martyr fighting Ulrican aggressors in Talabecland, is the first to be canonised.</p> <p>1455 The Grand Theogonist issues the Charter of the <i>Order of Templars of Sigmar</i> which takes part in the Araby crusades.</p> <p>1549 After the Middenland Grand Duke has given up the elections and declared himself Emperor, the Grand Theogonist "convinces" the elected Emperor to appoint the Arch Lectors as Imperial Electors.</p> <p>1913 The <i>Inquisitorial Priesthood</i> is founded, according to the new Imperial Charter of the Guild of the Inquisition.</p> <p>1980 The Grand Theogonist declares that the Holy Empire of Sigmar is no more. He predicts that "the Apocalypse is near, lest the secular rulers once again submit themselves to the one true Emperor" and calls off the election of a new emperor until such submission should arise. He relieves all Faithful from any and all obligations, apart those to the Church of Sigmar.</p> <p>2000 The Sigmarite Sisters are excommunicated for heresy. The Sisterhood is restructured by decree of the Grand Theogonist.</p> <p>2042 The Church lay secular claims to the City of Altdorf. At a decisive battle east of Altdorf the Reikland forces defeat the Church, who later blame the Order of the Fiery Heart for remaining neutral.</p> <p>2197 After Grand Theogonist Kazgar XII's unsuccessful attempt to have the Lectors choose his own son as his successor, it is decided that all Lectors must maintain celibacy.</p> <p>2303 The Talabecland law against Sigmarites is annulled and the Talabheim Arch Lector is reinstated.</p> <p>2304 The Grand Theogonist presides over the election of Magnus the Pious as Emperor of the reborn Holy Sigmarite Empire and succeeds in maintaining the cult's three Electors. The Order of the Silver Hammer starts a hundred year long <i>tour de force</i> bringing the Word and Law of Sigmar to all the lands of the Empire.</p> <p>2307 Magnus the Pious settles the debate over the inquisition by reaffirming the Charter of 1913 that directs the Church of Sigmar to investigate into matters of Daemonology and heresy throughout the Empire.</p> <p>2429 Marienburg's secession results in a division of the Cult there. A smaller, primarily rural faction of the Marienburg Sigmarites stays loyal to the Church of Sigmar.</p> <p>2460 The current Grand Cathedral in Altdorf by Royal Architect Hotto Kreiger¹ is consecrated, three decades after the destruction of the previous one during the War of Succession.</p> <p>2494 Grand Theogonist Gludred III dissolves the Magnæran fraternity of the Order of the Anvil and excommunicates the leaders for heresy.</p> <p>2499 Following the death of Grand Theogonist Gludred III, the young Lector Jan Todbringer of Reikland is elected Grand Theogonist and takes the name Yorri XV</p> |
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A Religious History of the Old World

By Stephen Cumiskey

The human religions in the WFRP rulebook are flatly presented, with no explanation as to how they came to exist in their current. The north/south, Sigmar/Ulric conflict is never fully explained. Even something as fundamental as how Sigmar, born a normal human being, could graduate to the status of a god in less than five hundred years is ignored. The religion of Law is also barely addressed at all, except as a vaguely defined motivation for Witch-hunters.

I want to provide here a plausible historical framework for how the current situation could have come about. Given that the empire of the Old World is largely based on the holy Roman empire, I'll be basing some of my ideas on that source and also using the thirteenth century Cathars as inspiration for the church of Law. Hopefully, this will help GMs with the motivation for scenarios based around religious difficulties in the Old World, and provide some thought to the ideas of other religions most Old World inhabitants will be carrying. I won't be considering the religions of the non-human races, as source books are apparently in preparation for these.

Pre-History

Early human history involved isolated cultures no larger than the tribal or village level. Humans spent their lives hiding in the great forests of the Old World, while around them the frightening, inscrutable elder races carried out their unknown plans. The great forests were alive with Elves, Dwarfs, Orcs, and the multitudes of Chaos creatures and nature spirits.

As far as the early humans were concerned, spirits inhabited everything from the greatest trees to the smallest rock. Life was fragile and full of sudden (often violent or unexplainable) death. Understandably, the humans appealed to the spirits (or even elder races like Elves and Orcs!) which they believed could influence their fate. The human understanding of the power and scope of these spirits of nature was limited by the narrow horizons of the humans themselves, confined as they were to small patches of land in vast, dark forests.

The Coming of the Druids

As Human civilisation spread and grew towards establishing the first cities, humanity gained a clearer idea of the true scale of the world they lived in. With it came a new conception of the spirits they believed to inhabit and control it. Clearly, mere nature spirits couldn't be responsible for the changing of the seasons, and couldn't deal with the dead of the whole world. Equally, further contact with the elder races showed them to be more akin to humanity than spirits.

The coming together of previously separate tribes, each with their own spirits and traditions, combined with this new awareness of the world led, for the first time, to the rise of a class of people whose task was to explain the world and intervene with the spirits for their people. Enter the druids, and with them the gods. Perhaps these had once been thought of simply as spirits; now, though, they stood as more fundamental forces in the world of the earth mother.

From this period comes the first coherent creation myth shared by the Old Worlders, centring around the earth mother, fertilised by the creative (and destructive) power of Chaos. Her body, i.e. the world, gave birth first to the gods, then the elder races and finally humanity. The Old Faith lacks an end of the world scenario, as the world was thought to follow the patterns of nature and remain in a constant state of death and renewal. The individual human was part of this process and would return to the earth and then be reborn; the existence of a hell for those who violated tribal laws varied from area to area. The apparent involvement of the Slann in the beginnings of life and the Chaos gates was totally unknown to the people of the Old World, as Lustria, the base of Slann power, was undiscovered at this time.

The Old Faith gives the force of Chaos no moral dimension; like fire it is both creative and destructive at the same time. It is simply a fact of life, taken to be perfectly natural. At this stage, the Chaos gods were not separated and identified from the other gods; they were seen simply as more god spirits, unpredictable children of mother earth which must be handled with care and reverence.

The Gods of Man

Gradually, due to reasons of personality or the character of the druid's people and land, some druids began to concern themselves more and more with one spirit god in particular. For some, living in the great depths of the forests, the

worship of Taal seemed most important; for those at the shores or by lakes it was Manann, while for others the rituals of Shallya or Morr would seem more important in the cycle of life. Lacking a central authority for establishing orthodox rituals, the form of worship of individual gods varied greatly between communities. Only in the north, with the cult of Ulric, did a strong, united religion develop. With the galvanising force of frequent, violent Chaos incursions, the cult of Ulric grew to eclipse the Old Faith it was once part of. It had its own high priest and a more consistent view of the relationships of the gods and other issues. Ulric, god of wolves, winter and war, was at once a symbol of resistance to the incursions of Chaos and a god who must be feared and placated in the harsh northern winters.

Sigmar

When Sigmar achieved his final victory over the Orcs and established his Empire, he knew that if it were to survive his death, it would need a united system of both laws and religion. And so he set about creating a united church, much as the druids had been, but with a few key changes.

The Druidic religion was too diverse. While some groups shared core ideas, there were huge contradictions in other areas. This was partly a result of the oral tradition, which resulted in details changing from community to community. While this was not a problem in isolated, disunited tribes, in a united Empire with better communications these differences could become a source of conflict and dissension. Equally, it lacked a moral view of the gods. All gods were seen with equal parts fear and respect, from Shallya to Nurgle, and all were viewed as fundamental parts of the earth mother's creation.

A uniting religion for the empire needed both an orthodox view of mythology and a clear differentiation between the gods which were fundamental to human society and those (such as the Chaos gods and khaine) who represented divisive and destructive forces in the world.

To set about creating his united religion, Sigmar hosted a grand conclave in his capital with a view to building a priesthood from the diverse Druidic traditions. Here, representatives of all the groups within the Druids would come together and formulate the orthodox vision of religion in the new united empire, all under the watchful eye and guiding hand of Sigmar. The idea emerged of a priesthood who could minister to their communities in all aspects of life, calling on Shallya at birth, Taal in the harvest and Morr in death. This was desirable, as most isolated rural areas could afford to maintain only a single cleric. However, the (at times extensive) rituals and knowledge build up around the major gods would be concentrated and developed in their own orders, led by a grand master but ultimately under the authority of the Grand Theogonist within the unified church.

This is the point where the idea of unofficial gods enters the picture. Gods too small or local in influence simply do not enter into the official books of the faith; rather, they appear in apocryphal texts of individuals from the area of the god's influence. Many, such as Ranald, would not really have risen above the idea of Old Faith spirits for most of the population.

It would also be necessary to build a coherent view of the theology of the church. The first step was to reinterpret the creation story. (The current ones placed too high a value on the divisive forces that could destabilise the Empire; "surely, this must have been an error that crept in through human fallibility and weakness...") The earth mother became Rhya, and instead of Chaos' creative energy, Taal, the wilderness fertility god, is given the status of consort to the earth goddess. The Chaos gods are grouped together and isolated for the first time, now firmly equated with the Chaos gates, a malevolent force invading the world from somewhere beyond, a force to be opposed at all times. Death, too, ceased to be a constant process of renewal and more a final reckoning as to whether the individual joined the righteous in heaven, free of the taint of Chaos, or whether they would join the ranks of the pitiable spawn at the Chaos gates. For the first time, a notion of a permanent end to the world was envisaged. There was now the prophesy of a final battle, the idea that Chaos constantly threatened the end of everything. Only continued resistance could save both the living and the dead from destruction.

Although the conclave succeeded in founding the united church, it was not without its difficulties. Some of the Druids whose worship had not been shifted to a single god, or who were naturally suspicious of change and politics, rapidly

grew impatient with the endless debates and manoeuvring. Made uncomfortable by the idea of a central, final authority based in the capital, they finally split and returned to their isolated communities. However, they left behind a great many of their number in the new church.

In fact, communication being so difficult and uncertain at this time, many of the more isolated druids lived out the whole of their lives without knowing there had ever been a conclave.

The cult of Ulric also caused difficulties, but of a more significant kind. Unlike the religions of the south, the church of Ulric already had a high priest with considerable political influence among the rulers of the northern tribes and an organised, disciplined priesthood with its own ideas on orthodoxy.

Nevertheless, partly from respect for Sigmar and partly from the possibility of shaping the new church after their own ideas, they came. They contributed much to the debates and the formulation of the church, but in the end refused to become an order within the unified religion. They would not accept the authority of the Grand Theogonist. Nevertheless, Ulric's place in the theology of the church was now set, and the northern cult could reconcile itself to a guardedly neutral attitude to its new southern rival.

The Legacy of Sigmar

Had Sigmar simply died, things could have been very different. But instead he vanished mysteriously, accompanied by the appearance of a twin tailed comet and the claims of religious visionaries. Initially raised to the status of blessed patron saint of The Empire, he gradually gained status as time passed and miracles were attributed to him. Eventually, seeing the advantage of having the office of Emperor divinely ordained in the eyes of the people, the electors granted the request of some in the church of unity to become the church of Sigmar, with Sigmar declared as the god of The Empire.

This was to cause the most significant schism in the Empire's religious history. Opposition from the followers of Ulric hardened, and the orders of the other major gods (now strong organisations in their own right) refused to remain under the direct authority of a church which followed only a single god. With the individual strengths that had developed during the five hundred years of unity, they were able to separate from the direct authority of the Grand Theogonist.

Although now separated, the churches of the major gods still shared a common orthodoxy and ideas about faith and structure, and so the separation was not total. Indeed, they continued to co-operate, as each god deals only in one specific aspect of the life of an individual. Political influence is also better maintained through unity. Although the churches of the other major gods were not so closely enmeshed in elector politics as were the cults of Sigmar and Ulric, political influence remained vital to their survival as institutions.

Some, however, appalled at the political manoeuvring involved in the split, separated totally and founded the church of Law.

The nature of the church of Law is only briefly touched on in the rulebook, implying that the worship of Illuminas, Solkan and Arianka form totally separate religions. This is not so. Solkan, of course, always existed – he was originally the keeper of tribal laws and traditions, charged with the punishment of transgressors. The church of Law rejected Sigmar's revision of the creation myth of the druids. First, they looked at the traditions of the Druids and then, unsatisfied, went to a more extreme vision.

Rejecting the idea of the earth mother's part in the creation of the world entirely, they saw the world (in their eyes, rife with corruption) as the creation of the powers of Chaos alone. This made the world, flesh, and everything in it inherently corrupt. In the eyes of the church of Law, the only hope for the individual human was to reach a stage of purity sufficient to lift them from the material world up to the Chamber of Illuminas, an ideal otherworld free of the corrupting hand of Chaos. Arianka was the symbol of the creation of a perfect world, locked away by the force of Chaos and the imperfections of humanity. The legendary "crystal keys" that can reputedly release her are not literally real. The initiate into the church of Law is told that the keys represent the purified acolytes of Law who will one day release the ideal world from the hands of Chaos. Solkan became the force that wishes to literally burn away the corrupt world to make way for the time of the new world of Arianka, after the final conflict at the end of this world. The church of Law introduced their own prophesy of the world's end, which is always seen as imminent.

Unsurprisingly, the extreme rejection of the tainted world was too extreme to appeal to the majority of well-adjusted individuals. The cult of Solkan became attractive to those with a burning hatred of the world, which, for whatever reason, they have come to see as corrupt. The extremity of these ideas ultimately made the church of Law as dangerous as Chaos in the eyes of most of the Old Worlders.

The early flourishing of the church of Law in some areas met with stiff resistance from all the established religions, some going as far as instituting crusades against the nobles who supported it. Many a convert to the church died in sieges on their castle homes or on the battlefield in the hundred years after the split. The church was finally driven underground by the established faiths, only to reappear again and again through The Empire's history.

Conclusion

So what does all this mean to the average Old World character? The historical detail here will probably be unknown to any character without the theology skill, but the historical roots of modern situations like the disputes between the churches of Ulric and Sigmar needed a clearer historical root. Characters who worship gods of Law should also find something here to help their motivations beyond the idea of the wandering, slightly psychotic Witch-hunter. In reality, all of these religions probably intermesh in the minds of the people, with old traditions from the Old Faith still lingering in the back of people's minds. The notion, for instance, of the possibility of appealing to Nurgle in times of plague bears this out.

For characters following the Old Faith, the greater gods are still a part of their own faith. But only a part. They will see the new religions as having lost the fundamental truth of life as an endless cycle of change and renewal, and as being detached from a true understanding of the workings of the world and steeped in material power and decadence. The Chaos gods too remain a part of the Old Faith pantheon, to be respected as well as feared. Dedicated followers of both Chaos and Law will both be seen as more lost than the followers of the new faiths, trapped in extreme, blinkered world views. Members of the elder races, especially the Elves, will be seen more as nature spirits than as beings of flesh and blood like humans.

To members of the new faiths, the druids are seen (accurately) as a dying breed, and as being part of humanity's dark past. At times their rites may actually be mistaken for Chaos cult practice, leading to persecution or at the very least suspicion. How the followers of the new faiths see each other is largely dependant on their political relations at the time. Most of the time religion will not be a cause of conflict between the average Old Worlders, but priests are likely to take differences more seriously. The Followers of Chaos will undoubtedly be attacked, while the followers of Law will be seen alternately as champions of righteousness or a dangerous menace.

The followers of Law themselves have, by now, learned to be more discrete. Meeting in secret on the lands of sympathetic nobles, they draw new followers by their ascetic, devoted lives and strength of purpose. Not to mention claims to hold truths about the world the other faiths are afraid of, which appeals greatly to the disillusioned. While some followers of Law in the world will follow the model of the Solkan-inspired, fanatical Witch-hunters or flagellants, most will simply live an ascetic lifestyle, quietly attempting to reach the required state of purity. They may attempt to convert followers of other faiths (even followers of Chaos), but are more likely to employ the example of their lives than the witch-hunter's torch as persuasion.

The question of what the gods actually are (provoked by the presence of the Chaos gods in Warhammer 40k) is resolved in different ways depending on your school of thought. 40k seems to imply that the gods are echoes in the warp of fundamental impulses in the minds of sentient beings. To the extent that the gods of Chaos appear to exist whatever humanity does, the same can probably be said for all the other fundamental gods too. So what does this make Sigmar? One way of looking at it is that Sigmar the man is simply dead, gone wherever dead men go. But the god Sigmar is the echo of the belief which grew in the people in the idea of Sigmar the god. The gods in Warhammer do not appear to intervene very directly. They act mostly through visions and blessings. Even the Chaos gods only act through their Daemons and followers. But all of this is beyond the inhabitants of the Old World, who remain ignorant of other struggles going on elsewhere in the galaxy, the nature of warp entities, and so on.

For the lonely watchman on the walls of Bögenhafen (see The Correspondent in *Warpstone* 10), the great conflicts and movements of the past years may well be unknown to him, but they will have shaped the way he sees members of the different faiths. The local god Bögenaur fits snugly into the established pantheon of the gods, not as fundamental to life as Morr or Shallya (to whom he will doubtless pray in times of need), but still important to the area from which he came. The notion that gods may once have been human will not seem so strange in the Empire of Sigmar. And while he may be surprised to find that folk from other towns have never heard of Bögenaur, he will still offer a prayer to the patron of the town's prosperity. There's no limit to other folk's ignorance, after all.

In the Light of the Twin Moons

The Truth about Geheimmisnacht The Night of Mystery and Hexensnacht The Night of Witching Being an Honest and Earnest Account of these Most Peculiar of Nights by the Reverend Garrett Lepper

The late afternoon shadows lengthened along the forest trail, hinting at the time that had passed. For the summer, it was a most curious day, silent and mild, the afternoon stirred only by a gentle breeze. A pleasant day by all accounts, and the continuing stillness belied the menace endemic to the approaching evening. Doktor Rusholm was, however, in no mood to appreciate the weather as he alternated between silently cursing himself and looking about with fearful glances in all directions.

In the best of times a nervous man, the good doctor was now quite terrified and in his mind reiterated the details that had brought him so far from home on such a dangerous evening. Frau Zaubern had collapsed during the Geheimnstag Day celebrations, and the doctor had sent his wife home while he attended to the stricken woman for what he thought would be a short period of time. Reviving, treating, and reassuring the befuddled Frau Zaubern had taken more time than he had anticipated, and in his hurry to return home to Frau Rusholm he had twisted his ankle and nearly lost his glasses. He cursed his luck, of all nights to be passing through the forest, he thought. Geheimmisnacht, the "Night of Mystery".

Looking up he discovered the sun had finally passed below the horizon, and a chill descended upon the forest. Doktor Rusholm wondered if the forest was always this still or whether it was his nervous disposition affecting his senses. Dreading every step, the doctor was relieved when

he saw a light bobbing ahead on the winding trail before him. His fear of passing through the forest alone had overcome his caution, and the doctor began to hobble, wheezing but grateful, towards the light ahead, eager to see any other soul rather than pass the remainder of the journey in isolation.

Frau Rusholm had not stirred from her lonely vigil beside the door, where she had waited all night waiting to hear her husband's footsteps approaching, to hear his familiar knock on the door. Exhausted and tearful, she noted the first rays of the rising sun filtering through the cracks of the door heralding a new dawn after Geheimmisnacht. She was filled with a sudden resignation that her husband would never return.

Geheimmisnacht had claimed yet another victim.

Of the Seasons and the Movements of the Moons

With their lives so subject to the whims of the elements and seasons, the people of the Old World have become familiar with the rhythms and even the secrets of nature. So dependent are they on knowing the capriciousness of their environment the citizens of the Old World have carefully noted those times when they can anticipate abundance or scarcity. They have learnt to look at all the signs of nature, the flora, the fauna, the cycles, the first snowfall, the first yearling, and most carefully, the stars and the moons. It is said that the moons exert some influence on the gods and on nature, or that the moon's behavior reflect the will of the gods - none are certain which way around it is. Each day and night therefore offers up secrets if one is only willing to patiently watch for them.

There are two nights that possess a powerful and terrifying significance for all, whether asleep or awake. These two nights are known as Hexenstag, the Witching Night, and Geheimmisnacht, the Night of Mystery. Hexenstag is the first night of the new year, while Geheimmisnacht arrives in the middle of the year. Both are notable for being the only nights when both moons, Mannslieb and Morrslieb, are full, glowering down at the world beneath them.

Both nights follow festival days celebrated by the Old Faith and the Elven followers of Liadriel. These days are noted in both faiths as days of change and transformation, reflecting the ambiguities, absurdities, and even the dangers that the world presents to its children. Although preceded by festival days, these nights are held by nearly all religions as nights of great fear and concern, for the gods are reputed to be powerless, and evil walks the land in its many horrific guises.

Mueller stirred from his fitful sleep.

...ssshhhh!

Someone or something was whispering to him. His head cocked and listened. With a sudden sense of urgency he threw open the shutters - and there in the sky were his friends, the two moons. He returned their smile, listening obediently with a fixed grimace on his face.

When they finished whispering, he nodded once and walked over to a table, where he opened a drawer. He pulled out a long and gleaming knife. He slipped into some clothes, and crawled out the window to do as the moons had requested.

Shocking Accounts of Misfortune on These Dreaded Nights

On these nights it is reputed that the most foul of creatures crawl out from under the eaves of the forest and from their lairs deep in the earth. It is said that even the dead awaken from their fitful rest to dance under the twin lights of the moons. Children conceived or



born on these nights commonly bear marks of chaos, or are believed to live accursed lives, or inherit the most mischievous traits; growing up to be miscreants, mad, depraved, devoid of moral character, or worse. Animals born on these nights are considered tainted and unfit, and sacrificed the next morning, then buried far from fertile fields, wells, or sacred ground.

It is on these most dreaded of nights that the most evil of creatures are free to act as they so desire. It is whispered by some that on Geheimnisnacht and Hexensnacht the gods leave humanity to fend for themselves, for even they avert their gaze from the horrors transpiring beneath them. Abandoned by the gods, people lock their doors, draw close their shutters, and hope that the fires giving them heat, warmth, and security and do not draw the attention of the fanged and clawed creatures craving their flesh.

Under the twin light of the moons Beastmen join together at their brayherds for rituals deep in the forest. These follow attacks on isolated farms, homes, or even villages for sacrificial victims for their gods and food for their celebratory feasts. The gods best left unmentioned whisper seductive secrets into the ears of the mad, the haunted, the murderous and the greedy, offering them untold power in exchange for their souls and urging acts of debauchery or sadism. Those accepting these promises usually venture off into the forests to seek out the Chaos Wastes; those declining are usually driven insane from the experience and present a menace to all around them. Even the moon Morrslieb has been known to acquire a most horrible visage, wearing a leering grin that causes the most virtuous to recoil in horror at its ghastly mask, as if the very moon itself is delighting in the mayhem below.

The tales above are lurid and shocking, and, if true, one would be hard pressed to explain how civilization survives these twin onslaughts of Geheimnisnacht and Hexensnacht that occur every year. However, few of these nights have come close to this morbid reputation. Rather, these tales represent the image of Geheimnisnacht and Hexensnacht that appear in Witch-hunter pamphlets, the sermons of doomsday cults and the most fervent and puritanical of priests.

What Truly Transpires on These Most Maligned of Nights

In reality, these nights are *usually* not as bad as these descriptions depict. Strange things do indeed happen, animals born on these nights are killed and children are best if not born under the waxy and unhealthy glow of these two moons. Most people stay indoors, utter their prayers and awaken the next morning relieved that their fears were unwarranted - at least, *this time...*

On these two particular nights, many temples are open, with services held all night long, congregations praying and chanting to their gods for divine protection. Leaving, the believers return home safe with the assurance that their devotion has once again warded off evil.

However, it is not only the prayers of the devout that ensure that Geheimnisnacht and Hexensnacht rarely live up to their notorious reputations. For weeks before, Witch-hunters, templars and wandering priests travel abroad, ready to persecute those plotting mischief on the nights. Some cynical types believe these plagues of fanatics do more harm than those perpetrators of mischief they seek to persecute! In urban areas the authorities round up potential troublemakers, ensuring that they are locked safely behind bars, while the city watch and local militia remain vigilant for any internal or external threats. Since most people remain at home, and the authorities are out in force, and intolerant of any misbehavior, these nights can be some of the most quiet and uneventful of evenings.

That is not to say that all is well. Those brave enough to look out their windows may note cloaked and hooded figures moving late at night through the shadows to clandestine meetings. Those sentries on the walls of the town or city may see torches or mysterious lights moving about in the forest, hearing laughter or even blood-curdling screams. Few are brave or stupid enough to venture out into the forest to investigate such phenomena. In the morning people may awaken to note that their neighbors have mysteriously disappeared, leaving behind a home locked from the inside with nothing disturbed, taken, or missing, other than the absent owners.

Those living beyond the safety afforded by urban areas have more to fear

for they are frequently alone, isolated, and far more vulnerable to those things that move about the forest at night. It would be absurd to think of rural homesteads and settlements as subject to the full onslaught of that evening, for despite their ill repute these nights follow the day of religious festivals of the Old Faith. For those practitioners of the Old Faith a time to prove their devotion and mettle for these nights are simply another aspect of the seasonal and cosmological cycle that they have come to anticipate, for better or for worse. Druids and their followers gather in Stone Circles and Sacred Groves to perform ancient rituals to protect the forest and its inhabitants from the dangers active under the full moons. The tone of these rituals is darker than those at the equinox, but it is the Druid's duty to recognize all things that bear an influence on the eternal cycles of nature. These nights also have another significance for the Old Faith: they are nights of change when the normal rules are suspended and anything is possible, and it is then that Druids may note the most strange of omens, or perform a ritual not normally permitted.

Geheimnisnacht and Hexensnacht are also important for the various fringe cults attached to the more traditional religions. These cults stir themselves up into a frenzy, shouting out dire predictions about the impending end ahead, whipping and maiming themselves, performing ritual acts of debasement and torture as an appeal to their god to save their lives and/or the world, or to pluck them off the face of the earth when the end of the world arrives.

The heavenly events are of particular interest to fortunetellers, diviners, and astrologers, for on these nights the most fascinating phenomenon may occur. Morrslieb may almost appear to have a face, the moons may change colours or eclipse each other, or meteor showers or other strange events may transpire, all of which may tell the watchful of tidings to come. Hexensnacht is particularly important, since it is believed by many to give some astrological indications of what the new year may bring.

Jurgen cackled gleefully, his face contorting into a skull-like visage. The wind lashed about his body sending his voluminous ropes flapping in the wind as the dark thunderclouds whisked by overhead - yet even the clouds and the descending rain were not enough to mask the glow of the two moons aloft in the night sky.

"Faster! Faster fools!" Fearful of their master's most terrifying appearance and the power emanating from him, they dug faster, ignoring the chilling rain that drenched them. Jurgen's exuberance was the first sign of emotion that any of them had ever witnessed.

A few seconds later, a shovel exposed the first skull. Jurgen lifted the skull into his hands, speaking animatedly to it. He then yelled out "Faster! We have much work to do, there are hundreds of bodies buried here - only hours remain!"



The Wicked Revelers of these Bewitched Evenings

So who are those who risk, embrace, or even revel in the dangers of this night? Those most to benefit on this night are those who practice the dark arts, for it is widely accepted that acts of maleficia and sorcery are at their greatest on such nights. It is said that even the most difficult of rituals becomes possible, since the dark gods and their daemonic servants are most generous and powerful at these times. For this reason, necromancers and daemonologists will perform their most important rituals for their chances of success are much greater and the magic on such nights is more malleable. Those practitioners of magic who do not practice the black arts are most cautious to not experiment or even cast spells, not only so that they remain above suspicion of witchcraft, but because it is believed that there is a strange taint to all magic worked when the two moons are aloft. It is believed that such spells become difficult and unwieldy and their effects often have unexpected or undesired results.

Chaos Warriors and Chaos Sorcerers know the gods watch carefully, wallowing in their servants' worshipful acts of havoc. Chaos warbands fall mercilessly upon homesteads, farms and the unlucky travelers on such nights. In the forests, Beastmen join together to cavort, shamans summon daemons and many Beastmen acquire spontaneous gifts of mutation by their pleased gods.

The servants of chaos are not the only ones to take advantage of the dark magic that flows from the poles on these evenings. Devotees of Khaine choose this night to act on their murderous intentions, for it pleases Khaine that only the two silent moons bear witness to the murder perpetrated in his name. For the followers of Khaine there are no better nights to act. Although their victims may be more cautious and suspicious than ever they will not escape their doom. In the lands of Naggaroth where the Dark Elves reside, the Witch Elves of Khaine's bloody rituals easily rival those of the servants of Chaos.

One would hope that the list of those sowing misdeeds and misery would end there, but sadly it does not. Practitioners of the Old Faith believe that were-creatures are particularly susceptible to the power of the moons when both are full, having no control over their transformation, and are thus more likely to enter into a murderous rage. Vampires and liches have been known to come forth these evenings to fulfill their own dark agendas; it is whispered that those vampiric minions acquired on this evening are forever devoted to their vampiric master. In the cities, those cursed with the madness of the moon, the desire to kill according to the moon's phases, are unable to resist the allure to use their razors or daggers on the soft flesh of others.

There are of course those with no connection to a greater evil who simply use these nights for their own personal gain. Those planning misdeeds sometimes decide to execute them on Geheimmisnacht or Hexensnacht to conceal the nature of their acts, be it murder, theft, or some other offense. In the absence of any evidence, the authorities are more likely to dismiss the incident as yet another mystery resulting from these baneful nights.

There was a sense of anticipation in the air. Unusual, for out in the open, in the high mountain air, Skaven were skittish. Yet here, on the top of an ancient Dwarfen tower in the World's Edge Mountains a dozen Skaven hunched over parchments and instruments. Half a dozen were looking through cylinders made of bronze, iron, and brass, peering into the night sky. The remainder clutched rats' bones with which to write upon the giant flesh parchments.

The silence was interrupted by a gasp, and a dozen streaks of light crossed the night sky – there was no time for even a quick prayer thanking the Horned Rat for this blessing – coordinates were quickly read out and the trajectory and speed of the warp meteors were plotted out on charts and their area of impact quickly estimated.

Within hours, groups of Skaven were dispatched to collect the bounty offered by the Horned Rat.

The Effects of these Nights on the Game

The appearance of both moons herald an influx of power as the portals shower the world with energy, most of it dark and malign. By night and by year, the twin moon's powers vary. The following are a list of effects that

"What One May Do To Protect Their Hearth and Home"

An extract from a simple pamphlet detailing the curious and powerful means by which one may hold off the many dangers that the certain nights herald. circa 2100IC

For as long as we mortals have had to endure the dangers of the Night of Mystery and the Night of Witching, both the wise and the superstitious have sought out diverse and ingenious means to ward away the malificia that accompany these evenings. Over time a number of traditional folk beliefs, some clever while others foolish, have been developed and practiced but much has been lost. The efficacy of such charms and trinkets is not considered here, for one must discover for oneself which provide refuge and which invite disaster. Rather than make any judgments as to their merit, these relics are merely described here by your humble author.

Even the charlatan posing as a palm reader is privy to the knowledge that the most important place in the home or building is the doorway, for this is symbolically the threshold into the house, and it is critical to place thereupon wards to prevent ingress. On these nights the sensible person will position charms over the doorways to their abode; religious symbols and other such tokens are commonplace. The backwards and superstitious folk of the rural countryside hang a piece of iron over the door, and some will even hang precious trinkets made of silver to protect themselves and their loved ones. Although most rural folk are bereft of even the most humble of educations, neither able to read or write, many nail a scroll inscribed with a prayer acquired from their temple. For this purpose this scroll should be held in place by an iron nail for greater potency. Less common today than in the past, cautious folk would hang a mask with a horrific face on the front door, or the gate, or posted on a stake in the ground by the house. Its fierce visage was reputed to scare away those meaning harm, even creatures of the night and the nether realms, although common sense dictates that children's masks may nary drive off fiends! In my travels, other folk have suggested sprinkling blessed water around the doorway and windows in the house for it is certain to secure the abode against any unnatural transgressors. Another common ward still employed by the simple folk in the countryside is the use of herbs and plants. Simply place a small sprig on a doorway or windowsill to ward off those seeking entry, and for this the preferred flora are mistletoe, holly, or garlic, but sometimes wise country folk use other medicinal herbs as well. These in the rural countryside and familiar with the flora found there swear by the use of Truefool, while caretakers at graveyards and mausoleums wisely choose to protect themselves with a plant distastefully named Graveweed. Any of these materials and items have been guaranteed to me by various authorities that when placed at a threshold of a house, will keep out ghosts, spirits, daemons, and other creatures of the night. The reader may feel that such measures are sufficient – but I choose to assure the efficacy of such niceties over doorways by ensuring that the door itself is reinforced by

an item of heavy furniture!

Another long and hallowed tradition is to burn fire, either torches outside or more commonly a large fire within the hearth. Fires inside the house have unorthodox things, fuelling them, unusual woods that are deemed inadequate as normal firewood, or malodorous herbs to create a stink to repel those entities that may approach the house. In some areas bells are frantically rang, metal pots and pans hammered to scare away the unwanted spirits, while others sing and chant inside their home. Some sensibly dispense with all these fires and noise, lock the doors, put out the fire, extinguish all the light sources rather than call undue attention to themselves.

A word of caution for travelers abroad on these nights, for there is considerable danger: not only must they fear those things summoned from dark places, but also those paranoid and deeply suspicious people whom may be encountered on these evenings. Many a harmless traveler has been killed by a volatile crowd or an over-eager Witch-hunter mistaking them something other. When traveling late at night, one is warned to take refuge in a temple or wayside shrine and no place else, for approaching homes without invitation on these nights is strongly discouraged and may result in tragedy. Furthermore, shy away from other travelers, and if pursued, flee to a crossroad and hide, for some say that malicious spirits will become confused and wander off in the wrong direction.

Old practices tell travelers to wear a mask to trick menacing creatures into thinking you are one of them, while others warn to cover the face in ashes to trick them into thinking you are the walking dead, thus spirits and other malignant beings will not disturb you. Be forewarned – both practices are nowadays foolish since you are more likely to be killed by a frightened road warden than you are to trick any of the sly and malicious entities frolicking about on these grim evenings.

Whatever you do, do not take food from strangers, for witches and daemons in disguise offer unwary travelers food, and legend has it that such victuals are made from human flesh, and partaking of such a grisly feast on these nights will most assuredly make one become a ghoul. Likewise, abstain from drink offered by strangers, for there is the chance that it is human blood, or poison, and drinking the former gives you a taste for blood, while drinking the later will of course kill you.

Of course such customs may or may not prove effective, and those with an ounce of wisdom will take the additional precautions of keeping a weapon at hand, resisting opening doors to strangers or neighbors nor approaching either if outdoors. They should not be lulled to sleep but rather remain awake and vigilant throughout the long night, and keep prayers and chants to the gods upon their tongues.

may occur on any of the nights. The GM should choose one or more, although the players will most likely be ignorant of the night's effects. Those who have long experience observing astrological or astronomical phenomenon on Geheimmisnacht and Hexenstag, and who wish to perform rituals may make a test (Intelligence modified by *Astronomy*) to determine what the night's effects are. Those with *divination* as well as *astronomy* (or *astrology*) may predict the effects days, weeks, or even months in advance.

Feel the Power! The gravitational pull of the moons causes the warpgates at the poles to temporarily expand, glutting the world with magical energy. All Daemonology and Necromancy spells cost less (a point less, or their total costs halved if this is a particularly ominous night).

Daemons Eager for Souls Daemons are keen to take advantage of the night's potential, and are particularly willing to deal with mortals. All their *Willpower* tests are at -20. Daemons summoned without the protection of an effective protective circle may, instead of attacking the summoner, merely intimidate them into a daemonic pact or some other deal.

Daemons Walk the Earth Daemons summoned seem nourished by the unholy lights of the moons, and are not subject to instability for the remainder of the night.

Lunacy! The unhealthy gleams of the moons cast a baleful influence upon the mortals below, and Morrslieb may even break into a grin of insane mirth encouraging all manner of uncivilized behavior. All Cool tests (in particular all related to Insanity or Insanity points) are at -10, and on particularly strong nights all failed Insanity Tests result in an additional point being gained over and above what would normally be awarded.

Morrslieb's Contempt It is said that on some nights, Morrslieb looks down upon the earth and is appalled by what it sees below, and in its disgust it spits upon the world that offends it so. A meteor shower of warpstone rains down upon the earth sowing fear and panic in the good at heart, and delight in those with different proclivities. Such rare nights are omens of grim times ahead.

Spreading the Curse The effect of the moons on lycanthropes is extremely powerful. All lycanthropes are frenzied and anyone so much as wounded by a were-creature is automatically subject to lycanthropy.

Tainted Winds The magic flowing into the world is laced with darkest evil, so that the most casual of invocations and incantations is fraught with danger for even the most accomplished of casters. Those with Sixth Sense, Magic Sense, or Magical Awareness will know that something is wrong about the air, but further details will elude them unless they have experienced this rare event before. Those who throw caution to the wind and choose to cast spells put their minds and bodies at great risk, as they

will be channeling the darkest of magic through their bodies. Each spell has a percentile chance, equal to the number of Magic Points in total spent for casting that spell, of causing a Magical Disability as if the unlucky practitioner were an evil or chaotic spell caster. Also, Spell Failure results in an automatic Magical Disability if the failing practitioner also fails a magic test. Evil and chaotic practitioners are immune to these effects, but are filled instead with a bloated sense of power.

The Dead are Restless Riding the tide of dark magic are countless mad and angry souls craving to walk the earth again. The number of dead summoned may be increased by half, and on nights when the winds blow particularly strong, they are not subject to Instability until dawn.

Witching Storms There are only a few accounts of the phenomena known as Witching Storms, when the moons are hidden by black clouds that shower down acidic rain destroying crops, damaging buildings, and burning skin, when green lightning strikes down the virtuous, thunder echoes the maniacal laughter of dark gods, and the winds are reputed to bear death in their tainted air. The danger of these Witching Storms cannot be underestimated, and are major catastrophes resulting in widespread death, destruction, and chaos. Witching Storms are always accompanied by a whole host of other phenomenon. It is claimed that when the world has experienced the thirteenth night of Witching Winds, that the world will finally end. Scholars debate the number of times the world has experienced such winds; many believe the number is somewhere between ten and twelve.

Hilda remained huddled the bed, clutching her doll – using all of her self control to keep from screaming. It was still here, in the house. She could hear its claws scratching the wooden floor as it prowled through the dark hallways. She heard scraping as it entered her room, and snuffling as it crept closer and closer to the bed under which she was curled.

Final Thoughts on these Dreaded Nights

The world and its everyday processes and cycles all too often take a secondary role in games, consigned to provide only the smallest of contributions to the atmosphere of the game. The passing of days and nights holds little significance, and summer or winter days are nearly identical. The environment can add immensely to a campaign – even such things as the movement of distant astral bodies. The players should not be ignorant of the cycles of the year, nor should they be unaware of the significance, whether baleful or beneficent, that some days and nights bear.

Festivals and holidays can greatly enhance a campaign and provide countless opportunities for the players to interact with the rich detail in the worlds the games are set in. Likewise, the players should not only look forward to festivals, but also learn to fear those nights when the two moons share the sky and illuminate the madness that the foolish mortals live with but so often fail to acknowledge.

NEXT ISSUE



WELCOME TO TALABHEIM

Finally it begins. Part One of our epic background to the Imperial City.

FOX CROWE

The saga comes to a dramatic end.

THE MASTER THIEF

A new career or two for the light-fingered.

& MUCH, MUCH MORE...

**OUT
SPRING
2001**

The Lore of the Ranger

By Ouroboros

"Well, Wilhelm?"

I hate it when he calls me Wilhelm. I turned around to watch the perfumed fop set upon his gelded horse. His fine silks were stained and torn, his hair dishevelled. The past week of tracking had led us on a merry chase to the edge of the great forest, and the trek had not gone well upon the young Lord Grebinslib. "He's gone into the wood."

"Well, will that slow us down?" He waved at the air imperiously with his hand, as if to rush me and his four armed guards into Taal's heartland like hunting dogs. I grunted; with hunting dogs, we might just have a chance.

"Let me put it to you this way, Lordship. If he went in there, we ain't going to find him." I uncocked my crossbow and placed the bolt in my hip-quiver, slinging the weapon; I wasn't shooting anyone today.

He sat, mouth agape as I began to walk away. And why not? My job here was done.

"Bounty Hunter!" Have you ever noticed the only thing worse than being called by your proper name by a effeminate noble is having said noble use your job title? I'm Will Keller. Willy to my friends and Herr Keller to sop-buckets like Lord Grebinslib. He did pay me enough up front to supply me with beer for a good four weeks, so I felt obligated to stop and turn. Just barely. "You were paid to help me track down this villain and I expect you to honour our deal. We may not be on my land anymore, but I assure you, Duke Kringleberg is a very good friend."

"Look, my Lord, Krieg is an experienced woodsman. He's lived years in places like this, surviving at Rhya's mercy and in spite of Ulric's fury. If he don't want to be found, we ain't gonna find him. He's going to lead you in circles for weeks until your food runs out, your horse dies, and then you die from lack of water. That's if you don't catch his attention so that he lays a few surprises for you in the mean-time."

"You coward! He is a single man, unarmed, with no supplies or reinforcements!"

I looked into the forest, it's primeval heart beginning to stir with the life of dusk. The trees, like sentinels, stood guard over Krieg's new home, waiting for we city-dwellers to trespass on his claimed grounds. "He may have been weaponless before, Milord. He isn't any more. The very forest will fight for him."

He cursed me, and promised he'd see me in jail, and then ordered his fools forward. I knew then that they would never come out again. Krieg, to my knowledge, has never been captured, though they have seen him in some of the towns. Rumours say he traded a horse, a rapier and some chainmail to some passing mercenaries a while back. He still lives in those woods. He nearly owns them.

One thing is for certain: I ain't fool enough to let my enemy choose the terrain.



Hmm, Let's look at our basic hunter's skills: *Concealment Rural, Follow Trail, Game Hunting, Silent Move Rural...* Maybe (25%) *Immunity to Poison*. Well, ladies and gentlemen, is that it? After years of experience in the forests of the Old World our hunter has only four or five skills to show for it? Of course, if he had all the relevant skills that the outdoor life could bestow, at least thirteen more could be added to his total: *Prepare Poisons, Animal Care, Orientation, Herb Lore, Identify Plants, Set Trap, Spot Trap, Fish, Animal Training, Dowsing, Concealment Rural, Charm Animal & Scale Sheer Surface*.

Even with all of these skills available, a ranger is often relegated to being the Bowman of the group, firing his one arrow per combat round and every once in a while sneaking around in a forest. If this is all there is to a ranger career, then why not just bring along another warrior? Well, much of adventuring in the Old World happens in old, forbidden places where there are no beds, stores or keeps for days in any direction. Once, just once, when the party is hurt, cold and hungry, they will turn to the Ranger. And they will owe their survival to him.

My Papa used to say that there were places only Taal and his First Children were meant to walk. I ain't never had no cause to doubt him.

Bulliwylfe Reiklander

Most country folk won't speak freely to a city person. They figure they's tainted by the evils of city life, or are looking to swindle 'em. gotta speak their language, you do.

Vern

This article is meant to expand upon the existing skills available to Rangers, providing them with something distinctive and customisable. With these new abilities, a true master woodsman can be created. (After all, what else is the Ranger going to do when the Wizard is buying spell after spell?) As these are special skills they shouldn't be freely available to all and sundry; they represent the accumulated years of experience of living in the wild. Sometimes, however, it makes sense for a warrior, rogue or even an academic to pick up one or two ranger skills, in recognition of their time spent living rough. The following experience costs should be used when these skills are bought:

If the character is currently a ranger: 100 exp. Per skill.

If the character has been a ranger at one time: 150 exp. Per skill

If the character is not and has never been a ranger: 200 exp. Per skill.

I am free, truly free. All the agitators, nobles and merchants are chained to their lives and to their gold. I am beholden only to the gods, and to their will... and that is as free as any man ever gets.

Krieg

I guess that would be considered philosophical if 'n it weren't outta the mouth of a dung-footed peasant.

Heinrich Blutroch

Agriculture (Intelligence)

The most basic of ranger skills, this allows the ranger to recognise crops, how to grow them, and the state of health of standing crops. Knowledge of common pests and how to fight them is included in this skill. Much can be surmised of a town where the crops are incredibly healthy or sickly, even before reaching the town proper.

Animal Lore (Intelligence)

This skill represents word-of-mouth experience handed down throughout the generations. A woodsman's craft is not only about the forests and plants, but also the animals. This skill covers animal behaviour and tendencies. When will a bear attack? Why will a stag charge? Is there likely to be something living in this cave? These are the sorts of questions this skill can answer. Not only that, but having it will add +10% to any other animal-relevant skill tests.

Athletic Endurance

Mountain men are known for their iron constitutions and fit condition. They are constantly pitting their physical prowess against starvation and worse. With this skill, the ranger gets +10% to physical tests requiring athletic prowess (leaping, jumping, climbing, etc.). In addition, they get +10% to any test to resist penalties from fatigue.

Build Basic Structures

This is the skill that is passed to all country folk which allows them to build the structures they need to survive, all without the help of a trained engineer. The entire community usually pitches in to raise log cabins, half-timber houses and churches, as well as wooden barns. This building takes ample time, but can be cut short by having everyone co-operate on the project. (Whole towns usually get together for big projects, such as barns, many of which would be completed in a day; historically, this is the origin of the word "barnstorming".) Remember this is only to build the structure... gathering and preparing the materials can take much longer.

Log cabins, long houses, barns and the like may be built in this fashion, but not stone structures or constructions involving plasterwork. A good rule of thumb for building time is to take the dimensions of the structure in feet and add them together. Then, divide by two to give the amount of time in days it takes for one man to build it. Subtract two days for each additional helper.

Example: Hans wants to build a half-timber cabin for himself... 20'x20'x10' high. It would be a total of 25 days of work! Luckily, Hans has many townsfolk who like him. 10 men from the town will help, reducing the time to 5 days of hard labour ($20 + 20 + 10 / 2 = 25 - 20 = 5$). No construction will take less than half a day, not matter how many people help out.

Build Survival Shelter (Wooded, Arctic, Plains) (Intelligence)

Stuck roughing it, as adventurers often are, with no tents or pavilions to keep out the elements, snow-storm, or tempest, is a real danger to life and limb. This skill allows a Ranger character to build simple shelters from the material available (snow, branches or grass). The ranger makes a *Construct* test; the amount the roll succeeds by is treated as a bonus to the *Toughness* tests of anyone who takes shelter there. This bonus is only good for resisting characteristic loss or adverse conditions brought on by environmental conditions. Building the structure takes 1d2 hours, +30 minutes for every additional 2 people it is meant to house.

Dwarfs get +10 to tests against this skill.

Example: Ranger Rick is trapped with his 4 pals in a freezing rain that threatens them with hypothermia

and sickness. Rick wants to build a structure for them all. Rick makes a *Construct* test with a Dexterity of 39. He gets a 29, succeeding by 10. The makeshift hut is meant to house the ranger and 4 people... he rolls a 2. To 2 hours we add 60 minutes (because of the extra 4 people, the structure must be bigger) meaning it takes 3 hours for him to make his lean-to/hut. Anyone who takes shelter in it gets +10 to any *Toughness* checks versus sickness and cold.

Butchery (Intelligence)

This skill is used for the expert butchery of game animals. Used to making the most of any kill (because it might be a while before the next comes along) this skill allows a Ranger to get 25% more edible meat from a carcass than characters would normally be able to.

Elven Lore (Intelligence)

The Elves still roam many parts of the Old World. It is not unheard of for their hunters to range far search of game, and to come in contact with humans. Usually these are peaceful meetings, exchanging goods and beginning trade between the peoples. With this skill, a ranger knows the proper etiquette for approaching an Elven hunting party and gains +10 to *fellowship* tests during such meetings.

Cover Trail (Intelligence)

Used by those who don't want to be found. They can cover their trail to avoid being tracked through the wilderness. Such tricks include walking in a stream bed, walking in a circle and finding a shelf of rock to walk across are available to characters with this skill. When the *Intelligence* test is made, however much the ranger succeeds by is applied as a penalty to anyone trying to use *Follow Trail* on him. If used to cover the movement of a large group, the ranger has -5% to his *Intelligence* test for each person other than himself he has to cover for. Each horse counts as two people.

Dowsing (revised) (Intelligence)

Dowsing, as presented in *WFRP*, has been replaced by *Find Water* (see below). Dowsing, as it is presented here, is used to find underground water by instinct. It is used to find likely places to sink wells to be able to support towns or households. As adventurers are unlikely to stick around to dig a well to get a glass of water when thirsty, it is of most use to those who want to help locate likely places for towns and the like. Also, helping people find new well sites is a great saleable skill, and can be used to gain room, board or useful trade goods from country folk in search of a new water supply.

Find Shelter (Intelligence)

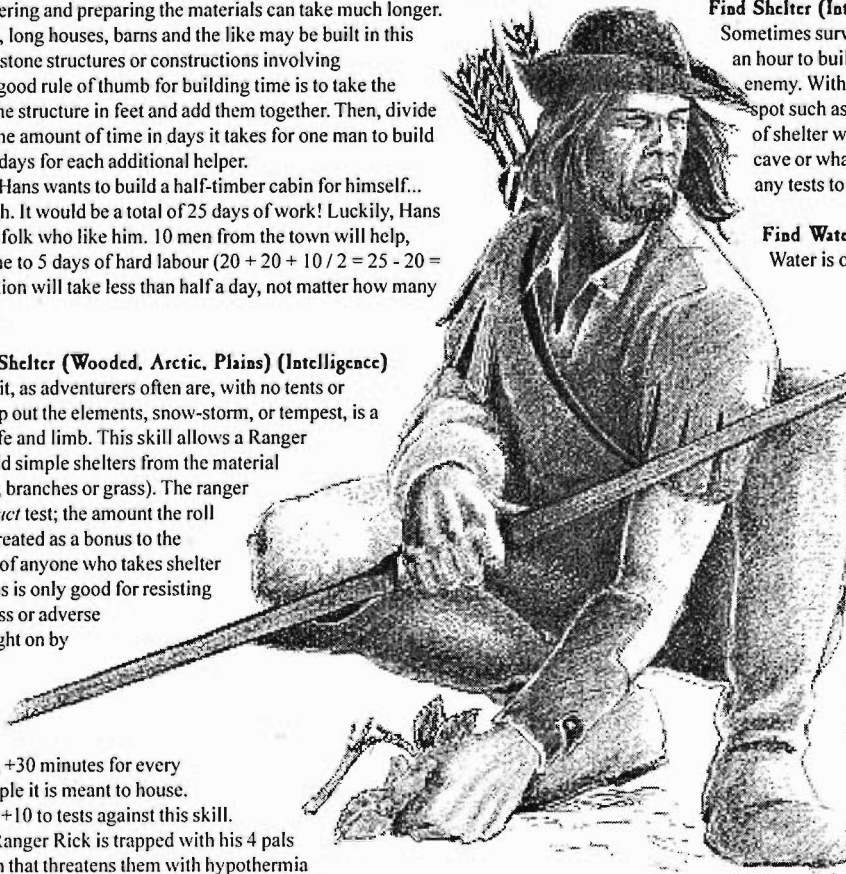
Sometimes survival is a matter of getting to cover, and quickly. Taking an hour to build a lean-to is not an option when time itself is your enemy. With this skill, the ranger can determine if there is a likely spot such as a natural cave, deadfall, ravine, or other natural form of shelter within 30 minutes travel. This does not mean there is a cave or whatever; however, if there is one, they will have +10% to any tests to find it.

Find Water (Mountain, Desert, Temperate) (Intelligence)

Water is one of the most basic of human needs, and finding natural springs and streams is a basic part of survival in the wilderness. This skill allows rangers to make an *Intelligence* test to lead the group to a likely place for a natural spring to be located. In desert conditions, water-bearing vines, plants and fruits can be cut open and the moisture collected. If the Ranger also has *Dowsing*, he receives +20 to any test to find a source of clean water. As with all *Find...* skills, the character won't find anything if the GM has decided that there's nothing there. This skill must be purchased separately for each of the environments listed above.

Forestry (Intelligence)

The Ranger has knowledge of what pieces of deadfall and vegetation must be cleared to allow a healthier forest to grow. They can maintain clear paths that will not disturb the local life, and can also recognise an inhabited areas from its state of repair. On any grounds a Ranger has been tending for more than a month, they have a bonus of +30% to all forestry skills (*Tracking*, *find shelter*, etc.)



because of their familiarity with the lay of the land. The ranger will also be qualified to tend a noble's hunting grounds. Elves get +10 to this skill.

Gardening (Intelligence)

This skill allows the Ranger to plant, tend and manage a garden so that it is both healthy and aesthetically pleasing. It also allows a Ranger to start an Herb Garden. These gardens, when regularly tended (at least once a week), will enable the ranger to transplant medicinal herbs and gain a steady seasonal supply.

Hiking (Intelligence)

Going up a mountain, no matter which direction you take, is hard work that requires skill, patience and endurance. Characters with this skill have hiked extensively in the past. They will know how to pace themselves, judge distances and recognise dangerous spots in the trail. The ranger also gets +10% to the amount of ground they can cover per hour.

Joinery (Dexterity)

This skill is used to create practical items to furnish a country home. Wardrobes, bedframes, tables chairs and all other manner of furniture can be made for a tidy profit. With the *woodcarving* skill, truly stunning pieces can be made. Rangers with this skill get +10% to detect secret compartments in furniture.

Leatherwork (Dexterity)

A woodsman wastes nothing, because everything they come by is either a boon of luck or (more likely) the result of patient effort. The skin of many animals can be made into clothing, shelter and tools. This skill allows a Woodsman to create various supplies from leather, including backpacks, leather jerkins and jackets, trousers, belts, and even water-resistant tents. Preparing the leather might take quite some time (d6+6 days). Actually making most items takes between 1D4+1 hours and 1D4+1 days, depending on the size of the item. Items like this can be sold for only 25% to 50% of the normal price, since in towns there are much higher quality items to be had.

Legends and Lore (Intelligence)

A place is characterised by the legends and tales that surround it. The ranger will be well versed in this lore. As some legends are based in fact, the ranger could have a wealth of (dis)information for the party he travels with. Any *Busk* tests using the story-telling skill are at +10% because of the wealth of information the Ranger can draw from. To recall any stories about a particular area, the Ranger will need to make an *Intelligence* test.

Make Clothing (Dexterity)

Rangers are not given to trading for everything they own, and are often required to patch and re-patch clothing for extended periods. With this skill, a ranger can make (with thread, a needle and cloth) their own clothing, blankets, curtains and even water-resistant tents. Coverings made with this skill are not fashion-statements, but will be durable and warm. These basic clothes are the way many tell country-folk from city-dwellers. Most clothing will take 1D3 days to complete; larger items will take as much time as the GM sees fit. Items like this can be sold for only 25% to 50% of the normal price, as with leather goods (above).

Make Fire (Intelligence)

Making a fire is perhaps the most basic woodsman's skill. Without it, some foods can not be eaten, water can not be boiled, and in the winter the ranger freezes to death. It is assumed that adventurers can make their own fires; however, after heavy rain it is often much harder to get the sodden wood to catch. Rangers, whose life depends on creating a fire in any circumstance, are not only adept at finding dried wood but also things like the raw flint that needs to be used. Being able to create a fire-bow, a ranger need never fear freezing except in the most extreme situations.

Make Improvised Weapon (Dexterity)

Some bows, as a rite of passage held over from ancient times, are left in the forest as a rite of passage. Naked and alone, they are forced to use what their fathers have taught them to arm themselves. They have one week to return, armed, clothed and fed. One of the most important skills is the art of building improvised weapons to kill game and for self-defence. The weapons are not as good as modern equivalents and have the following penalties depending on the 'tools' available.

No Tools: Damage -3, -10% WS/BS - Club, Wooden Spear, Staff

Sharp Rocks: Damage -2, -10% WS/BS - Club, Stone Axe, Stone Dagger, Stone-tipped Spear, unrimmed Leather-fronted Shield*, Staff

A Knife: Damage -1, -10% WS/BS - Club, Axe, Dagger, Shortbow & Arrows, Spear, unrimmed Leather-Fronted Shield *, Staff

Each weapon takes 1 hour to make and requires a *Dexterity* test. Dwarfs get +10 to this skill.

* if an attacker striking the shield rolls 4 or more on their 1D6 damage roll, the



shield will protect the character as normal but will then be destroyed

Mountain Climbing (Intelligence)

When the rock goes from horizontal to vertical, sometimes there is no other option but to go up. As climbing harnesses have not been invented, few people risk the free-hand style without a safety line. The intense muscle power and concentration needed to scale several hundred feet of cliff-face is not to be underestimated. Characters with this skill suffer no penalties from extended climbs, are more adept at finding the routes up natural cliff faces (+10% to tests) and can usually pick the correct route up the face (+20 to any test for avoiding dead-ends). The Ranger has to have *Scale Sheer Surface* to buy this skill.

Pioneering (Intelligence)

Many settlements die out due to plague, famine and war. New settlements spring up across the Empire at new mining sites, outside cities where the population has grown out of control, and to escape warring nations. The people of the Empire have learned through bitter experience that simply erecting a group of buildings is no way to start a community. Many rangers act as scouts and guides, safeguarding the townspeople until they reach the site of their new home. Once there, however, a whole new set of problems arises. Availability of open land, water, windbreaks, wood, stone and defence are just a few considerations that Rangers take into account. The best and highest paid pioneers are those who can not only advise the people during the journey, but also during the dangerous first year of the town's establishment. With this skill they can pick a good place for the town to survive and thrive.

Preservation (Intelligence)

It is a fact of life that food spoils. In medieval times, people salted, smoked and dried meat, berries were taken and bottled in pots and jars with preservatives, all so that the family could eat during the lean winter months. On a successful *Intelligence* check (modified by the presence of needed supplies such as spices, salt and the jars themselves) a Ranger can take batches of food and preserve it to last for 1d3 +1 months without spoiling. Nearly any fruit or fish can be dried for travel, and will make a much-needed break from hard tack and jerky.

Halflings have a bonus of +20 to this skill.

Rope Craft (Dexterity)

In the backwaters and small, out of the way places of the Empire, there are no manacles to restrain a criminal, so ropes and thong cords are used to bind a malcontent until the law's arrival. To tie someone up so they can't escape easily takes practice, patience and a good amount of skill. When trying to break out of ropes using brute force, the ropes count as having a T5 and 1W (+1 for every extra yard of rope used). The minimum amount of rope required to tie a human-sized creature is one yard if only their arms are to be bound or three yards to bind both arms and legs. Each attempt to break free takes 5 minutes, and requires the escaper to roll versus *Toughness* or lose 5 points of *Dexterity* until their bloody wrists and/or ankles (chafed from the ropes) heal. When slipping free from rope, the average person can escape by making a successful *Initiative* check (and *Toughness* test as above). When an experienced person is the one doing the restraining, the ropes get +2 to their *Toughness* (6 total) and an extra +1 wound for every extra yard of rope used to resist being broken. Any 1 test to slip out of them is penalised by however much the Ranger made his *Dexterity* check by. Characters being tied who have *Escapology* never get penalties from the *Rope Craft* skill use. This skill also adds +10% to any tests related to tying down or securing items, making rope bridges, hammocks, and for the morbid, nooses.

Example: Ranger Rick is going to tie up Aladdin the Assassin. Rick rolls versus his *Dexterity*, and succeeds by 20. When Aladdin tries to slip out of the knots, with his *Initiative* of 40, he only has a 20 percent chance because of Ranger Rick's skill at knot-work.

Survival Crafting (Dexterity)

Like leather-crafting, but much more broad in definition, *Survival-crafting* allows a Ranger to use animal-bones, organs and such to make bone daggers, water-skins, poles and other items that may be necessary to survival *that are not covered by any other skill presented here*. Items like this can be sold for only 15% to 25% of normal cost.

Veterinary Healing (Intelligence)

The Healing of animals is quite different from that for humans, and uses a separate

skill, herbs and tools. With this skill a ranger can aid at births, with minor injuries and with the kinds of diseases that most domesticated animals might catch.

Weather Sense (Intelligence)

The weather of the Empire can be a friend or an enemy, and being able to read the winds is a valuable skill for anyone who spends their life in Taal's realm. A ranger with this skill can automatically tell the weather conditions for the next 1d6 hours, can make an *Intelligence* test to guess the next 24 hour's weather, and can make an *Intelligence* test with a -30% penalty to guess weather up to two days away.

Whitewater Rowing

Not all rivers in the Empire are quiet and serene. Some are wild torrents of raw fury, and woe to the poor soul caught in a section of rapids without the needed skills. The ranger gets +20% to any tests (e.g. *Risk*, *Initiative*) to avoid disasters in white-water conditions.

Wilderness Cooking (Intelligence)

Forest folk live off a rougher fare than their city counterparts, or even their village cousins. The food may be (arguably) more bland, but it is filling, simple to make and keeps well. The wilderness cook gets no penalty to fix hot, filling meals when living in the wild. Cooking in the civilised places is a little difficult, however, as the wider range of food and spices available mean that the meal might not be appreciated. Halflings get +20% when using this skill.

Wood Carving (Dexterity)


To say that foresters are barbaric, crude and lacking in any artistic talents is a lie propagated by the nobility who wish to feel superior. The ability to make objects spring forth from wood is perhaps best mastered by the people who have spent generations living in harmony with it.

Learn something in your travels: being able to hit a ha'penny at seventy paces ain't going to build a house for your wife and children.

Victor Jenner

We got our own laws here, city-boy.

Anon



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VALKYRIE

A Lover Lost

A Scenario by Mike Hill. Additional Material by John Foody

This is a short adventure for characters in their first careers (and suitable for novice players), although some notes and suggestions are included for more experienced characters and players. The PCs are introduced to the city of Nuln before journeying to a nearby family estate. They have the opportunity to unite two lovers and put an end to the machinations of a powerful Necromancer. This scenario could easily be played straight after the rulebook scenario *The Oldenballe Contract*.

GM's Summary

The characters arrive in Nuln, their first big city. After falling foul of the locals, they come upon one of their own – an outsider. He is Radovich, a Kislevite who has travelled to the Empire to meet his betrothed. Alas, Radovich's beloved, Eva

Staller, is not to be found anywhere. The characters assist their new-found friend as best they can, but the evidence quickly stacks up against Eva and her father Johann. It appears that the pair have been exposed as chaos cultists and met a fitting fate at the hand of justice. However, as the characters peel back the layers of deceit, it becomes clear that a single evil soul is behind the false allegations: a Necromancer hell-bent on digging up the past. Literally!

clothing, accent and manners (or the lack of), and react accordingly. Common folk look on outsiders as either a threat, or an opportunity to jack the price of goods and services up a notch. The Watch will take a keen interest in the movements of foreigners, particularly if they don't have any good reason for being in the city. The gentry will most likely ignore the PCs, or instruct their bodyguards to remove them!

The level of 'civilisation' apparent in the Warhammer world may surprise players familiar with other fantasy role-playing games. As a result, they may overlook opportunities to unravel the mystery. One such opportunity is the huge public bureaucracy, which employs vast numbers of citizens and provides access to valuable records. To ensure that the players are aware that the bureaucracy exists, have their entry to the city delayed whilst customs officials examine their boat (or personal belongings) and their names are taken by the Census Clerk. If questioned, the clerk will advise them that to ensure they hold accurate taxation records, visitors and permanent residents must be listed in the Master Census Registry, held at the Kommission for Public Affairs.

After a few hours of getting lost, cheated and abused, a rather tired looking young man who has clearly suffered the same indignation as the PCs approaches the characters. This is Stigg Radovich, recently arrived in Nuln to be married. Despite his nervousness, Radovich quickly introduces himself:

"Greetings, comrades; I am introducing myself please as Radovich. I am from these parts, not at all and my head is thinking that you are the same, no?"

Radovich doesn't give the PCs much chance to respond before continuing with his plea for help!

"I come from Kislev to marry but I am here already for one week and I am not finding my Eva! My father is arranging the marriage and I am writing to her many letters – which she is not replying to. You will please be helping me find her, yes? There is being a dowry of large sums from which I can pay deliciously. But before then I can only give you five gold crowns, leaving me not much at all."

When the agitated Radovich calms down (perhaps the PCs buy him a drink in a nearby tavern), they manage to figure out his story. Radovich hails from an impoverished land-owning family in the icy wastes of Kislev. For the past two years he has been writing increasingly poetic love letters to Eva Staller, the daughter of a wealthy Nuln merchant. The Stallers wish to establish a Kislev link in their family and have offered a substantial dowry to Radovich's family. However, after a gruelling overland journey (mostly by foot), Radovich has been unable to locate his betrothed or to find word of the Staller merchant family.

The rest of the scenario hinges on the PCs taking pity on poor Radovich and agreeing to help him find Eva Staller. If they are unconvinced, have the barkeeper discuss Radovich with whoever buys the drinks. He could casually mention that he has also had trading links with Radovich's family for Kislevite spirits, and that the match is an excellent one for the affluent Staller family's trading concern.

Note that Radovich will insist on remaining at his inn (The Cooked Goose).

"I must be remaining myself right here! What if my Eva is looking for me also? She has plenty better chance of finding Radovich if he's in just the one spot!"

Prologue From Kislev with Love

Upon arrival, the characters are overawed by the grand city of Nuln! Locals clearly identify the PCs as out-of-towners by their



If the characters return to the inn with progress reports Radovich will strongly oppose suggestions that Eva or her father were involved in any unsavoury activities – even in the face of overwhelming evidence. If the PC party is a little under strength or in need of a push in the right direction, you may wish to allow Radovich to join the characters in the search for Eva. Be advised, however, that with his poor combat abilities and slender Cool, he may be more of a liability than a boon!

The Plot

Rath Hebbard lives a dual life. In public, he is a well-respected city official with a promising government career ahead of him. His private life, however, is a good deal more sinister! Rath is a twisted and evil man, obsessed with his own mortality and the legacy of a long-forgotten ancestor. Originally a student of the Magical Arts from Altdorf, Rath's search for immortality has led him down the path of the Necromancer.

Three generations ago Wilhelm Hebbard, Rath's great-grandfather and a powerful Necromancer was convicted of grave robbing. This most heinous of crimes warranted a severe punishment; after a public flogging, the evil sorcerer was taken back to his country manor and thrown into the cellar. Labourers then bricked up the cellar entrance. Wilhelm was entombed alive!

Rath is confident that the original black sheep of his family would have been buried alive with the fruits of his study into the Black Arts. Rath also believes that access to his predecessor's notebooks and journals will move him closer to his goal of immortality. With access to all of the city's records, Rath has been able to pinpoint the location of his great-grandfather's last resting-place.

He discovered ownership of the manor house and lands had returned to the state, and the house remained empty for several years until it was sold at auction to a local noble. The noble placed the house up for auction, which Hebbard found out about just in time. However, the price went above Hebbard's means and although he won the auction (using the name Odo Groller) he wasn't able to pay for it. The property went to the second highest bidders, a merchant family visiting from Middenheim: the Stallers.

Realising that a family with no knowledge of the manor's significance now owned the property, Rath began his attempts to worm his way into the Staller household. Firstly, he began courting young Eva Staller. This didn't go too well for poor Rath, as Eva found him most repulsive! Rath's next ploy was to threaten Johann Staller (subtly of course). Rath warned Johann that the Staller's influence was waning in Nuln and that other, more aggressive competitors were making overtures towards the Staller dockside warehouse. Rath promised that, as a son-in-law, he would be duty bound to ensure 'fair-play'. Johann refused to take the bait; he no more wanted Rath for a son-in-law than Eva wanted him as a husband! As a result, Rath then arranged for the warehouse to be burned to the ground. (Other property was damaged in the fire but if you want to make an omelette, you gotta break eggs...)

When this also failed to crumble Johann's resolve Rath took the manor by force with the aid of his trusted henchmen, a handful of undead warriors and his vicious 'pet' Syth. Rath has held the Stallers captive now for several days. He intends to have Johann sign the property over to Odo Groller (a fictitious citizen that Hebbard has created to divert suspicion from his family name), but he is in no hurry. Rath is basking in the fear of his prisoners and is enjoying every minute of it! He has recently unearthed some additional skeletons to use as 'gravediggers' in the excavation of his Ancestor's

impromptu tomb.

To cover his tracks and account for the disappearance of Johann and Eva, Rath has skilfully used his trusted position in the city to spread rumours of their involvement in a chaos cult. Since no one in their right mind would wish to be implicated with chaos cults, it is increasingly difficult to find anyone prepared even to talk about the Stallers. In fact, if the truth is not brought to light, the Stallers will pass into urban myth as a pair of chaos-tainted heathens who were brought to justice by the good and honest folk of Nuln. Just as Rath would wish!



Act 1 Missing Persons

Nuln is big. Really big. So how can a collection of out-of-town misfits possibly hope to track down a missing woman? They may adopt one or more of the following approaches:

- (a) Ask local traders and merchants about the Staller family, and Eva in particular.
 - (b) Inquire at one of the Public Kommissions (Nuln is serious about its census) and other official bodies.
 - (c) Check out the address to which Radovich has been sending his letters.
 - (d) Take to the streets in an attempt to find the Stallers.
- Each of these lines of enquiry reveals a little of the plot, but also poses further questions and, in some cases, leads to grave danger!

Local Traders and Merchants

Depending on their backgrounds, the PCs may approach either or both tiers in the merchant community. At the basic level, the vendors and street traders know of the Staller family; some of their stock used to come from the Staller warehouse. They also know that the Stallers suffered some terrible misfortune but few will go as far as to say this. The majority fears that merely talking about the Staller's fate will cause some of that bad luck to rub off on them. Traders are a superstitious lot!

However, a successful Bribe (at least 2GC) or Bluff Test will cause a nervous trader to reveal:

"I don't know where they've gone but they've gone. Their warehouse on the docks was emptied and burned to the ground."

If the characters press for further details, the trader (let's call him Hans Kludding) tells them that they'd do well to mind their own business and stay out of his. If things turn nasty, Hans will summon his brother-in-law (know as Big Himey) to assist. Make it clear that Himey will finish the conversation one way or the other!

If the characters are going to approach the merchant middle-class of Nuln, they will need a suitable ploy to even get an interview. For example, they may need to masquerade as a visiting noble or wealthy merchant seeking to arrange agreeable trade routes. Whatever method they choose, the middle-class know very well that the Stallers were implicated in a chaos cult, that their assets were seized and their warehouse burned down. Naturally, this sort of information is not given lightly; most of the gentry and middle-class of Nuln moved in the same circles as the Stallers and do not want to be implicated in the same way. The PCs will have to be very clever to get the following information:

"Of course this is just a rumour, but I understand that the Stallers were involved in some rather distasteful activities. Naturally, I don't have any details – nor would I want any – but you must understand that there were some... er... disappearances and the authorities were making some discrete enquiries. But that's all behind us now... Anyway, I understand that they are being held somewhere pending a trial, but that they may be acquitted after all. Wouldn't that be good?"

They also know the approximate area where the Staller's lived. If the PCs suggest that the Stallers may already have been convicted and burned, the merchant will be most surprised.

"Burned? Oh no, there have been no public burnings. I never miss one of those!"

As with the trader, the wealthy merchant will summon armed guards to dissuade further questioning from inquisitive PCs. No more information can be gleaned from this source.

Inquiring at the Hall of Records

Bluff and *Bribe* (5GC or more) tests and liberal use of the *Blather* skill will be required to get past the bumbling Nuln bureaucracy.

Even outsiders can spot a public building with little coaching. The tall gabled roofs and spires can be seen from some distance, they are surrounded by lavish 'public' gardens (which are patrolled by public guards – expressly to keep the public out!) and are securely fenced off with yards of wrought iron railings. A number of inquiries may lead to information about the Stallers:

Stigg Radovich
Traveller & Scribe from Kislev

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I
4	27	29	2	3	6	29
A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
1	33	25	36	24	31	42

Skills
Arcane Language –
Magick
Read/Write
Secret Language –
Classical
Speak Additional
Language –
Reikspiel



Trappings

Knife, Writing equipment (boxed in a small chest), warm clothing & shoes, purse with 6 GC, assorted love letters

The Kislevite is tall and thin with gangly arms and legs. However, his slight frame is concealed beneath a huge black coat and matching fur hat, which he is never without – whatever the weather! Despite his obvious distress, he can't disguise a wide-eyed wonderment as he gazes around the city. However, he also spent a night in jail after trying to get the Staller's address from Four Seasons coaches, which is where he sent his letters.

Radovich is nervous but likeable. He is always carrying too much (box, letters, quills, ink etc.) and frequently dropping his belongings when he is distracted - and he is easily distracted! He is a daydreamer, and always has his head in the clouds.

> There are records of a fire on the docks, a number of private buildings were either damaged or destroyed. There is no particular mention of the Staller warehouse.

> A heavy Bribe (at least 5GC) will grant access to the Census Registry – a massive leather-bound book listing every permanent resident of the city. (The Registry is available to the public, but Albrecht, the Chief Clerk, is loathe to consult the tome unless absolutely necessary. It is so large that it must be carried on the backs of two junior scribes!) There are three points of particular interest: Johann Staller (father) and Eva Staller (daughter). The listing includes the lot numbers of two properties owned by the Stallers. After the PCs have seen the Registry, an officious looking scribe appears and neatly rules through the entries.

The PCs will be directed towards a large notice board. Here notices of births and deaths are posted. As they head over to it an officious looking scribe finishes writing the names of Johann Staller (father) and Eva Staller (daughter).

> A heavy Bribe (at least 5GC) will grant access to the Registry of Properties. Again, this is something that the Chief Clerk won't do lightly. From this Registry, they can locate the appropriate lot numbers of their properties, of which there are three: one is the warehouse, another the town-house, the other the family estate. However, there is no actual address for the Family estate. It has been covered by an ink spillage. The entries for the owners cross-reference with the property details. Each entry lists every owner for every piece of property. The owner prior to the Stallers was a Herr Oskar Scheinder, and before that a Herr Wilhelm Hebbard. Only mention Hebbard's name if they have already encountered him.

The PC's investigations will not go unnoticed; before leaving the Kommission they will be summoned to the stark offices of Rath Hebbard, the Under Secretary to the Commissioner for Public Affairs.

Rath is a tall, imposing man with short dark hair and piercing steel-blue eyes. He has a pale, almost sallow complexion. He will be very interested in anyone asking questions about the Stallers. Great care has been taken to ensure that their disappearance would go unquestioned.

An Audience with Rath

Rath is all business when he talks to the PCs, attempting to draw out their motives. Any PC who has read the Registry of Properties should make an Intelligence test to recognise the name Hebbard. If questioned about his connection to the Staller estate, Rath will comment that his is a common surname, that he originates from Aldorf and his family has never owned property in or around Nuln. Naturally, Rath will not lose his cool, and he will dismiss further questions with a wave of his hand.

At this stage, Rath will only reveal his scandalous rumours; namely that both Johann and Eva Staller were tried and convicted of unwholesome activities associated with the worship of a chaos god. He will claim that he is not privy to all of the 'gory' details; suffice it to say the Stallers were burned at the stake in accordance with common practice. Furthermore, the authorities deemed that the Staller warehouse was too tainted by chaos to abide – it was destroyed. He is sure their house will be condemned soon. The Staller estate in the forests southeast of the city is currently 'off limits' while the appropriate authorities examine the place in detail. However, he has no idea of its exact location.

After the visit to the Kommission, Rath will have the PCs shadowed by two of his personal guards (Guther and Klaus, page 39); they have been bought with promises of eternal youth and would rather die than reveal their connections to Rath.

Investigating Hebbard

Looking into Hebbard's background will reveal little. He has few friends but is a good worker, working late into the night. He gained a job in the Hall of Records after arriving from Aldorf.

The Watch & Prison

Nuln's Officialdom denies all knowledge of the Stallers. All are convinced that the Stallers have been arrested, tried and burnt. However, they all believe that the events took place somewhere else. In truth, they aren't really interested in "Chaos worshipping scum." Hebbard's spreading of rumours has proven to be very effective. If the PCs push the point, they will be directed to the religious court. Of course, if they push it too far they may be arrested.

The Religious Court in Nuln will confirm that there have been no burnings in recent weeks and that the Stallers have not been arrested. The clerk suspects that this is all just malicious gossip.

The Temple of Morr

The Clerics at the Temple of Morr will confirm that the bodies of the Stallers were not brought to them (not that there would have been much left). If asked, they will confirm that suspected Necromancers are sometimes bricked up underground. An older cleric will vaguely remember the name Hebbard, but not the location of his tomb. If the PCs ask for help when taking on Hebbard, the clerics will say they do not have the resources at present to do so.

Checking Out the Postal Address

Radovich has been sending his letters to Eva Staller care of The Four Season Coaching Company. Some of his letters were

delivered to the Staller's estate, but any sent in the last 10 days will still be at the coach house.

The Four Seasons headquarters in Nuln is not a particularly grandiose affair (use the standard floor plan from the rule book, p329) and the innkeeper is happy to return the additional letters to Radovich. The innkeeper did have Radovich arrested, but this was simply because he became a nuisance and people had trouble understanding his accent. The only information the innkeeper can provide is that his courier (a chap by the name of Loskum) was turned away from the Staller estate when he recently attempted to make a delivery.

Loskum will not wish to discuss his recent trip to the Staller house. If pressed (and bribed) he will admit that he was advised to stay away from the house by the City Watch, but went anyway. Loskum will warn the PCs against going to the Staller house, but will grudgingly tell them how to get there.

The Town House

The Staller townhouse is located in a staunchly middle-class section of town. At the moment it lies deserted and empty, the gates firmly padlocked. A wreath in the shape of a gate (tribute to Morr) is attached to the bars. The small grounds are well maintained, and the gardener is the only servant who has remained. His name is Klaus, and he is friendly if not too bright. He has stayed as he doesn't know where else to go. The Stallers were always very kind to him and he doesn't believe they could be involved in dark deeds. However, he has been told (and believes) that the Stallers were arrested and burnt for their crimes. If the PCs ask the right questions they will get some useful information:

- > He knows they weren't arrested here, but doesn't know where it happened. Their manservant Viktor has also gone missing. Klaus is afraid of Viktor, as he is very fierce.
- > The wreath was placed on the gate by Hanna Eitberg, Eva's closet friend.
- > He knows the Stallers had a second home outside the crater, but is not sure where.
- > There was a burglary the night after they were arrested (although Klaus wasn't there). He doesn't know what was taken.

Streetwise?

Some of the PCs may think they have underworld connections or a degree of street savvy, which may lead them to investigate some of the rougher dockside pubs and taverns. Enquiries concerning the Stallers will reveal little, perhaps (40% chance) that they are merchants and owned a warehouse that burned down recently. Anyone prepared to talk about the incident will be happy to point the characters to the scene of the fire.

If the PCs specifically question locals about the fire or the warehouse, the conversation will dry up and the mood will become noticeably hostile. Gunther and Klaus actually hired locals from the same sort of places that the PCs are asking their questions (for 1GC each) – so the locals are understandably suspicious! It is common knowledge that someone had been trying to buy the warehouse from Staller. The characters can continue to make Bluff, Bribe and Gossip tests until they miss a roll by 20% or more, at which point things turn nasty (we're talking bar room brawl)! Each successful test reveals one piece of information in the following order:

- > "Me and a few of the lads torched the place – made a pretty penny out of the deal too. Best thing for those Chaos Worshipers if you ask me."
- > "No one was hurt, and anyway, some other merchant will build a warehouse on the site soon enough."
- > "We were hired by a couple of nasties – they called themselves Gunther and Klaus. I reckon they were relatives

of someone who had been sacrificed to the dark gods.”

If things turn sour, reel out some dock workers looking for a rumble! If the characters do get involved in the brawl, the Dockers will *Strike to Stun* until one or more of the characters draws a weapon. Thereafter, they will quickly sober up and back down, but the PCs will lose any chance of gaining respect in the area.

However, if the PCs hoe in with fist, chair and bottle, a good fight will be had by all, and the Dockers can be counted as friends and allies from that point on!

The Warehouse

Should the characters wish to examine the scene of the fire themselves, they will find the wharf a blackened ruin with charcoal timbers jutting out of the icy waters where the pier once stood.

Whilst the PCs are picking through the debris, a drunk approaches them asking for “a few coins for me ol’ mother”. If pressed for information, the drunk (Ludo Janse) will confess that he slept right through the fire (“on account of having one nip too many”) but will go on to say that after the fire had burned itself out something very strange happened.

“When everyone had gone home, a black coach bearing the city’s crest pulled up just over there. I was just waking up and my vision is never too good first thing after a nap, but I could tell that the horses pulling that carriage were very jittery – prob’ly ‘cos of the fire that happened.”

“The strange thing is what got out of the coach. A tall man dressed in black, face white as a sheet in the moonlight. He had a chain in his hand and on the end of that chain he was draggin’ some ‘orrible evil thing! Huge it was, almost like a man, but not, if you see what I mean?”

“Anyways, the bloke walked all over the wreckage, draggin’ this monster behind him! By now my eyes had cleared up so I could get a good look at what was going on. The monster had a black sack on its head, so I couldn’t see its ugly mosh, but the man was scaring me even more! He had this terrible grin on his face. And then he started laughing. So I legged, it smartish like!”

Ludo doesn’t have any more to add but after a story like that he will be holding his hand out expecting at least 1 or 2 crowns for his troubles!

Coaches with City markings are lent out to high-ranking Civil Servants. There is little way of discovering who was driving a coach and when, though, as no records are kept.

Hanna Etberg

Hanna, a pleasant young woman, was Eva’s closest friend. She is very upset by the news of her death, and she firmly believes Eva was innocent. She knows Johann Staller had forced Eva to court a man named Hebbard for a short while, but Eva hated him. She thinks Johann wanted Eva to marry Hebbard as it would give him some protection from aggressive business rivals. However, he had also been making the same overtures to a merchant family in Kislev. Eva liked the sound of them more.

She knows they have a manor outside the city but not where. However, she does remember they purchased it a year or so back at auction.

The Auction-House

A *Bribe* test will need to be made to have the clerk find records of the Manor House’s address through the Staller name. He remembers the purchase, as there was fierce bidding for it. It was initially bought by Odo Groller. However, he couldn’t come up with the money in the twenty-four hours, although he did produce a signed declaration from a city official saying he could get the money. However, this was not good enough for the Auction house and the Manor went to the second highest bidders: the Stallers. Although he only

remembers the estate was in the Cranstein area, south-west of the city, he does have a Lot Number which will provide more exact information. This can be looked up in the Registry of Properties.

When the PCs have finished with their investigations – it is time to confront the source of evil itself!

Act 2 Rescuc Mission

The character’s investigations should have revealed some damning evidence against the Stallers. Closer examination of the facts should reveal that Rath Hebbard is somehow involved in their predicament, and interested in their estate outside Nuln. Radovich will maintain that his Eva is totally innocent, and that the charges must have been ‘trumped-up’.

“These terrible things I am bearing about my Eva, they cannot be full of truth. I think they are full of something that smells bad and tastes not too good! My father would not have involved me with such a family of no good types. You must go to her house and get into the bottom of these lies!”

Mercenary PCs may be wondering about their promised payment – if so, Radovich will personally guarantee a sum of not less than 100GC each from his father. This is a wildly outrageous amount; the best he could raise would be about 25GC in total, and that would require a trip to Kislev!

There are really only two avenues for further investigation: a trip to the Staller estate or a closer look at Rath Hebbard.

Rath Hebbard

At this stage, Rath’s reputation and standing within the government will protect him from any accusations of wrong doing, particularly if those accusations are brought forward by a bunch of unknown out-of-towners.

The GM may allow the PCs to locate his private residence (but only if they wow him with their ingenuity). Here they will find all the evidence they need: the trap door to secret cellars (connected to the sewers), necromantic paraphernalia and exhumed bodies. If the GM feels generous, the PCs may be allowed to liberate a gold candlestick (9GC) and a magic scroll (Destroy Undead).

Following a successful mission to the Staller estate, the PCs should be able to locate Rath’s hideout with little effort. Once hard evidence of his unwholesome activities is revealed, it will be ‘open season’ on Rath. If captured, he will be convicted of ‘Crimes against The Empire’ and, somewhat ironically, buried alive for his sins.

The Staller Estate

The estate is about six hours walk (or three hours by coach or horse) southeast of Nuln, and is surrounded by well-kept farmland. In fact, the PCs will no doubt meet some peasants tilling the soil. If questioned, the farmers will confess that they haven’t seen the Stallers for a week or so, but that there has been plenty of traffic heading up to the house, including a sinister looking black coach. One man says he was approaching the house when his horse was spooked by a terrible scream from within, and he was thrown to the ground. Needless to say, he decided to take a different route and left the area swiftly.

Use the Typical Farmstead (p333 of the rulebook) for the Stallers house, with the exception that there are no animal pens and the fence shown on the map is a six-foot high stone wall.

The Gatehouse: The gatehouse door is open and two carts (minus horses) can be seen within – although their cargoes are covered by heavy tarps. Within the gatehouse, a normal Listen Test (60%) will detect an occasional scream coming from the barn. The carts contain a collection of recently

excavated skeletons (many with skulls and rib cages still packed with damp earth). Rath intends to animate them to excavate his great-grandfather’s tomb.

The Barn: Gunther and Klaus (if they still live, or two other similar henchmen) have set up shop in the barn and are gleefully torturing Viktor, the Stallers’ loyal retainer. Viktor doesn’t have any information for his captors – they are just torturing him for ‘fun’!

If Viktor is rescued he will be a valuable assistant and a perfect eyewitness for the wrongs done to the Staller family. Viktor’s story is as follows:

Rath Hebbard made a number of inappropriate advances to young Eva; Johann rejected Rath not just because Eva hated him but also because she is betrothed to another – a foreigner from Kislev. Rath didn’t take the rejection too well; he spread rumours that the Stallers were involved in a chaos cult. Later, the Staller’s dockside warehouse burned down and Rath and his ‘men’ came to the house. Viktor has been held captive for almost 10 days.

Viktor Muller

Loyal retainer to the Staller family

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I
4	46	31	6	4	9/4	46
A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
2	32	30	32	51	34	36

*Viktor normally has 9 Wounds but, following his extensive torture, the score is reduced to 4.

Skills: Disarm, Dodge Blow, Ride – Horse, Street Fighting, Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure, Strike to Stun, Very Strong (included in the profile), Sixth Sense

Trappings: (when rescued): Sword, Mail Shirt (with leather jacket), Pot helmet, Shield

Viktor is brave, courageous and true. He can be relied on to do the ‘right thing’ and will lay down his life to protect Eva and Johann. If he learns that Radovich is Eva’s husband-to-be, he will not be impressed (“I’m not sure which is worse, necromancers or bloody foreigners”) but, nevertheless, will behave in the appropriate manner. He is a huge man in his early forties, his thick black hair is flecked with grey but his heavily muscled body has lots of fight left yet!

Forge, Tack Room & Stables: With the exception of the stables, these areas are deserted and haven’t been used since Rath took over. The stables contain a pair of recently slaughtered horses (they brought the carts in the gatehouse). The thing that killed them is Syth – Rath’s ‘pet’ Beastman! Syth remains in the stables feasting on the horseflesh unless he hears movement in the yard (30% chance, or 60% if the PCs are making a lot of noise).

Syth has goat legs and a goat’s head, with burning red eyes. He has a metal collar around his neck, which trails a length of chain. When he first emerges from the stables he will growl, “Master? ...you are not master - you are meat!”, before attacking.

The Tower

Ground Floor: The room contains a pair of rocking chairs by the fireplace, a narrow table and a bookcase. The bookcase contains a few slim volumes on local history – nothing suspicious. The fire is lit and well stoked. A staircase leads both up and down.

First Floor: The door is locked from within (T 7 W 10, CR –

Rath Hebbard
Second Level Necromancer

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I
4	37	41	3	4	11	59
A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
1	43	58	60	49	46	29

Alignment: Evil
Skills: Arcane Language – Magick, Arcane Language – Necromancy, Cast Spells – Battle Magic 1, Cast Spells – Necromantic 1; Necromantic 2; Petty Magic, Demon Lore, Identify Plants, Identify Undead, Magic Sense, Meditation, Read/Write, Rune Lore, Scroll Lore, Secret Language – Classical
Magic Points: 24
Trappings: Slender ornamental sword (normal hand weapon), Wizard's staff (walking stick), spell ingredients (when not at the Kommission), and neat, fashionable clothing
Penalties: Cadaverous Appearance, Morbidity, Animal Aversion
Petty Magic: Curse, Gift of Tongues, Magic Lock, Open
Battle Magic: Immunity from Poison, Flight
Necromantic Magic: Hand of Death, Summon Skeletons, Summon Skeleton Champion, Hand of Dust

Rath keeps his distance at all times (ever conscious of his sickly appearance) but remains aloof, self-confident and above all, smug! He will never be rude or lose his cool (for example, if accused of necromantic activities by the PCs he will calmly reply, "And I assume you have some evidence to support these outrageous claims?") but does enjoy being particularly condescending.

Gunther and Klaus
Two Incompetent Thugs

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I
4	27	32	3/4	3	6	30
A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
1	36	22	26	32	24	26

Alignment: Evil
Skills: Concealment – Urban, Secret Language – Thieves' Tongue, Secret Signs – Thieves' Signs, Silent Move – Urban, Read/Write, Shadowing, Torture
Trappings: Sword (The blades are coated in treacle; it looks effective and they don't trust themselves with poison), Instructions (A list of the PCs descriptions written in a steady, delicate hand. Signed 'R'), Black leather jackets

Gunther is just over five feet tall and painfully thin. His wispy blond hair frames a quizzical expression with a gleam of near-madness in his steel-grey eyes. In contrast, Klaus is a massive six-footer with huge muscular arms (he has Strength 4), balding, short black hair and beady eyes. If it were possible to read Klaus' expression, it would clearly say, "what time is lunch?"

Although vicious killers with a penchant for blackmail,

10%). Any attempt to tamper with the lock or door will alert Rath. He will first call out "who is it?", which may give the PCs an opportunity to masquerade as Gunther or Klaus. But as soon as his suspicions are aroused he will climb to the rooftop and make his escape (if possible). If the PCs can convince Rath (*Bluff* test at -10%) he will open the door but due to his suspicious nature he will have a Hand of Death spell prepared!

Roof: On the roof, a clutch of six skeleton guards (WFRP page 250) wait in silence. If forced, Rath will attempt to retreat to the roof where he will allow his skeletons to slow down the PCs while he casts a Flight spell. If he escapes he will flee to his private residence to conjure up some more skeletons in his cellar.

If Viktor is present, the strength of his courage grants everyone a +20% modifier to the Fear test. Viktor himself need

torture and arson, Gunther and Klaus should be played for laughs. They constantly argue and blame each other for any obstacles they create – particularly when hiding within earshot of the PCs. Klaus is frequently hungry; on occasions, he may be seen to lick his sword blade. Remember, Gunther and Klaus are the comedy relief, but they will happily die to keep Rath's secret safe. Add +30 to any *WillPower* tests they need to make to reveal information.

If the players are smart, they will end up following Gunther and Klaus back to the Kommission where they will witness the two goons hand over a report of the character's movements to a clerk, with instructions to pass it on to Herr Hebbard. The clerk is just as he appears to be, and has no idea of his master's secret life.

not make the test (having grown used to seeing Rath's undead minions).

These are mindless automatons programmed to attack anyone other than Gunther, Klaus, Rath or Syth. They do not and cannot speak. When instructed by Rath they merely nod and carry out their tasks in silence. Currently they have been commanded to hold their positions – they can detect movement in other areas of the house but will not move to investigate. When they do move it is in an awkward stilted fashion and they can easily be outrun.

Within, the PCs will find Johann and Eva tied and gagged, sitting in chairs by the fire. On a nearby table is the deed to the Staller estate. Rath will soon be 'asking' Johann to sign the property over to his alter ego, Odo Groller. Naturally, the 'asking' will involve some torture of the beautiful Eva, which Rath is quite looking forward to.



Syth
Subservient Chaos Beastman

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I
6	41	25	3	4	11	30
A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
1	30	29	24	29	24	10

Alignment: Chaotic
Skills: Disarm (Syth will swing his chain in an attempt to disarm an opponent, then he attacks with tooth and claw)
Trappings: Chain
Role-Playing Notes: Kill, kill, and kill.

Epilogue
A Fine Romance

If things go to plan, Rath will be brought to justice, Eva and Radovich will marry and Johann will reward the PCs as best he can - which will include 20GC each (ironically, the Stallers are just as poor as Radovich's family).

Johann will be able to explain the details of Rath's plot to the characters. He has been held captive for several days and has had to listen to Rath crowing over his victory for most of that time! Of course this may lead inquisitive characters to unearth old great-grandpa Hebbard. Johann will be set against that plan, but will stand aside if his rescuers insist. Two possibilities of what the PCs may find behind the wall are detailed in Appendices 1 & 2, following the 'Complications'.
GM's Note: If you are feeling particularly generous and don't

mind magical items in your campaign, you may have a grateful Johann grant the PCs a pair of family heirlooms, which he will draw from a locked chest in the master bedroom.

- An Amulet of Thrice Blessed Copper
- A Mithril mail coat (2 AP weighs only 64 Enc. covers legs and body) suitable for human-sized characters

Experience Point Awards

The GM may award a number of points based upon the level of investigation undertaken by the PCs and how much actual 'role-playing' they managed to do!

Award	Activity
10-20	Good role-playing
10	Talking to local traders
-5	Upsetting Hans and Himey
+10	Getting to see a legitimate merchant

Surviving PCs will now have friends and contacts in the city of Nuln, the value of which cannot be overstated!

Complications

Even with the best intentions, sometimes things just don't go to plan.

The following are a few optional notes for GMs who wish to 'spice-up' the scenario and tweak the difficulty level.

A Subtle Twist

This option has no bearing on the difficulty of the adventure but does add a slightly bitter ending to the piece.

Radovich is not exactly the typical grim Kisleвите, as described in the WFRP rulebook. In fact, he is completely at odds with the image of the chaos-battling warriors of the North. He is a wimp! His father was well aware that his son was the runt of the family but didn't have the heart to suffocate him with a pillow while he slept! So Radovich Senior hatched a cunning plan to get rid of his son.

Eva Staller has never heard of Stigg Radovich. Yes, Radovich has been writing to her for two years – because his father told him that a marriage had been arranged. But the letters were never delivered. Radovich Senior assumed (probably quite rightly) that when his son left to meet his 'betrothed', he would be gone for good.

The Stallers were chosen at random as a likely match for the love-struck Radovich, and instructions were left at the Four Seasons to hold on to all mail from the Radovichs.

Poor Radovich. Of course, the Stallers will still be grateful for the PCs intervention and reward them appropriately, but Radovich will be heartbroken.

"Reports of my innocence have been greatly exaggerated"

In this particularly cruel plot twist, the rumours of Johann Staller's involvement with a chaos cult are in fact true! Although Eva is not involved in any way, Johann is a cell leader who just happened to get in Rath Hebbard's way. Rath doesn't care that he might be stirring up a nest of hornets, he is prepared to go to any length to unearth his ancestor and examine the notebooks and remains.

If the GM chooses to employ this option, some of Staller's men arrive shortly after the PCs have bested Rath and rescued Johann and Eva. In his euphoria at seeing his cell leader alive, their leader Belloche will blurt out some incriminating evidence which will shock all present (particularly Viktor!).

"Master, we came as soon as we could. Tell me if these men (he gestures to the PCs) have harmed you in any way and we shall offer their souls to lord Tzeentch."

Johann will sigh deeply at Belloche's foolish display, before flying into a rage that betrays his madness.

"Belloche, you idiot! Now they will have to die. Kill them, kill them all!"

Johann's maniacal laughter drowns out the sound of battle as Belloche and his men attack. However, given the opportunity, he will run and climb to the rooftop where he will be jostled by any remaining skeletons and fall to his death!

Who's Laughing Now?

This final complication involves a much more realistic response from Rath to the character's investigations. Rather than have Gunther and Klaus follow the PCs and report back, Rath calmly instructs his henchmen to murder the characters and dump the bodies in the river. After all, no one is too concerned when a handful of outsiders vanish without a trace. It makes record keeping at the Kommission so much less complicated!

This option removes the comedy element from the scenario and, as such, the GM should use the following profile for Gunther and Klaus. They are now serious, competent killers.

Gunther and Klaus

A pair of uncompromising Assassins

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I
4	37	32	3/4	3	6	39
A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
1	36	22	36	32	44	22

Alignment: Evil

Skills: Concealment – Urban, Prepare Poisons, Read/Write, Secret Language – Thieves' Tongue, Secret Signs – Thieves' Signs, Shadowing, Silent Move – Urban, Torture

Trappings: Sword (Each oated with a level 2 dose of Manbane (enough to paralyse see p.82 of the rulebook for further details), Padded mail shirt, Instructions (The character's names written in a steady delicate hand. Signed 'R'), Steel beaker containing 4 doses of Manbane, Mail (mesh) gloves

This time around Gunther and Klaus are professional killers. They make their plans before approaching their prey and never speak to each other while others are present. Ideally, they will wait for the characters to split up and then attack lone PCs or those who seem least likely to be able to defend themselves. If their victims succumb to the paralyzing effects of the Manbane, they will wait until all other threats are neutralised before dispatching the target. No questions, no torture, just death! That's a professional killer for you.

It should be clear to the GM that the new Gunther and Klaus represent a very real danger to the PCs (and the adventure) and great care should be taken when adding this option. Even experienced players may be taken unawares by this attack.

**Appendix 1
Cellar Dweller**

Brave, inquisitive, foolish. Occasionally, adventurers are all three. In some cases, it is expected of them. If they were not, perhaps they would simply stay at home rather than risking life and limb for fortune and glory. That is why they will almost certainly want to see the cellar wall

cracked open and the goal of Rath's dark quest bathed in the light of day!

A Breakthrough!

Once the PCs venture down to the cellar, investigation by lantern light will quickly reveal the odd nature of the northernmost wall. The bricks are larger and the mortar is thick as if hastily and liberally applied.

Characters using appropriate tools (mallets and chisels, which can be recovered from the forge and stables) can remove one or two bricks with little effort in 1D6 minutes. Those using weapons of war to assault the wall must make attack and damage rolls (remember to double the chance to hit and net damage scored) against a Toughness of 10.

As soon as the PCs have removed the first two bricks or inflicted 2 or more damage points on the wall, the lantern or torchlight gutters briefly but doesn't blow out. A heartbeat later, the door to the cellar swings shut with a loud bang. As all eyes turn towards the door, there is a scraping sound from the hole in the wall and the characters turn again to see a third brick missing and two points of red light glowing from within that hole!

In seconds, the bricks crumble in a curtain of dust, leaving the withered husk of Hebbard senior grinning at the PCs.

Scholar, Gentleman & Liche!

When Wilhelm was prematurely entombed over sixty years ago, he prayed for a quick death and forgiveness. But after 10



days, Wilhelm still lived. He sated his appetite on beetles, spiders and those rats too slow to escape his grasp. The damp moss that covered walls of his prison slaked his thirst.

Days turned into weeks, and madness took over his prayers. He now begged for freedom and revenge at any price. Soon, a voice from Wilhelm's darkest nightmares answered those prayers.

The beast that came to him gave his eyes a red light by which to see, and whispered words of sweet revenge. The creature (which Wilhelm refers to as 'My Sweet') began long years of tutelage which would heighten Wilhelm's magic and sharpen his madness.

Once every 20 years, the creature allowed Wilhelm to venture from the cellar as a Shade, a creature that could exist only in the dreams of a troubled soul. At each opportunity, Wilhelm would search through the dreamscape of his kin, desperately seeking a seed of evil from which could be nurtured a disciple capable of unearthing his now Undead body. Eventually he came to the dreams of a young Rath Hebbard and was more than satisfied with what he found there. Rath was already cruel and vindictive, with a thirst for power that his meager ability would never quench. The thoughts Wilhelm imbedded in Rath's subconscious would guide the boy through manhood to a position of respect among men and deliver him first to dark sorceries and then to his great-grandfather's tomb!

Wilhelm Hebbard

Liche

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I
4	46	25	4	4	23	60
A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	43	89	89	89	89	-

Alignment: Evil

Psychological Traits: Wilhelm causes *Fear* and *Terror* in living creatures (remember to add +20 to all tests if Viktor is present – as usual, he does not need to make the roll).

Wilhelm has the characteristic burning red eyes and desiccated body of a liche, but lacks the transfixed gaze and powerful magic (unless the GM is feeling as evil as Wilhelm himself, in which case, consult the WFRP rulebook p.249). However, Wilhelm is far from harmless: he has 4 Attacks and a very reasonable *Weapon Skill*.

He will concentrate all of his attacks on one opponent at a time, only switching targets when one falls or flees. Should he defeat all of the PCs - and that is possible - he will waste no time in hurrying upstairs to taste freedom. Shortly thereafter, he will begin searching for Rath.

Wilhelm is a foul sight to behold. His clothes have long since turned to dust, his hair is gone and what remains of his skin is blackened and drawn tight over sharp bones. The jawbone hangs in a permanent silent laugh. When he speaks, his voice crackles and booms like a thunderstorm but the jaw does not move an inch.

Wilhelm is mad. Both insane and greatly vexed! Beyond his opening soliloquy he won't have much to say but will wail and moan with each attack. He will steadfastly attack each character one by one until he has defeated all present. Once defeated, however, his final words will be: "My Sweet, do you desert me now, after all these years?"

As soon as Wilhelm is visible all characters (bar Viktor) must make *Fear* and *Terror* tests (remember that characters who fail a terror test automatically gain +1 Insanity Point). If Viktor finds himself alone with the liche (because everyone else has fled) he too will turn tail with a view to regrouping and mounting an assault as soon as possible.

Once the tests have been made, but before any of the PCs have the opportunity to act, Wilhelm speaks. His voice is so deep and resonant that dust and plaster falls from the ceiling.

"Thank you My Sweet, you have rewarded my patience," he utters. "My good people, you have my gracious thanks for releasing me from a most unjust fate. I am pleased to see that the seed of evil I planted many years ago has finally borne fruit. My clever great-grandson has proven his worth, although... I don't see his face among you? No matter, My Sweet demands a bloody tribute for his aid. Regrettably you must all perish this day, and in this very room. Were I a kind man, or my benefactor less demanding, I would slay you quickly and with compassion. Alas, you see before you the remains of a man buried alive by ignorant slaves - and for my revenge, I must answer to a beast darker than the blackest night."

With that, Wilhelm begins his vicious attack!

By Sigmar's Hammer, We're All Going to Die!

It is entirely possible that the characters will find themselves in a good deal of trouble at this stage. Some of their number may have fled or fallen into a catatonic trance, whilst others may be in no condition to battle the enraged liche.

However, clever PCs may have one card left to play. Should any of the characters make mention of Rath Hebbard, Wilhelm will become momentarily distracted, looking this way and that for his kin. Should any of the characters try this plan, make a Will Power roll for Wilhelm. If he makes the roll (likely) he will lose his next attack. If the roll is failed, he loses the next 1D4+1 attacks.

The Dust Settles

With Wilhelm defeated, the final trace of the evil Hebbards will be swept away. Nothing but dust and bones remains of the liche; if he was entombed with his books and equipment, they have long since turned to dust.

The Stallers will forever be grateful hosts when the characters are in the region. As further evidence of their gratitude, Johann will introduce the PCs to likely tutors, from which the PCs might acquire further training.

In the course of his normal business, Johann will tell the tale of his trials and tribulations to a scholarly acquaintance. A year later, a booklet will be published entitled *The Horror Below* detailing the PCs and their adventure. The book will be a modest success, but will no doubt serve to further their fame, particularly amongst the literate nobility.

Additional Experience Point Awards

The GM may consider the following supplementary experience awards, following the conclusion of the scenario.

Award	Activity
10	For collecting the necessary tools from the forge and stables
10	Distracting Wilhelm by using Rath's name
20	Finally destroying Wilhelm

**Appendix 2
Dead Man's Hand**

Most of Herr Staller's cellar is taken up with wine racks, old travelling chests and packing crates, but within an hour, enough flotsam can be moved to examine the walls. As soon as the characters are able to pass a beam of lantern-light around the cellar it becomes obvious that the most northerly wall was a later addition to the building. The wall was clearly not constructed by skilled tradesmen. The bricks are uneven and the mortar has almost turned to dust.

Any character with a *Strength* of 4 or more can easily dislodge a brick (weaker characters must make a *Strength* test); thereafter, it is a simple matter to remove enough bricks to shine a lantern through his hole.

The cell beyond is a mere 6-foot by 6-foot square, and contains only a crumpled skeleton lying next to a small iron

candlestick. (It appears that Wilhelm's jailers gave the man one candle to see out his life.) Around the neck of the skeleton hangs a stylised brass raven on a delicate metal chain – the symbol of Morr, god of death.

As one of the PCs enters the cell he or she will notice writing scratched upon the far wall. In fact the entire wall is covered with hastily scratched characters. Judging from the condition of the candlestick, it is clear that this is the tool the prisoner used to write his epitaph.

The Writing is on the Wall

The first few sentences are transcripts of 'Morr's Word', the prayer read before the dying and dead. Thereafter, the tone and content changes...

Should my body be discovered in the months or years to come, I would have my family know the truth. I do not fear death, for how can a bumble priest of Morr fear that which must be? My regret is the shame that my passing will leave for my kin.

As a priest of Morr, my duty is to the dead, the dying and the bereaved. That is why I was so often seen at the graveyard. All right-thinking folk know this to be true.

However, it was my affinity with that place that caused my undoing.

One chill Kaldezeit night, I stumbled upon unbolty activity! I looked on, struck silent by fear, as first one then another body dragged itself from a freshly-dug grave. But the dead did not walk abroad unbidden. The band of another guided their actions.

I clearly saw Baron Asmund reading from a dark tome and cackling gleefully as the bodies left Morr's embrace and returned to unlife.

I fled the scene but must have been spotted by one or more of Asmund's lackeys. I went at once to the house of Justice Wermach who listened to my story and gave me sanctuary for the night.

The following day, constables of the watch came to Wermach and I was arrested. One month later, after Asmund had paraded a succession of 'witnesses' before the city's magistrates, it was I not he that was convicted of grave robbing and necromancy!

Let it be known that the good name of Hebbard is not sullied with dark chaos tainted magic!

The irony here should be only too clear. Just like the Stallers, Wilhelm Hebbard was an innocent man condemned by false accusation. His dying wish was that his family name be cleared. Of course, his own great-grandson embarked upon that very road which Wilhelm himself was wrongly accused of!

Baron Asmund

Any locals of the area will be familiar with the name Asmund. Johann can tell the PCs that the Baron's family still holds a position of power in the political scene. They own substantial holdings within the city and without.

Exactly what happens from here is entirely up to the GM. If the characters investigate the Asmund family, will they discover that the Baron still lives on as a liche? Will any of the family know of their ancestor's obsession with dark sorcery? Or is it that link which accounts for their great wealth and influence?

"Let the dead stay dead."

Popular saying

"The dead never rest easy, for there are those who would drag them from Morr's realm for their own dark ends."

The Book of the Dead

I Know Not, The Birth of Fox Crowe

Part Two of Three

by Ourobouros

I was drinking in a dive and enjoying myself.

Well, I was being eaten alive with worry. That's almost the same thing.

I sipped at beer that tasted as if it had been aged with a drowned cat in the barrel, and felt the eyes upon me. The bar was like most others - crowded and smoky. This one was in the poor quarter, filled with low-lives eyeing me with suspicion and avarice. The promise of my money was balanced by the Phantom I had set in its new sheathe across the table. Between the five throwing knives, boot dagger, short sword (also freshly purchased) and The Phantom Angel, I tallied more in the threat than the opportunity column. You ask me what happened to my company? Well, they were safely upstairs. In a perfect universe, the rest of our trip would have been swift and neat, I would have made love to the lady and scampered on my way with my memory fully restored. Of course, as I'm sure you'll agree, it is neither a perfect - nor even a fair - universe. Ranald and his dice, Luck and Misfortune, had more in store for me yet. Much more.

The carriage was moving slowly, even tied to the two magnificent Bretonian Faes, so heavily laden was it. By my reckoning it was five more days 'till Wolfenburg. Aelia made comfortable conversation with me while Geila made uncomfortable silence. Theo kept up a fine banter but for the times when it was my turn to tell a story - for I had none to give; that space was still held by the miserly Fog.

The air was quickly turning to frost and Ulric had finally remembered it was time to rule over his brother's kingdom. He had shaken the sleep from his eyes to descend upon the lands of Men. The bugs were chirping in annoyance at the sudden chill, screaming for all the world at the night. When everything got quiet, I knew something was about to happen with the severity and speed of an avalanche. It did, and not all of us made it through alive.

After the next group of 'bandits', I took full stock in our situation and had begun to feel my blood boil. People do not respect someone who loses his head, but should you distill the rage into a compact line and use it as a whispered weapon, people quite often crumble. Simply, there were too many bandits on this road for coincidence, too many of them looking for someone like us to hit. Geila and the rest were busy burying Reinhold - no older than seventeen... I watched him die for me, taking on a man who outmatched him as I rolled on the ground, trying to introduce an idiot to my misericorde. Reinhold didn't know me well. No-one really can, without me knowing who I was. He had been a quiet boy. I guess he decided I was more important than he to safeguarding his lady. He died upholding his oath to her, and I decided I needed to know why. Gods, but this beer is horrible. I've a mind not order a third.

So, I took Aelia head-on, unleashing the barest hint of the animal upon her. I stalked her across the road and backed her into a tree, spearing her with questions and accusations. She broke. No surprise, I know. I have used this method before and it worked then, too. Everyone waited, tension sparking in the air as Theo laid his hand on his sword, ready to kill even me to protect his charge.

Good boy.

She wasn't heading here to make a trade deal for iron. She was going to bid against several noble families for Turken Valan. Something more witty than a surprised throat noise would have been more dashing, but I wasn't tracking the conversation. "Fox, the Dwarfs are pressed for men. They are stripping forts further from home to strengthen their main towns and city centers. They simply cannot leave these outposts; it would open them to attack without warning. They have taken to selling these lands to men who can afford the price. They have traveled to Wolfenburg, to give any noble families a fair chance to bid on the land and the fort. They get the gold and protection -"

"- and the winner gets to tax anything that goes in or out of the pass it guards." I finished. Considering the amount of luxury and finely made items that come out the Dwarfen kingdoms, whatever outrageous sum the winning family payed would be made up in less than ten years. Not only that, if an enemy buys Dwarfen cannons, guns or armour in bulk, whoever taxes the goods will know it. I wandered the glade, realizing the path before me was not a wide trek but a thin board over a rushing river. Something did not fit in this puzzle. "You are not from the family of RaubTalabec."

Her face drained of color and she lowered her eyes from my face. "No. I am not of the family of RaubTalabec, servants to the Elector of Talabecland. I am Aelia Krieglitz, Grand Duchess of Talabecland." I didn't feel any more like bowing to her, but I did feel the river below turn into a lake of fire. It made sense when I thought it through. Having the Church of Shallya assign one of their number to a noble's daughter took substantial and frequent donations, out of the reach of even some of the most affluent families.

"Traveling incognito?" I whispered, turning from her. Have you ever noticed that no matter how many times you tell yourself not to trust a pretty woman, you always do? Have you noticed you always wind up getting kicked for it? We were on the outskirts of the Shadow Wood, one of the great bastions of darkness in The Empire, with an Elector! Electors like to assassinate other electors, or capture them for ransom; it's a hobby they have. No matter what they chose to do to Aelia, killing the guards - namely moi - would be necessary.

Hey! I speak Bretonian!

"My father took the direct route with two hundred men in heavy armour. An assassin took his life before the procession had marched its second day. I decided twenty men moving swiftly would have a greater chance. I have spent more time than I would like to remember circling the Shadow Wood the wrong way around to reach Wolfenburg. Many men I have known since I learned to speak have died before me." Her voice, on the edge of cracking, gained an underlying plate of rock. She gazed proudly at me and straightened. "In their memory, and that of my father, I will not stop now." he paused, gathering words against me. "I will pay you ten times what I said to see me to Wolfenburg -"

I stilled her with an upraised palm, my face a mask of fury. "I have taken a contract and will complete it as I swore." The words were familiar in my mouth, said hundreds of times. They were also the truth. It was not a fair world, but I was not going to add the injustice. Also, had it been me, I would have lied too. I don't have to like it.

I began unhitching the horses and the nanny, pale and fluttering, came to make sure I had not harmed her charge. I gathered everyone into a circle and explained our situation. I could just have said "bad" and left it at that, but we needed to get something constructive done here. We were a very conspicuous, slow and under-defended target. That needed to change. We stripped the bandits and used what clothing of theirs we could. We used hammers to remove all family crests from weapon scabbards and cut the leather holding Aelia's heraldry from the boy's shields. No, I don't have the right to call them boys any more. They have fought and died beside me. They were men, and I let them know it.

From beneath the carriage's inner seat they brought forth a torso-sized chest, fitted with iron and filled with gold and gems. We took the poorest of the lady's clothes and she dressed in them. The riches and finery we left.

"It will cost me money I severely need to replace those goods in order to be presentable to the Dwarfs." She grouched.

I gazed along her form, now only covered in a simple blue dress and stained-green cloak. Old riding clothes from the look of them. "Your enemy will have spent more still."

"How do you know?"

I turned to her slowly. "Because they have failed with thugs and mercenaries..." I let all mirth leave my voice, "...and the assassin guild's talent is not cheaply bought." Now, Geila and Aelia dressed simply, the gold hidden in the saddlebags and backpacks across our shoulders. We carried only three days of food each, and a skin of water besides. Oh, and Aelia decided that Leoncur shouldn't have to walk. She carried her pet in her arms as we set off. I will never understand nobles...

The rest of us wore mismatched armour with no heraldry or crest, making us appear as feckless freebooters. Questors traveled roads the world over in search of gold, and while rare, they were more common than carriages carrying Grand Duchesses. I hefted two bandit corpses into the wagon and set it alight with lamp oil. I seem to burn everything I leave behind nowadays.

We left the road, paralleling it a mile off. It took four days to reach Wolfenburg instead of two, but we arrived unmolested. Six small armies of fifty to a hundred men sat outside the walls, courtesy of the other Electors in residence. They were here to bid, some against mortal enemies, and too many dealings amongst my 'betters' had turned to bloodshed in the past to ignore that a war might start here.

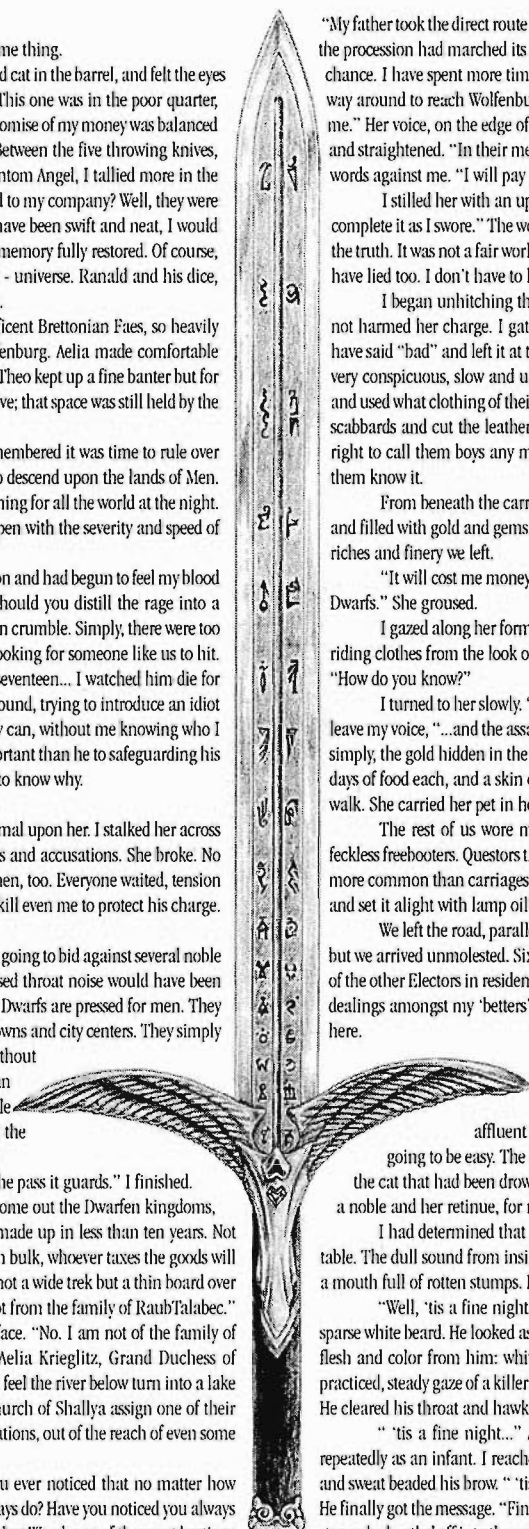
I took my pay and bought new necessities, using the silver and copper change to secure rooms at this inn. It was late, and any assassin would surely be waiting for us on the few roads leading to the more affluent areas of town. He may be out there, but I was damned if his job was going to be easy. The beds were infested, the tankards were dirty, and for dinner I think I ate the cat that had been drowned in the beer I was drinking. It was also the safest place in town for a noble and her retinue, for now.

I had determined that I was not going to order a fifth rancid beer when a purse fell onto my table. The dull sound from inside did not sound like coin. I looked up at the owner: an old man with a mouth full of rotten stumps. His breath was decay itself as he sat and smiled across the table at me.

"Well, 'tis a fine night." His voice was rattish, lazy. He scratched at an old scar beneath his sparse white beard. He looked as if something unwholesome had burrowed in and sucked all the spare flesh and color from him: white hair, pale eyes, jaundiced and yellowed nails. I simply leveled the practiced, steady gaze of a killer at him. He waited, sipping at a mug grasped like life itself to his breast. He cleared his throat and hawked a goblet upon the floor.

"'tis a fine night..." Apparently, his parents were not only inbred, but had dropped him repeatedly as an infant. I reached across the table and grasped Phantom's sheathe. His eyes widened, and sweat beaded his brow. "'tis a fine night..." I stood, being a hair over six feet I loomed over him. He finally got the message. "Fine, just take it. I never liked you; no respect for the rules." I felt my pulse stop as he hustled off into the crowd with the expertise of a city urchin. He was almost to the door before my numb limbs began to respond again. When I reached the night time street, he was gone, swallowed by the dark.

The pouch inside was unmolested, and as I entered everyone watched me with fearful eyes. I gathered up the small package and staggered up the stairs. Theo was outside Aelia's room, alert and awake on his



guard. I waved absently to him and entered my room before opening the canvas bundle. The scrip contained four hundred gold coins worth of unset gems and jewels. There also was a scrap of paper.

I can read! It said: *They were well pleased. Your fame will grow. Offer exist. Contact soon if ready.*

I read it three times, unknowing of its meaning. "I never liked you, no respect for the rules..." the wretch had said. Someone here knew who I was, even if I did not. What rules, what offers? Why did I hold a king's ransom in my hand? Alright, it was a Knight's ransom, but it was still more money than most people see at one time in their life.

No matter the question I asked, the Fog remained silent. That night I dreamt of walking through a black forest where the leaves were all silent ravens. They all watched me with unblinking eyes.

We hopped from street to street, moving like mice in a cat's barn - our eyes roving, watching for threats. I picked apart the shadows with my mind, dissecting any place from where a poisoned knife could spring. The back of my neck tingled and chill sweat raced with the air to frost up my veins. Our group was horribly exposed, even though we dodged from alley to alley and half watched forward while half watched our rear. I watched both ways and up besides. Our tortured pace of doubling back and waiting for the perfect moment to move across busy streets reduced everyone to panting dogs before long. We entered the rich quarter and found a place to watch the front of the inn where the negotiations would take place. Then and only then I let them collapse for a few minutes. Only Theo was keeping pace with me, and he was worn. Then again, from the odor emanating from inside my shirt, I was not in prime condition at the moment. All this before midday.

The Grand Sage, like all buildings in this town, was built for war. On the edge of the Shadow Wood, where orcs and worse things held sway, this town was built to withstand a siege of not only the city but of each and every building. Wolfenburg has come under fire every time the orcs have rallied an army, and has fallen repeatedly. It represents the quickest way from the frigid north to the heart of The Empire without going around the Forest of Shadows or the Middle mountains. The taxes and prestige this offers means some noble simp will always see it resettled, by force of personality or by force of arms. Eventually, seeing the power offered by the City, it was claimed by the Elector family of Konigsvald and made the capital. The Grand Sage was richer, and thus more unassailable than most. A wall, as tall as two men and topped with pig iron spikes, surrounded the square three floor structure. The windows were thin, placed so that if the leaded glass panes were kicked out, they would be serviceable arrow-slits. As my eyes picked out each of the defensive measures, the next became more obvious. From the ornamentation of the wrought iron gates to the wooden bridge that rose over the pool that blocked easy access to said gate, it was all covered by a thin veneer of civility, but was brutally functional nonetheless. A guard stood outside, resplendent in shining mail beneath his gentlemanly attire.

We crossed the street quickly, huddled together like a family of frightened cats. We all looked like we were being hunted. This was very bad, but I don't see as you can sell dung as a diamond, even to a blind man. The guard came to attention, snapping his halberd on the stone at his feet as if we were about to see the Emperor himself. His eyes were sharp and his uniform clean, telling more of etiquette than skill at arms. His locked-rigid back spoke more of servant than soldier. In a crisp, clear voice he hung out. "Approach and be recognized."

Hey, dung-nuts, does it look like we want to be heralded to the whole world, I didn't say Aelia moved forward to take on the watchman. The miles and the fear and the blisters on her feet melted away until an Imperial Duchess stood before the guard. "I am Aelia Krieglitz, Grand Duchess of Talabecland, I have a set of suites reserved."

He smiled ruefully. "Shove off."

Alright, the queen was wearing her old and stained riding clothes. She was also a bit disheveled and suffering from the runs, an affect of last night's meal of roast rat. Her green eyes, however, had lost none of their nobility. "I beg your pardon?"

His bemusement faded into annoyance. "I said shove off, or I'll have the city watch throw you into the stocks. You have no business here..." He smiled nastily, a highly paid servant looking down upon a gaggle of tramps. "...your Grace."

Now, gentle reader, you realize that this is the type of man I wipe my boots on. You also realize I was standing in the middle of the damn

street with a damn duchess who, more than likely, had a damn assassin drawing a bead upon her damn back with a damn crossbow, right? You also probably remember that I am, by nature, impatient. That is why I took one swift glance to make sure the guardsman was not wearing a gorge and back-handed him.

Gorges are uncomfortable things, they make your neck all stiff and sweaty. They also stop people like me reducing you to a hacking pile of offal on the street with a fist in your throat as I had to Herr Faux Guard. I removed the key from his belt and unlocked the iron gates, gesturing everyone inside. If you guessed Geila hated me again, you would be correct. I was beginning to believe you can't please some people. People like Geila... and the six definitely not ornamental guards who had surrounded us as soon as we had entered the front doors.

Their eyes were fixed on me, their breath coming in smooth rushes as their bodies primed to kill. This is a fight I wasn't going to live through -

"Aelia!"

-unless my string of bad luck had finally taken a wee trip to bother someone else. I held up my hands in surrender (and prepared to kick the first bastard who moved on me between his legs), and waited for someone else to solve the situation for once.

"Aelia!" The guards melted back into their niches before the boisterous voice. "You look simply dreadful!"

He was made up like a street whore, colour brought to pasty, flabby skin only by paints and blushes. His voice could only barely be contained inside his rotund majesty. He eyed me like a side of meat, then turned back to embrace Aelia like a lost relation. Considering the inbred nature of nobles, that was a real possibility. They nattered back and forth like hens at a seed-pile, as we were efficiently, and swiftly, booked into our suites. I was impressed at the service, though not impressed enough to be distracted from the hired swords who had turned out to see Aelia's defenses. Each of the noble families (there were five here) had their own troops of servants and guards that dwarfed our own. The Dwarfs also had a caravan in residence, though I saw none as of yet. Each also had hired a killer, either freshly purchased or sworn to loyalty; some had two. It's like wolves, really. We watched each other's movements and weapons; feeling, smelling and posing. Each time, a bit of mutual forewarming went out - a bond of kinship toward another skilled warrior, and an acknowledgment of willingness to die in order to kill. We were professionals and it was our job to die, all at once or bit by bit.

I lent half an ear to Aelia and the fop, who turned out to be Horatio Von Konigsvald, Elector of Ostland. If I have ever been impressed with noblemen, I doubt I ever will be again. He was a pattering juvenile, however he did have some information of interest to me. The auction was still on for two weeks from now, even though several electors had sent word that they would not be coming due to various 'misfortunes'. Justicus Von Alptraum, Elector of Averland, had the misfortune of having to recover from poisoning. Leoric Todbringer was struggling in vain to recover from a beastman's axe in his skull.

Yes, dear reader, things were getting ugly. Being installed in our rooms (what am I, a fixture?) was pleasant and surprising. The suites were groups of three or four rooms, linked to other, smaller and less luxurious rooms for the servants. Baths, privy, bedroom, reading rooms... All together as a hedonistic apartment in a building that was easily three-hundred feet long, seventy-five feet wide and three stories massive. This wasn't an inn, it was a castle. The fact that the great and the good wanted to call it an inn, however, made it fit us. Tailors were fetched from other parts of town and rushed here to fit us for new clothes. I chose several sets, all made from velvet, silk or leather... all black. I have more important things on my mind than making sure my clothing matches for polite company.

It seemed that all of the finest people in the world were here, excepting the Emperor Mangus himself. Some whispered the Emperor had enough to worry about keeping an Empire intact and under his rule which had been divided not fifteen years ago. On the other hand, most the electors were present although Graf Todbringer was too busy learning to walk, let alone taking over his duties from his recently deceased father. His grieving mother has taken the role of regent, and it was rumored that she was torturing a hastily gathered set from the underworld, searching for whoever it was that had killed her husband. It also became apparent that Justicus had bowed out, finding the playing

field too rough for his tastes. Indeed, inside these walls was a least one murderer.

I rose from my seat in the entrance to the princes' suite. In the near complete and total black, I crossed the ankle-deep carpet with less sound than a soft breeze. I twisted the knob to her bedroom, carefully measuring its resistance and entering as a patch of pitch on coal. Stealth is partially down to luck, as are many endeavors. A bit is skill, but more than anything else stealth is patience. I took ten minutes to shut the door and cross the chamber, but the noise I made was less than an owl's flight. Even Leoncur did not stir at my passing.

The light was filtering from the single white candle, spreading across the predatory night to splash across the Princess. Her soft skin was like one of the legendary Bretonian queen's dresses, fit so perfectly that one day's worth of growth would make it unwearable. I am clear enough of mind to know I am not in love with her. To say I would refuse her bed if she offered it would be a lie, but she would never offer, this I knew. The seemingly paltry sum she had paid me could be multiplied a thousand fold by anyone wishing her dead. I could kill her now for having lied to me. Geila sat in a chair, her wrinkled face looking as kind as I had ever seen it. Her sagging, aged breasts rose and fell with her breath, showing the life that stirred within her. Some part of me still wanted to slay her as well, for she definitely knew more of me than I did.

The reason I did not, the reason I was still here, was something flighty and intangible. It was some small seed inside me, woken by the Cleric's scream. It was a part of me that wanted to do something pure and noble. Something with the hope of a young boy who stares out to sea and imagines commanding a ship. Something like a young man who hefts a sword and is determined to become a mighty hero. I know that hope lives inside me, stretching from a long sleep like a mighty dragon. From the fear and pain it caused me, I also know it used to be dead. I had taken a vow to protect something pure - this young woman with the will of a matriarch - and this dragon would not let go of the mission. No one would kill this girl while I lived. Of course, whether I would continue to live was a point of contention.

I crept back into the entrance foyer and sat on an upholstered couch, sinking into the padding. Closing my eyes, sleep was held at bay by the constant threat of raven-filled dreams of scorpion pits. My mind began to collect the information I had stripped from my surroundings.

The talks were yet to begin, the time set nearly a year ago by Mekin Mantelforge, the emissary from the Dwarfen High King. I smiled to myself. By letting everyone know where and when the negotiations would take place, and locating it centrally in The Empire, the Dwarf King ensured fierce bidding by several parties. All the better for a high price. At least tomorrow a detachment of Aelia's guards, dispatched from her castle, would arrive. That is, they would if Aelia's orders to come had made it through -

-The sound of metal grinding on stone shuffled softly through the chamber.

I wondered when he would come. The front door to the chambers had begun to open. If I had not poured sand in the expertly made hinges they would not have made a sound, but they did, and had snapped me out of my doze. The door stopped, the opener mindful of the sound he was making. I heard a cork, and a thick liquid - certainly oil - being poured on the hinges through the crack between door and jam. This was no servant of the inn, for certain. I rolled off the couch into a crouch, picking The Phantom from where it lay on the carpet. I hefted it, relishing its lethal weight in my hands.

I felt the Animal stir, begin to buck, to roar. Containing the rage inside a quiet shell made a sweat bloom on my brow. Between one heartbeat and the next I was ready to kill. A stain of black of a slightly deeper hue poked from around the door, surveying the room, then was lost. Like me, he had come into a darkened room, dressed and hooded in black. Like me, he had sat in the dark, taking minuscule motions to cross open fields and sticking to cover and concealment. However, it is impossible to pick a lock, as he had done, without a candle and I had been sitting in the dark for four hours since I had checked on the Princess. This made my night vision a touch sharper, coupled with the fact that he had to move. Movement in deep shadow attracts much more attention from a human brain than a stationary blotch. To him I was a shadow caught between couch and table. To me he was a target as bright as day.

He had his back to me before I struck. Phantom carved deeply, snapping bone and shearing muscle with equal abandon. It ground

to a halt having carved a path from shoulder to navel. The assassin's blade-hand jerked spasmodically in death, the knife flying from his grasp and cutting my brow. His only sound was the strangled cry of a ravaged lung and the gurgling noise of breath exiting a wound. Moments later men crashed into the room from all sides. I had discarded my hood and stole to the corner so that anyone could see me and recognize me before killing me. Thankfully no one tried. There are some accidents that won't be fixed with an apology.

Aelia and Geila emerged from their room - again against my orders. I wonder if they will ever learn to listen to me and stifle their curiosity until they were sure it was safe.

The Grand Sage's guards and Theo and his young-bloods decided, graciously, not to hack me to pieces. I let Aelia send the guards away as Theo and his command helped me examine the corpse. He had been a she, by the way - not that it would have made me hesitate to strike had I known. I pulled off the hood, with its thin canvas mesh covering the eyes, to expose a woman's bitter, ox-like face beneath. Amongst her possession I found knives, vials of poison and oil, garrotes, and three emerald-tipped hairpins... all the tools used to sculpt murder. If any doubt was left, the bright green scorpion embroidered on her left glove left no doubt. The Assassin's guild was now involved.

No one slept, which is no surprise. Everyone asked me the options we had, and I let them know there were none. We were doing all we could. We had holed up and were being careful. Aelia went back to bed, as did the others - save Geila. She was tending my head wound, seemingly as confused as I had ever seen her. Her body was still laid out in all its gory glory upon the carpet because I needed to finish my perusal of it. Her hands were more tender than I could ever remember them, and her ministrations more thorough. She began to mutter a prayer and my scalp beneath her hand began to prickle and itch. She was done moments later, and she rose to take up her position at the right hand of her lady who was already back in bed. She made it about halfway there before turning to appraise me critically. I returned her gaze; only my flat demeanor met her searching eyes. "When I had met you, I felt you were the worst tragedy to befall this good family yet. Then I thought you a valiant savior, then a stalking doom."

Why do Clerics enjoy being cryptic? Can anyone tell me? The next cleric who gives me a half veiled commentary is going to find my boot prints covering the back of their robes! It had been a long night without any real sleep. I had little time or patience for this. "Care to tell me why I am such a threat? I have provided nothing but great service for Aelia and her men - and you to put a fine point on it."

Her eyes widened and she shook her head fractionally. Her breath was the only thing powering her words as they escaped past her. "You really do not know?"

I felt the animal stir; my fingers itched for a weapon. My voice was a knife that I flung across the barrier at her. "Know what?"

She retreated from me, holding out a hand to stay me where I was. Her face mirrored her goddess, a bottomless well of pity for me. I preferred the fear. "If you truly do not remember, Crowe, it is better you should forget. But I do not think your past will lose you as easily as you did it."

Then she was gone, I heard the lock snick to enclose her in the sanctity of Aelia's room. My skin flushed and chilled at the same time. What does she know? How was she so sure? A thought of myself going in and beating the knowledge flitted into an out of my head just as fast. As little as a few days ago, the thought would have been a serious consideration. Apparently my humanity was winning its war against the Animal within. I just hoped it wouldn't get me killed before I found out who I was... I hate missing the end of a good mystery.

Many hours later, I was sure I had gleaned all the information I could from the corpse. That is to say: I found nothing unusual for an assassin except an odd key. It was much more intricate than the others I had seen for this inn. I opened the front door to our apartment and used the key to both unlock, then lock the bolt. That was how she had gained such easy access to this place, in the heart of The Sage. I also garnered a multitude of weapons whose nature was stealthy killing. When Theo finally rose from his bed, he asked me about many of them, being unfamiliar with their design. I off-handedly explained their use and function to him and named the poisons in the vials as I cleaned clotted blood from my hands. No matter what you see on stage, death is always a messy affair.

Aelia had pled being sickened with fear at the thought of near death, and had waved off dinners with the other electors on that pretense. She was not afraid, though: she was furious. She stormed about her confines, raging at the unknown employer of the midnight visitor. She was prepared to wage war and, in my mind, prepared to enter the negotiations. I slept, wasting a whole day once Captain Keller arrived with his men. For once, my importance was diminished in the group. I was no longer needed at the formal dinners, and was replaced in coordinating the defence of the princess by the captain. I left them a note that I needed supplies and departed early the day after. The walls had begun to close in and my chest unclenched as soon as I passed outside the confinement of The Grand Sage. I spent the day wandering, clearing my head as much as I could with the fog in residence. As I re-entered the apartments, past the four guards Keller had outside the room, I went to my specific room of the apartment and unlocked it. Moving inside, I lit a lamp against the coming night and the key I had just used caught my attention.

It was the key I had taken from the assassin.

I grabbed it and used it on every door I could in the suite, and it worked every one flawlessly. The locks were all of the same variety, made by the same manufacturer: Bauer and Sons, of Altdorf. This was the master key for them all.

I took a walk through the castle and saw what I was looking for, then I rushed to speak with Aelia. I burst into her book-room, startling the hell out of Keller's men. "Aelia, who owns The Grand Sage?"

Keller bristled. Fighting men are real sensitive about honour. He had placed Aelia above himself in his great view of what is. By barging into her study and addressing her as an equal, I was placing myself on her level, and thus above him. "Get out of here and wait until you are summoned, Nameless."

You know, someday I'm going to hurt that man. Badly. I gave him a look that let him know exactly what I was thinking, then focused on Aelia, dismissing him.

The Grand Duchess looked up from her dispatches, her eyes weary. She had been busy since word had come back from the Emperor. She was to work with Horatio to contain any activity in the Shadow Wood using both their troops. Her entire day had been taken up pouring over maps, trying to deploy forces to contain the border.

"What?"

"Who owns this inn?"

She was taken aback, trying to switch mental paths to get to the portion of her brain that held that information. "Horatio Von Konigsvald. His family originally stayed in this castle before the Konigsvald Fortress was built using methods brought back from the Crusades. It was is up on the hill on the outskirts of town. It is nearly unassailable, but as uncomfortable as most castles." Ever try living in something made of wattle and daub? I didn't say.

"This place was made a royal inn and turned over to be a comfortable palace for the Elector's family -"

"I know who's paid to have you killed."

Don't mind me, I'm just trying to stay warm. Not an easy proposition on a copper-tiled roof in the middle of winter. I was clothed in basic black, with the assassin's scorpion embroidered glove and mask on. A crossbow was sitting within easy reach as I pulled a wad of resin from my mouth (to keep it warm) and smushed a leather thong in to it and attached them to the window pane before me. It began to harden almost instantly. I did the same thing to the other end of the cord, anchoring it to the roof. Below, an army of servitors began rushing about, oblivious to me as they prepared the great hall below for the banquet. The Great Central Hall of The Grand Sage was no less richly appointed than our rooms - artwork and furniture either carved in a classical style, or in actuality antique works (I was betting on the latter). It was an open hall for the entire three stories, up to the roof where leaded glass windows surrounded the crowning fourth story on all sides. During the day, this was a happy, lively place that captured the essence of daytime. At night, with the three chandeliers and fourteen sconces lit, the windows became mirrors that I could hide behind, as well could any assassin. The ornamental façade on the corners, done up to exaggerate the block-pattern of the stone, had provided a sure ladder onto the roof. If you have ever wondered why castles are unadorned brutish things, you know now.

I knew it would be today, on the eve of the talks, that the next assassin

would strike. Don't believe me? Well allow me to marshal my arguments:

One. It was the only event where Aelia was guaranteed to be present. Protocol required it.

Two. It was the perfect place to put a shot. You are hidden from below by the mirror effect of the glass and shielded from the towers and outer wall by the decorative gargoyles atop equally useless merlions that ringed the main keep's roof.

Three. I had a gut feeling. (Yeah, I know, but if you have nothing else your gut has to do.)

Four. Once I had found the key, I knew exactly what was going on. I just needed proof. That is, by the way, why I was sitting on a roof in the middle of a winter's evening while Aelia and a host of lesser hanger's-on dance in the ball-room fifty yards to my south. As much as Keller argued at the plan I had devised, Aelia had learned to trust my instincts. She gave me the large sum of gold I needed and I had crept away into town to procure the services of a competent Illusionist.

I took out my dagger and began, quietly, to peel a pane out of the window by scraping back at the lead caulking that held the palm-sized piece in place. Removing one piece was enough, enough to shoot through, enough to get me shot if they saw me doing it. You see, fairly soon, five of the most powerful people in The Empire would gather in the room below. This is a prime opportunity for, say... a Tilean assassin to throw a lit keg of powder in the room and cripple The Empire for months at least, as the new Electorships were sorted out. This one scenario alone makes bodyguards rather twitchy, as plans like it have been tried before. I was reasonably confident that if the pane popped loose it wouldn't fall now that it was tightly held by thong and resin. My major concern was that one of the guards below would hear it fall in, ever so slightly, or hear me scraping. As far as anyone was concerned, I was an assassin, and would take whatever measures required to make me dead. My fears were not unfounded, even though none of my worst expectations had come to pass. What fears you say? I may be skilled in the arts of war and stealth, a master of subterfuge and (on a good day) wit but none of that helps when Randal rolls daemon-eyes on his dice. This time he had been rolling with me, for I had the lead seal peeled away from the pane in plenty of time before the nobles began to file in for the feast, and no one had so much as glimpsed upwards at me. Sometimes even I catch a break.

Horatio Von Konigsvald entered first and sat waiting for them, for it was his town. It was also his Inn, but I will get back to that later. The Dwarfs were not in evidence as of yet, pretending not to be here so the bidding would not start early.

At this moment, all I had to do was wait. I could say I waited like a hero, calmly and coolly, but that would be a lie. Have I mentioned stealth is a good portion of patience? Have I mentioned I am not a patient man? Have I mentioned it was cold? Have I mentioned there was an assassin coming? Good, now you're all caught up with my state of mind. I shuffled back and forth in my crouch as little as possible, tensing and loosening my muscles to keep them from stiffening up. No such luck. The night crept in closer as the formalities (temporarily) ended down below and the meal had begun its tortured pace. Nobles like to punish themselves with long, drawn out banquets where each bit is served in courses. Each just enough to get you really hungry for the next, each with its own rules and etiquette. I managed to do well enough deporting myself on the occasions I was invited to eat with my betters, though the pace of the meal was maddening. Small talk was out of the question, though, as all my anecdotes were sealed in the fog. I much preferred the intimate gatherings between Aelia and the other Electors where they felt out the competition. They were business meetings, pure and simple.

A scuff of a boot on a copper tile behind me let me know it was time for action, or acting, as the case may be. My heart began to thunder in my chest, clouding my ears with its infernal beat. The Animal wanted out, tugging and pulling at me to let it free to kill. Not yet, dammit! I've got a plan to finish.

I eased the glass piece out of its socket with little noise: the smells of the banquet wafted to me and clenched my stomach into a tight little knot around my fear. I hefted my crossbow and looked down into the room, passing over the gentry up and down the table. Only the very foot of it was hidden from my view. I lost the shadow's sound behind me several times - gods, he is good! - making the hair on my neck prickle as I felt the beast lunge at its chains again. I removed a bolt from my small quiver and poured a sticky, amber substance (syrup)

over it's head. As calmly as I could I put the faux poisoned bolt into the firing groove in the crossbow and picked it up, shouldering it. I heard him again, no more than two paces.

This is the part where it gets dangerous.

I tensed my whole body, as obviously as I could. Then, with exaggerated ease, I reached for my belt where my dagger –

“Stay your hand, brother. I am not here for you.” Hearing the voice that sounded like a wind in a gale, I turned to face my mirror. His crossbow was slung, a dagger in his hand. His glove was black, with a green scorpion, his mask as impenetrable as mine. He was nearly twice as far away as I had thought; so much for my vaunted sense of hearing. Efficiently, I set down the crossbow, replaced the glass plate and spun while drawing my dagger. He stayed me with a hand.

“I could have killed you four times before now, brother. I sought to bargain this out using the Code.” To show his good faith, he lowered, but did not sheath his dagger. I did likewise.

“The Code, then.” I said.

He came over to me, just out of reach. “I have come on Business; this takes precedence over personal grudges.”

“I have also come on business.” I replied. Stalemate. He waited for a few seconds and I realized it was my turn. Should I screw up here, it would turn real ugly real quick and I would lose my chance to learn what was going on. I chose the most obvious route. “I was here first, the effort made to reach any of the targets below so far was mine.”

He paused for a moment. “I am after a most difficult target: an elector to The Empire.”

“As am I.”

That set him aback for a moment. He rubbed a hand over the outside of his mask, as if rubbing a stubbled face beneath. His voice had lost some of its power at having ‘successfully’ caught me unawares. I was getting the feeling of this Code now and he was entering forbidden waters at last. “Who are you here to kill?”

I folded my arms and said nothing. The silence stretched for many minutes before he spoke again. “I am here to kill Aelia Talabecland.”

I faked an easy relief in my whisper. “I am not here to kill her. Rest assured brother, that we might take down both our targets, simultaneously. Thus will our guild’s reputation grow, and we will both be paid.”

“But wait, my employer is in that room, and should you kill him, I will not be paid for my work tonight!”

“Then who is your employer?”

His form galvanized, his whisper became dangerous and dark. “You know better than that.”

“I apologize, my brother.” Here goes. “I am here to kill Horatio von Konigswald.”

“That is my employer.” Now I have you, you painted bastard. The Assassin stood motionless before me, caught in a web. He had initiated the Code, a way for assassins to mediate disputes amongst themselves. Now he was in a difficult position. He could attack me, raising a clamor and spoiling his chance to kill his target. On the other hand, two very dangerous men now had mutually exclusive goals.

I had all the things I had come for but one, and it was time to go. “Fear not, Brother. For a tithe of your fee, to offset my effort in your work, I will try again tomorrow. I was able to buy a master key to this place from a servant who had taken it from one of our number who had fallen here some time ago.”

He relaxed, grasping at the easy way out like a drowning man. “That is agreeable. If I make my target, then the rest will be put at ease that our business is done here. Your job will be that much easier for it.”

Yeah, right.

I began to collect my gear and my crossbow as he began to set up to take the shot at Aelia where I had been sitting. “I will collect my pay from the Guild-master.”

He nodded. “Of course. I will give you some time to get away.”

Sure you will. “Thank you, brother.”

I stole away, silent in the near absolute darkness of the cloudy night. He turned and got ready to take his shot. What happened to waiting for me to escape? You must be kidding. With two men trying to escape, his chances of living to collect his pay had doubled. He was intent on his aim after he had moved the pane, needing to make this quick if I was to be his stalking horse. So intent was he that when my syrup covered bolt ripped into his back, it must have been a count of three before he keeled over and crashed through the window to spatter his bodily fluids across the dining tables.

Well, that will ruin your meal, defecation or not.

I discarded the mask and glove, glad to be rid of them. To my right the Illusionist dropped his spell; the shadows near the merlions seemed to retreat like unquiet spirits before an exorcist. Next to him was a priest as well, his blue Verenan robes shining dully in the light coming from the dining room behind me.

“Were you able to hear?” The priest, face waxen and drawn, nodded. “Then you have a decision to make, your honour. You can preserve justice, or your life.”

The Illusionist Raunstein was much more pragmatic, and apparently had enjoyed the subterfuge. He clapped silently at me with a half-hidden smile. “Our deal is complete?”

I handed him my small canvas pouch of gems. “Neither the Priest nor I will ever mention your name in this matter.”

His beard parted in to a grin. “Very good. If you ever need work, I have space for a good man.”

I nodded. “Maybe later.”

“Suit yourself.” He raised his hands, forming a complex symbol in the air. His muttered voice gained the resonance and power of an avalanche, thrumming at the strings of the universe. Suddenly, Raunstein was swallowed again by the creeping shadows. I could see the darker place that marked his passage as he crept away, but I had to look hard. He wouldn’t have any trouble getting out of here. Must be nice to be a wizard.

“Why have you done this to me?” I turned to the Priest – actually a High Judge, summoned here to witness the admission and death of an assassin. His face was sweaty and pale in the cold night air, his breath coming in gasps. “If I speak the truth, Horatio will see me dead as well.”

You know, I’m beginning to lump in priests with royalty on my scum of the earth scale. “Then I guess you have something to pray about.”

I left him there; I had things to do.

Aelia wielded all her political power with the subtlety of a sledgehammer and got the killer’s body. Then again, having myself and a dozen armed men at her side couldn’t have hurt our case. We claimed the body from the guards of the Inn and I let it finish bleeding out on the suite’s carpet. Horatio’s carpet. I can see some of you are confused as to how I knew who had financed the assassins against Aelia? Well, I hate to give away my tricks, but I guess this once it will be acceptable. Horatio owns the Inn, staying here because of the comfort available, retreating to his fortress up the hill if the town is assaulted. Now, if you were a public figure, subject to assassinations yourself, would you trust the master key to anyone else? I wouldn’t. Everyone has a price, everyone. Electors know this, trust me. He gave the Assassin’s Guild the master key. What if they wanted to use it against him? They couldn’t. I took a walk around the castle before coming to see Aelia, and saw while all the other locks and door handles were antique, vertigrised bronze, the lock to Horatio’s room was brand new and shiny. If he had been successful, Horatio could replace all the locks in the same fashion, once again keeping the master key for himself. The one he had given the Guild would then be worthless.

Aelia had been planning on safeguarding her people; now she was



planning war. The Verenan cleric had told her everything he had seen and heard. Not really my problem, though. I was more interested in what the assassin’s corpse could tell me. Theo sat nearby, leaning over me as I stripped the body. The most valuable thing I did find is that the assassin had worn a whisper mail shirt. Whisper mail is expensive, and therefore rare. It is made by taking a sparsely linked mail shirt and threading the spaces with black leather cords. No jingle to alert anyone and most of the protection of regular chain. Perfect for the assassin.

Theo sat back on the couch where I had hidden to kill the first assassin, and watched me doing my grisly work. “So what do you hope to find, Crowe?”

“I’m not sure, Theo.” I heaved the corpse over, unlacing the thin gambeson so I could slip it off him.

“What happens now, will they give up?”

“No, the assassin’s guild will never give up unless the target or the employer dies.”

“So Lady Talabecland will be forever watching for a knife in the dark, then?”

I looked up from my work; the unlined, youthful face was frightened and drawn. To him the world had been a simple place of honour and duty until Horatio had taught him different with hired thugs and professional killers. I wish I could give him some hope... wait... The fog was parting... just a bit... whispering to me in its half-heard song. “Tonight, before the Assassin’s Guild learns of this one’s failure. If we can find them and kill the Guild-master. No one knows of the specific jobs the Members have taken except the Master and the assassin, to prevent anyone from stealing work from anyone else. If we can reach him before he can auction the job to anyone else...”

“Auction?”

There was a pressure in my head beginning to build, pushing at my eyes. “Assassins bid on jobs. The one who bids lowest gets it and the difference

THE FORUM

Finally, some letters. Issue thirteen's article *The Warriors' Grimoire* certainly seemed to stir a few pens to paper. The feedback was an even mixture of love and hate, a spilt the following letters don't necessarily reflect. As always, keep them coming...

"Munchkinism at its worst"

Richard Iorio: In all, issue #13 was a pretty good issue. I enjoyed the interview with Kim Newman and the look at *Warhammer Fiction*, and it helped me decide not to pursue any of more of these books. Rick Davis did a very good job, and I agree with his statements on Konard. Tim Eccle's *Correspondent*, as always, helps to rethink the views on the Old World. Some may complain that the details are not necessary, but they help trying to put the world into context. I even enjoyed parts of Garrett Lepper's *The Road to Damnation* but did find some of it bit tedious and over-classified.

The one article that I had problems with is *Ouroboros' The Warriors' Grimoire*. My question after reading this: is this necessary?

The Warriors' Grimoire is nothing more than a way for players to overpower their characters and make them into killing machines. This is munchkinism at its worst, and the justification for these needed tricks is laughable.

The author writes: "In this article, we will try to expand the repertoire of the common WFRP warrior to allow them to become real experts with the blade."

Basically what he has done is create power stunts that can be bought with experience points. These stunts then allow the fighter to do things such as "Parry and Bind Out."

Through out the piece needless rules and die rolls are called for, and there is no explanation of what is going on. If stances are so important to this new system of combat, why are they not described in detail?

Also, why the hair splitting. Not only do we have "Two Blade," but "Two Mass," "Two Axe," "Axe/Blade," "Axe/Mass", and "Blade/Mass." Why not simply create a two weapon fighting skill?

All of this can be assumed in the WS stat to keep combat and the game streamlined. Role playing can be used to this effect as well. All these tips and tricks do is clutter combat and add needless rule systems into the game.

My players, through about a year of play, have received around 1,000 EPs. They are far too busy saving and buying skills and stats, and do not have time for these little tricks.

These rules would wreak havoc on a game, but I suppose if you are munchkin gamer, and want to be an effective power gamer, this would appeal to you. Sadly, it didn't to me. For me it was the low point of what was a really good issue.

"System overly complex and cumbersome"

Alfred Nunez: With eager anticipation I awaited month after month for issue 13 to arrive at my doorstep. A few issues ago, *Warpstone* supplanted *White Dwarf* as my favourite game magazine (these are the only two I found worthy of a subscription, by the way).

All started well with Rick Davis' review on *Warhammer Fiction* and Tim Eccles' *The Correspondent*. The blow-by-blow critique of the novels was very detailed and fair. Though I didn't agree with all his points, I found the article very informative and look forward to Rick's review of the latest editions of *Warhammer* novels.

The *Correspondent* was as thought provoking as Tim intended. The joy of the regular feature is that it adds depth to areas that most GMs (myself included) gloss over, and this month was no exception. Should I ever regain the role of omnipresent GM in my gaming group, I will use Tim's efforts to create havoc among my players (hee hee).

The interview with Kim Newman was interesting and provided some insight in his dealings with Games Workshop, especially at a time when GW's interest in WFRP was beginning to wane. I would have hoped that GW was more interested in maintaining some level of continuity between their game world and that presented in Newman's novels. (Subsequent releases of WFB amply demonstrated that nothing in the background was set in stone.)

Then I hit the first pothole in what was an otherwise smooth ride so far.

The basis for *The Warrior's Grimoire* by *Ouroboros* was to give fighters a chance to differentiate themselves from others of their profession much as (the author's view) wizards personalising "themselves with their spells." To me, the contents of the article amounted to nothing more than an attempt to make a fairly smooth combat system overly complex and cumbersome. The author claims that the use of the new skills only adds moments to the time required to conduct combat once players are familiar with their own character's tactics. Until then,

the play of combat is obviously slowed down. Let's us not forget the NPCs. Surely they, too, would be allowed access to these same skills. If so, then the GM would also have to keep on top of all the relevant skills, which would slow down play further. To what end? A more realistic combat system? A number of other games offer such, but most prefer to sacrifice some realism for speed of play.

The Warrior's Grimoire also seemed to be a means of introducing power-gaming into WFRP. One skill in particular, "Combination Strike" allows a highly skilled fighter, say a Mercenary Captain, a chance to greatly increase their attacks. Thus, a PC who has reached this pinnacle of achievement has a good chance (with some good dice rolls) of being equally as deadly a fighter (even with the negative modifiers) as the over-powerful Elf Wardancer. A band of warriors with these skills would be able to wade through a multitude of skeletons with relative ease.

Hmm. Now that I think on it, *The Warrior's Grimoire* didn't use one of the stronger elements of WFRP: careers. It seems that in his attempt to provide a means to differentiate one fighter from another, the author doesn't limit the new skills to one career or another, thereby making each a "generic" skill for fighters. (I wonder if Assassins are classified in this scheme as a "fighter".) The use of an all-encompassing career of fighter, rather than the various careers detailed in WFRP, seems to be an attempt by the author to make WFRP look more like a certain high fantasy FRP. I wonder what's next. New skills for Thieves? Rangers? Academics? (Or will this be somehow split between Magic Users and Clerics)?

Issue 13 then picked up with John Foody's *Remains of the Knight*. The adventure was fairly straight forward. What I liked most of all was the detailed background which provided some historical content to a rather undeveloped area in the Empire.

I continued to read the latest *Warpstone* when I hit another pothole. Garrett Lepper's *The Road to Damnation* didn't offer much, in my opinion. The author's attempt to categorise such things as the degrees of secrecy for cults, a leader's introduction to and motivation of the cult, and the activities of a cult was needless hairsplitting. At one point, the author even stated, "note that there is some overlap since such subjects can rarely be defined to neat categories." So, why do it? In my view, the article could have been more tightly written had the author dispensed with the unwarranted categorisations. As it stands, I found the piece as interesting as the attempts by some people to derive new, marginal careers from those that appear in the WFRP book. Various "soldier" careers come to mind...

Editor (JF): *Richard and Alfred's letters pick up on an important point. For many players, adding extra skills and rules to combat serves only to complicate the smooth flow that the basic rules provide. Personally, I fall into this category - the less rules the better.*

However, many players are interested in adding something new to their combat. The Warrior's Grimoire does this. Any addition will, of course, slow things down but some players will be happy with this trade off if it gives them an extra layer of "realism".

"May appeal to GW players"

Peter Butterworth: With respect to review of *warhammer* fiction, a review of the new novels released by the black library would be more timely: I want to know whether I should buy these or not. The fiction review and the interview were exhaustive (a bit long ?), yet *Warpstone* should continue to print this type of article. The main reason is we wouldn't see such articles if *Warpstone* didn't do them. However, I guess the interest for such articles must not be very great unless you are a hardcore *warhammer* fan, as they are not very useful for game play.

The *Correspondent* article brings up interesting questions. However I never seem to completely agree with Tim Eccles' views on the subject. For me the equality of both sexes in the old world, an idea he expressed in a previous issue, is wrong : there are other ways of handling these problems. I certainly don't want politically correct roleplaying.

On to *The Warriors' Grimoire*. Gosh, I certainly don't need all these new rules. I guess this article is not much use to me. The combat system may need some updating but it must stay simple, quick and deadly.

I believe the *Sold in the Hills* scenario to be a truly excellent. Moody, not overpowered, no magical artefacts lying everywhere, coherent, very well written, very well illustrated. It is superior to most officially published WFRP scenarios. The background in the *Warpstone* scenarios (by John Foody) is very strong and

good. You don't even have to play the scenario for it to be useful. However, the Remains of the Knight scenario is the weakest scenario in recent issues of Warpstone. These "stop the cult", "stop the ritual", "save the town" type scenarios are becoming a bit repetitive (the background is still very good though). It sometimes seems just about every imperial citizen is a chaos cultist in disguise.

One problem the Warhammer GM has to address in order to play a scenarios is, how do I get the PCs properly involved in the plot? A poor way to do this (the way many scenarios are written):

- PCs meet NPC {at an inn}
- NPC says "do action"
- PCs agree, they do action {and find cultists}
- PCs follow the plot in order to stop beastly ritual {optional}

But why should the PCs agree?

The way you can get the PCs involved properly will be different for just about every Warhammer group that exists. Even if scenarios are rewritten in the previous fashion, yet they are not intended to be played that way.

A Darkness Over Nuln was very poor indeed. It isn't correct to my idea of WFRP and reading it wasn't enjoyable. Please don't waste a page on a sequel! Maybe it will appeal to GW players!??

Editor(JF): *An accusation often levelled at WFRP scenarios is are all of the "hunt the cultist" variety. As Peter says, "it sometimes seems just about every imperial citizen is a chaos cultist in disguise." This is true, to a degree, but Warpstone has tried hard to stay away from making every scenario filled with cultists. I think we have succeeded overall, although we have had two of this ilk recently. I don't think there is any possibility, or want, to avoid this aspect of the Old World entirely. The trick is to find new ways of doing it. More important is to ensure the motivation and acts of cultists, although influenced by Chaos, remain realistic and thought out. Remains of the Knight does seem to have been generally unpopular, but perhaps this is, in part, because of cultist fatigue. Getting PCs involved in the scenario is also a problematic point. As a scenario writer, all I can do is make a generalised introduction. GMs need to mould it around their own campaign. (Hey, I have to do it too!)*

THE WARRIORS' GRIMOIRE: SOME Q & A

Editor (JF): The following questions originally appeared on the Warhammer list, but I thought they made some good points so we duplicated them here. Weapon master Ouroboros answers the questions...

Claas: Once again a damned good issue. I especially liked the article from Ouroboros about combat manoeuvres. It was just the thing I always missed without realising I did. It gives the simple and straight combat rules in WFRP the extra edge, without flashy magics or something un-warhammerish. But as much as I liked it, there were a few things I didn't fully comprehend or thought to be a bit strange:

Don't get me wrong I loved the article and can't wait to confront my PCs with a NPC able to use the stances and a few manoeuvres (and possibly teaching one or two...), I'm just a notorious nitpicker (the more I like something, the more I start picking around).

Q. Bash: If the attacker fails his Weapons Skill test, does it mean the whole bash attack fails or does the attacker just not gain the D3 extra Strength?

A. Should the WS test fail, it means the attacker has telegraphed his attack too loudly and his opponent has stepped out of the way: he misses, but still runs the full length he otherwise should have. Combined with Trip... could spell disaster for the charger.

Q. Combination Strike: Does the attacker gain D3 strikes per Attack or (irrespective of Attacks) per round? When the former is the case, can the attacker use his other Attacks otherwise, or does he/she have to use all Attacks in this way (ie. Attacks multiplied by D3)?

A. Attacks multiplied by D3. However, it must be remembered that these attacks are all at 1/2 weapon skill and -2 to damage. This allows experienced warriors to take on small bands of snotlings, rats and such or finish off several tired, wounded opponents. Used against healthy, competent opponents, it is unwise in the extreme, as if you hit and if you do damage, it is likely only to delay your demise. It is also useful for holding people at bay who don't want to risk getting even a little hurt. Most people fall into this category. I mean, would you take on a guy with a knife unless you really had to? ("g'on clem, he's only got a sword.. it won't hurt much...")

Q. Corps-a-corps: I'm far from being a hand-to-hand combat expert, but why does an attacker get -20 WS for stabbing with a short off-hand weapon. The combatants are so close to each other they should get a bonus to hit rather than a minus, shouldn't they? Apart from this, this technique doesn't make any (or many a) sense to me.

A. The big issue about trying to hit someone with an off-handed weapon while in corps-a-corps is that you are too close - body contact close. It is much easier to kick the guy in his nuts than to plant 12" of steel in his kidney.

Also the other factor - and it's a major factor - is keeping the pressure on the opponent's blade. If he gets that blade free then you are in deep trouble. On the other hand, if you put on too much pressure and he backs off, you fall on your face. The secret lies in using the crosspiece of the sword to 'lock' your opponent's blade into place. Not easy, and it also requires constant maintenance and concentration to keep from losing him.

All that concentration means less focus can be given to that off hand, and thus the -20. Perhaps -10 would have been more reasonable, but I didn't want to seem soft in front of all the other GMs of the world [grin].

The various disarms are hard to do from corps-a-corps, unless they involve stabbing him or grabbing his hand (Wrist-grapple). If you are strong enough, I suppose you could lock his blade, then twist it out of his hand, but it requires a level of strength, skill and flexibility in the wrist I can hardly imagine. Remember, you have to not only get his sword into your control, and keep it, but move it fast enough and far enough, that he

can't hold it. Face-to face with no room to move, it's a nightmare to try.

Corps-a-corps is actually rarely done in real life. There are only 4 reasons I have ever done it.

a) Fatigue. Fighting taxes every level of your being and a little rest is nice once in a while. When you lock blades, you get a moment, like two fighters locking up in the ring to catch a quick breath.

b) to plant a secondary weapon (that hopefully he hasn't seen).

c) to grab his wrist to use superior strength and mass against him. Some guys are light enough that I could literally grab their wrist and toss them off their feet by yanking hard. Once they are off balance and/or on the ground, with my left mit over their right wrist, the fight was over.

d) To not kill someone. If I need a few seconds to reason with a guy I don't want to kill. I can make him listen by stopping the fight until my charm wins him over.

Q. Feint: According to the rules stated for a Feint, every fighter capable of this technique would use it under any circumstances, at least before striking a 'normal' blow, as it has no disadvantage compared to a 'normal' blow. I think the Feint should only be successful when the opponent indeed tries to parry or dodge the 'strike' (ie. the feint). Another option would be to require two successful Weapon Skill tests instead of one.

A. You are correct. And it is an oversight. My reasoning for it is that everyone who can feint, does. It only takes a split second, is easy to abort, and does exactly what it is supposed to. A good feint is impossible to tell from a real strike, and tires the defender much more than the attacker. For game balance purposes, however, you are correct.

I re-read the text and it is not exceedingly clear, but it does require 2 WS tests, one to feint, and, if both are successful, then the blow cannot be avoided.

Q. Headsman's chop: I do not see the meaning of such a technique; what is it good for? A prone opponent (as mentioned later in the article) always suffers double damage from an incoming attack. While I don't see a disadvantage in the Feint, I don't see an advantage in the Headman's chop (both in comparison to a 'normal' strike).

A. I was under the impression (from a debate on the mailing list) that normal 'doubled' damage was done so: Roll, figure damage, subtract Toughness, double the remainder to wounds. The headsman's chop has you roll dice, double the roll then add modifiers and subtract Toughness. It provides more damage on average (but not in every instance).

Q. Pinking: Isn't 'Hand' a typo? Head should be inserted, shouldn't it?

A. Actually hand is correct. Pinking is striking a part of the body to disable the attacker's ability to fight. Severed tendons, swelling and cramping occur when damage is done. Also, the hand is in a much more strikeable position than the head, as it is waaaaay out there with the sword in it. Swordsman, if they have time, usually dissect their opponents, rendering them incapable of fighting back before killing them.

It also allows a protagonist to actually win a fight to first blood without worrying about a death-sentence for a clumsy strike.

Q. Slide-Cut: One of the techniques I appreciated most. The modifications sound reasonable, but I think the hand would be also incapacitated in all cases (until it receives medical attention) and thus the combatant disarmed in the first place (but anyway that should be self-explanatory).

A. You are perhaps correct, or a Toughness test to see if the pain is too great. If it seems more realistic to have the weapon dropped or worse, feel free. It seemed that it was a little too extreme for such an easy sword-trick. But you have a very valid point.

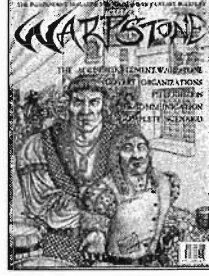
Q. Wrist Grapple: Is a free hand needed to use this technique?

A. Yes, a free off hand (or favoured hand if the weapon is in your off hand) is required.

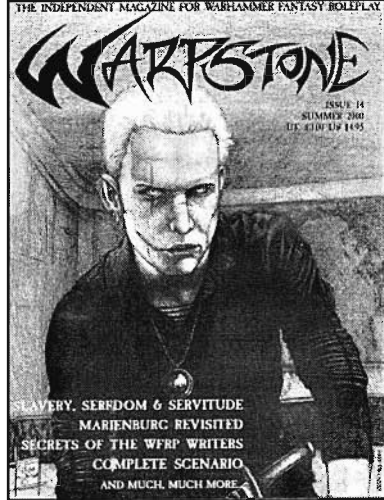
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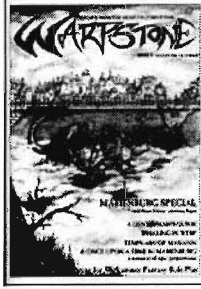


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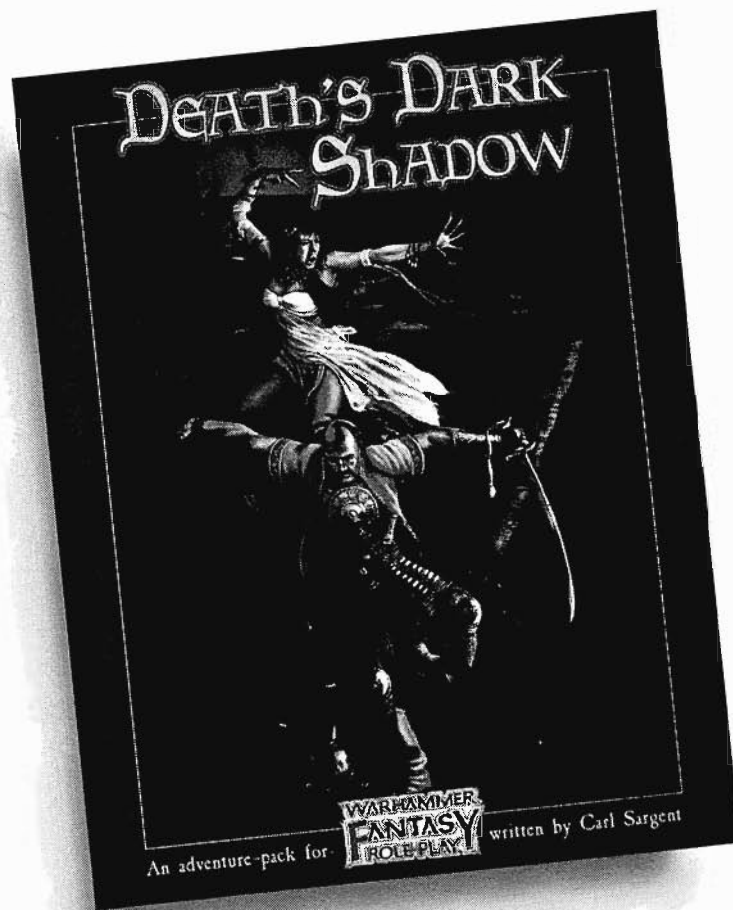
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