

# ARTSTONE

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## EDITORIAL

By John Foody

As far as WFRP is concerned I chose entirely the wrong two weeks to take my holiday this year. I returned to an inbox filled with hundreds of e-mails, many asking, 'have you heard?'

Yes, it is true. WFRP is soon to be alive again. Press statements from Black Industries (a subsidiary of Games Workshop) and Green Ronin, a well-respected RPG company, announced they would jointly be producing a new version of the game. So, a new rulebook, a campaign date of 2520IC, the backing of Games Workshop, no D20, well...

There's more talk of this major development inside this issue, including interviews with the main players.

'But what does it mean for *Warpstone*?' you cry. At the moment we don't really know. We have been talking to Black Industries, who contacted *Warpstone* (and other leading fan efforts) as soon as the announcement was made. What they did say was that they liked *Warpstone*, which we were happy to hear! By the time you read this things will probably be clearer.

We will be becoming a WFRP2 magazine with all that entails. Articles will continue to appear in the next few issues for the current background as we have a few in the pipeline. However, this doesn't mean we will be limiting ourselves in any way.

It is probably safe to assume that, little will change in most WFRP games. Campaigns tend to take place at the lower levels of society, or certainly places were it doesn't really matter who the Emperor and Grand Theogonist are. What matters is that the game world retains the elements of what makes WFRP great. This is the greatest challenge facing the writers of the new game and we eagerly await its arrival.

We are also pleased to announce that *Warpstone* now has its own dedicated forum. Andrew from Critical Hit ([www.criticalhit.co.uk](http://www.criticalhit.co.uk)) offered to host this for us and we were pleased to say yes. It's been useful for us so far and we hope it provides a new element to enjoying *Warpstone*. I think this does mean a final end to the traditional *Warpstone* letters page. Due to the lack of letters it's been an erratic presence anyway. We've been criticised on a number of occasions for having no letters' page, but it's really only been due to a lack of letters. Anyway, you'll no longer have to put up with me asking you to put pen to paper.

Finally, many of you will have immediately recognised the work of this issue's cover artist. Oh yes! Ian Miller, among the finest of all WFRP artists (and it is a very fine field) did a cover for us. Many thanks to Ian, a true gent.

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[www.warpstone.darcore.net](http://www.warpstone.darcore.net)

## 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 not 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 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 the world of Warhammer, filling the gaps that are present. We also look at how the game is played, discussing issues relevant to gamers.

If you have an article but you are not sure whether it is 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. See our guidelines as Scenarios.

## REPORTS FROM THE HEART OF CORRUPTION

### Reviews

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We have a look at a couple of unofficial efforts – the second part of *A Private War* and the on-line Bergsburg project.

“This is a very welcome addition and correction to the entire WFRP world.”



### Keep it Secret!

19

Some ideas for GMs on why secrecy can help the atmosphere of your game.

“In many cases this familiarity can lead players to become blasé about certain aspects of the game.”



### Fragments

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The latest news to affect the world of WFRP, including the new version of WFRP.

“Highlights included the pun-ridden WFRP version of the Italian Job.”



### Going Underground

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A fresh look at using underground areas in WFRP by adding some realism.

“Underground races like Dwarfs may burn oil to produce carbon monoxide so it sits in deep points to act as a trap.”



### The Warpstone Interview

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We talk to the main players behind the new version of WFRP – Simon Butler of Black Industries and Chris Pramas of Green Ronin.

“A lot of my work is simplifying, clarifying, and streamlining.”



### Don't Look Now!

28

A scenario of supernatural nonsense set in Marienburg. Just what did the PCs see?

“Yes, we have seven hills in Remas. Here, they have no hills. Whaddaya do with a city with no hills, eh?”



### Getting There

10

Just how long does it take to get from Nuln to Talabheim? No more peering at the map with a ruler and rates of travel. A rough and ready guide to help you out.

“It's a long way to walk.”



### Talabheim

47

The Talabheim Project finally comes to an end as we look outside the crater.

“In the centre of the graveyard are the elaborate mausoleums built by wealthy Sigmarites to honour themselves and their families.”



### The Correspondent

11

Tim Eccles regular column takes a look at using real world history in WFRP.

“Or might Wood Elf music be the equivalent of the typical ‘Yes’ track, lasting a couple of days (and for the introduction only)?”



### A Dark Art in The Bright Light

55

Part One of a close look at alchemy in the Old World.

“Alchemy is closely related to astrology for both aspire to discover the higher knowledge of our relationship to the gods.”



### The Sign Post of History

13

Some thoughts on where the Old World may be going.

“Eventually, assuming he continues trying, he will be assassinated by the Skaven, whether acting on their own or in the clandestine employ of rivals.”



### Treasure Hunt

60

Dangerous men and dangerous times in our short story inspired by “Death's Dark Shadow”.

“Next time we will use a real daemonologist!”



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### ABBREVIATIONS

A	Number of Attacks	Fel	Fellowship	M	Movement	SL	Secret Language
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	RoS	Realm of Sorcery	WFRP	Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay
EPs	Experience Points	Int	Intelligence	S	Strength	WP	Will Power
ES	Effective Strength	Ld	Leadership	SDTR	Marienburg: Sold Down the River	WS	Weapon Skill

# THE BERGSBURG PROJECT

On-line WFRP Resource

Reviewed by Peter Rutkowski

Bergsburg is a magical place. No, not your d20-fantasy town teeming with incoherent unrestrained forces of mumbojumbo in for a thoroughly mindless hack 'n' slay. This online work-in-progress may well be called magical since it constitutes nothing less than what the early apostles of the world wide web wanted their medium to be, a never-ending project that lives and prospers through the community participating in it.

Bergsburg was the invention - and nowadays is under the overall quality control of the 'Council of Five', aka first and foremost Luke Twigger with Arne Dam, Clive Oldfield, Ryan Wileman and Joe Colman. Among past council members and contributors one will notice names of writers of WFRP books and many whose work has graced the pages of *Warpstone*. But while in this hallowed publication they do it on their own, so to speak, in Bergsburg they add to a bigger picture. As so often happens, intelligent restrictions enhance creativity no end. This applies to Bergsburg in the best sense.

Bergsburg lies to the Southeast of Middenheim, close to the range of the Middle Mountains on the main road connecting Middenheim and Talabheim. It is a good choice for various reasons. The town is part of the WFRP geo-political background but was never much elaborated on in the official Games Workshop products nor in those of Hogshead Publishing although recently it seems to have disappeared completely. It lies way off the path adventurers will tread while trying to save The Empire from itself in *The Enemy Within* campaign. As one of the larger or at least economically and politically more relevant settlements of The Empire, it can be, depending on how you want your games to develop, an important place, a place where adventuring lives can start. Or end.

While it is still in development (as it is meant to be) there is already enough fleshed out for no end of adventure right inside the town's boundaries. Indeed, Bergsburg provides almost enough material to have an adventuring life begin and end there with nothing more than an occasional foray into the unknown beyond the town's gates.

Bergsburg's shape is an almost square (which is strange and reminds one more of a Roman military camp), divided into east and west by the winding Drakwasser river. There are nine town quarters, Helmsberg, Beilheim, Verenenstadt, Rolandsbrucke to the west, Sudentor, Viehstadt, Grossplatz, Harzel and Osttor to the east. To those who know their German (pardon me, their Reikspiel), these names already indicate what you can find under the various well laid-out indices: in general they offer very nicely developed locations, people, stories and histories. The maps are in the 'classical' style of GW publications for WFRP (example shown on this page) and the rumours and colourful sayings at the bottom of the pages add to the overall impression of a vibrant town. This actually transcends the harsh boundaries of the standard fantasy town setting, aka town gate, watch house, stables, tavern, eternally shady side alleys. Truly, Bergsburg has left 'fantasy' behind and become 'real'.

Looking at single locations, or rather postings, one can find a fascinating multitude of characters, background stories, mysteries and architectural descriptions. The Ulrican Templar who has to do penance by only carrying a stick as weaponry is so good one would like to use him as a recurring wandering character for the entire Empire. Alas, he has been set so well into the context of the town, but nonetheless this reformed bully alone makes it worth a visit to Bergsburg. Taking a look at the recent posting, *The Rat and Shovel* by Peter Johnston, you will learn more about seedy taverns and pit-fighting than you ever wanted to know. This is a very welcome addition and correction to the entire WFRP world. Pit fighters are no longer a gamer's easy way

around the anti-social barbarian, they are indeed poor sods, either nut cases no longer able to interact in a civilised fashion with the rest of the world or nearly brain-dead cripples wholly dependent on the goodwill of others. One could go on, but better to look for yourself and pick and choose.

Undoubtedly, the town of Bergsburg's biggest shortcoming is its layout. This in fact is a major flaw, perhaps not obvious at first glance, but anyone with more than a passing knowledge of the history of city development will soon see the problem when looking at the Bergsburg map. Simply put, it's a question of rotating everything by 90 degrees. As you move through Bergsburg from south to north the town becomes richer. A minor flaw is the too-even distribution of quarters and their almost identical size. One would have expected the better living quarters or the main trading places to be somewhat smaller and with separate names and character.

There appears no good reason why the south should house the working poor and the north the well-to-do. Indeed, one would expect the poorer quarters along the riverside (traditional work place and in every other town than Bergsburg the main sewage outlet). Whatever the major sites of importance or influence in the current Bergsburg, the first settlement would have been along the banks of the Drakwasser river. With The Empire's waterways constituting the premier traffic system it would be obvious that stevedores, dockyard workers, porters and wagoners concentrate along the river and especially near the port facilities. Consequently, their housing wouldn't be too far away. But in Bergsburg as it is, the workers have a rather long jog to work and back. This might - in an 18th/19th-century version of WFRP - lead to Bergsburg being the place where they invent the bicycle - or at least the horse-drawn omnibus.

I would rather have liked to have seen a well-developed dockyard quarter to both sides of the river with only a few 'safe' streets opening up to the better quarters, temples, merchant houses and city squares, plus a colourful bustling ferry or bridge toll business including the streams of pilgrims from Talabheim or Middenheim. This does

not rule out seedier areas in other quarters. Indeed something like The Pit and corresponding places of interest ('The Rat and Shovel') could well be only a couple of streets away from more refined areas. As Bergsburg is decidedly smaller than Altdorf and Middenheim a bit more leeway in this direction and a bit more anarchy in 'town planning', would do the place much good.

The gap between addition of new material to the site is sometimes erratic and this lets the project down. Bergsburg is not your run-of-the-mill published-on-paper WFRP supplement. As an online resource from which enterprising gamemasters can pick and choose as they wish, it gives the community an unprecedented freedom of adventuring. As such, the Bergsburg project deserves the highest praise. And may many of us come up with ideas worthy of the hallowed Council of Five's attention.

## The Bergsburg Project

You can find the Bergsburg project at [bergsburg.darcore.net](http://bergsburg.darcore.net) (or use the link from the *Warpstone* website).



## ALL QUIET IN KISLEV

By Tim Eccles

Reviewed by Luke Twigger



All Quiet in Kislev

By  
Tim Eccles

The Independent WFRP Campaign

*All Quiet in Kislev* (AQiK) is a WFRP scenario independently produced by Tim Eccles. It forms the second part of a campaign trilogy, set in and around the border between The Empire and Kislev, which began in *A Private War* (reviewed in *Warpstone* 19). As written, AQiK is not intended as a stand-alone product, so is only of limited interest to those who do not already have *A Private War*.

Presumably due to issues of cost and ease of self-publication, the format for this book is more basic than was used for *A Private War*. Once

again, the text is presented in a clear and straightforward fashion with the emphasis on content rather than style. Most of the maps and plans are scans of hand sketches, though the main regional map has had a more professional treatment.

In *A Private War*, the PCs were drawn into the pursuit of a doctor who had fled Middenheim. That book finished with the doctor crossing the Kislev border with the PCs not far behind. AQiK continues the action directly. There are notes concerning various NPCs from *A Private War*, many of whom are unlikely to continue the pursuit. Details are provided describing what differences may be observed once the PCs are in Kislev rather than The Empire.

The overall adventure style remains similar to that in *A Private War*. Details are given of the various towns, villages and other locations that the doctor passed through on his journey. The PCs follow, several days behind, and must pick up clues as to where to head next. In general it's easier to discover the necessary information than in *A Private War*, though making further enquiries often reveals extra clues.

In addition to the main pursuit, most locations have distracting intrigues and adventures that the PCs can participate in as much or as little as they wish. Most of these have some kind of political angle and the PCs can make themselves various friends and enemies amongst the local nobility and religious establishments. Many of the side quests have the potential scope to develop into significant story lines with some extra work by the GM.

One addition I appreciated, lacking from *A Private War*, are notes from Tim's personal sessions where he playtested this campaign. These were generally insightful and suggested some alternative approaches to the main text.

As with *A Private War*, a sizeable proportion of the text is contained in appendices. Some of these are related to the adventure, containing NPC profiles, organisations, etc. Two of them are dedicated to

Rumours and Dreams. These allow fore-shadowing to be employed while also offering red herrings and further adventure hooks.

Of more general interest was the section on the Garderike region, located on the border between The Empire and Kislev. This area has not been covered in existing supplements and this chapter will be of use for GMs wishing to set further adventures in the area.

Naturally, for an adventure taking place in Kislev, some reference must be made to *Something Rotten In Kislev*, the Ken Rolston segment of the famous *The Enemy Within* campaign. Something Rotten in Kislev polarises the WFRP community more than almost any other supplement and it is clear that Tim is not a fan of *Something Rotten in Kislev*. One of the appendices is dedicated to a discussion of what problems Tim sees in it and how this relates to the material presented in AQiK. Tim also addresses some continuity errors found on maps presented in various official supplements.

Finally, there are several pages containing errata, clarification and discussion of *A Private War*.

The general style and format offers more of the same, with more hints and clues being revealed of the overall story arc. The campaign is continued in the third part, *Homeward Bound*. In summary, if you played and enjoyed *A Private War*, you will want and need this book in order to continue the adventure. If you don't own *A Private War* then this will be of less use, although the background material is good.

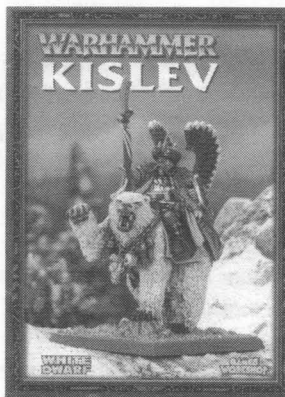
For more information on *All Quiet in Kislev* visit [www.shadow-warriors.co.uk/Warhammer.htm](http://www.shadow-warriors.co.uk/Warhammer.htm)

## KISLEV

Warhammer Army Book by Gav Thorpe

Published by Games Workshop

Reviewed by John Foody



Back with *White Dwarf* 288 came this *Warhammer Fantasy Battle* supplement for Kislev. Of the 34 pages, there are around eight that contain background of potential interest to WFRP.

Inside, you get background to the country that differs from that presented in *Something Rotten in Kislev*. The main change is the disappearance of the Norse as leaders, largely replaced by the Gospodars. Three new gods are introduced, and apart from the fact that the god of thunder is named Tor, they could be easily slipped into any WFRP game. Ulric, Taal and the Spirits all retain a place. The various military units described will add colour while there are also descriptions of Tzarina Katarina and Tzar Boris, depending on who you have ruling the country.

WFB background material often needs to be taken with a pinch of salt before using in WFRP. However, this Kislev background will work better than most as a starting point. If you don't own *Something Rotten in Kislev* then it's worth picking up.

Visit the Warpstone Forum at

[www.criticalhit.co.uk](http://www.criticalhit.co.uk)

[www.criticalhit.co.uk/forums/forumdisplay.php?f=2](http://www.criticalhit.co.uk/forums/forumdisplay.php?f=2)

# WARPSTONE FRAGMENTS

BRIEF REVIEWS AND NEWS FROM THE WORLD OF WARHAMMER



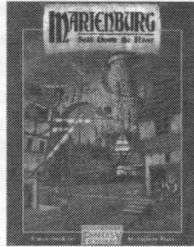
## TALABHEIM: BUILDERS WANTED



*Warpstone's* background to the city of Talabheim has come to end after seven issues. Now it is your chance to help build the Eye of the Forest. We want you to come up with a location, NPC or anything else that will drop right into the city. All the pieces we like will be published in *Warpstone* and the best will win a three issue subscription and a signed copy of either *Dwarfs: Stone & Steel* or *Marienburg: Sold Down the River*. The runner-up

will get the book the winner doesn't choose.

Your entry should be no more than 750 words long and you should make clear the district of Talabheim in which your entry is located. You should also include your name, address or e-mail address, and which prize you prefer.



The closing date is the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2004. The Editor's decision is final.

## Dwarf Competition

Charles Dawes is now the proud owner of the Ralph Horsley original artwork and a signed Copy of *Dwarfs: Stone and Steel*. He correctly answered "Josef Bugman" to the question in last issue's competition.

## Dis-Order

*Warpstone* had some confusion with a few orders recently. We believe everything has been sorted now and everyone contacted as appropriate. If you haven't heard back from us about an order then do get in touch.

## USD & EUR

*Warpstone* is now accepting cheques in Euros and US Dollars. Prices and further information can be found on our website.

## Grovel, Grovel...

Apologies to Clive Oldfield for missing his name from the credits last issue where he should have been listed as Associate Editor. We are also happy to welcome Steve Moss to the team.

## Warpstone Website

For those of you who haven't checked out the *Warpstone* site recently, it's well worth a visit. Not only are there loads of out of print articles, we've also got pieces exclusive to the site. Check out the following, which will appear soon:

*Playing the Game*: Nuln Politics by Dave Perry  
*Grovod Forest & Playing With Fire*: Convention scenarios by Alfred Nunez Jr.

*A Journey into Darkness & The Black Tower*: Parts 2 & 3 of *The Missing Children of Regensdorf* by Paul Williams.

## Legion

Also available from the site is *Legion*, our irregular newsletter, initially sent to subscribers. *Legion 4* is the most recent issue, containing Thoughts on using the *Champions of Chaos* book in WFRP and the 'Order of the Dark City', a reprint from issue one.

## TIMCON

For the first time in years (that we remember anyway) a dedicated WFRP convention took place. Organised by Tim Eccles of *Warpstone* and *A Private War* fame and

located somewhere in darkest West London on the 17<sup>th</sup> of April, twenty or so WFRPers gathered for a day of WFRP gaming.

Simply, it was a huge success. Highlights included the pun-ridden WFRP version of the Italian Job, a nuclear explosion, a duck-fearing targeteer and much more. A trip to the pub and a fine convention fanzine rounded the day off. 'When's the next one?' we cried.

Now we have the answer. For all who missed out the first time, TimCon2 will be taking place in Brentford, London on the 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2004.

Tickets are priced £6 (TBC). For more details, including a list of games, check out [www.shadow-warriors.co.uk/TimCon02.htm](http://www.shadow-warriors.co.uk/TimCon02.htm). We hope to see you there.

## A Private War

Tim Eccles has reduced the cost of *A Private War* to £5 within the UK and £6.50 elsewhere. Full details are at [www.shadow-warriors.co.uk/Warhammer.htm](http://www.shadow-warriors.co.uk/Warhammer.htm).

## NEXT ISSUE

### LICHEHOOD

How to become a master of undead

### CONSPIRACY IN MARIENBURG

Part one of an epic scenario

### THE ORDER OF THE BLACK GRIFFON

Protecting pilgrims in the name of Sigmar

& MUCH, MUCH MORE...

OUT  
LATE  
2004



# WFRP IS DEAD! LONG LIVE WFRP!

## The Second Coming of WFRP by John Foody

After months of speculation the immediate future of WFRP was finally decided. April 2004 brought announcements from Black Industries, a subsidiary of Games Workshop, and Green Ronin, the US RPG Company. The announcement stated that, "Green Ronin has been named exclusive RPG developer for Games Workshop's intellectual properties, including *Warhammer* and *Warhammer 40,000*. The games will be published by Black Industries, the new RPG imprint of Black Library Publishing. Work has already begun on a new edition of the classic *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* game."

The direct involvement of Games Workshop and an outside company was a surprise, for few expected this mixed approach. Games Workshop are not going it alone, recognising that they have no recent RPG experience. Rumours and discussion mushroomed on WFRP forums and for the first time in a long while, there was a positive feeling about the future of the game.

Meanwhile, the man in charge of Black Industries, Simon Butler, made himself known to the fans. He contacted the leading website editors to say hello and began to participate in on-line discussions, saying that Black Industries had been monitoring fan forums for some time.

Green Ronin were quieter but they had been developing the game for some months already. The reaction to Green Ronin's involvement has been positive. They are seen as one of the leading quality designers of RPGs, having been heavily involved with d20. The lead designer behind Green Ronin, Chris Pramas, is the author of *Death in Freeport*, a scenario often favourably compared to WFRP.

While the initial excitement faded a little as the news dried up, the sense of anticipation remained. Simply, to date, Green Ronin and Black Industries have been saying the right things. There were going to be changes, but the kind of changes that fans have been after for years. Few would argue that WFRP is perfect and a second edition is the ideal way to relaunch the game.

The main points coming from the early information were generally broad. There would be a new version of WFRP, one based on the current rules. A new magic system was promised but the parts that worked would largely stay. It was about time this happened and choosing to stick with the old rules shows their strength has been

recognised.

Fears that WFRP would become d20, while remote, were finally dismissed, with Chris Pramas saying in the *Warpstone* interview (page 6) "certain parts of the d20 System increasingly drove me crazy the more I worked with it, and I've been determined to keep those things out of WFRP". Black Industries & Green Ronin have both been at pains to say that the background would not be that of *Warhammer Fantasy Battle*. Rather it would be unique to WFRP, taking the best parts from other Warhammer sources, including the current version. As the background will be set some years later than that of *The Enemy Within*), Green Ronin are taking the opportunity to revise virtually everything.

So what chance does a 20-year-old game have of success? Never a better one, Green Ronin have established their name on consistency and quality. This coupled with a promised eight books a year, shows the game should be well supported. Having the weight of Games Workshop behind the game should also broaden the its appeal to a new audience. There is a huge untapped RPG market of old Games Workshop players that could be tempted to give it a go, and Chris Pramas thinks that many d20 players are looking for something new. Most importantly WFRP has the quality of background and rules to impress.

Where might things go wrong? The influence of *Warhammer Fantasy Battle* also a potential problem, although only long-term. To start with we will have a consistent approach but what happens when *Warhammer Fantasy Battle* changes its background? A robust Black Industries/Green Ronin approach will take the best bits, but at worst, we could face 2<sup>nd</sup> editions of supplements, simply because the background is changed elsewhere.

It will also be interesting to see how well WFRP fares commercially in the US. Hogshead repeatedly had problems selling the game to some distributors, seemingly due to a mixture of dislike of Games Workshop and not wanting to stock smaller games. *Warpstone* has certainly been aware of many instances in the past of shops and distributors telling customers that WFRP/*Warpstone* was no longer available and no, they couldn't check it out.

One of the famous aspects of WFRP is its humour, its very British humour to be exact. It will be interesting to observe if any of this survives. Much seems likely to be lost with a mixture of international writers. However, in truth, it is an area that had disappeared with the more recent releases and has never been a strong point in *Warpstone*.

The designers also seem to be undertaking a lot of playtesting, which is always a good sign. Hopefully, this will result in a elegant and simple system.

If Black Industries & Green Ronin get all aspects of the game right, from design to selling, then WFRP can become one of the biggest RPGs on the market. Although unlikely to threaten d20 as a system it can certainly surpass the larger lines.

Come spring next year we will have some of the answers. Much hangs on the quality and success of the rulebook. The signs are good at present and I look forward to seeing how it all turns out. If the reassuring words from the main players are carried through then we have another 20 years of WFRP to look forward to.

Check out [www.blackindustries.com](http://www.blackindustries.com) and [www.greenronin.com](http://www.greenronin.com) for more information.

### WHO ARE GREEN RONIN?



Green Ronin Publishing is a game company from Seattle, USA. Over the past four years they have established their reputation, publishing such books as *Death in Freeport*, *Book of the Righteous*, and the *Mutants & Masterminds* RPG while winning multiple awards. They have a number of publishing partners, foremost of which is now Black Industries.

Green Ronin founder Chris Pramas made his name working on such game lines as *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* (he wrote a chapter in *Dying of the Light*), *Feng Shui*, and *Underground*. He later helped start Ronin Publishing. He then went to work as an RPG designer at Wizards of the Coast. While still at Wizards, he started Green Ronin Publishing as a side venture. Green Ronin proved so successful that after leaving Wizards in March of 2002, Chris jumped right into running the company full time.

# THE WARPSTONE INTERVIEW

## Warpstone talks to Chris Pramas of Green Ronin

**Warpstone:** Can you give us a brief history of your background in gaming?

Chris Pramas: I got into the hobby when I was 10 years old. My brother and I got the white-boxed D&D set and that was that really. Through *Dragon Magazine* I got into Avalon Hill games, miniatures, boardgames and an ever-broadening number of RPGs. I tried all kinds of RPGs in the early 80s, from MERP to *Gamma World* to *Chivalry & Sorcery* to *Twilight 2000*. I started playing *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* and *Warhammer Fantasy Battle* in college and soon WFRP had become our RPG of choice. We played more of that than anything else for a solid four years, though we did also play games like *Pendragon*, *Call of Cthulhu*, and WEG's *Star Wars* game in that era as well.

After a couple of false starts, I broke into freelance game writing in 1993. That started me on the long strange path that has ended up with Green Ronin doing WFRP2.

**WS:** Why was Green Ronin chosen to bring WFRP2 back to life? What is Green Ronin's part in WFRP2?

CP: Games Workshop was interested in getting back into RPGs but they realised that they didn't have people on staff familiar with the modern market. They were, in essence, looking for a company with expertise in the field. We had developed a reputation for excellence by this time, plus I had written for WFRP before and done a series of short stories for *Inferno Magazine*. Games Workshop favoured us because Green Ronin is a market leader in RPGs and I was already well versed in both the Warhammer and 40K settings.

At GAMA Trade Show 2002 I had a meeting with Andy Jones [GW's head of their Entertainment and Media Division – Ed], who was doing some research on the roleplaying market. Afterwards, he told me that he'd be willing to entertain a licensing proposal from us. My original pitch was for Green Ronin to license a 40K RPG and publish it. Andy liked the proposal but wasn't sure what Games Workshop's RPG strategy was going to be yet. We kept in touch, meeting periodically over the following two years. Games Workshop finally decided that they wanted to publish RPGs themselves, so I put together a new pitch with Green Ronin as a design house. That pitch was the basis of the deal we signed earlier this year.

So basically, we work with the Black Industries team to agree the product range – what books we're going to be doing, what's in them, and how they're structured. Then we handle the writing, editing, illustration, and layout. Black Industries prints, markets, and sells the books. It's a much better deal for us than a straight up license would have been. Having GW's full weight behind the new RPG line is going to help tremendously.

Our basic mandate is to make the RPG of the Warhammer World and we are working very closely with Black Industries to make sure the final product is true to the spirit of both the world and WFRP.

**WS:** What is your favourite WFRP book?

CP: *Shadows Over Bogenhafen*. I think of it as the archetypal WFRP adventure. I've played and GMed it many times and it's always fun. It was a big influence on my Freeport material.

**WS:** It is interesting to compare *Shadows Over Bogenhafen* to *Death in Freeport*. That has a WFRP feel to it, but one that seem to come directly from *Call of Cthulhu* rather than WFRP, and *Shadows Over Bogenhafen* in particular. Would you say that is true?

CP: Well, *Call of Cthulhu* was certainly an influence on *Death in Freeport*, just as it was on WFRP itself (insanity rules anyone?). *Shadows Over Bogenhafen* was an influence in that it was a great example of using the structure and elements of *Call of Cthulhu* in a fantasy setting.

**WS:** How much will you take on from the old WFRP?

CP: What we are doing is certainly informed by all the old material and uses bits of pieces of it in certain places, but we're not going to be using much of it straight up during the first couple of years. This is intentional. I want to bring out a lot of new material to show that we are serious about supporting the new edition.

**WS:** What are you personally writing for WFRP2?

CP: Well, the core rulebook for starters! This is a huge endeavour. I do have some freelancers helping me out on some parts of the book, but I'm doing the meat of the redesign myself. I'm also acting as the line developer for the time being, so I'm planning out releases, finding authors for the supplements, and keeping everything on track.

**WS:** Do you see the Freeport series as a 'model' for WFRP2?

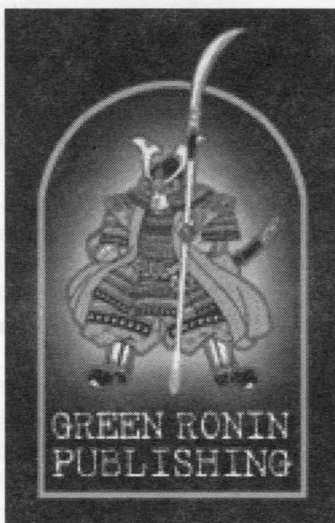
CP: No. Freeport was designed with the d20 market in mind. It's an island city-state you can drop into any fantasy campaign world and a lot of things (like deities) are kept deliberately vague to make it easy to integrate into your setting of choice. We've never developed a "world of Freeport." Warhammer, on the other hand, is all about the Old World. A lot of what we'll be doing is setting material, constantly expanding the information available on different parts of the setting.

**WS:** Will d20 have any influence over the revised rules?

CP: Well I have spent the last five or six years working with the d20 rules, starting with the internal development and playtesting of them at Wizards of the Coast (where I was on staff), and that experience has surely had an effect on my ideas about game design. Honestly though, the d20 influence is mostly negative. By which I mean that certain parts of the d20 System increasingly drove me crazy the more I worked with it, and I've been determined to keep those things out of WFRP. Really, I think D&D became way more complicated than it needed to be with 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, which has led me to try to make WFRP2 a simple yet robust system.

**WS:** What kind of elements are you determined to keep out of WFRP as far as your D&D experience goes?

CP: I want WFRP to be a friendlier game than D&D is for both players and GMs. I want players to be able to make a character in 10-15 minutes. I want newbies to be able to learn the game easily. I want GMs to be able to stat up NPCs quickly. Stat blocks are so unwieldy in D&D now that preparing a simple encounter can take far too long, doubly so if you are new to the game. It used to be that D&D was the portal game that got people into roleplaying. If I wanted to introduce people to roleplaying now, I would absolutely not use D&D3.





As we develop the line, you'll also notice a real difference in our focus. Many D&D and d20 books are all about the mechanics, with endless numbers of new feats, spells, prestige classes, and so on (and yes, I have published my share of these books to be fair!). WFRP will be putting the Warhammer World front and centre. While we certainly will be adding to the rules in some areas, mechanics will not be the focus of the WFRP line.

**What kind of elements are you determined to keep out of WFRP as far as your D&D experience goes?**

CP: Probably the system for skills and talents. WFRP1 had a huge skill list, but many of them weren't skills in the traditional RPG sense. I've divided them into skills and talents, the latter group including things like *Fleet Footed*, *Strike Mighty Blow*, etc. The other weird thing about skills in the old game was that they were entirely binary. You had them or you didn't, and once you had them you could never get better at them except by increasing your Characteristics. My new system lets you buy skills up to three times, with each additional purchase giving you a +10% bonus on your Tests. You are, however, still limited to the skills of your career, so to get *Dodge Blow* three times you have to go through three careers that offer it as a skill. Talents, however, you can only buy once, so no stacking three *Strike Mighty Blows*!

I like this system because it gives you options and lets you specialise your skills if you want to. You aren't forced to buy each skill multiple times though. If you want to blow through a career without getting better at skills you have already, that's your choice.

**WS: What is more important to the development of the Warhammer world – depth or breadth of background?**

CP: We are starting with depth and moving on to breadth, if that makes any sense. The core rulebook is Empire-focused. It assumes that your characters are from The Empire and that's where you'll be having most of your adventures. However, we'll be expanding the scope of the game through supplements.

**WS: What is going to be the hardest part about writing WFRP2?**

CP: Oh, the magic system, which I'm starting this week. It has been a weakness of the game for going on twenty years so I really need to get it right!

**WS: What type of adventures and campaigns can we expect to see?**

CP: We are doing a series called the *Chaos Trilogy*, which is basically an *Enemy Within*-style campaign for the new edition. Some products will also feature short adventures. We're trying to make sure GMs have plenty of adventure material to work with.

**WS: What writers are currently involved?**

CP: I started by getting some old WFRP hands like Graeme Davis and Anthony Ragan working on supplements. "Crazy" Todd Miller was a shoo-in to write the new insanity rules. Ian Sturrock (an ex-Hogshead staffer) and T.S. Luikart are working on another sourcebook right now. Brian Kirby and Bill Simoni, two of the authors of *Black Sails Over Freeport* (a mega-adventure we did last year that just won an Origins Award) are also working on projects. More folks are being added all the time.

**WS: What artists are involved?**

CP: That part of the process is just getting rolling really. John Blanche is doing some concept work for us at the moment and really, who could be better for this job? Hal Mangold, our Art Director, is in charge of making sure the game looks great and he'll be recruiting people shortly.

**WS: Are you going to be accepting submissions?**

CP: Not any time soon. We know the books we want to release over the next few years, so it's more a matter of finding the right people for the projects.

**WS: What needs to be fixed in the WFRP rules?**

CP: The core of the system is a good one but it has been a long time since the first edition. A lot of my work is simplifying, clarifying, and streamlining. The three "big issues" were long-term character advancement, the magic system, and the old chestnut of "naked dwarf syndrome". I've addressed the first and third of those already and I'll be sorting the magic system next. There were also some things in the old rules that seemed to be there because they were in AD&D, like alignment and class. Those we just tossed.

**WS: Consistency is central to maintaining the gritty realism that is WFRP. RPGs needs background stability while the Warhammer Fantasy Battle world has changed much more both due to the needs of the game, and through varying editorial policies over succeeding editions. How will WFRP2 deal with these changes, past and present?**

CP: On a case-by-case basis really. We are drawing on old WFRP material, *Warhammer Fantasy Battlematerial*, Mordheim material, and even stuff from the Warhammer novels. That's why we say this is the RPG of the Warhammer World, not the RPG of *Warhammer Fantasy Battle*. WFRP is focused on a lower level than the minis game, if you know what I mean. There's stuff in *Warhammer Fantasy Battle* that's just not appropriate for the RPG. You'll never see a scenario from us in which the PCs take off in a flight of gyrocopters to attack an orc horde, for instance.

**WS: What will attract new players to WFRP2?**

CP: A few things I hope!

1. The Warhammer World. It's a setting that really strikes a nerve with gamers and we'll be providing a great deal of info on it.
2. The rules are simple and flavourful, but robust. I think people are ready for a great fantasy game that is easy to learn, run, and play.
3. Plentiful support. Within a year, you'll have seen more new WFRP books than have appeared in the last twelve years. You can be sure that if you love WFRP, there'll

be a steady stream of new, useable, and fun material.

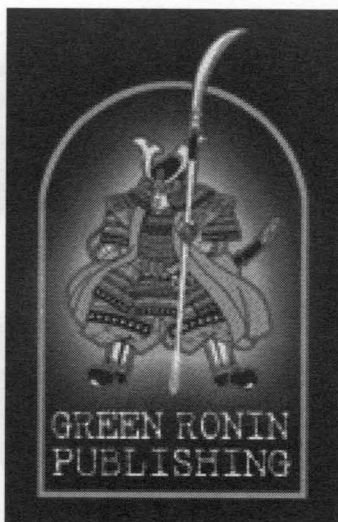
4. Look and feel. Green Ronin already produces some of the best-looking books in the business. With a visually rich world like Warhammer to explore, we're going to make these books look fantastic.

**WS: How much playtesting will the game have?**

CP: We've just started outside playtesting. We have three months to do the heavy lifting, but playtesting will be an ongoing process. You never know when playtesting is going to turn up a potential problem. If we have to fix something in layout to get the game just right, we will.

**WS: Finally, Why the name "Green Ronin"?**

CP: In the mid-90s, I started my first RPG company, Ronin Publishing, with two partners. We picked up the rights to the *Whispering Vault* RPG from Pariah Press and also published a sourcebook for the Feng Shui RPG under license. When we started, the idea was that each principle would have a colour-coded screen name, like you'd find in old Japanese TV shows. Mine was Green Ronin. When I was starting Green Ronin, I wanted folks in the industry to understand that this was my new company (without resorting to calling it Chris Pramas Games, which is a little too self-aggrandising for me). Thus Green Ronin Publishing was born. In retrospect, I probably over thought the whole thing and I sort of wish I had picked a name that everyone pronounced the same way!



# THE WARPSTONE INTERVIEW II

## Warpstone talks to Simon Butler of Black Industries

**Warpstone: Can you us a brief history of your background in gaming? Why were you chosen to run Black Industries?**

Simon Butler: Sure, like many I guess my gaming history started with AD&D1, back in the early eighties (my first ever character was a halfling thief, who came to a rather sticky end as I recall). From there, I ended up moving into playing a lot of *Runequest 2*, *Chivalry and Sorcery*, and *Aftermath*, as well as occasional forays into *Call of Cthulhu* and various incarnations of *Traveller*. I jumped onto WFRP very early on, and have been playing it on and off for more years than I want to think about!

As to why it's me for Black Industries, I guess it's difficult to be completely unbiased there. Overall though, probably because I love roleplaying, and believe absolutely that this is something Games Workshop as a business should be involved in.

**WS: Why republish WFRP?**

SB: That's an easy question to answer. Firstly, because it's one of the very best, most original fantasy RPG's that's ever been written. When it was released there was so much about it that quite literally re-defined roleplaying.

**WS: Why not just publish WFRP2 yourselves?**

SB: But we are! WFRP2 will be a Black Industries product all the way. We're working with Green Ronin, because they have great RPG design expertise, and they really understand the Warhammer World, but make no mistake – this is a Black Industries product.

**WS: What is Black Industries part in the process of releasing WFRP2?**

SB: Black Industries is the RPG arm of Black Library Publishing, Games workshop's publishing business. We work closely with Green Ronin in designing RPG material, which we then print, market, support and distribute.

**WS: Why was Green Ronin chosen to write WFRP2?**

SB: When we sat down and talked to Chris and the guys from Green Ronin, they seemed to have such a fine grasp of Warhammer as a setting, and such an obvious and genuine love of WFRP, they just became an obvious choice. Plus, they've got a track record of producing excellent, well-put together product – I love what they do.

**WS: Is there anyone else from Games Workshop involved with the project? What is their background relative to WFRP in particular and role-playing games in general?**

SB: Oh absolutely! The exciting thing for us is that games like WFRP allow us to go and explore all sorts of parts of our worlds that we don't normally have a chance to look at, so we literally have a queue

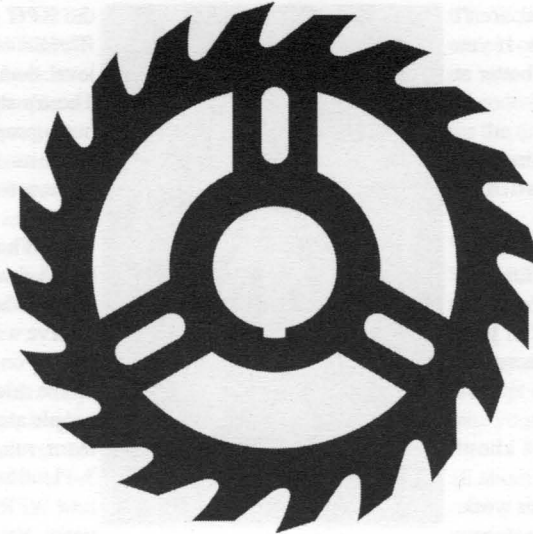
of folks here ready to help. So far this week alone, I've been talking to John Blanche about Middenheim, Gav Thorpe about Wood Elves and their role outside of fantasy battle, Rick Priestley about magic, and Marc Gascoigne about all sorts of exciting stuff.

**WS: What about Black Library writers?**

SB: Sure – we are already having some conversations there.

**WS: What have you learnt from Flame & Hogshead's experience with WFRP?**

SB: Blimey! That's a big question. The flippant answer to that is 'of course', but I could probably go on for hours about things we've learned from those years. Overall though, I'd say that the biggest thing we've learned is that there is still such a strong appetite for roleplaying in the Warhammer World!



**WS: Have Green Ronin being given limits with how they develop the game – From Warhammer Fantasy Battle Stat lines, links to Storms of Chaos to more controversial areas – Fimir method of breeding, Slanneshi's sexual perversions?**

SB: Well yes and no. When we're working on a title, literally the first thing we do is sit down and decide what it is, what's in, what's out etc. So by the time Green Ronin are working on a book, they have a very clear idea of what we're doing. There are obviously times when questions crop up, but we resolve those as they arise. So no, they don't limits as such, but they do have a plan that we've agreed, and we talk a lot

to make sure that things stay on track.

**WS: How much will WFRP2 be tied to the Fantasy Battle background? Also, Consistency is central to maintaining the gritty realism that is WFRP. RPGs needs background stability while the Warhammer Fantasy Battle world has changed much more both due to the needs of the game, and through varying editorial policies over succeeding editions. How will WFRP2 deal with these changes, past and present?**

SB: This is something that we've given an awful lot of thought to. The problem in a nutshell is that the Warhammer World as described in WFRP is now almost exactly 20 years old. Over that time we have developed explored, any number of areas, and ideas within that world. For various reasons, the world of WFRP has not changed over this period.

When we were looking at bringing WFRP back, this was obviously something we needed to address. We looked at various options, but in the end decided that the world of WFRP2 would come back into line. There are a number of reasons for this – firstly, it provides players and referees (especially new ones) with a huge resource to draw on,

in terms of books, army books, art, miniatures etc. Most importantly however, I genuinely believe that the current version of *Warhammer Fantasy Battle* is the strongest yet – just look at the last Bretonnian army book!

The argument that I definitely don't buy is that because we're bringing things up to date, we automatically lose the dark and gritty feel that's become WFRP's trademark. Ultimately, the Warhammer world remains a pretty dark, bleak and unpleasant place, and WFRP2 will certainly reflect all of that and more.

As for consistency, being essential to maintaining this feel, sure, I feel like that's important too, which is why of course we're bringing the world back into line.

**WS: How much playtesting will the game have?**

SB: The short answer is 'a lot!' WFRP2 is currently in the midst of the biggest playtest program Green Ronin have ever been a part of. There are several hundred players involved across several continents. There are eight big playtest groups running just within Games Workshop HQ!

**WS: Are you taking part in the playtesting?**

SB: Oh yes! I'm refereeing what has pretty much my regular group that includes Gav Thorpe, and Max Bottrill (Design Studio Bigwig), plus some of the Black Industries guys. Gav, Max and I have been roleplaying together for a long time, so despite the fact that we are doing this 'for work', we're still managing to enjoy ourselves.

**WS: WFRP has a loyal fanbase? Is this a problem or benefit?**

SB: Honestly? It's both! The fact that there is such a uniquely committed community of WFRP players out there that have supported the game over so many years is nothing short of awe-inspiring. This commitment has, in no small part, been one of the contributing factors to a second edition.

The downside with such a passionate following is that almost by definition, we will end up upsetting some folks. If we change a rule, some people will shout, if we leave a rule, others will shout. If we kill off Gnomes, part of the community will be after my blood, if we keep them, another section will shout foul! Ultimately, much as I'd truly like to, we're not going to please everyone.

**WS: So, are you killing off Gnomes?**

SB: Well, Gnomes haven't really been a part of Warhammer for something like 15 years, so it's difficult to see how we could keep them in and maintain any level of consistency.

**WS: What is your attitude to fan produced material. WFRP has a strong history in this regard, not just the Internet but paper publications?**

SB: This is actually quite a clear area. I write or alter almost all the material I end up refereeing. I think that this is a fundamental part of

roleplaying, and I'm really looking forward to seeing what WFRP referees come up with! As for people sharing stuff with others for free, for example on the web, great - there are some issues around Intellectual Property protection that people need to be aware of, and these can be found on the Black Industries website.

However, what people can't just do is write material set in the Warhammer world, or use any of our imagery, rules etc and then sell it without talking to us first! There are hopefully pretty obvious legal reasons for this, involving copyright and trademark protection etc.

**WS: Will WFRP2 rules be contained in one book?**

SB: Absolutely. Everything you need to play WFRP2 will be contained in the core rulebook.

**WS: How many WFRP releases are you planning a year? What books can we expect to see in first couple of years?**

SB: We have a pretty exciting release schedule for the next couple of years. We're looking at approximately 20+ titles over that period, including the Core book, a bestiary, supplements on the Empire and Bretonnia, a fantastic adventure trilogy set in the Empire as well as supplements on Dwarfs, weapons and armour etc with a number of others currently in development.

**WS: How will WFRP2 be sold? Will the game be sold through Games Workshop shops?**

SB: WFRP will be sold via our website and through game stores as you'd expect. We also plan to sell through bookstores. There are no plans at present to sell through the Games Workshop Retail Chain.

**WS: Will we see background for areas outside those covered by Warhammer Fantasy Battle?**

SB: I wouldn't rule it out, but I feel like we have plenty to go at within the confines of

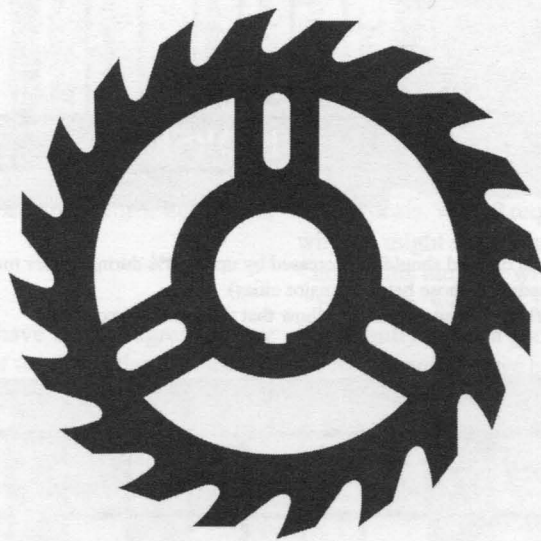
the Old World for now. For most people I think that the Warhammer world means The Empire, Bretonnia, the Worlds Edge Mountains, the Border Princes etc. That's certainly what first attracted me to WFRP, and it's the world I want to spend my role-playing time exploring – at least for the time being.

**WS: Will the end of Warhammer on-line have any effect of WFRP2?**

SB: No, none. Warhammer Online was a completely separate business to Black Industries, and the reasons we decided to shut it down were entirely to do with the massive growth in costs that there's been in getting a MMORPG to market. We're still 100% committed to a Spring 2005 launch for WFRP, and are still absolutely pedal to the metal in terms of development.

**WS: Will we see WFRP in *White Dwarf*?**

SB: Well, I did point out to someone the other day that as *White Dwarf* used to be a roleplaying magazine, I was thinking about asking for it back! Seriously though, I doubt it. *White Dwarf* is the magazine of the tabletop wargaming hobby really – maybe the odd news item, but nothing more. Anyway, isn't that what *Warpstone's* for?



# GETTING THERE

Imperial Travel by John Foody with Alfred Nuncz

This article is designed as a reference guide for GMs and players. The tables below give estimated times for travel with The Empire. Distances are based on the maps found in *Death on the Reik* and the rulebook, with average daily travel rates taken from *The Enemy Within* book (page 6). We are aware that different maps give different distances and the text in many sourcebooks give contradictory figures. Many other factors may come into play. However, these figures can be used as a basis.

Certain journeys, for example Altdorf to Carroburg, can only easily be performed by river; however road travel rates are given. This will either be a circular route or a slow off road rate, whichever is the quickest. On the main roads, inns can be expected to be found a days travel from the last one (i.e. you stop when you get to an inn).

Destination		BARGE							SAILING SHIP						
		Altdorf	Carroburg	Marienburg	Nuln	Marienburg	Carroburg	Wolfenburg	Altdorf	Carroburg	Marienburg	Nuln	Talabheim	Wolfenburg	
Wolfenburg		29	36	49	43	6		15	15	26	22	3			
Talabheim		23	30	46	37	4		12	12	23	19		2		
Nuln		19	26	42		40		9	12	20		18	20		
Marienburg		17	12		31	38	42	7	5		16	16	18		
Carroburg		5		16	19	22	26	2		8	9	11	13		
Altdorf			7	23	14	17	21		3	11	7	9	11		
Origin		BARGE							SAILING SHIP						
		Altdorf	Carroburg	Marienburg	Nuln	Talabheim	Wolfenburg	Altdorf	Carroburg	Marienburg	Nuln	Talabheim	Wolfenburg		
Altdorf															
Carroburg															
Marienburg															
Nuln															
Talabheim															
Wolfenburg															

**Notes**

Journey times on road should be increased by up to 50% during winter months. This should be less on the main roads (i.e. those between major cities).

Figures marked with an asterisk (\*) show that there is no direct route.

		FOOT							WAGON						
		Altdorf	Carroburg	Marienburg	Middenheim	Nuln	Talabheim	Wolfenburg	Altdorf	Carroburg	Marienburg	Middenheim	Nuln	Talabheim	Wolfenburg
Wolfenburg		56*	64*	83*	21	75*	6	96*	104*	128*	27	120*	8		
Talabheim		50*	58*	38	15	69*	3	88*	96*	120*	19	92*		4	
Nuln		19	27	44	31		38*	25	32	54	40		56*	60*	
Middenheim		13	21	23		15	7	17	24	30		20	10	14	
Marienburg		25	17		11	21	18*	30	23		15	27	59*	63*	
Carroburg		8		9	9	12	32*	8		11	12	16	48*	52*	
Altdorf			3	12	6	9	29		4	15	8	12	44	48*	
		HORSE							COACH						
		Altdorf	Carroburg	Marienburg	Middenheim	Nuln	Talabheim	Wolfenburg	Altdorf	Carroburg	Marienburg	Middenheim	Nuln	Talabheim	Wolfenburg
Altdorf															
Carroburg															
Marienburg															
Middenheim															
Nuln															
Talabheim															
Wolfenburg															

# THE CORRESPONDENT

## Real World History and WFRP By Tim Eccles

I have recently been considering the notion of real world history and its use within WFRP. In part this was prompted by the 'That's Entertainment' article by Jody Macgregor (*Warpstone* 21). This was an excellent article spoilt, to my mind, by the direct application of real world history (or at least a version of it through what Jody seems to describe as French minstrels) into the Old World.

The two should be very different, as I hope to show. It seems to me that we had neither the minstrel (the ribald eleventh century jack-of-all-trades) nor the troubadour (thirteenth century romantic civilised artiste) - nor the same socio-political environment to create them. Worse, we have non-Human species in the Old World that would have affected Human social development in all sorts of ways - including music. Simply ascribing the genius of entertainment to Bretonnia is lazy and misses what WFRP is about - or so my line of thinking goes.

Medieval France and its minstrels does not equate to Bretonnia and its musicians in any structured manner, although I do not deny that the two might have an obvious appeal and surface similarity to each other. This then is what I want to try and discuss - when to use appropriate real world history as colour and when to recognise that the Old World is very different and has alternative racial, sociological and structural emphases - and this is what makes it a humorous, gothic and fantasy RPG.

### Excuses, Excuses

Before I get too righteous in all this; I have been progressing my own campaign into the northern wilds of the Wheatland Colonies. Games Workshop's *Hordes of Chaos* is pretty good, but it gives no details for my RPG purposes (for obvious reasons) and so I set about developing Chaotic and non-Chaotic Marauder peoples. I did what I have never done before, and have always vehemently opposed, and took Sarmatian and Scythian cultures direct from history. In my defence, I did add fantasy colour to them - although not a lot is needed! My rationale was simple: I wargame these two armies and study them (as an amateur) and so it merges two interests. I have also taken two cultures that gamers will probably be completely ignorant of (my players are - or were until they read this!) and not simply copied (say) Rome or Sparta, with which many will be familiar. Still, it continued the line of thought and showed that what I was seeing in others' work, I might also be accused of doing. Hence my analysis of real world history in the Old World.

The point was also brought home to me when my players commended me on using the latest GW fluff for the tribes. Since I had not, I went and checked out their material, and they have largely taken their Chaos Marauders from the very same sources! History is too rich and, often, unbelievable not to be plundered and there is every encouragement to do so - but with care.

### History Matters

It is largely a matter of taste, but the reason that I play (and write about) WFRP is the background. The game comes to life; it is colourful, serious, humorous and as realistic as fantasy can be. I play other games too, and these tend to reflect different tastes - in problem-solving, in combat mechanics, in simply getting to meet

friends. WFRP - as I like it - requires commitment to its intense depths, whilst being fairly forgiving (unlike the world of Glorantha for example). To this end, the reason that WFRP has continued to survive is that its background is addictive. From this perspective, history matters and we have to do all we can to get the balance of dark gothic, fantasy, comic and serious.

History is a basic shoe-horn into the game-world. It provides an immediate way into the world for the players and a quick and easy option for GMs. However, our own world and the Old World are very different creations with different species, deities, natural and physical laws, histories, social structures and the like. To my mind, a believable Old World has to have a deep structure and model that explains how things work from creation to the modern mundane. Whilst it need not actually know the precise rationale behind the price of a beer, it has to be able to explain how things work at a level that players and GMs are interacting at.

Put bluntly, WFRP is not an old-fashioned game of dungeon hack where players travel from dungeon to dungeon without any sense of why these places exist, how they were built, why no one else has ever found or disturbed them and why large amounts of magic and jewellery seem to have no effect upon prices or the standard of living of the locals. WFRP requires more thought. To this end it is obvious why we might steal from the real world as this saves time and effort - nor is this innately wrong.

However, we need to recognise the nuances of WFRP. Most importantly this is a game of *fantasy*. At its simplest this means that we have magic and we have deities that can - and do - grant wondrous powers. These issues would affect any world to its core and yet most games do not reflect this. For example, in D&D I have never understood why practically every house is not lit by a continual light spell. Magic is relatively common, it is a low-level spell and over the lifetime of a dwelling would easily repay its cost in savings in lanterns, oil etc. More fundamentally, why is every society not a theocracy when gods blatantly exist and thus control the afterlife - which is infinitely longer than one's seventy years on the prime material plane? These issues are less obvious within the low-fantasy WFRP, but they are still present.

### History Repeats Itself

We are all busy people who play games to have fun. The Old World is not a post-doctoral piece of research; it is a virtual gaming environment that needs to be ready to play weekly (for those who are so lucky). Stealing ideas from history is a necessary shortcut and perfectly acceptable. Moreover, it almost certainly adds depth to the fantasy history and allows us to play in a richer and more vibrant world. However, the nuances of a fantasy world in general, and the Warhammer World in particular, need to be the primary consideration. I want to game in The Empire - not the Holy Roman Empire. Stolen ideas need to revolve around the game, rather than simply forcing the rich fantastical creation that we have into a poor and pale imitation of real world Renaissance Europe. The Old World that we have draws from many sources and we must continue to do so.

In order to sketch out these ideas within a particular example, let

us return to the minstrel that started me off in this vein and the sorts of question that I think would need to be considered before simply adopting real historical precedents. We firstly need to consider the role of Elfs in all this. Are they the equivalent of the thirteenth century romantic troubadour? Are they genuine artistes only interested in their craft? Would they pass their skills on to another (inferior) race - particularly when most official material suggests that they have had nothing to do with the development of Humanity? And what of the history of the Elfs: why would they spread music around at all? Why would Wood Elfs involve themselves with Humanity? What might Wood Elf music be like and why would they have need of travelling musicians when they are community-centred? Surely Wood Elfs do not have such specialisation within their social structure, but would all be able to sing, dance and perform to a decent standard at festivals and other public occasions? Is an Elf division of labour consistent with our ideas about Elf society? Would those Elf minstrels found in the rules not simply be modern creations, as those few Elfs who wander Human kingdoms find it an easy way to earn money, gain access and be popular (rather than be a popular target for stones and abuse)?

In examining what we know about Elf development, there is then the danger that we have missed far more obvious in-game reasons for the development by assigning some meta-reasoning for the development. Would Humanity even have any interest in finer Elven arts - particularly when the local Human equivalent is a far better farter and can play the local tunes with a pair of spoons whilst baiting a bear? Let us also recall the history of mankind and that of the Sigmarite tribes and the Bretonni people in particular; would they support travelling players or music in such a form? Might Dwarfs have been a better source to teach music? After all, it was with Dwarfs that Humans traded and learnt many of their skills, and Humans were even accepted as vassals to Dwarf lords. Would they not have learnt songs by the Dwarf merchants' campfires and at the courts, markets, religious ceremonies and other public events of their overlords?

My final source for thought is to do what WFRP does best and pull ideas from here, there and everywhere and attempt to add a splash of humour. Might an alternative origin be a spoof of the rise of Elvis and the stealing of excellent poor peoples' (black origin) music for a far more commercial (white) audience? Perhaps a sea Elf entrepreneur could take the ideal of Ulthuan music and manufacture a 'boy band' of Human minstrels for mass consumption? Could we continue the 1980s theme of WFRP and parody the rise of the synthesiser and the notion that everyone was a musician in some way? Or might Wood Elf music be the equivalent of the typical "Yes" track, lasting a couple of days (and for the introduction only)? Equally what type of music and entertainment realistically would pre-date the minstrel in the Old World of Sigmarian tribes? I doubt that we would have monastic chants!

Let me repeat that the Entertainers' article was very good. Realistically, it might not even be sensible to expect this level of analysis in every part of the game. However, I do think that we need to attempt such rigour in determining when and where to copy and paste real world history into WFRP.

### **A Self-Evident Fact?**

It might be that what I am saying here is evident to all. If it is, then it is rather odd that so many examples exist in WFRP. Much of the fan material on the internet blatantly takes history in toto - particularly in such areas as the Border Princes, Bretonnia and the early history of the Old World where we find Rome and Sparta to name but two.

Games Workshop is also a culprit of such an approach with the current Huss and his Hussites a glaring example, although with more excuse since they are interested in fighting with miniatures and not building worlds.

Two particular examples come to mind, deriving from recent ideas that I have used in my games. It seems clear to me that the Old World follows the traditional western European system of inheritance and succession. Why? In a polytheistic society, the notion of innate male superiority and the concept of bastards are far from certain to be followed. To some extent, the fact that WFRP does not discuss marriage or confirm primogeniture is understandable. However, at the same time, inheritance of property and position, inter-family feuding and the accession of the nobility are tried and tested sources for adventures and background colour. Simply assuming that they will follow a (badly fitting) real world system fails to recognise the nature of religion and society in our game. It is lazy and it misses practical options for writing an adventure.

Religion is also my second example to try and prove the point. Almost everyone in the Old World is polytheistic, but the way that they are described is as monotheists. People and regions are described as Ulrican or Sigmarite. This is simply a misunderstanding of polytheism. No one is a Sigmarite. They worship all gods; that is the definition of polytheism. Agreed, they might favour a particular god or two but they would acknowledge all the gods and their spheres of interest and control. If they want a good harvest, they do not worship Sigmar, but (say) Rhya - whoever they are. Equally, no province is only of one religion; a province recognises all of them. The only difference is that some "Ulricans" do not recognise Sigmar as a god: but they would still worship Shallya, Verena, Morr and the rest of the pantheon. I have no problem with referring to someone as an Ulrican *but* that does *not* mean that they worship Ulric. It means they worship Ulric, Shallya, Morr, Verena, etc with an emphasis on Ulric as he has some particular personal affinity (regional, sphere of interest etc). This should be true even of priests, who recognise all gods within a holistic pantheon of deities. Equally, temples should really be to all gods. The only exception is the group of polytheists (that you might call Ulricans) who do not recognise Sigmar as a part of the pantheon.

I have also developed some extreme Sigmarite cults who believe that Sigmar *is* a monotheistic god of The Empire. However, published material describes people within the Old World as if they worship simply the one god, be this Ulric, Sigmar, Morr or Verena. This is a mistake, and once again loses the colour and flavour of the Old World by thinking in Christian Medieval European terms.

### **Conclusion**

The key, as in everything else, is balance. I tend to develop my Warhammer history to add colour to my game and make it more realistic. I want PCs that have the Art, Sing, Dance or similar "useless" skills to gain additional understanding of what is happening and be able to interact better with NPCs and the environment in which the characters are located. In-game history is thus very important. However, this is a hobby and not my job. I have limited time to develop these ideas and so I freely and readily purloin ideas from anywhere and everywhere interesting. The fundamental danger to avoid is simply taking whole chunks of history and placing them complete into the game. We must all avoid becoming the hack who simply transcribes history into the Old World. This is a danger; simplistic application is tedious and frequently loses the essence of WFRP. Rendition of real world history ignores what matters; selective stealing across the centuries adds colour.

# THE SIGN POST OF HISTORY



## The Many Paths of the Warhammer World

Back in *The Correspondent* in issue sixteen, Tim Eccles argued that GMs should consider the future in their own Warhammer Worlds. Giving some examples himself, he argued that such looking forward would help GMs to know where their campaign would go. We asked some WFRP writers to give us their version of what they think could happen. One part comes from reader Dave Perry, who sent us his own version of the future. *Enemy Within* spoilers appear throughout the article.



### Resentment, Conspiracy and Treason by Anthony Ragan



Any discussion of the Old World's future has to rest on assumptions about its past and, more importantly, its present, and an author should reveal his biases from the start. In my case, my starting point is based on a few works: the Old World as described in WFRP, WFB two and three, and the early novels and anthologies. Editions of *Warhammer Fantasy Battle* from version four on and *Mordheim* are ignored *in toto*. The starting year is 2514, with Emperor Heinrich X having just survived the events of *Empire in Flames*.

The first thing to consider is the likely course of history for The Holy Sigmarite Empire. In 2514, while hope is in the air with the accession of a new, seemingly competent Emperor, hard times lie ahead. At an Empire-wide level, there is likely both relief and resentment. Relief on the part of Electors and others who realize they narrowly avoided a greater disaster, and resentment from still others who see themselves as losers. Among the latter are the hierarchy of the Cult of Sigmar, who are suffering the public disgrace of having their Grand Theogonist revealed as a Daemon in disguise, and the grandees of the Grand Principality of the Reikland, who have lost the patronage they must surely have received from a line of Emperors who were also Grand Princes of the Reikland. Resentments are sure to rise as Heinrich brings in his own people and distributes rewards to those who supported him. And resentment breeds conspiracy, which breeds treason...

Heinrich also faces problems with a population whose expectations are perhaps too high and from Electors manoeuvring for power and settling old scores. For the population in general, the news of a new, vigorous emperor who is also descended from a god will probably lead many to think that he will usher in a golden age. They are almost certainly bound to be disappointed: brief as it was, the civil war probably disrupted agriculture, leading to probably famine and a migration of rural folk to the cities in search of work and food. Their provincial rulers will have a more

immediate impact on their situation, but clumsy policies or incompetence on the ruler's part might well translate into resentment of Heinrich - "Ere now, he's bloody Sigmar's kin! Why can't he just fix all this? Because he don't give a damn about us, that's why!" Bread riots and banditry might force Heinrich to take stern measures, leading to further resentment, which leads to conspiracy, which leads to... you get the idea.

Supportive as they were of his election, the other Electors will surely test his will and try to maintain the prerogatives they gained under several weak emperors. The more Heinrich tries to impose an efficient administration and to strengthen the office of the Emperor, the more Electors and other important nobles (including churchmen) will resist. At some point, there will come a crisis, rebellion "in defence of ancient privileges" and the need to use force.

In short, I think the immediate future of The Empire is rocky, at best. While Heinrich seems competent and vigorous, he faces a dangerous future: conspiracy and eventual open rebellion by those with reason to hate him, and possibly even a new civil war. Foreign powers may test the new Emperor, with Bretonnia encouraging separatism in Reikland, the Border Princes raiding the east, and even a cooling of relations with Kislev. Social dislocations caused by the civil war will test his ability to bring benefits to the people. I suspect that the credibility he has gained in the wake of the Battle of Wolfenburg and his own native skills and savvy will stand him in good stead for a few years. However, the dissipative forces and enemies within and without The Empire will be too much for him to overcome for long. Eventually, assuming he continues trying, he will be assassinated by the Skaven, whether acting on their own or in the clandestine employ of rivals. The Empire will then fragment as electors fight to be the rightful Lord Protector of the young child Heinrich had by his Empress, Grand Countess Emmanuelle, and a new "Age of Wars" will begin.

What of other parts of the Old World? In Marienburg, a crisis is coming because of the ambitions of Jaan van de Kuypers. He wants to be Stadtholder and to make the rest of the Directorate his puppets. He is close to succeeding. Within a few years, van de Kuypers will arrange for the assassinations of Directors de Roelef, Fooger, van den Nijmenk, and den Euwe; he will succeed in the cases of de Roelef and den Euwe. The resulting turmoil will lead to riots and street battles, including a rebellion by the Suiddockers against the whole corrupt order, lead by Lea-Jan Cobbius. Eventually, a new order emerges with van den Nijmenk as the Stadtholder of a Directorate with several new members, and House van de Kuypers broken up. The Burgerhof gains real power,

as the price of peace with Cobbius' Stevedores is a bloc of seats and genuine authority over policy. The damage to the city-state's wealth and power, however short-term, leads to a concurrent crisis; the Bretonnian invasion.

In Bretonnia, Charles de la Tete d'Or has stopped playing croquet and decided the time is right to restore his house's ancient glory. In the early years of Heinrich's rule, Bretonnian gold and agitators provided by the Black Chamber encourage the resentment of The Empire's richest province, the Reikland, against the "damned Ulrican usurper," as well as succouring those Electors willing to play a double-game. At a time when Heinrich can least afford it and when Marienburg is in turmoil from van de Kuypers' coup, Reikland will rise in rebellion and a Bretonnian army will march through Axe Bite Pass to invade Reikland, the fortress of Helmgart falling to treachery. Another Bretonnian army under Marshall Georges Renaud invades the Wasteland and marches on Marienburg.

Sadly, Bretonnia's abilities do not live up to King Charles' opiate visions of conquest. The Reikland invasion is stopped at the walls of Bögenhafan and the army crushed by an Imperial force lead by Marshall von Genscher, whose mostly *M i d d e n h e i m e r*, Talabeclander, and Middenlander troops then savagely put down the rebellion. Meanwhile, the Wasteland expedition is forced into ignominious retreat when van den Nijmenk and Fooger convince Ulthuan to intervene in return for trade

concessions. Broken by the disaster and wholly dependent on opium, King Charles is found dead one day, his throat cut by unknown assassins. Childless, his heretofore secret will names the Count of Moussillon as his heir.



### The Battle Goes On! by Martin Oliver



My main disagreement with Tim's ambitious attempt at Old World futurology concerns its reliance upon western-European intellectual assumptions. Economic rationalism justifies stability and growth, just as every good capitalist knows that it should. Merchants will take their rightful place in society, as all middle

class thinkers know they must. Religion is strongly featured, but is used as a proxy for politics and class struggle, which every good Marxist knows is inevitable.

All this, in a world where long-term acquaintances sprout tentacles, Wizards meddle with earth-shattering forces, the devout have firm evidence rather than faith and "the fairies that live at the end of the garden" probably *do* live at the end of the garden.

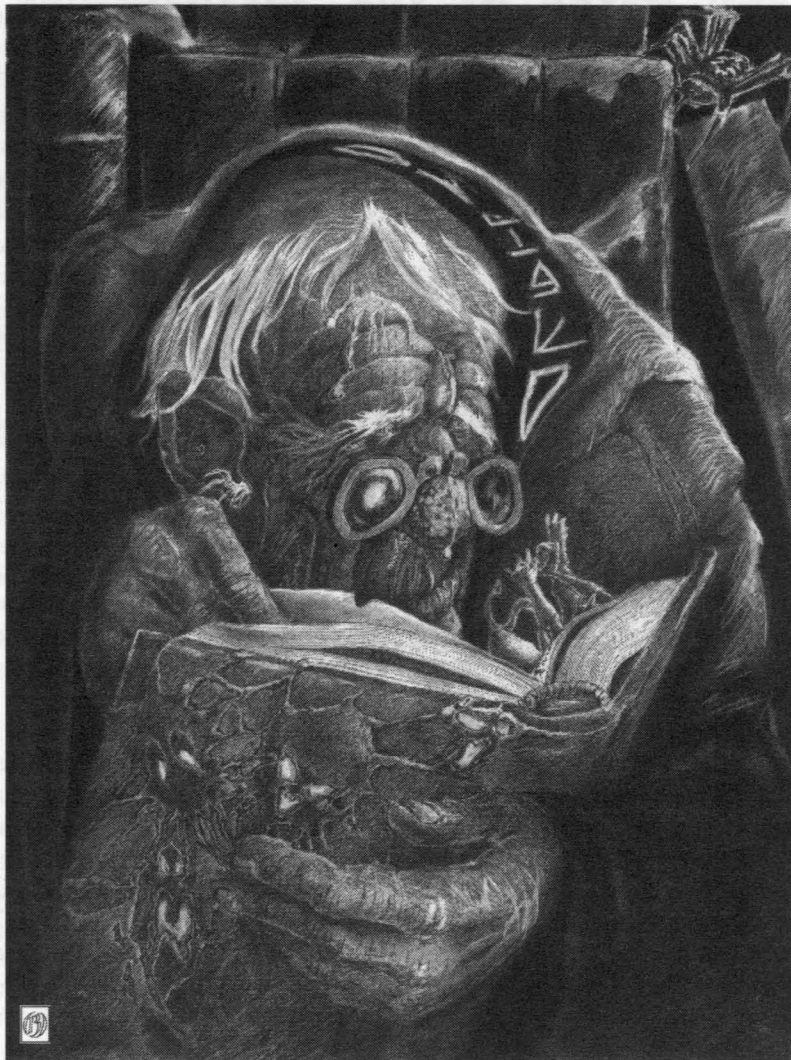
But it is easy to criticise without offering something in return. There are alternatives to imperialist capitalism that ought to be considered. I will concentrate mainly on the short term, since I think that long-term predictions in a world touched by Chaos are unavoidably rash.

"The long-term repercussions of the civil war would be minimal, and will play little part in the development of future events." Perhaps not. The Empire is a melting pot of factions and interests; tensions simmer, and rivalries between groups last for decades. Once the cat is out of the bag, and the historical order is unsettled, who knows who might make a grab for power? Tim draws a parallel between Heinrich and Magnus the Pious; I'd have to reply that Magnus' glory arose from his valour in the face of cataclysm. Unless there is another incursion, or the wholesale disintegration of The Empire, I cannot see that Heinrich would go down as anything more than a footnote about stable government in the history books.

Could such disintegration happen? Only too easily. The factions are well established, have histories

going back centuries and are not going to suddenly give up their grudges because of a few years worth of economic prosperity. There is no chance that the tensions between Sigmar and Ulric will go away; the drive to centralise is in direct conflict with the need to preserve diversity (a requirement of the pantheon). Faced with the prospect of assimilation it is far more likely that the followers of the other gods will rally behind Ulric than choose to be re-created as mere saints of Sigmar.

True, Ulric's traditional virtues seem outmoded in civilised society - but there are two alternatives to becoming obsolete. Firstly, Ulric takes a diminished role, with the cult playing to its strengths in the vast tracts of the Old World that will forever remain uncivilised because the forces of Chaos or the greenskins keep





invading. Secondly, rather than fade away, the cult adapts - it is happened plenty of times in our history, and there's no reason to assume that dogma would take precedence over survival here. Reinterpret the cult as focusing on risk-taking and valour, and it's easy to imagine up-and-coming merchants who make a living trading in futures donating to Ulric instead of Handrich. (Who said Ulric can't help with economic battle?) Sure, there might be a split or a schism, but new gods like Handrich come and go - barring something spectacular, there is no way they could overturn an established cult; far more likely they will be incorporated as saints instead.

And what about the rise of the merchants? Unlikely, without something drastic happening. Take a brief look at who holds power in The Empire: the priesthood of Ulric, the priesthood of Sigmar and the nobles. What will it take for power to change hands? In a world so fraught with violence, it will probably take a war - a war in which the merchants are able to bankroll military forces when the 'old money' of the nobles has dried up. In the British Empire, the middle classes really became important politically when industrialists were able to work for cultural domination (rather than the aristocracy who had previously financed armies), both by supporting the military and by controlling the natives through trade.

The Empire isn't really a major trading power, ruling out one option. That only leaves war as a way for the merchants to gain power. And who might such a war be against? Well, it won't involve picking fights with Kislev (far more useful to keep it as a buffer state between The Empire and Chaos). The expansionist tendencies of the Chaos Dwarfs promise to drive greenskins back into The Empire in ever increasing numbers. It's back to the time of Sigmar, all over again. The fight may well be for survival, not expansion.

It's outside The Empire, with Marienburg, where I think modern Western values are most likely to be adopted. I can imagine it developing a form of cultural imperialism similar to that of America - why invade and take the land, when they can simply suggest to the Old World nobles what it might be in their best interests to do, and bankroll freedom fighters where they don't hold sway? At least one big battle for control of the Old World might not be fought with armies at all - it'll be a battle of ideology, a battle for the hearts and minds of the common people. (There is all sorts of potential here for campaigns involving subversion, influence and intelligence gathering.)

Wider still, there are the Elves and Dwarfs. Both are races in decline, but they approach this in different ways. The Elves remain distinct, for the most part, preferring to control the situation from afar. Their interventions are few and far between, but - like the introduction of principled magic - are major when they do occur. When they leave, they may well do so with some last flourish that changes human history dramatically. The Dwarfs? Well, they're dug in firm, but they are also working to shape The Empire. They trade, they teach, they live alongside the Humans. Their influence through the cult of Sigmar was a major coup. The Humans aren't Dwarfs - but they may be the next best thing, if only they can be nudged in the right ways. Still, neither of these races will be particularly impressed by the internal feuding of their Imperial allies, and it may well take a while before the Humans can inspire confidence again.

As a final thought, I leave you with a little speculation: perhaps the most under-valued race, in a world where the power to resist

Chaos is worth more than armies, is the Halflings. They were the last experiment of the Slann; they must have been made for some purpose. Perhaps their time is coming. Perhaps Chaos is rising again, and this time the Humans will be too much part of the problem to be able to stop it. Maybe, just maybe, the future history of the Old World will be written by Halfling historians.



## The Immediate Future of the Dwarf Empire by Alfred Nuñez, Jr.



As presented in *Empire in Flames*, the civil war following the deaths of Emperor Karl-Franz I and Graf Boris Todbringer, in its simplest terms, pits the Ulrican provinces against those following Sigmar. There are a few surprises along the way, but the civil war is bloody and brief, lasting only one campaign season. With the ascent of Heinrich Todbringer to the Imperial throne as the direct heir of Sigmar, all ends with peace in The Empire. Or does it?

Emperor Heinrich X is a far more capable leader than the late Karl-Franz and might well tend towards a stronger central government, much like Magnus the Pious, rather than continue the ineptitude of his predecessor. Heinrich's position is further strengthened by the vacancies in the hierarchy of the Sigmarite church and lack of any clear leadership. While he moves to strengthen these institutions, Heinrich might well encounter opposition from his allies.

I see Grand Duke von Bildhofen as Heinrich's likeliest opponent. As one of the remaining "Old Guard" and the patriarch of a ruling dynasty, von Bildhofen would hardly accept any loss in his privileges. In fact, he might even demand some concessions for his role in besting the Sigmarites. Talabheim and Talabecland would also join with von Bildhofen in demanding some compensation from the "losers" in the recently concluded conflict. Thus, the Imperial civil war would continue for several more years, at the very least, growing all the more bitter.

The on-going strife would force many nobles to hire troops to fight for their cause. This war would eventually lead to some sort of peace, which the execution of many of the leaders on the losing side might bring about sooner. The Empire would endure, though weaker than before.

### What about the Dwarfs?

Although they see themselves as honouring Sigmar by protecting his Empire from invasion from the east, the Imperial Dwarfs of Karaz Ankor have a history of remaining neutral in human conflict.

Since they have staunchly resisted the losses to the cursed greenskins and vile Skaven, the Imperial Dwarfs have long dreamt of recovering their lost Dwarfholds and returning their mountainous empire to the Golden Age. The reality of their decreasing numbers does not really seem to concern them much.

The first step was the recent recovery of Karak Eight Peaks. Against the odds, the Dwarfs were able to recapture and hold some of the upper levels. That action rekindled the Imperial Dwarfs' long-cherished aspiration to regain what was once theirs. In addition, the ending of the recent Imperial civil war has meant that there are plenty of mercenaries to be had for the asking.

The southern Dwarfholds - Karak Azul, Karak Eight Peaks and Kazad Migdhal would prefer resources to be used to return

Karak Eight Peaks to its former glory. The use of expendable “adventurers” to clear out the lower levels of Karak Eight Peaks has been beneficial, but progress is slow. Unfortunately, transporting and supplying troops to the remote south are both problematic for any recovery effort.

Given the proximity of the Manling fighters and mercenaries, Karak Ungor seems the likeliest choice for recovery and it is believed to be still inhabitable. The other possibility, Karak Varn, is closer to the other remaining Dwarfholds.

Moreover, the old noble clans from Karak Ungor, with Prince Ulther Stonehammer as the strongest advocate, are firmly lobbying High King Thorgrim Grudgebearer to make the recovery of the first Dwarfhold to fall, the highest priority.

The next step would be to gain the support of the Dwarf realms west of Karaz Ankor. Relationships between these and the Imperial Dwarfs have often been strained as many do not honour the High King’s position.

The western Dwarfs have fewer delusions about the future of their race and believe the dream of reliving that bygone age will not come to pass. Though the western Dwarf-kings are not willing to march with their Imperial brethren, they will not stand in the way of any clansman who would want to join.

The Expatriate Dwarf elders face the same dilemma. Many realise that any large scale attempt to recover the lost Dwarfholds could likely end in failure. This could severely weaken the defences of those holds which have withstood sieges in the past. Out of respect for their Karaz Ankor brethren, the Expatriates do not believe it proper to criticise the policies of the High King, no matter if they privately believe that such are mere folly.

Word would quickly reach the ears of a surprised and concerned Emperor Heinrich. Not only would he be alarmed about the number of mercenaries in the Dwarfs’ employ, but also the exposure of the eastern borders should the Dwarfs fail. Furthermore, the new Emperor may well have to put aside his own ambitions in light of these developments.

The Imperial Dwarfs would most likely begin their campaign of recovery within a few years of 2520 I.C. despite the Emperor’s objections. Heinrich’s successful effort to unify The Empire under his strong leadership provides the Imperial Dwarfs with their opportunity. Thus, Heinrich faces a dilemma. Does he move troops to the eastern borders to prevent any incursions or does he wait for developments to unfold?

The attempt to recover Karak Ungor could take years. A war is certain to attract greenskins from both sides of the Worlds Edge Mountains. Losses to the Dwarfholds taking part could well mount and it is likely that the Dwarfs will risk reducing their garrisons, tempting other enemies to accelerate their own plans of conquest.

Consequently, the situation will likely spiral out of control, perhaps even drawing in elements of the Imperial and Kislevite armies. Other than the eastern Old World, the effects of the Imperial Dwarf recovery is unlikely to create much impact elsewhere.

Should the Dwarfs prevail in the battle, they will be faced with the dilemma of repopulation. The Imperial Dwarfs would have to provide incentive for these clans to settle in the recovered Dwarfhold, lest all their effort be for naught.

It is equally likely, perhaps more so in fact, that the Dwarfs fail to recover Karak Ungor. This would be nothing less than catastrophic for the Dwarfs. The remaining Karaz Ankor

Dwarfholds might well find themselves under siege with little hope of reinforcement. Should any of these fall, the Dwarfs themselves might become further divided, possibly even descend into a civil war (though the Imperial Dwarfs may be too weak to really carry this out). So divided, they would be easier prey for their many enemies.

In this event, The Empire and Kislev would both become more vulnerable as their eastern borders become more exposed than ever before. In such circumstances, a new age of continuous war becomes inevitable.

### What’s a PC to do?

In its earliest stages a war in the Worlds Edge Mountains would have little effect on life in The Empire. As the years wear on, the drain of fighting men and Dwarfs will become more obvious. This might have an adverse effect on the smaller farming settlements as families without young men might move to larger settlements for better defence. PCs might well find more employment opportunities to provide muscle in areas where bandits and worse are active. Some will view these able-bodied PCs with disgust, here whilst their menfolk have gone off to war and glory, but PCs might also enjoy the gratitude that others might well provide.

Localised famines would occur, as troops require more provisions to continue the struggle. Rioting could arise and the local noble could well be looking to increase his men-at-arms to keep the peasants at bay.

In time the stress of war will make its way across the rest of The Empire as people grow more concerned that the Dwarfs will fail. Many will leave their homes and migrate west. This displacement will create more tensions from which crafty PCs could profit, such as providing an armed escort.

More ambitious and opportunistic PCs might worm their way into the courts of the more important nobles. From there, they could find themselves in critical situations, like providing escort for an ambassador charged with convincing the Dwarfs to abandon their goal.

The post-*Enemy Within* setting does not necessarily have to be one of peace, nor strife within the Imperial boundaries. In fact, a campaign where the once-dependable ally on the entire eastern border of The Empire suddenly finds itself in a death struggle of its own making could create the type of anarchy in which most PCs thrive.



## Old Enemies and New Alliances by Graeme Davis



One of the main things that will have to be addressed in the near future is the outcome of the Dwarfen civil war that is taking place at the end of the *Doomstones* campaign. This will have profound repercussions for the security of the Old World. With the Dwarfs weakened by internal conflict, the level of Skaven activity in the Worlds Edge, Black and Grey Mountains can be expected to increase, and it is quite likely that some of the smaller, weaker Dwarfholds might fall to the Skaven. There is a risk that the Old World might be split in two by an expanding Skaven empire, and the forces of Chaos would not miss such an opportunity. We might even expect another Chaos Incursion through Kislev into The Empire. If Imperial forces are already occupied trying to bolster

the Dwarfs and stem the Skaven advances when this happens, a new Chaos Incursion would force them to fight a war on two fronts, which could be disastrous for the entire northern Old World. Even if The Empire manages to hold firm, it is quite likely that Kislev will fall, and the whole of Kislev might suffer the same fate as the doomed city of Praag.

The remnants of the Bloodaxe Alliance are still in the Border Princes, and I would expect a series of skirmishes between them and the various small states of this area. If a strong, charismatic leader springs up to replace Radzog, there is a chance that the Bloodaxe Alliance might re-form and pose a serious threat to the area. With Skaven on one side of them and Greenskins on the other, the Dwarfs of the World's Edge will be in serious trouble, even if they manage to resolve their civil war and unite in the face of these two common enemies.

*Empire in Flames* saw The Empire itself wracked by civil war; combined with the other factors mentioned above, this could lead to the collapse of The Empire itself. Unless it can stand united against the triple threat of a Chaos Incursion from the north, Skaven expansion in the south, and renewed Goblinoid attacks from the east, there is a good chance that it will crumble into a collection of small states, each holding out as best it can but too small to survive for long on its own. If this happens, it would take a leader of the stature of Magnus the Pious - or perhaps even the miraculous intervention of Sigmar himself - to hold The Empire together and give it any chance of survival.

In many ways, the Elves are the wild card in this scenario. While they may not be able to do much about Skaven expansion, they could prove crucial in the struggle against the Orcs and the forces of Chaos. It would take a miracle of diplomacy, but if the matter of the Phoenix Crown can be resolved in a way that is acceptable to both Elves and Dwarfs, and the ghost of the War of Vengeance finally laid to rest, a strong Dwarf-Elf alliance could prove to be a crucial element in the defence of the Old World.

The Vampire Counts of Sylvania, in the far east of The Empire, are another unknown. They will most likely defend their province against any attackers, but they are unlikely to co-operate with other Imperial forces unless the alternative is total destruction. While, for the most part, they are not formally allied with the forces of Chaos, they might decide to let the Chaos Incursion weaken The Empire, and then move in to expand their control over Ostland and other parts of The Empire. Relations between the Lahmia and the Tomb Kings of Khemri will also be important. They might co-operate against the Greenskins threatening the Border Princes (although they would surely charge a terrible price for their aid), or they might both attack the area while the Humans and Goblinoids are fighting each other, only to meet in the middle and fight for supremacy.

While Marienburg is able to defend itself with the help of the Sea Elves, there is little to prevent the rest of the Wasteland from falling to Chaos, Skaven, Fimir or any combination of forces. It would be a fairly simple matter to cut off access to the rest of the Old World via the River Reik, and then the city would be entirely dependent upon its shipping. Provided that Marienburg's fleet can be reinforced by the Elves of Ulthuan against attacks from Dark Elves and other pirates, this may not be a serious problem. However, if the Dark Elves make a determined effort to seal Marienburg off from Ulthuan, they could win themselves a valuable

foothold in the Old World.

The states of the southern Old World - the Estalian Kingdoms and the Tilean City-States - will also be of vital importance. If they can force the Skaven onto the defensive by mounting an attack on Skavenblight and other strongholds on the southern side of the mountains, they might be able to buy valuable time for the rest of the world. An alliance between Estalia and Bretonnia could anchor the western edge of the Old World against attack, protecting The Empire's western flank and freeing Imperial troops to fight on the other fronts.

Despite its apparent security, the Old World is a house of cards, and it would take very little to plunge it into a new age of wars, one at least as terrible as anything that has gone before.



## A New Order by Dave Perry



This alternative history grew from my own campaign, which ignores events in *Empire in Flames*.

In the face of the rise of the importance of the merchant classes, the traditional nobility continues to decline. Much of the politics of the World has been defined by this development and people have positioned themselves based on their beliefs on how the future will develop. Broadly speaking three factions emerged: First were the true, old school nobility to whom buying and selling were things done by the lower classes, not befitting a gentleman. These favoured repression of any attempt to alter the status quo.

Second are the radical (or simply power-hungry) merchants who wish to sweep away the old order and build a new modern Empire, one that would, of course, require the execution of the decrepit remnants of the now useless aristocracy.

Finally there are the moderates from both sides who see that change is inevitable but hope to bring it about gradually and without violence.

The other major change will be in the growth in power of Nuln. Nuln forges strong links with the Moot and then comes to their rescue when Stirland attacks them. The Stirland campaign is a massive success with the Moot freed and Stirland's old-fashioned army crushed by Nuln's cannons and much of Stirland taken by Nuln. It is then that Altdorf stirs, perhaps recognising a threat to its power. The new Emperor declares sanctions but his mysterious death aborts any action he may have taken.

When the Electors meet to decide on the new Emperor, would-be factions quickly form, with the nobles of Altdorf (backed by Stirland, Ostland and Middenland) on one side and Nuln (backed by the Moot, Talabecland and Averland) on the other. With the differences really too great to be decided peacefully, civil war is inevitable.

*The Correspondent* theorised the gradual decline of the Church of Ulric in the face of opposition from the Church of Sigmar and its own irrelevance in the modern age. In our campaign the Church of Sigmar is riven by the conflict between the Grand Theogonist and the Arch-Lector of Nuln. This has considerably weakened the Church of Sigmar and prevented it moving on the Church of Ulric. It has made it less appealing to those Ulric worshipers who may have been considering defecting.

Also the appointment of the capable Heinrich Todbringer to the Electorship of Middenheim promises a revitalisation of the

city under his strong leadership. This revitalisation aids the Church of Ulric, based in the city since time immemorial.

Perhaps most important however is Middenheim and Ar-Ulric's studied neutrality in the face of the civil war. As Middenheim's army remains fresh and untouched, the chances of them being the decisive factor in the war increase. While Heinrich Todbringer has not the political support to be Emperor himself, with Ar-Ulric's canny advice he is likely to do well out of the war.

The resistance of the old school nobility to change - with the guillotines of Marienburg hovering in the background - has been one of the major factors behind the civil war. Opponents seek to undermine both extremist camps by a reunification of Marienburg and The Empire under a trade treaty and more liberal laws.

In foreign affairs Kislev appears to be undergoing a re-birth, with the Tsarina ruthlessly conquering Bolgasgrad while encouraging scholars and thinkers from all over the Old World to her court.

Bretonnia however seems to be ever more mired in its problems. With powerful Bretonnian nobles defying their King's orders and taking part in the Imperial civil war, the hold King Charles has on his kingdom has never seemed so tenuous.

The appearance of the Gnomes bargaining for sanctuary in the Moot bodes ill for their ancient allies the Dwarfs. Many have felt that, with typical stubbornness, the Dwarfs had set themselves an impossible task when they continued to try to hold the Worlds Edge Mountains. It is feared that this constant warfare has finally taken its toll on the dwindling Dwarfs and that they have finally reached the point where their extinction is inevitable.

It is probably not unconnected that this seems to coincide with the Elves increasing their contact with Humanity. New trade treaties are struck between the human kingdoms and the Sea and Wood Elves, while previously unknown Wood Elf colonies all over the Old World reveal themselves to their human neighbors. It is even rumoured that the High Elves may choose to contact Humanity, although there remains little sign of it.

However, it is the normally placid Halflings who have changed the most. The invasion by Stirland led them to militarise for the first time in their history and in the civil war the near unthinkable happened when Halflings met 'Biggers' in open battle and won!

Militarisation is not the only change to come to the Halflings. Rumors spread of a 'Halfling Heresy', of Gods that pre-date the Moot, Gods other than Esmerelda, indeed, Gods whose worship was suppressed by the Priests of Esmerelda.

For the first time in many generations Halflings have no idea what shape the future will take.

vicious dogs of war on the population at large. While opponents in the nobility and the cult of Sigmar can be dealt with by more subtle means, the many strands of conspiracy uncovered with the exposure of the Purple Hand, and perhaps the Red Crown, will unravel and lead to cabals and scheming enclaves permeating all levels of society. Some will be real, and some imagined under torture. The entire Empire will be caught up in the furore of retribution.

Nobility and clergy will be removed through enforced abdication and assassination and new seeds of resentment and fear will be sown. As he was chosen by unearthly powers, Heinrich will acquit himself well and the problems he inherited will be seen to disappear. However, plots and conspiracy will simply be moved deeper into the darkness where they are much more susceptible to the influence of Chaos.

The cult of Sigmar will be riven by internal feuding. Those loyal to Heinrich will win the power struggle but fanatical Magnaerans, whole covens of witch hunters disgruntled at having to adopt Ulrican orthodoxy, and simple bigoted nationalists will organise and bide their time. Their powerbase will stretch secretly throughout the cult and reach almost to the Grand Theogonist himself. The military of Reikland, Averland and Sudenland will await the word of Sigmar, to be passed to them through the noble officers and the company priests.

The chief beneficiary of the times will be the 'Blood of Sigmar', a Khornate cult masquerading as a nationalist Sigmarite organisation and feeding off the desire for vengeance of the most fanatical and disenfranchised Sigmarites.

On his deathbed, Heinrich will rest assured that he has left behind a stable nation, a named heir and numerous upstanding progeny. One day later the entire von Bildhofen dynasty will be but a sad memory; a single night of bloody massacre will ensure not a single heir to Heinrich remains.

The armies of the southern provinces will mobilise and take Nuln and Altdorf. The Grand Theogonist will reluctantly flee to Carroburg and then to Middenheim, and a new Grand Theogonist will be named by the revolutionaries headed by the Blood of Sigmar. It is in this way a high priest of Khorne will become ruler of half The Empire. At his signal marauders in the north will begin a new and unprecedented offensive against Kislev.

Imperial Dwarfs, despite pleas from all sides will remain inactive. Their traditional ties to Sigmarite homelands will pull them one way, while their assumed loyalty to Sigmar's chosen will pull the other. Expatriate Dwarfs will join both sides in the civil war, but mostly they will lie low, or scurry back to the mountains.

The civil war will rage for years. Bretonnians, Skaven, Greenskins and Vampires will all take advantage of the anarchy and seek to pick what they can from the ruins. Then it will start to get grim and perilous. The Empire will not even come close to recovery for generations.

## A House Divided by Clive Oldfield



At the end of *Empire in Flames* The Empire is left with new hope, but also in a precarious position. The Sigmarites have lost a lot of their god-given rights and previously unchallenged power base. The chosen of Sigmar is an Ulrican. Chaos cults have been shown to have infiltrated the highest echelons of Imperial power.

Heinrich has to tread a very careful path. He must be magnanimous but must also deal with treacherous plotters with sanguine efficiency. There will be a golden age of witch hunting; Heinrich will have little choice but to unleash these particularly



# KEEP IT SECRET!

Maintaining atmosphere in your WFRP games by Matthew Pritchard

GM: *The stinking corpses of the Skaven now lie in pieces at your feet. (Voice drops to a hoarse, atmospheric whisper.) Looking around, you see that the dank underground chamber is a dead end. The walls are covered in a thick coat of slime, beneath which is just visible the baleful outline of a symb...*

Player 1: *Right, must be a secret door around here somewhere. My Elf's got an Initiative of 72 (Rolls a 40). Yep, got it. What do I find?*

GM: (Cut off mid-flow) *Er, yes, there is a secret door. (After momentary pause adopts atmospheric tone again) Yes, the faintest outline of a door can be detected, a door that, judging by the skill with which it has been concealed, must have been of Dwarf construc...*

Player 2: *Right, I'll check it for traps. (Rolls a 12). Yep, made it. What do I find?*

GM: (Getting annoyed.) *No, it's not trapped but it is locked. Anyway, as I was saying, the door, though made of wood, is cunningly concealed and...*

Player 2: (Rolling dice and not listening) *Oops, failed my pick lock by a mile. Doesn't matter though, the Pit Fighter can just boot it open. After all, we know it's not trapped....*

Sound familiar? If it doesn't, or indeed if you think the above a perfectly acceptable example of gameplay, then you probably don't need to read this article. But for those of you to whom the previous exchange rings depressingly true, read on - help is at hand.

We all know that WFRP is an incredibly atmospheric game. So what exactly has gone wrong in the above to destroy that atmosphere?

After having spent a certain amount of time using any system, players become familiar with both the rules and the mechanics of the game. In itself, this is not a problem. Gaining knowledge of a particular character's abilities and how best to employ them is an essential part of the gaming experience. In the case of less combat orientated characters it often becomes the primary source of enjoyment - a cunningly used spell or a lock picked at a crucial moment can be just as memorable as prevailing in battle against overwhelming odds.

However, in many cases this familiarity can lead players to become blasé about certain aspects of the game, particularly when a simple dice roll determines success or failure. This article looks to provide a few practical techniques for GMs to prevent game mechanics causing the atmosphere to slip.

## Thou Shalt Roll in Secret

In situations such as above it is far better for the GM to make the roll for the PC in secret. This has the advantage of keeping the game based firmly around an exchange of narrative.

It also creates a quandary in player's minds - if the search turns up negative can they be sure that there really is nothing to find? What might they have missed? The stakes are even higher when a possible trap is involved. Is it really safe to open the chest?

Of course, slavishly employing this approach can lead to frustrating stand-offs between players and GM of the 'Nope, you find nothing / Then we'll search again / Nope, still nothing / Then we'll search again, etc' type. This brings me to my second point.

Making selective dice rolls for players not only keeps the narrative firmly in the hands of the GM but allows him, if necessary, to bend the rules a little in the interests of drama, especially when the adventure is building towards a finale. To return to the example above, the secret door could be central to the plot, so why leave its discovery to the whims of a dice roll? Far better to roll in secret and have the PCs find it anyway. Make them wait a little, building up the atmosphere with the sound of dozens of scurrying, clawed feet echoing through the sewer tunnels behind them, unsure as to whether or not there is anything to be found and then, bingo! they slip through the hidden door just as the shadow of an enormous Rat Ogre becomes visible on the wall outside!

I would not advocate using this approach all the time. Dice rolls are part and parcel of the game and, in many cases, disastrous dice rolls can be the source of many an unexpected comedic or dramatic moment. As an adventure approaches its climax the action becomes far more focused, and often the random element the dice introduce can detract greatly from the drama.

My players had spent weeks on the trail of Titus Spleenbile, a champion who they finally brought to ground in the Reikwald Forest. An expectant hush settled on the room as Spleenbile lifted his huge chaos blade and the players prepared themselves for the climactic battle... except that it wasn't to be. The party's Elf warrior got to go first (*surprise, surprise!*) and through an unbelievable combination of lucky rolls did a whopping twenty-five points of damage in a single blow - more than enough to slice both Titus Spleenbile and his chaos steed into little ravioli-shaped pieces of leprous flesh. Whilst the Elf's player sat beaming, the rest of the players mumbled despondently about it being 'ridiculous, starting with 2d10+50 Initiative.'

The campaign's entire dramatic climax now hung on a single dice roll, namely Titus Spleenbile's *Dodge Blow*. I made the roll in secret, having already decided that Spleenbile would pass it regardless of the dice.

Fifteen minutes later the battered party emerged triumphant after a battle of titanic proportions. Although they had lost a huge number of *Wounds*, both Spleenbile and the campaign had gone out with a real bang and everyone was happy.

Now, there are those who might regard this as wilful cheating on my part; but cheating can only occur when two or more teams are competing against each other. Although GMs make dice rolls for NPC villains and monsters, they are not his creatures; it is not a case of the PCs vs. GM.

The GM's chief responsibility is to create and control the world in which the PCs adventure in as dramatic a way as possible. Game mechanics can be a necessary part of this, but one should never be a slave to them. After all, what type of atmosphere do fantasy games aim to create? It is not one of straightforward

realism, but rather one of heroism and derring-do. Let's face it, left to the whims of the dice Frodo would never have made it even as far as 'The Prancing Pony'.

### Keep 'em Guessing

When used with a little basic psychology, secret rolls can also add tension to the game. Imagine the scene. The PCs have come to a tricky part of the adventure and are undecided as to what to do. After minutes of heated debate they finally plump for one of the options - at which point the GM begins feverishly consulting his or her notes, shaking their head and tutting, whilst engaging in a flurry of hidden dice rolling. Sounds simple, I know, but try it some time and you'll see how effective it can be, the players exchanging worried looks and wondering if they should turn back.

Secret notes are a good idea too. Characters with a skill that imparts specialist knowledge not available to the others should have any information they glean written out for them on a piece of paper. Hand it over, let the PC read it, then take it back immediately and destroy it. The PC is then free to let fellow party members know as little or as much as they want, thereby creating tension between the characters themselves. (What do they know that we don't? What are they holding back?)

This can also be employed to create a realistic sense of suspicion between the characters. A disastrously failed roll in open play simply means 'proceed with extreme caution and believe nothing the GM tells us.' In secret play it can lead to all sorts of internal dynamics within the party. For example:

Nimble Proudfoot, halfling burglar, searches a chest for traps. The GM, having secretly rolled a 99, decides that on such a disastrous failure false information should be imparted and hands the player a note informing him the chest is free of any traps.

Nimble: *Right, all clear.*

Bodyguard: *Can't waste any time, the Watch'll be here any moment. Out of the way, titch, I'm going to smash it open.*

GM: *Your sword sweeps a mighty arc and crushes the lid of the chest in a single blow. However, as the blade strikes the wood a slight 'click' is audible and you feel a sudden sharp pain in your forearm. Gazing down you see a small, glistening needle protruding from the flesh.*

The PCs watch in horror as the Bodyguard sinks to the floor and goes into uncontrollable spasms. All eyes turn suspiciously toward the Halfling, who is shaking his head in confusion and protesting his innocence.

Elf: *So, you never did really forgive him for not letting you have that magical dagger, eh, Nimble?*

It is important not to overuse this technique - occasionally hand out notes with mundane information on them. Just watch party members' eyes narrow in suspicion as the player concerned replies, 'Oh, it was nothing.'

### Combat Conundrums

Another simple atmospheric trick is to not let players know how many *Wounds* they have left. Of course, the downside is that it can make the GM's job more complex so a little organisation is imperative. However, used correctly, it adds immeasurably to the realism of the game. No longer will

warriors wade merrily into battle, content in the knowledge that they have all but two of their *Wounds* to squander. Each possible conflict will now have to be considered in the light of the huge cut they already have across their right thigh or the crushing blow that has left their arm numb with pain. In short, players will start to worry about the actual health of their characters, rather than viewing it as a simple number.

This also makes healing injuries a far less cut and dry affair. How many times have you heard the words 'let me go in first, I'm back up to full *Wounds*'? Now GMs make the dice roll for the *Heal Wounds* or *Cure Light Injuries*, note the new total down and inform the player 'You feel much better, although your head still throbs and you feel a little dizzy.'

### Conclusion

Often the overt presence of game mechanics and statistics can detract from WFRP's atmosphere, robbing it of its sense of gloomy mystery. I hope the techniques in this article prove of use to those GMs who wish to preserve this ambience a little more within their games.

This advice won't be to everybody's taste. There are many gamers who take great delight in dice rolls, statistics and the clean, clinical gaming experience they create - and I wish them all the luck in the world. After all, roleplaying is meant to be, above all else, an enjoyable experience for everyone involved.

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# GOING UNDERGROUND

A New Look at Dungeons & Caves

By Craig Bunting



## INTO THE DEPTHS

Innumerable roleplaying scenarios feature 'dungeons' represented like a flow chart; the tunnels and chambers are merely connecting routes from one encounter to another. They are described as 'ten by ten corridors with flagged flooring' or something similar. This lack of realism is colourless and adds no 'texture' to the game. While underground adventures may occur in a fictional setting they need to be based upon real-world laws and this article will attempt to shed new factual light on these fictional settings to add colour, depth and texture to WFRP games.

### DEFINITIONS

There are three broad types of underground 'void' a foolhardy group of adventurers might find themselves in.

**Mines:** tunnels and chambers (*adits* and *stopes* in mining terms) dug out for mineral content.

**Caverns:** naturally occurring voids where an underground river (or lava) passes or passed through at some time.

**Dungeons:** specifically excavated voids designed for a reason such as habitation (whether in life or after life) and which have some 'touches' in the way of decoration, clean finishing or levelling.

### SOME UNDERGROUND HAZARDS

Rock cannot be tunnelled through without careful engineering and effort since it comes in a wide variety of types, each with different properties. Give some thought to what sort of rock the underground environment is in. Is it strong enough to have large unsupported spans across a chamber or is it weak, requiring pillars to hold the roof up?

**Gas:** in mining terms there are several gasses but they all have one of two effects: explosions or suffocation. Gases tend to build up in tiny spaces in rock. Coal is the classic example of 'gassy rock' and a thin layer stretching over a large area contains a lot of gas. Tools of the trade can help prevent gas-related accidents; the real-life invention of a naked-flame lamp shrouded by metal gauze did not ignite flammable gasses in the surrounding air. Dwarfen mining engineers are aware of this technique but, like most secrets of the elder races, it is closely guarded. Therefore subterranean adventurers need be wary of the following occurring:

**Methane ('firedamp'):** will explode when the air contains 4-5% of it. An explosion might propagate down a tunnel and bring the roof in. Methane is colourless, odourless, lighter than air and will collect in high pockets. When that bold tall fighter raises his torch to see ahead... boom.

**Carbon dioxide ('blackdamp') and carbon monoxide ('whitedamp'):** both will suffocate adventurers and are heavier than air, collecting in deep areas like pits. Carbon monoxide is a product of burning hydrocarbons (lamp oil or methane) in a low-oxygen environment (certainly underground). A party in a deep section of an abandoned dwarfen mine sees black-sooted walls but the skeletons at their feet look like they just keeled over; as the party ponders this they wonder why they are suddenly short of breath. Underground races like dwarfs may burn oil to produce carbon monoxide so it sits in deep points to act as a trap.

**Hydrogen sulphide ('stinkdamp'):** smells like rotten eggs. It is extremely corrosive, toxic and flammable, exploding in concentrations of 4-5% in air. One tea-mug full in a 10-foot cube can be distinctly smelt. Two tea-mugs full irritates the eyes and throat (affecting perception rolls and spoken spells). At six pints it temporarily destroys a person's sense of smell (until in fresh air). This might make a dungeon delver incorrectly think it has gone. At fourteen pints hydrogen sulphide causes rapid unconsciousness and paralyses the respiratory system, killing the victim. Hydrogen sulphide can be easily created by chemistry. Dwarfs might throw leather bags of sulphur and delicate glass bottles of acid to produce this gas.

Note: The wick of a lantern will burn with a specific colour, and the shape of the flame will change when small amounts of the above gasses are present. Dwarfs with their own safety lamp inventions and those with *Mining* skill are likely to know when and what gas is present by the way the flame burns.

**Water:** any cavity below ground level (and the water table) will naturally fill up with water. Mines may have what appear to be puddles that are actually deep shafts full to the brim with murky water. A man in armour could go down in an instant and never be seen again. Water trickling from the roof puts out torches while making the floor slick and treacherous. In mines they try to pump the water out until they have finished excavating while most dungeons are unlikely to be built in places that would normally flood. Still, moisture is usually a problem.

**Rockfalls:** there are two types of these. The first is blocks of loose rock that fall out of the roof under their own weight. These might cause more rocks to fall and is a common occurrence. Before a period of work down a mine, a man would be sent to prod and poke the roof to locate, identify and bring down any dangerous area. If a mine is left untended debris might drop from the ceiling at the shock of dropping a backpack. One stone may break off and the 'thud' of that might cause another to fall, and another, and so on. The second type of rockfall is really a rock *burst*. These occur deep beneath the earth (two miles or more) when a section exposed in an excavation gives way under pressure and 'bursts out' of the wall. These can be prompted by people striking walls made of hard rocks and usually only occur in very hard rocks. Rockfalls can be attributed to bad engineering and neglect, while rock bursting happens every now and then as long as the empty space exists.

### SOME UNDERGROUND FEATURES

In addition to hazards there are a number of peculiarities of subterranean environments.

**Sound:** sound echoes around a cavern but in a narrow tunnel people will have trouble making themselves heard. Two people twenty feet apart in a tunnel five feet wide with rough surfaces (mines, for example) will have to shout to make themselves heard clearly. If the walls are smoother, sound will travel more easily but in a rough tunnel two men will not hear goblins' footsteps crunching on the gravel floor fifty feet away. It is likely that those men will not hear them until poked with spears. Bonuses to *Listen* tests in caverns (through echoing) and penalties in tunnels are applicable. Generally speaking a person could hear noises normally up to the width of the tunnel away.

**Natural lighting:** there are creatures that live at the bottom of deep oceans that produce their own bioluminescence and in a fantasy setting this analogy can be applied underground. Glowing slugs and luminous



plants of one sort or another are all very likely to evolve in such places. It is worth noting however that the light from these organisms are only going to be seen when artificial lights have been extinguished so a party might walk by them and not notice. Some of these organisms might emit infrared or ultraviolet light allowing creatures that can see in these ends of the light spectrum some advantage. Just a few patches of bioluminescent fungi dotted around are going to help anyone with *Night Vision* enormously.

Dwarves might keep luminescent fish in bowls to provide enough light to get by in a tunnel whereas goblins might culture bioluminescent fungi in clay pots filled with their own faeces. Alchemists might take rare minerals and treat them with some foul chemical to make them glow although such chemicals are likely to be expensive.

**Light:** torches, candles and lamps all have a flame that will flicker with movement and cause shadows to dart and wave around them. Objects as large as a human head can be missed in these conditions quite easily and mild penalties to visual perception checks are going to be applicable. Reading spells off scrolls is going to be almost impossible unless someone is standing still next to the caster with a candle or lamp.

**Space:** two people could not hope to fight effectively with swords in a toilet cubicle and some tunnels are about as wide. To do so with a 'swung' weapon the wielder is going to need at least the length of their weapon either side and above them. One man with a four-foot sword requires an eight-foot wide by ten-foot high tunnel to fight. If two men with swords were standing side by side they would hinder each other greatly unless they are trained to fight in such circumstances. Height is also a factor: a six-foot man is going to have trouble fighting a four and a half-foot goblin in a five-foot high tunnel. When a person cannot stand easily and has less than about three feet either side to move in, penalties to their *Initiative* would be in order for skills like *Dodge Blow*.

Races (and careers) adept at underground fighting use thrusting and stabbing weapons like short swords, daggers and spears. In game terms they should have a skill allowing them to fight without penalty in restricted areas (see *Tunnel Fighting* skill on page 26).

**Ventilation:** air will circulate very slowly underground although too slowly to make any difference in-game. Fire is a ravenous consumer of oxygen and fire-spells, burning oil and similar will instantly make large volumes of air non-breathable. A ten-foot cube of air will let a calm man to breathe for about six hours. That can be halved if he is engaged in low-energy activity (walking) or just nervous, and quartered if he is engaged in frantic activity (fighting) or panicking. A hand-held torch will probably consume all the oxygen within twenty minutes while a candle will consume as much as a resting human. Characters using the *Meditation* skill can double their available time.

Dwarf mines will have a vertical shaft with a fire underneath allowing heated air to rise out of the mine while at another entrance fresh air will then be sucked in. They may also erect heavy sacking curtains over areas of the mine they do not use so air is not circulated around unused spaces. Humans might just make another entrance so the wind can blow through while goblins might just rely on their movement in an out of the mine to stir the air around.

Dwarves might build mill-style machines to fan air around a mine and they may even have the machine itself underground; something like a

tread-wheel with a pony or a couple of apprentices in it, possibly even a water-mill. It is possible they might use backpack-sized portable hand-operated devices and leather hoses in smaller areas. In wider tunnels where there may only be one entrance they might hang a thin stone wall along the middle of tunnels, effectively dividing it into two parallel tunnels so fresh air is blown down one side, through the areas being worked in the and stale air returns along the other side of the curtain.

Human miners are likely to imitate Dwarf techniques as cheaply as they can and use sacking curtains rather than thin walls. Goblins might have developed some unsavoury vegetable-based liquor in which they immerse certain minerals that react together and freshen stale air (a chemical reaction that releases oxygen).

Magical aid can be used to ventilate underground spaces also. Air Elementals could be summoned to whistle through a mine to displace stale air for fresh, the *Wind Blast* spell (First Level Battle Magic) could be aimed into the entrance of a mine from outside to displace stale air. If a portion of a mine has been sealed off or fire has consumed all the oxygen *Wind Blast* will freshen it up enough to travel through. It is likely Goblins and Dwarves will have spells that do this job and underground siege warfare between the two races includes lighting fires to burn off the oxygen to asphyxiate the enemy as well as building air-tight walls to fend off these sort of tactics.

**Movement along Ground Surfaces:** unless the ground has been specifically finished it is going to be very uneven. Adventurers will find themselves naturally walking at Cautious rate and without a roof consistently at least a foot above their head they are going to stoop. If they have to jog or run on such surfaces *Dexterity* or *Initiative* checks need to be made to avoid tripping or bashing heads on low sections. A fast moving man hitting his head on a low, protruding boulder is comparable to falling ten feet. It at least might knock his helmet off for his pursuers to pick up.

## ENGINEERING AND GEOLOGY

Different rocks have different properties and can generally be classified into two groups:

**Hard Rocks:** these include granite (as seen in Cornwall, for example Bodmin Tor), sandstones (the Roaches in Staffordshire) and some limestones (as seen in Derbyshire, for example Ecton Mine). These are difficult to dig through and tunnels are going to be as small as possible. These rocks support their own weight well and blocks will rarely fall after the miners have finished work. Hard rocks can be mined by hammering metal spikes or dry wooden wedges (to be soaked in place with water and allowed to expand) into existing cracks and prising out large blocks. This is highly labour intensive. They can also be mined by lighting fires against the walls to get them red hot, then dousing them with cold water to crack them. Another way is to drill blast holes by using a long steel drill rod - a long round rod with a stone chisel bit cut into the end that is hammered (strike, turn one quarter, strike, turn one quarter...) into the rock. Gunpowder is used for blasting. This is expensive but faster. (Historically, you could proceed a whole two yards a week!)

**Soft Rocks:** coal beds are typically found in soft rocks with layers of weak mudstones (like sandstone but with much smaller grains of sand). These tunnels are much faster to mine as they can be hacked out with picks. The roof needs supporting with wooden fences braced against

the walls to stop crumbling. Falling blocks in this sort of rock would be common and where several tumble out of the same place they leave a pocket for gas to collect.

Coal is mined most easily where it is lying flattish, giving rise to coal mines that have distinct levels separated by layers of non-coal rock. Coal also has a tendency to be 'laterally extensive' and results in large open areas (a few hundred square yards) that are supported by pillars of coal left in place at a width of two to four times the thickness of the coal bed, for safety. Economical coal beds can be anywhere from two foot plus thick and it is known in the 1800's real world for men to work three foot high coal seams. Children, Halflings and Goblin slaves could be put to work on thinner seams.

**Tunnels:** Skaven have been known to build long tunnels over hundreds of miles to give them access to sewers under cities. Generally speaking tunnels excavated for access are engineered through the easiest rock to move.

While Dwarfs who have the skills to cut through harder stronger rocks knowing the ceiling will support itself, the Skaven are likely to dig through the softest rock and worry about supporting the ceiling in other ways. Dwarven tunnels will therefore be straighter while Skaven tunnels will be more warren-like where they have followed soft rock in the general direction they want to go in. They might even have several small tunnels going in the same direction so a small army might be moved quickly through tunnels less likely to collapse.

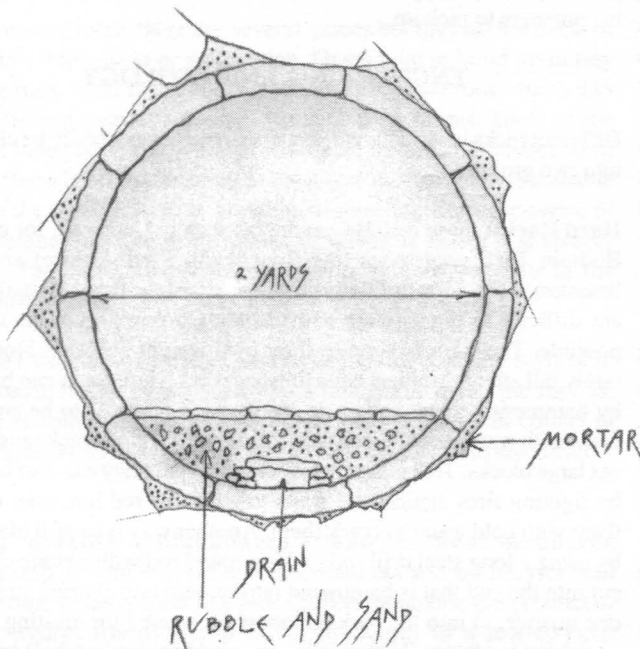
Skaven are likely to dig five-foot diameter tunnels at the rock-soil interface (called 'regolith'). This is going to be three to five metres down in the Imperial forests and get thinner on the slopes of hills. It is likely Skaven may use coppiced willow mats staked into the tunnel

walls and plastered with some kind of excrement and lime mix to make crude cement. This sets and helps the formation support itself. The Grey Seers are accomplished Alchemists and lime mortar is a common and well known material in the Old World. It is worth noting the Viet Cong fought successfully using such warrens as bases during the Vietnam War. Tunnels and chambers with hospitals, barracks and workshops were impervious to American bombing as well as being generously laced with simple but effective traps. Skaven will know all these tricks and more.

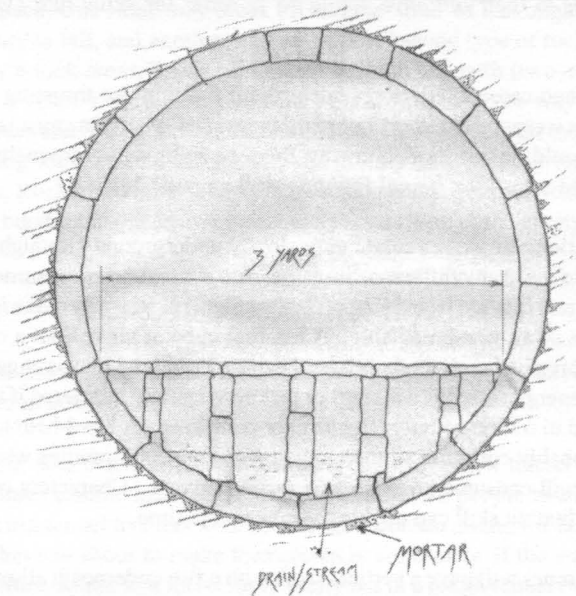
The willow mats and mortar are not going to be hard to rip down by determined heroes bearing picks and in the warren-like tunnel of Skaven a deadly game of cat-and-rat could develop. Sections of tunnel could be stripped of their support, an enemy is lured in and a small black powder charge detonated to bring a long section of tunnel down on their heads. The unfortunate victims then suffocate immobile in the dark.

### CONSTRUCTION: MINES

It costs to build anything, and that is doubly true for underground construction. Even slaves need feeding and any excavation is going to be no larger than absolutely necessary. Supporting the roof is a temporary measure: Once the mine has had all the ore taken it can be left to cave in by itself. Sometimes voids can be reused as tombs, refuges in time of war or turned into residences. These are also going to be of irregular shape and size so any chamber constructed for occupancy might be of unusual shape or have an odd manner of access. However, they may occur in predictable sequences, e.g. egg shaped pods several tens of yards long every hundred or so yards in a north-easterly direction, getting steadily smaller and deeper, following a natural pattern of mineral deposits.



Drawing from Dwarven texts on tunnel building: tunnel support in hard rock. Fill cavities with mortar and place tightly fitting interlocking masonry. The pressure of the surrounding rock forces the masonry together.



Tunnel support in soft rock. Again, plug hollows with mortar to stop pieces from breaking and place tightly fitting interlocking masonry. As with hard rock, the pressure of the surrounding rock forces the masonry together. In this example a raised floor allows spring water to pass beneath, possibly with separate channels for fresh and 'soiled' water.

Mining can go on for decades if not centuries and what began as a copper ore pod might eventually become a palace for the Dwarf prospector that found it. Mines tend to have thin tunnels just big enough for a miner (of whatever race) to carry out a basket full of rock on their back with maybe a few 'scoops' taken out the side of a tunnel for two miners to pass each other. For a Human this might be as little as five and a half feet high and two and a half wide (children might be chosen for their small size and low - if any - pay). Where ore is being taken out there are larger, irregularly shaped recesses.

Dwarfs mine methodically and with good engineering, know where ore is likely to be, what features to look for in rocks that might prove hazardous and, most importantly, how to efficiently support the roof and walls. This is usually done by leaving pillars of the poorest ore in place and using dried waxed timbers that will not rot quickly and can be re-used. The overall process will be planned out and mining will be more expensive in initial resources, yet more profitable and less wasteful overall.

There will be an entrance the workers go in and a shaft under which they light a fire (nowhere near coal of course). This fire warms air that travels up the shaft and in doing so sucks fresh air into the workers' entrance. Dwarf tunnels are going to be two-dwarfs wide and might have a finished flat floor to enable them to push carts or use pit-ponies. Dwarf mines have roofs that incline so light gases flow to specific ignition points where they are burnt off safely or allowed to vent outside. The floors will be slanting to channel away water or to collection points where it can be pumped out. The walls and roof are relatively smooth and well finished with no nasty protrusions so a dwarf can trot without fear of hitting his head.

Humans running mines in The Empire might have some skill in engineering but are going to be less fussy. Unlike Dwarfs who are more 'professional', miners are likely to be farm labourers working in winter for basic wages. Here tunnels are supported with sawn logs that will rot in the damp in a few weeks or months. A relative lack of geological knowledge means digging out every bit of ore they can get and not leaving some to support the roof. While there is a certain amount of planning in the layout there are no flattened floors or finished walls.

The floors might be inclined to have water run out but the only precaution for explosive gasses is a man covered in soaking rags crawling with a long stick holding a lit candle, poking it where gas might collect. (This was actually standard practice in the mid to late 1800's in Britain.) Roofs will be rough and only obvious protrusions will be removed. The walls are likely to have rough timber fences built up against the rock in places where the wall is unstable and prone to crumbling.

Goblinoids and some Humans dig wherever it is easiest without planning or holding the roof up. This sort of mine is a warren where the tunnels wriggle around chasing the ore seams with scoops and pockets taken out the sides. Unstable roofs and walls fall in and just enough of the rubble is shovelled away to be able to get through. This is faster but prompts more fall-ins later. No provision will be made to channel gas and water out of the mine and the walls and roofs will be rough to the point of inconvenience. It is likely such a mine's profile will be almost the exact shape of one of the miners who made it, plus a few inches on each side.

Skaven natural instinct is to follow the rock strata in such a way so that although their tunnels appear to be as haphazard and ill-planned as the

Human and Goblin ones they are surprisingly stable, in part due to being smaller and better shaped.

### Caverns

Caverns eroded by water are generally going to be in hilly areas where the water enters the rock at the hilltops and percolates down through the rock mass and out into valleys. The classic rock for this is limestone, such as that found in Derbyshire. Such caverns will have a curving fluidic shape and are typically a series of organ-shaped voids

whose walls become smoother towards the bottom. The conduits for the water between the caverns greatly vary in size. They might split into several smaller channels where the water has exploited more soluble rock.

Stalactites (hanging down) and stalagmites (sticking up) form natural pillars. These structures are prized by Dwarfs who carve them to further accentuate the shape. Dwarfs often enlarge and modify natural caverns to form pleasing 'water-front residences' or construct mills powered by water wheels to grind ore for the smelter.

Caverns also provide living space for other humanoids and non-humanoids. It is likely to find remains of habitation going back hundreds to thousands of years. Some of the 'remains' might have been trapped for quite some time and be unhappy about it, not to mention ravenous. Think attack of the zombie/wight sabretooth tiger in The Old World's equivalent to Derbyshire.

## CONSTRUCTION: DUNGEONS

### Non-dungeons

Dungeons were not always specifically constructed underground. The Roman emperor Nero built a huge palace after a large swathe of Rome burnt down. In time, a large portion of this structure was built over, leaving the rooms effectively below street level, to be found again hundreds of years later. Cities have a tendency to raise the ground level they are erected on. Floods may send thick layers of mud and debris yards through the streets, making the ground floor the basement.

Where buildings are built on soft ground they also tend to sink. Roads may be re-surfaced and tend to rise and eventually a building, once on street level, becomes a basement, and later, a cellar. The city may eventually be abandoned, leaving the buildings on the surface to crumble into ruin but letting the cellars and basements remain. Such areas are not designed to support the load of the rubble of a crumbling city upon them and so are unstable. Collapsed sections will be common. In deserts, huge sandstorms and dunes can quickly bury entire cities. Much of Ancient Egypt's monuments literally had to be excavated out of the sand.



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Cellars have slightly domed roofs and their layout will mimic that of the ground floor. It is likely the rooms in such a cellar will be small (10-15 feet square) and maybe knee-deep in water or mud. Where an abandoned city has been buried it might be possible to break through one cellar into another; certainly Skaven find such labyrinths to their taste. The walls are collapsing stone or brick lined with little alcoves for long-gone lamps or storage spaces. These dungeons mimic the original urban layout and have 'patches' in between of what once were roads and streets. (It would be worth looking at some of the original city plans for Altdorf from *The Empire in Flames*).

This sort of burial can be seen in Colchester where the basement of the Temple to Claudius survived but the city above it (and the temple) were torn down by Boudica and her army in AD74. In this case terrified civilians took shelter in the basement when it was attacked. Imagine the terror when they realised they were sealed in! A few hundred years later adventurers hunting for the lost temple and its riches breach a basement like this but instead they find a basement of undead, animated by their maddening fear from ages ago. The Skara Brae Neolithic (new stone-age) village on Orkney off the north coast of Scotland is another example of how underground voids might be created and forgotten.

### Dungeons

Where dungeons are cut into the rock, the dimensions are going to be determined by the stability of the roof and the walls. Good hard rock (a nice thick sandstone) allows a tunnel to be three or four yards wide without any fear of blocks falling out of the ceiling, which can be left as a flat surface. Weaker rocks only permit tunnels one or two yards wide and require arched ceilings for support. In the USA, with the use of modern technology, some mines have been turned into business centres and storehouses. Where a dungeon is required to be built into rock and is not a 'recycled mine,' the builders are likely to 'pick their rock' and the best rock is going to be hard flat layers of rock, like sandstones.

Tombs cut into rock akin to the Ancient Egyptian examples will see much foot traffic before their occupant is finally laid to rest, so they have to be accessible and easily navigable until closed up. Each culture decorates tombs differently and may have 'dummy' chambers with the entrance to the real resting-place bricked up. Tombs designed for infrequent visits (say once every fifty years) hold the important remains from a society, making long-term roof stability crucial are also engineered to last. There may also be the need for people to enter in procession necessitating wide corridors.

In Turkey, large masses of a particular type of volcanic ash have been tunnelled out and occupied. Some of these are in the region of half-mile cubes in volume, a warren of dwellings and shafts. The rock is soft enough to tunnel through but consistent enough to be stable although the wriggling tunnels are not likely to be very wide.

Dwarfs turn their mines into dwellings by widening and supporting the tunnels where required, packing mortar into the walls to prevent blocks of rock falling out and using masonry blocks to make the wall look more like a wall than a rockface. The most stable void that can be excavated underground is a sphere, so the most enduring dwarf tunnels are likely to be tubes lined with masonry blocks. The surrounding rock forces the blocks tighter together, effectively making them support themselves (the same way an arch works, but in 360°). Dwarfs set a flat flagged floor on small pillars allowing any seeping water to run away under the ground level. The large, irregular voids that were mined out may have levels built into them, looking like a multi-storey carpark.

These empty spaces might be the size of a single room or a large building, having balconies around the side lined with dwellings, not unlike a small coliseum or amphitheatre.

The construction of tombs is influenced by the religion of the builders. Some tomb-like structures on the Orkney Isles have been found that are effectively spiral staircases down into the ground, although these are thought to be more for ritual purposes. The Ancient Egyptians, meanwhile, buried their dead (when not in pyramids which are dungeons in themselves) in excavated dungeons with exquisitely finished, plastered and painted walls and ceilings. Generally, the wealthier the society, the more elaborate the tombs.

## GAME APPLICATIONS

**Mining skill:** characters know about underground gasses, where they are likely to collect and what their hazards are. They are able to tell where rocks are weak and how wide a tunnel can be. "*This area could have a three yard wide tunnel, which would be useful as this is a mine... so why haven't they?*" They recognise common ores of iron, copper, zinc, gold, silver, lead, tin and, if they survey a mine, might be able to make predictions about where there may be a juicy pod of ore. "*According to my calculations, there is likely to be a big spot of ore to the north. The builders must have known that and mined it, so the access tunnel to it must be there.*"

**Engineering skill:** characters will be able to secure a section of underground roof and walls with materials (timbers, mortar, cut stone blocks). They can spot where a section of wall may have been engineered to hide something, like blocked and plastered up doorways and flagstones designed to move under weight to set off traps. "*Listen to this [tap tap tap]. Now listen to this bit [tip tip tip]. There's a spot behind this section of wall.*"

**New skill: Tunnel Fighting:** a character may fight with any suitable weapon they have the required *Specialist Weapon* skill to use (if necessary) in confined spaces. They do not suffer any hit roll penalties due to fighting in confined spaces. This skill should be added to the Tunnel Fighter career.

## DUNGEON TEXTURE

Countless dungeon scenarios are little more than underground arenas and badly thought-out trap mazes. People do not build underground structures specifically to entice creatures to bring treasure for adventurers to plunder.

A dungeon may have been in existence for thousands of years and used by different people, races and cultures for different reasons. Its details or "dressing" should reflect this background to make players feel they are exploring something with a history and not just stumbling from one encounter to the next. This history can also be incorporated into the adventure itself. For example, if a party is looking for a particular dungeon, various historical and cultural hallmarks may point them in the right direction.

Let us say the PCs are searching for the magic item Siphiron's Belt. They might learn from research that for an unrecorded reason Siphiron fled to the city of Gauchuk. Gauchuk disappeared over a thousand years ago but used to be on the edge of the Stacnek (sometimes called Starnek) flood plains in the northern Border Princes region. At that time, the region was populated by native tribes and traders from what

is now known as Araby. Many minor city-states evolved through a blend of Arabyan civilisation and the rich resources of the Border Princes region. Siphiron was originally from the area now known as the Estalian Kingdoms, also being civilised partly by traders from Araby.

The party travels to a low, wide hill on the plains to get a better view of the land. They spot a small piece of painted plaster and, as one of them bends down to pick it up, the ground gives way and they plunge into a warren of old cellars that used to be ground floors. Now Siphiron was a wealthy female merchant, and their investigation shows she did not leave the city with the rest of the inhabitants when it was buried in flood-mud. So they are assuming that their quarry may have died there previous to the disaster and therefore is still buried somewhere amongst the remnants.

The group notes that all these rooms they are wandering through (via holes in the walls Skaven have made) have cheap pottery scattered around in them. The characters know that Siphiron was very wealthy and not resident in this part of town, but if Skaven turned the ground floors of the city into a warren, where are they now? So, the party come back to the surface and start looking for an area of this hill with fragments of better masonry and statuary.

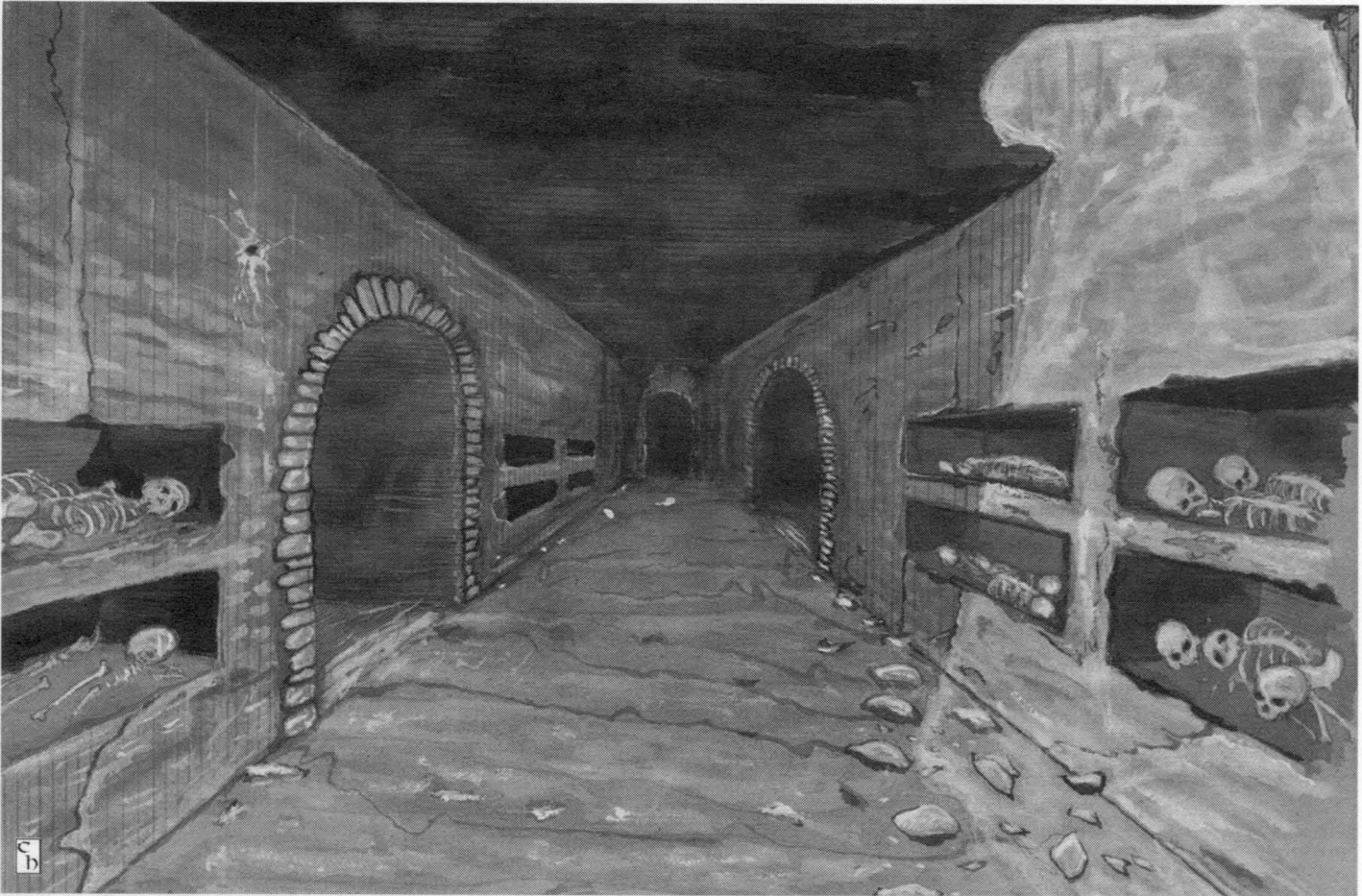
They eventually find pieces matching this and probing into the ground with a spear uncover hollow space beneath. Digging down hits paydirt in the form of a large chamber complete with crumbling plaster and ancient, expensively painted walls. There is little broken pottery (wealthy people had servants to clean up) and the walls are cut masonry, not the crude baked clay bricks found in the last part of town. The group wanders around through more, smaller holes in the walls (the masonry is harder for the burrow-building Skaven) and find an ancient

altar. Closer inspection reveals it is carved with unusual Arabyan runes but painted over with the foul scrawling of the Skaven Grey Seers, who are still curiously absent, except for one minion found mutilated with unknown runes cut into its skin. Below this chamber is a catacomb (that was underground when the city was built and is now waist-deep in water). The tunnels here are just wide enough for two men stooping slightly to carry a coffin: say, about three feet wide.

In a chamber they find a number of tombs, in fact *thousands* of tombs. One of which is decorated in a different style, curving and ornate rather than square and simple. Could that be Siphiron's? Of course they open it up only to find out it *is* Siphiron's and she's not happy. If the party bothered to let the academic finish translating the runes that describe Siphiron's life (that are not unlike those cut into that mutilated Skaven) they would have learnt that Siphiron was not so much travelling to the city as she was *on the run* to the city. A city that had shared her philosophy that the dead can be reanimated to work for the living. Siphiron fights back, being slightly shorter than a man and thus not hindered by the low ceiling. Does the party push their main warrior in front, stooping under the low ceiling with a big clumsy sword and three feet to swing it in, or do they shove their mage ahead hoping she will think of the right spell? There is only room for one at the front - Siphiron is coming, they must decide...

**In Conclusion**

Make the history of the dungeon and its physical characteristics integral to the plot of your game. Go in a few mines if you can (many run tours, Ecton Mine in Derbyshire and the blue-john mine at Castleton to name but two), while castles that have vaults and caves can be toured (Cheddar Gorge). Take a little bit of reality and spice up your fiction with it.



# DON'T LOOK NOW

A Scenario by Clive Oldfield

This is an adventure of supernatural nonsense, inspired by the movie *Don't Look Now* (Nicolas Roeg, 1973). However, it has been designed so those familiar with that movie will not gain any advantage by having seen it as the adventure simply uses some of its imagery.

Information is presented in a linear format. This should not mean that the adventure is linear and it is possible for players to branch out in strange directions. Many of the events, locations and encounters can be amended or ignored as required.

The atmosphere for the adventure should be creeping and eerie. The strangeness of the original encounter should build gradually towards the horror of the denouement. It should be possible to reach the perilous finale without exposing the sensible and careful party to too much physical danger along the way, but its members should become scared for their lives at points. To solve the adventure the party will need to partake in serious and tenacious investigation. Any party expecting to fight their way to the prize will probably not even notice the adventure beginning so can skip all this and continue towards the Yetzin Valley, where their skills can be better employed.

The adventure takes place in Marienburg, starting in the Kruiersmuur district. It can be moved anywhere within that honest Wasteland city or to any city or large town of the Old World that boasts a waterfront and a Physicians' Guild.

## The Story so Far

Claudio Zefferetti was a moderately successful cheese merchant of the Remean district of Kruiersmuur, Remasweg. He had a regular supply of exotic cheeses from Tilea and made an adequate living selling to discerning housewives of the Tilean and Bretonnian ghettos. He also managed to sell his wares to some of the fancy restaurants across the water. From Mascareni to Parleani, Claudio supplied it; and he only got the best.

Six years ago, Claudio's beloved wife, Maria, died shortly after the birth of their third child. This was the first in a long line of tragic events that has brought him to the brink of ruin and despair. Claudio vowed to bring up his three children as best he could, and was able to afford a nanny for them as well as a

housekeeper. Recently, as the family's fortune has declined, any such luxury is now out of the question.

A couple of years ago, Marco, Claudio's eldest son, died of a mysterious wasting disease. Much of Claudio's wealth was spent on trying to find a cure or at least a diagnosis for the strange illness. Claudio was heartbroken. Marco had been the apple of his eye and expected to carry on the family business. Still, Claudio had two surviving children: Ana, and little Emilio. Claudio put his grief behind him and steeled himself for their benefit, convinced that Emilio, his youngest, would take on the role that Marco should have played.

During the tortuous death of his son, Claudio spent all the money he had saved on treatments and consultations with the good doctors of Marienburg. He was then forced to go to Benito Arlisconi, a feared Remasweg racketeer and moneylender to take out a loan. Since then, that loan has crippled his business and recent distractions have meant that he now barely makes enough, on top of the repayments, to feed his family.

Claudio's ill-luck continued; three months ago, Emilio began to show the same early symptoms that Marco had shown. Claudio despaired; he felt sure that he would have to stand by once more, while Emilio followed his poor brother to Mór's realm. He made a few half-hearted enquiries to the Marienburg medical community, but, wary because of their previous failures and the fact that he is still in some debt to Arlisconi, refused to suffer more of their expensive quackery.



Then one night, an ancient stranger came to Claudio's house and introduced himself as Doctor Igor Kalter of Nuln, recently arrived in Marienburg and an expert on wasting diseases. Kalter convinced Claudio that he had a good chance of saving his son and that he would only accept payment if he were successful. Claudio asked what payment this might be, and Kalter replied that it would be 'less than the value you place upon your son's life.' This satisfied the desperate Claudio.

However, the good doctor was really Jozef Visser. Visser is a Wastelander who has travelled The Empire, Bretonnia and beyond, dabbling in the darkest arts; his area of expertise is necromancy. He moves in respectable circles among Marienburg's intellectual elite, which is how he heard of the unfathomable cases of the Zefferetti brothers.



If the GM adheres to the controversial but increasingly popular doctrine that all cheese making is influenced by Chaos and is an integral and important aspect of Nurgle, then the diseases and deaths that befall the Zefferettis can be explained through Nurgle. As a cheese merchant, Zefferetti might be expected to acknowledge the role of the 'mould father' in his business and prosperity. It may be his abuse of this relationship or his refusal to condone it, that has led to the Zefferettis' illnesses. If, on the other hand, the GM refuses to acknowledge the Great Unclean One's blatant and inalienable influence on dairy produce throughout the Warhammer world, then this should not be necessary to the scenario.

He reasoned that there might be much to learn from Emilio about the nature of mortality. He felt sure that even though he might not be able to effect a cure, he would be able to instigate an at least short-lived recovery. This would allow him to claim the sort of payment that he had received a good number of times on his travels.

After a few weeks of treatment, Emilio did seem to be getting better. Visser concocted a tonic that made Emilio stronger. When he seemed almost fully recovered, Visser explained to Claudio the exact nature of the payment he would be prepared to accept. Visser demanded Ana Zefferetti as the price for saving her brother. Claudio agonised over the dilemma but knew deep down that there was only one answer he could possibly give.

The next night Claudio led his daughter down to the Daankkanaal to exchange her for the medicine his son required. On their way, Claudio met a neighbour and sometime business acquaintance, Guido Remajn, to whom he explained, using his weak cover story that Ana was on her way to Carroburg to visit relatives.

Visser's two servants, Goobscheid and Uuyers, were waiting aboard the boat, the *Red Mist*, having already unloaded a crate of tonic onto the quay. Claudio sent his daughter on ahead, telling her there was a surprise for her on the boat. Ana laughed and sang, running happily towards Visser's men, ready to jump down onto the boat but hesitated as she saw her father lift the crate and turn to walk away. One of the servants grabbed her arm and pulled her aboard. They then cast off for their voyage back to Goudberg as Claudio made his way home, struggling with his burden.

Goobscheid and Uuyers struggled to keep hold of the frantic young girl and muffle her screams during the crossing, as the boat's

skipper, Lodwig Kraamelanger, looked away, trying to think of the money. When they unloaded in Goudberg, Ana had a final chance to save herself. She managed to wriggle free and ran along the quayside. She only made it a few dozen yards before she was caught again, and after losing her bright red cloak to the dockside mud, was carried off to Visser's house.

Ana was kept locked in a cage at the house for two days while preparations were made for her sacrifice. She was then smuggled into the cellars below the Guildhall of Physicians in Paleisbuurt where Visser had equipped a laboratory. Aided by Uuyers and a young apprentice, Gustav Taalin, a ritual was dedicated to Nagash and Ana's throat was slit. She remains to this day, hanging from the contraption deep in the bowels of the Guildhall, her life fluids slowly leaking into convoluted paraphernalia. From her bodily fluids, Visser distills the concoction that brings him youth once more.

The trauma of her father's betrayal, the terror of her imprisonment, the obscenity of the operation and her continued unconscious existence, together with a latent talent has triggered a powerful psychic power within the dying girl. Ana, or more accurately, a demon of Nagash attracted to her plight, is using the power to attract those that might wreak vengeance upon Visser and also free the girl/demon/ghost/wraith from her physical and supernatural bindings.

The demon, whom we will call Ana, is slowly developing her power and using her recent memories as a starting point for its exploration of the world. As well as her appearance at Daankkanaal, Ana has also visited her father as a ghost. Claudio has watched his son's health rapidly deteriorate since he gave up his daughter and is so wracked with guilt that the haunting by his daughter may push him over the edge into insanity.

Through coincidence, luck, or even meticulous character judgement, the haunting of Daankkanaal, the location of Ana's final moments on her native Kruiersmuur, will be witnessed by a group of highly disciplined and meticulous adventurers and investigators. Your PCs, I'm afraid.

### The Vision

The PCs are walking along Daankkanaal, somewhere in Kruiersmuur. It would be better if it were at night or at least at some time of day when there are not many people about, although Daankkanaal is not a very busy place at the best of times. There are a couple of boats moored further down the quayside, but none around the area the PCs are approaching. The PCs should not be too much the worse for drink

### How it Should all Happen

This section is intended as an exemplary run through of the adventure that will describe many of the clues and the links between the different sections. This is not intended to depict the only or correct way through the scenario, by any means. Some of this will make little sense until the entire adventure is read.

The PCs see the vision and it sends little shivers down the back of their necks. They assume that the girl has drowned and that her spirit has chosen the PCs to discover foul play.

The PCs consider searching for the body in the canal before deciding that this would not be too clever. They then consider the medallion she was seen to be wearing and her appearance, the location of Daankkanaal near Remasweg and decide to go up to the Remean district and ask a few questions in the local inns and market.

While going about some other business on the north islands, one of the PCs notices a figure that looks similar to the one in the vision. He pursues, but finds it is only a homeless Dwarf. Her cloak is extremely similar to the one in the vision and the Dwarf shows him where she picked it up, on Streusel's Wharf.

Through charm, wit and subtle investigations, the PCs learn that Ana Zefferetti, has gone missing. The PCs visit the Zefferetti residence and are not convinced that Claudio's daughter had actually gone to Carroburg. They head for Boogaardweg to confirm his story.

After a run in with a Remasweg crime gang the PCs are left hanging until a note arrives from Zefferetti explaining their mistake. The gang leader makes it clear that the PCs owe him a big favour.

Returning to Zefferetti's, the PCs discover Claudio's dead body, a suicide note and a few other clues. The PCs search for clues around the Streusel's Wharf area.

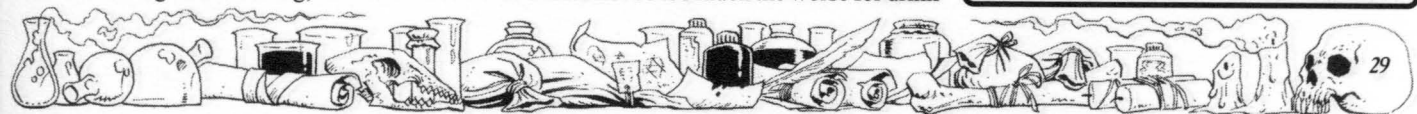
The PCs find the *Red Mist* and interrogate its skipper, Lodwig Kraamelanger. He tells them that he has run a few errands for a man named Kalter and he knows that one of Visser's henchmen, Goobscheid, frequents The Sands.

The PCs meet Goobscheid and follow him home. There they find enough clues to have Visser and his men burned at the stake several times over: clues that make them think Visser is at the Guildhall of Physicians.

The PCs go to the Guildhall of Physicians and follow another vision of Ana into the operating theatre where three doctors are carrying out an autopsy. Once there, the PCs and everyone else sees a sudden vision of Ana's 'murder'.

The PCs pursue Visser into the depths of the guildhall and corner him in his secret laboratory. Overlooked by the tormented form of little Ana, the PCs defeat the evil necromancer and try to release the girl.

Not content with this, the warped and abused spirit of Ana attacks the PCs as a wraith. The PCs fight her and eventually banish her from this realm. May Mórr have mercy on her soul.



and not suspicious of anything at this moment.

The PCs hear a little girl's giggles behind them and then see a red robed figure dart between the members of the party, not touching any of them. They feel a sudden chill or sense a strange foreboding. PCs with *Sixth Sense* feel this more deeply and may have an inkling immediately that the girl might not be real. The little girl looks behind her excitedly as if a playmate is pursuing her. The PCs can see her features. She is a normal, pretty girl. Her long, dark hair can be seen flowing from her bright red hood. She giggles again, turns to look in front once more and runs off as fast as she can.

The girl begins to sing in obvious delight. The singing is high pitched and frail and its tune is the same as a number of nursery rhymes sung in childhood throughout The Wasteland and The Empire. The melody is melancholic and easily considered haunting. The lyrics are well known in Marienburg and a local would have heard them before. Children growing up in The Empire would have sung something similar.

*'Do you wish for a surprise?  
Look which way the raven flies.  
Be sure that you do not tell lies  
When you wish for a surprise.'*

If any of the PCs look behind, they will see no playmate, no pursuer, no one singing. The girl stops by the edge of the quay. She is too close to the side and there are no barriers at this point. She looks back at (or, more accurately, through) the PCs to an imagined pursuer and the giggles stop. The singing stops, too. She looks suddenly frightened and beckons the PCs (or rather the unseen companion) to come with her. She starts to cry and seems to be frantically gesturing to the party to follow her. Then, with her face hidden as her hair flies out of her hood, she seems to jump into the canal.

The bend in the quay stops any PCs from seeing the point in the water where she actually falls. The scene should be shocking enough that minor details do not matter so much. Anyone thinking back about the incident later, may just recall that no splash was heard.

The PCs may have no reason to suspect that the girl was an apparition. They might try to rescue her - a dangerous undertaking in itself if they are not careful. The water is filthy, cold and it is impossible to see anything more than a foot below the surface (see *Dredging up the Past*). An old rope lies a few yards away on the quayside: they might wish to put this to use, but it has been left there for a reason. Using it to take the strain of an average Human will give it a 50% chance of breaking. The only steps down to the water are a good fifty yards away. They can simply jump into the brackish waters and think about things later.

Anyway, they will not be able to save the girl.

To their knowledge no one else witnessed this event. When, or even if, the PCs realise this was all some sort of strange vision or ghost, they can pass a *Cool* test or gain one *Insanity Point*.

### Pretending it Never Happened

The PCs may decide they have no reason to look into this strange, but minor, occurrence. If that is the case then they should eventually be convinced otherwise. The image of the girl's plaintive expression as she is about to fall should keep some of them from sleep. The entire scene being played through in their dreams may cause them to wake with a start.

The memory of the haunting melody of the girl's song may send chills down their spine at any time, and they may find themselves absent-mindedly humming it. They may hear a similar song sung by children or mothers in the streets. Even songs that don't really sound like it will begin to.

Any loss of sleep should soon begin to tell on their state of mind and their physical condition. Sooner or later, the party should try to root for the source of their disquiet. If they don't, however, their personal torments will stop a year to the day after the apparition; by this time, they should be physical and mental wrecks.

If the PCs are to rest easily once more, they should eventually come to the conclusion that they must find out the mystery of this girl's suffering (and death?) and probably bring the perpetrator to justice. If they are not aware of this then someone in a tavern or down the market can mention off hand that ghosts only exist because they are seeking to right a wrong done to them before they continue to Mórr's realm.

If the party is sincere in its efforts to uncover the mystery then the GM may wish to leave off with the haunting dreams and fitful sleep, the guilt of helplessness and the suffering of little children. On the other hand...

It should be left to the GM's discretion what sort of penalties the haunting nightmares might cause. This should fit in with the pacing of the campaign and general tone of the game. It should be enough, though, to spur the players into some sort of activity. Penalties might include the gaining of *Insanity Points* from the nightmares, or the reduction of stats from lack of sleep, or both.

### Thinking Things Over

Here are some details that the GM may decide to pass on through questioning by the players, perhaps after successful *Intelligence* rolls or similar.

It is difficult to tell the social standing of the girl's family from her dress. She is neither princess nor street urchin. She could be a lower class girl wearing her Festag best, or from a wealthy family, dressed down. Somewhere about the middle orders would seem right.

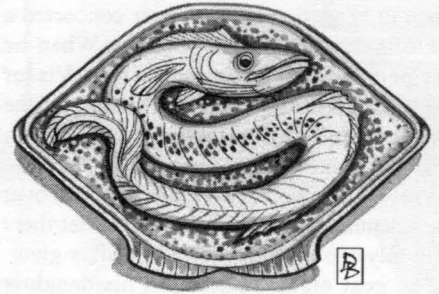
The little girl could easily have been of Bretonnian or, even more likely, Tilean stock. Both communities have settled in Kruiersmuur. She appears similar to a lot of the girls that can be found playing around this area at busier times of the day, if PCs take the trouble to look.

The voice singing the haunting nursery rhyme may have just had a hint of a Tilean accent.

There was no splash to be heard when the girl should have hit the water.

There was something strange about the way the girl fell. It's hard to say, exactly, but it looked somehow like some sort of force was pulling her down. She kind of jumped, but then she was kind of pulled. It was not clear.

If any of the party can lip read then they will notice that just before the girl jumps, as she turns towards them, she says, 'No. Papa. No.' The phrase is unmistakable and very similar in Wastelander, Reikspiel, and the various dialects of Tilean.



### The Red Fish

Someone with good powers of recall might think back and remember that the little girl was wearing a chain around her neck. It might be remembered as a shining medallion catching the light as the child's body plunged towards the water. The medallion depicts a long coiled fish, a symbol popular among Tilean merchants, especially those of Marienburg. Those familiar with the Tilean communities will know that the symbol is favoured by Remeans and not Miraglianese. If the PCs talk to someone who knows, the long 'red fish' or 'pesci rossi' is a Remean Verenan icon, symbolising the unbreakable and tenuous nature of wisdom, the search for knowledge and the eternal connection to the motherland. This is why it is a popular symbol for expatriates. It is also said to bring good luck and a safe return on journeys. The fish is stylised and represents no particular fish, especially not a herring.





## Seeing it again

The PCs may wish to hang around Daankkanaal hoping to see the vision again, in order to watch more closely and pick up more clues. At the GM's discretion this could work. The PCs will eventually see exactly the same scene played out once again. They will not be able to interact with the ghost in any way.

Remember the ghost is the anguished spirit of a life taken cruelly by evil acts, seeking to bring about redemption and some sort of justice. It is not there to entertain the PCs with a show every evening with choc-ices served in the interval and a matinee on Festag.

## Dredging up the Past

The fact that the PCs saw and heard no splash when the girl seemingly fell into the water could be a clue. It may suggest that they were watching a vision of the girl jumping, or being pulled, onto a boat. On the other hand, who would know if visions are supposed to have those sort of sound effects? Probably not the PCs.

The PCs may decide to search the area below the quay for the girl's body. Anyone in the know would be able to tell them that the body would have floated off unless weighed down. The currents around the islands of Marienburg are notoriously tricky to follow, so it is anyone's guess where a body may have ended up although there are a number of mud flats around the city notorious for exposing littoral.

The water below Daankkanaal is about twelve feet deep. Ingenious PCs could come up with any number of clever ways to get themselves filthy and cold. There is a rumour that, *'Some Dwarf has invented metal lungs that will let you breath underwater for a long time. He is hiring his invention out, at a high price. But his name escapes me, right now.'*

Nothing of much use will be found while scrabbling along the riverbeds searching for corpses. Every hour the PCs check they may roll on the chart below.

1. An old boot. This left boot is wet and rotting but for the desperate, it would make half decent footwear.
2. An almost complete painted, wooden nameplate for the *Kwikzilver*. Nobody knows what happened to the actual boat, but the nameplate is in good condition and would look neat hanging above the bed in some slacker teenager's bedroom.
3. A floater.
4. The rotting body of an ugly duckling entangled in fishing line.
5. A clue for another adventure. It can sometimes look very corny when the PCs have to find an object out of the blue, just to advance a plot. Here is an opportunity to allow them to

find something half useful without arousing their suspicions, much.

6. A severe cold. If the PC fails a *Toughness* test it could develop into flu (-1/10 to every stat for D3+1 days).

The PCs may also attract some unwanted attention while they loiter on the Daankkanaal quay.

## The Remasweg Winklers

The Remasweg winklers are proud of their patch on Kruiersmuur. They have fought a few bloody brawls to dominate the winkle trade on the islands and are not about to let a bunch of heavily armed outsiders muscle in on their business.

Caked in mud and smelling like low tide, this rag tag bunch of scavengers and beachcombers will take some convincing that the party are not trying to take their winkles. Everyone knows that Daankkanaal is one of the city's hotspots. The winklers can muster up to twenty members and friends to aid their cause though they won't fancy a fight with people who actually have weapons that aren't winkle-knives. If the party persist in taking their spot then they might call on the help of Arlisconi.

The winklers will be happy to accept any sort of financial recompense. They would sell the entire year's rights to Daankkanaal for a couple of Guilders, but the party do not know that they are that cheap.

## The Watch

The Black Caps have a small base nearby and if the party hang around Daankkanaal for long enough, acting wet and suspicious, they are bound to be noticed. They will have to come up with a convincing excuse if they are to be left alone without being watched closely.

If the party tell them directly of a young girl's death by drowning, then see the section on *Telling the Cops* for possible reactions.

If the Watch believe that the PCs are harmless, it might still wish to foist some make-believe expenses on them, like a fishing licence: *'Doesn't have to be just for fish, mate.'* Or berth charges: *'Look, it's the law. As soon as you tied that rope to the quay, you became liable for tax. I'd let you off if I could, you not actually being a boat and all, but it's the law. More then my job's worth.'*

## Maarcus Meergaang

Maarcus is the captain and crew of an old watercoach that ties up a few dozen yards down from where the vision of Ana appeared. He is nearly as old as his boat and it is easy to see why he gets few fares. Only those who can row and swim themselves would feel comfortable climbing aboard the *Sun Skipper*.

The lack of business old Maarcus attracts leaves him a lot of time to be nosing around Kruiersmuur quays asking annoying questions. If the course of action taken by the party seems reasonable and well thought out, it will not be by the time Maarcus has finished his interrogation.

Maarcus will ask a few questions and then make off as if he has a fare, but he will be back a few minutes later to ask a few more questions, just to clear up some of the misconceptions he got the first time. This will just confuse him more. The party had better be very clear and very simple in everything they tell him for if there is the slightest chance, he will get the wrong end of the stick.

Strangely, for someone who hangs around Daankkanaal asking lots of questions, Maarcus has heard and can tell the PCs absolutely nothing of what they may wish to know.

## The Cult of Mórr

Knowing that a ghost is involved, some PCs may decide that the whole incident is better dealt with by the professionals, and approach the Temple of Mórr. The GM can play this one of two ways.

**The Hard Way:** The PCs gain an audience with the very friendly and attentive Brother Verzekering who listens carefully to what they say. He will nod reassuringly and be most empathetic in all the right places. He will assure the PCs that all that can be done, will be done. They need not worry and everything will be cleared up presently.

The PCs will continue to be haunted by their nightmares. They will continue to be ground down and terrorised by their visions. If they return to the temple, Verzekering will be on a short errand and back in a day or so. After a few more visits to the temple, the PCs should get the message that they might need to deal with things themselves.

**The Other Hard Way:** Seeing ghosts is one of the favourite pastimes of every dotty old lady, wild eyed war veteran and attention starved teenager in the Old World. They genuinely believe that some poor soul is crying out to be mercifully released unto Mórr. The cult is not equipped to investigate one tenth of the incidents and sightings that are brought to their attention.

If the PCs have some connections to the cult then this should be politely explained to them. Otherwise, they should be given the standard spiel that Mórr watches over all things and that eventually, when his time is right, the souls of the departed will be shown the way unto the shadows. They need not fear, for Mórr's understanding surpasses mortal thought and he



does operate with unfathomable process. The PCs will be advised to come back, though, if people start getting killed by the spirit.

It is possible that by the end of the adventure, people do indeed start getting killed by the spirit. It is also possible that the PCs will have no way of dealing with this. If this is the case, and the PCs have behaved impeccably, then the cult might agree to intervene as an epilogue.

### Telling the Cops

The most local presence of law and order in Marienburg is the Black Caps. The first thing that they will ask when told of a girl falling in the water is how long ago it happened. If the reply is longer than three minutes then, whoever it might be, will shrug stoically and go about their business. If the PCs insist that something be done then they will be asked the name of the missing, or drowned, person. When the PCs are not able to supply it they will receive another stoical shrug.

The PCs should have a very difficult time convincing any officials to help them. People fall in the water all the time in Marienburg and many are never seen again. The PCs should get used to it or move to Middenheim.

### Asking Around Kruiersmuur

The PCs might wish to ask around Kruiersmuur, especially Daankkanaal, about any recent drowning or missing girl. The locals are wary of strangers. There is a Remean district and a Miraglianese district in the ward and it takes very little for old feuds between the two to flare up again. The Wastelander residents are wary of either camp. One lesson the PCs may learn quickly, if they venture into the Tilean districts, is never to mistake a Remean for a Miraglianese and vice versa.

The PCs might have to talk to a number of people before they find anyone with anything useful to say. The GM can decide who is encountered, bearing in mind that the PCs will need a lucky break if they are to solve the mystery. If they talk to enough people then they will have earned their luck.

### Pom Frujt

An impoverished flower seller, her wares are of the lowest quality, wilted and infested. She will draw out any encounter with the PCs, hinting that she might have information for them, but careful not to tell them much until they have bought at least one of her pathetic bouquets, though she does not have the wit to ask over the odds for them.

*'Them girls jumping in and out of the canal all the time. They has to wash theyselves, y'know. If you ask me there's something down there. Something not right. Not right at all'*

### Helmuyt Dicke

A shady looking bawd who will allow himself to be approached by the PCs. He will be interested in finding out what they are about because for him there is no such thing as too much information. He will also be interested to see if his services are required.

*'So, you're looking for a young girl, are you? I know a few young ladies who might be willing to oblige, for a small consideration to my good self. Young, red cloak, dark hair, you say? Whatever floats your schiff, sir.'*

### Lise Wieggers

Lise is a respectable spinster of Kruiersmuur. She will have a lot to say about the declining morality of almost anyone. Her special ire is reserved for Tileans. In her mind they are destroying what was once a friendly and respectable neighbourhood. Her usual chain of illogic involves comparing the Miraglianese unfavourably with the Remeans and then vice versa, and so on, interminably.

### Michaeli Maroni

A young Remean who came to Marienburg as a ship's carpenter but was dropped for the return leg for being a useless, boring idler. If a PC takes the trouble to ask him a question, he will talk for hours of his plans to return to Remas, and how it is the most beautiful city in the world.

*'Yes, we have seven hills in Remas. Here, they have no hills. Whaddaya do with a city with no hills, eh? Middenheim; one hill, only one! Whaddaya do with a city with only one hill, eh? In Remas we have seven hills.'*

### Anastasia Villi

Anastasia is an old, proud Miraglianese who has never come to terms with the fact that she had to come to Marienburg to escape abjection. She pines longingly for the old country having built a myth in her head of the wonder of her native city, that nobody has managed to disabuse.

On subjects closer to home, if the PCs confront her with any mysterious happenings at all she will put it down to the Seaweed Man. She will claim to have seen it with her very own eyes and to have escaped its clammy grasp.

*'Orrible it was. Like something out of the dark dreams of a madman, it was. And as it got closer I could feel its cold breath on my neck, I could. Then I felt the icy touch of its long chill fingers all down my spine, I did. And I looked into its dark fiery eyes that glowed bright red whilst all around it was a dark and green as midnight's neap tide.'*

### Guido Remajn

Guido Remajn knew the Zefferettis well. He

knows of the death of Marco, but not Emilio's illness. If he is in the right sort of mood when the PCs ask him, he realises that the description they give matches little Ana exactly. He knows that it could not be her that fell into the water. He remembers Claudio explaining to him one night that Ana was on her way, that very evening, to catch a boat to take her to stay with cousins in Carroburg. He never heard anything else on the matter and assumes that Ana made it safely to Carroburg.

Remajn has no problem with Zefferetti. He has known him for ten years and sometimes puts business his way in his capacity as small time luxury goods importer. He specialises in Tilean and Arabyan jewellery but everyone likes a nice bit of cheese.

### Isa Truust

Isa is a smart representative of one of the bigger financial houses. If the PCs look like they have two pennies to rub together, Isa will be anxious to invest it for them. She has a number of portfolios of excellent investment opportunities offering high yield with a comparatively low risk. Her unit trusts were ranked first in their class eight years in a row. She will use her blather, her undoubted knowledge and her feminine charms to coerce the PCs into handing over as much as possible for her to invest.

If a PC mentions the red cloak, Isa will immediately say, 'Oh, like a Red Maids' uniform.' Some of her best friends were Red Maids (see *The Red Maids of Verena* section).

### Tobi Fleiss

If the PCs get lucky they could run into Tobi Fleiss. He is an old, homeless lush that hangs out in various places around Kruiersmuur. He has a number of half-decent sleeping places and divides his time between them. The night of Ana's abduction he happened to be trying to get some sleep on Daankkanaal. If he overhears the PCs asking about the incident, or he is specifically asked, then he will have a story to tell. At first he will not appear to be much of a prospect, just another drunk looking for some free booze.

Fleiss will insist that a bottle or two of his favourite rum is brought to him before he gives much information away. He will refuse to enter any but the seediest drinking den, having been kicked out of so many decent ones that his aversion is too deeply ingrained. If the PCs dismiss him, Fleiss will part with just enough information to convince them that he can be useful to them.

On the night in question, Fleiss was just curling up ready to sleep when he saw the girl that the PCs describe walking with a man. The details will be hazy as he was very drunk at



the time but he will be able to point to the exact spot on the quay that the vision appeared. Two or three men had unloaded a crate onto the quayside. When the girl arrived, the men bundled her into their boat. She screamed and they had to muffle her noise. The man who had brought the girl there then picked up the crate and walked away.

Flaiss will claim to have half forgotten about the incident until reminded of it by the PCs' enquiries. As bizarre as this might sound, it is the truth. If the old drunk is paraded before the watchmen as a witness they will barely be able to contain their mirth as they kick all concerned out the door.

### A Stitch in Time

Impressed by the distinctive red cloak, and perhaps an encounter with a homeless Dwarf (see *Red Dwarf*), the PCs may go in search of a tailor. There are a number of them dotted throughout Kruiersmuur and the Tilean districts, especially around Heerenstraat on the outskirts of Remasweg, known in the borough as 'Silk Road'. If the PCs choose a random shop to enter, it will be Ruben Waalwijk's.

Waalwijk is an elderly, bespectacled craftsman who is clearly skilled and diligent. He will continually bemoan the fact that the younger generation take no pride in their work and are not willing to put in the effort required to make quality garments. He has been through three apprentices recently and the Tailors' Guild has refused to allocate him another.

His wares are of undoubted quality, although easily recognised as many years behind the times. Another of his pet grievances is the fleeting and fickle nature of fashion, to which he refuses to pander.

If the PCs are clear and describe it accurately enough, Waalwijk will be able to tell them that the cloak was probably made for a student of the Red Maids of Verena school. If he likes them, or they look like they might purchase something, Waalwijk will even go to the trouble of fetching an old red cloak which has been lying about the storeroom for a number of years, though the old tailor cannot recall exactly why, now. If the PCs wish to buy the cloak, although Haendryk knows why they would, Waalwijk will be glad to be rid of it for as little as four Guilders.

### No Such Thing as Ghosts

If the PCs are not getting on too well then they can be walking anywhere in any of the Tilean ghettos when they catch a sudden glimpse of a red cloaked girl running into a dwelling nearby and slamming the door shut behind her. The PCs might have the hairs on the back of their necks stand up as this figure could easily be the same as in their vision.

In fact, this is the home of Eliza Piloti, a school friend of Ana's. As this is just a normal household, the way this scene plays out will depend to a large degree on how the PCs approach it. Depending on what time of day it is, the menfolk, including Eliza's father Guiseppe, may or may not be at home. Whatever, her mother, Elena will most likely do most of the talking.

If the PCs simply blunder into the family home demanding answers then they could mess this scene up in a big way and possibly lose their chance to solve the mystery. Also, families in any ghetto can rapidly and ferociously band together when faced with the unwanted attention of outsiders.

Eliza knew Ana well (they have even been mistaken for sisters) and her tragic family was the subject of much gossip among the Pilotis. Although they have no reason to suspect Ana did not go to Carroburg, other than 'it was a bit sudden', they do think Claudio has been behaving a little strangely recently. Elena can be used to give the PCs whatever information the GM wishes. It would not be much of a leap for her to think of Ana Zefferetti if the PCs mention a missing girl looking just like Eliza. At least if they were wondering why the two girls dressed so similarly, she would mention the Red Maids and describe glowingly how well Eliza is getting on there and what a wonderful woman Mariannette Diaggio is.

### The Red Maids of Verena

The Red Maids school in Noord Miragliano is a small, strict college for young middle class ladies of Tilean heritage. All pupils are bilingual and lessons are taught in both Wastelander and High Tilean (a received combination of the various Tilean dialects, available only to the educated and pretentious). It is run by the stern and matronly Mariannette Diaggio.

The school is expensive and used by those prosperous immigrant families that cannot yet afford a private tutor. It is well known in this corner of Kruiersmuur for the uniform, a bright red cloak that all pupils wear. The school has an excellent reputation and a long waiting list.

The school building is a tall terraced house in the Miraglianese district. Diaggio uses the top floor as living quarters. Despite the less salubrious surroundings, the building is well maintained and recently painted. The school is careful to never favour one Tilean city-state over another and sometimes goes to seemingly ridiculous lengths to keep an air of immaculate evenhandedness. Although some of the more enlightened Tileans think that this downplaying of ancient feuds is a good thing (for girls, at least) most view it as decidedly strange.

### Mariannette Diaggio

It is Diaggio's life's work to educate the young ladies of Tilea. Now, in the more liberal climate of Marienburg, she has found a perfect atmosphere to liberate her young charges from traditional dogma and to prepare a way for them in a changing world. Diaggio is a severe disciplinarian, though she behaves this way for the good of her girls. She sees them as pioneers and is anxious that they never let the side down.

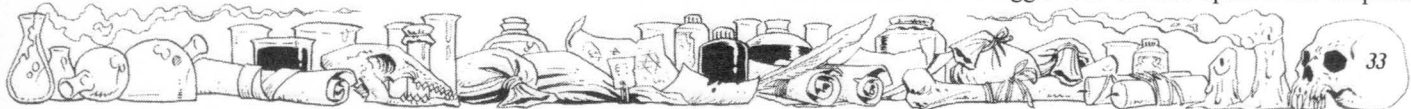
*'You know, sir, despite what you may think, your time has gone. Our time has come. My girls will inherit the world.'*

If the PCs come to the school looking for Diaggio, they will be made to wait until school is finished for the day. No amount of bullying will get the PCs seen to any quicker. If the party think they can bully a middle-aged woman and a load of little girls, then they have another thing coming. Any hard time the PCs try to give Diaggio will be seen as a perfect opportunity for her to show off her fortitude and superiority to her young ladies, as the perfect example of all she has taught them.

If treated with due respect and she believes it is truly in Ana's interests, then Diaggio will be willing to tell the PCs what they wish to know. If the PCs do not mention the name Ana Zefferetti, Diaggio might (GM's discretion) be able to put two and two together. Note that apart from bumping into the right person (Guido Remajn, Julieta Veronese, Elena Piloti) around the Daankkanaal, Diaggio might hold the best chance for the PCs to put a name to Ana's face. Certainly Diaggio keeps track of her pupils' welfare and Ana is the only pupil, over the last year or so, for whom she is not certain of her whereabouts or safety. Naturally, then, Diaggio will think of Ana if the party say the right things, but she will be reluctant to give them her name unless they look trustworthy.

The girl they describe could be Ana Zefferetti. Ana was a good pupil but her family fell on hard times, something to do with a death in the family. She kept Ana on for a whole year without payment. But a few weeks ago Ana stopped attending. The school received a letter from Claudio Zefferetti saying his daughter was going to Carroburg to live with relatives. Diaggio assumed this was because her father's pride had kept him from accepting any more charity and he could no longer afford to keep her. Diaggio might speculate that Ana could possibly have been sold as a prospective wife to some Imperial with strange tastes; it happens sometimes. Ana did keep her red cloak, of course. It would not be surprising that she wear it around, even though she is no longer a pupil; it was a quality garment and should last. Ana was a good swimmer.

Diaggio will become upset if she suspects



## Rumours

Here is a short list of the current rumours and mutterings doing the rounds in southern Marienburg. They can be cast about the adventure as the GM sees fit.

Arlisconi is going to send his boys against the Luigieris of Noord Miragliano. Apparently his son is going out with a Luigieri girl. Someone called Thibault died in a sword fight over it.

You just can't seem to get decent Tilean cheese anymore. You used to be able to get anything you wanted, quality stuff.

Someone saw a ghost the other day. Can't remember her name, but she said she saw a vision of a small girl jumping into the water, yonder.

There's a giant mutated fish down in the Doodkanal. This big it is. And it will eat anyone who so much as dangles their leg over the side.

When Mórrslieb is full, anyone who ever drowned in Marienburg gets to come back one last time and wreak vengeance. 'Vengeance! Vengeance!', they cry. You can hear them.

The Physicians' Guild will pay for dead bodies. They like to cut them up and see what's inside. They think it will help them cure people. Cutting them up never cured nobody, if you ask me.

Those razorbills are a sight to behold. They'll pick the flesh from a fleshy thing as sure as eggs is eggs.

The 'Seaweed Man' is back. A strange green meteorite landed in Manaanspoort Sea and has made itself a body from sea weed and shells. It eats little children.

Bella Donna knows everything there is to know; past, present and future. It must be true, some bloke down the tavern told me.

Apparently Manaanspoort Sea has some of the largest tidal variations in the whole of the Old World.

Those Red Maids? Some secret cult that sacrifices little girls to the Dark Ones, if you ask me.

Don't go down *The Feathered Nest*. It's a bit too rough for the likes of you.

which she wheels around between her favourite pitches all over Kruiersmuur; as luck would have it, she has had a funny feeling about Claudio Zefferetti for some time. She was friendly with his wife, Maria, before she died, and entertained the notion that perhaps Claudio murdered her. When Marco died this confirmed her suspicions that Claudio was up to no good.

If the right questions are asked, Julieta, who knows Ana too, and might recognise the description, could suddenly decide that Claudio most likely threw his daughter in the canal to kill her. His motive could have been to silence her as she was obviously a witness to Claudio's other murders. She will also offer the opinion that Claudio is poisoning his other son, Emilio, 'in order to inherit his inheritance.'

Careful questioning should reveal that Julieta is mean-spirited and vindictive and uses little logic to link her various accusations. She also has a funny feeling about a few other Kruiersmuur locals and can give the PCs a long, tenuous list of their crimes too. Despite Julieta's flaws, she could be used to lead the PCs to Claudio's door, especially if the party is having trouble finding their way there by other means.

## Someone Jumping Down onto a Boat

If the players are convinced for too long that the girl in the vision jumped from the quay into the waters of Daankkanaal and drowned, then it may be a good idea to describe to them someone jumping down onto a boat. It should not be high tide at the time and the PCs can be going about town just doing the things they do. The GM could casually describe someone nearby busy at work by the side of the dock. He could be patching a sail or cleaning his tools or darning fishing nets or anything. Then, he jumps off the quay and disappears for a second.

It is okay; he hasn't jumped into the water. His boat was out of sight of the PCs and as he lands, and stands up, the players see his head once more. Hopefully, if the players are getting wrapped up in the idea that the girl drowned, then this incident will help them realise she may just have been jumping onto a boat.

## Red Dwarf

This little encounter offers a vital clue to the whereabouts of Ana. This might influence the party's actions at a later date. It is up to the GM how this section is presented to the players, but I would suggest that having six strapping adventurer types cornering a small 'girl' is not going to make them tremble with fear. The GM may wish to inflict this incident on only one of the players or have most of the members of the party thrown off the scent during the hunt.

One of the PCs can be out checking up leads from this scenario or doing anything else they do. If a PC cannot be got alone then you may wish to engineer it so that the final confrontation occurs with a single PC. During the pursuit other PCs may take the wrong turning or trip over a mooring rope or collide with an old lady pushing a barrel of fish. The encounter can happen anywhere in the city near some boats. It would make sense that the events occur as near as possible to Streusel's Wharf in Goudberg, but this is not absolutely necessary.

The PC is minding his own business when he catches sight, briefly, of a small red robed figure making her swift way among the busy dockside crowds. She is only a dozen or so yards away from the PC but moving quickly. If the PC does nothing he loses his chance to be the centre of attention for a few minutes. If he pursues, he will lose sight of her. When he reaches the point where she was when he glimpsed her, after a few moments scanning the vista he will spot her again, just disappearing round a corner. She moves quickly; she is small, but her stature makes it easier for her to avoid the bustling crowds.

As the PC makes his way to the corner, he should make an *Initiative* roll to avoid an old lady absentmindedly pushing her small barrow of slightly old Sea Bass. Any collision will send the barrow and the old lady sprawling but the PC should continue on his way. He might hear the shout behind him as he goes, 'Oi, you, that's my grandma that is. I'll remember you. You'll pay for this.'

As the PC breathlessly reaches the corner you might wish him to make another *Initiative* roll to spot the small red figure making her way down some quayside steps. She is heading for a line of old boats. The boats are barely sea worthy and nowadays are used for storage. The figure makes her way across the decks of each boat, heading for the one at the end. However quickly the PC manages to follow the figure he sees the figure disappear into the hold of the final ship in the line.

When the PC reaches the final boat, he will find the hatch closed, but it is a simple task to lift it. The short drop into the hold can be made without much fuss, unless the PC is concerned that his legs and lower body may be attacked as they dangle there momentarily. Only the light coming in from the hatch illuminates the hold, and the deepest corners of the room are quite dark. A short, cloaked figure can just be discerned within the deepest recess of the ship's hold. There is a strange stench.

The tension should mount now. The figure is unmoving and believes she cannot be seen, so the PC must get closer to her. As the confrontation reaches a denouement, the figure



will throw back her hood and her hand will reach into her cloak and pull out...a couple of maggoty apples. The old Dwarf will plead with the PC. *'Please don't tell no one what I done. Do us a favour; keep the old Black Caps away, Sir. 'Tis only two old apples after all. Do a good service to an old dwarf mother, won't you be so kind.'*

The figure is in fact an old female dwarf who has been living for a number of years in the hold. She is known by a number of the stevedores who tolerate her and sometimes give her scraps. She stole the two apples and seeing she was pursued had no better idea than to run home.

The Dwarf, Hemme Gloddottir, knows nothing about any drowning of a girl. If asked about the cloak she will say that she found it laying on the ground in Goudberg. She says that she thought someone had thrown it away, *'It's unbelievable what some folk will throw away these days, I tell you, unbelievable what they don't want. Don't know they were born, some of them.'* She can take the PCs to that spot, especially if they offer her a few shillings.

The site where Hemme found the cloak is an area of Goudberg waterfront known as Streusel's Wharf. She can show the PC exactly where she found it, and it is only a few dozen yards from where the *Red Mist* is moored.

### Getting Lucky

After a time the PCs will need to hear the name Zefferetti. How and when this crops up should depend on how the players have gone about the investigation. If they haven't come up with a plan then they might just get lucky during the questioning of residents near Daankkanaal.

There should be other ways to point the PCs towards the Zefferettis. Remajn actually saw them on the day of the disappearance and was fed the Carroburg cover story directly. Other people will know of Ana's leaving and view it with more suspicion. The good women folk of the Tilean ghettos, including Elena Piloti, do like a good gossip and some stories might circulate amongst them there. The rumour that *'the cheese merchant sold his only daughter into the 'body trade' to settle his medical bills'* is almost a literal truth. *'Zefferetti's mind has turned. He doesn't care about his business anymore. The death of his son has affected him so; his bills lie unpaid and his cheeses lie erm...moulding'*, is common currency.

### The Zefferetti Household

The Zefferettis live in a narrow tenement in the heart of the Remean district on Wilkesstrasse. They now occupy only the first floor whereas at the height of the business, they rented the entire building. A woman's touch is clearly lacking throughout the flat. Although Claudio does most of his business away from his home, the stench of Tilean cheeses permeates the residence. There are several samples of the strongest parleanis lying forgotten in drawers or under furniture. The rooms are generally bare and nearly all the non functional adornments have long been sold.

Anyone wishing to see Claudio will be admitted and given due respect. It should be remembered that having a band of adventurers bursting into ones residence and demanding answers to strange questions never makes a good impression. Claudio will be loathe to allow strangers into the back room where

Emilio is, and will do all the entertaining in the front room.

Emilio lies in bed in the room at the back of the apartment. He is very gaunt and weak and looks like he has not got long to live. The bottles of tonic, supplied by Visser, are stored in a chest next to the bed and a half empty bottle is placed next to a glass on a table.

Claudio is already wracked with guilt and nearly broken. The PCs should find him almost beyond caring what impression he makes on them. He is no longer anxious that his story regarding his daughter's disappearance be believed, though he will defend his position strongly, as a matter of habit, as much as anything else.

Claudio has been visited by the 'ghost' of his daughter several times since her disappearance and this has contributed to his uneven mental state. At the moment he seems to be immersed in a self-absorbed fit of melancholia.

Some players might come up with some rambling pretext for talking to Claudio and dig for information about his daughter only subtly. The GM should play this by ear, depending on the quality of the cover story, but Claudio, despite his guilt, will not flinch from calling the watch, or demanding that the PCs leave. He also has little interest in his business nor anything else at this time.

During any intimidating questioning by the PCs, Claudio will suddenly have a good idea of how to get rid of them. He will use their line of questioning as an excuse to get them to antagonise the Remean crime boss, Benito Arlisconi. He will pick a character vital to his story, say, the man whom he supposedly hired to take his daughter to Carroburg and tell the PCs where they could find him to verify his story. Claudio's idea is to send them directly to the house of Benito Arlisconi and hope that Arlisconi's bodyguards will deal with his problem for him.

He will tell the PCs that the house is in Boogaardweg, a very bad neighbourhood, and that they should go prepared. He will also suggest that they wear green scarves somewhere on their person, not prominently, but clearly visible to those who might need to see. Claudio will explain that this is one of the signs of the local gang and it should see them to the house safely. The green is actually a sign of a Miraglianese gang and Arlisconi's (whose colours are red) most bitter rivals; they are currently feuding openly. If the party have no green material on them with which to make these scarves, then Claudio will offer them one of his daughter's old dresses which they can rip up. Some players might find this odd, of course.

The players might be satisfied with this new

### THE SEAWEED MAN

The Seaweed Man is a popular character all over Marienburg and a number of people could mention it to the PCs as a possible cause of the girl's disappearance, seriously or at least half in jest. A surprising number of disappearances get put down to the Seaweed Man every year. This could be evidence of its existence and voracious appetite. On the other hand, it could just be evidence of a lot of otherwise unexplained disappearances.

References to the Seaweed Man can be found in various books. Several Annals of Verena report sightings, some by members of the clerical staff themselves. A popular pamphlet did the rounds in the city a few years ago. It was enthusiastically illustrated and described the monster's appearance and nature in great detail. The author seemed to take great pleasure in the lurid accounts of some of its kills.

The PCs could discover that it is believed that making sacrifices, especially human ones, to the Seaweed Man will placate it and stop it devouring the entire city. It is sometimes associated with Nurgle, as a diseased and unclean abomination of the sea's bounty. Diligent researchers at the library of Verena might discover that in a couple of special volumes, the Seaweed Man is actually named as *Ir'c'ignol*, Lord of Wrack and Ruin.

It is up to the GM how much time might be wasted on this wild goose chase. Perhaps it could be used as the subject of any standard hunt the monster scenario, but without the actual monster and possibly without a denouement. The Seaweed Man will work well, in a city like Marienburg, as a ubiquitous and mythical terror or in-joke. A small, misguided cult could even be created that makes the occasional sacrifice to their god, praying for kelp from above.



lead and leave Claudio for now. If this happens Claudio will have time to reflect on how much deeper this thing is getting. The hopelessness of his life and the mess he has made of his business and family now looks like getting the PCs killed. After some time, Claudio decides everything has gone too far. He writes a quick note to the PCs (Handout #1) and gives a boy instructions on delivering it to them as quickly as possible. He will then write a suicide note (Handout #2), make sure that his son is as comfortable as possible, then go into the front room and hang himself.

Clearly, Claudio knows everything required for the PCs to solve the mystery. Even if he cannot convince the party to go to Boogaardweg it should be apparent that it is in fact his daughter that the PCs saw in their vision. The GM may need to get Claudio out of the way very quickly, before he spills all the beans and effectively ends the investigation. The very desperate may decide that the ghost of Ana appears in the middle of this encounter. She will focus her attention on her father and ignore the PCs. She will look at him plaintively unable to hide the utter despair of having such a wicked father. A wound in her neck spills imaginary green blood onto the floor as she points accusingly at Claudio. Claudio can then keel over and die of a heart attack (causing a few minor alterations to be made to the *Zefferetti's Again* section).

### Boogaardweg

Boogaardweg is the more run down side of Remasweg but it is by no means unpleasant. The Tileans, a gregarious and close-knit bunch, mix well within the melting pot of Marienburg society, but they know when to keep it in the family. The infamy, throughout the Old World, of the Tilean organised crime gangs is as much due to this and the popular stories of Martino Scarfacci, as to fact.

Benito Arlisconi knows a bit about Claudio Zefferetti. He loaned him a large sum of money a couple of years ago when Claudio's eldest son was ill. Since then, Claudio has been paying it back steadily, and apart from a couple of late payments, has been no trouble at all. The gangster is also partial to mascareni and is grateful to Claudio for the regular supply. He knows nothing about his daughter, however. One or two of his men believe that the daughter has gone to live with relatives somewhere, and if the party leave on decent terms with Arlisconi they may be afforded this information. The way the PCs choose to approach Arlisconi might have a negative effect on their first meeting.

If the players walk along Boogaardweg wearing green 'chiefs, brandishing their weapons and looking like they are expecting

trouble, then things may get messy. There are a number of inconspicuous sentries dotted on the approaches to the Boogaardweg who will quickly warn Arlisconi of any likely trouble so it will be hard for the party to surprise anyone. Arlisconi could easily meet the party with a force of eight henchmen and have that number again surreptitiously encircling them. A pitched battle should be futile and if it came to that, the PCs' best bet would be to flee or surrender. Fleeing through a ghetto they know little about, where nearly everyone is in debt or in fear to the Arlisconi gang, would be interesting and perilous. The eventual capture of at least some of the party would be likely. And they can then be treated as if they had surrendered in the first place.

If the party surrender they will be quickly taken to a butcher's shop just off the Boogaardweg where they will be enthusiastically interrogated. Arlisconi is not belligerent or stupid and he is genuinely keen to know what the PCs think they were up to. One of Arlisconi's more gangsterly affectations is his penchant for interrogating enemies when they are tied by their feet to butcher's hooks and dangling upside down before him.

Arlisconi is also not interested in unnecessary bloodshed and it might be possible for the PCs to convince him of their mistake (read: stupidity). Of course, if he is going to release the PCs, they should be in his debt for some time in the future and genuinely thankful to have escaped with their lives. If the PCs can be convincing about Claudio's deception, Arlisconi will be thoughtful for a moment, then tell the PCs to go and inform Claudio that he wishes to see him.

If the party make a big mess of the whole situation and are injured, or have made Arlisconi particularly angry, then the boy with Claudio's message (Handout #1) will turn up at just the right time to let the players off the hook (possibly literally). Arlisconi will read the message out loud and unless the PCs have been spinning him a whole load of nonsense, the message should make things more clear.

*I have lied to you but I do this last thing for you. You will not find Ana. She has gone forever, because of me. She is gone. You won't find her in Boogaardweg. Leave there now. I will be dead, soon. The doctor has killed me. C.Z.*

Whatever happens in Boogaardweg, if the party escape from there alive they will probably head straight back to the Zefferetti residence with vengeance on their minds.

### Zefferetti's Again

There is a good chance, if the PCs make it out of Boogaardweg, that they will wish to have another word with Claudio. When they reach

his home they should find him swinging by a rope from the rafters of the front room. In the next room, Emilio lies in the bed, approaching death himself, a fresh glass of tonic recently poured for him.

On the desk near to Claudio's body is a letter obviously scrawled recently and hurriedly by him (Handout #2). It reads as follows:

*I pray to Morr speed me to your realm. Bring me where you have taken Marco, and as you drag Emilio, there, despite all I have done to save him. I pray that the Shallyan sisters will show their mercy to Emilio and I give them all my remaining worldly goods.*

*Under the wings of the Raven may I find the peace there that has eluded me here. May the Gods forgive me. May Ana forgive me.*

*Claudio Zefferetti*

It may come to the PCs' attention later on, if they bother to check up on Emilio's progress, that Claudio died with too few assets to cover all his debts. Emilio was taken in by the *Heiligdom, Asylum of Blessed Rest* (M:SdtR p.115), but died days later. If the PCs supervise Emilio's transfer to the temple then they will be pressed for as much money as possible; those helpless, chronic cases take up a lot of the asylum's available supply of mercy after all.

Next to the suicide note is a pile of written papers. They are mostly connected with the business, including outstanding invoices going back several months as well as unanswered correspondence. There is nothing from any relatives in Carroburg (they do not exist).

Next to these papers, or fallen on the floor, or down the back of a drawer, or on the top of the pile, wherever it will be found, is a torn strip of paper (Handout #3) that reads: *Kalter dusk Daankkanaal Red Mist*

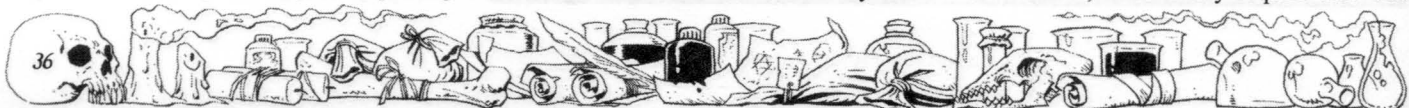
This is the note that Claudio made prior to his meeting to swap his daughter for the tonic. It is slightly cryptic but a clever bunch of PCs should be able to make sense of it, eventually.

In a chest next to Emilio's bed can be found nine half-pint bottles of his tonic. There are no markings on the bottles. Another quarter full bottle can be found on the table besides the bed, next to a full glass.

In the drawers of the desk are piles of ledgers connected to Claudio's business and various other bits of paperwork. It might take some time and be tedious to sort through all this.

After a while Arlisconi may send a couple of his men round to check up on Claudio and the PCs. Depending on what terms the PCs are now on with Arlisconi and how they deal with the two gang members, this may be uncomfortable for them or no problem at all. The goons may even be useful for palming off care duties and funeral arrangements.

Remember, Emilio may require care and



attention during this time, waking up from his reverie to request water, tonic or someone to see to his other bodily functions.

### Gen and Tonic

Enterprising PCs may decide that there is money to be made from the nine full bottles of tonic to be found in the Zefferetti house. They would probably be right. Visser concocted the tonic as a means of achieving a short-term improvement in Emilio's condition, something to give his father hope. The long-term effects were of no concern to Visser and he was unscrupulous as to its effects. The key ingredient in the dark brown fizzy liquid is the extract of pepci root, a strange herb that is found in Lustria and rumoured to be heavily used by some Pigmy youth cults.

The tonic does give a feeling of well-being and an increase in energy for a short while. A quarter bottle per day would be required to keep these effects going. In game terms this could be represented in +1/+10 to all stats. After 10 days use the tonic no longer has any effect. After a day of no tonic, all the user's stats should be reduced by 1/10 for as long again as the tonic had been taken. Other side effects include 'lipsmackin'.

### Get Kalter

The note (Handout #3) was written by Claudio to remind himself of where Visser had arranged for Ana to be exchanged for the tonic. Kalter is the name that Visser used when dealing with Zefferetti, and one he often uses in connection with his darker work and his older appearance. The *Red Mist* can usually be found tied up in Goudberg not fifty yards from where Hemme Gloddottir found Ana's cloak. If the PCs manage to work out that *Red Mist* is the name of a boat, and think of looking for it there, then it would not be hard for them to find its skipper Ludwig Kraamelanger.

If the PCs get stuck then they can learn from a contact that the *Red Mist* is the name of a boat. A visit to the shipping registry and a well placed bribe should supply the information that the boat's owner is registered as Ludwig Kraamelanger and the berth of the boat is given as Streusel's Wharf, Goudberg.

### A Dream Boat

If the PCs did not find Handout #2 then they will have trouble connecting Zefferetti with Kalter/Visser. By now though, Claudio Zefferetti should be dead and that will please his daughter very much. Therefore, whether or not they have the note, she will reward the PCs with a small insight into her fate, in order that they may bring her other tormentors to justice. Ana can send the PC with whom she feels most empathy, or all of them, a dream.

As well as the ongoing haunting, Ana can send them a short, helpful vision.

*It is dusk. The thick, blood red mist clears gradually to reveal a small boat cutting through the brackish waters of the dank canal. You feel the air getting colder. You are restrained by large hands gripping you tightly. You feel a small jolt as the boat lands and then make a sudden last attempt to run free. You jump over the side, onto the mud of the bank and struggle to run quickly, but the mud is too thick to run on and it is dragging you down, it feels like cheese. The thick cheese-mud seems to be pulling you down and gripping your ankles. You feel completely helpless. Those large hands grip you tightly once more and you feel yourself being carried back to the boat. You feel total helplessness and despair. Through the thickening mist, the last sight you see is the nameplate of the vessel that carried you here. It clearly says 'Red Mist'.*

### Snake in the Grass

If the PCs are unable to find any clues that might lead them to Kraamelanger but they are putting some effort into it, then we can help them. Run '*Red Dwarf*' and hopefully the party will then do some asking about around Streusel's Wharf. Then they can meet Arthur Paardekooper.

Paardekooper is an unpleasant and sordid character who hangs around some of the seedier dives. His face is well enough known at The Sands and he has some useful contacts. He got drunk a few nights ago at the same table as Kraamelanger. In an unguarded moment and into his rum, Paardekooper overheard small snippets about Kraamelanger's role in bringing Ana to Goudberg. If Arthur does have a special talent it is for knowing what information might prove useful in the future.

Paardekooper will hear about the PCs and their investigation and approach them. The GM should know that Paardekooper knows very little. He heard of a young girl in red and a late night kidnapping, and that is about it. He will want to get as much money from the PCs before giving them Kraamelanger's name. He has not much to dangle before them, but he will not let what he knows go cheaply. Being a shifty looking character with repulsive features, the PCs might not be able to help but suspect that he is trying to take them for a ride.

The GM should appreciate that the encounter with Paardekooper is a stroke of luck for the PCs and should really make them pay through the nose for it. They should be made to part with as much as they possibly can afford. Note that Paardekooper is pretty bright and streetwise enough not to let himself get dragged into the sort of situation where the party could just beat the information out of him.

If the PCs do manage to do a deal with Paardekooper, then he may be useful to them once this adventure is over. He has good contacts, and provided the PCs don't value personal hygiene or good manners too highly he will be a man they can do business with.

### Lodwig Kraamelanger

The *Red Mist*, when it is in port, can be found moored at Streusel's Wharf not fifty yards from where Hemme Gloddottir found Ana's cloak. Ludwig is the skipper and owner of the boat, a small single mast skiff. He is based in Goudberg and earns most of his money running in small but valuable (i.e. illicit) cargo from Carroburg. He has a number of contacts with various smuggling organisations but he prides himself on being a freelancer. His livelihood depends on him being trusted to keep his mouth shut when appropriate.

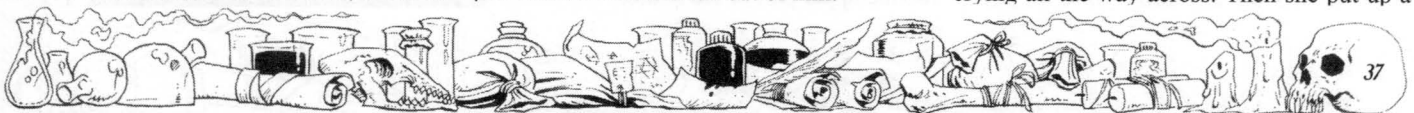
If the PCs find the *Red Mist* then Ludwig may be aboard. If not then they can ask around and someone will know he regularly drinks at 'The Sands' a few yards up the wharf.

Lodwig is approaching middle age and has that ruddy wrinkled face and sun bleached hair typical of the archetypal Marienburger sailor. He has a habit of stopping in the middle of a sentence, preparing himself momentarily and launching a great gob of spittle with a grand arc that lands yards away.

Lodwig will not be easily intimidated. The PCs will hold little fear for him unless they get really nasty. If the PCs do try physical stuff then there will be a few of Ludwig's friends nearby, either on their own boats or at The Sands, and there will be a load of other people willing to defend him just because the PCs are outsiders.

If asked about carrying a girl in a red cloak across the river he will be generally unhelpful: '*There's a thousand girls look like that in Marienburg, I'd say.*' '*I carry lots of passengers; I don't remember all of them. I don't remember any of them.*' If shown the piece of paper with the boat's name on he will be visibly shocked for a moment, then do his best to cover up that lapse: '*OK, so I had an appointment to pick someone up. I'm a river taxi for Manaan's sake.*' He will swear that he has heard of no one by the name of Kalter.

However the PCs approach the situation, sooner or later they should get some information from the smuggler, even if they have to follow him down a dark alley and kick him until his guts spill out. If he thinks the PCs might kill him, then the boatman will be less reticent. He can tell them that he did carry two men a while ago who picked up the girl in Kruiersmuur on the Daankkanaal. He remembers because she was sobbing and crying all the way across. Then she put up a



bit of a struggle for such a little thing and nearly got away. He will say he didn't know the two men who carried her off.

Kraamelanger will hope that is enough to satisfy his tormentors, but if they lean on him even harder then he will reveal what he knows of Dr. Kalter. Kalter contacted him about a year ago to pick up a package from somewhere down in Doodkanaal, and he paid well. Everything went off without a hitch so Kalter used him again. He has done a number of jobs, obviously all illicit. He picked up a young girl in Carroburg and brought her to Kalter, once. That was the only other time he had carried live cargo for Kalter. The girl, Heidi, was no trouble; she thought she was joining the Shallyan convent, poor thing. But the red hooded girl, Ana they called her, was distraught right from the beginning.

The two men were Kalter's henchmen. Lodwig had dealt with them a number of times. He does not know where Kalter lives or much about him, save he looks very ill, has a lot of money and is a physician. He never arranges to meet Kalter: the man or his servants just turn up when they need a boat and demand his services. One of Kalter's henchmen, Ektoor Goobscheid, drinks at The Sands as well but they don't chat much. If asked how he knows Kalter is a physician, Lodwig will reply that it was something he said once, but he cannot remember exactly what that was now.

Kraamelanger has a good memory for the jobs that he has done and could tell the PCs a number of addresses in the city where he has run errands for Kalter, this could lead to a number of other adventure hooks.

Kraamelanger can describe Kalter as looking *'Ill and very old. There is something not quite right about him. He kind of stares right through you, but his eyes are unfocused like a fish, like a dead fish'*.

*'Goobscheid is a moron. If you asked him the time of day he'd want to make something of it. Someone needs to give him a good slap. Just coz someone's paying him to pay me doesn't mean he can lord it like that, does it? When I see him in The Sands, I just keep out of his way.'*

*'Uuyers is a creepy, snivelling, little lungworm.'*

Kraamelanger does not know where Kalter might be found. He does not see him much and deals mostly with Goobscheid and Uuyers. He does not know where to find Uuyers either, but he knows that Goobscheid patronises The Sands as much as he does, so will be found there most nights.

### The Sands

The Sands is a typical seaman's hangout. 'You can't drown on dry land' is a popular

expression among sailors the Old World over, meaning, however much you drink, it will be okay. That sort of attitude seems to still hold true more often than not, and The Sands is not an exception. The building has four visible storeys. The ground floor is where most of the drinking gets done. The next two floors are mostly for bawdy accommodations or those who wish to drink and deal in privacy with the top floor used as offices and living quarters.

Outsiders come and go at The Sands all the time, doing deals and looking for the right sort of boatman. If the PCs keep their heads down and behave properly they should have little problem here. If they try and start a fight or muscle in on anything then the locals will band together to protect their patch.

If the PCs come in wanting to know who Goobscheid is they can ask around. The barman, believing that the PCs are just here to hire him will be happy to point him out for a small consideration. Others may be more or less wary at the GMs discretion. But if the PCs ask for Goobscheid and he is identified to them, then they should actually introduce themselves to him or suspicions will be aroused.

Goobscheid drinks with a group of two to six similar mindless thugs who will be as happy as him to start a fight for next to no reason if a victory looks assured.

### Visser's Residence in Goudberg

The party may get Goobscheid to reveal Katler/Visser's, and his, address to them in a number of ways. They could probably beat the information out of him, but the most prudent would be to just follow him home. If the group tries to gain illegal entry to the premises after following him back from the tavern, then he would no doubt be drinking off his excess at the time. However the party manages it, Uuyers will most likely be at home and a lot more alert than his colleague.

Uuyers is fanatically loyal to his master and will fight to the death, confident (deluded) that he will return to the land of the living in the near future. If Uuyers is captured then the party will have to work very hard indeed to extract anything worthwhile from him. Regardless, there are a number of clues around the building that should point to Visser's location.

The house is located in Goudberg not a long walk from Streusel's Wharf and The Sands. The front of the house is on a busy and respectable thoroughfare whilst the back, a storey lower, meets a narrow and filthy alley. Goobscheid and Uuyers when not with Visser always use the back entrance and they rarely use the upper part of the house.





## Visser's Bit

The house is split into two distinct parts. The upper two floors are smart and exactly what one might expect an aspiring young bachelor physician to take. They are looked after by the housekeeper Erica Haak. When Visser first came back to Marienburg he intended this place to be his base. Since then however, he has managed to gain an apartment in the Guildhall. Therefore, he gave instructions that Igor Kalter should be given free reign of the building. Haak finds Kalter 'a bit creepy' and does her best to keep out of his way. She has no inkling that Visser and Kalter might be the same person (as she has not seen enough of Kalter), or that anything sinister is going on. Haak is concerned that the bottom part of the building has been let to a disrespectful meathead like Goobscheid whom she sees coming and going occasionally. She knows he must be up to no good. She knows nothing about the secret door that links the two apartments.

The most interesting room in the house is Visser's office. Although he now keeps most of his paperwork at the Guildhall there are a few pieces of correspondence that might be useful to the PCs. There should be a couple of letters addressed to Dr. Jozef Visser c/o the Guildhall and also a couple addressed to him at this address. There might also be some addressed to Kalter at Goudberg. This should serve to encourage the PCs to at least make some enquiries at the Guildhall. There might also be some paperwork relating to some other NPCs that might have connections with Visser and be of interest to the PCs. A copy of Handout #4, dated for this very day (or tomorrow if it is late) is also here. It reads as follows.

*The Chartered Guild of Honourable Physicians of Marienburg do stage this day of -/-/ for the elucidation and education of the finest and most eminent minds of this brave and honest city, featuring the Master of his guild, the most learned bachelor of medicine, Prof. Karl Gruybaar, assisted most diligently by Doktors Jozef Visser and Gunther Flemisch, of an unfortunate citizen (as yet to be determined), a thorough and afiduous autopsy, in two parts.*

*With refreshments and intermiffional entertainment.*

*2 Guilders on the door*

At the back of the desk, behind a makeshift secret panel (it is easy to spot if someone is looking for that sort of thing), Visser has hidden the *Liber Nivea*, his most prized tome.

Behind a secret door made to look like a bookcase two lower floors can be reached from Visser's house. Coming up, the door is obvious and not a secret at all.

## Uuyers' and Goobscheid's Bit

Uuyers and Goobscheid each have their own room here and occupy the upper level of the lower quarters. Uuyers' room is immaculately clean and the objects therein have been placed with a geometric precision. Goobscheid's room on the other hand is filthy and the smell is not pleasant. The remains of meals going back several weeks have attracted vermin. Their relative standards of hygiene are a source of constant friction. The door leading to the alley out back is very sturdy (T5 W8) and has a couple of mortice bolts. It also has a shutter so that those wishing access can be checked out.

The cellar is reached by some narrow wooden stairs near the back door of the floor above. The first girl that Visser acquired for his potion was called Heidi Drechs. Her family was tricked into thinking she would be joining the Shallyan convent. She was bled here under Uuyers' supervision until dying a few months later. The contraption that held her, together with pipes to supply her with water and nutrients, and the pipes that carried ichor from her body, can still be seen hanging off one of the walls. The import and unusualness of the object is clear and the stains and dried fluids lend it a sinister air, but it would take a sick mind and an inspired guess, perhaps, for someone to realise exactly what the apparatus might have been used for.

Theodor Uuyers is likely to be here when the PCs arrive. If he hears them coming he will make his way down here to make a stand; if he does not hear them, that is because he was down here anyway, studying. He has a wide desk where he works and several large boxes where he keeps his specimens. There is enough material in these boxes for the required number of undead servants to appear should Uuyers cast *Summon Skeletons* in this room.

There is also a cage in the room. This was used for keeping Ana in until the time was right to move her to the Guildhall. As the PCs are exploring this ill-lit room a shadow of Ana may appear to them from the past. As they peer at the cage through the gloom, for a few seconds a despairing figure can be seen hunched up behind the bars. The figure will lift its head to the PCs and reach out a hand as if in a desperate appeal for help, and then disappear. This sighting of Ana may gain the players an *Insanity* point, especially if they lost one the first time they saw Ana's 'ghost'.

If Uuyers or Goobscheid are taken alive and convinced to talk (this will be much easier for Goobscheid than for Uuyers) they will reveal that Visser/Kalter can be found at the Guildhall of Physicians.

## Doctor in the House

Now the PCs have followed the trail as far as

Visser's residence, they have probably got his name as a chief suspect behind the mystery. They should also suspect that the good doctor is behind other less than legal actions. They could wait for him to return to his house in Goudberg, and eventually that is what the doctor will do. Though his other schemes are starting to come to fruition, Visser has a lot less need for his henchmen and the house than he did previously, so it could be a good number of weeks before he does return. The party may know that Visser will be assisting in an autopsy very soon and might decide that would present a good opportunity to check him out. It could be important to bear in mind that at this stage the PCs might not necessarily know that Kalter and Visser are the same person.

If the PCs ask at the reception of the Guildhall of Physicians about Dr. Visser they will be informed that his theatre is about to start and that they should make their way up the steps at the end of the corridor. They will be reminded that the entrance fee for non-guildmembers is two Guilders.

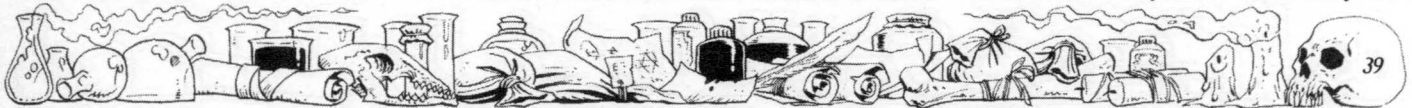
If the PCs enter the Guildhall to see if they can find out any information about a certain Dr. Kalter, things will be more difficult for them. They will probably have thought of a decent ruse to get his details without arousing any suspicions. Once they have seen a fastidious and demeaning petty clerk at the reception (located to the side of a grand entrance foyer) they will be asked to wait. During their wait, the air will get suddenly colder and those with *Sixth Sense* will get that old feeling once more. A small girl (yes, Ana, without her cloak) will put her head around the door and beckon to one of the PCs, then run off.

If the PCs follow Ana down the hallway, they will have another fleeting glance of her before she disappears again. That should be enough to lead them up the stairs and towards the theatre where the autopsy is about to begin, which is where Ana wants them to go for now.

## A Night at the Theatre

There is about to be a public autopsy. The three esteemed physicians holding it are Dr. Visser and two colleagues. Professor Karl Gruybaar is the aged master of the guild, a slightly decrepit but well respected surgeon. He is well known in his field and someone who has studied medicine or similar in Marienburg would likely recognise him or his name. The other is Dr. Gunther Flemisch, in his forties and another eminent presence.

Autopsies are strangely popular among all sections of Marienburg society and the medical college has no qualms about letting anyone who can pay in to watch. If too many of the PCs look like they have come ready for a



pitched battle this could cause problems but generally the Guild are tolerant of any who pay.

The theatre is semicircular with ten rows of wooden seats, steeply raked and overlooking the operating theatre itself, with its gaudy red floor. The venue has a capacity of about four hundred and it is well over half full. Most of the onlookers are students or doctors but a fair number are voyeurs and spectators. There are a few very dubious characters indeed among them.

There is a buzz of expectation in the place and a couple of the loudest students are having an affected argument about some subtle point of the latest medical theory. Another group is having a quietly earnest discussion. In the centre of the floor the naked body of a young man lies on a large stone table. The floor has been cleaned but still bears some of the grime and crustiness of past operations.

There is a long desk at the back of the hall on which are placed many different utensils and strangely shaped bottles. Items that will probably catch the PCs' attention are a

beautiful set of five variously sized, shiny bone saws and myriad knives. Behind the desk, hanging from the wall are several fantastically detailed drawings of the human form in various states of dissection. To the right side of the floor hang two skeletons - anyone with medical skills can tell one is a Human male and other female. Most of the wooden surfaces have been painted a lurid green.

A while after the PCs have settled down and looked over their program (Handout #4) the three distinguished doctors emerge from the antechamber to an enthusiastic round of applause. It is clear that old Dr. Gruybaar is the most senior and he announces the background to today's body. *'The unfortunate was a stevedore of Doodkanal who had contracted Manaas's Curse (Rabies) after being bitten by an unknown creature while unloading a cargo from the New Coast. The purpose of the day's autopsy is to investigate the vital organs to ascertain the effect that the disease has had on them and to measure which and how much of the cardinal fluids have been*

*consumed by the curse.'*

After more applause, Dr. Gruybaar moves behind the slab and begins his work. Kalter / Visser stands by a tray that has an array of fiendish instruments upon it, which he hands to Gruybaar when they are required. Flemisch stands at the back, keeping out of the way except when required to parade around the front of theatre, carrying a variety of receptacles, to give those in the front rows a closer look at some of the organs and fluids recovered. After a particularly gruesome item is removed from the body, the GM may wish to require any PCs watching make a test against *Toughness x2* or suffer an uncontrollable urge to vomit.

### Messing Things up

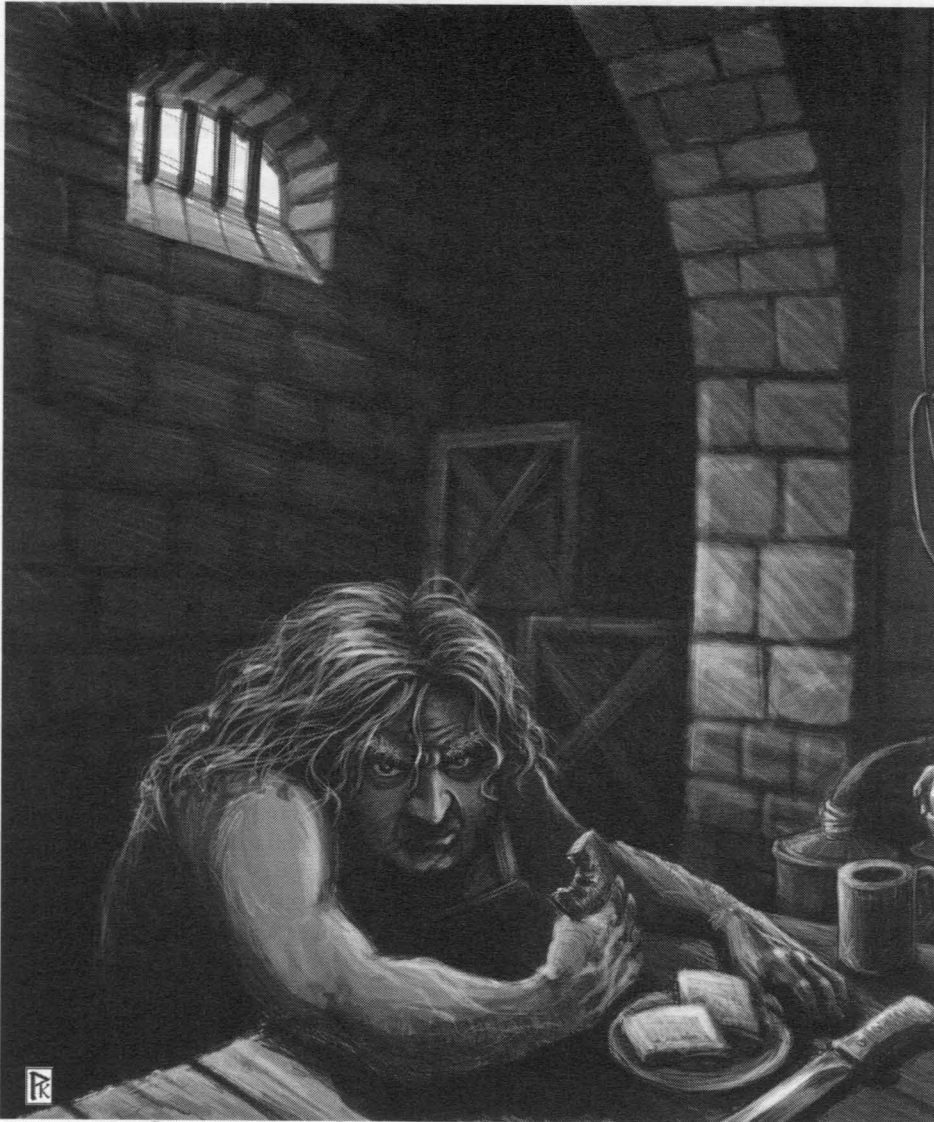
The PCs may or may not find this very interesting, but they should imagine that someone connected with Ana Zefferetti's death is present in the theatre, and that probably it is one of the three good doctors they are watching. If they have heard descriptions of Kalter as being very old, then they might suspect Gruybaar.

Alternatively, the PCs may believe that Visser is responsible for certain crimes and be ready to arrest him immediately. If the PCs try to force their way down to the doctors things will get messy. They may have no obvious evidence against anyone so when the watch is called it is bound to end in tears, since they will have better things to do than listen to conspiracy theories and ghost stories from a riotous rabble. Suffice it to say that a group of adventurer types running amok in one of the most prestigious of Marienburg's academic institutions is not going to be looked upon kindly by anyone.

### Showtime

At some point during the autopsy, after the GM has had a chance to make the players feel queasy with descriptions of guts and gore, Ana Zefferetti will demonstrate to all present the manner of her sacrifice to Nagash. This will shock the whole theatre and lead to a panicked evacuation. Also it might not be clear, even then, who perpetrated the act. Ana will cause a ghostly illusion that will last for a short moment, a couple of seconds at the most, although it will probably seem much longer.

As the doctors go about their business, the tall windows allowing the light into the theatre will darken. Things will start to look different in the gloom. The theatre becomes a cellar (the look and feel of which is commonly Marienburger but some might recognise it as very like the cellars under the Guildhall). The thick granite table, on which the body is lying, becomes a narrow wooden table carved with



strange runes, which seem to glow in the darkness. The dissected cadaver itself becomes the body of Ana Zefferetti. She lies still with her eyes open wide, full of terror, but she is unable to make a sound. Her small, pale body is tied to the altar and she can barely move.

Rising over Ana is the figure of Kalter (for when this ritual was performed, the now-youthful Visser was of course still ancient looking). Nevertheless, a long black, hooded robe now hides his features. Behind him slightly, holding various paraphernalia, are his two servants, also robed. Kalter calmly slits the girl's throat, Uuyers catches her blood as it spurts out and Taalin struggles to hook up a brass tube to the girl's jugular vein. Kalter then lifts his face to the heavens and laughing demoniacally reveals his desiccated features to all those assembled at the operating theatre. Mwahahahaha.

Those who have seen Uuyers will probably recognise him from the image. Just because the PCs have seen Kalter's features at almost the same moment as they saw Jozef Visser does not mean they will immediately recognise him as the same man. From their appearances there seems to be a good 50 or 60 years separating the two. The GM might require Intelligence rolls to be made, but unless the players have conjectured something along the right lines about the anti-ageing properties of certain necromancy etc, then it should be hard to make the connection (they may, however, suspect, the two men of being related).

The view will then return to normal. Everyone is stunned, especially the three doctors performing the autopsy. There is a nervous silence for a moment and then a riot.

### Pursuit

The scene in the theatre will be quite hectic. Amidst shouting and screaming, people will make their way towards the doors at the back of the gallery. There will be no orderly evacuation. Some people have fainted and are blocking the stalls. A fat old gent has fallen in the aisle and others are scrambling to get over or around him. One attractive young lady is in the middle of a scrum pining plaintively for some gallant fellow to rescue her. Some people are jumping down into the theatre to escape.

Once Visser collects himself, he will exit quickly through the door at the back of the theatre into the antechamber and make his way down to the cellars. Hopefully the PCs will see him do this and will make an effort to follow him. With everyone rushing about and trying to get out of the theatre in a panic the PCs might have to make some brave and hazardous manoeuvres to follow Visser closely.

The route from the antechamber to the cellars is quite straightforward; the corridor leads

virtually straight to some stone steps. Once these are descended, however, the PCs will find themselves in a warren of caverns and passageways. It will be virtually impossible to follow anyone through this labyrinthine complex and hard not to get lost unless someone knows the way very well indeed.

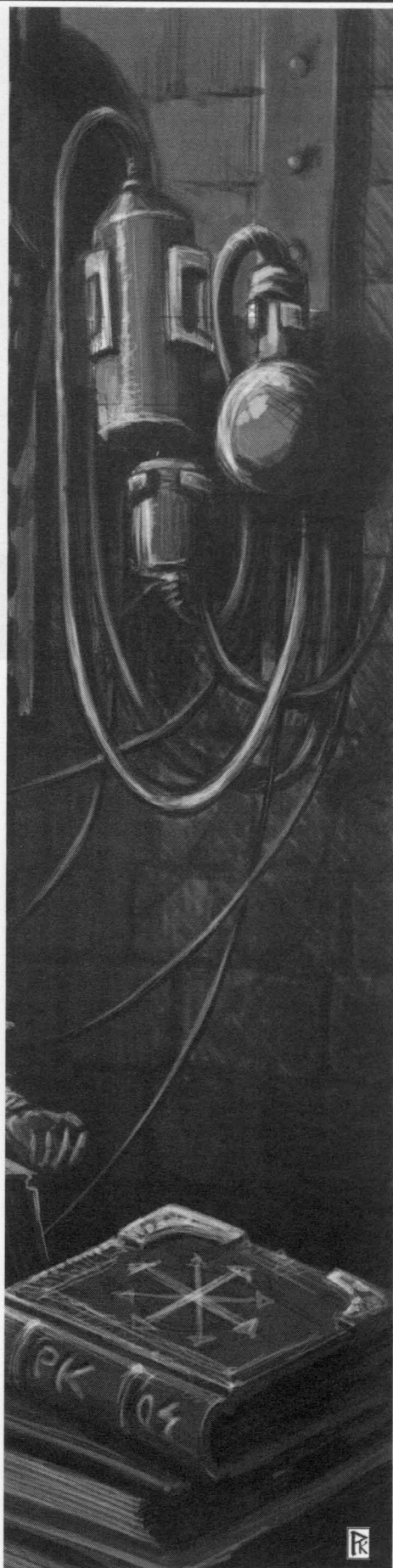
The GM should let the PCs flounder about in the darkness for a while getting themselves more and more lost. Then, they will hear the high pitched lilting melody of a by-now familiar nursery rhyme. They will spy Ana turning the corner just ahead of them. When they reach that junction they will just be able to see her again as she disappears around another bend. Eventually, the vision of the girl will lead the party to the cellar in which she is being kept. If they split up to search the cellars then they will all see the vision of Ana from their various locations, at the same time.

The door to the cellar room is bolted and magically locked and. When the PCs do finally force their way in, Visser will have prepared himself to fight for his life using all his power, while Taalin will attempt to protect his master by using a long, sharp, obscure medical implement. Even as they prepare to melee, the PCs will not be able to help noticing that Ana, who is suspended on the opposite wall, is observing them. So many pipes and hoses lead into and out of her body that she seems to be part of some nightmare automaton spider or an insane plumbing experiment. When the PCs arrive in the room, Ana's eyes flicker open, and despite her twilight existence, a half smile will play upon her lips. This view of Ana will necessitate a successful *Cool* test or the loss of an *Insanity* Point.

Optionally, the GM might consider that the PCs have been placed under immense stress during the adventure. They should be desperate by now to end their troubling nightmares, and they have just discovered the gruesome fate of the innocent child they have been searching for. If any of the PCs have been showing signs of desperation and imbalance then the GM could rule the failure of their *Cool* test will send them into a *Frenzy*, from which they will not rest until Visser and Taalin lie dead.

Visser is a very dangerous opponent and the presence of his assistant, Taalin, gives him someone who can fend off the PCs while he rains magical destruction down on them. The GM should take some responsibility for ensuring that the wizard does not wipe out the PCs in an instant.

If the party is small and clearly not ready to battle him, Visser could become shocked and become panicky at the vision in the theatre. He could flee to his house in Goudberg, and from there to some other bolt hole he has lined up. This would just leave Taalin and Ana to



deal with, and given Ana's hate for Taalin, this should not be too dangerous for a weak party; they can always run away. The PCs could find correspondence in Visser's apartment that gives clues to his new whereabouts, leading to more adventure.

If Ana's precarious physical body is killed (a single wound will do it) then this will release her wraith. If Visser is already dead, then it might be fun to have the deranged spirit attack the party, showing appropriate WFRP gratitude. If on the other hand the party are in deep enough trouble already, the wraith should attack Visser and Taalin, helping the PCs and redressing the balance of power nicely. It might take an inspired guess for someone to realise that the child's death could help them, or they may wish to just put Ana out of her obvious misery as quickly as possible.

In addition, if the party is in trouble, the GM may wish to rule, on the expenditure of the first fate point perhaps, that flying shards of glass, or a wild weapon slash, has managed to finish off Ana and her wraith is free to join the melee.

#### **Wraith: The Oblivious**

If Visser wins the fight, or at least manages to escape, then it will be up to the GM to decide what course of action the necromancer will take. He may decide to flee the city, but if it looks like there is a good chance that his plans for the guild may still work then he will put all his energy into seeing them through. This will more than likely involve hunting down the PCs who have dared to stand up to him and destroying them.

If the party kill Visser then his death will release the ties that have bound Ana tenuously to her mortal body and she will be free to wreak her revenge on mortality as she sees fit. As his magic has kept her alive, upon Visser's death, Ana's body will finally die and the PCs might witness her ethereal body pulling free of her mortal one. If the PCs are expecting a show of gratitude then they are mistaken. Ana's atrocious treatment has turned her mind; her Wraith will wish to attack the PCs and anyone else she can, and devour their spirits. If Gustav Taalin is still alive and present when Ana's wraith is released, then she will attack and kill him eagerly before doing anything else.

The GM should not feel the need to make sure that they have the magical weapon necessary to defeat Ana's wraith. It could be much more interesting for the party to make a swift exit. Having saved the city from an insane and powerful necromancer, the haunting of the cellars below a Guildhall would be a small price to pay. In addition, they can always get hired at a later date to rid the guild of its uninvited guest. Further exploration of the

large complex of cellars under the Guildhall, especially if the PCs are given free rein, could uncover Shallya knows what.

#### **Aftermath**

The fallout from this adventure could be extremely varied depending on the actions of the party. Even after ridding the world of Visser and Ana, the PCs might not know exactly what has gone on and may wish to further their investigation, if only for their own peace of mind.

The GM will want to work out the standing of the PCs with the Guild of Physicians. They might appear to be a group of ransacking hoodlums, or heroic saviours. More than likely, an ambitious physician and aspiring politician will be grateful that the PCs have got one of his rivals out of the way, even if he does not show it.

If Visser has not been killed then the PCs may have a lot more work to do. If he flees Marienburg then he will make his way to Nuln where he has a well established network of allies and excellent hiding places. He will want to set up a laboratory once more and search for a suitable victim. If he manages to make more of his potion, then he will emerge into society after a few months with a plan for taking over a respectable institution of that city, with healthier, younger looking skin.

If the PCs manage to kill Visser then the GM might wish to consider that the method of youthful appearance described in the *Liber Nivea* could also have the effect of bringing Visser to Lichehood. Although the PCs see him dead and buried, he could well come back into their lives at some point. When he does rise from the grave he may wish to wreak vengeance on his killers immediately. Or, he may have other unfathomable Liche-like motivations and could end up as the baddie behind another adventure plot that the PCs stumble upon.

If the PCs fail extensively then life can become difficult for them. They will have to cope with the physical and psychological effects of the lack of sleep caused by Ana's haunting. The knowledge of their failure should additionally make things weigh more heavily upon them.

The demon that has possessed Ana may still be in the land of the living. There is not much precedent in WFRP for a demon of Nagash, and undeath is not generally described in demonological terms. It is easily left to the individual GM do deal with this. Possibly, the demon is growing stronger the closer Ana gets to death. It could become a very powerful entity indeed, gaining control of Visser's mind until it is ready to rise up and consume the entire city. On the other hand it might just be a Wraith,

as described herein. If the GM is prepared to let the demon grow beyond wraithhood, then it should be borne in mind that the demon has already established telepathic links, however weak or tenuous, with the PCs themselves and it will no doubt seek to exploit them to the full.

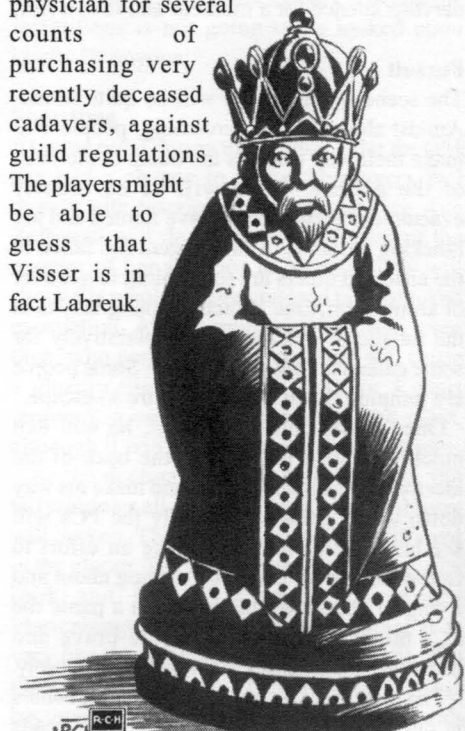
The party may have not advanced to a meeting with, or even knowledge of, Jozef Visser. In this case, the doctor's rise may become some sort of distant plot that the PCs might hear a little about. A physicians' guild, headed by a megalomaniac demonologist, who may or may not be under the control of an undead demon, could possibly have adventure and plot implications for the future.

#### **Visser's Apartment at the Guildhall**

Visser has used his influence within the guild to obtain the most desirable apartment in a grand annexe of the Guildhall. It occupies the entire top floor and is sumptuously decorated.

A desk contains papers connected with the legitimate business of the guild. There are also sketches of equipment intended for a silver smith, as well as bills and receipts for their manufacture. The equipment can be found in the laboratory under the guildhall, most of it connected in some manner to Ana's body.

Some items of direct interest to the PCs include a scroll in Visser's own hand detailing instructions in the Necromantic spell, *Hand of Dust*. Another paper is one that Visser has dug up from the guild records. It details the minutes of a disciplinary procedure against guild member Jens Labreuk in 2402. The minutes detail the expulsion of a young physician for several counts of purchasing very recently deceased cadavers, against guild regulations. The players might be able to guess that Visser is in fact Labreuk.



## NPCs

### Jozef Visser, AKA Jens Labreuk, AKA Igor Kalter

Necromancer III, ex-Necromancer 1 & 2, ex-Wizard Level 1 & 2, ex-Wizard's Apprentice, ex-Physician, ex-Physician's Student

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	35	32	4	4	11	59	1	50	53	67	47	47	35

"Mwahahahaha!"

**Alignment:** Evil (Nagash)

**Skills:** Arcane Language - Magick, Arcane Language - Necromancy, Cast Spells - Petty, Cast Spells - Necromantic Battle III, Cure Disease, Demon Lore, Heal Wounds, Herb Lore, Identify Plants, Identify Undead, Magic Sense, Magical Awareness, Manufacture Drugs, Prepare Poison, Meditation, Rune Lore, Read/Write, Secret Language - Classical, Scroll Lore, Surgery, Swim.

**Trappings:** Liber Nivea, Statuette of Nagash, Scroll - Hand of Death, Various Components.

**Magic Points:** 26

#### Spells

Petty: Curse, Magic Flame, Magic Lock, Zone of Silence.

Battle I: Fire Ball, Steal Mind, Wind Blast.

Battle II: Lightning Bolt, Cause Panic, Break Weapon, Mental Duel.

Necromantic I: Summon Skeletons, Hand of Death.

Necromantic II: Control Undead, Stop Instability, Summon Skeleton Minor Hero.

Necromantic III: Life in Death, Summon Skeleton Horde.

**Insanities:** Morbidity, Megalomania.

**Magical Disabilities:** Cadaverous Appearance, Animal Aversion.

Visser was born Jens Labreuk in Marienburg around 2367, the son of Imperial landholders turned merchants. He was always fascinated by medicine and soon after joining the Guild of Physicians became a rising star in that organisation. He took very few patients and used his parents' wealth to finance a number of bold experiments and studies. Visser became obsessed with the search for the Elixir of Life, a fabled concoction that would bring immortality and eternal youth.

After a scandal involving the purchase of the cadavers of the recently and violently deceased, Visser fled an angry mob and made his way to The Empire. He roamed from city to city never staying in any one place for more than a few years, but all the time he fervently pursued his dream of creating the Elixir of Life with no regard for those lives that had to be sacrificed for his gain.

His inherent ruthlessness and the nature of his study lead almost inevitably to the doctor's worship of Nagash, a powerful Arabyan god



of undeath. Through his researches and divine inspiration, Visser has begun to turn himself into a Liche. Not content with this, however, Visser seeks also to preserve (or more accurately, regain) the appearance of his youth.

Using the wealth of his family and making many investments on his travels, and with many years experience, Visser has also grown very wealthy indeed.

#### Potion of Younger Looking Skin

Visser has found a way to create the Potion of Younger Looking Skin. He read of the technique in the *Liber Nivea*, a tome that he discovered in the Grey Mountains near Garnier in Bretonnia. Though proven to combat visible signs of ageing, the potion concocted through this method has only temporary effects.

The method described involves extracting the life essences from fresh blood. The quality of the ingredients and the purity of the process affect the duration of the potion a great deal. The entire blood of a child freshly squeezed into the spotless scientific receptacles and immediately processed, for example, can create a potion with effects that will last for a number of weeks. Blood scraped off the floor after a bar room brawl, on the other hand, may only be partially effective for a matter of hours.

The potion temporarily removes all the effects of the *Cadaverous Appearance* disability and also makes the necromancer look as youthful as they did when they were in their twenties. It is up to the GM what effects the potion might have on non-Necromancers, especially PCs. It could simply have no effect,

or it might make the PC look a lot younger. It may, however, have undesirable side effects. It might be highly addictive, and when the effects run out it might leave the user preternaturally aged.

#### Return to Marienburg

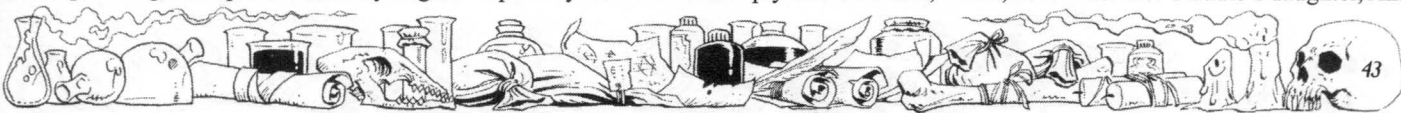
Visser has recently returned to Marienburg. Though ancient in Human terms his motivation is immature; revenge. He wished to rejoin the Guild of Physicians and eventually become its master. His megalomania rampant, he has the plan of perverting all the physicians of Marienburg to the worship of Nagash and then to make the entire city a reborn Nehekharan utopia like the cities of legend.

A regular supply of potion from Heidi Drechs meant that Visser could appear virtually the whole time as his youthful self. He was thus able to join the guild and play

a very active part in the institution. It also helped that he donated a very large amount of money. Visser has charm and, when using the potion, a rare vitality that makes him extremely popular. He is also an absolute expert in the disciplines he specialises in.

Some months ago, the girl died and Visser was reduced to sending out his henchmen to murder in order for him to get temporary relief from his ageing. This also forced him to withdraw somewhat from political life at the guild. During this time, Visser reverted to using a name he had adopted many times previously, that of Dr. Igor Kalter of Nuln. He still managed to research and do a few deals as Doctor Kalter. Somehow, a deathly appearance is accepted more in a doctor than anyone else. Visser also managed to make 'Kalter' a member of the Guild of Physicians. Therefore, Visser could gain entry to the Guildhall even if he had not used the potion to disguise his appearance. Kalter does manage to give a few people in the Guild the creeps and has been the subject of some conversations around the water fountain, but Visser has spread a rumour that Kalter suffers from a rare ageing disease and that Kalter might be a bit sensitive about it. However, as Kalter, Visser tries to keep to himself as much as possible.

It was about this time that Visser heard of a wasting disease that had perplexed the finest of Marienburg's minds. Keen for any sort of clue as how to enhance his anti ageing process Visser visited Claudio Zefferetti in Remasweg to see what afflicted his son. It was during this visit, that Visser met Claudio's daughter, Ana,



and decided she would be perfect to use as the main ingredient in his potion. Using Claudio's desperation about his son as a bargaining counter, he hatched a plan whereby he could have Ana given to him.

Because of the complicated process, and Uuyers incompetence with Heidi's body, Visser decided to have Ana brought to the laboratory that he had created deep below the water line in the cellars of the Guildhall. He used his influence to convince Gustav Taalin, an ambitious and unscrupulous apprentice and Visser's first convert to Nagash, to look after the body of Ana permanently for as long as she survived. Taalin knows that the longer he keeps her alive, the better will be his reward.

Now that Ana has been hooked up to apparatus in this semi-secret laboratory, Visser lives in his apartment in the guildhall. He is busy scheming and charming his way to become master of the guild and as soon as Gruybaar dies, which Visser is currently arranging, it seems certain that the young Visser will take his place. Every morning Visser goes to his laboratory to imbibe the potion that Taalin has purified over night. He will then inspect Ana for signs that she may be dying; she has so far stayed remarkably healthy.

**Liber Nivea**

This tome is bound in what looks like goatskin. Within its covers are to be found many secret techniques for defeating the signs of ageing. It was written by a famous magician of Garnier in Bretonnia who died of a heart attack after marrying a woman seventy years his junior. Some of the techniques are innocent and others little more than wives' tales, but the sacrifice of virgins and the draining of their blood is advocated for the less frivolous recipes. The book is currently hidden in Visser's house in Goudberg.

**Statuette of Nagash**

This is a small lapis lazuli figure about three inches high, depicting a male in flowing robes and wearing a crown. It might easily be mistaken for an ornate chess piece, perhaps. The bearer of this statue is protected from Tomb Rot (and possibly many other diseases). Visser always keeps this hidden on his person.

**Scroll of Hand of Death**

This is a scroll prepared by Visser for his apprentice Uuyers' benefit. This is currently being stored in Visser's apartment in the Guildhall.

**Theodor Uuyers**

Necromancer I, ex-Wizard I, ex-Wizard's Apprentice.

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	26	32	3	2	8	43	1	34	25	46	32	27	33

*"Do not cross me ye minions of the false gods, for I shall smite thee in the name of Nagash, the true lord of all power!"*

**Alignment:** Evil (Nagash)

**Skills:** Arcane Language - Magick, Arcane Language- Necromancy, Cast Spells - Petty, Cast Spells - Battle I, Cast Spells - Necromantic I, Identify Plants, Identify Undead, Magic Sense, Rune Lore, Read/Write, Secret Language - Classical, Scroll Lore, Swim.

**Trappings:** Long Black Cloak.

**Magic Points:** 14

**Spells**

Petty: Curse, Magic Flame, Magic Lock.  
 Battle I: Fire Ball, Steal Mind.  
 Necromantic I: Summon Skeletons, Hand of Death.

**Insanities:** Morbidity.

**Magical Disabilities:** Cadaverous Appearance.

The power of magic has captivated and seduced Uuyers. He is obsessed with gaining as much power as possible. The manipulation of dead spirits and the intrusion upon Mórr is a small, almost insignificant, price to pay for access to such powers.

Uuyers likes to look the part too; he wants everyone to know he is powerful. Though subtle, the symbolism of his dress is clear to those familiar with the arcane. Theodor's desire to look the part means that he appears to be much more powerful than he actually is. Unfortunately for Uuyers, he is beginning to look the part in another way. He has yet to notice, but his skin is becoming ever more pale and taut and his eye sockets are darkening.

Theodor loves his job. He has physical protection from the idiot Goobscheid. Theodor's own power is gradually growing. But more than anything, the power of Visser's name strikes fear into many with whom he deals.

Theodor's master is the one of the greatest sorcerers of Marienburg. He has the town in his pocket. And soon he will defeat death itself. When that time comes, his loyal servant will surely be rewarded with the same immortality and a place at his master's right hand for eternity.

**Ektoor Goobscheid**

Bodyguard

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	54	28	5	4	8	42	2	27	33	25	29	24	24

*"You want some? You want some, do you? Come and get some, then."*

**Alignment:** Neutral (Manaan)

**Skills:** Specialist Weapon - Fist, Street Fighting, Strike Mighty Blow, Very Strong, Swim.

**Trappings:** Leathers, Short Sword, Nightstick.  
 Description: Ektoor Goobscheid is a common thug. He is large, meat-headed and obviously strong. Although it is not a literal truth, the description of 'knuckle dragging' is most apt. With no wits he grew up living by his strength, working on the docks mostly, with a bit of intimidation on the side. Visser hired him a couple of times as extra muscle and decided he would be perfect to run those errands where no thought was required.

Ektoor's job is perfect for him. He gets well fed and enough money for any single man. In addition he gets to throw his weight around often enough and occasionally do some real damage. The business with the young girl was not to his taste, and looked a bit dodgy, but you have to take the rough with the smooth.

Ektoor is happy to take orders and abuse from his employer. Some men are destined to lead and some to follow; that's the way it goes. Ektoor has gradually got used to Theodor. He does not understand exactly what the man wants from life and finds he acts a bit strange sometimes, but he doesn't tread on his toes much and they get along fine.

**Claudio Zefferetti**

Merchant, ex-Trader.

*"What do we work all our lives for, if it's not to pass on some comfort and protection to our children? What's the point in toil if there is no one to pass on the fruits of our labours?"*

Zefferetti (pictured) is only about forty years old but the strain of the last few years has made him look many years older. His clothes are of the finest quality, but several years behind the times. He seems to have trouble concentrating these days and often ends sentences unfinished.

Claudio is increasingly maudlin. He often talks about when he or Emilio will die, or when his wife or Marco died. His general attitude to everything is fatalistic. His colleagues and friends have noticed this remarkable change, but Claudio doesn't want to be helped.

**Benito Arlisconi**

Racketeer, ex-Footpad.

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	56	55	4	4	11	40	2	32	44	33	43	31	26

*"I'm not saying we killed him. I'm just saying, you don't see him walking round town much anymore, do you?"*

**Alignment:** Neutral (Ranald the Protector)

**Skills:** Blather, Dodge Blow, Specialist



Weapon - Fist, Silent Move Urban, Street Fighting, Strike to Stun, Swim.

**Trappings:** Club, Heavy Jewellery, Sharp Suit, Crossbow, Stiletto.

Short and wide but looking musclebound under the flab, Arlisconi looks the part of a Tilean mobster. His face is wide and flat and his nose is broken in several places. He has a tendency to grab his codpiece when things get exciting.

Arlisconi's family has always been dockers, ever since they came to Marienburg three generations ago. They worked themselves up from the dirt on the ground to respectability. They were always poor, but nobody ever went hungry or barefoot. The family stayed together and were loyal to each other. Everyone did what the patriarch said, unquestioningly. That is the sort of discipline required to keep the Remean patch free from the filthy Miraglianese.

Arlisconi is a wealthy man now, but he has never forgotten his roots and he has never forgotten you can't trust a filthy Miraglianese. Luckily for Arlisconi, everyone in Remasweg agrees with him and are prepared to pay a small consideration to have their premises and businesses protected from the filthy Miraglianese.

For some reason, Arlisconi's favourite method of interrogation is to string his victims upside down by their feet, and proceed from there with a good, long chat.

### Remasweg Gangsters

Footpad

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	41	41	4	3	8	41	1	31	31	31	31	31	31

**Alignment:** Neutral

**Skills:** Silent Move Urban, Strike to Stun, Swim.

**Trappings:** Red 'Chiefs, Club, Leather, Knife, 25% chance of Crossbow.

The Remasweg Gangsters are little more than civilians, locals whom Arlisconi can call on to protect the Remasweg turf. Quick to mobilise, usually against incursions by filthy Miraglianese, they can also blend back into the urban scene at will. Some of them will be professional thieves and thugs and some will be normal citizens who know which side their bread is buttered.

### Gustav Taalin

Physician's Student

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	33	23	3	3	7	32	1	34	27	50	42	22	25

"You have tried to hurt me. I know you have. Now you are helpless. Now I can hurt you in any way I desire and you are utterly powerless."

**Alignment:** Evil (Nagash)

**Skills:** Heal Wounds, Manufacture Drugs, Prepare Poison, Read/Write, Scroll Lore, Secret Language - Classical, Swim.

**Trappings:** Medical Instruments, Sprig of Poisonous Herb, Scalpel, Healing Herbs.

**Insanities:** Sadism.

Snivelling and scrawny, speaking with a heavy lisp, Taalin is a bully magnet. His splayed teeth and long, lank hair add nothing to his appearance. All his life Taalin has been picked on by those physically stronger than him. Suddenly, he has a chance to gain power himself.

At last, the boy has found someone that likes him, someone important, too. His studies at the Guildhall have been going well, even though the other students, and most of the masters, do not like him. But Visser has seen a talent in him and an attractiveness all the others have missed.

All Taalin must do to repay Visser's kindness is see to this one patient. It is unusual how she is tied to this contraption and fed and bled through tubes. She spends her time in a stupified ague, barely moving, barely living. But every extra day Taalin keeps her alive he gets extra thanks from his great mentor.

It is clear the girl suffers; it is clear she undergoes almost unendurable torment. Sometimes Taalin is tempted to add poison to the nutrients he prepares for her pipes, or to slit her throat, again. That would be the most merciful thing to do. But then, where would he be? What would Doctor Visser say? What about his career? Besides, now somebody knows how he feels.

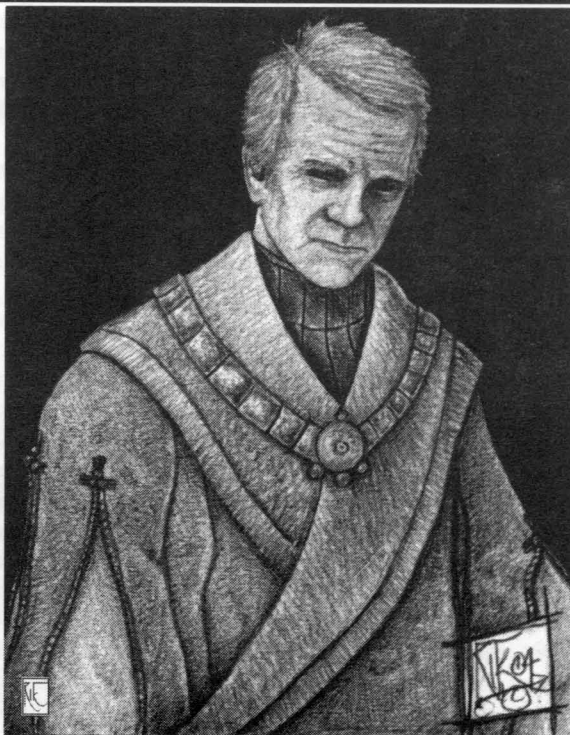
Taalin knows that the girl, had they met elsewhere, would have been just the same as the bullies. She would not have cared about him and she would have hurt him. So his revenge on her, is his revenge on everybody, and it is just.

### Arthur Paardekooper

Bawd

"Well then, you need to find her, and uncle Arthur might know where she is, right? Well, uncle Arthur might need a little bit of help, in return."

Paardekooper has weasel-like features, a very severe overbite and large, crooked front teeth. This makes him dribble copiously. He often uses the sleeve of his large coat to wipe the phlegm away and he never seems to wash the coat. Paardekooper loves to ogle and leer at the prostitutes who hang out around Goudberg



docks, which makes him dribble even more.

It is hard to tell what his business is. He is very well connected, having 'friends' in all sorts of unexpected places. He deals in information and probably buys and sells more illicit things. When he talks to someone much younger than himself (he's about 50), he likes them to call him 'uncle'.

### Lodwig Kraamelanger

Smuggler, ex-Boatman.

"There's nothing down there that will interest you, officer, on my honour. Of course, if you find anything to warm your cockles on a night like this, then that will be your good fortune."

Fond of spitting and looking every inch the typical Marienburger boatman, Kraamelanger finds himself very rarely stopped by the authorities. He puts it down to a lucky face. That could be true, but a deluded belief in your own innocence is always a lot more effective than a masking of acknowledged guilt.

Kraamelanger is a freelance boatman who will carry just about any valuable cargo at a competitive price. Kraamelanger is careful to keep his nose away from where it is not wanted, be punctual and collect his payment. For these reasons he has a number of regular clients and has little need to tout his business outside the small circle of body traders and drug smugglers who have learned to trust him.

However, the boatman will do whatever it takes to save himself. If that means spilling all the beans he can and making a quick retreat to some obscure Bretonnian backwater, then so be it. He is generally astute and is careful enough that he has not yet needed to do a



runner, though he has a route and funds well planned.

Kraamelanger's small boat, the *Red Mist* has any number of secret niches where things can be hidden. Kraamelanger's favourite trick is to hide a single bottle of Bretonnian brandy in one of the easier to find places. The excisemen who find this are usually pleased enough to let him continue, while they keep the booze.

### Dr. Karl Gruybaar

A withered and pale old man, Dr. Gruybaar is the most eminent presence in the Physician's Guild. He has written a number of influential works that are circulated throughout the Old World. He is the first choice physician of many of the richest Marienburgers. Now he is older, he rarely performs on live subjects, but acts as overseer on surgical procedures.

Gruybaar might be of no more interest to the party other than to say he trusted his fellow guild member and had no reason to suspect him of any hidden motive. If played as part of a campaign, it might be worth considering that Gruybaar has a responsibility to his guild to supply them with ever-larger numbers of cadavers and body parts for educational and

experimental purposes. Several members of Marienburg's underworld and body trade know Gruybaar very well indeed and favours are frequently exchanged.

### Dr. Gunther Flemisch

A neat and well-groomed man, with a reliably professional demeanour, the party may get hold of Flemisch around the Guildhall or at his private surgery in Guilderveld. He is remarkably straightforward and sensible. He takes on few airs and is genuinely sincere in his wish to pursue his vocation to the best of his ability. He also understands the pragmatic side of his calling, like any good Marienburger, and has made a good living.

If asked about his colleagues by anyone with a modicum of civility he will be civil back. Discretion is necessary to a good doctor so he will not pour his heart out at the first request. It might be possible to get his true feelings about Kalter, with a bit of gentle coaxing.

Flemisch has witnessed Kalter's rise at the Guildhall and has always respected his skill and knowledge. Right from the moment they met, however, something has bothered him about the young doctor. Flemisch cannot put

his finger on exactly what the problem might be, but it would help him feel better if the doctor were to be exposed for what he really is, whatever that might be. If the party can gain the trust of Dr. Flemisch he may well aid them, directly or indirectly in whatever plan they can think up. He must consider it to have a more than average chance of success, of course.

### Ana

Wraith

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	27	0	3	4	15	30	2	-	18	18	18	18	-

Ana starts the adventure as a kind of Ghost. No profile is provided as it should be difficult for the PCs to interact with her.

Should the bond between Ana's spirit and her physical form be broken then she will become a wraith. This is essentially her goal and the motivation for her manipulation of the PCs. Magical means might achieve this, but the simplest method is to further damage her (already near-dead) body. Ana's body is only kept alive by certain rituals that Visser has performed. So if Visser should die, then Ana's body will too.

Handout #1

*I pray to Morr speed me to your realm.  
Bring me where you have taken  
Marco, and as you drag Emilio, there,  
despite all I have done to save him. I  
pray that the Shallyan sisters will  
show their mercy to Emilio and I give  
them all my remaining worldly goods.*

*under the wings of the Raven may I  
find the peace there that has eluded me  
here. May the Gods forgive me. May  
Ana forgive me.*

*Claudio Zefferetti*

Handout #2

*Kalter dusk  
Daankkanaal  
Red Mist*

Handout #3

*I have lied to you but I do this last  
thing for you. You will not find  
Ana. She has gone forever, because  
of me. She is gone. You won't find  
her in Boogaardweg. Leave there  
now. I will be dead, soon. The doctor  
has killed me.*

*C.Z.*

Handout #4

The Chartered Guild of Honourable Physicians of Marienburg do stage this day of -/-/- for the elucidation and education of the finest and most eminent minds of this brave and honest city, featuring the Master of his guild, the most learned bachelor of medicine, Prof. Karl Gruybaar, assisted most diligently by Doktors Jozef Visser and Gunther Flemisch, of an unfortunate citizen (as yet to be determined), a thorough and afiduous autopsy, in two parts.



With refreshments and intermiffional entertainment.  
2 Guilders on the door





# TALABHEIM

## Part Seven: Talagraad & Others

### Dead or Alive: The Talabheim Warrant Execution Company

*"Unity is Strength." Company Motto*

Many years ago city officials became concerned with the number of criminals turning up dead and decided that bounty-hunting needed to be organised for it to work smoothly. The foremost Bounty Hunters were summoned and informed that their profession was to be regulated. Nine senior and respected individuals were chosen to run the association. With the assistance of the Oath Sworn Keepers a set of rules and by-laws were drawn up. All bounties were passed directly to the Company and are posted at the company offices - which can only be used by members. This organisation was named the Warrant Execution Company.

Despite its money, friends in high places and legal standing the company is not as influential as it would like. Power is devolved from the nobility and city government and either could bring down

the Company. However, the Company is too good a tool to be removed on a whim so the Board maintains the delicate balance. They do not cross the authorities, and defer to the city guard and watch when jurisdictions overlap. In return, city officials allow the Bounty Hunters to work more or less without interference.

Currently the Company is run by Dieter Rottlander, a merchant and ex-Mercenary Captain who became a Bounty Hunter after leaving the military and rose through the ranks to join the Board. A large bluff man in his late forties, still fit and strong despite his age. He has been running the Company for twelve years. Still a soldier at heart, he has traditional views on law and order. His main interests are keeping crime off the streets and bringing criminals to justice. He has a very keen grasp of politics and finance but prefers to be blunt and forthright. He is on good terms with the military and has respect for the judiciary if not the nobles in the Peerhaus. He also likes Dwarfs a lot more than many citizens and tries to support them politically. His beliefs would lead him to close down the internal group known as the Star Chamber without a second thought if he found out about it. He is the closest thing to a good guy among the company directors.

#### Rules And Regulations, Benefits & Restrictions

Licensed Bounty Hunters can use force of arms within Talabheim's limits. This effectively means that only those criminals willing to go of their own free will can be transported by an unlicensed Bounty Hunter. Bounties are issued by the Courts in the persons of the Oath Sworn Keepers on those wanted for trial.

Membership gives access to warrants issued by the city, information and a certain "official" standing. The Company is allowed to take prisoners away from non-Company Bounty Hunters and arrest or fine them if they breach regulations.

The scribes and clerks who handle the paperwork report directly to Secretary Martyn Vogler. Trained as a lawyer, Vogler became the Company secretary after being recommended by a member of the Merchants' Guild. This gentleman was being blackmailed by Luc Richleau, a member of the

Board who wanted his man overseeing the paperwork. As the secretary to the Star Chamber, Vogler has a lot of dangerous knowledge about many noble families. He knows, literally, where the bodies are buried. Vogler is head of the Company's network of informants but a lot of what he knows never gets into the Company files as he is secretive and a little paranoid.

#### Warrants

Warrants are displayed in the Company offices and anyone interested informs the clerks, where provide further details. Applicant's names are put on the file as "in the hunt" and given to anyone else enquiring. Members are strictly forbidden to hinder each other and can work co-operatively.

Once a target has been captured, he is taken to the city's Lower Courts for identification before incarceration and trial. The necessary paperwork is passed to the Company which then pays out the bounty, less a small commission.

Any strictures specified in a warrant must be strictly adhered to. "Alive" warrants mean just that. Others like "must be able to talk" or "capable of facing trial by combat" (popular with Royal Warrants) are also often used. In cases of theft the return of stolen goods may also be a part of the warrant. Failure to adhere to strictures can lead to fines or removal of licence.

There are three types of warrant that the Company deals with officially: City, Private and Royal. There is also an unofficial warrant, issued by the Star Chamber.

City Warrants are issued by the courts and Oath Sworn Keepers on escaped criminals and suspects, including those beyond Talabheim's borders. Suspects are always "wanted alive" while escaped or known criminals are mostly "dead or alive" (the courts know what they look like).

City Warrants are usually set at between 2GC to 20 GC for minor offences such as theft. Up to 50 GC is given for murder, rape, major theft, heresy or "crimes against the city". This generally covers agitators and political dissidents. Bounties can add up as more crimes are committed. There is no upper limit on the bounty.

Private Warrants are issued by groups other than

#### Talabheim: Credits

##### Project Co-ordinators

John Foody & Noel Welsh

##### Project Team

N. Arne Dam, Alfred Nunez, Anthony Ragan with Andrew Hind, Ryan Wileman, Luke Twigger, Tom McGrenery, Mark Bell & Zeno Collins

##### Part Seven

The Talabheim Warrant Execution Company: *Zeno Collins / Outside City: Anthony Ragan, Alfred Nuñez Jr & John Foody / Talagraad: John Foody with Luke Twigger, Zeno Collins & Andrew Hind / The Brotherhood of The Pit: Zeno Collins / PCs: John Foody / Goldstrades: Anthony Ragan & Alfred Nuñez Jr*



## Sancho Luis Sergio Vergara, el bull (Fat Sancho)

Member of the Talabheim Warrant Execution Company  
Bounty-Hunter, ex-Protagonist

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
2	54	49	5	5	9	41	2	29	28	33	54	32	31

**Alignment:** Neutral (Ulric)

**Skills:** Cook, Disarm, Dodge Blow, Drive Cart, Follow Trail, Marksmanship, Read/Write, Ride Horse, Shadowing, Silent Move Rural, Silent Move Urban, Specialist Weapon - Gunpowder, Specialist Weapon - Lasso, Street Fighting, Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure, Strike to Stun.

**Possessions:** Mail shirt, sword, mace, dagger, crossbow (for use outside city), quiver and bolts, lasso, 4 pairs manacles, 20' rope, backpack, cutlery, tinderbox, blanket, tankard, cooking pot, blunderbuss and shot (definitely for use outside the city).

Fat Sancho is big - 210 lbs big - with an impressive belly, long greasy hair, permanent stubble and an odour problem. He wears leather treads and jacket, and a thick coat made of oiled leather lined with fur and with a fur collar (rumour is, it took a whole bull to provide the coat) all year round, indoors or out. Sancho doesn't like to wash and he also likes spicy food with plenty of garlic. Vodka is his preferred drink. Sancho is from Estalia and of Tilean, Estalian and Bretton heritage (as his name would suggest). He speaks all three dialects with an obvious Estalian accent. He is sociable and likes to help his friends. Generally he stays in Talagraad as he finds the city is a bit stuffy. Sancho believes in playing safe and not taking risks. He likes his targets to have their backs to him and preferably be asleep. They aren't even safe on the privy. "Dead or alive" warrants are his preference; with luck the target won't even see him or his crossbow. His blunderbuss is used to clear a room if threatened by a target's associates or to discourage pursuers. Sancho would cheerfully train PCs and support their application, or he may invite them along on the odd job for an equal share of the money. He is their best way into the Company when digging for information.



the Oath Sworn Keepers, and on a "wanted alive only" basis. Those on whom a private bounty is posted are still taken to the city courts and the Keepers then decide if the "criminal" has indeed committed a crime for which the private group can hold the "criminal" responsible. This system is most often used by merchants and guilds to capture someone who has committed a crime that has not been brought to the attention of the Civil Authorities, such as fraud, passing counterfeit coinage (including forged bankers drafts or business contracts), and criminally inaccurate weights and measures.

Private Warrants are generally set at 5GC to 50GC by individuals; if a guild sets the bounty it may range from 10GC for a street trader trading without a licence to 500GC or more for defrauding other merchants. A percentage of the value of goods stolen or money owed in debts may be part of the bounty.

Royal Warrants are very special. Traditionally only certain noble families (the Royal Families and some Peers) can issue them.

Royal Warrants start at 100 GC for commoners and 500 GC or more for nobles. These bounties are set at the whim of the noble issuing the warrant.

After all, money can buy most things.

### Information Gathering and Storage

As the Company has grown, so has its power (both overt and covert) and benefits (such as information) have become more structured. It has files on many criminals and underworld gangs in its cellars that can only be accessed by company clerks on behalf of licensed hunters. Some of the largest files are those held in the Special Records section, which can be accessed only by permission of the company Board as it holds details of criminal activity by nobles.

Clerks are either hired from the lower levels of the civil service, or are retired Bounty Hunters. Excivil clerks understand the laws of Talabheim better than the average Bounty Hunter and their advice on interpretation can be useful on occasion.

Restrictions on files may be placed for reasons of security, such as embarrassment to city dignitaries. Keeping the information private also gives the Board an edge in negotiations - though it hates the term blackmail.

### The Military, Temples & Nobility

If a bounty is put on a serving member of the

military, the company politely informs the senior officers who decide whether to make the arrest or give the Bounty Hunters free rein. The majority of the time the Bounty Hunters are allowed to make the arrest.

Cults rarely issue warrants. They deal with their own problems, but exceptions are made for the printing of heretical pamphlets or a scholar who has written or lectured on an unfit subject. When a Bounty Hunter crosses paths with a cult - a fugitive enters a temple, is related to a priest, or is important to the cult - they request an audience with a senior cleric on a "matter of moral lassitude affecting the temple". They then allow the priests to decide how to deal with it.

The Company's relationship with the nobility is covertly closer and darker than with any other group. The nobility does not like having to wash its dirty laundry in public or go cap in hand to the Oath Sworn Keepers to have someone arrested. Nobles of a certain rank can institute "Royal Warrants", where the noble does not have to name the crime or gain permission from the Oath Sworn Keepers to serve it.

Criminals wanted on Royal Warrants are usually handed directly to the noble or his representative.



Officials overlook this close relationship in deference to the rights of the nobility. This might not be the case if the Oath Sworn Keepers were aware of the darker side of this arrangement, only known to a few. This Star Chamber is the one part of the Company that deals with "dead only" warrants.

### The Star Chamber

A Royal Warrant issued to the Star Chamber is not advertised even within the Company and no paperwork is generated. Instead, specialists are discreetly offered the warrant. No reason for the warrant need be given, nor questions asked. Often, even the Star Chamber doesn't know who the client is. This is the Company's darkest secret.

The directors who run the Star Chamber are Ernst Mellinger, Georg Treuer, Otto Gwisdek and Luc Richleau. Martyn Vogler is their secretary and takes care of all the records. These records are written in code and hidden, partially as a bargaining tool if the Star Chamber ever faced disaster.

### Current Numbers

There are twenty-five licensed Bounty Hunters living and working within the city, twelve in Talagraad and the outlying villages, and a further ten to fifteen members further afield. The Warrant Company offices have a staff of five junior and two senior clerks plus a secretary, Martyn Vogler. Company members, who volunteer to be placed on a rota, guard the Company offices. The pay is low but it is regular and it keeps them up to date on business. The city allows them to wear chainmail armour and carry some weapons.

### Joining

GMs may prevent PCs from joining to show the restrictiveness of the city's practices and generally annoy players.

If a PC is to join the Company then applications must be made in writing with sworn statements, by the applicant and witnesses, confirming their identity. There is a fifteen gold crown fee per application and a lawyer must draw up the statement. The Company may not accept statements from non-residents and the PCs will have to convince a local noble or city official to vouch for them.

An application may take months to be assessed. Successful applicants attend the Company offices to be interviewed by three Directors.

If approved they will receive identity papers and warrants to operate in Talabheim. There is not a lot of work for Bounty-Hunters, so the Company is reluctant to take on new members unless the situation (read, the plot) warrants it.

The Bounty-Hunter's Warrant must be carried at all times as proof of his legal right to carry weapons and wear chainmail armour when in the city. They are still banned from carrying crossbows, long bows, gunpowder weapons and platemail. Such items can be stored at the Company-owned inn "The

Hare & Hounds" in Talagraad.

While on a hunt, Bounty Hunters traditionally wear a padded doublet or tabard of black with red piping with the Company seal embroidered on the chest allow ingmembers of the Watch and City Guard to recognise them. It also identifies them as persons who may be immediately called upon to give support to members of the City Guard or the Watch if they require assistance.

Anyone caught impersonating a Bounty-Hunter by wearing a similar doublet is subject to immediate arrest and severe punishment.

### Charges and Fees

The Company has an Annual Membership fee of 50 crowns. The percentage of bounty paid to the Company is dependent on the Warrant: City 15%, Private 20%, Royal 25%.

Payments can also be invested by the Company on behalf of the Bounty-Hunter, this allowing them to build up accounts with reliable merchants entering the city.

Star Chamber fees start from 175 GC (see *Warpstone* 11 (pg11) - plus an additional 10% as the Company offers a guarantee as a matter of honour). These prices are not set but are a general guide to the payments offered by nobles or requested by the Star Chamber for such work.

### The Directors

There are nine directors of the Company. All are retired Bounty Hunters and now respected (or at least feared) merchants. Their prime concerns are profit and maintaining the status-quo. They maintain their power by making themselves as indispensable as possible to nobility and courts.

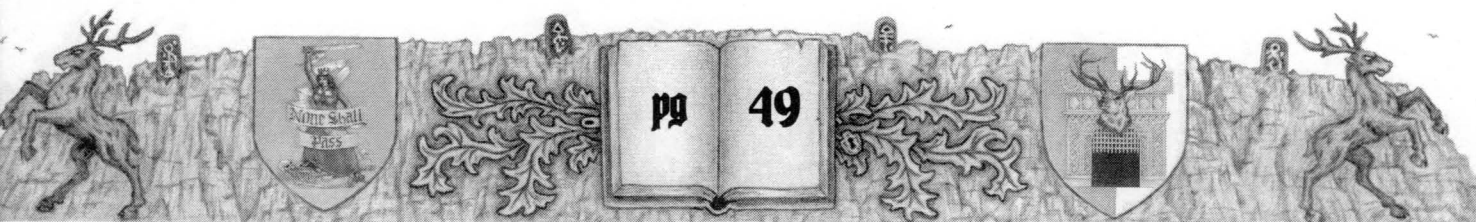
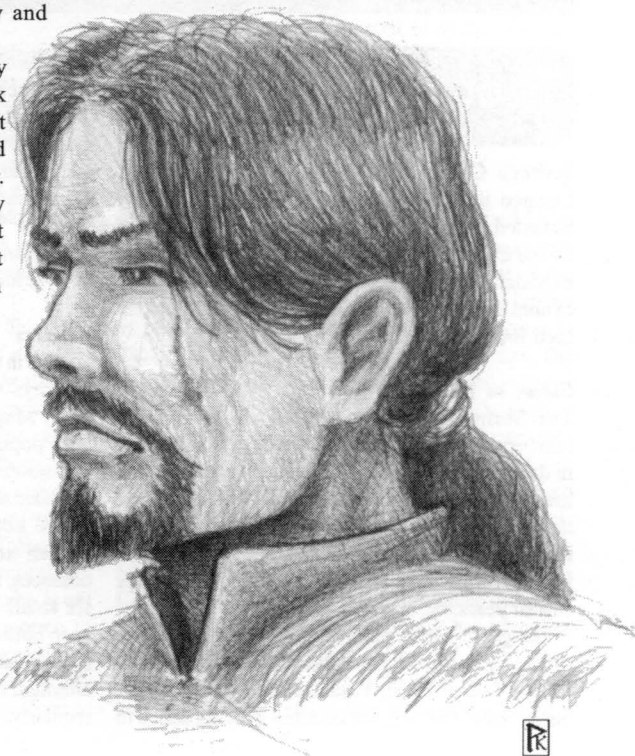
Ernst Mellinger: A slim man in his early fifties, who is clean-shaven and dark haired though going grey. There is a hint of the Tilean about his good looks and easy charm, inherited from his mother. Originally a moral man with strong family values, he became a Watchman to protect people, a Bounty Hunter to get those that got away (and make a profit), and then an Assassin just for the money. He justified it, believing that the truly honest and innocent will not make the kind of enemies that would pay for their death. As head of the Star Chamber he is happy to let someone else be the Head of the Company's Board.

Sasha Kazinski (pictured): Slim and dark, and of medium height, Sasha's stunning good looks, neatly trimmed beard and ready wit all convey the impression of the man about town. A duelling scar on his left cheek makes him look even more rakish, whilst his Kislevite heritage lends something of an exotic air that is confirmed by his being a

gentleman, sportsman and a scholar who is surprisingly well read. Amongst the Bounty Hunters he's one of the lads and generous when buying rounds: amongst the merchants and nobility he is a raconteur, drinker, gambler, duellist and charmer of women. Bounty-hunting was always more of a hobby (which he of course excelled at) and a chance to bring a sort of justice to the city, and Kazinski sort of slipped into being on the Board. A Kislevite ex-patriot, no one really knows what he's doing in Talabheim or why he cannot go home. He does seem melancholy on occasions (especially weddings) and never talks about his family. Some say it was an affair with a married woman, some say a fatal duel, some say both; whatever happened Kazinski's not saying, but he is buying the next round.

Luc Richleau: Tall, thin, in his early forties with dark greying hair and a small neat goatee beard and moustache, he has a certain vulpine quality to him. He is patient, likes to know what is going on, and how he can profit from it. He is a schemer and likes to be the power behind the throne, especially if people do not realise he's pulling the strings. One day he may end up running the Star Chamber, and then even the nobles may have to watch their backs.

The other directors are: Dieter Rottlander, the current head of the Board; Nicholas Ardendorf, an old soldier, strong on law and order; Maximilian von Kliest, a freelance and Rottlander's protégé; Georg Treuer, an assassin for the Star Chamber, sometimes kills people just for practice; Franz Witzenberg, a lawyer who was the Company secretary for many years and Otto Gwisdek, an ex-Bounty Hunter who is slightly sociopathic.





## OUTSIDE THE CITY

### Traitor's Copse

Located in the woods, away from any regularly travelled path, is this unmarked site. Maintained by the Cult of Mórr it contains the bodies of those executed for betraying Talabheim. They are buried in unmarked graves, the Cult maintaining a map to their location.

### Shrine to Mórr

The Shrine to Mórr is located at the western entrance of the Ewigtraum Cemetery. The shrine is in the form of a large portal consisting of two plain granite pillars and a lintel carved from basalt. To the right is the groundskeeper's small house; a member of the Mourner's Guild and a priest of Mórr, Herpin Bleich has held this position for fifteen years.

The graveyard is relatively small, given the size of the city. Since most Talabheimers primarily follow Taal or Ulric, Taalite priests perform their burial rites. The rest are handled in accordance to

the rites of the Cult of Mórr. Those that are buried have their eternal-resting place marked by a gravestone. In the centre of the graveyard are the elaborate mausoleums built by wealthy Sigmarites to honour themselves and their families. These mausoleums have recently come under attack from vandals. The cult of Mórr has lodged a formal complaint to the cult of Ulric given evidence they have at hand.

### Sloskeys' Oculus

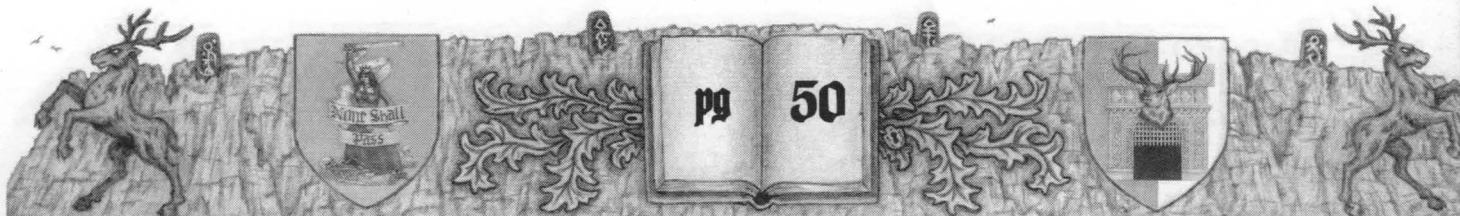
Hidden in the walls of the crater is the near-mythical Sloskeys' Oculus, occasionally known as the Prison of the Magi. Few have even heard the legends (the once popular tale of *Otto and the Prison* is rarely told now) and even Wizards pay it little credence. It is used to lock away those charged at the Wizards' Court. Located at the top of a winding path and hidden and protected by a number of natural defences, it is little more than a large chamber with six small alcoves leading off. Strong doors have been built in these and they contain no more than a straw mattress. How it is guarded is unknown, although it seems certain a high level mage attends regularly.

The location is ideal for the prison, as the magic dampening effect the crater exerts has a particularly strong influence here. Tomes locked away at the college from all but the highest ranked Wizards speak of an entrance leading from the room into the crater wall and to strange secrets within. If this actually exists or is just a story is another matter.

### Temple of Taal

The Temple of Taal is located in the northern crater area within the forest of Taalgrünhaar. The temple is circular and built of rough, unmortared stone with a conical roof. The roof is timber-framed and covered with thatch. A single, open doorway leads to the interior. A large bear skull serves as sentry to the temple. Its interior is empty save for a circular central hearth and a small shrine opposite the door. The hearth is built up from the floor and faced with deer and bear skulls and is the focus for worship. The shrine is nothing more than a cairn of stone dedicated to Rhya.

Anyone visiting the temple will usually find it empty of priests and initiates. Taalite priests and initiates do not live near the temple. They generally reside in the rural villages of the crater and a couple



actually live outside in Talagraad. However, one can find the majority of the priesthood here during Taal's holiest of days and celebrations, the Spring Equinox.

A smaller, circular temple dedicated to Barrer, a divine servant of Taal, is adjacent to the larger temple of Taal. Its construction is similar.

### Temple to Karog

Across the River Talabec from Talagraad lies the Temple to Karog, the river god. Its circular construction is similar to that of a Taa-lite temple. A wood carving of an otter above its entrance welcomes worshippers to its protective interior. The people of Talagraad who make their livelihood on the river maintain the temple. An itinerant priest of Taal stops by occasionally to attend the temple and to the needs of Karog's worshippers.

## TALAGRAAD

*"No-one lives in Talagraad - they survive."*

Every visitor to Talabheim must first pass through the town of Talagraad. Sitting on a bank of the Talabec, by a deep-water harbour, the town has grown up around the docks. Over the years it has been destroyed a number of times by both invader and disease. All in all, Talagraad is a cheap and nasty place, especially at night. The Teamsters and Stevedores control a large part of the town and there is no legislation protecting their rights here and they are not afraid to use violence. Free from many of the restrictions of Talabheim, the town has become a haven for shady business.

In fact, Talagraad has worried the authorities for some time, afraid that it could threaten Talabheim's prosperity by taking business away. Talabheim is located inside the crater and is not always the most convenient place to stay. Many travellers would rather not pay the Wizard's Way tolls or spend the extra time travelling. If Talagraad should grow too big and powerful it may affect Talabheim itself. Many steps have been taken to alleviate these fears over the years but few Talabheim laws concern Talagraad. Its dangerous reputation has grown over the years and a palpable air of edginess can be felt nearly everywhere.

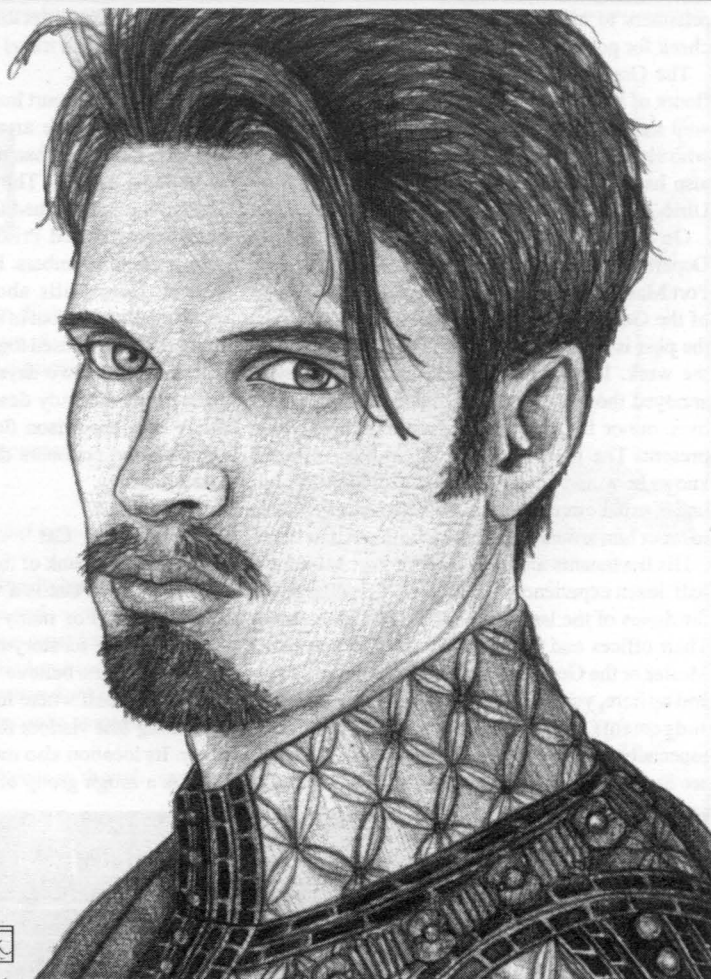
The town is surrounded by a wooden stockade, although the area near the docks has a more secure stone wall behind which the "better kind of visitor" stays. The docks are always busy with ships unloading and loading, Excisemen checking and numerous others doing their day-to-day jobs. At night the Watch has a heavy presence and the various inns and taverns spit a constant drunken stream out into the streets. Nearby stands the biggest building in town, Fort Lackey, the home of the Talagraad Governor. The more expensive inns and powerful businesses surround the residence, all sheltering within its safety. The rest of the town is

a slum, with poor housing, few amenities and a good chance of falling foul of violence and strange laws.

The people of Talagraad are generally working class, most employed, directly or indirectly, on the docks. There is a large itinerant population catered for by a variety of inns. Most others are just passing through on their way to or from the city. Young nobles often enter the town to 'slum it' for a night, escorted by bodyguards to help them get away with things that would land them in prison in Talabheim. Many have also discovered it is a good place to get your rivals murdered. There is little arguing with the fact that the town is a dangerous place. Territory is hard fought for, whether it be guild, criminal or otherwise.

Talagraad is, as would be expected, the smuggling centre of Talabheim. It is estimated that twenty-per-cent of the goods in its warehouses are illegal in some way or another. The Royal Department of Excise and Port is one of the largest and most efficient (relative to the other government departments) bodies in Talabheim. In Talagraad it takes on many of the duties of the Watch and also performs other roles to keep Talagraad functioning and the traffic moving through the city.

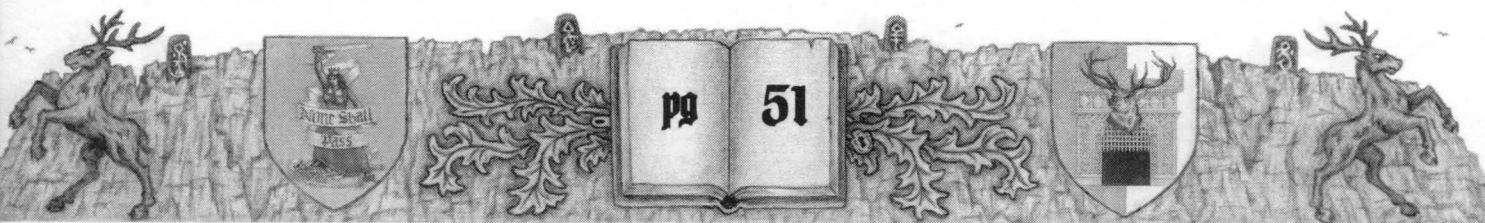
Measures have been taken to ensure Talagraad remains an unattractive place to live or stay. It is kept lawless (to a degree). Wizards are only allowed to stay for three nights before they must move into Talabheim and register. Any undesirables can be thrown into jail for vagrancy, having all their goods confiscated. The Excisemen raid regularly to ensure this rule is applied. An old law states that "gentry and educated men" may not stay in Talagraad. Hence anyone that does must be of the poorer sort and is treated as such. In reality anyone who is not a resident, boatman or dock-worker is open to attention. The occasional merchant is treated to a demonstration of this law as a reminder to all. Talagraad Prison is a fearsome place, located



beneath Fort Lackey, designed to strike fear into anyone. A heavy tax, known as "Martin's Tax", is charged on lodging, ale and food. In addition there are a host of other obscure, more archaic laws that can be brought into play at any time.

### Fort Lackey

Few remember that this is officially named Duke Gronzy's Talabec Fortress since it has been known by its nickname for years. This name comes from the belief that the governor is useless and a lapdog to the Talabheim authorities with no interest in Talagraad. There is an element of truth to this. The noble chosen as Governor is always a loyal member of the court, but one who has disgraced himself in some way. They are given the post to make amends so that they can be welcomed back to the Court. However, they are also chosen for their ability and loyalty, being made fully aware of their responsibilities. The current governor is the young Margrave Ulrich Boormann (pictured), not in the Court's good books after an affair with an unnamed countess. He is somewhat bitter as he hoped to earn an important military post. However, after being governor for a year, he has decided to make the best of it. He has also taken to "inviting" female



prisoners to his bed (after having the physician check for pox), a bonus he enjoys immensely.

The Governor lives and works on the top two floors of the fort. The departments are lavish and well staffed. He has a personal guard of forty men who also back up the Excisemen when needed. He also has the power to summon the garrison from Ulric Tor, although only in daylight.

On the bottom two floors is The Royal Department of Excise and Port. Headed by the Lord Port Master, the post is usually filled on the orders of the Governor upon his arrival. Tradition has it the post is given to someone who will do most of the work. Hektor Anfragen, a civil servant who annoyed the Margrave on a number of occasions over minor bureaucratic procedures, holds it at present. The pair hate each other, but Anfragen knows he would never have been promoted so high under usual circumstances and the Margrave gets to order him around and knows the job will be done.

His lieutenants are the Assistant Port Masters, a half dozen experienced Excisemen. They supervise the duties of the large number of their Excisemen. Their offices and records are here. The Lord Port Master or the Governor also sit in court (and if you end up here, you are guilty) judging those arrested. Judgements are erratic and generally unfair, especially the Governor's. The common Excisemen are locally known as Frater's, a nickname usually

given to charity collectors. They are hated. Most live in the city and travel back every week or so to see their families.

Steps from the court lead down into "The Deep", dungeons for those arrested in Talagraad. This prison is far worse than anything in the city itself, or perhaps even in The Empire. The temple of Shallya has approached the Peerhaus a number of times to get it closed. Prisoners are shackled to walls in long damp chambers. Food and water is thrown to each from grills above, while the waste is occasionally taken out in buckets. Men, women and children are all housed together. Dead bodies cannot be removed for two days under a law intended to ensure they are truly dead. Disease is rife, and in heavy rain, the prison floods. Seventy years ago, two hundred prisoners died during a particularly bad winter.

#### The Ten-Tailed Cat

Located on the bank of the river near Fort Lackey, The Ten-Tailed Cat is a well-known name across The Empire. For many years it has acted as a gathering place for storytellers and bards. However, many outsiders believe it is actually located in Talabheim itself where locals take great delight in informing lost visitors that they are in the wrong place. Its location also means that the tavern often attracts a rough group of individuals. It is a good

place for patrons to find adventurers or to try and discover information not readily available elsewhere.

#### Hindelin Lines

In the shadow of Fort Lackey stand the offices, private dock and inn of Hindelin Lines of Altdorf. The dock is solely for use by the boat 'The Emperor Luitpold' (AN pg 90), and is guarded by private guards. The inn Luitpold's Rest is for the use of the passengers although other travellers are welcome here. Payment is 5GCs a night and 9GC for non-passengers but food and lodging is of the finest quality. Patrons are free of the worry of the Frater's attention, although in return the company has promised to report anything underhand. This relationship has been strained recently, when it was unearthed that a shipment of Ranald's Delight had been smuggled into the city through the inn.

#### The Bald Badger

The Bald Badger is a large, sprawling roadside inn on the outskirts of Talagraad at the start of the road up the hill to Talabheim. It caters mainly to people making a stopover on long journeys who wish to avoid going all the way into Talabheim itself. It has a very large courtyard and stables that make it an ideal base for Hochland Crossing, who pay a monthly rent to make use of its facilities.



## Will Sturdy

Corrupt Official

Exciseman, ex-Boatman, ex-Smuggler, ex-Lock-keeper

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
2	32	40	2	4	5	66	1	36	20	43	28	34	47

**Race:** Halfling

**Alignment:** Neutral (Esmeralda)

**Skills:** Blather, Boat Building, Consume Alcohol, Cook, Embezzle, Evaluate, Fish, Haggle, Law, Numismatics, Orientation, Palm Object, Read/Write, River Lore, Row, Secret Languages-Thieves, Silent Move Rural, Silent Move Urban, Speak Additional Language-Kislevite, Supernumerate

**Equipment:** Exciseman Uniform, Sword, Pipe & Pipeweed, Eyepatch

**Quotes:** "Oh dear my boot slipped. Oh, look, a hole. And what is this? Bretomian Brandy. My, my, I'm shocked."

"A friend of Yurii's are you? Yes I was expecting you. Carry on through."

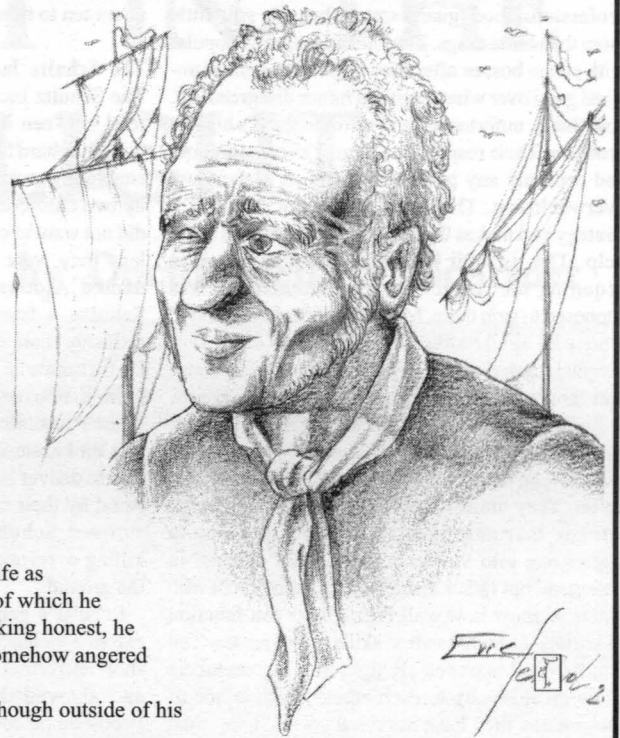
"Just past the ruins of the Old Realtor castle, slow your speed right down and keep the line or, by Karog, you'll end up on some nasty sand banks."

Once one of the most respected smugglers in both The Empire and Kislev, Sturdy (as everyone calls him) is now something of a grandfather figure to the boatmen and smugglers who ply the rivers of the northern Empire. He has settled down to a quiet life as Assistant Port Master of Talabheim, casually aiding the Vory by turning a blind eye (of which he actually has one) to the illegal transport of goods through his port. To keep things looking honest, he occasionally turns in or fines a smuggler, but these individuals are either those who somehow angered their bosses or, less regularly, independent operators.

No one is quite sure how he got the Assistant Port Master post or how he keeps it, though outside of his "friends" he is efficient at collecting excise and spotting smugglers.

Anyone offering to buy a few drinks and listen to some of his exploits will find a ready source of river lore and smuggling tips in Sturdy. He will also go to great lengths to tutor promising smugglers - be it through recruiting them into the Vory, securing contracts, or negotiating favourable repair fees from the local boat-wrights.

A Halfling with red hair (now greying), Sturdy is a distinctive figure on the docks. He's still devilishly handsome, but bowing to the inevitable creaks of advancing age - notably chronic rheumatism in his left leg and a blind left eye. Everyone is his friend and he makes time to talk to them all - to Will, there is no such thing as a hurry.



*Eric*  
1/1/02

## The Pit

Located under the floor of a warehouse on the East Side of Talagraad is a pit used to stage public fights. In many ways it is a proper old-fashioned pit with poor indentured fighters and the odd Half-Orc or occasional full-blooded specimen. Once or twice a month are amateur nights. The legendary fighter Harte, long since retired, runs the Pit. However, it is widely known that the Pit Master acts as a front for someone in Talabheim, someone with real clout. Just who, remains a mystery. Fights are well attended and The Pit has been established long enough that a fraternity of ex-fighters has grown up (The Brotherhood of the Pit).

## The Hare & Hounds

Where you find criminals you will find those who live off them. Though obviously not popular, the Warrant Execution Company likes to maintain a presence here to support its people who work in Talagraad and assist the City Watch and River Wardens. To this end the Company bought an inn in Talagraad which serves as a base of operation for their people. It still does business as a normal inn but has sleeping quarters, storage and offices for Bounty Hunters and Wardens. As the riffraff

are kept out and people think twice about robbing here, the Hare and Hounds is popular with the more well-to-do locals or those passing through Talagraad.

The widow Gratz is a thief turned merchant hired by the Company to run its inn. Gratz is actually her maiden name and the title "widow" is a bit of a local joke.

The main doors open to a drinking area full of tables and chairs with eight two foot thick oak pillars supporting the wooden-beamed ceiling. The 30 foot long bar is on the left where the barrels of beer are kept. Behind the bar, shelves of wines and spirits line the wall and doors lead to the kitchen and pantry. The fire is always burning and is built up to a large roaring mass in winter. Doors on the right lead to a snug dining room for more refined guests. Stairs from the upper rooms head down here making it easier for guests to dine without going outside.

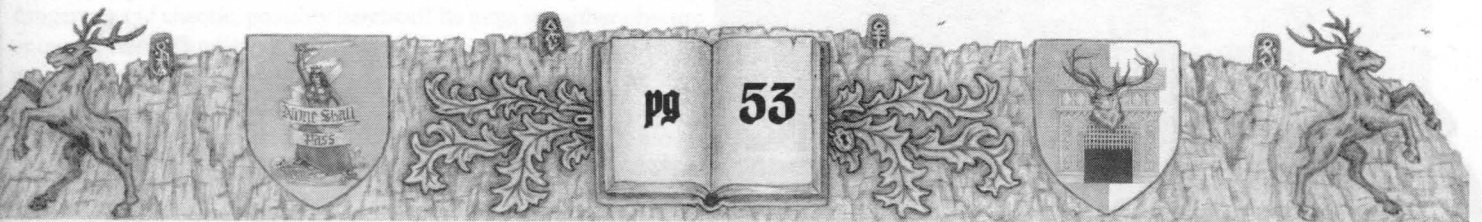
The Hare and Hounds would be a good place for the PCs to use as a base. Here, if they ask the widow nicely, they can store weapons and armour that they can not take into the city and they can eat, sleep, and drink in relative safety.

## The Brotherhood Of The Pit

"Live to Fight, Fight to Live" is the code of the Pit Fighter. But if a Pit Fighter leaves the pit there is little for him in the outside world. If they want anything they have to make it or take it themselves. It was to support fellow Pit Fighters that the Brotherhood of the Pit was created by Emmerich Sagebrecht, a Pit Master turned Mercenary Captain. Sagebrecht believed that it was disgraceful that a Mercenary got more respect and consideration from potential employers than a Pit Fighter who was probably better experienced. Pit Fighters were seen as unreliable and disloyal, which Sagebrecht felt was untrue - they had just not been given the chance to prove themselves.

His theory was that, generally, people would not accept a lone Pit Fighter as a useful employee despite their loyalty, professionalism, skills and willingness to work hard for a fair day's pay. However, if someone (who did not take a cut) negotiated for them they could be taken seriously, have their talents recognised and find employment somewhere. Unfortunately the reality has fallen a little short of the theory.

These ex-Pit Fighters, and others, hire out as



guards, bodyguards, mercenaries and enforcers for whoever can pay. They aspire to elite mercenary or professional bodyguard status, but are still little more than hired thugs. They are no longer as popular with crime bosses after they wiped out a medium-sized gang over what seemed a minor disagreement. And this is, unfortunately, the Brotherhood's biggest problem. Their response to almost every situation, and certainly any perceived threat, is instant and overwhelming. This is of course not much of a strategy and makes them extremely limited as hired help. This is their greatest stumbling block to acquiring the respect that the Brotherhood was supposed to gain them. Members of the Brotherhood tend to be hired on short-term contracts or for very simple jobs that are mostly legal, such as warehouse and caravan guards, or bouncers at rougher events.

Another problem for the Brotherhood is their inability to back down from any challenge questioning their ability, masculinity, honesty and so on. They almost never retreat from a fight, an attitude that unfortunately causes situations to degenerate into violence. This is not unusual in Talagraad but rather disturbing for Sagebrecht who wants to show how well Pit Fighters can function in society and what varied skills they possess. The Brotherhood is extremely tight-knit and members show great loyalty to each other, which is one of the reasons they have survived so far. They trust virtually no-one else and often share all they have. No one else is going to look after them so they look after themselves. The bonus for those in Talagraad is that anyone who gains the trust of the Pit Fighters through friendship, or demonstrating a sign of trust in them, will generally have it for life, so long as it is not betrayed.

Currently numbering around thirty individuals with several associates on the fringe, the Brotherhood no longer only consists of Pit Fighters since they have a soft spot for other social outcasts and misfits. Present regulars include a Dwarf weaponsmith, an ex-Templar of Ulric having a crisis of faith, a Markovite activist and an Initiate of Myrmidia as well as friends in a few local gangs and at the Talagraad pit.

Player Characters are most likely to meet members of the Brotherhood where the ex-Pit Fighters work as guards, bouncers, or bodyguards. Combat experienced PCs could join the Brotherhood and be drawn into all sorts of work related scenarios, and if a PC joins then they are expected to assist the Brotherhood in all things, no matter what their personal feelings.

The Brotherhood owns a large house and grounds that used to be an inn. It has been partially converted to allow training as well as operating as a barracks for those staying in Talagraad. There is still some brewing done on site although this is little more than a hobby for several of the Brotherhood under the watchful eye of Hargin Mundri. Only a few own horses so a large portion of the stables is unused. The cellar is well stocked though mainly with trail rations, and there is a bewildering array of weapons

and armour in storage, most acquired by members as trophies after successful bouts. There are usually about ten to twenty living here.

### The Schultz Incident

The Schultz Incident was a short but very bloody feud between the Pit Fighters and the late crime boss Burchard Schultz. Schultz ran a protection and smuggling racket in Talagraad before being gutted by two enforcers hired from the Brotherhood who did not want to carry out his orders. The man whose legs they were supposed to break (an armourer named Aldous Stronhiem) was, unknown to Schultz, a friend of the Brotherhood. Schultz foolishly threatened to get another to do the deed. Unfortunately for him, he directly tested the intimidation method of the Brotherhood and the Pit Fighter mentality of "you and whose army?" The two Pit Fighters slaughtered the henchmen he had sent to deliver his ultimatum. The other Pit Fighters stood by their comrades and under cover of night stormed Schultz's warehouse and townhouse, killing everyone before burning both buildings to the ground.

Schultz's gang was not able to deal with the extreme violence meted out by the Pit Fighters. The short and brutal war eliminated the Schultz faction and showed the other crime gangs what the Brotherhood could do if pushed. What was worse, in the eyes of the crime-lords, was that this concerned something as ridiculous as honour.

### Emmerich Sagebrecht

The founder and leader of the Brotherhood, he is a quiet and slightly brooding man with a strong sense of discipline. He is extremely loyal to the members and those few non-Pit Fighter friends he has. His honesty is beyond question and he always fulfils a promise. Sagebrecht can appear stern but is actually full of compassion for fellow comrades for whom he is determined to provide another way to earn a living. He is a natural organiser and negotiator, which is partly why the Brotherhood has come so far under his care. His genuine affection for the others helps bind the Brotherhood together.

## Goldstrades

The following is an addition to the Goldstrades district, as published last issue.

### The Temple of Sigmar



The Temple of Sigmar is, unsurprisingly, found in the Sigmarite quarter in Talabheim. It was built in 2320 IC on the foundation of the earlier temple, which was burned to the ground during the bloodshed of the Slaughter of Innocents in 1360 IC. A small plaque on the floor of the western entrance commemorates the death of St. Gottlieb the Unyielding in that year. Gottlieb single-handedly prevented the Ulrican mob from storming the temple for several hours with the

## Talabheim PCs

PCs born in the Grand Duchy of Talabheim should use the career tables as listed in the main WFRP rulebook. The background and detail of some careers will need to be looked at with reference to the Talabheim background. For example a Boatman is likely to be based in Talagraad, while a Rat-Catcher may never have seen a sewer. With the agreement of your GM, amend the Warrior table of that a roll of Seaman is amended to Noble.

### Where were they born?

Most born in the Grand Duchy will have their home in the City of Talabheim. Outside of Talagraad, it will be a rural location.

Die Roll	Place
01-80	Talabheim
81	Breitblatt
82	Gründach
83	Klarfeld
84	Sumpfrand
85-92	Talagraad
93	Vateresche
94	Waldfährte
95-96	Other location inside the Crater*
97-00	Other location outside the Crater*

\* Other locations could be a farmstead, manor house, back of a coach etc.

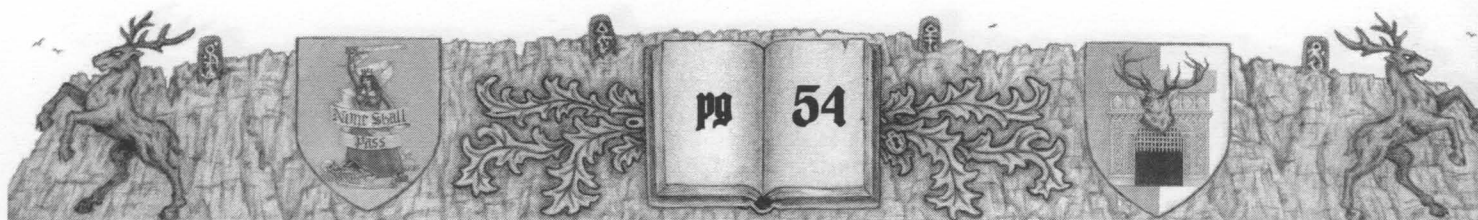
### Talabheim Names

Talabheim Names are generally Imperial but with a Kislevite influence. See *Chart of Darkness*, and *Warpstone* issue 2 and issue 6 for listings of these. They are also available on the *Warpstone* website.

famous words, "None Shall Pass." Eventually, the mob proved too large and Gottlieb fell beneath the constant blows which rained upon him. He sang praises to Sigmar as the mob ripped him to pieces.

The temple is constructed from stone imported from the Worlds Edge Mountains. Dwarf stonemasons volunteered to fashion the new temple (some say that the High King of the Dwarf Empire financed its building). The dome is inlaid with green malachite and topped with a Dwarfen warhammer symbolising Sigmar's Hammer Ghal-Maraz. To the north of the temple lies the building which doubles as the rectory of the Sigmarite priests and the barracks for the Templars of the Fiery Heart.

The centre chamber of the temple is octagonal in shape and has an altar near the Southeast wall (in the direction of the Dwarfhold of Karaz-a-Karak). Entrances are located at each of the cardinal directions. The interior walls are decorated with scenes of Sigmar battling Orcs, mutants, and the like. The northwest corridor leads to the offices of Arch Lector Aglim and the senior priests.





# A DARK ART IN THE BRIGHT LIGHT

## A Treatise upon Alchemy (Part One) by Doctor Leif U. Schrader

Sir,

*I have finished the examination of the alchemical pursuits you requested a year ago. I hope it answers many of your questions. My research has led me to understand that alchemists have much to offer The Empire. Creating gold is but one, as I believe my research will show. Like you and the Imperial Inquisition, I also wish to see any kind of heresy destroyed. However, banning alchemy is not the right way to achieve this. It offers us a way to understand the work of the gods, looking for the clues and messages they have left us – indeed, it may help us defeat Chaos.*

*Regarding the hearing on the twelfth day of Jahrdrung, I do not think it necessary to secure the palace with the help of the templars. None of the alchemists pose a threat. If you allow, I believe that the High Priestess of Verena should be present during the hearing. Possibly, she could speak of the methods for the use of alchemy that would not interfere with the authorities policy.*

*Your obedient servant  
Julius von Neustadt*

*Altdorf in the year twothousandfivehundredandfourteen since the coronation of Sigmar*

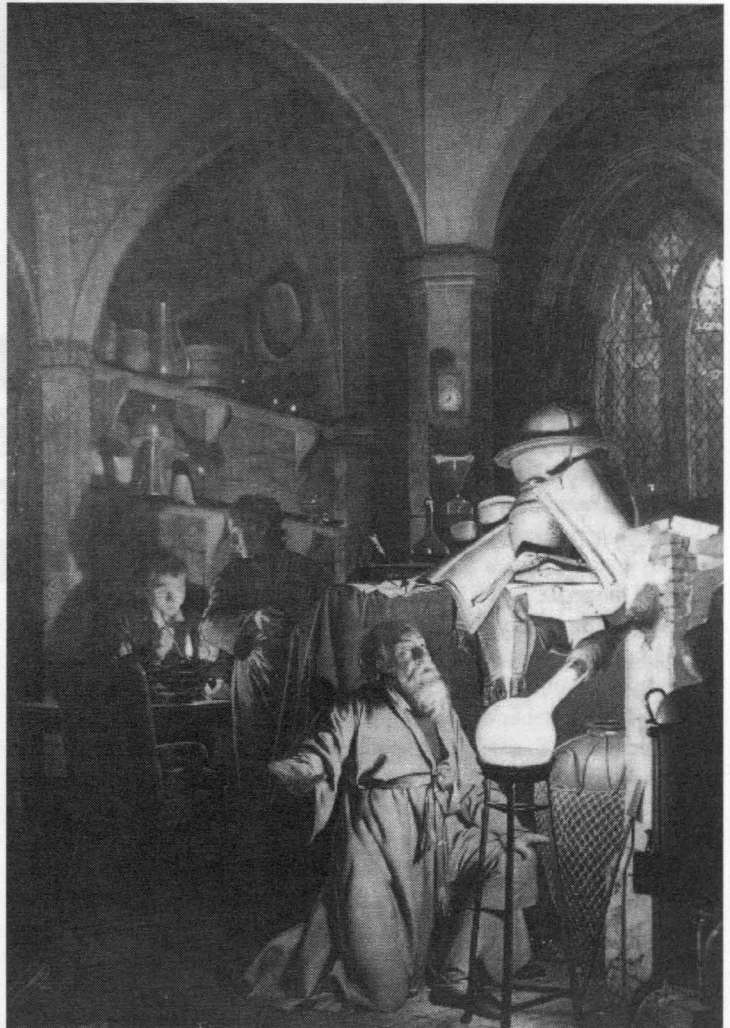
[This article is written to bring the career of an alchemist into the limelight. Compared to other professions, especially magic users, alchemists always seem to be degraded to simple manufacturers. *Realms of Sorcery* only examines alchemy briefly. This article is meant to show some of the possible background on which alchemy in the Old World is based. From experience I can say that most PCs are likely to finish the career of an alchemist as quickly as possible to become a wizard or similar. The career of an alchemist is also not very “fantastic”, whereas fantasy literature is full of wizards. I hope that I can change that opinion a little. Those parts in square brackets are explanations or modern terms.]

*If you would publish your infatuation  
Come on and try your hand at transmutation;  
If one of you has money in his fist  
Step up and make yourself an alchemist.  
Perhaps you think the trade is easy learnt?  
Well then, come on and get your fingers burnt.  
Anon*

Since the prejudice against alchemy and those practising the art (and with the reading of this treatise we must admit that it is an art) is persistent, it was felt necessary to discuss the various aspects of alchemy and its importance to our life. Although this is not the first treatise upon alchemy, most were answered with distrust or even sarcasm; most famously Edgar Kocke “It deserves not to be read in schools/But to be freighted in the ship of fools”. I hope that this humble tract escapes such scorn.

Alchemy lies somewhere between science and dark magic - certainly dangerous and chaotic, possibly heretical! Its aims are either obscure or too difficult to understand and always seem to include fire and foul gases. Practitioners are rarely seen on the open street; instead they prefer a secluded life in cellars and towers.

Alchemy is closely related to astrology since both aspire to discover



the higher knowledge of our relationship to the gods and the world. Astrology looks at the influence of the stars upon our body and soul, while alchemy deals with influences of a more terrestrial nature.

The first and most difficult question is how to define alchemy. Alchemists rarely seem to work with living things and, whereas an artist or craftsman might change the shape of the material he works with, an alchemist strives to change its very nature. The Alchemist manipulates that which cannot be seen or felt. Generations of experimentation and observation have achieved our present lofty insight.

### Origin

*"For it was not the siege tactics of Feldmarschall Schöltgen that destroyed the defences, but a few potions mixed in the wrong order by the defenders." - Lecture in military history in Nuln*

We know little of the first alchemists, but believe the dwarfs were practising alchemy long before the dawn of humankind. For them alchemy is about practicalities and the very act of creation, rather than lengthy discourse and theory.

Alchemy as an art grew with the development of humanity. We do not know where or when alchemy was first discussed theoretically but the word alchemy comes from Araby. There it is called Al-Chemie: "The Change" or "The Transmutation". Some scholars argue that the root "Chem" simply means "Art".

Most theoretical discussions centre on the question of what is the dominant element. Although of little practical use, this has a strong influence on the work of many alchemists.

Since alchemy involves the fundamental principles of the nature of the world, it has been thoroughly discussed by many philosophers. The greatest were Heraclitus, who supposedly lived in ancient Tilea, and Anaximades of Araby who ended his life in Tilea. Besides these two giants of philosophy, a number of other philosophers considered the nature of the world but much of their work is lost. Anaximades stated the whole world is stable and firm while Heraclitus argued it is in constant change like a burning flame. Both opinions have advantages and their defenders.

Alchemy, in some form, has been practised in The Empire since before the coming of Sigmar. Crude in the beginning, it developed eventually into a true science. During the reign of Magnus the Pious alchemy was taught at the great universities for the first time. It lost much of its associations with witchcraft during this period, but a general stigma, especially among the lower classes, remains.

### Elements

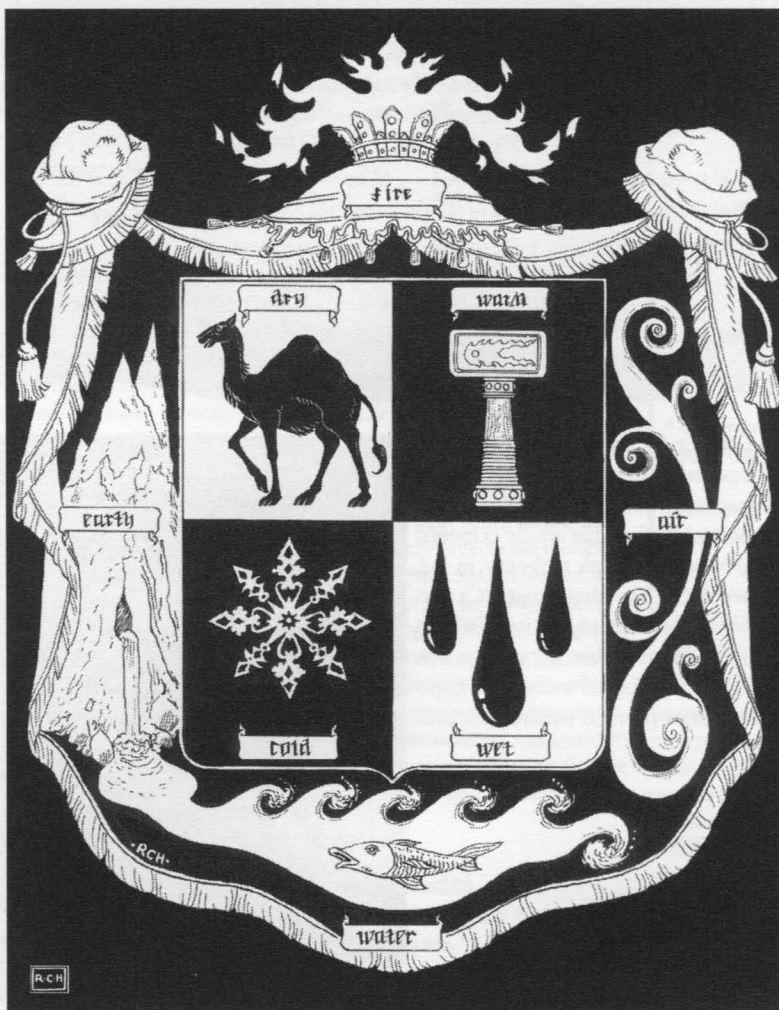
All materials and living things are composed of four elements: fire, water, air and earth. The nature of a substance is determined by its dominant element(s). Even when dominated by one element a material also contains the others. Fire contains water, hence the smoke, as well as air and earth - the air is rising up out of the fire and the earth can be seen in the ash that remains. Water contains air; steam appears when the water is boiled; fire, since we can warm water and extend the influence of fire in water; and earth, for particles remain when you dry water. Air contains fire, seen in the hot winds that blow over the Southlands deserts; it also contains water, easily recognised in steam or clouds; as well as earth, which we see when water washes air with rain. Earth contains fire, since it is warm in the mines; as well as

water, seen when you dig a hole in the ground; also fire, the best example being coal, which continues to burn even if no other source of fire is introduced. Or, more poetically: "The father of this matter is the sun (fire), the mother of this matter is the Mannslieb (water). The wind brought it into its belly. The nourisher and milk-giver of this matter is the earth. And this matter is the father of all perfection of this world."

To wholly understand the most general premises on which alchemy is based we must go back to a philosophical question. Alchemy says everything exists in either of two forms. First the reality. A stone is a stone is a stone. When we open our eyes and see the sun and the moon and the stars and the crops in the field, we always see the reality. From that we must distinguish the possibility. A stone is a stone, but it also contains the possibility of a statue. The possibilities can only be seen when we close our eyes. It is often called imagination. Everything is just the

transformation of a possibility into a reality. As an unnamed Arabyan philosopher once said: "As long as the wine is in the bottle, drunkenness exists only as a possibility". The transformation from water into steam would not be possible, if the water did not contain the air (steam) as a possibility.

The task of an alchemist is to provoke the possibility in reality. Since each substance contains all the elements, it is possible to provoke one or more of them and therefore change the whole process, often called transmutation. Although literally correct, some draw the conclusion that such a process is linked with the dread god Tzeentch, called the Great Mutator and Changer of the Ways. Nothing could be more wrong. From the little information we have, Tzeentch can only manipulate existing things. It cannot create something anew and all of its creations are without soul and mind, mere parodies. A number



of alchemists have published texts on the relationship between the god and alchemy and these have been proscribed.

The second premise is that an original material must have existed at the dawn of time. This must have contained all possibilities, without form, taste, smell, colour or nature. It is generally called the Prime Substance or Native Element. Over time this material has transformed into all the things we see, every object and creature. Although the Prime Substance potentiates everything as a possibility this must not be confused with the Fifth Element, which we come to later.

Since all materials contain all elements, alchemy is able to convert one material into another simply by exciting one element or restraining another. There are, at least theoretically, pure elements. These materials are supposed to contain the special powers necessary to create the Fifth Element. Alchemists have tried to distil these pure forms from common material but these attempts have been futile.

Every element represents certain characteristics and scholars argue that one or more elements dominate human beings, even to the extent of determining one's personality. The different elements and their characteristics are given below.

The most important characteristic of an element is its nature. As we can see in the table, two elements share each nature. The elements and their nature can be brought together to show their harmony (see illustration right).

**Quintessence**

*Ah, no, let be! For the Philosopher's Stone,  
Called the Elixir, never can be known.  
We seek and seek, and were it once discovered  
We should be safe enough - expenses covered.  
But there's no way; whatever path we trod  
The search was useless and I swear to god,  
For all our cunning, when all's tried and done  
That stone won't yield itself to anyone.  
It's made us squander all we ever had,  
Losses enough to drive us nearly mad  
But for the hope that crept about our heart  
Always supposing, when we felt smart.  
It would relieve us of our sad condition;  
Sharp was the hope and hard the supposition.*

For centuries alchemists have searched for the Quintessence, also called the Philosopher's Stone. However, strictly speaking the two are not identical. The Quintessence is, as the name already implies, the Fifth Element - the purest substance.

Pure elements contain powers necessary to create the Fifth Element - said to bring the other four into harmony. Since it contains all other elements in their purest form it contains the possibility of all other materials and substances. However Quintessence is not sought for this. Instead it can purify any substance - and since gold is the purest metal, the Quintessence is able to turn any metal into gold. Perhaps it can also purify the soul itself and by doing so, extend life to an almost endless degree, healing any disease.

The Quintessence is the compound of four perfect elements and the ultimate goal of alchemy. The Philosopher's Stone is the masterpiece

of alchemy, the idea of transmutation itself - turning the impure into pure, foul into fair and lowest into highest.

The Quintessence needs a further process, before it becomes the Philosopher's Stone. Although almost pure, the Quintessence needs a seed planted into it that can make a theoretical possibility a real possibility. This seed is a single grain of pure gold. Only then is the universal elixir created, that which the alchemists in Cathay call the "Secret of the Golden Bloom of the Highest One" (T'ai-I Kinn Hoa-Tscheu). The secret of this transmutation is said to be represented in the development of sentient beings from the lustful child to the thinking person, to the wise man. Every Human is said to wear a mask in their life: the mask of the beggar or that of the king. The Philosopher's Stone completes the person by lifting the mask and revealing the true being.

The oldest known source for the Philosopher's Stone is the Tabula Mercuria, attributed to Heraclitus. Unfortunately this vanished long ago and the little information we have is second-hand.

Perhaps the most important known passage reads:  
"And as everything was created from one, everything is dominated by one. This is the father of perfection of the world. Thou shalt divert the earth from the fire, the fine from the coarse, very lovely with reason. It rises from the earth to the sky and back to the earth and receives the strength of the above and the below. If thou have done this, thou shall have the splendour of the world and all darkness shall give way. Of all power this is the strongest. If a disease takes one year to heal, it heals it in one day. Lost limbs start to regenerate. Solves the grains of the lungs and takes poison away from the heart. If you carry the stone, no beast will do you any harm. To carry it as a necklace makes you invisible and sewn into your clothes allows you to fly like a bird."

Arnald of Villanova wrote that the Stone turned earthly matter into spiritual substance. These substances make other substances neutral, meaning it is in a state which can turn them into all possibilities without any work.

Salt, Sulphur and Mercury, representing the body, the mind and the soul, seem to be necessary to purify the Quintessence. The process is done in an instrument called the Philosopher's Egg. Unfortunately we have no knowledge of what this egg may look like, although authorities refer to it frequently. The Quintessence has to pass six stages before it becomes the Stone. This first is the matrimonium corporale (marriage of the body) in which the elements are mixed together. The second is the solutio (solving) in which the elements are dissolved. Next is the calefacio (warming) in which the mixture is heated. Next is the hibernation (cooling) in which it is cooled followed by the separatio (separation) where the elements are divided. Last is the matrimonii coelesti (the heavenly marriage) in which the elements are again put together. The lapis is the final step, in which a small amount of gold is added as a seed.

Although this description is detailed we have no records on the required amounts and their proportions, nor the correct instruments or temperatures.

The Quintessence and the Philosopher's Stone share many characteristics - are both without colour, odour, taste or weight. The Quintessence is said to be fluid, while the Philosopher's Stone is

Element	Nature	Fluid	Colour	Taste	Smell	Age	Mood	Season	Sex
Fire	warm*-dry	Gall	Red	Bitter	Hot	Adolescence	Choleric	Summer	Male
Air	warm-moist*	Blood	Yellow	Sweet	Fragrant	Childhood	Sanguine	Spring	Male
Water	cold*-moist	Slime	White	Tasteless	Weak	Manhood	Phlegmatic	Autumn	Female
Earth	cold-dry*	Black Gall	Black	Sour	Stink	Old Age	Melancholic	Winter	Female

\*this nature is predominant

♄ Saturne Lead	♄ ♄ ♄ ♄ ♄ ♄ ♄ ♄ ♄
♃ Jupiter Tinnc	♃ ♃ ♃ ♃ ♃ ♃ ♃ ♃ ♃
♂ Mars Iron	♂ → → ♂ → → ♂ → →
☉ Sol Gould	☉ ☉ ☉ ☉ ☉ ☉ ☉ ☉ ☉
♀ Venus Copper	♀ ♀ ♀ ♀ ♀ ♀ ♀ ♀ ♀
☿ Mercury Quicksilver	☿ ☿ ☿ ☿ ☿ ☿ ☿ ☿ ☿
☾ Luna Silver	☾ ☾ ☾ ☾ ☾ ☾ ☾ ☾ ☾
Acetum	✕ ✕ ✕
Acetū distillat	✕ ✕ ✕
Es	☿
Er	♄
Alchimicus	♄ ♄ ♄
Alimen	♄ ♄ ♄
Amaluma	♄ ♄ ♄
Aunus	♄
Antirionis	♄
Aqua	☿
Aqua Fortis	♄
Aqua Regis	♄
Aqua Vita	☿
Arena	☿ ☿ ☿
Arsenicum	♄
Arsmentū	♄
Aurochabū	♄
Aurum	♄
Luna	☾
Labrum	☿
...	☿

without body. A number of Alchemists have claimed to have created one of these, yet these claims have proved fraudulent.

The most spectacular discovery thus far has been aqua vitae, or alcohol as it is known today. The only more or less reliable information on the creation of the stone comes from age-old tomes, but no record is younger than three hundred years.

Some alchemists say that the secret of the Philosopher's Stone was revealed to the first man by a hooded figure who whispered: "You can become a god, if you want." The few that followed this doctrine and spread it further were rightfully executed by the Inquisition. I mention it only out of academic interest. Another characteristic of alchemical lore that has attracted attention is the belief that the Stone can cleanse Chaos itself.

It is clear that the Stone seems to be similar to the substance we generally know as Warpstone or Wyrdstone. What other than Warpstone has the power to change and mutate something? This fact has led many to believe that Warpstone is in fact the Philosopher's Stone and that alchemists do nothing else but plot against humanity. Although some may work with Warpstone to reveal its secret, it has nothing to do with the Philosopher's Stone. The two may be brothers, but they are very different. The Philosopher's Stone is able to change things, which is also a characteristic of Warpstone, but Warpstone does not change one element into another, instead it twists the nature of a substance. It cannot create something new. The two are opposites - the Philosopher's Stone is the fair and wise, whereas Warpstone is the chaotic and twisted.

Despite this, as you know, this is an area which many Alchemists fall into and indeed, the reason for the recent hearings. A number of outlawed alchemists have used Warpstone in their work, perhaps as an easier but impure part to transmutation. This only serves to confuse observers of the nature of Alchemists. We have Necromancers and Demonologists but yet there are wizards loyal to the Emperor. The same is true of Alchemists.

### Homunculus

"A cat's eye, lizard's blood, the fingers of three children and a frog..." - the last words, before the Inquisition came in.

The homunculus, the artificial human, is another secret masterpiece of alchemy. It must be possible to create human beings, since we too are composed of elements. Since this Human is created artificially it can be made in any form and with any characteristic the Alchemist wishes. However, it is impossible to create a super-being, for all forms have their limitations.

The evidence that homunculi must be possible can be found beneath gallows. When a convict is executed on these his semen drops to the ground. Later we can find what herbalists call mandrake and we also call allraune; small caricatures of human beings with legs, arms and heads. As the earth never

contains salt, mercury and sulphur in the correct proportions, and the convicts excreting the semen are dead, it cannot grow and gain life, but dies directly after its creation.

A Homunculus requires sulphur (mind), mercury (soul) and salt (body). This gives it form and everything necessary to receive the seed of life. The seed of life is nothing but semen that also plants life into the body of a woman. This practice was rightfully abandoned with the help of the Inquisition and only a few renegades try to create the Homunculus today. However, there is evidence that Necromancers have taken up the idea. In contrast to alchemy, necromancy uses powerful and foul magic to create living beings. But due to their necessarily warped minds, necromancers can only create caricatures of sentient beings, those having no life, only un-life.

### Metals and Metallurgy

We know that metals strive towards perfection and purity. Therefore it is necessary to classify the different metals in order to determine which are perfect and which are not.

Gold is a perfect body and the most perfect substance that we have. It wants nothing and only perfection is satisfied with itself. The second metal is silver. It wants nothing other than a little fixation. Steel is clean in its body but imperfect, since it is red inside. It wants sulphur, since it turns red when left alone. Lead is unclean and imperfect; it is weak and wants purification, fixation and firing. Likewise copper; it is impure; too dominated by earth. Iron is the young brother of steel, but yet very different, It wants sulphur in the same way as steel.

What every blacksmith and alchemist does is to purify metal until he produces a better metal and possibly gold. Metals are solidified forms of gases found in the earth. Metal is the best example of alchemy. When a smith puts copper and tin together, he creates bronze. Although not an element in its own right, it clearly shows the work of the alchemist. Once a new insight has been found, it is relatively easy to copy and work from.

Weapons in the past were made of simple and weak metals, mostly copper or bronze. Over the ages alchemists, although they hardly called themselves such, developed methods to change these weaker metals into stronger forms. They created the long lasting and strong metals that help to defend our beloved Empire today.

Real gold must be distinguished from what some call alchemical gold. This looks similar but is lighter. Minting gold crowns from this inferior metal, also called cat's gold, without a special license, is counterfeiting. These crowns are often used as payment for troops and mercenaries. It is generally not accepted outside The Empire. Although other kingdoms follow the same practice, Marienburg has issued a strict ban on these gold crowns.

Mercury on the other hand is the strangest metal, the only liquid metal that we know. Often called

wise metal, some say that Verena has blessed it. The counterpart of mercury is sulphur, the burning metal. These two are said to be the mind (sulphur) and the soul (mercury) in fixed form. They need salt, the body, as a container.

Many alchemists work closely with prospectors and miners. Almost any large mine is first inspected by an alchemist who determines the degree of purity in the metal. To do so, the alchemist uses a number of acids. Aqua Fortis is the most important, for this acid has the characteristic to divide gold from all other metals, since only gold can withstand it. The kind of metal also can be determined by the trained Alchemist from the colour of the foam that develops upon application.

**Magical Ingredients**

The wizards and their colleges have an almost endless demand for magical ingredients. This need is to a great degree fulfilled by alchemists. Although "high" alchemy is a magical profession, they continue to be seen as lesser brothers.

Almost any college for wizardry has a faculty dealing with alchemy. These are also the places where most of the research in the wide field of alchemy is done. When new spells are created Alchemists are often present to help with ingredients.

**Other products and results**

The aforementioned are just the most basic and important tasks of alchemy. Besides these an almost endless number of other fields of knowledge that are influenced by alchemists. Many work in the field of pharmacy, something that has led to disputes with pharmacy guilds. Although few alchemists work directly in medicine, some have - often by chance - discovered new means to cure afflictions. Another evolving field is the treatment of those we would categorise as evil. Everyone, except those blessed by the gods, contains evil to a certain degree and has the ability to inflict it. Nevertheless, few are actually thoroughly evil. Since every element is associated with a certain temperament it is possible to change the temper of a person by changing the proportions of the elements within the body. For example, a melancholic person can be helped by the ingestion of air. The same is, at least theoretically, possible in the treatment of lunatic and evil persons. Through treatment the elements can be brought into more harmonious proportions.

Another side effect of experiments is the development of certain drugs and elixirs that may temporarily change a person's nature. Some can cause hallucinations while others calm or excite, or even make a man more potent. It should be noted that many charlatans can be found in this area as seen in the markets throughout The Empire.

Alchemists often manufacture gunpowder and combustibles. They are often the only people to have laboratories with the appropriate equipment - and the appropriate thickness of the walls to withstand

an explosion. Alchemists who work with prospectors in the search for minerals often make combustibles as a by-product. Most combustibles have little to do with fireworks since they explode too slowly. However, these can have devastating effects upon rock and fortifications. Of course, alchemists earning their living in this field are required to do so under the direct licence of the local ruler, or the Emperor himself, and are often required to swear an oath of silence. The most famous centre for such manufacturing is NuIn's School of Engineering.

A significant development of recent times comes with alchemists being employed by the dyers guilds to create new colours. Again such recipes are considered secret and it is not unknown for a rival guild from another city to try and steal the formula or even the alchemist. The manufacture of soaps is no less secretive and has provided fame, or at least fortune for more than one Alchemist. Although not true alchemy, many are thankful to work in such a field.

You may have heard of the new discovery made just a few months ago at the Gold College in Altdorf. We do not know what to make of it, and sadly I do not have full access, but it seems that there are quite a number of possibilities for its use. Claus Hofstall an alchemist I know to be working on metals, seemingly without reason, began to rapidly turn a glass globe that was pressed against fur. When he touched the globe he found himself in the corner of the room. Unaware of what happened, scholars immediately argued that it was possible to transport matter from one point to another. Since Hofstall's hands were severely burnt, the university council has prohibited any further experiments until the theoretical principle is understood.

**Astrology**

Alchemy is closely related to astrology, as often summed up in the phrase: As above, so below. Everything in the stars has its parallel in our world. Everything follows the same harmonious rules. Many alchemists try to find the secret of the Quintessence in the stars, since they believe that the stars contain the Universal Spirit. The Universal Spirit not only makes the stars move in an ordered system, but is also the creator of the Primal Substance and therefore the Quintessence's secret.

Astrology is also one of the oldest sciences, with most of the secrets of the stars considered to be by now revealed. The biggest secret that remains is Morrslieb, the Chaos Moon, and its movement across the sky. While astrology and alchemy are closely related to each other, the disciplines have become divided. Some alchemists, especially in the less enlightened parts of the world, perform certain experiments only on specific dates or when the stars are in a special alignment. However, experience shows us that this has no influence on an experiment's outcome.

*To be continued...*

Balneu Martis	MB
Balneu Vajoris	V
Bena	bn
Borax	W
Calimare	c
Calx	U E T
Calx viva	U T O
Calx adrum	U
Caput mortis	U
Canthare	U
Cera	U
Christallum	U
Cinis	E C
Cineres clavellati	U
Cinabar	U
Coagular	U
Cochobato	U
Crocus Martis	U
Crocus Vermis	U
E. vitum	U
Crucibulum	U
Cucurbitum	U
Dies	U
Digere	U
Diluvare	U
Distillar	U
Filturc	U
Emus Equi	U
Ferum	U
Flegma	U
Ficra	U
Gumma	U
Hora	U
Jems	U
Jynis rota	U
Lapis calaminaris	U
Lapis	U
Lutare	U
Lutum Symplicium	U
Magnas	U
Marchsite	U
Materia	U
Matrimonium	U

# TREASURE HUNT

A Short Story by François Dubé based on "Death's Dark Shadow"

Blood on my face. Blood on my arms. Red blood. Dark blood. A disgusting mixture of everything and the stinking smell of roasted meat.

'Next time we will find a real Daemonologist!'

My face darkened. I bit my lip then I turned around and shouted.

'This stupid Alchemist almost got us killed, and you say...!'

The captain raised his hand and I stopped. He was right. Next time we will use a real Daemonologist. Obviously the Alchemist did not prepare the pentagram correctly. He probably did not chant the beast's name properly. He had been shaking like a leaf in a storm. He could not control himself. How could he ever have controlled the Hunter?

I looked around. Half of the Alchemist's body was nothing more than a ball of meat and bones splashed against a cave wall. The second half, still recognisably human, lay in its own blood in the centre of an ill-prepared pentagram, a few feet away from an old black book. Nothing more than another body we will have to bury with the others, I thought.

We knew the beast was powerful but not so deadly. We imagined it to be a well-trained dog or something like a forester with a bow and hat. The captain was wiser. He'd said with a powerful voice, his sword and sword-breaker in his hands: 'Be ready for anything.'

The beast had been bigger than a horse, with reptilian wings, scorpion tail and the body of a mutated wolf. The kind of beast mercenaries would talk about in the tavern and with words no one would believe. Its loud bark caused terror among the troops. Its heavy scales were hard to penetrate even with our Dwarf steel. In less than a minute, the beast killed four men and would have killed every one of us if it had not begun to flicker before vanishing in a cloud of smoke and thunder.

I looked at the cave and at the river a few hundred feet below. The cave was dark. The river was quiet. The Hunter's last bark could still be heard in this underground marvel linking The Empire and the peninsula of Tilea. That's why they call it 'the River of Echoes', I thought. The Captain was near me, ready to strike if anything appeared from nowhere. He was tall, strong and proud. His voice was powerful. His eyes were terrible, giving the strange feeling of seeing more than everybody else could see. His dark cape hid a complete suit of Dwarf chainmail and his sword was well crafted, like everything he

owned. He was a mercenary captain, sometimes seen as an outlaw, sometimes as a hero. We were his personal army. Now we were working for ourselves. A part-time quest we had shared for more than five years.

The captain walked among the bodies, then stopped and removed something from the reddish mess that once was our surgeon. It was a white object, less than a foot long, like ivory,

like the claw of a giant lion.

'Our friend left us something', he said, throwing the object to me.

'A claw!'

'Probably worth a fortune for a priest of the Forbidden Ones.'

I agreed, then asked, 'You still want to summon the Hunter again?'

'The pet wants a worthy master,' he stopped



then added, 'and a soul or two.'

'Great.'

Dealing with Daemons was already more than dangerous when you only had to send them back to their damned kingdom. To control a Daemon without losing your soul was almost hopeless. Yet, we needed the Hunter. Finding a Daemonologist, one of those doomed wizards who dares walk in the path of dark magic for power or blood thirst, seemed to be the only way.

'Where will we find a Daemonologist? Those bastards are experts in hiding. Knights and priests and witch hunters, you name it, are running after them and still they hardly find one. Except when they want to be found. Besides, only fools trust these Chaos lovers.'

'I know one.'

'You know one! How can you...'

'I know one.' He repeated. 'One that can help us find another.'

I noticed the hate in his words. I argued no more. Of course nobody would tell how he came to know a Daemonologist. Knowing one and not telling the witch hunters was a crime in itself and the kind of thing the captain and I would surely never do. On the other hand, adventuring with occult tools and books was also enough to be burnt without any inquiry and yet, we were doing that too. 'That's the only way', hissed the captain when I questioned this whole idea.



The captain had come to me one day in Miragliano with a prayer book.

'You came to say your prayers Roderick?'

'I came to see a priest.'

'Do I look like a priest?'

Black leather jerkin, throwing knives, soft black boots, many pouches and a few well adjusted belts, I looked more like a thief or some kind of mercenary than a holy man. Yet I was a priest - a priest of Ranald, the god of thieves. I hate the kind of god who asks you to dress like a monk, never kiss a girl and spend your youth on your knees and your nights studying. I prefer mine, who allows a beer and a girl after a difficult theft. I prefer my god, who asks me to be a thief first and a priest second, not the 'if you can't do it, teach it' kind of priest.

'People say that you are a priest.'

'Well, people talk too much about things they don't know.' I stopped, then added. 'What's the matter anyway?'

'I want you to translate this book for me.'

He handed me the book; a prayer book, an old one. I read a few words, turned the pages. Then I shut it sharply.

'It's a prayer book to Verena.' I spat. 'There is nothing I can do for you.'

'It's the prayer book of Ostello Veridad, the personal priest of Gaetano Carnera.'

I looked at the book a second time with more interest. Carnera was a notorious 21st-century outlaw. The legend said he was buried with all his wealth and magical weapons in a secret place. He was buried in 'death's dark shadow' said the legend, for whatever it meant.

'It's a fake.' I said. 'It's an old prayer book, probably authentic, but Veridad's book would be made of gold and gems not of silver and ivory.'

'Probably,' he said. 'Translate it for me anyway. I will pay in gold and gems.'

He paused then asked,

'By the way, how do you know my name?'

'There are not a lot of Marienburgers in a City like Miragliano. Most of them come while trading, but never stay long. The only thing I like about them is that they are rich.'

'I'm not rich.'

'But you're a good soldier and you know how to read.'

'So?'

'You'll be rich one day.'

'Or I'll be dead.'



The captain's face was quiet. Already he had given orders to bury the bodies, find the men who fled and be ready to move out in one hour. His face was covered with scars and there were more under his armour. He was a good captain. In some

ways he was a thief like me but on the other hand I'd seen him give money to the poor and protect mountain settlements that hardly had little more to pay than a bottle of wine or beer. It was exactly like Carnera centuries ago.

'Muammar the Mad sure had good reasons to fear such a beast. If it is as good in finding graves as it is in killing people we've got quite a dog.'

The captain was still on his guard as he moved to collect the black summoning books and weird twisted things left by the alchemist. He'd learned in his life to never trust anything.

'Many wards against this Hunter were written. I trust my spells for the proper pronunciation of the name. Magic never fails - only Humans do.' I paused then continued. 'It was a good thing we brought more than one rocky tablet since the spell consumes the material where the scripts are written. Too bad for the museums.'

The captain feigned not to hear and walked toward the bodies of the mercenaries, a brief moment of sadness in his eyes. I shared his pain. We all knew it was not going to be easy. Nothing worthy comes easily. It was a treasure hunt. Our treasure hunt. Gaetano Carnera was an outlaw. A thief. A bastard. The kind of man every merchant would cursed and feared. When he

hit a caravan, the muleskinners were left with the minimal equipment to survive. Everything else he took and gave to the poor. He was a thief but he was more than that. We wanted to be more than thieves.

'So we need a Daemonologist. That, I understand.' I said walking to his side. 'A real Daemonologist might control the Hunter, but who will control the Daemonologist?'

He smiled.

'I'll do the talking. You will cover me.'



The Captain had been in Miragliano to hire mercenaries, although he was not yet a Captain. He was an ex-sergeant, serving on trading ships, protecting the expensive goods of Marienburg's richest families.

He was educated but poor. His parents died and he was raised at the Orphanage of St. Rutha in Marienburg's Suddock district. He survived, became a marine, a mercenary of the sea. He'd fought against pirates a few times, so I'd heard. I had my doubts at the time; you don't fight pirates a few times; you either escape or die. He'd quit. Too many orders to listen to. Too many polite words to be said. And there was a thing about transporting goods for Sigmar's church. For Ranald knew why, Roderick hated the established rulers of the cities and estates we travelled across. 'They're all corrupt' he said. He decided to go it alone, work for what he considered important.

Finding good mercenaries in Miragliano was never easy. They needed to be strong warriors ready to do just about anything for money and at the same time be loyal to the group and captain. Usually, people came to Miragliano to hire marksmen. Roderick was looking for something else. I watched him one day, walking in markets and crowded streets, stopping in taverns. He never saw me. He needed me. After a while I walked to him.

'My translation is finished.'

'Have you found anything worthwhile?'

'You asked me to translate, not to think, captain.'

He smiled, then threw me a purse with gems and gold. He took the original prayer book and transcript and sat at the table of an outside coffee house and began to read.

I followed him without a word and sat on a bench nearby.

'You won't learn a lot about where the tomb is located in this book.'

He continued to read as if he hadn't not heard.

'You might learn a few things about the potential guardians you'll meet if you ever get there, though. You know, ethereal things, spirits of bodyguards who gave their soul to protect the eternal sleep of their master.' I paused and continued. 'You might even find some elemental

or magical protections like the ones you find in Arabyan tombs.'

He looked at me, interested.

'You know about Arabyan tombs?'

'Well there was a meeting of scholars a few months ago in the city. Some had been to Arabyan cities and studied burial rituals and cultural stuff. Interesting discussions.'

'I heard a bracelet vanished during that meeting: a millennium old gold bracelet with snakes on it and a mysterious aura of magic.'

'I heard that too.'

'But you don't know what happened to the bracelet.'

'No, of course.'

'Some said it was the perfect crime.'

'Well people talk too much about things they don't know anything about.'

A beautiful woman brought us a bottle of good wine. The Captain looked at the bottle. I looked at her. He spent a few minutes appreciating the wine: its colour, smell, taste, probably its price in Marienburg. Eventually, casually, he asked me.

'You know that there is a scholar named Mortimo Pabo. He is preparing a search party to find the tomb of Muammar the Mad, a great priest of Araby, who lived more than sixteen hundred years ago and died in the mountains between Tilea and The Empire.'

'I heard that Pabo is looking for a mercenary captain.'

'He was. He found one recently.'

I smiled. Roderick smiled back.

'Such an expedition would surely provide useful information about Carnera's tomb. They did not live in the same years but they might share a few similarities.' I said with a sly smile. 'I once heard of a general who sent his army to capture a city. He had never seen the battlefield before, nor cared that he had not. He greatly outnumbered the enemy and believed he could not lose. The battle was lost. As he looked over the dead and dying he understood what a fool he was. The battlefield was all mud and marshes. Thousands died.'

'Which means?'

'The best way to survive in front of overwhelming odds is to understand them first. Get as much information as you can and then you can win.'

'I'll remember that one.' Said the captain. 'Especially now that we know that Verena's prayer books are worthless.'

'Yes of course. There is little to learn in these books. You know it's all poetry and nice words. These priests of Verena were very theatrical in their rituals, you know. The text had to rhyme and be gentle on the ears. For instance, there is an interesting part telling :

'O Verena, greatest Goddess, Protect my rest,  
May no living ever find my grave,  
May no Daemon ever come in and break my sleep'

The captain smiled.

'Well the translation does not rhyme but the original did...'

Roderick drank more wine and finally asked:

'Would the mercenary life be of any interest to you?'



'We were under the Vaults a few miles away from Miragliano and now we are in Marienburg. Could you have not known any Daemonologist closer?'

The captain did not answer.

'I know we earned some money trading and escorting but...'

'Why are you in such a hurry? What else do you have to do that is so important?'

I kept quiet for a while. The captain continued to walk like a rich merchant at home, though his eyes were looking steadily around. The place was odd. The free city of Marienburg was pretty much like any city in The Empire for a Tilean mercenary like me. But this island, this part of Marienburg, was quite unique. Cows walked freely, entertainers played with snakes, people with long robes and jewels in the nose walked in the street, strange music was in the air, beautiful women with dark skin and eyes gave inviting glances. They called it 'Indierswijk': a ghetto of traders and diplomats from the Far East. A place where you can trade spice for gold. Some illegal stuff too.

'They all are Daemonologists to me.' I said. 'I would not be surprised to see that bunch kneeling in front of a four legged god with six arms!'

'Your god did not teach you to respect others or how to shut-up?', the captain said, again smiling.

'Well, I guess he forgot.'

We walked silently for a while, then I asked.

'You said she was an illusionist who became a priestess of some exotic version of the Blood God.' I paused then asked, 'Why did she not become a priestess of Slaanesh?'

'You tell me,' said the captain with the serious, teasing voice I came to know pretty well, 'You are the theologian.'

I think he liked me. His life was mostly too serious and my complaints and questions were like a warm breeze on his face.

'Well having some knowledge of theology does not make me understand everything, especially not the logic behind Chaos.'

'Then use your imagination,' the captain replied. 'Perhaps she got tired of illusory blood and wanted to see it for real!'

It made sense, but then everything weird made sense when dealing with Chaos. Killing a complete village to have more skulls at the feet of an idol had some sense. Killing your own brother too. I spat and felt suddenly dizzy. I needed a bottle of good wine, the body of a

voluptuous lady and to be miles away from this city, with too much gold for only two hands. Around me the world went on. Life went on. Trading went on. I remembered my youth in Miragliano, the death of my parents. I spat. My uncle trained me as a thief for the love of gold. I became a thief for the art, the challenge; to be more than I was. Stealing became my life and then my god.

I feared my uncle. He had been a drunken bastard but knew how to hit where it hurt. When I wanted to be away from his never-satisfied greed, I hid in a place where I knew he would never come: the Great Library of Miragliano. I spent my early youth escaping from scholars and librarians until one decided that what I wanted was to learn how to read. One became my teacher and my second family. I learned to read and read all I could. I even ventured to the forbidden shelves. Avoiding the scholars, monks and priests, studying with great devotion books filled with naked priestesses was not a big deal. I had seen better guardians. I learned to sense and avoid magical alarms. I read books on magic and forbidden studies describing Chaos creatures and how to destroy them. My teacher was not a fool. He knew what I was doing.

One day while I was borrowing *The Forbidden Lords - Tome IV*, he came and stood by me and said: 'You did not complete the third my son. It says the more you come into contact with Chaos the higher the risk of being corrupted and losing your soul.'

He raised his hand and I saw a glow of light in it. I thought I would be turned into a frog but nothing happened. Instead, he said, smiling: 'Your mind is strong Emilio but will you be able to refuse power when it is offered to you?'

I said yes without hesitation. I only wanted to be far away from my uncle. I did not want his death or to control the world. On this day, we changed reading lessons for a different type of learning. He was a priest of Ranald of course. His hobby was to find necromancers and Chaos worshippers and steal their books and artefacts without a single drop of blood being spilled.

'Ranald values life even more than many "good" gods', he said. 'Even the life of the lost ones has a high value for him. This doesn't mean we can't steal what they value the most. Besides, without their dark precious scrolls, skulls and relics they are less dangerous.' He died a few years later, as did my uncle.

We walked in silence for many more minutes, dressed as merchants with eight men carrying seemingly heavy trunks and bags. Then the captain stopped in front of a building with a plain wall of white stone with nothing to make it special except a carved symbol of the sun over the doorsteps. With some imagination we could see a mouth with two long fangs covered with blood at its centre.



'That's where we die.'

'We have a plan don't we?' the captain replied sarcastically.

'A plan to get us killed.'

'You know, what I like about you is that you are such an optimist. Are you ready?'

I felt the eagerness in the captain's voice. For a single second, he stared at the closed door knowing exactly all that was to come. I crossed my arms and fingers and chanted a prayer. I felt energy filling my body, flowing into my arms, my legs and then my head and eyes. I did not turn toward the captain. I simply made a step forward.



Carnera was buried with powerful magic weapons, weapons that could give us fame, glory and a never-ending list of mercenary jobs. He could also help us to fight for a better world.

It was not what you usually expect of a treasure hunt. There was no map or riddle or code to understand. The burial was not planned many years before the death of Carnera. There was no living witness or hints anywhere to be found. Nothing could help. The tomb was built not to be found.

There was a weakness and we found it - no living thing could find the tomb but an unliving beast could. We had to collaborate with Chaos. Running with Daemons and staying alive and sane was the only way. Crazy but necessary.

We had little experience with Chaos worshippers and Chaos in general. I'd read a lot about them but never went with my teacher on his dangerous quests. I followed him but he knew how to escape any shadowing.

As we rode from Kreutzhofen in the south of The Empire to Miragliano, I sensed we were being watched. I looked around and found nothing but the smile of Morrslieb, the moon of Chaos, high in the sky.

I had the feeling that things would not work out as planned.



The door opened on to a long hallway leading to a single room lit by peaceful flowing light from stained-glass windows. The captain said it was a temple dedicated to Sunrhaya: a goddess of the sun. It wasn't. It was a fake. Illusions and hate

tainted everything: the flower necklaces of the idols were made of human skulls, the peaceful tapestries were in fact covered with paintings of human sacrifice. Here, reality was just out of reach. I wondered what diplomatic reason could allow a temple like this to exist in Marienburg. Probably business related.

'Perhaps they don't know about it,' said the

captain

'Perhaps they don't want to know.'

I looked again around the two-story structure that surrounded us. We were in the centre of the perfect place for an ambush. Behind every column, tapestry or idol an army could stand and wait for the perfect time to kill us. There was no guard. Only fools would enter a place like this without being invited. An old lady with dark eyes and skin walked to us, offering black flowers and fruits we preferred not to eat. The captain put a few gems and gold rings on her silver plate and she went to the end of the room to offer the gift to the idol of a lady with four arms and a third eye on her forehead. Then she stood quiet and still beside the idol. The captain walked to the centre of the room while the men looked around suspiciously.

'We came to speak to the Black Mother.'

There was a long silence, the peaceful face of the goddess darkened and I saw tusk-like teeth grow from her mouth. Then a deep voice echoed in the room seemingly from the idol.

'And who are you to ask such a favour?'

'A man with gold.'

'Do I know you?'

'We never met.'

'Then there is nothing I can do for you.'

A few steps behind the captain, I looked around towards the statues, the curtains and the tapestries. Where was she? I asked myself. I looked again at the idol. It was impressive, yet I did not think she was in it. The idol radiated some kind of evil - it would probably animate and kill us very soon.

'I need information.'

'Why would I give it to you?'

'You know why. You can already feel it despite the magical coffer that holds it.'

'A Daemon claw!'

The captain agreed.

'Give it to me.' The voice said with a menacing tone.

'We need a name first. We need the name of a Daemonologist who will work for us for money. There is surely one of your clients who has a taste for exotic, rare occult items who would be happy to earn some gold.'

'You seem to know me well for a man I've never met.'

'You met my father many years ago.'

There was a silence. I concentrated on the idols on the side of the temple. They were no statues. They were minor Daemons frozen in place by their own will or by the will of their mistress. With four arms and swords, they would be a great challenge for the men. Perhaps their last one.

'It was a long time ago indeed.'

'My father served in trading missions in far countries.'

'He was a good master of illusions from the great college', she paused, 'an unfaithful

husband and a poor father too.'

'He was deeply attached to your people.'

Again there was a moment of silence. The main idol was not a Daemon. Its magic probably maintained the minor Daemons in this world or maintained the protective illusions. Maybe both. Then the voice replied.

'Yes, he was.' She paused a few seconds then added with bitterness 'It's too bad the Witch Hunters who killed him did not share his view.'

Again, a long silence. There was no motion in the room, the men, the statues; everything seemed frozen in time. I could not feel anything behind the tapestry, the idols. The captain spoke with a low comprehending voice.

'It must have been devastating for you.'

The voice rose again slowly, with difficulty, with a mix of sadness and controlled rage.

'I... I... I was not devastated... I... I am an all powerful goddess... do not pity me... I...'

Bad! Bad! Bad! I thought, looking frenziedly all around the room, seeing statues beginning to animate. Where was she? Where was she? I kept thinking and looking and... then I saw her. Kaliana, the captain had said her name was. She was there from the beginning. She fooled me with simple magic. Still beside the golden idol, dressed as a domestic, I saw her, exactly as the servant was, old and wise and evil. Beneath her old crippled lips I could see lips moving. Around the frozen image of a quiet slave, I saw arms moving, I saw spell components taken... I raised my hand, crossed my fingers and discharged the only spell stored in the old golden bracelet I wore. Waves of multi-coloured wind hit the domestic pushing her to the floor. I turned around as statues began to move, lifting their swords and stepping towards the men.

'Tell them to stop.'

The idols stopped. I faced the main idol again and saw the captain, the tip of his sword touching Kaliana's neck. He was serious and ready to kill.

'We are worshippers of Ranald. We kill only in self-defence. One move from your pets, one chant from you and I'll consider it such.'

Kaliana kept silent for a moment, two hissing snakes moving around her head. The captain spoke again, clearly, slowly, strongly.

'Only one name.'

'You will have to walk in death's dark shadow', she said with a strangled voice.

'I've been there before.'

She hesitated, then hissed.

'Kreutzhofen.'

I wanted to say something, but the captain raised his hand towards me without a look.

'It's the name of a town, not the name of a Daemonologist.'

'The man you want is in Kreutzhofen.'

'Fair enough. You never said anything. We heard nothing. We never met. We never came here. Trading goes on.'

He paused a second making sure she understood.

'Emilio, we need cover.'

'Yes, captain.'

I crossed my arms and fingers and chanted a few words. The room filled with a multi-coloured mist until we could not see the end of our own noses. I heard our men moving toward the exit and the sudden wail of Kaliana, full of pain and hate, cursing us, cursing the captain, cursing the world.

'By the way, we keep the claw. We might need it for any future talks' said Roderick.

A few seconds later we were in the streets dressed as merchants, surrounded by merchants.



A short treasure hunt it was supposed to be. A nightmare it became.

We set sail along the River of Echoes for Carnera's treasure. Being Tilean and rich helped us to get a boat and a chance to sail the underground river. And so

there we were. Again.

We knew the battlefield this time. The men were far away from the pentagram, far enough to give them a sense of security when the beast came. They had magical bolts in their crossbows, perhaps our only hope if things turned bad. The captain, a brave mercenary and I were with the Daemonologist. He had the claw. The captain insisted that he used it during the summoning. 'No killing of men or children,' he said. The Daemonologist understood. The claw was enough for a successful summoning, from the little we understood about Daemonology.

We knew it was high risk. 'We are walking on the edge of sanity,' said the captain to me. 'If we succeed Gaetano's treasure will get worthy owners. If we fail... we will be dead.' And he laughed. He was a gambler. We all were.

The chants were completed, the pentagram too. The man in front of me was dressed in black with a purple cap. Once he was a man of good, lured by the taste of power. Were we all lured by the taste of power?

The summoning was ready.

'Do it!' said the captain.

The Daemonologist began to summon the beast and the air became thick and heavy. I started my own magic - a simple trick to understand the Daemonic bargain that would soon begin.

The captain and the men were ready for the beast to come. Dressed as a common mercenary, throwing daggers in my hands, I focused on the Daemonologist. The insane words were difficult to bear for human minds. Terrible words of destruction and worse were said. Dark energy was drained from rocks and stones to a dark shape twenty feet above the

Daemonologist and then the Hunter appeared. He barked. The brave mercenaries ran. I stayed where I was. The captain did not move. The Daemonologist was still in control.

'Who are you to summon Behar Karzaram, Beast of Khorne, Tomb Seeker, Terror of the living and of the unliving?'

'I am your Master. I hold your claw. You are mine to control.'

The voices were terrible. The bark was terrible. For me it wasn't a bark. It was a laugh. The terrible laugh of an all powerful being in front of will-be-killed men.

'What god do you worship, Daemon Master.' asked the beast with knowing humour.

'The... g... g... god of pleasure...'

More laughter.

'You chose wrong little one. On your knees piece of meat and confess your mistake. Recognise that Khorne is the only one you worship and will ever.'

There was a near silence for a few seconds. Only the strong beating and flapping of the Hunter's wings, still many feet above our heads, could be heard.

'I...', the Daemonologist began. Then he bent to his knees and continued.

'I am your servant my Lord. Khorne is the only one I worship and the only one I will ever worship.'

'Good.' said the beast in a powerful bark. 'Now let's offer your first blood to Khorne's altar. Now!'

A furious fire blew toward the captain. His clothing was set in fire. I dodged the warped-lightning thrown from the twisted staff of the Daemonologist and threw my daggers in the chest of the corrupted man. He fell again to his knees, soaked with blood. Crossbow bolts whistled in the air. One pierced his neck. Another pierced the dark scales of the Hunter. The beast wailed and fell silent; for a moment. Then he laughed, looking at me, at the captain

and at the men loading their crossbows.

'You'll all die, little ones! You'll all die!' Said the beast using a twisted form of Tilean speech so we would understand.

The flame followed me as I tried to flee its warped heat. My luck came to an end. I felt my skin burning. I fell to my knees looking helplessly at my soon-to-be-killer.

'I give you my soul.'

The bark stopped. Bolts, the last ones whistled and hit rocks. Only one voice was audible; the proud and strong voice of a mercenary captain.

'I give my soul to Khorne. With the weapons we will find, I'll make rivers of blood for our Mighty Lord. Teach me how to keep you in this world.'

The pain in my ears was worse than the pain of my flesh. I remembered the hate, the obsessed desire for power, the horrors we saw, the eagerness to end this quest and the wail of Kaliana. Suddenly, it struck me that it was her dying wail.

'Khorne was pleased to see the sacrifice you offered him in Marienburg. Only the strongest survive. Whatever protection you had before, you lost it on that day. I accept your soul. I'll help you until the end of your days and then you'll be mine forever.'

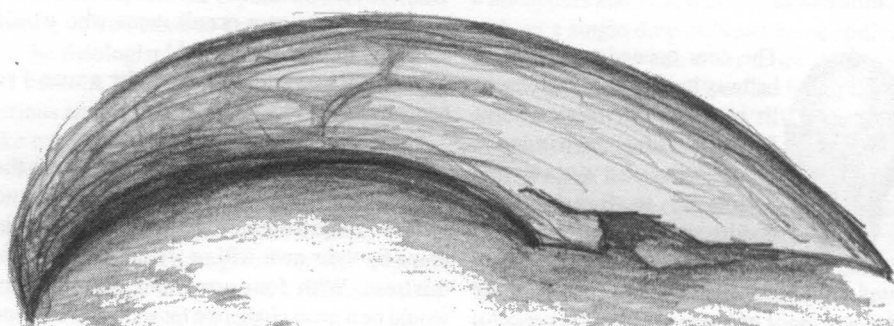
'Teach me how to keep you in this world.'

'I need blood.'

The captain laughed.

'Go and get it.'

A terrible laugh again as the powerful wings took the Hunter and the captain towards the helpless mercenaries. A terrible laugh, the laugh of my captain, the laugh of the one who will be called "The Silent Blade of Khorne", the one who will hunt without mercy, again and again, Witch Hunters, High Priests and Templars. Burnt in my flesh, burnt in my soul, I knew I would have to track him down to cleanse my soul of the terrible mistake I had made.



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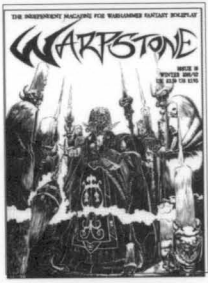
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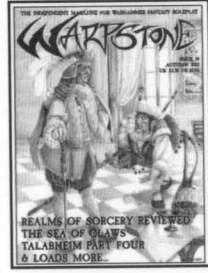
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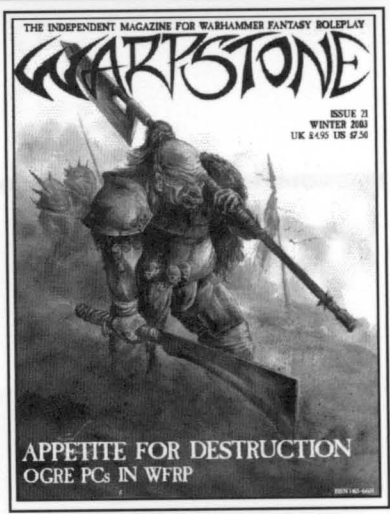
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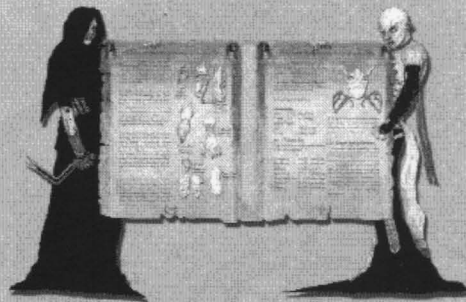
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