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THE HORNED RAT COMPANION



THE ESSENTIAL COMPANION FOR CAMPAIGNING
AGAINST THE DENIZENS OF THE UNDER-EMPIRE

THE HORNED RAT

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THE HORNED RAT COMPANION



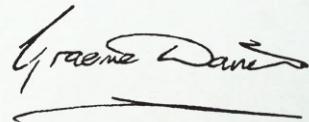
Welcome to **The Horned Rat Companion**, the fourth in a series of companion volumes for **The Enemy Within** Director's Cut.

This series of books presents additional and supplementary material of various kinds: to continue the 'Director's Cut' metaphor, it might be regarded as the 'DVD Extras' that used to be found on special-edition DVDs, in the days before streaming. Grognards will remember them: they usually included commentaries from the director and other key personnel; extended and deleted scenes, 'behind the scenes' documentaries, and other material for the true fan and collector. This book does the same for **The Horned Rat**. Here is a brief summary of what you will find in these pages:

Behind the Scenes: The Characters face a new cult in **The Horned Rat**: a rag tag group of Skaven agents known as the Yellow Fang. Their goals, methods, and membership are detailed here. Also included are some notes on the Middle Mountains and on the evil that permeates Brass Keep.

Supporting Cast: The Skaven are the undoubted stars of this adventure, and an expanded treatment covers their history, culture, weapons, and magic. Supplementary bestiaries describe some new monsters to throw at the Characters. Some optional NPCs allow the GM to add even more to the adventure, and the new Ironbreaker career gives Dwarf PCs more ways to smite the evil Ratmen.

Bonus Adventures: Two classic adventures are revisited, with an investigation into a missing son in Middenheim drawing the attention of one Alphonse Hercules de Gascoigne in **A Little Help from my (new) Friends**. In a mine in Middeland, miners have unearthed a cursed thing in tunnels dug by inhuman hands in **Horror in the Darkness**, and of course the indefatigable Gravelord returns for his penultimate visit.



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PRODUCT



THE HORNED RAT COMPANION

'The Skaven? Why there's no such thing, and the blighters kill anyone who says otherwise. Were I you I'd keep myself to myself and stay far away from any who speak of them, further still from the creatures themselves. They are no cousin to the Beastmen of the wild woods as some would have you believe, but an separate class of entity entirely. Terrible machines they have, that gnaw away at the roots of the Old World. Their magics are more cursed even than the foulest witchery, and loyalty is a thing unheard of among them. They would eat their own kin if it would benefit them in the slightest, so just imagine what they would do to you or I.'

'No, there's no such thing as Skaven. If you ever want to sleep soundly again take that notion into your heart and hold it dear. Especially so if you should ever have the misfortune of stumbling into their schemes, for when luck has failed you, ignorance is the only comfort that remains.'

— Sofia von Hassenburg, formerly of the Temple of Verena. Vanished in the sewers of Ubersreik, 2510 IC



FOR GROGNARDS

Grognard, n. From French grognard, 'grumbler'. An old soldier or other kind of veteran: originally, a member of the Old Guard in Napoleon's army, whose long and faithful service won them the right to complain, even in front of the Emperor. More recently, an experienced (and often opinionated) player of wargames and/or roleplaying games.

Over the last 30 years or so, an awful lot of people have played the *Enemy Within* campaign. This new version includes some changes and, at key points in the story, boxes like this one offer new ideas and different events to make the campaign just as fresh and challenging for seasoned WFRP fans as it was when it first appeared in 1987. Those players who think their previous knowledge will give them an advantage may find the forces in the shadows and behind the screen more formidable and tricky than before.

Some of the material in this volume has also been reprinted from earlier sources, and grognard boxes are provided where appropriate with the same ends in mind. Of course, if the alternative options look better, feel free to use them instead of the originals!



CHAPTER 1

HISTORY OF THE SKAVEN

RATS! RATS!

Omnes: Rats! Rats! Horrible rats!

Watchman: Rats in the streets!

Herr Gusser: And rats in the houses!

Frau Gusser: Rats in my hair!

Jurgen Gusser: And rats in my trousers!

Maid: Rats in the beds!

Governess: And rats in the cradles!

Father Pfeller: Rats in the soup!

Innkeeper: And rats in the ladles!

Omnes: Rats! Rats! Horrible horrible rats!

— from the opening chorus of Detlef Sierck's comic opera, *The Rats of Hammstatt*

To many in the Empire, the Skaven are nothing more than legend. Tales from more than a thousand years ago tell of the Skaven Wars, in which rats and ratmen boiled up from the drains and sewers to attack the Empire's cities following the Black Plague of 1111. The heroic Count Mandred of Middenheim united the reeling nation and led an army that defeated the evil ratmen. He defeated their leader in single combat, cutting off the monster's head and turning its skull into a helmet that remains one of Middenheim's greatest treasures. Mandred became Emperor of a grateful nation, and the ratmen were seen no more.

THE SKAVEN TODAY

Today, many in the Empire believe that the Skaven never existed. The ancient chroniclers, they say, turned the rats that spread the plague into intelligent, humanoid monsters, either as a symbol of the terror and devastation that it caused, or through a simple inability to credit that so many people — three-quarters of the Empire's population, according to some records — could be killed by a creature so small, and so commonplace, as a rat. Others believe that the legends were true, but maintain that Count Mandred's campaign wiped out the entire Skaven race. Others still believe them to be no more than Beastmen who happen to have been born resembling rats rather than goats or other creatures.



Nothing could be further from the truth. The Skaven are all too real, and far from extinct. They have spent centuries in their underground lairs, breeding and plotting, and developing horrific technologies based on Warpstone, an unnatural mineral imbued with the very essence of Chaos. They learned a bitter lesson in the long-ago Skaven Wars, though, and rarely show themselves on the surface.

HISTORY

The origins of the Skaven are lost in the mists of time. A Tilean folk tale, *The Doom of Kavzar*, tells of an ancient city of Humans and Dwarfs brought low by a grey-clad stranger, who offered to complete an ambitious temple on condition he be allowed to add a dedication to his own gods. The temple was completed with miraculous speed, but the stranger disappeared, leaving a great horned bell in the temple's tower that tolled thirteen times each night. On the first night, Morrslieb flashed as though in response to the sound; the next morning, black clouds darkened the sky and an ashy, oily rain began to fall.

The storm worsened in the following days, with violent winds and black hail that ruined the crops for miles around. The hail grew in size, and soon great stones were falling on the city like missiles from a besieging army. The Humans' homes were ruined, and the Dwarfs, safe underground at first, found the filthy water flooding their underground workings. Sickness and unnatural births spread throughout the town. Rats devoured whatever food was left. When that was gone, the rats roamed the streets in huge swarms, eating any creature they encountered.



In desperation, the Humans invaded the Dwarfs' underground homes, to find nothing more than gnawed bones and scraps of cloth. Multiple beady eyes glittered around them in the dark, and they gathered into a fearful huddle as their doom approached, and the sound of chittering increased and reverberated around the tunnels.

In the heart of the Blighted Marshes that stretch from the north of Tilea to the Black Mountains lies the doomed city of Skavenblight — or so it is said. Whether or not it was once the Kavzar of the folk tale, the capital of the Skaven Under-Empire is a vast and unfathomable maze, from its crooked and dizzying spires to its bottomless depths. Countless Skaven live, breed, work, and die here, along with slaves taken from every known race. Tunnels radiate out from this great city in all directions, encircling the world.

The Skaven spread out from the city in the very distant past, fighting wars against the other races, making and breaking treaties — and most of all, creating their own nests of intrigue. Civil war broke out from time to time, the last ending two centuries ago when the Grey Seers brought the lesser Skaven to heel by the unprecedented step of summoning the Horned Rat — the dark and dreaded god of the Skaven race. Since that time the Skaven clans have largely refrained from making open war upon each other, and the Grey Seers have kept a tight hold on power.

Whether or not any of this is true is hotly debated among those few scholars who care to consider such things. Not one of these scholars can be found among the Skaven themselves, for they are a people who care little for history, even their own, and less for cerebral debate. As a 'society' they are far more concerned with the immediate present than any mythic past. As individuals, Skaven revise their own personal history constantly. Every mistake is the vile treachery of an underling, and every success a singular moment of victory achieved — despite the staggering incompetence of everyone else involved. The history of their species is a matter for others to consider — just prior to Skaven jaws snapping shut about their neck.

However, there is a dark rumour of an abominable city of Skaven somewhere near Tilea — a towering monstrosity looming over a blighted marsh. If this was once the Human city of Kavzar none can say, for the Skaven claimed it long ago and there is nothing Human about it any more.

THE SKAVEN WARS

More than 1,400 years ago, the Empire was struck by the Black Plague. This terrible disease carried off more than three-quarters of the population, wiping out generations, leaving whole towns deserted and corpses festering everywhere. The plague even carried off Boris Goldgather, who was arguably the least popular Emperor in history.

Just as the Empire was most vulnerable, hordes of Skaven scurried from hidden underground tunnels, overrunning the land in the wake of the atrocious plague that they had unleashed upon the Old World. Thousands were slaughtered or enslaved, but those who remained fought back with incredible resilience and vigour. Count Mandred von Zelt of Middenheim rallied the surviving Elector Counts and fought a bloody campaign against the ratmen, culminating in 1124 in the Battle of the Howling Hills. There, Mandred beheaded the Skaven leader, Warlord Vrrmik of Clan Mors, with one stroke of the Middenland Runefang. The surviving Skaven broke and fled. After the battle Count Mandred had the Skaven Warlord's skull fashioned into a helmet: known as the Helm of Skavenslayer. Mandred was dubbed 'Skavenslayer' and subsequently elected Emperor.

Under Mandred's leadership, the Empire slowly recovered from the Skaven wars. His heroic reputation and charismatic personality held the Empire together, and under his wise but stern rule a massive programme of reconstruction began. The Skaven have long memories, though, and on the cursed and haunted night of Geheimnisnacht Eve in 1152, Emperor Mandred died at the hands of a Clan Eshin assassin.

The next Electoral Council ended in stalemate, with the Electors of Talabecland and Stirland mustering equal support. The result was a series of civil wars that lasted for the next two centuries, with no recognised Emperor.

THE RED POX

In 1786 the Red Pox broke out in the Bretonnian town of Bordeleaux. It spread rapidly, engulfing much of Bretonnia and northern Tilea. This was no natural plague, but was spread by the Skaven, again in the hope of softening up their opponents before moving in for the kill. Skaven armies emerged in the wake of the pox, expecting to find Bretonnia and Tilea weaker targets than the Empire. However, the people of both countries put up a desperate defence, and the Skaven force was broken at the Battle of Remarche in 1813 by a combination of Bretonnian and Wood Elf forces.



THE GREAT SUMMONING

The failure of this campaign led to another series of civil wars among the Skaven. They were only brought to an end in 2302, when the Grey Seers ordered all the feuding Skaven clans to Skavenblight and summoned the Horned Rat. This daring ritual terrified the clans into accepting the Grey Seers' authority, at least in principle. In practice, feuds and intrigues continue unabated — these machinations are as natural to the Skaven as breathing — but despite this, the Skaven have once again begun to scheme and plot, and present a threat to the surface-dwellers.

In the years that followed the Great Summoning, a number of attacks were made on the Tilean city-states. Many small towns bordering on the Blighted Marshes were razed or simply disappeared. Skaven raiders menaced shipping in the Tilean Sea until the Dwarfs of Barak-Varr destroyed a Skaven fleet in 2321.



THE BATTLE OF NULN

In 2499, after long years of building up strength beneath the cities of the Empire, the Skaven mounted a full-scale attack once again.

It had long ago been discovered that Man-things could be bribed or blackmailed into aiding the Skaven: a campaign of manipulation and bribery targeted many key individuals, the most important of whom was Fritz von Halstadt, the Chief Magistrate of Nuln. When the Skaven's plan to spark another civil war in the Empire was thwarted by a couple of sewer jacks, the enraged Grey Seer Thanquol mounted a vengeance-attack on the city. Troops from the four Greater Clans (Eshin, Moulder, Pestilens, and Skryre) and several Warlord Clans poured out of the sewers: close to half the city was destroyed, and a force of Stormvermin almost captured the Elector Countess Emmanuelle von Liebewitz.

Most members of the Council of Thirteen were furious, feeling that the attack was launched prematurely. Many more were upset with the attack's failure. However, the Seerlord Kritislik pointed out that a rebellious Warlord Clan was all but eradicated during the action, which, he maintained, was to the benefit of the Council and all Skaven.

The attack also showed that the Skaven's long-cultivated veil of secrecy was effective. Despite many casualties, the majority of Nuln's population still did not believe that Skaven existed. Even survivors from the thick of the fighting were persuaded that their foes were mutants or Beastmen. The Skaven ensured they remained a shadowy threat to all but the keenest of minds.

THE PRESENT DAY

Nuln was rebuilt, and despite rumours of ruthless ratmen attacking the Elves of Ulthuan, no major Skaven action has been recorded in the Empire since.

The Skaven have become much more secretive about their activities on the surface since Nuln. They act on a smaller scale, at night and under cover, and take care to kill any witnesses and remove their own casualties. From time to time, groups of Gutter Runners or lone Assassins are sent to recover or destroy evidence of the Skaven's existence.

Meanwhile, members of Skaven cults like the Yellow Fang have standing orders to promote the fiction that the Skaven Wars never happened. According to a number of Skaven-sponsored historians, the ratmen are no more than a metaphor: an image created by the garbled, mythologised folk-memory of a time when the Empire was overrun by an exploding population of rats — completely normal rats, unremarkable except for their numbers — that spread the Black Plague.

Because of this, the majority of the Empire's inhabitants now believe that the Skaven either never existed or were wiped out in the long-ago Skaven Wars. The attack on Nuln is generally ascribed to Beastmen, and although a few scholars advance controversial theories about Skaven survival, and occasional sightings are reported in the Empire's sewers or shadowed streets, almost no one takes such claims seriously.



THE COUNCIL OF THIRTEEN

Skaven politics are labyrinthine and convoluted. Their society has been described by Bagrian, a Bretonnian Taalite priest who is an authority on the Skaven, as 'a tyranny moderated through assassination'. For the teeming multitudes who make up the Warlord Clans this is effectively the case, but there is a higher order directing the grander schemes of Skavendom: the Council of Thirteen.

The Council has antecedents. Shortly after the first Skaven emerged from Skavenblight they were met by twelve Grey Lords who directed them to spread across the world, and throughout the history of the Skaven leaders known as the Lords of Decay have remained their supreme commanders. The individual lords who made up this group changed, but there were always twelve of them, with the thirteenth place reserved for the Horned Rat — the monstrous god of the Skaven.

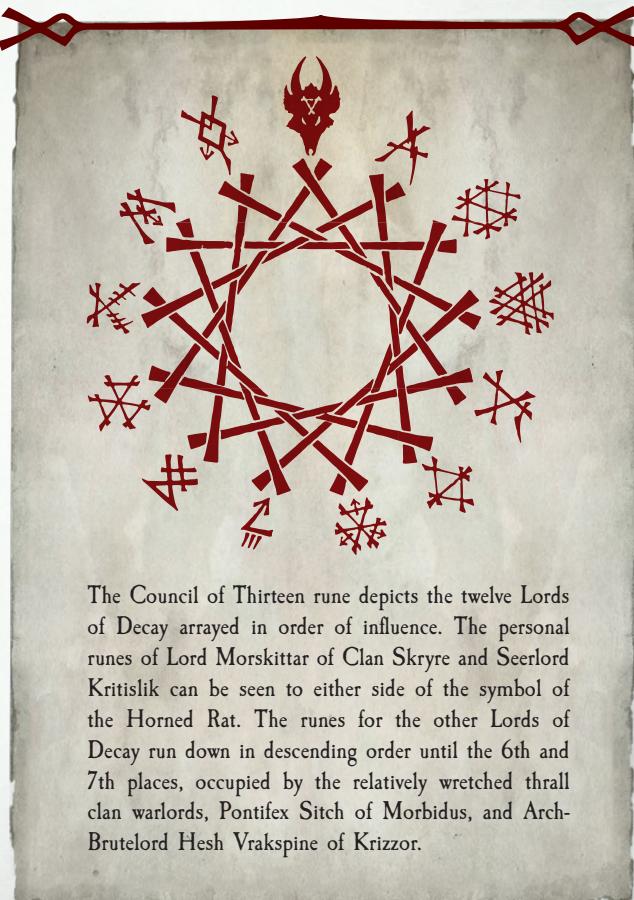
After the poor performance of the Red Pox in 1850 IC, Skavendom descended into a civil war that was finally brought to a stop in 2302 IC. Sensing the rising tides of magic that accompanied the Chaos invasion of Kislev, the Grey Seers summoned representatives of the major clans to Skavenblight, and called on the Horned Rat to put an end to the conflict.

The Horned Rat is said to have revealed the Black Pillar of Commandments. This unholy monument is made from purest Warpstone and has thirteen sides, each bearing thirteen dictats to be followed by his children. The 169 commandments vary from the ambiguous to the contradictory. The Horned Rat must have intended for the system to be as complex and intricate as possible. Scheming and plotting come naturally to Skaven, and the Great One draws endless amusements from the machinations of the Lords of Decay as they twist and turn within the convoluted laws.

The Black Pillar of Commandments was also a test for any aspirants to the Council, as only the favoured of the Horned Rat could touch its rune-inscribed surface and survive. However, those that lived became the most powerful of all Skaven, gifted with unnatural longevity and imbued with dark power. The Horned Rat ordered all Skaven to obey his new Council, or else feel his wrath. The Skaven — notoriously craven — dared not defy their god or his favoured servants. The seats on the Council were occupied by the most wicked and cunning of Skaven. In times past any clan leader strong and devious enough could seize power if only he could depose a rival and 'create' a vacancy. However, not since the Second Civil War and the intervention of the Horned Rat at the Great Summoning have any challengers defeated, disposed of, or else supplanted any of the existing Lords of Decay.

The current members on the Council of Thirteen have remained the same since the Great Summoning and subsequent unification of the Skaven in 2320 IC. Their position has waxed and waned with the power of their clan, and with the success and failure of their machinations. Indeed, as Clan Pestilens has risen in influence so has Arch-Plaguelord Nurglitch's position, and he currently sits on the tenth seat. However, Lord Kritislik, Seerlord of all Skavendom, has sat as the right-hand claw of the Horned Rat since before the Great Summoning. He remains the most powerful of the Lords of Decay.

The positions on the Council command a descending order of precedence. The first and twelfth places (the right and left hand of the Horned Rat) are the most important seats, and the sixth and seventh places are the least. However, any Lord of Decay can abstain, and by so doing veto a command from his opposite number. Hence, Lord Kritislik, the Seerlord, can (and frequently does) veto the orders of Lord Morskittar, the Lord-Warlock of Clan Skryre. This means that the Lords of Decay often need the help of others to set their schemes in motion. Thus the circle of maze-like plots continues, encouraging ever-shifting dynamics, blackmail, bribery, and all manner of corruption. Assassination attempts amongst the Lords of Decay are considered rather crude, but are not unheard of. It is more likely that the lower clans or even outside kingdoms are manipulated, which in turn affects the Council of Thirteen's actions.



The Council of Thirteen rune depicts the twelve Lords of Decay arrayed in order of influence. The personal runes of Lord Morskittar of Clan Skryre and Seerlord Kritislik can be seen to either side of the symbol of the Horned Rat. The runes for the other Lords of Decay run down in descending order until the 6th and 7th places, occupied by the relatively wretched thrall clan warlords, Pontifex Sitch of Morbidus, and Arch-Brutelord Hesh Vrakspine of Krizzor.

The Lords of Decay are always twelve in number, being completed symbolically by the Horned Rat. The first order of the Council of Thirteen prohibits the study of magic, so only Clan Skryre and the Grey Seers could pursue its use. (The enforcement of this law is not terribly exacting; Eshin Sorcerers and Pestilens Plague Priests often flout it, to the dismay of the Grey Seers.) It is the council's role to unite the clans against the Skaven's enemies and interpret the will of the Great Horned Rat. In truth, the Council of Thirteen is far more interested in pursuing its own nefarious plots and schemes, manipulating the lesser clans, and assassinating those who pose them the slightest threat.

The Council members identify their position with an elaborate rune. In most cases, these sigils are adapted from a Lord of Decay's Clan-symbol. But it is not unknown for a clan to adopt the personal icon of its leader. These runes, and endless subtle variations of them, are seen throughout each Lord of Decay's clan. Similar markings are also seen amongst Thrall clans and other 'allies'. Having links to a Lord of Decay is not something to keep secret — it is something to inspire dread and fear into rivals, and as such should be emblazoned as prominently and as often as possible.

THE COUNCIL RATIFIES PROJECT MOONBREAKER

When Maliss Manrack informed Lord-Warlock Morskittar of Project Moonbreaker he received muted encouragement in response. Morskittar said he would raise it with the Council, but doubted it would receive support due to many Grey Seers prophesying a role for Morrslieb in years to come. At the next meeting of the council in Skavenblight Morskittar proposed the plan, hoping that the others would veto it. This is because he wanted to table an alternate plan by Warlock Bombadier Gnawltch Shun to send a rocket to Morrslieb and commence mining operations on its surface. Morskittar had thought that if he proposed Maliss's plan first the other lords would veto it, and he could then use their objections to justify this plan. He imagined they would veto the second as well, and therefore be wholly out of objections to his favourite plan, which was to sponsor the development of a teleportation device proposed by his most talented Warlock Engineer, the prodigious Ikit Claw.

Unfortunately for Morskittar, Seerlord Kritislik immediately and enthusiastically supported Maliss's plan to blow Morrslieb apart with the Moonbreaker. In truth, Kritislik hated the plan, but one of his spies had told him supporting it would lead to dismay amongst several senior Warlock Engineers to whom Morskittar had promised rewarding commissions.

So Morskittar was left in the embarrassing situation of having to veto his own plan, which he did, saying he had second thoughts and now considered that imperfections in the execution of Project Moonbreaker could result in Morrslieb being hurled

through space away from the world, or broken up into pieces that remained aloft rather than raining downward. Kritislik refused to accept Morskittar's argument, and re-proposed the plan in turn, so it was up to the rest of the Council to break the deadlock.

Lord Gnawdwell of Clan Mors leapt on the suggestion that Morrslieb might be knocked into space rather than shattered. Lord Kratch Doomclaw pointed out that Lord Gnawdwell predictably opposes anything Seerlord Kritislik suggests. This enraged Lord Gnawdwell's sense of honour — because it was true — and he fired back that Kratch Doomclaw predictably opposes anything he deems to be in the interest of Clan Mors — which was also true.

PROJECT MOONBREAKER FINAL VOTES OF THE COUNCIL OF THIRTEEN

For	Against	Not Present
Seerlord Kritislik		
Packlord Verminkin of Clan Moulder		
Arch-Plaguelord Nurglitch VII of Clan Pestilens	Lord-Warlock Morskittar of Clan Skryre	Lord Griznekt Mancarver
Warlord General Paskrit the Vast	Lord Gnawdwell of Clan Mors	Arch-Brutelord Hesh Vrakspine of Krizzor
Arch-Sealord Vrisk Ironscratch	Grand Nightlord Sneek of Clan Eshin	
Lord Kratch Doomclaw		
Arch-Pontifex Sitch of Morbidus		



Grand Nightlord Sneek of Clan Eshin rarely advances his own opinions in council meetings, but this time his whispering voice hissed in support of Lord Gnawdwell. This enraged Gnawdwell further because he felt that the Nightlord was so widely distrusted by the other Lords of Decay that his support could only undermine Gnawdwell's position. Warlord General Paskrit the Vast and Arch-Sealord Vrisk Ironscratches more or less proved his point by immediately and vociferously siding with the Seerlord.

He-who-is-eleventh, Packlord Verminkin of Clan Moulder, held a conference with himself for a while, but his heads came to a consensus and effectively vetoed Gnawdwell's objections to the Seerlord.

Lord Gnawdwell became apoplectic, accusing the Packlord of possessing such heedless greed for Warpstone that it had robbed him of reason, the Arch-Plaguelord Nurglitch VII of having addled the council's wits with a magically induced fever, and Vrisk Ironscratches of harbouring parasitic barnacles in his brains. This loss of temper heralded the end of negotiations as Gnawdwell effectively lost what little support remained for his position. Paskrit the Vast, Arch-Plaguelord Nurglitch and Vrisk Ironscratches immediately voted to approve the plan.

Arch-Pontifex Sitch pretended to ponder his position for a while, before doing exactly as he always does and voting in support of Arch-Plaguelord Nurglitch.

Maliss Manrack was granted permission to assemble a small army and occupy the lost hold of Karak Skygg in the Middle Mountains in order to construct and test his Moonbreaker cannon.

Embittered Engineers

So Morskittar returned to Clan Skryre's holdings in Skavenblight and informed his engineers of the news. Chief Warlock Engineer Ikit Claw was bitterly disappointed that his planned research into the construction of a teleportation device was being shelved. To cope with his feelings of rejection, he has turned his attention once again to Project Doomsphere, a mighty Warpbomb that could engulf the world in nuclear fire (a project that has Seerlord Kritislik's approval, though he would never be so lacking in diplomacy as to actually voice his enthusiasm for it).

Gnawlitch Shun was contacted via Farsqueaker and told to stand down his preparations for a rocket to the moon. Gnawlitch was outraged, but promised not to interfere with Maliss's plans for the Moonbreaker cannon. He was pacified mostly by the promises that when Maliss eventually did harvest a rain of Warpstone meteors Clan Skryre would be enriched and in the position to fund research into many new exciting projects.

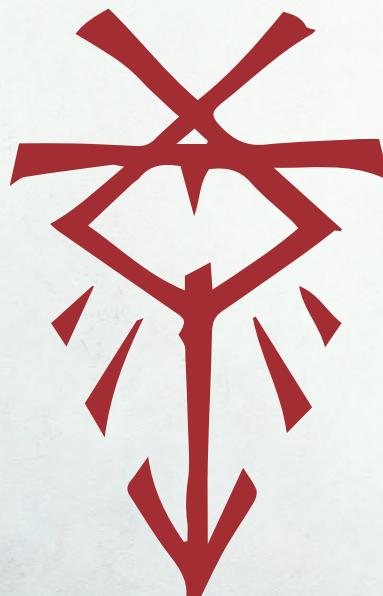


THE GREY SEERS

The Grey Seers are powerful sorcerers, capable of channelling eldritch energies and unleashing them in scaring bolts of destruction. Their fur is typically grey, though some have white pelts or are albino. The bony horns sprouting from their heads mark them as the chosen of the vile Skaven God, the Great Horned Rat. The favour of the Horned Rat is not without its price however, and Grey Seers are often sickly and frail. These prophets also act as the Council of Thirteen's chief agents and emissaries. These twin roles mean that Grey Seers wield tremendous influence in the Under-Empire. They possess a rank and position greater than all other Skaven barring the Lords of Decay themselves. This is not to say that Grey Seers are above the self-serving manipulations and treacherous scheming of the Skaven — indeed, they epitomise it. The Seers guard their power jealously, and it is a foolish Warlord indeed who does not immediately prostrate themselves at the feet of a Grey Seer and humbly acquiesce. The Rune of the Grey Seers is enough to strike fear into the hearts of friend and foe alike.

After the Council of Thirteen, the Grey Seers are the most essential power base within Skavendom. They interpret the will of the Horned Rat, and through preaching his commandments they seek to provide Skaven society with drive, cohesion and common purpose.

Without their influence it is doubtful that Skavendom could function. The Grey Seers' guidance ensures a semblance of Skaven order. Skaven by their nature are chaotic and unruly: without the Seers they would be even more riven with violent dispute and acts of betrayal. Grey Seers are not benevolent in their ministrations. They are as likely to make their point through lethal demonstrations of the sorcerous power they possess through the Blessing of the Horned Rat as they are by proclaiming their god's commandments.



GREY SEER SKRITTAR, HERALD OF THE COUNCIL OF THIRTEEN

The Grey Seer Skrittar is vain and power-mad — even for a Skaven. He travels with an army of Skavenslaves, whose sole duty is to bow down before him. As Skrittar's palanquin passes, these wretches stand up and run forwards so that wherever Skrittar looks there are at least a few dozen underlings abasing themselves. Any who are too slow or who dare look upon the Grey Seer's horned form are consumed by searing bolts of sorcerous lightning that leap from Skrittar's outstretched fingertips.

Palanquin Rules

Some important Skaven travel around atop litters borne by slaves and guarded by Stormvermin. Such platforms offer protection, extra fighters, and a more elaborate and visible display of power. There is a satisfying pomp about being carried around that appeals to a certain type of Skaven. Even better if the platform is bedecked with clan trophies, enemies' skulls, and the relics of defeated rivals.

Characters mounted on a Palanquin Higher gain all of the usual bonuses for Mounted Combat, such as the +20 bonus to Melee Tests against smaller targets.

Palanquin Guards

Skrittar's palanquin is borne aloft by four hulking Stormvermin. Each only needs one hand for the palanquin, so may use their free hand to attack.

Two Heads are Better than One

Skrittar is usually accompanied by a huge giant rat with two heads. Skrittar is not particularly sentimental about his pet, referring to it merely as 'the Rat'. If anyone should be so obstinate as to ask which rat he refers to he blasts them with Warp Lightning.

Using Skrittar

Skrittar and his attendants travel widely throughout the Under-Empire ensuring that all lairs and strongholds are aware of the Council of Thirteen's authority and the need to abide by the 169 Commandments of the Horned Rat. In particular, he is a promoter of the laws dictated by the Council that deny the practice of magic to all Skaven other than the Warlock Engineers and the Grey Seers. Therefore, there is something of the Witch Hunter about Skrittar, though his main motive for searching out and destroying other magic users has less to do with the fear of untrained magical practice, and more to do with megalomania and professional jealousy.

SKRITTAR'S MOTIVATIONS



- 💀 Receive fawning respect from low-ranking Skaven
- 💀 Punish low-ranking Skaven who displease him
- 💀 Instil respect for the authority of the Council of Thirteen
- 💀 Avoid disputes with other powerful Skaven
- 💀 Be seen to obey the Seerlord
- 💀 Protect the integrity of Morrslieb

Skrittar and the Cult of the Yellow Fang

Skrittar loathes Humans, but understands their value as covert agents. He would be keen to leave the Yellow Fang at arm's reach and let them help those Skaven who are more willing to interact with Humans.

In their turn the Yellow Fang understand enough of Skaven society and lore to recognise that Skrittar is an authority to whom the other Skaven owe their obedience. As such they would treat him to fawning obedience if they were to learn of his presence.



Skrittar and Under-Middenheim

Skrittar's presence in Under-Middenheim would cause problems. Gnawretch Skrray is a proud Warlord who would likely clash with the arrogant Seer. Gnawretch is one of the few Skaven in the Under-Empire who Skrittar could not merely execute with impunity: he is the favoured emissary of Warlord General Paskrit the Vast, who sits on the Council of Thirteen. As a herald of the Council, Skrittar could not merely despatch the favoured servants of those he calls master.

But the two Skaven do have a common enemy in Kanker Flett (**Middenheim: City of the White Wolf** page 110), whose secretive worship of Nurgle would enrage the Grey Seer. If Gnawretch could somehow set Skrittar and Fett on to each other, it would no doubt prove fatal for Fett. Then Gnawretch would have rid himself of a powerful rival and won the regard of the Seer with one stroke.

Skrittar and Clan Mange

Skrittar regards Clan Mange with wearied disdain. The fact that the clan place an emphasis on loyalty and professionalism disgusts the Grey Seer, who sees such qualities as distinctly unnatural. Skrittar may come to believe that the attack on Brass Keep is not a forlorn hope, but will actually result in the puny clan becoming a major player in Skavendom. He would therefore be desperate for anything that might contribute to Clan Mange's downfall, or be grateful for news that the assault is hopeless (in which case he will become an enthusiastic supporter of the plan).

Skrittar and Maliss Manrack

Skrittar is aware that the Council of Thirteen have granted Maliss Manrack the right to carry out Project Moonbreaker, and he has also been told by Seerlord Kritislik that the more resources are funnelled into the project, the more it will embarrass Clan Skryre.

But Skrittar has a personal revulsion to the plan. To him Morrslieb is a sacred thing: he has bathed in the light of the moon on Vermintide and finds its baleful green light invigorating and calming. He regards damaging the moon as the highest form of sacrilege, and cannot understand why the Council of Thirteen have allowed Maliss to go ahead with his plans.

So Skrittar might become an unlikely patron to the Characters, if he thinks they are set to destroy the Moonbreaker. If he can get them to disrupt Maliss Manrack's project without letting any of his fellow Skaven know about his involvement then it will be all the better for him. Skrittar's goals are to look like a supporter of Maliss Manrack as far as his fellow Skaven are concerned, but protect Morrslieb from harm.

GREY SEER SKRITTAR, HERALD OF THE COUNCIL OF THIRTEEN

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
5	55	30	32	58	65	38	35	65	55	43	18

Traits: Infected, Night Vision, Weapon (Quarter Staff) +7

Skills: Bribery 53, Channelling 75, Cool 75, Dodge 58, Endurance 78, Gossip 63, Haggle 63, Intimidate 52, Intuition 85, Language (Magick) 85, Lore (Magic 85, Under-Empire 85), Melee (Polearm) 75, Perception 85, Sleight of Hand 55, Stealth (Underground) 58

Talents: Aethyric Attunement, Arcane Magic (Warp), Combat Reflexes, Frightening, Instinctive Diction 2, Magic Sense, Menacing, Petty Magic, Resolute, Savvy, Sixth Sense, Strong-minded

Trappings: Robes, Quarter Staff, Warpstone Charm, 10 Doses of Warpstone Snuff

SPELLS

Petty Magic: Favour of the Horned Rat, Ghostly Flame, Mark of the Horned Rat, Rat Thrall, Vector Wrack

Arcane Magic: Crackling Doom, Cracks Call, Flensing Ruin, Howling Warpgle, Scorch, Warp Lightning, Warp Shield, Warp Storm

WARPSTONE CHARM

Talismans and charms incorporating a small chunk of Warpstone are often carried by important Skaven and are thought to attract the protection of the Horned Rat. A Skaven with a Warpstone Charm can reroll a single Test once every 13 hours.

WARPSTONE SNUFF

Skaven magic users often carry about preparations of Warpstone dust in order to acquire more magical power just when they need it. A Skaven magic user may imbibe a dose of the snuff when making a Channelling Test. The snuff grants them an additional +1 SL to the Test, but if they suffer a miscast, they must add +1d10 to any rolls they make on the miscast table.

The Rat

Skrittar's two-headed rat is a little smarter than your average rodent — after all, two heads are better than one. Despite this, it remains little more than a wild beast, quiet only in its master's lap — mostly because it understands that it will be fed. Away from its master, or if it gets too hungry, the thing quickly starts nipping at anyone that comes near. It associates the smell of Humans and Dwarfs with food.

THE RAT

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
5	35		40	35	25	25		17	15		11

Traits: Bestial, Brute, Infected, Night Vision, Size (Average), Skittish, Stride, Weapon +8

Talents: Ambidextrous

Mutations: Claws, Two Heads.

Palanquin Guards

Skrittar's palanquin guards are among the most loyal Skaven in the Under-Empire, which admittedly is not saying much. Still, they know that their continued privileges and good fortune rely on Skrittar remaining alive, and so take their duty seriously.

PALANQUIN GUARDS

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
5	45	35	45	35	55	50	30	30	30	20	12

Traits: Armour 4, Champion, Infected, Night Vision, Weapon (Warp-Cursed Blade) +9

Skills: Dodge, Melee (Basic) 60

Talents: Drilled, Enclosed Fighter, Strike Mighty Blow, Tunnel Rat

Trappings: Heavy Armour, Warp-Cursed Blades

Warp-Cursed Blades: The swords carried by Skrittar's bodyguards have been ensorcelled by his malign magics and give off a lambent green fire. They count as Hand Weapons, but they also possess the *Damaging* and *Impale* Qualities.

CHAPTER 2

THE MULTITUDINOUS CLANS

While theoretically the Council of Thirteen is the source of all authority in Skavendom, derived from the Horned Rat himself, in truth it is much more nuanced. The individual Skaven Clans sit below the Council. Some have direct representation within the thirteen, while others petition, threaten, and connive to get their way. The most powerful of these are the Warlord Clans, which form the vast bulk of Skaven society. Below them are the Thralls: significant clans that nevertheless must abase themselves at the foot of a more powerful warlord or risk annihilation. Clanless Skaven are almost unheard of, and indeed the phrase is interchangeable with the word for 'food' in Queekish.

THE WARLORD CLANS

At its peak, a single Warlord Clan could number in the hundreds of thousands and spread across a score of different lairs and strongholds. There is no knowing how many different clans there are scattered throughout the Under-Empire, though there are certainly many hundreds, if not thousands. The larger, more powerful Warlord Clans actively seek out and destroy smaller clans, absorbing their numbers as warriors or slaves, or simply gorging upon them as the unbearable pangs of the black hunger take hold.

Large or strong clans (usually one and the same thing) are less likely to be attacked by rivals and are more able to exert their will over lesser clans. The most successful Warlords effectively rule all of the surrounding clans, exacting tolls and demanding heavy tributes, becoming increasingly wealthy as a result. However, clans that grow too large and fractious can, if the Warlord is not aggressive enough, split into rivalling factions.

PRIMUS INTER RATTUS

There are no equals in Warlord Clans, only underlings and superiors. It is a rat-eat-rat existence where the weak are slain (and often devoured) by the strong. Considering their comparatively short lifespan, if a Skaven is to gain rank and status, they must do so as quickly as possible. The Skaven are obsessed with short-term gain and will construct an increasingly elaborate web of false promises, imaginary wealth, and dubious bargains if there is even the slightest chance of success.

One of the quickest ways to gain power in the Under-Empire is to secure an alliance with a more powerful faction. The price of such a pact is invariably extortionate, but for a budding Warlord, the opportunity for power is simply irresistible — especially if the ally in question can be double-crossed and disposed of at a later stage.



It is rare for a Skaven army to be composed of warriors exclusively from one clan. When the time arises to attack a foe, be it an army of surface dwellers, who hold the greatest bounties of plunder, or a rival clan, a Warlord gathers warriors and weaponry from any available source. Skaven from surrounding clans flock to a Warlord's banner, either for a share in the spoils of war or in the vain hopes of securing an alliance of their own. Weaker clans can be coerced and threatened into sending troops (who inevitably form the first wave of an attack) whilst stronger clans grow fat on the profits required to purchase their aid.

Skaven logic in these matters is simple: power and wealth buys (and bribes) better warriors, weapons, and war-beasts, which in turn assures a higher chance of victory and increasing power and wealth, and so on. One of the most prestigious and destructive sources of arms are the Great Clans, whose skills and weaponry are in high demand. It is for this very reason that the Great Clans have become so rich and powerful.

To a non-Skaven, all the Warlord Clan hordes may look the same. However, to a keen observer, or the ratmen themselves, there are distinctive differences. Clan markings and symbols, freely interspersed with the rune, icon, or visage of the Horned Rat, are often painted, scratched, daubed, or smeared atop shields, banners, and pennants. Some clans are known to wear rats, clothing, or armour of a specific colour. Others dye their fur with distinctive bandings or patterns, marking out the members of different Clawpacks. Some clans brand Skaven runes or clan icons into their skin so that their foes know who they are facing. Some Skaven are even mutilated, typically with scars and notches in their ears to mark allegiance or ownership. A great many banners and markings are present when Skaven armies muster. However, these visual differences blur amidst the ravenous hordes, and even the ratmen tend to rely upon their own keen sense of smell to find their clanmates.

THE THRALL CLANS

Whilst all Warlord Clans are eager to secure treaties and pacts with more powerful clans, there are those who cannot purchase such alliances. Some Warlord Clans willingly throw in their lot with one of the four Great Clans, trading total obedience for otherwise unobtainable power. These clans, known as Thrall Clans, are effectively extensions of the Great Clans.

Whether the Great Clans see these Skaven as actual (if temporary) allies or as unwitting pawns likely depends on the size and strength of the Thrall Clan in question. Unsurprisingly, many of these Thrall Clans share the same ideology and goals of their masters, and their armies incorporate a disproportionate number of their patron's weaponry, warriors, and war-beasts. These favours allow the lesser Thrall Clans to defeat their rivals and secure their own powerbase.

Many Thrall Clans dwell in lairs and strongholds far from their masters' eyes and have greater rein to pursue their own nefarious agendas. However, it is a foolish Thrall Clan that forgets its bonds of fealty altogether.



CLAN ESHIN

Clan Eshin, feared as assassins, murderers, and hauntings of the night, are active within and under the cities of man. Wherever there is squalor, Eshin scouts and assassins stir the rats of the city sewers.

Clan Eshin disappeared into the East early in Skaven history and had been considered lost for many centuries. When its members returned to Skavenblight, they were changed. During that long period in contact with the mysterious Human cultures of Ind, Cathay, and Nippon, the Skaven had learned much about the arts of stealth and assassination. From then on, Clan Eshin has found a clear role in Skaven society — its assassins have become the force the Council of Thirteen uses to uphold its decisions and maintain its reign of terror among the clans. Of course, the services of Clan Eshin are often hired by many other influential Skaven to spy on their rivals or to 'remove' overly ambitious political opponents.

Clan Eshin also provides light skirmishing troops and infiltrators to any Warlord Clan willing to pay its exorbitant price.



CLAN TREECHERIK

Clan Treecherik are the thralls of Clan Eshin. They are a murderous, untrustworthy, and perfidious clan — even by the dubious standards of the Skaven. Assassination is rife amongst the clan's ranks; such is the risk of an assassin's knife that the warriors of Clan Treecherik always strap their shields across their backs. Furthermore, the clan's warriors tend to wear clothing the colour of Skaven blood — it doesn't pay to let your packmates know you're wounded in Clan Treecherik. Far from being detrimental to the clan's long-term survival, this unremitting killing culls the weak and ensures that only the most skilled and ruthless endure. If a Skaven can survive in Clan Treecherik, he is a born survivor and has little to fear from the scheming and plotting of other clans.

The Skurry Stabbers

The Skurry Stabbers are one of Clan Treecherik's most murderous Clawpacks and have slain more (many more) of their own clanmates than the enemy (in fact, it has been several years since they've killed anything not from Clan Treecherik). Their current Clawleader is Gristl Twitchslice, an imposing figure who has remained in command of the Skurry Stabbers for an impressive three days. If he can make it to four, he will have broken the service record set by Smeer Throttskar over twenty years ago.

Gristl Twitchslice

Being the leader of the Skurry Stabbers is an unwelcome position in most ways, but Gristl intends to use it to his benefit. If he can prove himself for a little longer — say, perhaps a week — then he may impress his betters, perhaps even those in Clan Eshin proper. Once he has gained their favour, Gristl intends to take their place in the traditional Skaven manner — stabbing them in the back and moving in to their lair.

GRISTL TWITCHSLICE

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
5	40	40	40	35	45	40	40	35	25	20	15

Traits: Armour 3, Shield 2*, Infected, Night Vision, Weapon +7

Talents: Hardy, Robust 2, Step Aside, Luck

Skills: Dodge 50, Melee (Basic) 55, Stealth (Urban 65, Rural 65)

* The Clan habit of wearing shields strapped across their backs means that they do not gain the usual benefit for using a shield, but instead gain 2 AP against all attacks from behind.

Treecherik Clanrat

Clan Treecherik's Clanrats are more prone to infighting than most Skaven, which is to say they are very prone to it indeed. They are also particularly stealthy by Skaven standards, preferring to keep to the shadows and strike only when their foe is at a disadvantage. The brutal nature of life in Clan Treecherik means that by necessity most are more observant and quicker to react than their kin. Almost any extended fight they become involved in results in at least one fatal tussle between supposed comrades as one grudge or another is put to rest in the heat of battle.

TREECHERIK CLANRAT

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
5	30	30	30	30	40	35	30	30	20	20	11

Traits: Armour 2, Shield 2*, Infected, Night Vision, Weapon +7

Skills: Melee (Basic) 45, Stealth (Urban 55, Rural 55)

* Their habit of wearing shields strapped across their backs means that they do not gain the usual benefit for using a shield, but instead gain 2 AP against all attacks from behind.

Clan Eshin Infiltrator

The Skurry Stabbers, and Clan Treecherik more generally, provide a useful and unknowing service to Clan Eshin. Their reputation for infighting and endless internal intrigue provides the perfect smokescreen for Clan Eshin's assassins to infiltrate Treecherik's ranks to move about Skavendom unnoticed. Alliances shift within Clan Treecherik so quickly and fluidly that few notice one more or one less warm body in their midst, and so these agents of Clan Eshin are rarely remarked upon by Clan Treecherik's Clanrats. These assassins bide their time, awaiting the perfect moment to leap from the ranks and bury their blade in whatever enemy target, Skaven or otherwise, the clan has marked for death.

CLAN ESHIN INFILTRATOR

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
6	55	55	40	40	50	60	50	50	40	40	24

Traits: Armour 1, Infected, Night Vision, Stealthy, Weapon (Fighting Claws) +10, Ranged (Warpstone Star) +7 (8), Ranged (Death Globe) +12 (8)

Skills: Athletics 50, Dodge 70, Melee (Basic) 65, Ranged (Throwing) 65, Stealth (Rural 70, Urban 70)

Talents: Alley Cat, Combat Master 2, Combat Reflexes, Hardy 2, Step Aside, Strike to Injure, Strike Mighty Blow 2, Tunnel Rat

Trappings: Hand Weapon (Fighting Claws), Smoke Bomb, 2 Warpstone Stars, Death Globe, 2 doses of Black Lotus poison, 1d10 Warptokens



Using the Skurry Stabbers

The Skurry Stabbers are a violent, undisciplined mob more used to stabbing their kin down a dark side burrow than facing surface dwellers. However, the group are well practised in stealth tactics and striking from the shadows. If the Characters are proving tough to face head on, the Skurry Stabbers might be deployed to whittle away their resolve. They release poisons into food and water, harass the Characters at night to prevent them resting, kill or capture NPCs the Characters have had dealings with, and otherwise seek to make their lives miserable. Only if cornered will the Skurry Stabbers face the Characters head on.

THE SKURRY STABBERS' MOTIVATIONS



- 💀 Prepare for betrayal
- 💀 Betray a comrade before they get the chance to do so first
- 💀 Find a way to escape thralldom to Clan Eshin
- 💀 Find a way to join Clan Eshin proper
- 💀 Find a new leader to replace Twitchslice
- 💀 If the above are satisfied, confront the enemies of Skavendom

Clan Treecherik and Under-Middenheim

Clan Eshin maintains a small force of Gutter Runners in Middenheim for gathering information and the occasional discreet assassination. Gnawretch Skrray suspects this to be the case, but is unsure of who or how many of the burrow's Skaven might be Clan Eshin agents. He has set one of his underlings to uncover this information, but as this agent is a Clan Eshin spy, success is unlikely.

Clan Treecherik often provides guards on supply caravans to Under-Middenheim, as their paranoid nature makes them excellent sentries. Under Clan Treecherik's watchful, twitching gaze, as much as half the despatched cargo survives the trip. Clan Eshin makes use of Clan Treecherik's watchrats as cover for sending information and spies in and out of Under-Middenheim. The clan rarely gets involved in the politics of Under-Middenheim, as it assumes (correctly) that any party it supported would ultimately betray it.

Clan Treecherik and Clan Mange

Clan Treecherik considers Clan Mange something of a blunt instrument when it comes to solving problems. For the right price it might assist the clan in disposing of a few problematic opponents, but would never set foot inside somewhere as lethal as Brass Keep.

Clan Treecherik and the Cult of the Yellow Fang

Clan Treecherik considers the Yellow Fang to be an extremely useful instrument, and often makes use of them. It has forged some contacts with the cult in Middenheim, but has yet to put them to any use. A handful of clan members are convinced that a parallel cult of Human-worshipping Skaven exists, and hold occasional purges in the name of routing out this group.

Clan Treecherik and Mallis Manrack

As a Thrall Clan, Treecherik has no vote on the Council of Thirteen. However, Clan Eshin often uses Treecherik to add a layer of deniability to its involvement in any particular plot. As Lord Sneek voted against the plot to destroy Morrslieb, he is loath to support it openly. Despite this, he is well aware of the potential benefits of raining Warpstone down on the Empire and is determined not to miss out. Clan Treecherik Skaven may well find themselves despatched to Karak Skygg to aid in its defence, with a Clan Eshin assassin poised to foil the attempts of any other clan scheming to kill Manrack before his plan bears fruit.



CLAN MORS

Clan Mors is the most successful of all Warlord Clans, or so it claims. The clan's influence is so great that it consumes warbeasts and weapon teams from many lesser clans, and its ranks are bolstered by their warriors — hired, bribed, or coerced to fight in the first wave. Clan Mors's rise in power, size, and status is due in no small part to taking the Dwarf stronghold of Karak Eight Peaks, known to the Skaven as the City of Pillars — a major nexus for the passageways that make up the Under-Empire. Clan Mors's aggressive warriors bear many trophy scars and have better weaponry and more armour than other Skaven, the spoils looted over many long campaigns. The upper levels of the City of Pillars are constantly assailed by vengeful Dwarf warbands and spiteful Night Goblin tribes. This provides Clan Mors with a brutal proving ground for its chieftains, and a chance to grind the teeth of a growing cadre of elite warriors.



FANGSNAPPER'S CLAWPACK

The battle-hardened Clanrats of Fangsnapper's Clawpack led the assault that retook several vaults from the Night Goblins in the City of Pillars, and they were instrumental in Clan Mors's victory over Clan Corpulent. Scrak Fangsnapper rose to command the Clawpack during the sacking of the Empire town of Buchendorf when Scrak throttled his predecessor with his own tail. Since then he has defeated over a dozen potential rivals, and their broken fangs hang from his trophy rock as a warning to other would-be usurpers.

Scrak Fangsnapper

Scrak Fangsnapper is a much more accomplished Skaven warrior than his position at the head of a pack of Clanrats might first suggest. Two key aspects led to Scrak's apparently humble position. Firstly the Fangsnappers, like many of Clan Mors's soldier Skaven, are rather more accomplished and tenacious than their peers. Secondly, Fangsnapper, whilst fierce, is canny enough to know that if he keeps his head down and underplays his hand, he will likely escape the jealous, beady eyes of accomplished chieftains in the City of Pillars, in particular Warlord Queek Headtaker, who is famously intolerant of anyone who might prove a rival.

SCRAK FANGSNAPPER

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
5	55	40	45	45	40	55	30	40	35	30	15

Traits: Armour 3, Infected, Night Vision, Weapon (Spear) +8

Skills: Cool 50, Dodge 70, Intimidate 60, Intuition 55, Leadership 45, Lore (Warfare) 50, Melee (Basic 65, Polearm 75), Perception 50

Talents: Combat Aware, Combat Reflexes, Feint, Inspiring, Resolute, Warleader

Trappings: Mix of Steel and Leather Armour, Spear, Shield

Clan Mors Clanrat

Fangsnapper's Clanrats are battle-hardened veterans of countless engagements in the Undercity of the City of Pillars. They are practised in the use of their spears and watch one another's backs with a diligence that is rarely found in Clanrat regiments. They have drilled extensively together, and unwary foes who are used to the more haphazard form of combat practiced by most Skaven are often taken unawares by a carefully timed spear-thrust.

CLAN MORS CLANRAT

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
5	35	30	35	35	50	35	30	30	25	20	11

Traits: Armour 2, Infected, Night Vision, Weapon (Spear) +7

Skills: Cool 35, Dodge 45, Melee (Polearm) 45

Talents: Drilled 2, Combat Reflexes, Resolute

Trappings: Leather Armour, Spear, Shield

USING FANGSNAPPER'S CLAWPACK

Fangsnapper's Clawpack is a straightforward foe, more suited to fighting on the subterranean battlefields of the City of Pillars than any sort of subterfuge or complicated mission. However, they might just be despatched to make life complicated for Maliss Manrack (The Horned Rat page 150).

FANGSNAPPER'S MOTIVATIONS



- 💀 Survive the Under-Empire
- 💀 Perform well, but not so well that he gains a reputation
- 💀 Seem to be obedient and humble
- 💀 Carry out Gnawdwell's orders
- 💀 Seek an opportunity to find a new master
- 💀 Seek an opportunity to find an environment safe from Gnawdwell

Clan Mors and Under-Middenheim

Clan Mors has little to do with Under-Middenheim and tends to stay away from the city for fear of upsetting Castellan-Warlord Gnawretch Skrray and his master, Warlord General Paskrit the Vast. Whilst Lord Gnawdwell of Clan Mors occupies a more powerful seat on the council, the Warlord-General could potentially muster a number of smaller clans to any cause he thought worth protecting, and their combined might in coalition against Clan Mors could lead to a sudden reversal of Gnawdwell's fortunes.

But perhaps Gnawdwell might see the current situation as a way to ingratiate himself with the Warlord General, by placing Fangsnapper in the service of Under-Middenheim. With such an experienced regiment at his command, Castellan-Warlord Gnawretch Skrray could soon start policing the movements of other clans and requisitioning even more Warpstone (and other resources) to gain an advantage. Fangsnapper might well jump at the chance to help garrison a lair far away from the envious eyes of Warlord Queek.

Clan Mors and Clan Mange

Were Clan Mange to come into an unexpected source of wealth, it might hire Fangsnapper's Clawpack to help assault Brass Keep. Even Clan Mors's fiercest warriors would not fare well against the Blight Lords though, and the demise of the Clawpack would be a serious setback to Clan Mors's military efforts.

Clan Mors and the Cult of the Yellow Fang

The Fangpack have no involvement with the Yellow Fang. The only knowledge they have about dealing with Humans is how to kill them.

Clan Mors and Maliss Manrack

The Clawpack are aware that a plot to blow up part of Morrlieb has been permitted by order of the Council of Thirteen. Lord Gnawdwell is still resentful that the Council sanctioned Project Moonbreaker but, like all members of the Council, he knows not to let sour feelings spoil an opportunity to seize more Warpstone.

It is possible that Lord Gnawdwell wishes to see the Warpstone haul resulting from the Moonbreaker mission spent for the good of all Skavendom, and would order the Clawpack to protect Karak Skygg from outside threats. However, it is more likely that he would requisition as much Warpstone for his own coffers as possible, and he may send in the Clawpack at the last minute to secure Karak Skygg for Clan Mors.



CLAN RICTUS

Clan Rictus controls the tunnel lairs and passageways of Crookback Mountain, and it demands a steep toll from all those entering the Dark Lands (and twice as much again if they wish to leave it). The proximity of several Night Goblin tribes affords Clan Rictus an almost inexhaustible supply of slaves, making the clan immensely wealthy. So much in fact that its stash of Warptokens rivals the treasure holds of Clan Mors; the two clans are forever scheming for a way to usurp the other's power.

Clan Rictus's warriors are all vicious and grim, but it is for its inordinate numbers of large, jet-black furred Stormvermin that it is rightly feared. These elite warriors are stronger and more violent than any Clanrat, and lesser Skaven go to great lengths to keep out of their way.



THE DEATHVERMIN

The Deathvermin, also known throughout the Under-Empire as the Black Death, are the elite of Clan Rictus's formidable Stormvermin regiments and perhaps the most proficient regiment of warriors in all Skavendom. They are utterly ruthless and have crushed their enemies in countless battles, much to the annoyance of the clan's Warlord, Kratch Doomclaw. Indeed, the Deathvermin pose a significant threat to Lord Doomclaw's own power and despite throwing them into hopeless battles on numerous occasions, they have returned victorious every time.

Klik Rustclaw — Deathvermin Commander

Among the typically skittish and restless Skaven, Klik Rustclaw is something of an anomaly. The sizable Stormvermin remains calm and relatively composed in situations that would send other Skaven into a frenzy of killing, or scurrying to their burrows. Klik has garnered a reputation for long periods of quiet observation punctuated by moments of intense violence. Most of his rivals looking to lead the Deathvermin are aware that Warlord Doomclaw is somehow displeased with their Claw. This has left most happy to await whatever misfortune the clan leadership intends to visit upon Klik before they seize leadership for themselves. For his part, Klik naively believes his service to Skavendom is valued, and the increasingly lethal situations he is sent into to be a sign of the faith Clan Mors puts in the Deathvermin.

KLIK RUSTCLAW — DEATHVERMIN COMMANDER

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
5	65	40	40	45	55	50	30	42	48	21	20

Traits: Armour 4, Shield 2, Night Vision, Weapon (Spear) +8

Skills: Cool 65, Dodge 65, Melee (Polearm) 75

Talents: Combat Reflexes, Combat Master, Hardy, Resolute, War Leader

Trappings: Spear, Shield, 3d10 Warptokens

Deathvermin Stormvermin

Black-furred and heavier and stronger than the average Clanrat, Stormvermin are the core of any sizable Skaven force. Clan Rictus's Stormvermin are the envy of most other clans. They are disciplined, loyal (up to a point), and vicious when backed into a corner. Their armour is the bane of those who oppose them, and the Deathvermin's many victories have allowed Klik to outfit them in the finest leathers, mail, and plate armour that Skavendom can produce.

DEATHVERMIN STORMVERMIN

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
5	50	35	40	40	55	50	30	30	25	20	11

Traits: Armour 3, Shield 2, Night Vision, Weapon (Spear) +8

Skills: Cool 35, Dodge 60, Melee (Polearm) 60

Talents: Combat Reflexes, Combat Master

Trappings: Spear, Shield, Slightly less rusty mail armour

Using the Deathvermin

The Deathvermin are a particularly dangerous unit of Skaven, used to facing unbeatable odds and coming out on top. If the Characters were to cause particular trouble, these warriors might be called in to deal with them. If you feel that your group are having too easy a time of Clan Mange's forces, the Deathvermin are an excellent choice to pose a tough if straightforward fight.

RUSTCLAW'S MOTIVATIONS



- Survive and excel
- Further the interests of Clan Rictus
- Kill any potential rivals within the Deathvermin
- Take captives back to the clan
- Gather better equipment, learn better techniques
- Slay the enemies of Skavendom

Clan Rictus and Under-Middenheim

Lord Kratch Doomclaw of Clan Rictus has had few dealings with the small outpost of Skavendom beneath the Human city of Middenheim. He is aware, via spies placed in Ikit's Clawguard, of Castellan-Warlord Gnawretch Skrray's pathetic attempts to win the favour (and backing) of Clan Skryre. Kratch finds this loathsome display of subservience particularly commendable — or would, were it directed towards him. He may offer the services of the Deathvermin to tease the possibility of more substantial support, if only to see Skrray grovel. The Castellan-Warlord would surely use the vaunted Deathvermin to strike against the city above, especially if the Characters have uncovered any substantial Skaven presence in the city.

Clan Rictus and Clan Mange

Clan Mange are so far beneath Clan Rictus that Kratch views them almost favourably — they are, after all, no threat to him. If Clan Mange were to seek the assistance of Clan Rictus in their attack on Brass Keep, Kratch would be delighted to send the Deathvermin against it, especially as his spies have informed him that the keep is far better defended than Clan Mange believe ...

Clan Rictus and the Cult of the Yellow Fang

Clan Rictus have made little use of the Yellow Fang. A single attempt to establish the cult amongst the Orcs of the Dark Lands ended in disaster, and Clan Rictus have had little use for the concept ever since.

Clan Rictus and Maliss Manrack

Despite lending their support to the idea when it was considered before the Council of Thirteen, Clan Rictus have little to gain with Manrack's wild scheme to rain Warpstone down upon the Middle Mountains. They are currently among the wealthiest clans in Skavendom: their prized Stormvermin and access to the Warpstone that falls somewhat regularly in the Dark Lands assures a reliable income. Thus, they are as likely as not to sabotage the plan should it appear close to fruition.



THE PESTILENT BROTHERHOOD

Clan Pestilens are best known for the Plague Monks that make up an important sub faction within the clan. They are disciples of disease and decay, and the harbingers of plague. Centuries ago, a Skaven expedition ventured into the steaming jungles of Lustria, only to be decimated by virulent tropical diseases and the reptilian warriors who defend that land. The few survivors hid in the ruins of a temple they had discovered in the depths of the jungle. There they unearthed ancient secrets that should have been left undisturbed. Perhaps it was because of the knowledge they chanced upon, or perhaps their destiny was decreed by the Horned Rat, but these Skaven mysteriously began to revere the very diseases that were slowly killing them. A strange new breed of Skaven was born: the Plague Monks of Clan Pestilens. Constantly plague-ridden, they were capable of withstanding their diseases as long as they remained devoted to their festering god.



Soon the Plague Monks started to expand and the delirious ferocity of Clan Pestilens became legendary among their enemies. The first to suffer at their pox-ridden hands were the Lizardmen. Several of their cities were wiped out by lethal plagues until powerful magic unleashed by the Slann forced the clan to retreat. The majority abandoned Lustria and escaped to the Southlands, where they settled in the dark rainforests. From there they started to move north, spreading disease in their wake, until they reached the Old World.

When their emissaries reached Skavenblight, they attempted to rejoin Skavendom. At first, they were refused a seat in the Council of Thirteen, which resulted in a bitter civil war. The power of Clan Pestilens, supported by those clans who did not agree with the Council's policies, almost triumphed over the Lords of Decay. The Skaven population was devastated by the war and pestilence unleashed by the Plague Monks in their wrath. Finally, the Lords of Decay agreed that Clan Pestilens had proved their right to have a seat on the council and the clan agreed to put its powers at the service of the Thirteen.

Their monomaniacal zeal and devotion makes Clan Pestilens the most single-minded of all the Skaven clans. They are different, counted strange by all other ratmen. This absolute belief in their own righteousness has caused untold friction amongst Warlord and Greater Clans alike. Recognised as a major power, Clan Pestilens has a high seat amongst the Lords of Decay, having risen from the seventh to the tenth position. It is no secret, however, that many scheme to have the diseased ones destroyed. These plots have lurked in the shadows since Clan Pestilens nearly overthrew the council.

Ceaseless faith and an arsenal of diseases have not only helped Clan Pestilens survive, but have seen their influence grow. In recent centuries, Clan Pestilens have spread from their mysterious Southlands strongholds as far as the Vaults and even the Grey Mountains. During the civil wars, many sided with Clan Pestilens, but it was always unclear which were the true thralls and which were merely fair-weather allies. Many Warlord Clans continue to claim allegiance to Clan Pestilens, most notably Clans Skrat, Septik, Morbidus, and Gratzz.

ROLE IN THE HORNED RAT

Arch Plaguelord Nurglitch VII was one of the Council of Thirteen who voted in favour of Maliss Manrack's proposal. However, he did so late in the day and only after the provocations of Lord Gnawdwell. The Plaguelord is never quite trusted by the other Lords of Decay, for whilst Clan Pestilens are a significant power within Skaven society, they are known to harbour many magic users in defiance of the Horned Rat's will; and their plagues often go out of control and decimate the Under-Empire (on occasion outbreaks seem more than accidental).

Many of the practices and rites utilised by Clan Pestilens are similar to those employed by followers of the Chaos God Nurgle, and rumours that inner echelons of the clan are followers of the Plague Lord rather than the Horned Rat are regularly circulated (not least by the Grey Seers). No hard evidence can ever be brought before the Council, however.

Arch Plaguelord Nurglitch VII has his powerbase far to the south of the Old World, in the steaming jungles and malarial swamps of the Southlands. He would have to work hard to benefit directly from the rain of Warpstone meteors that will shower down over the northern Empire if Project Moonbreaker is a success. However, some members of the Pestilent Brotherhood have their centres of operation closer to the site. These include Clan Morbidus, but they are a serious asset to Clan Pestilens as their Warlord sits on the Council of Thirteen (and reliably supports Nurglitch in council meetings). Clan Septik, who are loyal enough to be trusted, but not so powerful that they would be missed, are being considered to act as Nurglitch's proxies on Project Moonbreaker.

CLAN SEPTIK

Clan Septik swore fealty to Clan Pestilens during the first great Skaven Civil War. They are the most fanatical believers in the entire Pestilent Brotherhood, rabid zealots whose fervour rivals (and possibly exceeds) that of their Clan Pestilens masters. Clan Septik see themselves as the right claw of Clan Pestilens, who have thus far encouraged this view — after all, you can never have enough devout troops willing to fight and die for your cause.

Despite the casual way in which this Thrall Clan is thrown into battle, they have so far always emerged relatively intact, leading many to believe that the Horned Rat himself is looking favourably upon Clan Septik. The warriors of Clan Septik utilise robes and banners of an off-white colour to better show their disgusting collection of filthy stains. These Skaven wield weapons and armour corroded with rust (the rustier the better), and their bodies are covered in dirty bandages draped over weeping sores. The diseased claw is a common icon amongst the Skaven of Clan Septik.

BLIGHTSKAB'S PLAGUEPACK

Blightskab's Plaguepack are amongst Clan Septik's most disgusting warriors. Their fur is matted with contagions and their skin covered with boils and buboes. Blightskab commands his regiment with hacking, phlegm-filled shouts. He is so eager to spread disease in the name of the Horned Rat that he has even been known to lead his regiment from the front! The Plaguepack are believed to have been responsible for the outbreak of Bleeding Eyerot (see page 26) that recently swept through the city of Nuln.

Blightskab — Plague Priest

Blightskab is a Plague Priest, initiated in infection, well versed in the *Liber Bubonicus*. In battle, he chants from the *Liturgus Infectus* in his phlegm-filled voice.

BLIGHTSKAB — PLAGUE PRIEST

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
5	55	40	45	55	40	55	30	40	35	30	17

Traits: Disease (Bleeding Eyerot), Infected, Night Vision, Weapon (Military Flail) +10

Skills: Cool 50, Dodge 70, Endurance 65, Intimidate 60, Intuition 55, Leadership 45, Lore (Warfare) 50, Melee (Flail) 75, Perception 50

Talents: Combat Aware, Combat Reflexes, Feint, Inspiring, Resolute, Warleader

Trappings: Military Flail, Green and Beige Rags

Diseased Clanrat

The Clanrats of Blightskab's Plaguepack are not true devotees of plague, and whilst they are led into battle by a Plague Priest, they are not themselves Plague Monks. Nevertheless, Blightskab's infectious example has spread to the lesser rats, and they fight with more ferocity and tenacity than regular Clanrats.

DISEASED CLANRAT

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
5	35	30	30	35	45	35	30	30	20	20	11

Traits: Armour 2, Disease (Bleeding Eyerot), Infected, Night Vision, Weapon +7

Skills: Endurance 45, Melee (Basic) 45

Talents: Combat Reflexes, Resolute

Trappings: Light Armour, Sword, Shield



BLIGHTSKAB'S MOTIVATIONS



- 💀 Spread Bleeding Eyerot
- 💀 Raise Clan Septik in the eyes of Clan Pestilens
- 💀 Raise Clan Pestilens in the eyes of the Council
- 💀 Destroy the enemies of Clan Pestilens
- 💀 Confront and destroy those who call Clan Pestilens heretical
- 💀 Discover if Clan Pestilens is heretical, and if so find out if this might be beneficial

Using Blightskab's Plaguepack

Middenheim presents Blightskab's Plaguepack with a perfect environment to unleash another epidemic of their signature disease, Bleeding Eyerot. The packed Human city is a ripe breeding ground for contagion and Clan Pestilens are eager to see an experimental strain unleashed there. They may send out the Plaguepack as agents to unleash the disease upon Middenheimers.

There are a number of obstacles to bypass in infecting Middenheim. The first of these is that the inhabitants do not access their water from any one source, but from a number of springs and wells throughout the city. The cult of Shallaya has a strong presence in Middenheim, and the city's Komission for Public Works and Physician's Guild are also keen to show themselves vigilant and effective in containing outbreaks, so the corruption of any one water supply, or city district, will soon be identified and dealt with.

But the greatest obstacle comes from Under-Middenheim itself. Clan Mors rule here, and will not brook a challenge to their supremacy.

Blightskab and Under-Middenheim

Kanker Fett is one of the three Skaven who wield most power in Under-Middenheim and desires to spread disease in the city above. Warlord-Castellan Gnawretch Skrray has thus far kept Fett's ambition in check. The arrival of the Plaguepack threatens to tip the balance of power in Clan Pestilens's favour. Gnawretch Skrray will not allow this to happen if he can help it.

Fett desires to make an alliance with the Plaguepack and, when suddenly outnumbered, hopes Gnawretch Skrray will be cunning enough to make a public show of his support for any project the Plaguepack wish to embark upon.

In a secret effort to maintain his power, Gnawretch may even go so far as to give enemies of the Skaven, such as the Characters, clues to the Plaguepack's activities, hoping that they can be done away with without leaving any evidence implicating his own involvement.

Blightskab and Clan Mange

The Plaguepack may assist Clan Mange in return for Warptokens, but Blightskab is much too clever to help attack Brass Keep. The Plaguepack may try to enslave surviving Clan Mange Clanrats after the attack on Brass Keep.

Blightskab and the Cult of the Yellow Fang

The Plaguepack are not aware that Human agents work for the Skaven and would merely see Yellow Fang members as potential test subjects.

Blightskab and Mallis Manrack

The Plaguepack are unaware of the existence of any operation at Karak Skyyg. Blightskab is a canny Skaven, and if he comes to learn about the Moonbreaker Cannon, he realises straight away that interfering with this plan will make him too many important enemies. He considers it best to stay loyal to Clan Pestilens and leave the Warlock Engineers to their own devices.

With this in mind, Blightskab quickly leaves the area if he finds out about the plot to blow up Morrslieb, and heads to the Southlands to make a report to the Masters of Clan Pestilens.

NEW DISEASE: BLEEDING EYEROT

Bleeding Eyerot is a horrific waterborne disease that attacks the eyes and tear ducts. The sufferer weeps a steady stream of bloody tears and finds it increasingly difficult to see. Whilst the disease is rarely deadly, it leaves its victims weakened and disabled.

Contraction: If you fail an **Easy (+40)** Toughness Test after drinking infected water.

Incubation: 3d10 + 5 days

Duration: 3d10 + 8 days

Symptoms: Lingering (Challenging), Organ Failure (Eyes), Wounded

NEW SYMPTOM: ORGAN FAILURE

Part of your body is acutely affected by the disease. During the course of the disease, any Perception Tests that rely on sight suffer a **-3 SL** penalty.

Treatment: Soothing unguents can be bought from all good apothecaries – ten doses for a shilling. Application of a dose alleviates the symptom for 1d10 hours.

CLAN MOULDER MONSTROSITIES

Clan Moulder has its stronghold in the depths of Hell Pit, far north of Praag, in the land of Kislev. Its proximity to the Northern Wastes, together with the huge reserves of Warpstone in its mines, make Hell Pit a nightmarish receptacle of the mutating energies of Chaos. The Masters of Clan Moulder have learned the art of controlling these mutations, and use them to create ferocious fighting beasts in foul experiments that combine mad surgery and the darkest of magics.

The packmasters capture many different animals and monsters from the lands south of Hell Pit, but most of their subjects come from the savage Northern Wastes and the dangerous Troll Country. They study the creatures they capture and experiment on them with feverish imagination. Often they crossbreed those monstrosities in an attempt to create new specimens, carrying the most dangerous traits of both species involved. Other times, they try to implant new organs and limbs. All these experiments involve the use of their infamous mutating balms that contain finely powdered Warpstone to focus the mutating energies of Chaos on the unfortunate creatures. These foul oils make even the most extreme changes possible, allowing Clan Moulder to violate the laws of nature in their unholy quest to make the ultimate fighting beast.

Clan Moulder sells its creatures to all Warlord Clans, and is a much-respected and sought-after ally for the ever-warring Skaven.



The Horned Rat

The Master Moulders of Clan Moulder and the Warlock Engineers of Clan Skryre have much in common. They are both fiendishly clever innovators and experimenters in their respective fields. The two Great Clans have even collaborated on several occasions. Clan Skryre technicians have supplied portable weaponry for the express purpose of being mounted on Clan Moulder warbeasts.

Packlord Verminkin ended up voting in support of Project Moonbreaker in part because he believed it would please Lord Warlock Morskittar (in fact Morskittar had withdrawn his support for the project by the time Verminkin voted, but two of Verminkin's heads had been arguing about Warpstone budgets, so he didn't notice).

When Verminkin came to realise that Morskittar was against the Moonbreaker project after all, his heads descended into confused recriminations. He came to a broad consensus with himself that, whilst it would be too embarrassing to be seen publicly working to sabotage the Moonbreaker project, he could work to see it spoiled and send a message to Morskittar explaining how he had always secretly been working in the interest of Clan Skryre. If successful, Verminkin could win back any regard he had cost Clan Moulder.

He also retroactively reasoned that maintaining a status quo in the gathering and distribution of Warpstone would be beneficial to Clan Moulder. Most Warpstone gathered in recent years has come from the Dark Lands, where Warpstone meteors fall with predictable regularity to be found by scouts from Clan Rictus's stronghold of Crookback Mountain.

Given that Clan Mors are their greatest rivals, Clan Rictus tend to prefer to pass their wealth northwards, via Clan Moulder's stronghold of Hell Pit, rather than south or westwards where Clan Mors could take their tolls. This situation is of great benefit to Packlord Verminkin. He has come to the realisation that he would have been better off opposing Project Moonbreaker, as a haul of Warpstone in the northern Empire, whilst it might be good for him in the short term, could weaken Clan Rictus's position in the long term.

Packlord Verminkin hopes he can stop Project Moonbreaker, but does not want to be seen doing so himself. Fortunately for him, Clan Rictus owe him a great deal, and also wish to see Clan Mors brought low. He plans to manipulate them into putting a stop to Moonbreaker by suggesting that Clan Mors could be dealt a severe blow as a direct result.

CLAN GRITUS

Clan Gritus were once part of Clan Mors, but following the death of Great Warlord Vrrmik, there was no leader ruthless enough to prevent the vast clan from fracturing. Clan Gritus was one of the factions that split off before a new tyrant rose. Over a thousand years later, Clan Gritus is now a powerful clan in its own right, one that actively seeks out and preys on weaker clans. Those not destroyed are absorbed into its own ranks and as a result Clan Gritus boasts many slaves and captured war-beasts. Even after post-battle feeding and inter-clan trading, there is such a surplus that this stock is used for sport. Many of Clan Gritus's warriors test their blades in lethal pit-fights and many bear scars, including the clan's current Warlord who lost an eye in the games. Clan Gritus maintains an ample supply of both Stormvermin and captured weaponry (of which Jezzails are particularly prized) to help put down frequent slave revolts.

The Hellbeast of Seep-Gore

Clan Gritus have become so successful preying on weakling clans that, in recent years, they have amassed a large surplus of wealth. The clan's chieftains have traded chests filled with Warpstone and commissioned the Master Moulders of Hell Pit to create a hideous creature of unparalleled size and ferocity — the Hellbeast of Seep-Gore. With it Clan Gritus plan to attack and slaughter their former masters, Clan Mors; the time is almost at hand.

THE HELLBEAST OF SEEP-GORE

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
6	45	—	55	55	35	45	—	10	25	15	68

Traits: Armour 1, Corrosive Blood, Die Hard, Fear 2, Infected, Night Vision, Size (Enormous), Stupid, Trained (Mount), Weapon +10

Skills: Melee (Basic) 65

Talents: Ambidextrous

Mutations: Acid Blood, Beweaponed Extremities, Skull Face, Two Heads

Master Moulder Wrakrench

The Master Moulders of Clan Moulder inspect the impact of their creations and find inspiration on how to make them even more deadly. Their presence instils a great deal of fear and discipline in their minions, and even the most powerful Rat Ogres shy away from these vicious Skaven, a clear testament to their great skill at inflicting pain.

Wrakrench is not a true Master Moulder. He is a member of Clan Gritus who has never received training from Hell Pit. However, he is a Skaven of some genius, and has observed the practices of Clan Moulder Beastmasters sent to manage packs of Giant Rats and Rat Ogres. Wrakrench has an almost instinctive grasp of how to motivate Clan Moulder war-beasts. He has also conducted several interrogations of Clan Moulder Packmasters, learning their verbal commands and coded gestures. Were Clan Moulder to realise the extent of his knowledge, or how he came by it, they would call for his immediate consumption.

MASTER MOULDER WRAKRENNCH

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
6	50	30	40	40	60	55	45	40	55	20	17

Traits: Armour 4, Infected, Night Vision, Weapon (Sword +8, Spear +8)

Skills: Animal Care 55, Charm Animal 65, Intimidate 55, Lore (Torture) 55, Melee (Basic 60, Polearm 65)

Trappings: Black Iron Armour, Hand Weapon (Sword), Spear.

Packmaster

Packmasters goad packs of Clan Moulder war-beasts into enemy ranks. They are notorious for their skill with the whip, a weapon that they learn to use with unparalleled ability. The Packmasters' intelligence coupled with their creatures' ferocity is a dangerous combination.

PACKMASTER

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
6	35	30	35	35	40	40	35	35	25	25	11

Traits: Armour 2, Infected, Night Vision, Weapon (Whip +5, Sword +7)

Skills: Animal Care 45, Charm Animal 45, Lore (Torture) 45, Melee (Basic 45, Entangling 50)

Trappings: Leather Armour, Whip

Using the Hellbeast

Clan Gritus are spurred on by an unusual thirst for vengeance. Whilst most Skaven are vicious and resentful, they are not sentimental, and would not pursue a historic grudge. Skaven are born conspirators; they tend to lack the patience to invest in long-term plans unless it is as a result of the guiding vision of the Grey Seers.

It has been many centuries since Clan Gritus suffered under the yoke of Clan Mors, and the great Warlord Clan has all but forgotten — Skaven are not particularly interested in learning about their own history. Yet, Clan Gritus maintain a tradition of resentment nursed with a desire for meticulous recompense more commonly associated with Dwarfs than Skaven.

The desire to see Clan Mors brought low, for the old slaves to become the future masters, drives Clan Gritus.

The Hellbeast is a significant war asset, a mighty creature capable of slaughtering lesser Skaven by the dozen, but is still vulnerable. A Clan Eshin agent could be hired to poison it, a skilled spellcaster could bewitch or destroy it. Keeping it secret and safe is an obsession of Clan Gritus. They may even leave the Under-Empire to move the creature, or house it for a period of time. Such operations could well come to the attention of the Characters.

WRAKRENNCH'S MOTIVATIONS



- 💀 Enact revenge against Clan Mors
- 💀 Enslave weaker clans
- 💀 Protect the Hellbeast
- 💀 Impress Clan Moulder
- 💀 Learn techniques Clan Moulder would prefer to keep to themselves
- 💀 Become a Great Clan and earn a place on the Council of Thirteen

The Hellbeast and Under-Middenheim

Under-Middenheim presents Clan Gritus with the perfect staging post from which to begin their assault on Clan Mors. Under-Altdorf is one of Clan Mors's major holdings, but is nowhere near as heavily defended as their stronghold in the City of Pillars.

Master Moulder Wrakrennch plans to approach the Warlord-Castellan with an offer to rid him of the monsters in Middenheim's Undercity that regularly slaughter Skaven patrols. Under this pretext he will bring the Hellbeast to Under-Middenheim, which happens to be at the end of a tunnel that leads to Under-Altdorf. Wrakrennch plans to lead it through this tunnel and set it rampaging throughout Clan Mors's nests once their guard is down.

The Hellbeast and Clan Mange

Clan Gritus are keen to enslave weaker clans, and Clan Mange present a tempting target. The Hellbeast could be used to complicate the events of the Black Hunger by breaking the starving Skaven out, only to enslave them.

The Hellbeast and the Cult of the Yellow Fang

Clan Gritus have no connection to the Yellow Fang. If they were to learn of Human agents assisting the Skaven, they would be keen to employ them to move and conceal the Hellbeast. However, the desire for more slaves is a constant driver of Clan Gritus, and should they find the Yellow Fang's usefulness waning, they would be quick to clap them in irons and march them back to their home stronghold, never to be seen on the surface again.

The Hellbeast and Karak Skygg

Clan Gritus have been led to believe that Project Moonbreaker exists so that Clan Skryre can repay a debt to Clan Mors. This is nonsense. Like most Warlord Clans, Clan Mors is in debt to Clan Skryre, having hired the services of many weapons teams and Warlock Engineers over the years. Clan Gritus plan to assail Karak Skygg just as Manrack is readying the Moonbreaker Cannon. They hope to conquer the mountain, enslave the Skaven there, and then use it as a staging post for their campaign against Under-Altdorf. This is a stupid plan. Even if Clan Gritus pull it off, they will face immediate retaliation from Clan Skryre with the aid of Clan Mors. Clan Moulder, having orchestrated this disaster from the shadows, would also lend aid in ridding the world of Clan Gritus, considering the cost worth the benefit of earning trust in the eyes of Clan Skryre.



CLAN SKRYRE

Clan Skryre specialise in blending evil magic and arcane Skaven technology. Its members, better known as the Warlock Engineers, constantly experiment to create newer and more powerful weapons of mass destruction. They often steal war machines from other species and strive to 'improve' them in their own unique way. This almost invariably involves the inclusion of Warpstone-based mechanisms that increase the weapons' potential for destruction, but also tend to make them much more unstable. Other species would consider such weapons far too dangerous for large-scale use on the battlefield, but Skaven have a different attitude, accepting a few losses from their own weapons as normal.

By selling the services of their specialised weapon teams to the constantly warring clans, the Masters of Clan Skryre have achieved an unparalleled level of influence and are, at the moment, the most prominent of the four greater clans.

Power struggles drive competing Warlords to seek any advantage they can buy (although stealing and coercing are fine options too). At times, a mere show of might is enough to win the day. In this regard, a Warlord Clan cannot have too much of Clan Skryre's wicked weaponry. The fact that the Warlock Engineers sell to all sides in the constant Skaven struggle for dominance is well known; the fact that for a very high price they offer to withhold their services is widely guessed. None but the Grey Seers know the exorbitant extent of Clan Skryre's double-dealing and treachery.

THE HORNED RAT

It is Skaven nature to be terribly jealous of one's peers, especially if they are overly successful. Even bearing that in mind, the bile and venom induced by Mallis Manrack's sudden ascension has been astounding. Most considered his plan doomed to failure — albeit a spectacular one. Though the details of the intrigues that led to the Council of Thirteen lending it their backing are not widely known, most of the clan's Warlock Engineers had thought Lord Morskittar was just as dismissive of the plan.

Clearly this was not the case, and despite any lingering misgivings, Clan Skryre aspire to capitalise on it as best they can. If the promised rain of Warpstone should fall upon the Middle Mountains, they intend to benefit from it more than most, as is only their right. If nothing else, a new and plentiful supply of Warpstone might diminish the influence granted to Clan Skryre from their hold over the rich veins beneath Skavenblight, and so they must act to maintain their position. More than one Clan Skryre digging machine stands ready to open tunnels to the Middle Mountains and the vast wealth that may soon be had there. Elsewhere in Clan Skryre, a few Warlock Engineers with more 'fringe' ideas have viewed Manrack's plan and come to the conclusion that it does not go nearly far enough.

CLAN VRRTKIN

Clan Vrrtkin have been the thralls of Clan Skryre ever since the Second Great Civil War, pledging their armies in return for power and eventually a lair of their own. Armed with hundreds of Poisoned Wind Globadiers and mortar weapon teams, Clan Vrrtkin led many assaults and gassed many rival lairs. Indeed, such is their predilection to exterminating Skaven warrens with the deadly vapours that the glass orb is often displayed on the clan's banners, warning enemies (and allies) not to stray too close. Unsurprisingly, the most sought-after item in Clan Vrrtkin is a gas mask. These inevitably go to the toughest warlords and Stormvermin first, with weaker Skaven fighting for what damaged and faulty equipment is left over. Most Clanrats have to make do with a urine-soaked bandage tied around their snout or else stuff rags up their nose to protect them should the wind change mid-battle.

THE TURNTAILS

The Turntails are Clan Vrrtkin's longest-serving Clanrat regiment, having survived over thirty battles — more than any other Clawpack in living memory. This is due to the fact that the Turntails can run away from battle faster than any of their allies. Having fought for so long, the Warlord of Clan Vrrtkin mistakenly believes that the Turntails are formidable warriors and has granted them the use of several Clan Skryre weapon teams. The Turntails find these weapons exceptionally useful, especially when covering a retreat.

Using The Turntails

The Turntails bring some particularly devastating Skaven weaponry to the battlefield, and while discretion demands that these weapons are reserved for use only when the circumstances demand it, the Turntails are far more willing to risk exposing the carefully nurtured Skaven conspiracy if it means preserving their own lives. If you wish to present your Characters with a truly challenging opponent, a few well-placed Turntail weapon teams could prove particularly devastating.

The Turntails and Under-Middenheim

Clan Skryre's long refusal to assist with the expansion of Under-Middenheim is a source of great frustration to Gnawretch Skrray. His continued pleas for support have grown tiresome to Lord Warlock Morskittar, and most of his missives and their accompanying gifts of Warpstone have been intercepted by underlings. The leadership of Clan Vrrtkin are aware of this situation and have despatched the Turntails to Under-Middenheim in order for the highly 'capable' warband to inspect its security and seize it for Clan Vrrtkin — with Clan Skryre's permission, of course. The Characters could easily encounter the Turntails during the course of one of these inspections, should they venture too far beneath the city.

The Turntails and Clan Mange

The Turntails would see little to gain in aiding Clan Mange, and even less in attacking Brass Keep. Should they somehow get involved, they would be among the first to flee, likely some leagues before reaching the keep itself.

The Turntails and the Cult of the Yellow Fang

The Turntails have occasionally made use of the Yellow Fang to gather information on the state of engineering in the Empire, in the hopes of learning some useful titbit that might gain them further favour within Clan Skryre.

The Turntails and Mallis Manrack

The Turntails may be offered to Manrack as suitable experienced guards, and would add a good deal of firepower to the defence of Karak Skygg. However, the group has been given secret orders from rival Warlock Engineers to steal the plans to the weapon and kill Manrack if his plan actually succeeds, ensuring that he does not go on to rise too far within Clan Skryre. They may be encountered throughout Karak Skygg rummaging through drawings, interrogating prisoners, or otherwise failing to guard whatever it is they have been assigned to protect.

Turntail Clanrat

The Turntails have an undeserved reputation for competence among their fellows, which lends them something approximating respect amongst the Skaven. In fact, the average Turntail Clanrat is constantly on the lookout for someone else who might serve to fail or perish in their place. They think nothing of shoving their fellows into the path of danger if it means they might survive, and have been known to set fire to entire buildings rather than clear out a single enemy soldier. This propensity for terribly disproportionate responses to perceived threats ironically makes the Turntails rather more dangerous than the average Clanrat.

TURNTAIL CLANRAT

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
6	30	35	30	30	45	45	30	45	15	20	10

Traits: Armour 2, Night Vision, Weapon (Hand Weapon) +7, Ranged (Doomrocket +12, Warpfire Thrower +12), Ranged (Warpmusket) +7

Skills: Dodge 65, Melee (Basic) 40, Ranged (Engineering 45, Blackpowder 40)

Talents: Flee!

Trappings: Leather Armour, Hand Weapon, Shield, 50% chance of having a functioning Gas Mask

*The Turntails have been equipped with a variety of Clan Skryre weapons, and for every five Clanrats there will be one weapon crew with a Doomrocket or Warpfire thrower.

Turntail Poisoned Wind Globadiers

The concept of training is very loose amongst the Skaven, and the Poisoned Wind Globadiers of the Turntails are hardly an exception. In fact, most Skaven 'volunteer' for the position solely because it is one of the few roles that guarantees access to a precious gas mask. So protected, they are not shy about using their weaponry and think nothing of throwing globes into a crowd of allies and enemies alike.

TURNTAIL POISONED WIND GLOBADIERS

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
5	30	40	30	30	40	45	30	30	15	20	10

Traits: Armour 2, Night Vision, Weapon (Dagger) +5, Ranged (Poisoned Wind Globe) Special* (6)

Skills: Dodge 55, Melee (Basic) 40, Ranged (Throwing) 50

Talents: Flee!

Trappings: Leather Armour, Dagger, 3 Poisoned Wind Globes, Shield, Gas Mask

*See **The Horned Rat** page 8 for the rules on Poisoned Wind Globes



CHAPTER 3

SKAVEN ARMOURY

SKAVEN WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT

The Skaven are an industrious species, creating a wide variety of arcane and technological marvels that outstrip the capabilities of even the Dwarfs. Indeed, were it not for the constant backstabbing and internecine warfare that plague them, the Skaven might well have already overthrown the surface world with their terrible machines and weaponry. Of course, any true adherent of the Horned Rat would squeak that it was precisely because of the bloody bickering and constant rivalries that the Skaven have been driven to achieve so much.

Whatever the case, Skaven equipment is strange and dangerous — often as much to its user as any unfortunate target. The weapons listed here allow you to outfit the Skaven enemies the Characters encounter with even more terrifying arms and armour. Of course, it is also possible that enterprising Characters will attempt to make use of these weapons. That is fine, as far as it goes, but given the Skaven propensity for using Warpstone in their creations, they may backfire with prolonged use.

Any Skaven Weapon that uses Warpstone in its construction, ammunition or fuel counts as a Minor Exposure to Corruption (*WFRP*, page 182) every day that it is carried outside of a lead-lined box or similar.

NEW WEAPON QUALITIES

ZZAP!

These weapons release a burst of electrical or arcane energy. ZZAP! weapons reduce AP by 1 and ignore all APs from metal armour.

Warpstone

Warpstone weapons are used almost exclusively by the Skaven. In addition to normal damage, any attack that inflicts a Critical Wound also causes a Minor Exposure to Corruption (*WFRP*, p. 182).

MELEE WEAPONS

The Skaven make use of a range of melee weapons to overcome their foes.

Beast-Prod (Moulder and allied clans only)

This barbed prod is used primarily for herding Rat Ogres and other Clan Moulder creations, but at need a Packmaster will turn its magical energy upon an enemy. It requires two hands and does damage as a Halberd, but ignores all armour.

Pavise

This large shield is designed to protect the Warplock Jezzail crews and other small-crewed weapons from enemy fire. It has an Encumbrance of 4, and instead of acting like a normal Shield it makes all ranged attacks targeting the crew Hard (-20).

Plague Censer (Pestilens and allied clans only)

This large, incense-filled flail disperses Warpstone incense smoke. All living creatures close to a burning Plague Censer suffer exposure to Corruption — see the table.

PLAQUE CENSER EXPOSURE

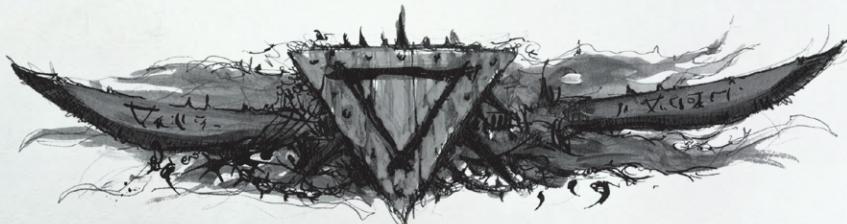
Distance (yards)	Exposure
2	Major
4	Moderate
8	Minor

Punch Dagger (Eshin and allied clans only)

Skaven of Clan Eshin use Punch Daggers, a type of weapon from Ind with one or two blades that jut out from between the fingers. Some variations require the wielder to strap the weapon to the wrist. A skilled Punch Dagger user makes quick stabbing motions or fast slashes.

Rat Claws (Eshin and allied clans only)

Tied to the paw with a leather strap, a Rat Claw consists of three to five steel claws extending outward. The claws enhance unarmed attacks and are useful climbing tools, providing a +10 bonus to all Climb Tests.



SKAVEN BLADES

In addition to the common weapons described in this chapter, the Skaven have devised a number of ways to make deadlier blades. Many involve Warpstone; some use the arcane ramblings of Clan Skryre, others the diseases of Clan Pestilens or the poisons of Clan Eshin.

Altered weapons retain all the Qualities, Flaws, and statistics of their base form, and gain additional properties as shown below.

Blade of Corruption (Pestilens and allied clans only)

The Blade of Corruption has long been a treasured artefact from the days when Clan Pestilens haunted the lands of Lustria. A vile weapon, it has a long, wavy edge and drips a foul green fluid from its tip. The Skaven whisper that the weapon was forged in the earliest days of Skaven history, and was cooled in the blood of Slann.

The Blade of Corruption counts as a Hand Weapon. Any creature wounded by it must immediately make a Difficult (-10) Toughness Test or suffer an additional 3 Damage and gain one *Poisoned* Condition as the weapon's venom courses through their veins.

If used by a non-Skaven, the Blade of Corruption slowly poisons its wielder. The victim must succeed on a Difficult (-10) Toughness Test each time it is used in combat. Each failed Test permanently drains the wielder of 1d10 Toughness. A Character reduced to 0 Toughness dissolves into a sticky mess of pestilential slime.

Blade of Nurglitch (Pestilens and allied clans only)

This Hand Weapon is blessed by the special ointments of the Plaguelords. These filth-encrusted blades carry a stronger version of the *Infected* monster trait (WFRP, page 340). In order to avoid a Festering Wound, any creature wounded by one of these blades must pass a Difficult (-10) Endurance Test.

Warp-Blades (Skryre and allied clans only)

Warp-blades are unique to Clan Skryre. They are commonly attached to poles, creating halberd-like weapons, or are directly implanted into the arms of Warlock Engineers. A tangle of wires feeds the blades, which hum with barely contained Warp energy. When used in hand-to-hand combat, Warp-blades are treated as either Halberds (in the case of those mounted on poles), or Hand Weapons (when they are implanted into a Warlock's arms), both with a +1 bonus to Damage and the ZZAP! Quality.

Warpforged Weapons

Warpforged weapons are created from steel that has been infused with powdered Warpstone, and have the Penetrating Quality even if weapons of their type normally don't. If the weapon already has the Penetrating Quality, a Warpforged version ignores the first 2 AP of metal armour, and all AP from non-metal armours.

Weeping Weapon (Eshin and allied clans only)

During their manufacture, a small amount of Warpstone is incorporated into the metal of the blade, accompanied by secret spells known only to the clan's Sorcerers. A Weeping Blade constantly sweats a powerful, Warpstone-tainted venom. Victims who suffer at least one Wound from the weapon immediately take 2 *Poisoned* Conditions per SL on the attack Test.

Most of these weapons take the form of Knives or Swords, but other weapons with the same deadly properties have been seen, including throwing stars.



SKAVEN MELEE WEAPONS

Weapon	Enc	Availability	Reach	Damage	Qualities and Flaws
BASIC					
Punch Dagger	0	Eshin only	Very Short	SB+1	Defensive, Fast
Rat Claws	0	Eshin only	Very Short	SB+2	Defensive, Fast
Tail Weapon	0	Skaven only	Short	SB+1	Distract, Imprecise
FLAIL					
Plague Censer	3	Pestilens only	Long	SB+4	Distract, Impact, Imprecise, Tiring, Warpstone
POLEARM					
Beast-Prod	3	Moulder only	Long	SB+4	ZZAP!
Things-Catcher	3	Skaven only	Long	SB+2	Entangle

Tail Weapon

Skaven with the *Tail Fighting* Talent (below) can use small blades or maces attached to their tails. This gives them an additional melee attack each round.

Things-Catcher (Moulder and allied clans only)

This two-handed polearm has a large, fork-like head lined on the inside with spikes. Designed to be thrust around the torsos and extremities of foes, these weapons can immobilise creatures of nearly any size. Clan Moulder is the only clan to use Things-Catchers on a regular basis, though they are sometimes employed by warbands sent to fetch prisoners.

NEW TALENT: TAIL FIGHTING

Max: 1

Tests: Any Melee Test involving a Tail weapon

You possess a tail, and are adept at using it for fine manipulation. You may use your tail for any task that would normally require a hand. Additionally, you may make one additional attack with a suitably designed Tail Weapon on your turn.

RANGED WEAPONS

Skaven ranged weapons tend to be both more advanced, and far more dangerous, than their human or dwarf made equivalents.

Death Globe (Skryre and allied clans only)

This is a Poisoned Wind Globe of an even more potent variety, able to release great volumes of deadly gas. It is identical to a Poisoned Wind Globe (see **The Horned Rat**, page 8) except that its cloud is twice as big, targets must pass a **Hard (-20)** **Toughness** Test to resist its effects, and those who fail lose 1d10 Wounds, modified by Toughness Bonus but not by Armour.

Doomrocket (Skryre and allied clans only)

This handheld rocket launcher is said to be based on designs stolen from Ind and sold to the Warlock Engineers by Clan Eshin. They are quite unreliable even by Clan Skryre's standards, but unmistakably terrifying.

If a Doomrocket attack results in a Fumble, roll on the table and apply the result.

DOOMROCKET FUMBLE TABLE

Percentile Roll	Result
01-33	<i>Dud:</i> The Doomrocket hits the target but fails to explode. Its Damage is decreased to +6 and loses the Blast Quality.
34-89	<i>Off Course:</i> Something has come loose, and the Doomrocket veers from its intended course. It strikes 2d10 yards away from its intended target. Roll 1d10 to determine its direction (1-5 left; 6-10 right).
90-100	<i>Explosion!</i> The Doomrocket explodes prematurely, dealing 2d10+5 Damage to every creature within 5 yards of the user.

Electro-Whip (Moulder and allied clans only)

Crackling with bright green energy from a chunk of Warpstone in the handle, this whip inflicts terrible pain on its victims. Terrible scarring, and possibly mutation, often follow.

Infernal Bomb (Eshin and allied clans only)

These iron-clad devices use cogs and gears to delay a blast of hellish energy. It is a *Blast 5* explosive with +12 Damage, which can be set to detonate up to 10 rounds after it is dropped or thrown. They are commonly used to create new doors in buildings or to cover a hasty retreat.

Poisoned Wind Globe (Skryre and allied clans only)

A Clan Skryre innovation, these small hollow glass spheres contain a noxious gas. When thrown, the sphere shatters, dispersing the poison. If the globe fails to hit its target, consult the following table:

POISONED WIND GLOBE

1d10	Result
1	You drop the globe at your feet, but somehow it doesn't break.
2-9	The globe falls 1d10 yards short of the target. This may cause it to land behind the thrower, indicating a particularly poor attempt.
10	You drop the globe at your feet and it shatters.

When the globe shatters, it releases a cloud of poisonous gas 3 yards in diameter and 3 yards high. The cloud persists for 1d10-1 rounds (a roll of 1 indicating that there is a draught or breeze strong enough to disperse it instantly). Every Character within the cloud must make a **Challenging (+0) Toughness** Test, modified by *Resistance (Poison)* and similar Talents or Traits, or suffer a +4 Damage hit that ignores armour and Toughness. A target must repeat the Test every round they remain in the cloud.

Poisoned Wind Globes are sometimes deployed as traps, using a simple tripwire. If a Character fails to spot the tripwire — **Challenging (+0) Perception** Test — the trap is sprung, and the globe shatters at the Character's feet. Treat these as any other attack with this weapon, centred on the triggering Character.

Poisoned Wind Mortar (Skryre and allied clans only)

The Poisoned Wind Mortar allows a weapons team to fire a weightier Poisoned Wind Globe to a range greater than a lone Globadier could hope to achieve. Hurting the enemy without risking one's own fur is always an appealing idea to Skaven. This weapon requires a crew of two: a trained Bombardier to fire it supported by a Crewvermin loader.

Ratling Gun (Skryre and allied clans only)

One of Clan Skryre's newer innovations, the Ratling Gun is a large, multi-barrelled repeating firearm. One squeeze of the trigger fires a barrage of Warpstone bullets, perforating a wide area.



WARPFIRE THROWER FUMBLE TABLE

1d10	Result
1	<i>Whomp!</i> The device explodes, dealing 2d10+5 Damage to everyone within 5 yards of the device.
2-9	Fuel Leak: Highly explosive fuel leaks out and ignites. Everyone within 3 yards of the device, including the crew, gains two <i>Ablaze</i> Conditions; those 3-6 yards away gain one <i>Ablaze</i> Condition.
10	<i>Phut!</i> The Warpfire Thrower fails to activate, but can be fired again the next round.

Smoke Bomb (Eshin and allied clans only)

When thrown or dropped, a Smoke Bomb creates a dense cloud of smoke in a 2 yard radius, lasting for 1d10 rounds (halve the duration if there is a strong wind). The smoke cloud completely obscures anything in its area, preventing ranged weapon attacks, magic missiles, and other effects that rely on sight.

Snare-Net (Eshin and allied clans only)

Snare-nets are strong but lightweight nets covered in hooks, used by Gutter Runners to capture prisoners alive or to entangle and slow opponents.

A Snare-net causes twice the normal number of *Entangled* Conditions.

Warpfire Thrower (Skryre and allied clans only)

The Warpfire Thrower hurls a blast of unnatural flame. It requires a crew of two: one Skaven carries a fuel vat and the other aims the nozzle. With a flip of a switch, powdered Warpstone mixes with onrushing chemicals, bursting into unholy flame. The hellish gout can turn multiple enemies into a twitching pile of smouldering goo.

Like almost all of Clan Skryre's creations, the Warpfire Thrower is unreliable. If a Warpfire Thrower attack results in a Fumble, roll on the table and apply the result.

Warp-grinder

The Warp-grinder is an experimental Skaven device for speedy excavation. It can cut through the hardest rock formations in a matter of moments. It is powered by Warpstone, and thus potentially very unstable. The Warp-grinder is a Major Corrupting Influence.

The Warp-grinder projects a flickering arc of green-black dark magic that rips through everything it touches. It consists of a Warpstone-tipped staff connected to a brass-jacketed Warpstone condenser by a tangle of hoses and wires.

It requires a crew of two: one to carry the condenser and one to operate the staff. The Warp-grinder can cut a 5 ft diameter tunnel through most kinds of rock at a Movement rate of 2. While it was not designed as a weapon, it can be deadly at short range. Of a two-Skaven crew, the one with the staff can attack with the Warp-grinder, and the Skaven with the condenser uses a hand weapon. Enc is shared between the crew.

Warplock Jezzail (Skryre and allied clans only)

Similar in some respects to the jezzails of Araby, Warplock Jezzails have small amounts of Warpstone worked into the weapon and its ammunition. Warplock Jezzails can utilise mundane blackpowder and shot, but this reduces their Range to 72 and reduces the Damage to +5.

Warplock Jezzails are heavy, but one Skaven is usually enough to carry the device. However, bracing and aiming the weapon is difficult and a second Skaven is usually assigned to hold up the rifle's barrel.

If a Warplock Jezzail attack results in a Fumble, roll 1d10. On a result of 1, the Jezzail blows up in the wielder's hand, destroying itself in a *Blast 1* explosion dealing the same Damage as a successful shot. On a result of 2-10, roll on the 'Oops!' Table in **WFRP**, page 160.

Warplock Pistol

The Warplock Pistol fires pellets of Warpstone, with a longer range than a blackpowder pistol. If a Warplock Pistol attack results in a Fumble, roll 1d10. On a result of 1, the pistol blows up in the wielder's hand, destroying itself in a *Blast 1* explosion dealing the same Damage as a successful attack. On a result of 2-10, roll on the 'Oops!' Table in **WFRP**, page 160.

Warpmusket (Skryre and allied clans only)

Shorter than the dreaded Warplock Jezzail, Warpmuskets are easier to use but less effective. They may be loaded with either a regular Warpstone Bullet, or with Warpstone Buckshot.

If a Warpmusket attack results in a Fumble, roll 1d10. On a result of 1, the weapon blows up in the wielder's hand, destroying itself in a *Blast 1* explosion dealing the same Damage as a successful attack. On a result of 2-10, roll on the 'Oops!' Table in **WFRP**, page 160.

Warpstone Star (Eshin and allied clans only)

A favourite weapon of Clan Eshin, this throwing star is coated with a Warpstone paste that increases its damage considerably. Some Warpstone Stars are Weeping weapons (see box, page 35).

SKAVEN HEAVY WEAPONS

The weapons listed above are somewhat common, found in larger warbands or small armies. However, the Skaven – and in particular, the Warlock Engineers of Clan Skryre – are capable of producing war machines of considerable size, such as the massive cannon encountered in the final chapter of *The Horned Rat*. A few of the best-known are described below. Stopping one of these monstrosities could be the focus of an entire adventure.

Doom-Flayer: Powered by a highly unreliable Warpstone-powered engine, this metal ball is crewed by a single Warlock Engineer. It is fitted with an array of whirling blades, which enable it to cut through a mass of enemies with ease – until its motor either seizes up or explodes.

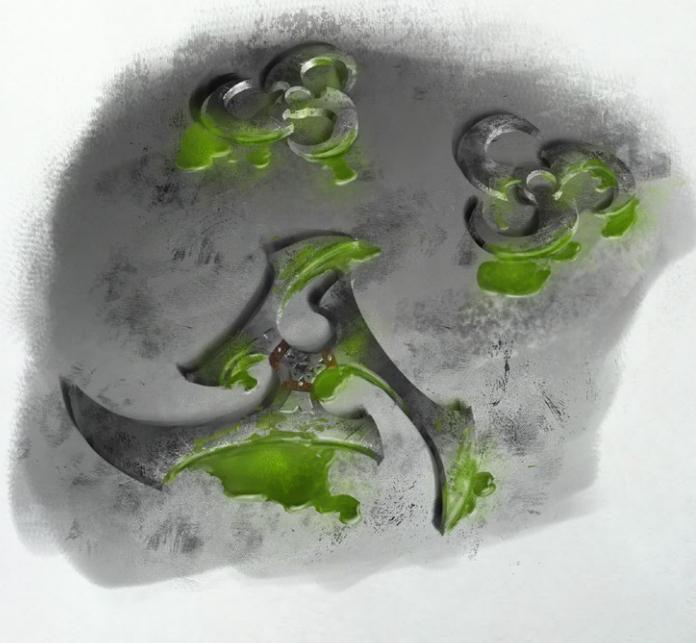
Doomwheel: This great wooden wheel is powered by Crewvermin running within it, commanded by a Warlock Engineer. It is fitted with a smaller version of the dreaded Warp Lightning Cannon (see below), and mounts an array of jagged, filthy blades on its front.

Screaming Bell: Mounted on a crude cart and pulled by a mass of slaves, this great Warpstone-tainted bell is commanded by a Grey Seer. Its blasphemous chimes can deafen and terrify enemies, while giving courage to the Skaven who follow it – the bell's brazen voice is the sound of the Horned Rat's blessing upon them.

Plague Furnace: A foul creation of Clan Pestilens, the Plague Furnace is essentially a gigantic Plague Censer mounted on a cart pulled by a chanting crew of Plague Monks commanded by a Plague Priest. Noxious fumes billow forth, spreading pestilence and sometimes obscuring the movements of the Skaven forces that follow it.

Plagueclaw Catapult: Like the Plague Furnace, the Plagueclaw catapult is a weapon of Clan Pestilens. Similar to a siege catapult, it fires enormous balls of pestilence that break open on impact, creating vile clouds of the same noxious vapour.

Warp Lightning Cannon: The greatest of the Warlock Engineers' heavy weapons, the Warp Lightning Cannon fires a deadly arc of Warp-energy capable of punching a hole through every known form of matter.



SKAVEN RANGED WEAPONS

Weapon	Enc	Availability	Range	Damage	Qualities and Flaws
ENTANGLING					
Electro-Whip	0	Clan Moulder only	6	+SB+2	ZZAP!, Entangle
Snare-Net	0	Clan Eshin only	4	-	Entangle
ENGINEERING					
Doomrocket	4	Clan Skryre only	50	+12	Dangerous, Impact
Poisoned Wind Mortar	3*	Clan Skryre only	100 (min. 20)	Special***	Special***
Ratling Gun	3*	Clan Skryre only	20	+9	Dangerous, Reload 4
Warpfire Thrower	2*	Clan Skryre only	30	+12	Dangerous, Warpstone
Warp-grinder	2*	Clan Skryre only	5	+12	Penetrating, Slow, Tiring, Warpstone
BLACKPOWDER					
Warplock Jezzail	4	Clan Skryre only	100	+9	Accurate, Dangerous, Precise, Reload 4
Warplock Pistol	1	Clan Skryre only	20	+8	Dangerous, Pistol
Warpmusket	2	Clan Skryre only	40	+8	Dangerous, Reload 2
THROWING					
Death Globe	1	Clan Skryre only	SB×2	Special	-
Infernal Bomb	0	Clan Eshin only	SB	+12	Blast 5, Dangerous, Impact, Timer**
Poisoned Wind Globe	0	Clan Skryre only	SB×3	Special	-
Smoke Bomb	0	Clan Eshin only	SB×3	-	-
Warpstone Star	0	Clan Eshin only	SB×2	+SB+3	Damaging, Warpstone

*These weapons have large ammunition or other separate components that require a crew of at least two to use properly. The number shown here is the Encumbrance that the lead operator (the Skaven aiming the weapon and pulling the trigger) must bear. The ammunition table opposite indicates additional burden the secondary crew Skaven must bear.

**Detonation can be delayed by up to 10 rounds: see weapon description.

***As Poisoned Wind Globe or Death Globe.

SKAVEN AMMUNITION

Ammunition	Enc	Availability	Range	Damage	Qualities and Flaws
BLACKPOWDER					
Jezzail Bullet and Powder (12)	0	Exotic	+20	+2	Impale, Penetrating, Warpstone
Warpstone Bullet and Powder	0	Exotic	+10	-	Damaging, Penetrating, Warpstone
Warpstone Buckshot	0	Exotic	-	-	Blast +1, Warpstone
ENGINEERING					
Doomrocket (1)	1	Exotic	-	-	Blast 5
Warpfire Fuel Vat (1)	2	Exotic	-	-	Blast 2*, Warpstone
Ratling Gun Belt (4)	2	Exotic	-	-	Repeater 1d10**, Warpstone

* Targets struck by a Warpfire Thrower must make a **Challenging (+0) Endurance** Test or gain an *Ablaze* condition.

** Generate this number the first time you fire a Ratling Gun after reloading it.

MAGIC ITEMS

The Skaven blend magic and technology in a way no other Species can match — and in fact, to the Skaven, there is little difference between the two. The items below vary from commonplace among the Skaven, such as the gas masks used by Poisoned Wind Globadiers and other Skaven lucky enough to scavenge one, to the truly powerful and arcane, such as the *Liber Bubonicus*.

Gas Mask (Skryre and allied clans only)

Clan Skryre's Poison Globadiers wear complicated contraptions upon their backs that consist of metal tubes and bellows, all of which connect to their gas masks. These masks, designed solely for the use of Skaven, grant the Globadiers a +40 bonus to any Endurance Tests made to resist the effects of inhaled poisons or gasses.

Liber Bubonicus (Pestilens and allied clans only)

Also known as the Book of Woe, the *Liber Bubonicus* contains the collected wisdom of Clan Pestilens: a chronicle of every corruption and plague since the clan's emergence. Every disease created and every foul experiment is marked down and tracked, both their composition and their effect on the living.

Each of the different orders of Plague Monks keeps its own copy, updated daily by a Plague Priest. A Skaven who loses a copy of this sacred tome is cursed by the Horned Rat, and must roll on the Wrath of the Gods table (WFRP, page 218) every day until the book is recovered and those who stole it have been punished in a grisly ritual sacrifice.

By reading from a copy of the *Liber Bubonicus*, a Plague Priest or Plague Lord can cast any spell from the Lore of Plague (see page 48) as if from a Warp Scroll (see below), with no Casting Test and no chance of a miscast or a critical. Each spell may be cast once per day.

Skalm

This foul-smelling ointment instantly cures 1d10 + 1 lost Wounds per application, causing the flesh around a wound to twist and fuse in a disturbing manner. Each use counts as Moderate Exposure to Corruption.



Skavenbrew

This concoction is made of Warpstone and the blood of many creatures. Skaven drink it to make themselves more ferocious in battle, but its effects are unpredictable. After consuming a dose, consult the following table.

The effects of Skavenbrew persist for 2d10 – Toughness Bonus rounds, to a minimum of 1 round. Non-Skaven who consume Skavenbrew are affected as normal, but once the effect ends they must immediately make a **Challenging (+0) Endurance** Test. If they fail, they suffer one *Poisoned* and one *Bleeding* Condition. On an Astounding Failure (–6 SL or worse) they also suffer one *Ablaze* Condition.

SKAVENBREW

Percentile Roll	Result
01-29	<i>Gone Bad.</i> Gain 2 <i>Poisoned</i> Conditions. The Skavenbrew has no additional effect.
30-59	<i>Inspired Hatred.</i> The drinker gains Hatred of all enemies.
60-89	<i>Frenzied.</i> The drinker becomes subject to Frenzy.
90-100	<i>Rabid.</i> The drinker's metabolism is driven to a hyperactive, feverish pitch. The drinker is subject to Frenzy, with the following changes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add +2 to Strength Bonus for the purposes of calculating Damage on all attacks. • The physical strain causes 1 automatic Wound each round.

Warp Scroll (Pestilens and allied clans only)

Plague Priests going to war often bring along copies of key passages from the great *Liber Bubonicus*, written in Warpstone-infused ink on the cured hides of defeated enemies. Each scroll contains one spell from the Lore of Plague (see page 48), which may be cast once by reading the scroll out loud. No Casting Test is necessary, and there is no chance of a miscast or a critical.

Warlock Optics (Skryre and allied clans only)

This Warp-enhanced optical device allows a Warlock Engineer to focus on a foe clearly, even those partially hidden in cover. When fitted to a ranged weapon, it negates all difficulty modifiers for shooting at a target in cover.

Warp Energy Condenser (Skryre and allied clans only)

The Warp Energy Condenser enhances Warp-blades (see page 35). When used alongside a Warp-blade, the weapon deals an additional +1 Damage.

Warp-Power Accumulator (Skryre and allied clans only)

A Warlock Engineer equipped with a supercharged Warp-power Accumulator increases the amount of Warp energy funnelled into any *Warp Lightning* spells he casts. When calculating Success Levels for the spell, you may reverse the dice used for the Casting Test if this result would be better.

However, if you miscast *Warp Lightning* when using a Warp-Power Accumulator, the device begins to overload in addition to the usual effects of the miscast. Unless the Warlock Engineer can shut the accumulator down on the next turn, which requires a **Hard (-30) Dexterity** Test to access the poorly placed emergency shut off, it explodes dealing 3d10 Damage, reduced by Toughness Bonus and armour, to everyone within 3 yards, and counts as a Moderate Exposure to Corruption to everyone within 5 yards.

Warpstone Tokens

The Skaven use Warpstone as both fuel and currency. To most non-Skaven, these are simply odd coins tainted by Warpstone, and are treated as any other sort of Warpstone for the purposes of spellcasting, corruption, and so on. However, Skaven spellcasters possess a metabolism attuned to the terrible power of Warpstone and are affected differently (see page 44).

WARPSTONE ADDICTION

Warpstone pervades the lives of the Skaven, and some can become addicted to it. Each time a Skaven eats a Warpstone Token, they must make a **Difficult (-10) Willpower** Test or become addicted to Warpstone. An addict must consume 1 Warpstone Token each day or take a cumulative –10 penalty to all Tests for each day they have gone without Warpstone. There is no cure for Warpstone addiction, and almost every powerful Skaven of note consumes considerable amounts of the substance. Their metabolism is uniquely suited to Warpstone, and while large amounts remain dangerous to Skaven – hence their use of low-ranking Skaven and prisoners in mining the stuff – consumed in smaller quantities, it prolongs their lives apparently indefinitely.



CHAPTER 4

SKAVEN MAGIC



SKAVEN MAGIC

Skaven magic, much like the creatures themselves, is particularly dangerous and unpredictable. Though they have a natural affinity for Warpstone — the raw stuff of Chaos and a potent source of magic — the Skaven have little natural magical ability. Instead, they must consume Warpstone for any hope to work the Winds of Magic.

SKAVEN MAGIC USERS

The Grey Seers are the mage-priests of the Horned Rat. Unlike other gods, the Horned Rat provides no miracles to his devout followers. However, the magical might the Grey Seers derive from their consumption of Warpstone fulfils this role in Skaven society, and the practice of magic is irrevocably associated with worshipping the Horned Rat.

This makes the existence of other magic users in Skaven society, such as the Festering Chantors of Clan Pestilens, the rumoured Sorcerers of Clan Eshin, and the Harbingers of Mutation of Clan Moulder, troublesome to the Grey Seers — the 169 commandments of the Horned Rat suggest that magical practice not tied to worshipping the Horned Rat is heretical. Clan Pestilens in particular has a number of skilled magic users who wield great powers of pestilence and decay, but the Grey Seers are suspicious as to the source of these powers. While the clan maintains that their grasp of plague and disease is a gift of the Horned Rat, their knowledge and prowess far exceeds that of any other Skaven clan.

The Warlock Engineers of Clan Skryre are less troublesome in this regard, as their peerless blending of magic and technology is more explicable to the Grey Seers; Clan Skryre's studies are permitted according to the Black Pillar of Commandments. Still, the Warlock Engineers' technomancy gives them powers the Grey Seers would rather they alone wielded, and so they are still watched with a degree of healthy paranoia.

Though the clan vigorously denies their existence, the Sorcerers of Clan Eshin appear to have learned their craft from Cathay. Their grasp of the shadowy ways of *Ulgu* is impressive, though these spellcasters weave far more *Dhar* into their magic than any but the most depraved Human wizards would dare attempt. It is by their magics that Skaven infiltrators have breached some of the most impregnable enemy fortifications. Their sorcery also causes the bodies of most Eshin Gutter Runners, should they die on the surface, to boil away to a greasy puddle — the better to keep the foolish surface dwellers in ignorance of the soon-to-be-ascendant empire broiling beneath their feet.

Rules

Skaven spellcasters have their own lists of Petty and Arcane spells from which to choose. Skaven grimoires are all but impossible to decipher by other wizards, and in any case Skaven magic is of a somewhat different nature to that taught at the Colleges of Altdorf. While it is up to the GM if Skaven spellcasters can learn the Arcane spells presented in **WFRP** pages 242–244, non-Skaven are strictly forbidden from learning any spells from the Lores of Plague, Stealth, and Ruin.

Careers

Skaven Grey Seers, Clan Moulder Harbingers of Mutation, and Clan Eshin Sorcerers use the Wizard Career found on **WFRP** page 60. Warlock Engineers also use the Wizard Career, but they must also have completed at least one tier of the Engineer Career (**WFRP**, page 54). Grey Seers can learn any of the three Skaven lores. Clan Eshin Sorcerers may only take the *Arcane Magic (Stealth)* Talent. Warlock Engineers may only take the *Arcane Lore (Ruin)* Talent.



THE PILLAR OF COMMANDMENTS

When he revealed himself to the Skaven, the Horned Rat placed a great pillar of black obsidian at the heart of Skavenblight. The pillar has thirteen sides, each containing thirteen edicts from the Horned Rat himself. Many are contradictory, but this is seen as evidence that the Horned Rat is a cunning and duplicitous god, and expects the same from his verminous children.

Touching the stone is almost always spectacularly fatal for any Skaven that attempts it, but surviving such an attempt is a requirement for anyone wishing to ascend to the Council of Thirteen. Aside from the original Council members, the number of Skaven to have survived this ordeal may be counted on one paw.

Skaven Plague-Priests and Festering Chantors use the Warrior Priest Career from **WFRP** page 116, but replace the *Bless* Talent with *Petty Magic*, and the *Invoke* Talent with *Arcane Lore (Plague)*. Additionally, add the Language (Magick) Skill to the Novitiate level of the Career, and Channelling (Plague) to the Warrior Priest level of the Career.

Skaven Magic and Warpstone

Skaven must consume Warpstone to wield the Winds of Magic — it is an essential part of the Skaven metabolism, and Skaven who use magic quickly burn away the traces of Warpstone in their own bodies. In game terms there is little effect, as most Skaven sorcerers are presumed to have consumed enough for any spells they need. However, if cut off from their supply of Warpstone for a significant amount of time, their ability to cast spells fades. Of course, most Skaven sorcerers are hopelessly addicted to Warpstone, typically carrying about a fair quantity of Warpstone Tokens (page 40), and perish if denied it for long.

For Skaven, using the refined Warpstone found in Warpstone Tokens is a little different from consuming the raw stuff of Chaos itself. Before casting a spell or channelling, a Skaven magic user can eat up to three Warpstone Tokens to boost their powers. Each Token adds +2 SL to the relevant Casting or Channelling Test, but does not double the SL of the Test or count as casting near a malignant influence (see **WFRP** pages 237–238). Consuming three Warpstone Tokens adds +6 SL, and in addition the result of the Test is doubled and the rules for casting near a malignant influence applied just as if the caster was using a piece of raw Warpstone. The +6 SL are added after the result of the Test has been doubled. Consuming more than three Warpstone Tokens has no additional effect, but is often fatal.

SKAVEN PETTY MAGIC

Skaven with the *Petty Magic* Talent may choose from the below spells as normal for that Talent. It is up to the GM if they can cast the normal Petty Magic spells from **WFRP** pages 240–242, but only Skaven may learn Skaven Petty Magic.

Favour of the Horned Rat

CN: 0

Range: You

Target: You

Duration: 13 hours

You gain an additional Fortune Point for the duration of the spell. You may only benefit from this spell once for every 13 hour period. Attempting to use this spell again before the full 13 hours have passed draws the disfavour of the Horned Rat — the effects of this remain up to the GM.

Ghostly Flame

CN: 0

Range: Willpower yards

Target: 1

Duration: 1 hour or Instant (see below)

You conjure a small blob of glowing green fire out of thin air, dripping viscous fluid as it burns. On subsequent turns, you may end this spell by using your action to hurl the fiery mess at an opponent. Use Ranged (Throwing) and treat the projectile as having Damage equal to your Strength Bonus plus Willpower Bonus. Otherwise, this petty spell generates light equivalent to a torch and remains for one hour before sputtering out.

Mark of the Horned Rat

CN: 0

Range: Willpower Bonus yards

Target: 1

Duration: 1d10 hours

The target must succeed on a **Challenging (+0) Cool** Test or gain an unsightly, weeping sore on their forehead or the back of their hand. The blemish remains for 1d10 hours and imposes a -10 penalty on all Fellowship Tests for the duration.

Grey Seers use this spell to mark their messengers. Despite the Fellowship penalty, those Skaven bearing it are usually allowed to pass relatively freely through Skaven tunnels and settlements.

Rat Thrall

CN: 0

Range: Willpower yards

Target: 1 (see below)

Duration: 1d10 hours

You summon an ordinary brown rat. For the next 1d10 hours, you may communicate with the rat as if you shared a common language, and it must obey all of your commands even if they would cause its own death. Rat thralls can fetch small objects, gnaw through ropes, and other simple tasks that an ordinary rat could perform, but such requests are limited by the rat's animal intelligence.



Vector

CN: 0

Range: Willpower Bonus yards

Target: 1

Duration: 24 hours

The target must succeed on a **Challenging (+0) Endurance** Test or suffer a -20 penalty to all Tests made to resist disease for 24 hours. Targets with *Resistance (Disease)* may use that Talent to resist this spell.

Wrack

CN: 0

Range: Willpower Bonus yards

Target: 1

Duration: Instant

You cause a spark of warp-energy to fly from your outstretched fingers, striking a single target with a jolt of searing pain. The target must make a **Challenging (+0) Endurance** Test or gain one *Stunned* Condition.

SKAVEN ARCANE MAGIC

Treat Arcane spells as extra options for every Skaven Lore of Magic. They are counted as Lore spells in all ways, meaning they get all the benefits of Lore spells, and can only be learned from and taught to those sharing the same Arcane Magic Talent.

Any spell marked with a '+' at the end of the Duration gains the following extra text: 'When the spell should end, you may make a Willpower Test to extend the Duration for +1 round.'

Curse of the Horned Rat

CN: 19

Range: Willpower yards

Target: AoE (Willpower Bonus yards)

Duration: Willpower Bonus hours

With a sickening lurch, the fabric of reality is torn by the twisting power of the Great Horned One. The target creature, and any others within a number of yards equal to your Willpower Bonus, must make a **Challenging (+0) Endurance** Test or be transformed into Skaven of size appropriate to the original victim, nominally under your command. Most become Clanrats or Stormvermin, but Ogres typically become Rat Ogres. They are as loyal as any Skaven, with vague memories of tunnels, betrayal, and the dark of the Under-Empire replacing those of their old life. Their nature is like that of any Skaven, and victims are unlikely to follow commands that would result in their death unless failing to follow those commands appears likely to be just as fatal.

The forms of most humanoids were never intended to become as the Skaven, who despite being known colloquially as ratmen are far more rat than man. In most cases the spell's victims will revert to their true forms after the spell has ended, though all will bear some mark of what was done to them. This often takes the form of a patch of fur, a malformed tail or yellowed, pointed teeth. The victim may spend a Fate point to resist the effects of this spell, or to revert to their true form if already under its effect.

IS IT FUN TO BE A RAT?

It could be! Note that this is the sort of spell that could effectively end a Character's career, as they scuttle off with their Skaven allies only to wake up in the Under-Empire, enslaved to the very creatures they briefly thought were their kin. However, it could also be an excellent way to start an interesting adventure, with Characters plunging into the underdark to track down a Skaven who was once — and might be again — their comrade.

Regardless, a canny GM will pay close attention to their Characters' Fate Points before unleashing this particular horror upon them.

Death Frenzy

CN: 5

Range: Touch

Target: 1

Duration: Willpower Bonus rounds+

You fill a Skaven with a horrible ravenous hunger, causing foam to fleck their mouth and their eyes to roll madly in their head. Your target becomes subject to Frenzy (WFRP, page 190) for the duration of the spell. Unwilling targets may attempt to resist these effects by making a **Challenging (+0) Cool** Test. Those that succeed suffer 1 Wound as they gnaw on their own extremities to distract from the spell's call to violence.

Musk of Terror

CN: 9

Range: Willpower yards

Target: AoE (Willpower Bonus yards)

Duration: Willpower Bonus rounds+

You summon a large cloud of choking musk. Any creature within the cloud is exposed to a *Terror (1)* effect or *Terror (2)* for Skaven (WFRP, page 191) as the deadly musk fills their minds with thoughts of fear. Victims perceive the caster as the source of this Terror.

Skitterleap

CN: 6

Range: Touch

Target: 1

Duration: Instant

With a sound of inrushing air and a puff of brimstone-scented smoke, you teleport yourself or one ally you can touch to any location within Willpower yards. If targeting an unwilling target, resolve the touch attempt using the rules for casting a touch spell in combat (WFRP, page 236), and the victim may make a **Difficult (-10) Cool** Test to change their destination by +SL yards. The target must be Average size or smaller. You must be able to see the destination, and this location must be free of objects and creatures or the spell fails.

Vermintide

CN: 8

Range: You

Target: Special

Duration: 2 × Willpower Bonus rounds+

You summon a swarm of rats that appear next to you and move as you direct, attacking any creature (except you) they encounter. You do not need to spend your action directing the swarm — it responds to any squeaked command readily. However, after Willpower Bonus rounds have elapsed, you lose control of the swarm. Thereafter, it moves about at random, attacking any creature it encounters.

If the rat swarm encounters a creature, the rats scurry across its lower extremities biting and scratching furiously, inflicting 1d10 Wounds to each non-prosthetic leg a creature has. This Damage is reduced by Toughness Bonus, but not armour (the rats scuttle inside of clothing and armour with alarming skill). The rats climb over any object less than 1 yard tall to reach their victims.

The swarm can be destroyed by any area of effect attack, but is immune to regular attacks — a sword blow or stomped boot will kill a rat or two, but more emerge to take their place. While not under the direct control of the caster, the swarm will not attack victims wielding a torch or other sizable open flame if another target is available, and will avoid targets inflicted with an *Ablaze* Condition entirely.

After the spell ends, the rats disperse.



THE LORE OF RUIN

The Lore of Ruin channels the terrible power of Warpstone to lash out at targets, often incinerating them whole. It is focused on destruction and disintegration, and is feared throughout Skavendom and beyond.

This terrible power is highly invigorating and the sensation of barely restrained energy is almost addictive. Whenever you successfully cast a spell from the Lore of Ruin, you may add +1 SL to any Initiative- or Agility-based Tests for the next 1d10 rounds.

Ingredients: Grey Seers use various scraps of fur, hide, bones, and crystalline Warpstone when casting spells from the Lore of Ruin.

Crack's Call

CN: 11

Range: You

Target: AoE (Willpower yards)

Duration: Instant

With an arcane incantation, you stamp your paw and the very ground splits asunder. A 1-yard-wide crack appears at your feet and runs a number of yards equal to your Willpower in a straight line in any direction within your line of sight.

Any creatures of size Average or smaller in its path must make an **Average (+20) Dodge** Test to leap out of the way. Those who fail fall a number of yards equal to your Willpower Bonus plus the SL of your Casting Test, and can do nothing except try to climb out. Targets who fall into the crack are *Prone*. Walls undermined by this spell likely collapse, and unfortified buildings are damaged severely.

If you score +4 SL or higher, you may increase the width of the crack to 2 yards. Large creatures can now fall into the crack, even the sturdiest walls collapse, unfortified buildings tumble down, and fortified structures are severely damaged.

Crackling Doom

CN: 5

Range: Willpower Bonus yards

Target: 1

Duration: Instant

You send a single crackling arc of green energy at the target. *Crackling Doom* is a *magic missile* with a Damage of +4. In addition, anyone damaged by this spell must make a successful **Challenging (+0) Endurance** Test or gain one *Stunned* Condition for every SL on the Casting Test.

Flensing Ruin

CN: 6

Range: Willpower Bonus yards

Target: 1

Duration: Instant

Green ribbons of warp-energy tear the flesh from the target's bones. This is a *magic missile* with a Damage of +4 which ignores both armour and Toughness Bonus.

Howling Warpgle

CN: 7

Range: You

Target: AoE (Willpower yards)

Duration: Willpower Bonus rounds+

You gesture twitchingly to the skies and fierce hurricane gales begin to swirl around you, filling a radius equal to your Willpower in yards. Enemies cannot fly in the howling winds, and ranged attacks into or out of the affected area suffer a -10 penalty. Your allies are unaffected by either effect as you divert the unnatural winds around them.

Scorch

CN: 8

Range: Willpower yards

Target: AoE (Willpower Bonus yards)

Duration: Instant

You thrust your paws into the ground while chittering the necessary incantations, and a gout of green flame bursts out of the earth at a spot you designate. This is a *magic missile* with a Damage of +10. Anyone damaged by the flame suffers one *Ablaze* Condition. Being set ablaze by the hideous Warpfire is a Minor Exposure to Corruption.

Warp Lightning

CN: 7

Range: Willpower yards

Target: 1

Duration: Instant

You send a powerful, sizzling bolt of Warp lightning at a foe. This is a *magic missile* with a Damage of +11. If the target hit location was covered in metal armour, ignore the armour's AP and instead add it to the damage inflicted. If you roll a Critical Success on your Casting Test, the Warp-energy overpowers you briefly. In addition to any other effects of the critical casting, you suffer a Damage +1 hit.

Warp Shield

CN: 6

Range: You

Target: You

Duration: Willpower Bonus rounds+

You summon a flare of Warp-energy, shaping it around yourself as a protective shield. While the spell is in effect, all hit locations gain +5 AP. In addition, any creature that touches you — including successfully attacking you with their bare hands or with a hand-held weapon made of metal — takes a hit with Damage equal to 5 + your Willpower Bonus. This hit strikes whichever limb was used to attack you and ignores AP from metal armour.

Warp Storm

CN: 12

Range: Willpower yards

Target: AoE (Willpower Bonus yards)

Duration: Willpower Bonus rounds

You summon a storm of Warp lightning covering a radius equal to your Willpower Bonus in yards. Each round while the spell is in effect, all creatures within the storm suffer a Damage +10 hit to the highest point of their body (usually their head) that ignores AP from metal armour.

If the caster wishes, they may use their action to move the ongoing storm to any location within Willpower yards.



THE LORE OF PLAGUE

The Lore of Plague draws its power from rot and decay, focusing raw *Dhar* into more refined forms of disease and corruption. Its spells corrupt all that they touch, and indeed few become proficient in the Lore of Plague without bearing some of its marks. Most Plague-Priests are covered in sores and pustules: glorious stigmata and a sign of their mastery over the forces of entropy.

The Lore of Plague infuses the wielder with the essence of rot. Whenever you successfully cast a spell from the Lore of Plague, you may gain the *Distracting Creature* Trait (WFRP, page 339) for the next 1d10 rounds.

Ingredients: Plague-Priests use all manner of vile excreta, odious emissions, and corrupted objects as spell ingredients. Most are squirted into the air and ritually inhaled, or burned inside a Plague Censer.

Pestilent Breath

CN: 8

Range: Willpower Bonus yards

Target: AoE (2-yard-wide line)

Duration: Instant

You exhale a pestilent, poisonous cloud in a line 2 yards wide up to the range of the spell. Anyone within the noxious fumes' reach must succeed at a **Difficult (-10) Endurance** Test or suffer a hit with Damage equal to your Willpower Bonus, which ignores armour and Toughness Bonus.

For each additional +2 SL, you may extend the width of the line by 1 yard.

Poisonous Pustule

CN: 5

Range: You

Target: You

Duration: Willpower Bonus hours

You create a pulsing, seeping pustule on one of your extremities. When lanced and drained (which inflicts 1 Wound upon you, regardless of Toughness Bonus and armour), you can spread the pus on to a melee weapon. If a weapon coated with this toxic secretion inflicts at least 1 Wound, it deals an additional number of Wounds equal to your Willpower Bonus unless the target succeeds at a **Hard (-20) Endurance** Test.

The pustule forms in a matter of seconds, and may be left in place for any length of time before it is drained. Once drained, the duration indicates how long the toxic pus remains effective. You may have a number of active pustules equal to your Toughness Bonus.

Bless with Filth

CN: 6

Range: Touch**Target:** 1**Duration:** Willpower Bonus minutes+

A foul mist wraps around one melee weapon you touch, or up to three items of ammunition for ranged or throwing weapons. The infused objects immediately begin to drip with toxic fluid. While the spell is in effect, all damaging hits with the weapon cause a *Poisoned* Condition in addition to normal damage.

Cloud of Corruption

CN: 7

Range: You**Target:** AoE (5-yard radius)**Duration:** Instant

You release a stinking blast of diseased fury. Every creature within 5 yards of you must make a **Challenging (+0) Endurance** Test or gain 1 *Poisoned* Condition. In addition, each attack you make for the next Willpower Bonus rounds gains the *Infected* Trait (WFRP, page 340).

Mantle of Contagion

CN: 4

Range: Touch**Target:** 1**Duration:** Willpower Bonus days

You taint a piece of food or clothing with the Black Plague (WFRP, page 186), which remains infectious for the duration of the spell. Anyone who consumes the tainted food or wears the piece of clothing for a minute or more is exposed to the disease.

Putrefy

CN: 8

Range: Willpower yards**Target:** AoE (Willpower Bonus yards)**Duration:** Instant

With a flourish and a curse, you cause all food within the area of effect to rot and decay, rendering it totally inedible. Any creature that eats the infected food is automatically exposed to the Galloping Trots (WFRP, page 187). This spell has been used with great effect to induce famine in surface populations.

Toxic Rain

CN: 10

Range: Willpower yards**Target:** AoE (Willpower Bonus yards)**Duration:** Willpower Bonus rounds+

You conjure a poisonous cloud of toxic smoke and moisture. It drifts a dozen feet or more above the ground. On the round after the spell is cast, the cloud rains a lethal downpour. All creatures in the area of effect must succeed on a **Difficult (-10) Toughness** Test each round or lose 3 Wounds, ignoring armour and Toughness Bonus. If a Character loses 6 or more Wounds to this spell in a single encounter, they also gain an *Unconscious* Condition.

As an action, the caster may move the area of effect of this spell to any point within Willpower yards of their location.



Veil of Flies

CN: 6

Range: You

Target: AoE (Willpower Bonus yards)

Duration: Willpower Bonus rounds+

With a curse and a flailing of your arms, you summon a cloud of gnats and biting flies. They swarm about you, filling the air in every direction for a distance equal to your Willpower Bonus in yards. The swarm moves with you for as long as the spell is in effect. Creatures other than yourself within the swarm suffer a -20 penalty to all Tests from the distraction. In addition, the cloud makes it hard for enemies to see you, imposing a further -20 penalty to all ranged attacks against you.

Weeping Wound

CN: 9

Range: Willpower yards

Target: 1

Duration: Willpower Bonus rounds

While the spell is in effect, every Wound suffered by the target counts as a Minor Infection (WFRP, page 187). All Endurance Tests to avoid *Festering Wounds* suffer a -10 penalty for each SL on your Casting Test. Additionally, if the target would gain a *Bleeding* Condition, they gain two instead.



Wither

CN: 6

Range: Willpower yards

Target: 1

Duration: Instant

Chanting passages from the *Liber Bubonicus*, you point a scabrous paw at the target, who must make a successful **Challenging (+0) Endurance** Test or lose 1 point of Toughness for each SL on your Casting Test. Creatures whose Toughness is reduced to 0 are killed. Characters can spend a Fate Point to be reduced to 1 Toughness and 0 Wounds instead. Characters who lose enough Toughness for their Toughness Bonus to drop must reduce their Wounds total appropriately.

Victims who survive regain 1 point of Toughness per day of complete rest. If treated with any form of healing capable of removing a Critical Wound, the victim recovers another 1d10 lost Toughness.

THE LORE OF STEALTH

The Lore of Stealth draws on the power of *Dhar*, infused with a particularly large portion of *Ulgu*, to confuse and conceal. It is unclear whether this lore remains similar to how it is practised in Cathay, or if the Sorcerers of Clan Eshin have corrupted a more noble form of stealthy magic. Regardless, spells of this lore specialise in concealing the sorcerer from prying eyes, using magic to distract or diminish signs of the Skaven's presence.

The Lore of Stealth wreathes the wielder in threads of magic that obfuscate their presence. Whenever you successfully cast a spell from the Lore of Stealth, you gain the *Stealthy Creature* Trait (WFRP, page 342) for 1d10 rounds.

Ingredients: Clan Eshin Sorcerers use small scraps of paper with assorted runes inscribed on them, which are then coated in powdered Warpstone. When used as an ingredient, the Warpstone powder is consumed, but the scraps of paper remain and can be coated again and reused. The characters used are of no known form of written Queekish, and the Sorcerers of Clan Eshin are in no rush to explain either their meaning or providence.

Swiftscamper

CN: 4

Range: You

Target: You

Duration: Willpower Bonus + SL rounds

You increase your Movement Characteristic by an amount equal to your Willpower Bonus. For every +2 SL, you may increase your Movement Characteristic by an additional point.

Armour of Darkness

CN: 6

Range: You

Target: You

Duration: Willpower Bonus minutes

You solidify the shadows around your body. In addition to making you harder to see in low-light conditions, this shadow armour also protects you from harm. You gain an additional 1 AP to each location, and a +20 bonus to any Stealth Tests you make in dim light.

Black Whirlwind

CN: 12

Range: Willpower yards

Target: AoE (Willpower Bonus yards)

Duration: Willpower Bonus rounds+

You summon a putrid whirlwind of vile smoke and stinging ash. The whirlwind moves up to 10 yards per round in any direction you wish. This does not require any action on your part beyond a few whispered squeals. Those affected by the whirlwind must succeed on a **Challenging (+0) Endurance** Test or suffer a -20 penalty on all Weapon Skill, Ballistic Skill, and Agility Tests, and to any Perception Tests involving sight, for the next 1d10 minutes.

Buoyant Passage

CN: 6

Range: You

Target: You

Duration: Willpower Bonus minutes

You become as buoyant as a piece of balsa wood, allowing you to tread over liquid surfaces like water, sewage, or oil as if they were solid ground. This spell also prevents tracks from forming in soft earth, snow, mud, or similar and any attempt to track you using such signs automatically fails.

Flash-Bang

CN: 6

Range: You

Target: AoE (Willpower Bonus yards)

Duration: Instant

You gesture with one paw and create a bright, loud explosion. Every creature (not including yourself) within the area of effect must make a successful **Challenging (+0) Endurance** Test or gain one *Blinded* and one *Stunned* Condition for each level of failure. On a Critical failure, the victim gains one additional *Stunned* Condition. This spell does not affect anyone with the *Arcane Magic (Stealth)* Talent.

Pelt of the Assassin

CN: 8

Range: You

Target: You

Duration: Willpower Bonus minutes+

By mimicking the ever-changing nature of raw Warpstone, you alter the structure of your fur so that it changes colour to match your surroundings. When perfectly still, you gain a +40 bonus to all Stealth Tests.

Stickypaws

CN: 8

Range: You

Target: You

Duration: Willpower Bonus minutes

You gain the *Wallcrawler* Trait (WFRP, page 343) for the duration of the spell. Objects you carry or wear are still affected by gravity and fall to the ground if dropped.

Traceless Demise

CN: 11

Range: Willpower Bonus yards

Target: Up to Willpower Bonus targets

Duration: Willpower Bonus days

The body of any creature that dies while under the effects of this spell dissolves instantly into a foul-smelling black slime. The slime is briefly highly acidic, and most equipment is rendered barely recognisable as well. Eshin Sorcerers commonly cast *Traceless Demise* upon assassins before they embark on a mission, ensuring that no Skaven corpses are left behind.

Limbs struck from a body before death do not dissolve, even if the victim ultimately dies while under the effects of this spell. Decapitation typically destroys the body but leaves the head intact.

Warp Star Infusion

CN: 8

Range: You

Target: Special

Duration: Willpower Bonus rounds+

You enchant a number of Throwing Stars equal to your Willpower Bonus, imbuing them with the foul essence of the warp. A target wounded by one of these Stars must make a **Hard (-20) Toughness** Test or suffer additional Wounds equal to your Willpower Bonus, ignoring armour and Toughness Bonus.



CHAPTER 5

BESTIARY

SKAVEN BESTIARY

As well as the terrible magics, weapons, and artefacts the Skaven may bring to bear against their enemies, they also deploy a twisted menagerie of living creatures. Some of these are natural creatures — or at least, no more unnatural than the Skaven themselves — while others are the terrible creations of Clan Moulder: infusions of flesh, Warpstone, and metal that mock all the gods save the Horned Rat himself.

Great Pox Rat

To engorge a Giant Rat to even further mass and obesity requires a Master Moulder of extraordinary talents, and the right blend of growth agents and hide-grafts. Great Pox Rats are abhorrent, bloated vermin the size of a large pony, only much wider. They are covered with mangy fur overtaken by patches of poxes and dripping lesions. A Great Pox Rat's filth-encrusted mouth is filled with needle-sharp teeth, sabre-like incisors, and yet-to-be-discovered diseases. Once astride the heavily bloated Great Pox Rat, a Warlord can rightfully twitch his tail in pride, for surely none would be so foolish as to challenge such a mighty personage.

GREAT POX RAT

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
6	35	—	40	40	50	35	—	15	15	—	26

Traits: Armour 2, Bite +8, Weapon +10, Size (Large), Trained (Broken, Mount, War)

Wolf Rat

Long ago, Clan Moulder bred Giant Rats as long-legged hunting beasts, combining their blood with that of the great Wolves of Kislev. The result was a bloodthirsty monster of such foul temperament that the Master Moulders could hardly contain it, much less train it for war. They managed to wipe out nearly all of the creatures, but despite their best efforts a few escaped into the tunnels of the Under-Empire. In the intervening years, some escaped altogether, but a few remained behind to hunt their Skaven creators. It is rumoured that one or two exceptionally talented Master Moulders have managed to tame a handful of the creatures, but very few Skaven believe it.

Wolf Rat are distinctive creatures, blending the appearance of both Rats and Wolves. Covered in a thick pelt of grey fur flecked with white, they have shorter legs than their Wolf ancestors, keeping them low to the ground and suggesting that they are

always ready to pounce. Their tails are long, pale, and naked, and they have broad, rat-like heads with sharp, yellow canine teeth.

Wolf Rat are normally encountered in packs of 3–10 individuals, but large packs can number as many as 20.

WOLF RAT

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
6	45	—	35	32	35	35	—	15	15	—	10

Traits: Bite +6, Bestial, Infected, Night Vision, Skittish, Stride, Tracker

Optional: Disease (Ratte Fever, Black Plague, or GM's choice), Frenzy, Hungry, Territorial, Trained (Guard, War)

Plague Rat

The Skaven of Clan Pestilens, knowing that rats are carriers of disease, bred a special type of rat specifically to spread their most virulent plagues. These warped and mutated rats have a ravenous appetite, reproduce at a horrific rate, and carry all manner of plagues. Plague Rats are thankfully rare, and once a food source is exhausted, they turn on each other until none remain.

Plague Rats look like large rats with patchy brown fur and diseased skin. Their snouts drip orange filth, spilling contagion wherever they go. Worse, most of these creatures suffer from the ravages of whatever disease they carry, and may be missing legs, paws, and more.

PLAQUE RAT

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
6	28	—	35	30	25	25	—	15	15	—	5

Traits: Bestial, Bite +4, Disease (Ratte Fever, Black Plague, or GM's choice), Hungry, Infected, Night Vision, Size (Little), Skittish, Stride

Optional: Big, Brute, Corrupted (Moderate), Die Hard, Frenzy, Infestation, Stealthy



Brood Horror

When the beast masters of Clan Moulder spawn a brood of Giant Pox Rats, there is occasionally one among them that will brutally devour the rest, growing fat and bloated in both strength and savagery, the twisted forms of its kin still visible as they writhe and claw at their fleshy prison. The so-called Brood Horrors are highly prized by the Master Moulders and traded with the wealthier Skaven clans for many thousands of Warptokens. Brood Horrors are used as mounts by especially powerful or ostentatious Skaven Warlords, or goaded into battle to flail and crush the foe beneath their clawed limbs, biting and savaging anything that gets within reach of their razor-sharp claws.



BROOD HORROR

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
8	45	—	50	60	45	35	—	15	25	—	72

Traits: Bite +9, Disease (Ratte Fever), Hungry, Infected, Regenerate, Size (Enormous), Tail +8, Weapon +10

Optional: Corrosive Blood, Trained (Mount, War)

Talents: Acute Senses (Smell, Hearing), Enclosed Fighter, Tunnel Rat

Digger: The Brood Horror can tunnel through the earth, including solid rock, at a quarter of its movement rate.

Foul Ichor: When a Brood Horror dies, whatever force of will and muscle that was keeping the beast intact falters and it explodes in a mess of blood, bile, and the remains of its consumed kin. Anyone within 4 yards of the creature must immediately make a **Challenging (+0) Dodge** Test or take 2d10 Damage, reduced by Toughness Bonus and Armour. Those struck by the foul mixture must also make a Challenging (+0) Endurance Test or gain two Poisoned Conditions.



Rat Ogre Bonebreaker

The Rat Ogre Bonebreaker is one of Clan Moulder's specially engineered variant breeds. The Bonebreaker strain is created by taking an augmented Rat Ogre and submerging the stitched monstrosity in a vat of growth agents for months. It takes thousands of slaves dying horrible deaths to produce enough growing juices to fill the vat, but the cost is easily offset by the asking price for the muscle-bound behemoths.

When it emerges from its forced chemical immersion, the Bonebreaker is a prodigiously proportioned Rat Ogre, so bulked out that its upper body is hunched over, straining to contain such massed brawn. A braced platform, strapped or bolted on to the creature's back, allows a Warlord to ride atop the beast, becoming as pride-swollen as the Bonebreaker is musclebound.

RAT OGRE BONEBREAKER

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
6	45	10	65	55	35	45	25	10	25	15	56

Traits: Armour 2, Fear 1, Night Vision, Painless, Size (Large), Stupid, Trained (Mount, War), Weapon (Razor-Sharp Claws +10, Warpstone Shard* +11)

Skills: Athletics 55, Dodge 55, Melee (Basic) 70

Talents: Dual Weelder, Ambidexterous, Hardy 2

The process of creating a Bonebreaker consumes a sizable quantity of Warpstone, not least of which is in the form of huge impure shards grafted to the creatures for use as weaponry. Attacks made with this weapon enjoy both the Warpstone (page 32) and Penetrating Qualities (WFRP page 298)

CHAPTER 6

THE APPRENTICE

Clan Eshin is known throughout Skavendom for its excellence in the art of assassination and subterfuge. There are a number of ranks of death-dealing agents within the clan, from the lowest Night Runners to the Warp-grinder, all of which are feared by other Skaven. Of those trained in the art of stealth killing, Night Runners are the lowest-ranking and least experienced. Viewed as expendable fodder by their masters, they often serve as scouts on exposed flanks, the bait for ambushes, or are thrown against superior foes to provide a useful delay or distraction. Those that manage to survive, proving their cunning and resourcefulness, are looked at in a slightly better light. While some Night Runners are marked as potential leaders, those with a true knack for stealth and killing become Gutter Runners.

GUTTER RUNNERS

These Skaven work in teams, assassinating Clan Eshin's targets, leading surface dwellers and rival Skaven factions alike into conflict with each other, and generally sowing discord and utter fear wherever they go. Among the Skaven it is supposed that every accidental death and associated misfortune can be blamed on the work of Clan Eshin's Gutter Runners. There is never any evidence of this, but it is often true all the same.

Some among the Gutter Runners further exceed their master's expectations. These few are taken aside and given further instruction in the deadly secret arts of Clan Eshin. A handful are apprenticed to true Clan Eshin Assassins, there to better learn the art of blade, poison and shadow — should they survive the harrowing apprenticeship in the first place.

BECOMING PREY

Gutter Runner Dricht Skuttlepike is one such apprentice. He was told to stand back and watch as his much more experienced master, Fleer Twitchkill, set upon some hapless surface dwellers in the Man-thing city of Middenheim. As fate would have it, the Characters have seen off Twitchkill, leaving his apprentice Skuttlepike in a rather awkward position.

DRICHT SKUTTLESPITE

The life of an apprentice assassin is a harrowing one. Kindness is not a trait enjoyed by any Skaven, but Clan Eshin's Assassins are cruel even by the measure of their kin. Many die during their training, more than a few at the hand of their master. Dricht Skuttlepike is Master Assassin Fleer Twitchkill's last remaining apprentice. There was no love lost between the two; nevertheless, he will eventually come after the Characters.

The Gutter Runner has no interest in 'revenge' per se; if anything, the Characters did him a favour by eliminating his master. However, Dricht considers Twitchkill's Shadow Cloak to be his by rights and will do nearly anything to get it. The Shadow Cloak is made from greasy human hair, tattered cobwebs, and strands of *Ulgu*. It is not a matter of want, but rather need. By outliving his master, Dricht has attracted the attention of his clan's higher-ups. It is quite likely that Lord Sneek, Clan Eshin's leader and a Lord of Decay, will turn his beady eye towards Dricht.

All Eshin Assassins are elevated to that position by performing a task set by Lord Sneek himself. This is inevitably an incredibly difficult mission of some kind — the assassination of a high-ranking Skaven or Empire official, for example — and it must be completed to a very strict timetable. If Dricht wishes to complete this task and live, he must have every advantage he can get his skilled and stealthy paws on. Recovering his master's enchanted Shadow Cloak would be an excellent start to securing his own long-term survival.





DRICHT SKUTTLESPITE CLAN ESHIN GUTTER RUNNER

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agil	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
6	32	—	34	32	35	35	—	15	15	—	10

Traits: Armour 1, Night Vision, Stealthy, Ranged (Crossbow Pistol) +9 (10), Ranged (Jezzail) +10 (120), Tail Attack +5, Weapon (Sword) +7

Skills: Athletics 65, Dodge 70, Melee (Basic) 57, Ranged (Crossbow) 66, Engineering 71, Stealth 65 (+5 SL due to Stealthy)

Talents: Accurate Shot 2, Combat Master, Combat Reflexes, Step Aside, Sure Shot 2, Tunnel Rat

Trappings: 2 Crossbow Pistols, Dizzying Array of Lethal Substances, Wounded Entitlement

Dricht's Armoury

Dricht makes extensive use of poisons with his crossbow bolts. The following are two of his favourites — the first of which he will certainly try to use to coax the truth out of one or more of the Characters.

Foolmaker —A rare substance made by combining various chemical extracts, scorpion venom, and hallucinogenic mushroom spores. Anyone that takes damage from a bolt treated with Foolmaker must make a **Hard (-20)** Endurance Test or immediately roll on the **Stinking Drunk** chart (WFRP, page 121) and apply the resulting effect. Additionally, any time they are asked a question, they must make a **Difficult (-10)** Willpower Test or uncontrollably blurt out an honest answer. Both effects last a number of rounds equal to 10 – Toughness Bonus. Further doses force them to roll again on the chart and extend the duration.

Dark Kiss — A poison made from the spittle of a sea serpent. Anyone that takes damage from a bolt coated in Dark Kiss must make a **Difficult (-10)** Endurance Test or suffer 3 more Wounds that ignore Armour and Toughness.

ASSASSINATION ASSUMPTIONS

During the events of *The Horned Rat* the Characters are almost certain to gain the unwelcome attention of Master Assassin Fleer Twitchkill, a Clan Eshin Assassin possessed of, or perhaps by, an enchanted Cloak of Shadows, and with a desire to kill most creatures he happens across. The assassin has been sent to silence the enemies of the Skaven in Middenheim — especially those who have stumbled across evidence of Skaven activity, or otherwise may reveal the Skaven to the wider world.

It is presumed that the Characters will have to kill Twitchkill or themselves fall beneath his poisoned blades. While it is possible that the Characters avoided him in some way instead, such relief can only be temporary — he will search for them across Middenland if he must. He is impossible to bargain with, and ceaseless in his pursuit.

SHINY-SHINY

Much like his master, Skuttlespite doesn't think much of other species, but he knows that most of them seem to be obsessed with gold. The Gutter Runner will study the Characters from a distance for a time, before setting up his *'clever-cunning'* ambush: a pile of *'shiny-shiny'* gold placed in a discreet location, like on a box at the end of an alley, or on a stump in a shadowy clearing. Skuttlespite reckons that the fools won't be able to resist such a lure. It consists of only a couple of actual gold crowns, with the bulk of it being pyrite.

Once the Characters go for his bait, he'll try to shoot one or more targets with a bolt coated with Foolmaker (see his stats), then demand answers to his questions from the shadows (he speaks passable Reikspiel). He will find it impossible to believe that all the Characters willingly gave up the Shadow Cloak, but anything that indicates their superiors have it (*'Ah, yes-yes, taken by your Clawleader'*) will see him sharply questioning them on where it would be stored.

Once Skuttlespite secures the cloak or, to his horror, discovers that it was destroyed, he'll withdraw to return at a time of his choosing so as to silence the Characters forever, as they now know far too much about the Skaven for Clan Eshin's comfort.

USING SKUTTLESPITE

When and where to deploy the apprentice is something that must be handled with care. He will not attack the Characters too soon after they defeat his master. A sense of cautious restraint, not to mention fear, will prevent him from acting immediately. Instead he will watch the Characters carefully, if less expertly than Twitchkill had done. The Characters' sense of relief at having killed the assassin will soon fade as they realise they are being closely watched from the darkness again.

Equally, Dricht cannot wait too long before striking. Word will get out that Twitchkill is dead, if it hasn't already, and he will be summoned before Lord Sneek and assigned his trial. Therefore, he cannot dawdle and will have to make his move against the Characters, even if they fail to fall into one of his clever traps.

Before Leaving Middenheim

Middenheim's streets provide ample cover and opportunities for Skuttlespite to strike. He is unlikely to attack during the day, but if the Characters are out and about at night he will attack them if he can. Areas like the Wynd would be best — winding narrow streets with many abandoned buildings and a lack of patrols will provide the would-be assassin with many opportunities. He may find that his display of 'gold' is snapped up before he has time to get into position, however. The Characters may well come across piles of pyrite inexplicably left in their path, a nearby street urchin vanishing into an alley, gold crown in hand, unable to believe their luck.

On the Road to the Picket

The road is long and Middenland isolated, giving Skuttlespite plenty of opportunities to attack the Characters. He may leave some bait on the road ahead of them, or wait until night to attack them while some are asleep. He will avoid attacking them in an inn, however, as the noise will undoubtedly bring unwanted attention.

At the Picket

Skuttlespite cares little for the Yellow Fang, and is completely, perhaps wilfully, unaware of their activities at the Picket. The presence of so many armed soldiers does give him pause, however, and unless the Characters are very careless about their own personal safety he will avoid attacking them while they are at the Picket.

On the Way to Karak Skogg

This is Skuttlespite's last chance to get the Characters, as by now a summons will surely have reached him from Lord Sneek. He will have to attack the Characters somewhere in the mountains, risking even his own life to extract answers about the cloak from them.

Flipping the Script

If the Characters are having too difficult a time with his master, it may well be wise to deploy Dricht in a different role entirely. Instead of 'avenging' his master post-mortem to retrieve the coveted cloak, have Dricht approach the Characters earlier and offer to help ambush Fleer Twitchkill and kill the troublesome assassin. This is entirely keeping with the treacherous nature of Skaven, and does not at all preclude Dricht returning to attack the Characters later on. After all, better to tie up any loose ends before they become a nuisance.

TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING

If the Characters do away with Skuttlespite, avoid the temptation to send yet another assassin against them. At least for now. Having one stealthy assassin followed by another is quite enough, and if you simply send another apprentice after them you will be trying the Players' patience. Worse still, you may distract them from the main plot!

By defeating a Clan Eshin Assassin and his apprentice Gutter Runner, the Characters have signalled to the denizens of the Under-Empire that these particular surface dwellers are resistant to Clan Eshin's usual tactics. While the assassins themselves would never admit as much, the price of any contract on the Characters' lives will shoot up as the supply of assassins willing to take them falls dramatically. There are, after all, easier targets.



CHAPTER 7

THE SKAVEN CONSPIRACY

'Rats! Tales of ratmen living under the city! Are you insane? Speak no more of it, or you'll find yourself locked up, or worse. Let's go before someone hears us.'

In the Empire's most remote villages and the glorious Reikland's bustling cities, and in the long, dark corridors of power, spies lurk, shadowing Humans' every move, just waiting to strike. Their assassins blackmail and murder officials across the Empire. Most atrocities occur without a trace. Entire villages disappear overnight. The Imperial armies have even fought them in open battle. Yet, the Empire's majority deny the Skaven's existence. One might ask how can such a wide-ranging threat escape notice — let alone survive, flourish and thrive — for so long? Those that speak out find themselves dead, or keep the knowledge of Skaven existence to themselves after witnessing the public humiliation and subsequent elimination of their outspoken peers. Denial and fear are lethal emotions, and combined provide the optimum conditions for the Skaven to move freely.

A LIFETIME OF DECEIT

Skaven society, for want of a better term, is the epitome of 'cutthroat'. Skaven have no concept of honour, ethics, or friendship: there are no alliances, only strategically delayed betrayals. Every Warlord is one misstep away from an underling stabbing him in the back and taking his place. Every underling knows that if *they* don't do it, their peers *will*. The constant jostling for personal status and power is all-consuming.

After nearly destroying themselves in civil war, the Horned Rat gave his children the Black Pillar of Commandments, 169 laws for Skaven society. But these laws are ludicrously complex and open-ended to the point where the only true law is '*Don't get caught.*' Everything else is merely pretext. Surviving Skaven have become *experts* in clandestine murder, shifting blame, hiding or destroying evidence, and framing rivals to take the fall for it all. This expertise serves them well in hiding their plans from the surface world.



THOSE WHO KNOW TOO MUCH

A scholar may happen across lost records of Skaven activities, or a city guard may notice a pattern to certain thefts and unexplained deaths, which may lead down avenues of investigation the Skaven want left alone. Occasionally an operation goes wrong and the Skaven are forced to leave a target alive, or they leave a body behind in their haste. The Skaven watch the surface closely, searching for people who come too close to discovering the truth.

Murder is usually the most practical and efficient solution to this problem. A peasant or burgher rarely has any security of note, and it is a trivial matter to infiltrate their home and kill them in their sleep. The nobility and other powerful individuals, with better security (and a great deal more paranoia about being murdered by rivals), may warrant a visit from Clan Eshin's assassins, who can infiltrate almost any stronghold with ease.

Skaven are cunning and wily, and ensure that most of the time they get others to do the killing for them. Suddenly the authorities receive an anonymous tip, conveniently find indisputable proof that someone who was about to go public about the Skaven was a heretic or other heinous criminal, and that person is swiftly put to death. Their records on Skaven are subsequently either burned as blasphemous ravings or soon stolen from libraries and evidence rooms, and people quickly forget all about it. The only thing that lingers is the memory of the discredited or feeble-minded deceased. (For more see Chapter 9: The Cover Up, **The Horned Rat**, page 62.)

Sometimes a target's elimination would cause more problems than it solves. Killing particularly powerful nobles or well-known, established or even notorious persons who know too much could bring multiple investigations, each with a chance of discovering the truth. In such cases, the Skaven may still turn the situation to their advantage. The target might be coerced into silence, or the Skaven might use family or loved ones to ensure cooperation. The threats are invariably horrific; Skaven see all other races as slave labour, test subjects, or food, and their threats match their callous disregard for 'lesser' races.

Blackmail is also incredibly effective. Many officials have dirty secrets that could ruin them, and the Skaven are experts at sniffing out and benefiting from such scandalous or prurient secrets. Anything from petty corruption to consorting with Daemons is used to silence a witness. A target might even be exposed to Warpstone to cause mutation, leaving the witness to be killed by an angry mob. Of course, the Skaven could offer to cure their target's deformity, if they agree to do their bidding ...

A POORLY KEPT SECRET

There are parts of the Old World that do not have the luxury of pretending the Skaven don't exist. In particular, Tilea has long suffered open attacks from the ratmen. As a result, the city-states spare little expense in defending against them. A famous mercenary company called the Rat Catchers, anti-Skaven veterans all, protects the city of Miragliano, personally financed by the prince. The Empire's refusal to acknowledge the Skaven frustrates the southern nations. Taverna gossip on the subject ranges from the grim to the absurd:

'The Imperials, they pretend the ratmen are a myth because they are in league with them! Look how hairy they are, why they're halfway to being Skaven themselves!'

'The Empire is so lacking in manners and proper civilisation, I say it is no wonder the ratmen have infiltrated so deeply without their knowledge.'

'Skaven sorcery, mi amico. They have cast a mighty spell of ignorance across the Empire to hide their presence! This is also why their men do not bathe and their wine is terrible!'

'They know, but they do not tell the people. Why? Look at them, they are gripped by panic already. If they were to admit there was yet another threat beneath their very feet, their society would collapse! After all, look at where it has got us.'

For their part, the Skaven and their agents work to inflame tensions between nations so their stories are greeted with scepticism, and what they can't discredit, they will embellish to such a degree that it becomes an amusing, outlandish children's tale.

'Captain, I'm not calling your men liars. Indeed, your prisoner's cell contains a tunnel to places unknown. But observe the markings in the stone, here. They point upwards. Your murder suspect did not dig his way out; someone, or something, dug their way in.'

— Inspector Fraucht, later found dead in Altdorf's docks with 13 stab wounds in his back

THOSE WHO SERVE: THE YELLOW FANG CULT

'The end of the world is at hand' is a common refrain across the Empire. The Ruinous Powers wax strong, Greenskin hordes ravage the land, and the Empire's old social order crumbles in the face of a rising middle class, feckless nobility, and destabilising cults. The latter are the greatest danger, with members often not realising they are in thrall to dark powers. The vilest cults are fully aware, and even work to speed the coming end. The Yellow Fang cult is among the most secretive and despicable of these. The cult has branches across the Old World, continuing to carry out Skaven deeds with abominable cruelty fuelled by intimidation and manipulation.

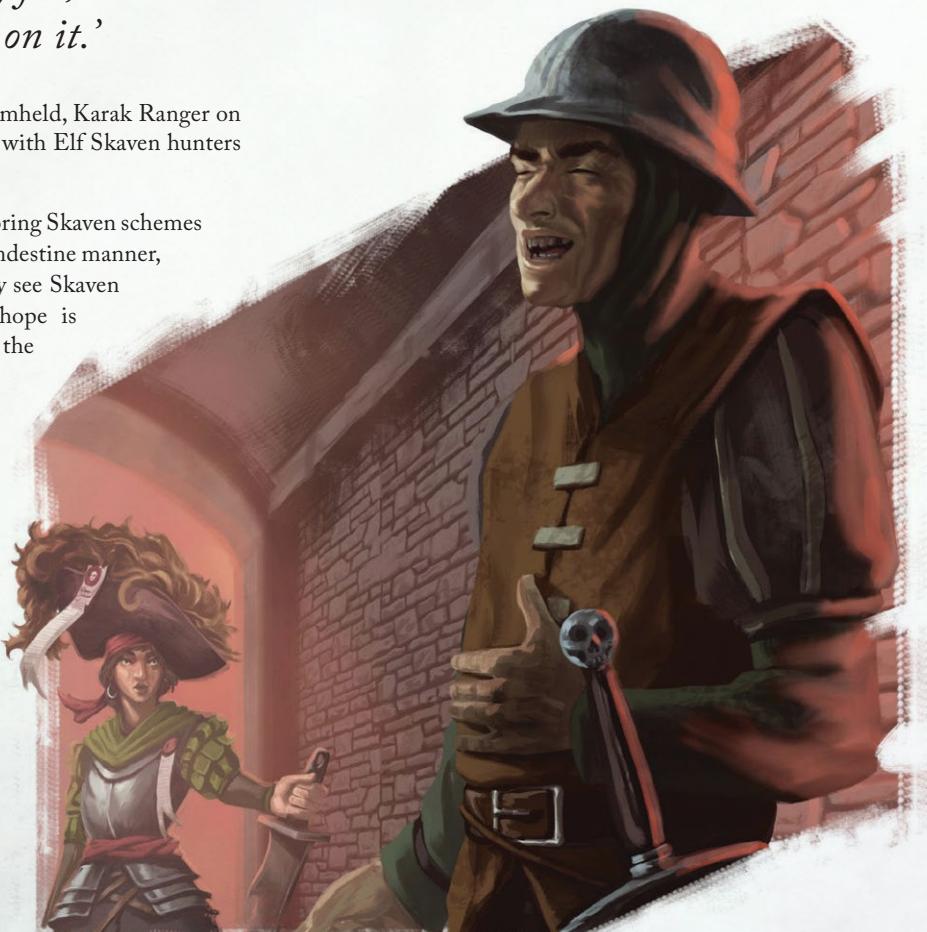
I hate elves, and I make no secret of it. I'll split an elf's skull as soon as I look at him. But what I saw in the Raki slave pens the day we wiped out their nest ... It ... Those evil ... By Valaya, there are some fates you shouldn't wish on any foe, and I'll speak no more on it.'

— Fenna Gromheld, Karak Ranger on cooperation with Elf Skaven hunters

Yellow Fang members actively help to bring Skaven schemes to fruition in a similar cunning and clandestine manner, but not as cutthroat or conniving. They see Skaven supremacy as inevitable, and their hope is that when the ratmen finally topple the Empire, they will be allowed to rule the ruins. Better to survive with the fates the Skaven have promised than all others.

The Skaven task the cult with many odious deeds, including disposing of evidence, covering up thefts and murders, and providing scapegoats for what they can't conceal. The Yellow Fang gnaw at the foundations of Human civilisation by spreading propaganda in public, cleverly couched as 'acceptable' prejudice — *'All this panic over mythical talking rats is a distraction from the TRUE enemy of the Empire: those blasted Bretonians!'*. Emulating Skaven treachery, the cult is extremely careful to hide its involvement, operating from behind complex lies, outrageous rumours, and unknowing proxies continuing the clever ruse of obfuscation. The Skaven make excellent use of yet another layer of obscurity. They consider the cult a useful tool, when they consider it at all.

All these tactics and more ensure that when evidence of the Skaven does surface, that proof rarely goes far. Yellow Fang members and blackmailed officials mock and discredit those who warn society. Any who persist soon wind up dead, after they have been stripped of their dignity and their reputation is left in tatters; their friends unwilling to investigate, lest they suffer a tragic 'accident'. Disappeared relatives are presumed dead even as they toil under cruel Skaven lashes, never to see sunlight again. More on the Yellow Fang can be found in the following chapter.



CHAPTER 8

THE YELLOW FANG

Many Humans hold dim views of the future. They believe that the Empire is failing and that the Old World itself is coming to an end. It seems that whatever Humans build or create crumbles into ruin and corruption: rulers care nothing for their subjects and family members betray each other for coin or a jug of cheap beer. Witch Hunters burn the innocent, crops fail, and prayers fall on deaf ears.

Most keep such grim thoughts to themselves, and do their best to get through one more day. Others, though, are certain a new order is coming and have decided to throw in their lot with it. They want to be atop the pile when the Empire finally collapses. For such people, the Cult of the Yellow Fang and its worship of the Skaven offer a means of survival, and the promise of a place in the coming new order.

ORIGINS OF THE FANG

It is not known when exactly the Yellow Fang was formed. It is possible that a rat-worshipping cult of some kind — not unheard of in the Empire and beyond — was somehow co-opted by an opportunistic Skaven. It is also possible that the creation of the cult was a Skaven plan from the very start, with Humans slowly inducted into an organisation entirely of inhuman making. In either case, the idea of using Human pawns came quite naturally to the Skaven. They consider themselves superior to every other species, and manipulating a few Humans into doing their bidding would therefore prove trivial. Over time this practice of bribery and intimidation of a few useful Human spies gave way to something much closer to outright indoctrination. The best part of all is that the cult is now self-sustaining. From time to time the Skaven step in to guide it in directions they find useful, but mainly the Yellow Fang has grown and maintained itself.





The cult has branches across the Old World, wherever Humans live with Skaven beneath them. For the most part the cult has maintained its secrecy admirably. Even in Tilea, where Skaven existence is more commonly known, few could guess that their Human followers are not the occasional wayward soul or blackmailed sewer jack, but instead a fervently devoted sect of worshippers.

The cult now eagerly awaits the day when its secret masters will rise up, throw down the corrupt Empire, and grant their favoured servants first pick of the spoils. This is almost certainly not going to happen, and indeed to most Skaven not used to dealing with Humans — which is the vast majority of the creatures — there is little difference between one Human and another, and surely all will be devoured when the great day comes and the Children of the Horned Rat rise up to take their rightful place atop the carnage of a ruined world.

ORGANISATION

The Yellow Fang is a secretive and clandestine organisation, preferring to work from behind the scenes. Its members are skilled at manipulating others without revealing their own goals. Thus, when a plot is foiled, few recognise the hand of the true conspirators behind it. Even when the authorities make arrests, the false leads and double-blinds left by the cult keep its role unseen.

Cells of the cult do not follow any particular pattern. The Yellow Fang is not a terribly discerning group when it comes to membership, save that those who can't keep quiet find themselves quickly silenced, so anyone who is sufficiently disillusioned and convinced of the Old World's impending collapse can find a place. The structure of the cult is very fluid, as individual leaders rise and fall through cunning, manipulation, violence, and alliances with any Skaven they encounter. In this way, the cult mirrors Skaven society, although the ratmen themselves tend to regard these Man-things as dupes to be used and discarded rather than as allies — especially since the concept of alliance is a hazy and highly mutable one in the Skaven mind.

The cult is currently battling a schism. The traditional wing of the cult maintains its gloomy view that the surface world is doomed, and the surface-dwellers along with it, and the best that can be hoped for is some kind of survival under Skaven masters. The other faction, which arose fairly recently and is expanding rapidly from its base in Carroburg, maintains that the cult is destined to overthrow the Skaven and rule the surface world when the Empire inevitably crumbles. After all, did not Mandred prove Human superiority — and is betrayal not pleasing in the eyes of the Horned Rat? Until the new order has been established and it is time to seize power from the ratmen, though, they practise utter obeisance and lay their plans, just as all good Skaven do. In recent years this faction has been led by Mila Raast (page 63).

SYMBOL

A stylised Skaven triangle with one of the lower points longer than the other and coloured a dirty yellow is the cult's symbol. A curved dagger favoured by the cult is used for rituals and assassinations, its shape suggestive of a fang. Particularly devout members have a small yellow fang tattooed under their upper arm; while others go so far as to have an incisor knocked out, stained yellow, and hung from a string to wear around their necks. The missing tooth excites no comment in the Old World, where almost no one keeps a full set of teeth throughout adulthood.

The truly devoted take things to an even greater degree, modifying their own bodies to look as ratlike as possible. Teeth are filed to points and ears are sewn to better resemble those of a rat. Some take on the affectations of Skaven speech and behaviour, repeating words and adopting twitching, jerking movements. The Skaven, of course, find this rather amusing, and further proof that theirs is the superior species — after all, why else would lesser creatures seek to emulate them? To some Yellow Fang members this is just so: they wish to look more like the creatures they worship. To others, especially among the faction that knows of and worships the Horned Rat directly, this is done not to emulate the Skaven, but in homage to their chosen god. A few of these fervent Yellow Fang extremists have even taken to wearing horns. While the average Skaven will think little of this, perhaps finding it mildly amusing, most Grey Seers would view it as a grievous insult. While a few Grey Seers do have dealings with the cult, none have yet to witness this brazen blasphemy directly — undoubtedly a blast of Warp lightning would end such an encounter rather quickly.

METHODS

The Cult of the Yellow Fang can be surprisingly effective. It uses direct action to attack and undermine the existing order. It is particularly fond of public acts of sabotage that spread fear and dismay through the populace, such as the despoilment of the Nordtor wells in 2420 that resulted in an outbreak of the galloping trots (WFRP page 187) that festered in the district for months. If they cannot find a convenient dupe to carry out an assassination, the Cult will send one of its own to complete the assignment — but they are careful to remove all cult tattoos and other identifying marks from the assassin's body. Undertakings such as these are invariably suicide missions, so there must be no evidence leading back to the Yellow Fang.

Typically the Yellow Fang are dispatched to either clear the way for a Skaven incursion, or to clean up after such an attack has gone badly. Beyond the more general goal of preparing human cities to fall, the Under-Empire is always on the lookout for areas where it might gain an advantage. Human engineering is watched carefully, for example designs and plans are often copied or adopted by Yellow Fang cultists inserted among the student body at Engineering colleges. The Skaven have learned much by closely observing human cultures as far afield as Cathay or Araby, and excel at putting this knowledge to use.

When more direct action is called for, such as killing someone in the Empire who has learned too much of the Skaven's existence, the Yellow Fang are sometimes used to lay the path or gather intelligence for a more skilled Skaven assassin — such as the one dispatched to kill Eunice Hasche in **The Horned Rat**. The Yellow Fang excel in this role, as their understanding of human culture means they are better equipped to predict a target's movements, for example, attend a Middenball game next week or a play this weekend (sport and the theatre being two concepts with which most Skaven would struggle).

The Yellow Fang are always on the lookout for opportunities to advance their position. This often takes the form of requesting greater authority or autonomy from their secret masters. The Skaven think this quite understandable, if undesirable, behaviour, but such is their view of Humans that even their most devoted servants are rarely trusted with any truly important task. Still, from time to time the Yellow Fang are given a task to which the Skaven would consider themselves better suited, such as a raid or assassination. In all such cases a Skaven team will be on standby in the sewers below, ready to rush in and set things right if the humans have failed in some way. Should the humans succeed, the Skaven credit the victory to their own watchful oversight of the bumbling cultists.

YELLOW FANG CULTISTS

The GM should custom-design important NPCs from the Yellow Fang to fit the required background and role in a particular adventure. Less important cult NPCs, or cultists who are needed in a hurry, can be designed according to these notes.

SIGNS OF SKAVEN

The Secret Signs (Skaven) skill is unique to the Yellow Fang, though others well studied in the Skaven might also learn it. It allows cultists to leave signs that can be interpreted by their fellows (such as '*This person is a friend of the secret masters*' or '*The masters use these tunnels and are not always friendly — avoid*').

Skaven themselves never take this skill, as the signs used are actually a debased form of written Queekish which all literate Skaven can understand.

THE YELLOW FANG AND MUTATION

The Yellow Fang does attract some mutants, but there are fewer mutations among its members than might be found in a cult of the Ruinous Powers such as the Purple Hand. While the cult has numerous secret rites, some of which are quite foul, none of these actually involve invoking the corrupting power of chaos. Their secret masters trade in Warpstone, but rarely trust the Yellow Fang to deal with any substantial amount of the material.

Cultists often change their appearance deliberately, filing their teeth and taking similar measures to appear more ratlike. This is popular among senior members who mostly serve the cult, while those who maintain positions in normal society tend to avoid it.

Though rare, mutants who bear a mutation that seems ratlike in nature — such as a tail or patch of fur — are often given elevated status in the cult, especially by those members who worship the Horned Rat more directly. Whether or not these mutations are actually a gift of the Horned Rat is an open question.





JUNIOR CULTISTS

Junior cultists make up the rank and file of the Yellow Fang, and many may have only seen a Skaven once or twice — typically around the time they are initiated into the cult. They usually have careers as Burghers, Peasants or Rogues. Very few high ranking members of society have fallen under the sway of the Yellow Fang, with the exception of those found in and around Carroburg.

If the GM needs to create a junior cultist in detail, take the Cultist profile (see **WFRP**, page 333) and add a day-to-day Career that is usually, but not always, drawn from the Burgher, Peasant, or Rogue classes, with the Talent **Secret Identity**.

Jan Guterwass

A formerly devout Sigmarite in the Middenheim City Watch, Jan was used to a sense of latent hostility to his faith among his fellow citizens. Ulric was the foremost deity in his home city, but Jan knew that elsewhere worship of Sigmar held sway. In his mind these cities were bastions of devout Sigmarite values, and monuments to the patron deity of the Empire. However, one pilgrimage to Altdorf and a dockside mugging by a Hook thug disabused Jan of this overly sentimental view. The city seemed anything but devout, and even those who espoused faith in Sigmar did little to help their abused brethren in Middenheim.

Jan returned home, his faith shaken, and took to drinking. It was in *The Drowned Rat* that the Yellow Fang found him — or more specifically it was in the urine-soaked gutter outside the tavern, drinking his wage away and chatting morosely with the rats. The Fang's view of an Empire riddled with corruption, teetering on the edge of apocalyptic collapse appealed to Jan. With the zeal of a fresh convert, he returned to the City Watch, and has been feeding information to the Yellow Fang ever since.

JAN GUTERWASS – YELLOW FANG JUNIOR CULTIST

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
6	32	—	34	32	35	35	—	15	15	—	10

Traits: Armour 2, Ranged (Heavy Crossbow) +9, Weapon (Sword) +7

Skills: Athletics 60, Dodge 50, Melee (Basic) 47, Ranged (Crossbow) 61, Lore (Skaven) 34, Secret Signs (Skaven) 35

Talents: Doomed! (*Find Thy Path and Stray Not*), Flee!

Trappings: Middenheim City Watch Uniform, Hand Weapon (Sword), Mail Armour, Heavy Crossbow and 12 bolts, 1d10 Silver Shillings

SENIOR CULTISTS

Senior cultists are mostly silver-tier Burghers, Peasants, or Rogues. Instead of starting with the cultist profile, create the NPC as normal and then add the Skills Lore (Skaven) and Secret Signs (Skaven) at an appropriate level, along with the Traits *Secret Identity* and, if you wish, *Corruption (Minor)*.

You might decide that a senior cultist has learned — or stolen — skills and other knowledge from a Skaven master. The exact Skills, Talents, and other knowledge will depend upon the Clan in question, and will usually not consist of anything beyond the scope of what a low to mid ranking member of that Clan might possess.

Mila Raast

Mila Raast is quite unusual as she was born into the Yellow Fang. Her parents were prominent members of the Carroburg branch, and constantly embroiled in its twisting intrigues and schemes. Mila was a precocious and charming child, and took to the cult with an enthusiasm that bordered on the delirious. Minor Carroburg nobility, Mila used every ounce of her wiles and influence to elevate cult members to prominent positions in the city, and in later years throughout Middenland. Her parents would eventually pass, victims of an inter-cult feud that Mila avenged almost performatively. By that time the Yellow Fang was everything to her, and the act of murderous betrayal just another way to give praise to the Horned Rat.

Mila has since expended much of her influence and most of her wealth in pursuit of the cult's goal of seizing control of Carroburg, but while her secular power and wealth has waned, her influence in the cult has grown. She has travelled to Middenheim to inspect the cult there, certain that the success they found in Carroburg can be repeated atop the Fauschlag. Middenheim's branch has not taken kindly to this intrusion. In particular Raina Müs (**The Horned Rat**, page 19) has taken a dislike to the noblewoman. The fact that Mila is second-generation Yellow Fang as well as wealthy incenses Raina even more.

In a fashion that any Skaven would find eminently familiar, Mila is on the lookout for any way to highlight how much the Yellow Fang in Middenheim could use her expertise. To this end she may approach the Characters with information about the cult's activities, in the hopes that their interference will emphasise the need for a stronger hand — specifically her own. Of course, she will have the Characters killed once they have played their part, but until that point Mila will employ the charm that has served her so well in life thus far.



MILA RAAST – YELLOW FANG SENIOR CULTIST

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
6	32	—	34	32	35	35	—	15	15	—	10

Traits: Weapon (Dagger) +5

Skills: Bribery 65, Consume Alcohol 41, Gamble 65, Intimidate 48, Lore (Heraldry 65, Skaven 75), Melee (Basic 37, Fencing 37), Play (Pipes) 48, Secret Signs (Skaven) 65

Talents: Attractive 2, Etiquette (Nobles, Yellow Fang), Luck 3, Noble Blood, Read/Write

Trappings: Coach and Team of Horses, Gem Encrusted Dagger (6 GC), Letters of Introduction to Petra Liebkosen and Kirsten Jung, A Dwindling Fortune (approximate 200 GC in property and holdings excluding those listed here)

CULT WIZARDS

Cult wizards are rare in the Yellow Fang, as the Skaven guard their magics jealously. However, a Man-thing with a talent for magic is a valued asset, and the cult takes special care to recruit those with a talent for Witchcraft. A member who has formal training as a Wizard would be particularly valuable, but so far no such individual has appeared — at least not in Middenheim.

Any Yellow Fang spellcaster will have access to a handful of Petty spells and one or two Arcane spells at most. Skaven never teach spells from the Skaven Lores of Plague, Stealth, or Ruin, and while the Skaven do keep grimoires, these are often inscribed into the flesh of living slaves and therefore both inconvenient to place on bookshelves and difficult to decipher. An exceptionally cunning and accomplished cultist may be able

to steal some magical knowledge, but this is incredibly rare, and the Grey Seers would hunt down such Man-things relentlessly.

Yellow Fang wizards will often cast their spells in emulation of the Skaven. They will use spells like *Beast Form* to become a Giant or Pox Rat, will take on ratlike qualities when casting *Fearsome*, or will *Produce Small Animal* to exclusively create rats.

Most magic-wielding members of the Yellow Fang are Witches, Mystics, or misled Hedge-Witches. A rare individual may follow the Wizard career. Such individuals will have better than usual access to Warpstone, however, despite how jealously the Skaven guard it. For more on how a reckless spellcaster can make use of Warpstone see **WFRP**, page 237.

THE HORNED RAT, GOD OF THE SKAVEN

More than most other races, the Skaven are characterised by a wide range of distinctive weapons and other equipment, which is described in Chapter 3.

While it may be tempting to arm Yellow Fang cultists with all manner of terrible Warpstone-powered weapons, the Skaven are reluctant to entrust such treasures to their own Clanrats, let alone to lowly Man-things. They certainly do not teach non-Skaven the necessary Lore and Trade skills to understand and operate such weapons.

Even so, the Yellow Fang are quick to master the Skaven virtues of deception and treachery masked by obsequious flattery. Once in a while a group of cultists will succeed in stealing some device and bringing it to the surface world, usually with some grandiose intention of causing widespread destruction in the name of the Horned Rat. Their fumbling attempts to operate these things without training can certainly result in impressive levels of destruction, but seldom as the cultists intended. More often than not, their efforts lead to a catastrophic malfunction that costs them their lives. Arguably those who die are the lucky ones, though: the Skaven are most unforgiving of thieves, and do not appreciate the extra work required to cover up such incidents so that the surface-dwellers remain ignorant of the ratmen and their technology!

The Humans of the Yellow Fang vary in their knowledge of the Skaven and their foul deity, the Horned Rat. Most know very little of this deity, or perhaps think of him as some kind of living overseer or leader of the Skaven. Some, however, have come by greater knowledge and give praise to the Horned Rat directly, granting his foul children due respect but not worshipping them outright. The Skaven themselves have not yet realised that this distinction exists, as they are prone to underestimating even those Humans who serve them.

These cultists of the Horned Rat adhere to their faith a little differently from the Skaven themselves. Instead of worshipping the Horned Rat out of fear, like some stern parent, some cultists of the Yellow Fang dare to hope for his favour. By working actively to destroy the Old World's civilisation, and thereby speeding the inevitable dawn of the new age, they hope to be rewarded with power and position — or at the very least, to be spared the slaughter that awaits the other surface-dwellers. Their conception of the Horned Rat is more rational, more compassionate than the dire god of the Skaven: in addition to withholding punishment, this Horned Rat might also reward those who please it.



CHAPTER 9

A GUIDE TO THE MIDDLE MOUNTAINS

Situated on the borders between Middenland, Hochland, Nordland, and Ostland, the Middle Mountains are the only mountain range that lies entirely within the Empire. Their troubled history and limited mineral deposits have left them sparsely settled, haunted by monsters and other dangers.

HISTORY

The Middle Mountains have a long and storied history, one that stretches back far earlier than that of the Empire which now claims it. Before ever Sigmar walked the Old World, the Dwarfs made homes there amidst the tall, unforgiving peaks.

KARAZ GHUMZUL

The earliest accounts of the Middle Mountains come from the Dwarfs who settled there during the expansion of the Golden Age. They called this realm Karaz Ghumzul, and the Dwarfs of the Middle Mountains declared their independence from the Dwarf heartland of Karaz Ankor during the War of the Beard (-2000 to -1600 IC). The reasons for this are disputed: some scholars (mainly Elven and Human) claim that the Dwarfs of Karaz Ghumzul were uncomfortably aware of their isolated position and their proximity to the Elven community of the Laurelorn Forest. The Dwarfs themselves maintain that they had larger concerns than a quarrel between two distant kings, for their prospectors had discovered a Chaos gate beneath the mountains, and the realm needed all its strength to contain it.

In addition to these dangers, the mountains did not yield the expected mineral wealth. When the Time of Woes (-1500 to -108 IC) began and the Greenskins and Skaven fell on Karaz Ghumzul, the Dwarfs abandoned their holds and fled the Middle Mountains to return to Karaz Ankor. They sealed the doors, buried them under rock, and destroyed the roads that led to them.

To this day, the Dwarfs will not say what drove their people from Karaz Ghumzul, but as they left the mountains near where Castle Lenkster now stands, the Dwarf priests pronounced a curse on the mountains and everything within them. Since then, many prospectors and adventurers have searched for the lost Dwarf mines, but none have succeeded. When Karaz Ghumzul was abandoned, the Brothers of Grimmir were the only Dwarfs who remained behind. These Dwarfen Slayer-Monks became the guardians of the Keep of the First Slayer, honouring his ancient vow to guard the Chaos gate beneath it.

HUMAN SETTLEMENT

Centuries later, the expanding Humans had no more success in settling the mountains, treating them instead as a barrier that divided the lands of various early tribes. Ironically, this dangerous and monster-haunted terrain provided those early Human communities with a measure of protection from each other, for raiding parties could not cross the mountains in safety. This meant that some of the Human settlements nearby could flourish and grow — the most notable being Middenheim, Wolfenborg, and Bergsburg. While it was true that monsters came down from the mountains from time to time, the hardy folk of the region were well able to deal with them. As the centuries passed and the Empire was born, strategically placed fortresses at Roezfels, Castle Lenkster, and Brass Keep protected the settled lowlands, ushering in an age of peace and prosperity for the surrounding provinces.

THE INCURSION OF CHAOS

That peace came to an abrupt end in 2302 IC, when the forces of Chaos overran Kislev and poured into the northern provinces of the Empire. The Chaos threat was finally defeated more than 60 years later, but isolated pockets of Beastmen and Chaos Warriors still survive in the Empire's remotest parts — despite all efforts to root them out. Brass Keep is one such place. It fell to Chaos in the early days of the incursion and has never been recaptured. The forces of Middenheim, Middenland, and Ostland combined to build a great circular fortification known as 'the Picket' (see **Chapter 10: Brass Keep**), which serves to keep the defenders of Brass Keep contained, and acts as a base from which private expeditions can set out to try to reconquer the fortress.

THE GOLD RUSH OF 2497

Despite the Middle Mountains' reputation for barrenness, and the fact that even the Dwarfs had failed to find any mineral wealth there in more than a thousand years of searching, there was a brief gold rush in the Middle Mountains in 2497.

Thousands of hopeful souls set out into the mountains, most of them woefully under-equipped and all of them completely lacking in outdoor survival or prospecting skills. Hundreds died from accidents, bad weather, and monster attacks: those who returned came home poorer than when they had left.

The birth of the gold hysteria was later traced to the Middenheim pamphleteer Oda Fortune, recently returned from a stint at the mining colony, who had been selling spurious maps at a crown apiece. Authorities found his house burning with an angry mob outside, but no trace of the miscreant was ever found. It was said that he departed for Marienburg the day after the last bogus pamphlet was sold.

TERRAIN

The Middle Mountains' forbidding grey peaks rise abruptly from the surrounding forests, forming a barrier that can only be crossed by a handful of passes. It is a harsh and unforgiving environment, haunted by monsters of all kinds — including, some say, a small but stubborn community of Greenskins whose ancestors were not entirely wiped out by the Dwarfs of Karaz Ghumzul.

While the natural terrain of the Middle Mountains is harsh enough, there are spots here and there — especially the area around Brass Keep — that have been further warped by the long presence of Chaos in the region.

These lands are not as bizarrely twisted as those of the North, but they can still be deadly. Some folks believe the terrain knows the minute a newcomer sets foot on the land. Unwanted visitors will be received with freak and fierce weather conditions: for

example, heavy hailstorms pursue travellers, pounding them with chunks of ice the size of a Human head. Mountain streams leap from their beds like great constricting serpents, striving to drag passers-by in to their deaths. Rocky paths are littered with stones as sharp as caltrops, whose wounds fester and sometimes warp into foul mutations.

For the most part, though, the Middle Mountains' terrain is harsh but natural. Ice and snow cap the peaks, razor-edged ridges divide one precipitous valley from another, and mountain tracks wash away in bad weather, becoming treacherous slides of loose rock and mud that can hurl incautious travellers to their doom on jagged rocks far below.

LOCATIONS

Barren though they are, the Middle Mountains are not entirely devoid of settlement. A few exceptionally hardy farmers scratch a living from the foothills, and there are a handful of other places of note.

BRASS KEEP

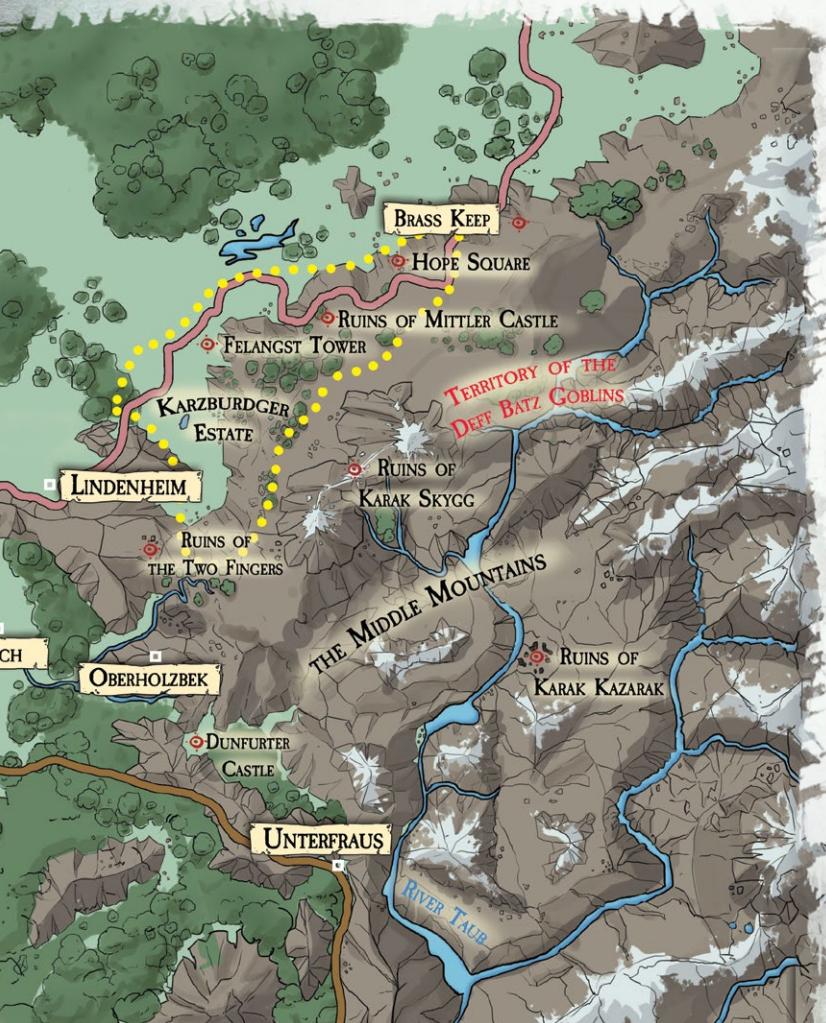
Originally one of three Imperial fortresses protecting the surrounds of the Middle Mountains, Brass Keep was overrun by the forces of Chaos two centuries ago and has never been recaptured. Chapter 5 of **The Horned Rat** includes more information on this seat of corruption.

THE PICKET

Built on the orders of Magnus the Pious to keep Brass Keep and its denizens contained, this great fortification consists of a ring-wall surrounding the keep and its hinterland, strengthened with wall-forts and supplied by two great depots in Middenland and Ostland. Chapter 4 of **The Horned Rat** takes place in the Middenland depot.

THE MIDDENHEIM MINING COLONY AND PENITENTIARY

The Middenheim mining colony and penitentiary called Hope Square lies four days' journey from Middenheim, in an area so remote and dangerous that most prisoners regard the brutal and dangerous existence of convict miners as safer and more comfortable than escaping into the mountains. You can read more about the mining colony on page 68.



CASTLE LENKSTER

Another of the three great fortresses of the Middle Mountains, Castle Lenkster lies in the foothills to the south of Wolfenburg. It continues its ancient role defending Ostland from threats coming out of the mountains. It is an important staging-post for expeditions into the eastern arm of the mountains, and for troops and supplies bound for the Ostland depot at the Picket.

ROEZFELS

The third of the three ancient fortresses, Roezfels is said to have been founded on the site of an ancient Jutones stronghold dating back to before the time of Sigmar. Sometimes called 'the fort that looks both ways', it guards the entrance to the strategic Death's Door Pass and the road to Bergsburg, as well as guarding against threats from the largely uninhabited western part of the Forest of Shadows.

THE KEEP OF THE FIRST SLAYER

The Keep of the First Slayer lies beneath the Nordberg, the tallest peak in the Middle Mountains. Part fortress and part temple, it is home to the Brothers of Grimnir, an elite order of Dwarfen Slayer-Monks. When the Dwarfs of Karaz Ghumzul abandoned the mountains, the Slayers remained behind, fulfilling their founder's oath to guard the Chaos gate that opened beneath the mountain at the time of the Great Catastrophe almost eight thousand years ago, when Chaos first entered the world.

The Brothers of Grimnir take little interest in the outside world, and are not known for their hospitality to outsiders. The only regular visitors are Slayers who make a pilgrimage to the keep in the hope of being found worthy to join the Brotherhood and finding the redemption they seek at the hands of some abomination of Chaos.

OTHER REMNANTS OF KARAZ GHUMZUL

Sealed beneath heavy rock falls, their great gates rune-locked, and the roads leading to them destroyed, the lost holds of Karaz Ghumzul have long fascinated Human and Dwarfen scholars alike. Although the Dwarfen chronicles of the time are very clear that everything of value was packed up and taken away when the holds were abandoned, they still exert a powerful fascination for historians and treasure-hunters.

No doubt, part of this allure is the fact that all the maps and records of Karaz Ghumzul — even their Books of Grudges — were deliberately destroyed as part of the curse the Dwarf priests placed upon their former realm when the holds were abandoned. Of all those who returned to Karaz Ankor in the

Time of Woe, not one would speak the name of their hold, or speak of its history or inhabitants, or tell why the realm was abandoned. For a race of such meticulous record-keepers as the Dwarfs, this deliberate attempt to erase the history of an entire realm was completely unprecedented, and still runs counter to every Dwarfen value and social norm.

No Dwarf living today will admit to knowing anything about Karaz Ghumzul, beyond the fact that it existed once, but was abandoned. Those Dwarfen scholars who study the lost holds do so secretly, under cover of some other research that just happens to take them into the Middle Mountains.

After the events of **The Horned Rat**, this conspiracy of silence can no longer be sustained. The lost hold of Karak Skygg has been found, and seen not only by any Dwarfs who helped defeat the Skaven plot, but also by a large number of manlings. Whatever shame or trauma has been motivating the Dwarfs to try to forget that the whole realm existed, the pretence is over, and they must confront some uncomfortable truths.



THE MIDDENHEIM MINING COLONY AND PENITENTIARY

The Middenheim Mining Colony and Penitentiary had its origins in the first great wave of the Shallyan crusade, when Sister Hildegarde literally took Graf Erich von Kärzbudger by the ear and lectured him about the senseless waste of life resulting from so many executions.

The Graf's first impulse was to have the old woman herself executed, but cooler heads prevailed when his Chancellor reminded him that the good sister was a personal friend of Emperor Magnus.

Rather than insult the new and popular Emperor, and owing quite a bit of money to the Marienburg banking houses, Graf Erich offered Hildegarde a deal: she would be allowed to set up a penitents' camp at some iron mines belonging to the House of von Kärzbudger in the Middle Mountains. The Graf would supply the guards and the prisoners, who would serve a sentence of labour in lieu of death.

In return, Hildegarde and the Sisters of the Tears of Pity would undertake both to reform these criminals and make the mines profitable. Only the Shallyans saw this arrangement as anything other than a compromise. *'Give her a year in that wilderness,'* the Graf was overheard to say, *'and she'll be back, wanting to burn those wretches herself.'* The Shallyans succeeded beyond anyone's expectations, except perhaps those of Sister Hildegarde herself. An able administrator with the ability to reach the most calloused soul, she not only convinced many (including some

guards) to give up their sinful ways, but the mine itself was turning a profit by the end of the second year. Middenheimers were stunned to see convicts return after their sentences were up and look for honest jobs, while the city's Chancellor couldn't believe there was so much profit left in the old mines. For over ten years, Sister Hildegarde made her experiment a model for others. When she died, the graceful prison population actually built a statue of her that stands by the chapel in the Square of Hope to this day.

The von Kärzbudgers were not, however, going to allow such a valuable source of metal and free labour to be controlled by someone else. After Sister Hildegarde's passing Graf Erich's son Wilhelm took direct control, putting the Middenheim Miners' Guild in charge. The Shallyan chaplains still minister to the needs of the prisoners and try to save their souls, but the convicts' real role is as unpaid labour for the City of the White Wolf.

LOCATION

The road to the prison begins about a day's ride north of Middenheim along the Nordland Road, where the weary traveller will come across a grim intersection. The northbound fork is well-used and leads quickly to the *Fox and Crown*, an independent coaching inn that prospers from the Middenheim-Salzenmund traffic. Riders heading toward Salzenmund hurry through the intersection and on to the inn, while those travelling south will often delay their journey at the inn until the next morning if dusk is falling. Few want to be caught near the crossroads after dark, for the eastbound road leads to the dreaded Middenheim Mining Colony and Penitentiary.



Twin granite pylons mark the start of the road, each bearing a pair of manacles and the seals of Middenheim and its Miners' Guild. From this point, wagon trains carrying shackled prisoners wind for two and a half days through the Forest of Shadows and along the base of the Middle Mountains until they reach a narrow valley set between two ridges. Tall, with sharp peaks and little cover, these ridges curve towards each other, almost meeting at the far end of the valley. Long ago, some sardonic wit named the ridges the 'Graf's embrace'. The grim caravans and their escorts pass through reinforced gates and follow the road to the far end of the valley, where the gap between the ridges is blocked by a keep and a wall. The wagons are unloaded in the Square of Hope in the centre of the barracks and workhouses, beneath the gaze of Sister Hildegarde's weatherworn statue. Sometimes, they carry back the fortunate few whose time is done: more often than not, they carry back nothing but iron bars.

The convicts are met by mercenaries in the employ of the Guild's Resident Master, currently a Dwarf named Yarrik. The duty sergeant reads the rules to newly arrived prisoners, making sure they know in grim detail the punishments meted out for any infraction or rebellion. His monologue is punctuated by the hammering of the blacksmith as he fits a heavier set of shackles to each new arrival. Once the blacksmith is finished, the guards lead the prisoners to the barracks, where each is assigned a bunk and a bucket. The next morning, before dawn, a meal of thin porridge is all they get before being led into the mines for the first of many long days, marching under a faded sign that reads 'Honest work makes an honest man.'

Work in the mines is hard and cramped, with few tunnels high enough for a man to stand in, and shifts lasting for 14 hours. Tools are dull and inadequate because the guards fear giving the prisoners anything that they could turn into a weapon. They have little to be afraid of, though, for the men are almost always too exhausted to do more than work, eat and sleep. One afternoon in 16 is considered 'free time' for trusted inmates, most of whom spend the time praying in the Shallyan chapel.

A DEADLY SECRET

Founded in hope, the penitentiary has now become a grim place where most inmates just try to survive until their sentences run out, or for those condemned for life, as long as they can. Still, there are a few with unbroken spirits who try to resist. Until recently, the camp overseers dealt with such troublemakers by working them until they broke or gave the guards a reason to kill them, but Resident Master Yarrik has found a better way. Big, strong prisoners, who look like they have wit and spirit to match their brawn, are illegally sold to pit fighter managers who travel the back roads of the Old World.

Each caravan travelling to the mining colony has an undercover contact riding with it. When alerted of a likely candidate by Yarrik's cronies, the contact passes a message to a middleman at the *Fox and Crown*, who in turn sends notice to a 'merchant' in Salzenmund. At the penitentiary, another unfortunate death is recorded, usually ascribed to a mining accident or a brawl.

The parties involved are discreet enough that few notice the lone covered wagons heading east from the crossroads, and no one has yet made the connection between, for example, a pit fighter with his tongue cut out in Bretonnia and a recently deceased Middenheim racketeer. The gold lining Yarrik's pockets keeps him warm through the cold northern nights.

ENCOUNTERS

While monsters are relatively common in the Middle Mountains, encounters of other kinds are rare — but not unknown. Here are a few possibilities.

MONSTER HUNTERS

When an area becomes famous — or notorious — for monsters, it will inevitably begin to attract monster hunters. These tend to fall into one of three categories:

Young Nobles

Although war is brewing in the Empire, it has not yet broken out into open conflict — which means that a young noble who wants to prove his or her mettle has only two options. The first is to enter wearisome service with a mercenary company, and place oneself under the command of a seasoned but ill-bred captain who has no respect for quality of breeding. The second — and, to many, more attractive — option is to assemble a stout band of lackeys, and set off into the wilds in search of big game.

A noble expedition will consist of 1–4 nobles and 20–30 servants, hunters, scouts, and cart drivers, plus a cook or two, and about half a dozen guards. They will have a dozen or more carts loaded down with grand tents, vintage wines, and various other equipment and supplies — and perhaps a few monster heads and other trophies.

Scholars and Wizards

The study of monsters is a matter of great import in the Old World. Every great university has a Department of Bestiaria devoted to the study of the strange and unusual creatures found in wild and Chaos-warped places. Wizards, too — and not just those of the Amber Order — study these creatures to learn how they came into existence, what dangers they pose, and, in some cases, what magical and alchemical uses their various body parts can offer.

An academic expedition will be led by 1–4 scholars or wizards, but will otherwise look very similar to a noble expedition.

Postulants and Penitents

The followers of many deities may come to the mountains in search of monsters. Some may be performing a penance, others may be fulfilling a vow made in exchange for a prior Blessing or Miracle, and others still may be proving themselves in order to win advancement.

Followers of Ulric, for example, conduct ritual wolf hunts as part of their devotions, and the more fierce and devout among them may decide to slay some other kind of beast. Followers of Sigmar — especially witch hunters and flagellants, or those who wish to enter those careers — may follow rumours of Chaos beasts in the mountains, and seek to please their patron by slaying them. Even followers of gentle Shallya may embark on a monster hunt occasionally, if an elusive beast is threatening an innocent village.

Penitence is not restricted to the religious. Dwarf Slayers regularly seek out the most dangerous monsters in the most treacherous terrain, so the Middle Mountains will offer them many attractions — not least of which is the chance to reach the Keep of the First Slayer, and perhaps be accepted into the elite Brothers of Grimnir. Nor is shame the sole province of the Dwarfs: members of other races may take to the mountains trying to forget, or court danger in the hope of laying to rest a shameful memory when cowardice or panic overcame them.

Regardless of their backgrounds and motivations, these monster hunters may be encountered singly or in groups of up to a dozen. Occasionally a religious expedition with a charismatic leader may take on the proportions of a small crusade, gathering numbers at every stop along the way.

ESCAPEES

The Middenland Mining Colony and Penitentiary (see above) is a harsh place, and although the mountains are arguably more dangerous still, there will always be those who prize their freedom above all things, and are prepared to risk death rather than give it up. Some simply want to escape, but others may have more complex motives: revenge on those who helped convict them; determination to prove their innocence; or even the desire to reach some hidden loot before the rest of the gang does.

Escapees seldom last long in the mountains, but they may occasionally be encountered in groups of 1–6. They are ragged in appearance, gaunt and pale from a prison diet and hard work away from the light. Unlike other travellers in the mountains, they carry little or no equipment, and have only stolen or improvised weapons.

Most escapees will try to avoid being seen, taking cover whenever they see someone else and either waiting for the strangers to leave, or trying to sneak away under the cover of the rough

terrain. A few, the bravest and most desperate, may attempt to shadow a party of travellers, waiting for an opportunity to sneak into their camp at the dead of night and make off with whatever food and equipment they can.

There is a standing reward for recapturing escapees, payable in any Road Warden post throughout Middenland. It varies with the severity of the prisoner's sentence — and the honesty of the Road Warden paying it — but is generally between 5 GC and 50 GC.

PROSPECTORS

Despite the well-known reputation of the Middle Mountains for being barren of mineral wealth, there will always be a few who come into the mountains hoping to find a previously unknown seam of gold or silver, or a pipe of precious gems, tucked away in some unexplored corner. Many are simply stubborn dreamers; a few have crackpot theories or untried 'infallible techniques' for finding the wealth that has eluded so many for so long; some are following visions they believe are prophetic signs of divine favour; and some, inevitably, have been sold bogus mining claims or spurious maps by some opportunist like the one who began the gold rush of 2479 (see above).

Prospectors generally travel in groups of 1–6. Those who know the Middle Mountains travel in larger numbers. Each prospector rides a tough mountain pony, and leads a string of 3–4 donkeys or mules laden down with tents, picks, supplies, and other equipment.

HERMITS

Among the religious-minded, there has always been a devout minority who decide to turn their backs on the world and contemplate their own particular version of the infinite in a remote place far from the distractions of the flesh. Some go further and seek out the remotest and most uncomfortable places they can, punishing their flesh to purify their souls and focus their thoughts on the sacred.

For many Middenlanders and Ostlanders, the Middle Mountains are the remotest and most uncomfortable place conveniently to hand, and here and there one may find the crude and cheerless stone huts of such ascetics, the shrines they build by the side of the track, and sometimes the hermits themselves. Occasionally, the buildings are intact, the shrines undefiled, and the hermits still breathing.

While many hermits prefer solitude, some gather in small communities of up to a dozen individuals. When contemplating the sins and follies of the world, after all, it is pleasant to have someone to share in the judgments and condemnations. Some hermits may ignore passers-by, or even try to chase them away with pious invective, while others may be more friendly —

especially to co-religionists who can prove, or feign, an equally impressive level of devotion. In a pinch, they might be prevailed upon to pray for Blessings or Miracles, or to provide basic first aid: some hermits are familiar with local herbs and their properties.

The rarest type of hermit is one of such pure heart and unwavering piety that their mere presence is sufficient to sanctify a patch of land around a cell or shrine. Within a radius of 30 yards or less, the landscape is miraculously changed: barren rock gives way to lush grass; sleet-grey skies to pure, cloudless blue; and twisted, stunted trees to bountiful groves of fruit set around a crystal spring. Monsters (and Characters carrying too many Sin points) are physically unable to cross into the sanctified area, or suffer pain and Wounds as if from one *Ablaze* Condition until they leave. Resting here doubles the normal rate of healing, and gives a +20 bonus to all associated Tests.



Ingrid Sassewort

Ingrid retreated to the Middle Mountains many years ago to escape a poor marriage and an only marginally worse outbreak of the Red Pox in her village. She has since lead a very satisfying, if occasionally perilous life of foraging amidst the towering mountains. In recent times various pilgrims have begun to seek out Ingrid in the belief that she is a particularly wise and deeply religious individual, though accounts differ as to her chosen deity. This annoys Ingrid to no end, and she keeps a club handy to chase such folks away from her camp. This only serves to deepen the belief that whatever sacred wisdom the old woman guards, it must be indeed enlightening.

INGRID SASSLEWORT (PEASANT)

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	27	31	28	53	55	32	28	33	61	25	23

Traits: Hardy 2, Weapon (Club) +6

Skills: Athletics 37, Lore (Mushroom Stews 65 Middle Mountains 53), Melee (Basic) 37, Outdoor Survival 75

Talents: Rover, Flee!

Trappings: Hand Weapon (Club), Blanket, Tent, Walking Stick, Dried Goblin Meat

FOLLOWERS OF CHAOS

While hermits seek to get away from the sins of the world, followers of Chaos (and occasionally of other forbidden paths such as those of Necromancy or Daemonology) may take to the mountains in search of a place where their own sins do not attract witch hunters or angry mobs.

Although they are much rarer in the Middle Mountains than they are in legends and nursery tales, the lairs of evil wizards and other followers of Chaos can occasionally be found. Many of these individuals will try to hide their true nature when faced with a party of adventurers like the Characters. They may try to imprison or even murder the Characters for use in some unspeakable experiments, or simply to prevent the word of their presence from getting out.

In order to win the Characters' trust and explain their presence in such a remote and monster-haunted place with a small retinue of guards and servants (most if not all of whom are actually apprentices, cultists, or both), they may claim to be robber barons or even chartered nobles, armed with a (forged) commission from some Elector or other to pacify the area in exchange for being recognised as its lord.

If the Characters have already encountered or even heard of a holy hermit of the type described in the previous section, a cruel GM might decide to have them encounter a powerful sorcerer of Tzeentch, whose Chaotic magics transform a patch of land so that it appears to be sanctified in just the same way — but being the work of Chaos, of course, its effects will be very different.

BANDITS

The threat posed by bandits or outlaws is the most mundane of all hazards in a wild area like this. Because they rely on a supply of victims to relieve of their food and valuables, these bandits and outlaws will seldom make their base too far away from a reasonably well-used route. This makes the base more vulnerable to punitive raids by the local authorities, of course, so it will generally be well hidden, using an intimate knowledge of the local terrain and whatever mundane and magical means can be deployed to help disguise it.

A MOUNTAIN BESTIARY

The people of Middenland claim that somewhere in the Middle Mountains, it is possible to find every kind of monster ever recorded in the Empire. Some extend the claim to include every unnatural and dangerous creature in the whole of the Known World. While this claim may be exaggerated, it is certainly true that the monstrous population of the Middle Mountains rivals even the denizens of the fearful Drakwald.

In addition to beasts of Chaos and the occasional small band of Greenskins, many kinds of monstrous beasts make their lairs among the peaks, feeding on each other and the occasional foolish traveller, and are largely untroubled except for the occasional Human noble on a trophy-hunting expedition.

The mountains are home to all manner of dangerous creatures, made hungrier and more aggressive by the barren environment and severe weather conditions.

COMMON CREATURES

Bears hunt and scavenge in the remote mountains, preying on mountain goats and upland flocks in the summer, and hibernating in caves through the winter. In spring half of all encounters with bears will be with a mother and two or three cubs: the mother will react with extreme violence to any approach or perceived threat (*WFRP*, page 314).

Giant Spiders of all sizes make their lairs in small caves and rock piles, venturing out to hunt (*WFRP*, page 315). One particular species, the Cliff Spider (see below) is highly specialised in this environment.

Snakes of all sizes can be found in the mountains, especially in the warm summer months when they can be found sunning themselves on the sun-warmed rocks (*WFRP*, page 316). The Rock Serpent is particularly dangerous (see below), with its deadly ambush technique.



Wolves are as common in the mountains as in every other wild place. They tend to be smaller than their more prosperous forest-dwelling relatives, but are no less aggressive. Many are intelligent enough to use the remote terrain to their advantage, driving prey into caves or blind canyons (*WFRP*, page 317).

Basilisks are exceedingly rare, but may be encountered in the remotest parts of the mountains, especially places that have been strongly and recently affected by Chaos — like the area within the Picket (see **The Horned Rat** page 114), for example (*WFRP*, page 317).

Cave Squigs are unknown in the Middle Mountains, where their Goblinoid masters have failed to establish a lasting presence. However, in other mountain areas, such as the southern Worlds Edge, they are a constant threat (*WFRP*, page 318).

Dragons are also unknown in the Middle Mountains, although there is always the chance that one of these great and powerful beasts may have arrived recently and settled into a large and comfortable cave. However, if that's the case the creature's hunting can scarcely have escaped the notice of local farmers and herders, and adventurers may already be in the area searching for its lair (*WFRP*, page 319).

Giants are unlikely to be encountered in the Middle Mountains, unless one has decided, for unknown reasons, to join the Warriors of Chaos in Brass Keep. Rare at the best of times, Giants are far more likely to be encountered in the deeper mountains of the Worlds Edge, where monsters of all kinds are more common (*WFRP*, page 320).

Griiffs and **Hippogryphs** are comparatively rare in the Middle Mountains, although efforts have been made to set up wild breeding programmes there. Bailiffs and huntsmen working for the local Electors have established a number of hunting preserves, stocking them with goats and other prey, and artificially improving potential nest sites in the hope that the creatures will breed. Every elector would love to have a Griffon as a mount, or to form a body of Hippogryph knights. Both species are notoriously reluctant to breed in captivity (*WFRP*, page 321).

Pegasi are more common in the Grey Mountains, which boast a wider expanse of upland pasture than many other ranges. It is also said — mainly by Bretonnians — that the creatures are attracted to their more chivalrous nation (*WFRP*, page 323).

Wyverns are rare but not unknown in the Middle Mountains, and more common in the wilder and more lawless ranges to the east and south. Cowardly opportunists, they are more dangerous to lone herders and their flocks, and will avoid a party of adventurers — unless they can ambush them and carry off a straggler (*WFRP*, page 325).

CLIFF SPIDER

This subspecies of Giant Spider lurks on steep mountainsides, relying on immobility and the camouflage of its mottled grey-black colouring to remain unseen. To the casual eye, the spider does not look very different from the boulders and scree among which it hunts its prey.

The spider can sense prey within 40 yd, using a mixture of eyesight and ground vibration. Anything rabbit-sized or larger counts as prey. The spider moves with blinding speed, extruding a filament of sticky silk and flinging it with a hind leg almost like a lasso. If the blur of movement is seen, the target is permitted a **Challenging (+0) Dodge** Test to dodge the sticky missile: failure results in one *Entangled* Condition for each level of failure. The spider can reel a victim in from any distance in a single round. Other Characters may try to cut the silk, which requires a slashing blow from an edged weapon causing more than 5 points of Damage.

Once the victim is reeled in, it will be dispatched with a venomous bite and the spider will take the body back to its cave lair for consumption. It will also retreat to its lair if its silk 'lasso' is cut.

CLIFF SPIDER

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
5	35	55	45	35	40	55	30	5	25	—	24

Traits: Armour 1, Bestial, Bite +4, Night Vision, Ranged special (40 yards), Size (Large), Skittish, Stride, Venom (Challenging), Wallcrawler

Optional: Size (Enormous), Venom (Difficult to Very Hard)

GREAT EAGLE

Great Eagles are the largest birds of prey in the Empire. With razor-sharp talons and a wingspan that measures over 30 ft, these birds are alarming predators. They are an ancient race, and have dwelled in the mountains of the Old World since long before the coming of Humans. Most of them nest in the Grey Mountains, though a few live along the Worlds Edge range and a handful in the Middle Mountains.

They are exceedingly intelligent, and a few of their elders are even rumoured to be capable of speaking the Elvish tongue. In any case, they are well-disposed to Wood Elves in particular. Their vision is so acute they can clearly see the movements of ground animals from up to 3 miles away. They have been known to stoop from great heights, striking a hapless victim like a thunderbolt before they are even aware of the danger.

GREAT EAGLE

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
2	65	—	44	43	55	52	—	38	43	25	32

Traits: Acute Sense (Vision: as Character Talent), Beak +8, 2 x Claws +6, Fear 1, Flight (100), Skittish, Size (Large)

Optional: Size (Enormous), Clever, Fearless, Territorial

MOUNTAIN CAT

The Old World Wild Cat looks very much like the puma of our own world, with markings similar to those of a European wildcat: brown and black stripes on the body and face, with black tail rings. They stand 1.5 to 2 ft at the shoulder, and measure almost 6 ft from nose to tail. Mountain Cats are abundant in the Old World, living in forest and mountain areas away from Humans. They prey on Giant Rats, deer, and livestock from remote hill farms.

MOUNTAIN CAT

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
2	65	—	44	43	55	52	—	38	43	25	32

Traits: Bestial, Bite +5, 2 Claws +6, Night Vision, Skittish, Size (Small), Stride, Stealthy, Tracker

Optional: Arboreal, Territorial



CHAPTER 10

BRASS KEEP



HISTORY OF BRASS KEEP

If it were not that this place saw one of Sigmar's great victories over the Dark, I would swear that it is cursed. The halls and bastions twist minds so that they become afraid of their own shadows. For sure, when the enemy is outside the walls, the soldiers of the Empire fight with valour. It is the enemy within that troubles me.'

— Castellan Klaus von Wallenstein, Lord of Brass Keep 1628–1632 IC

Nobody knows who built the original Brass Keep. In centuries past, when scholars explored the castle, they speculated that it had been there long before Sigmar defeated the necromancer Morath. The Elves and Dwarfs have not been able to shed light on its origins either. The architecture has the elegance of Asur construction, but no High Elf can find details of its origins in their own history. Dwarf stonemasons recognise the expert masonry, but no Dwarfen hand is known to have fashioned Brass Keep's cyclopean blocks.

FASTNESS OF THE NECROMANCER

Morath was the first known inhabitant of Brass Keep, a necromancer who fled the fallen kingdom of Strygos when his vampire liege Ushoran was overthrown. When the capital city Mourkain fell, Morath was entrusted with the Crown of Sorcery, a powerful and deadly artefact that had belonged to Nagash himself.

Morath escaped west and north with a small retinue of wights. He sought a fastness within reach of Human tribes to enslave, from where he could rebuild the glory of Mourkain. Morath took the ruined keep, raised its central tower, and cast powerful sorceries to shroud the ruin in illusions of grandeur that echoed his old home. For several centuries he conquered then killed the Humans around Brass Keep's hinterland, reviving their corpses after death to toil on his behalf. The bodies were left to rot in the glacial lake when their labour was not needed.

Eventually, whispers from the Crown of Sorcery told Morath that he must rouse himself for a greater purpose. Morath renewed his campaign of terror on the tribesfolk, who now built greater settlements of their own. The people of the Fauschlag sent expeditions into the mountains to find the source of the curse, but none returned.

It was the coming of Sigmar that ended Morath's terror. The Empire's founder had a vision of Brass Keep and its blasphemous lord. He felt driven to march an army of six hundred Teutogens and Unberogens into the mountains to attack Morath. After a hard, freezing march they arrived in the glacial valley before Brass Keep, where they were astounded by the drowned city below the frozen lake. Morath stood atop the pearlescent bone tower and summoned his undead army from beneath the ice. Sigmar's army was embattled, but Sigmar eventually fought his way up the tower to confront Morath. The Emperor defeated the necromancer and took the Crown of Sorcery.

As Morath died, the drowned city, impressive turrets, and bastion were revealed as illusions, with only Morath's tower intact. Sigmar marched east and abandoned the keep, leaving it a haunted, cursed place his followers were glad to leave.

A HOLY PLACE

Brass Keep was soon reoccupied by a ragged group of Norscan stragglers left behind after Sigmar's successful campaign against the incursion of Cormac Bloodaxe, champion of Khorne. These savage remnants of a once-great host squatted in the ruined fortress and eeked out a life by hunting and fishing the lake. Their fate is unknown, but they were gone by the coming of Ulgrim's Crusade in 450 IC.

Arch Lector Ulgrim held the zealous belief that wherever Sigmar fought his enemies, the cult must establish a grand temple and expel any who were unholy. He launched a crusade to Brass Keep from Altdorf, marching through Middenland with a ragged host of flagellants and holy warriors. After suffering hardships in the mountains and causing no small amount of collateral damage to friendly villages and farms, Ulgrim stalked into the ruined Brass Keep and declared it holy ground.

Brass Keep was held by a combined garrison of Middenland troops and Sigmarite pilgrims for hundreds of years. The walls were repaired and made fit for Human habitation, and a temple of Sigmar was established in the bastion wall. Life in the keep was hard — provisions were scarce in the mountains and the cold halls had few comforts. Worse, the inhabitants felt a sinister presence haunting both the fortress and the glacial valley. Desertion was common and even the most fanatical Sigmarite feared Morath still stalked the ruins.



Over the centuries, Brass Keep changed hands several times. During the Age of Three Emperors, it was held by Ostland troops for a period and sacked several times by Orc tribes. In 1882 another crusade sought to recapture the keep from occupying Greenskins. Count Mordrek, son of the Reikland Emperor, led a disciplined army of Sigmarite Middenlanders to retake the fortress. His dominion over Brass Keep was troubled, and somehow the influence of the mountains or the cursed halls drove Mordrek to embrace the Ruinous Powers. He became the legendary 'Count Mordrek the Damned', a champion of Chaos doomed to an immortality where he could not die nor ascend to daemonhood.

You can't make me go back! I'll hang first. It's in the soil, the food, the air.

The streams run past the Keep, and the filth flows down with it. Not even should blessed Shallya herself descend and cleanse the lands with Lord Ulric at her side, not even then would I venture back into that valley. I have seen what dwells within that Keep.

— Sargent Berget Haüler, hanged for desertion 2508 IC

THE BLIGHTKINGS COME

During the incursions of Chaos, Undra Kul's warhost swept down from the coast, part of Asavar Kul's monstrous invasion. The army swept into the Middle Mountains and besieged Brass Keep, where they hoped to establish a foothold in the Empire. After the Middenland defenders decimated the Chaos Warriors, a warband known as the Repugnauts invoked their god Nurgle, who infected the very stones of the castle; Chaos took Brass Keep once again. But this was a weakened army, and Nurgle's plagues do not distinguish between victims. Soon the only survivors were the warriors of Nurgle themselves, who held out in hope that another Chaos horde would come to their relief.

Respite came in the form of daemonic flies, which swarmed onto the survivors and infested the remaining defenders of Brass Keep. They were soon blessed by Nurgle to become first of the Blightkings, almighty champions of Nurgle, each with the power of a small army in their own right. Over the years, the castle attracted other Chaos cultists from the Empire, who flocked to the Blightking's banner.

The Empire has never retaken Brass Keep since. An attempt in 2370 IC was doomed to failure when the Blightkings and their vassals proved their supernatural resilience. A pair of great Chimera swooped from the filthy towers to devastate the Middenland artillery, while hordes of frenzied warriors poured from the gates to butcher the army.

The Blightkings remain in Brass Keep to this day. Some believe they are sustained by daemonic power; others that Morath's necromantic magics still act to prevent death. Whatever the reason, the political differences between the Todbringers, Kärzburdgers, and other Empire provinces have ensured that no unified force can assemble to defeat this very visible but darkly powerful Enemy Within.





BREACHING THE FASTNESS

Despite the great many signs pointing the Characters away from delving into the midst of a war between the unnatural forces of Nurgle and the teeming hordes of Skaven, you may find that the Players are nevertheless insistent on making their way into Brass Keep. If you feel you have given sufficient warnings, then it may well be best to let them.

LAYOUT OF BRASS KEEP

The Keep itself consists of an outer wall with a handful of turrets, most of which will be defended by several Blightkings as well as assorted other rotting horrors. The central tower consists of four main levels, previously used by Morath as both living space and a laboratory for vile experimentation.

The Dungeons

Like all good fortifications, Brass Keep at one time had a sizable dungeons, both to imprison unfortunates who fell into Morath's grasp, and for storage of food, alchemical ingredients, and other perishables. Since the coming of Chaos, the keep's dungeons have become flooded with a putrid brew of bile and other unmentionable substances. This vat of horrors will strip the flesh from the bones of any creature unfortunate enough to fall into it, and vats of it are occasionally hauled up to the walls both to act as weaponry against any attackers, and as a source of sustenance to the current denizens of the Keep.

The Lower Keep

Since the coming of the forces of Nurgle to the Keep much of its interior has become covered in unnatural growths. The walls are coated in thick, leathery skin that bulges with sodden, putrid life. Blisters as large as dinner plates swell and rupture, spilling corrosive pustulent material to the floors below, along with the occasional Nurgling, a lesser and unusually joyous daemon of Nurgle. Should the Characters pursue any Skaven into the keep, they will find some of them being dragged into these ruptured blisters by a horde of giggling daemons. If they get too close they may find the same happening to them.

Middle Floor

Should the Characters make it this far they will find the central floors of the tower transformed into a place of worship. Here rivulets of bile criss-cross the floor, drawing out an arcane tribute to Nurgle, the Plague Lord, and God of Disease. Any living creature who sets foot upon these floors without divine protection must make a **Difficult (-10) Endurance** Test each round or contract Nurgle's Rot. For each hour they remain here they will contract some other disease of the GM's choosing, should the Rot not prove sufficiently lethal.

The Chaos Champion Woerot the Tainted can be found here, offering up choice Skaven corpses as vessels for new disease to his favoured diety. As the Characters watch, the corpses bloat and burst, spilling yellow-green bile across the flagstones.

Upper Floors

Once the sole domain of Morath, and designed to echo the glory of lost Mourkain, this diminutive tower is the last spot in Brass Keep to resist the corrupting power of Nurgle. Despite numerous attempts by the servants of Nurgle, the lingering essence of Death cannot be cleansed from the place. While the undead are often carriers of disease, they do not fall prey to it, and so are hated by the Lord of Plague. Thus this area is shunned, and should the Characters make it this far (the Skaven certainly won't) they may find a brief reprieve from the plague ridden horrors that pursue them.

Such a reprieve will be especially brief, however, as the necromantic energies of the tower drains their very life. After a Character has spent a number of minutes equal to their Toughness Bonus in the tower, they will begin to loose one Wound each turn. This does not feel painful — rather they begin to feel cold and particularly tired. Any Character with the *Second Sight* Talent will notice this immediately, as hungry strands of Dhar being to stream into their mouth and nostrils, but others must pass a **Challenging (+0) Cool** Test to realise what is happening.

If a Character in the Tower is reduced to 0 Wounds, they immediately die, and return as a Zombie 1d10 minutes later.

DENIZENS OF BRASS KEEP

The Blightkings are the current masters of Brass Keep, holding out in hope that the forces of Chaos will again swarm them Empire. On that day the gates of Brass Keep will be thrown open, and a plague erupt forth that will surely end the Empire at last.

BLIGHTKING

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	60	—	45	55	50	30	30	30	40	25	28

Traits: Armoured 6, Shield 2*, Belligerent, Champion, Corruption (Moderate), Disease (Nurgle's Rot), Weapon (Sword +10, Great Axe +12)

Talents: Hardy 2, Strike Mighty Blow 2

Skills: Athletics 40, Melee (Basic 80, Two-Handed 80, Parry 80), Perception 60

Trappings: Putrid Great Axe, A Pair of Swords that Occassionaly Laugh , Shield Bearing the Skulls of a Dozen Slain Warriors, Cursed Plate Bedecked with Tributes to Nurgle, A Thirst for Battle and the Diseased End of All Things

The Blightkings enjoy using a plethora of weaponry, and may freely switch between wielding either their Great Axe, a Sword and Shield, or a Pair of Swords them once during their turn.

NURGLE'S ROT

The Plague Father has lent his name to only one disease, and it is the crowning glory of all his fetid works. Nurgle's Rot is a terrible and contagious ailment which wracks the body, mind and even the soul of those who suffer from it. It is most commonly caught during encounters with powerful servants of Nurgle, though it has on occasion spread like wildfire through a village, town, or entire region, before vanishing. While those who suffer from it can only curse the Plague Lord's name, the disease itself epitomises the ethos of Nurgle's followers — that of enduring terrible suffering and emerging stronger for it.

Contraction: Make an Endurance Test after coming into contact with an infected individual or servant of Nurgle. The Difficulty of this test varies depending on the source of infection — you should make one Test at the end of each day in which you are exposed to the disease.

Source of Infection	Difficulty
Mortal sufferer with at least two symptoms	Easy (+40)
Nurgling, pool of Daemon bile	Average (+20)
Plaguebearer, Blightking	Challenging (+0)
Great Unclean One	Difficult (-10)

Characters who fail this test contract Nurgle's Rot.

Incubation: 1d10 – 5 days, minimum 1

Duration: Until death

Symptoms: Nurgle's Rot presents differently in all who suffer from it. After incubation, the sufferer will appear jaundiced, with blotchy skin and yellow eyes. This has no negative effects, beyond marking them as ill in some way. One week after this occurs, and at the end of each week thereafter, the victim makes a **Challenging (+0) Endurance Test**. If they fail they develop a new symptom, as below. Where two options are given, the GM may choose whichever they prefer.

- 💀 First Failure: Coughs and Sneezes or a Fever.
- 💀 Second Failure: Pox or Malaise.
- 💀 Third Failure: Flux or Nausea.
- 💀 Fourth Failure: Buboes or Gangrene.
- 💀 Fifth Failure: Convulsions or Wounded.
- 💀 Sixth Failure: Blight.
- 💀 Seventh Failure: Death. A new Plaguebearer is born.

A potential victim of Nurgle's Rot may spend a Fate Point to avoid contracting it. However, once infected, it is impossible to rid oneself of Nurgle's Rot. Fate Points spent after the victim is infected merely delay the onset of new symptoms by a month. Should a victim of Nurgle's Rot die from the disease, a new Plaguebearer is created in the Realm of Chaos, emerging from a pustule of filth on a tree in Nurgle's Garden. If the GM prefers, then a Plague Bearer might instead erupt forth from the body of the victim, should that prove the more dramatic option.

CHAPTER 11

CHANCE

ACQUAINTANCES

This chapter presents three NPCs the Characters could meet during the events of **The Horned Rat**. They may help the Characters, or hinder them; they may join the party temporarily, or become replacements for Characters killed in the course of the adventure. In short, the GM can use them in whatever way will enhance the Players' enjoyment.



A FAMILIAR NAME

His collaboration with the Verenan priestess Amelie Meyer in 2522 – ten years in the future – will make Behram Gundarson arguably the most famous Skaven Slayer alive, which is not saying a great deal, as her work is not destined to be widely read. However, second edition grognards may recall his name from the supplement *Children of the Horned Rat*. At the time of **The Enemy Within**, though, Amelie is still a novice at the Altdorf seminary, and Behram has not yet met her.



BEHRAM GUNDARSON, SKAVEN SLAYER

Behram is at an early point in a career that is destined to go on to greatness — if he lives that long. Unusually for a Slayer, Behram is clad in the armour that he wore in his previous career as an Ironbreaker. His hunger for a heroic death is tempered by a streak of Dwarfen practicality that tells him there is no glory in being overwhelmed by a horde of Skavenslaves or Clanrats. He will happily kill them, regardless of their numbers, but he sees these lesser ratmen as nothing more than obstacles on his way to a glorious combat with a worthy foe: a skilled Clan Eshin warrior, or a tough and brutal Rat Ogre or — if Grimnir smiles upon him — a Daemonic Verminlord.

With grey eyes and a weather-beaten tan, Behram almost seems to be made of stone himself. Beneath his armour, he wears the tattoos of a Slayer, and he has discarded his Ironbreaker's helmet to display his dyed and stiffened Slayer's crest. Like his beard, it is bright orange.

Behram is laconic even for a Dwarf, and on no account will he discuss the events that led to his taking the Slayer's Oath — the loss of his family to a Skaven raid three years ago in the Grey Mountains. He is a master of understatement, capable of describing an inescapable death as '*an interesting situation*', and has a deadpan sense of humour that takes many by surprise, often straying across the line into biting sarcasm by Human standards.

BEHRAM GUNDARSON – SLAYER (BRASS 5) FORMER IRONBREAKER

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
3	60	30	40	55	38	20	30	30	45	28	18

Traits: Animosity (Elves), Hatred (Greenskins, Skaven), Night Vision, Prejudice (Elves), Tough, Tunnel Rat, Weapon (Hand Weapon) +9

Skills: Climb 43, Consume Alcohol 46, Cool 55, Dodge 42, Endurance 52, Intuition 40, Leadership 55, Lore (Skaven) 43, Melee (Basic) 65, Perception 45, Ranged (Crossbow) 35, Track 40

Talents: Enclosed Fighter, Fearless (Everything), Frenzy, Slayer, Strike Mighty Blow

Trappings: Armour, Helmet, Shield, Axe (Hand Weapon), Crossbow and 10 bolts

ENCOUNTERING BEHRAM

The Characters may encounter Behram at any point during the events of **The Horned Rat** as he scours Middenheim and the Middle Mountains, seeking to slay as many of the loathsome rats as he can before his inevitable death. He might pass them by on the road between Middenheim and Sokh, or spend a night at the Picket on his way into the mountains.

If things go seriously wrong for the Characters inside Karak Skygg — the kind of wrong that threatens the course of the adventure, rather than the kind of wrong written in on purpose — Behram might suddenly appear to help even the odds or divert attention away from the Characters. Even if it looks as though he was killed, he might appear later, wounded and down a Fate Point or two, perhaps as a prisoner to be rescued. He can fill in the Characters on any Skaven lore they might need, and provide useful support in a fight.

GIMBRIN FLINTBEARD, DWARF KING'S GHOST

Gimbrin Flintbeard, a long-dead Dwarf king, has been roused from his slumber by the outrage visited upon his hold by the invading Skaven — and perhaps (although he would take the suggestion very ill) by the magical energies of the Warpstone they brought with them. This magical influence might explain why, in contrast to the kind of Ghost described in the **WFRP** rulebook (page 331), Gimbrin retains all his mental faculties and memories from life. If not, then perhaps Dwarf stubbornness is to blame.

He wanders the less-populated parts of the hold, preying upon lone Skaven and small packs, occasionally popping out of a wall to scare the nearby ratmen. But — much to his chagrin — Gimbrin knows better than to expose himself to spells or enchanted weapons by fighting openly. In fact, his translucent cloak sports a large, ragged hole from an early encounter where overconfidence nearly led to his ruin.

Despite this, or perhaps because of it, Gimbrin is obsessed with ridding his hold of the Skaven. If he happens across the Characters, he attaches himself to them, lecturing constantly on the outrage done to his hold and the need to exterminate the Skaven to the last. If handled badly, he sulks, grumbles, and plays tricks, hampering everything the Characters try to do that — in his opinion — is not directly related to purging the Skaven from his home. This might include attempts to use cowardly stealth instead of headstrong valour.

Apart from the fact that he is a pale, translucent blue-green, Gimbrin looks very much like a stout but elderly Dwarf with a fine braided beard. He is richly dressed, wears a crown on his head, and carries a rune-carved great axe of the finest make. Like the king himself, his magnificent wargear is ethereal, nothing more than his memories of those possessions that still lie in his tomb along with his crumbling bones, many levels below the floor of the hold.



GIMBRIN FLINTBEARD — DWARF KING'S GHOST

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
6	30	—	30	30	10	30	20	45	70	20	10

Traits: Dark Vision, Ethereal, Fear 2, Hatred (Greenskins, Skaven), Prejudice (Elves), Territorial (Karak Skygg), Undead, Unstable (when outside Karak Skygg), Weapon (Great Axe) +9

Skills: Cool 75, Endurance 82, Leadership 85, Lore (Skaven) 60, Melee (Two-handed) 65, Track 40

Talents: Argumentative, Berserk Charge, Enclosed Fighter, Fearless (Everything), Frenzy, Inspiring

Trappings: Crown and Great Axe (ethereal), Dwarfen Outrage

FOR GROGNARDS: THE ROYAL TOMBS

The mention of Dwarf royal tombs will cause visions of wealth and powerful magic items to dance before the eyes of many a Player, and grognard GMs may even start planning a treasure hunt, perhaps based on the halls of Kadar-Gravning from the first edition *Doomstones* adventure, *Dwarf Wars*. This is a very bad idea.

For one thing, the Characters are supposed to be thwarting the Skaven plan and saving the Old World from a devastating rain of Warpstone from Morrslieb. They can't do that — not in time — if they are distracted by a treasure hunt.

For another, Gimbrin wants the Characters to help deal with the Skaven, not rob his ancestral tomb. He will fight potential tomb-robbers with everything he has, and may even summon up a Spirit Host of other Dwarven Kings and Queens to help him. The host consists of 1d10 additional Ghosts under his control. They use the Ghost profile (WFRP, page 331), with the addition of the *Swarm* Trait.

As a last resort, the destruction of Gimbrin's ghost may trigger a death curse that collapses all the passages leading to the tombs, effectively cutting off access forever.

Of course, if the Characters insist on abandoning their duty — and the fate of their homeland — in pursuit of ancient riches, you could let them. In that case, they will miss the climax of the adventure, and find themselves caught up in the explosion that destroys the peak and the hold beneath. They will have to escape as the mountain collapses into the hold, survive flares and explosions of warp-energy from the destruction of the infernal device, and report to the Todbringers that they failed.



ENCOUNTERING GIMBRIN

Gimbrin can be encountered almost anywhere in the hold. Since his near-disastrous brush with a Skaven spellcaster, he tends to keep to the less-frequented areas. However, sometimes his outrage builds to the point where he makes a furious charge, scattering frightened slaves and Clanrats, retreating before the rats can counterattack to plan his next foray. Gimbrin knows this is a futile task, as the raki are apparently endless and he is but a single Dwarf — and not even a living one at that. However, he stubbornly persists, which is something in which he has had many long years of practice.

The GM must judge the best moment to introduce Gimbrin. He might take a hand in a fight that is going against the Characters, or he might pop out of a wall when they are hiding or resting somewhere quiet, exhorting them to drive the Skaven out of his hold. If the Characters miss the explosives stowed in the walls (See The Hidden Arsenal on page 150 of **The Horned Rat**) then Gimbrin will point it out — he is in fact responsible for having them placed there. Gimbrin chose to remain with the keep after it was abandoned, and was killed in its defence shortly thereafter. The only reason he has not detonated the casks himself is that he still felt the Keep could be saved. Seeing the cope and size of the Skaven infestation has changed his mind, but he was unable to get near the Arsenal without the Characters aid.

Gimbrin might also appear if the Characters are captured and appear to need proper Dwarf assistance. If they seem to be doing well enough at the task of escaping, he will hang around making unhelpful comments, urging them to hurry up and deal with these cursed ratmen. If they are in genuine trouble because of unlucky dice or lack of ideas, he could help — indirectly. After all, it would be too easy simply to have him cut their bonds with his ethereal axe; he might offer advice — laconic and contemptuous, since they have not impressed him, but genuinely useful since they are the only allies he has.

Gimbrin's *Territorial* Trait restricts him to the inside of the hold, and he becomes *Unstable* outside it. When the hold is destroyed, his spirit is either shredded in the Warpstone-laced explosion, or laid to rest by the destruction of all the Skaven who had invaded his realm.



CHAPTER 12

DWARF IRONBREAKERS



IRONBREAKER

'A dawi and his shield stand firm!'

The Ironbreakers are a uniquely Dwarfen class of warriors, specialising in underground combat. Some Humans call them 'Tunnel Fighters', and they take no exception to this name, but 'Ironbreaker' is a more literal translation of the Khazalid *Angthragor*.

Ironbreaker is a Warrior Career. If Careers are being determined randomly, then any Dwarf Character who rolls Guard or Soldier on the Random Class and Career Table (**WFRP**, pages 30–31) may choose to become an Ironbreaker instead.

'There's a fine judgement to the military life, though don't let any officer hear you say so. It consists of knowing when to fight and when not to fight. When to let a town or a fortress go rather than waste further lives — especially your own — defending it when it can't possibly stand. Last stands are good fodder for poets, but have no place on the battlefield. No one seems to have told the Dwarfs that.'

— Ruger Martin, Reikland Mercenary

'When you've got your back to the gates of your home, and all your kin and kinder behind them, and before you a horde of creatures who want nothing more than to break those gates down and slaughter everyone you care for, you stand. You fight. It's that simple.'

— Rogni Barnisson, Ironbreaker

While most Ironbreakers remain close to the homes they are sworn to defend, a few do venture out into the world to hunt the enemies of the Dwarfs more proactively. There is particular trepidation whenever an Ironbreaker who has been entrusted with Gromril plate leaves their Karak. However, few would question the tenacity of any Dwarf, and fewer still the will and determination of an Ironbreaker. If a Dwarf bears Gromril, they are trusted to protect it as they see fit. Were they not worthy of such a burden, they would not have been given the precious armour in the first place.

IRONBREAKER ADVANCE SCHEME

WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel
+		✖	+	💀				+	🛡

CAREER PATH

✚ Tunnel Fighter - Brass 4

Skills: Athletics, Climb, Cool, Dodge, Endurance, Entertain (Singing), Intimidate, Language (Battle), Melee (Basic), Stealth (Any)

Talents: Drilled, Enclosed Fighter, Strike Mighty Blow, Warrior Born

Trappings: Breastplate, Open Helm, Bracers, Leggings, Shield (Large), Axe

✖ Ironbreaker - Silver 3

Skills: Consume Alcohol, Gossip, Leadership, Lore (Geology), Melee (Parry), Ranged (Explosives)

Talents: Beat Blade, Combat Aware, Shieldsman, Unshakeable

Trappings: 3 Cinderblast Bombs, A Weapon or Armour Peice made of Gromril

💀 Ironbeard - Gold 1

Skills: Intuition, Leadership, Melee (Two-handed), Perception

Talents: Careful Strike, Combat Master, Reaction Strike, War Leader

Trappings: Two-Handed Axe, Full Suit of Gromril Armour

🛡 Old Guard - Gold 3

Skills: Lore (Warfare), Navigation

Talents: Commanding Presence, Implacable, Inspiring, Stout-hearted

Trappings: Unit of Ironbreakers, Weapon Bearing a Master Rune



GROMRIL

Gromril is the most precious metal worked by the Dwarfs, and is viewed with an awe broaching the religious. It takes great skill to work, and none save the Dwarfs know how. Arms and armour made from it are incredibly strong. Items forged from Gromril are always Unbreakable, and often imbued with assorted runic magics.

The riddle of Gromril? The secret to its forging? Lad, I must get one of you manlings up here every decade asking after it. Dwarfs don't go in for riddles! Gromril takes great skill and technique to work, and none save the best Dwarf Smiths are good enough to do it. It's as simple as that, and if you'd like to press the issue I'd be happy to give you a tour of our forges. Head first, and from the warm side, if you catch my meaning.

— Gunnig Brensdottir, Dwarf Smith

No price is given for Gromril, as no suit has ever been for sale. It can only be earned through long years of service to one's hold, and the very idea of selling such an artifact is almost enough to make a self-respecting dwarf take the Slayer's Oath and seek repentance in death at the hands of a worthy enemy. It is very rarely found in the hands of non-Dwarfs, though it is sometimes given in return for some great service rendered to Dwarf-kind, or stolen. To be a thief of Gromril is to never know peace, for any Dwarf who heard of such a thing would not hesitate to slay the perpetrator on the spot, or at least right after they had handed over their loot.

Those few non-Dwarfs who do carry weapons or armour made of the material are often expected to return it to the Dwarfs at some point in the future, typically after the passing of a number of generations that varies with the value of the gift and the scope of the favour done to dwarfkind. This seems like a terribly long time to most Humans, but to the Dwarfs, long lived and fastidious record keepers as they are, it is quite reasonable. Many a scion has, on the death of a beloved great uncle or grandparent, found a contingent of Dwarfs on their doorstep, politely but firmly requesting the return of a dusty blade or sturdy breastplate that they had long assumed a worthless antique or fragile decorative piece.

GROMRIL ARMOUR

While any armour could in theory be made from Gromril and benefit from its unparalleled rigidity and durability, in practice it is mostly used to make plate. While any Dwarf will tell you that plate is the only armour worthy of being made from Gromril, some whisper that even Dwarf smiths balk at the idea of forging the notoriously difficult to work metal into the thousands of interconnected rings required by mail.

Gromril armour functions as any other plate armour, but provides 3 AP. In addition to the excellent protection this affords, the wearer is immune to any Critical Wounds inflicted on them. Critical strikes become normal blows. The only exception to this is Critical Wounds caused by damage inflicted after the Character has already been reduced to 0 Wounds.

GROMRIL WEAPONS

Far more Gromril is forged into armour than into weapons, as the protection it affords makes other uses for it seem almost wasteful. However, it is sometimes forged into weaponry, both for its durability, but also because few materials take Dwarf Runes with the same ease as forged Gromril. These weapons are bound to become legendary, and indeed the Empire's mighty Runefangs, badges of office to the Elector Counts, are just such artefacts.

GUDII'S SHIELD

Once forged for a Dwarf Prince and later stolen, this Shield is decorated with various ostentatious runes, as well as a single Rune of Power. As it is Gromril, the shield gains the Unbreakable quality, and attacks opposed by the shield may never inflict a critical hit except when the Character is already at 0 Wounds. In addition, a *Master Rune of Adamant* graces the shield, granting its bearer +10 Toughness for as long as it is in their possession.

VON HAFFENHOF'S SWORD

A rare gift to a human soldier who saved a caravan full of Dwarf children from a Troll, Von Haffenhoft's Sword was forged from Gromril and created specifically for the confused Ostlander. Despite not understanding quite how significantly he was being honoured, the name of Von Haffenhoft is still recounted by those Dwarfs whose ancestors were part of the caravan. The blade is Unbreakable, counts as a Hand Weapon, and bears a *Rune of Cleaving*, granting it +5 damage instead of the usual +4, and allowing it to ignore all AP from armour that is not made from Gromril.

For the rest of his life, Von Haffenhoft referred to the blade as '*my other, better sword*', and drew it only in the most dire of circumstances. After his death it was returned to the Dwarfs of Karak Skygg, who kept it in anticipation of another worthy manling coming along. They remained disappointed until the hold was eventually abandoned, and the blade all but forgotten.

CHAPTER 13



A LITTLE HELP FROM MY (NEW) FRIENDS



HELP WANTED

With a Little Help From My Friends is a short adventure designed for a small party of adventurers. A Character with the *Criminal* Talent or an otherwise flexible attitude toward breaking and entering will prove useful, as will Characters with decent Perception.

GETTING STARTED

This adventure takes place in Middenheim. It can serve as a nice distraction from the main plot during the early sections of **The Horned Rat**, or you may wish to use it to break up the events of **Power Behind the Throne** and **The Horned Rat**. If you want to use it outside of **The Enemy Within**, any medium or large Empire city will work just as well, and indeed it may take place in Altdorf during the events to come in **Empire in Ruins**, the final chapter of the campaign.

The encounter is designed to give Players a chance to think before they act. The Characters should consider the problem carefully, and you should do your best to encourage a thoughtful pace of play. Even so, both the Characters and GM may have to improvise quickly if things don't go quite according to plan.

There has been a kidnapping, and the adventurers are hired to rescue the hostage. This problem will feel familiar to parties that have played through **Power Behind the Throne** and rescued Law Lord Erlich's niece Reya. Indeed, such Characters have already begun to enjoy a reputation for tackling this sort of thing, as whispers spread of the events of Carnival week.

ENTER ALPHONSE

The Characters are approached by a rather short figure with the improbable name of Alphonse Hercules de Gascoigne. Alphonse, dressed in well-tailored but old-fashioned clothing, has an almost perfectly round head and sports an enormous waxed moustache almost too perfectly groomed to be real. He pets and twiddles it constantly. Alphonse is apparently some sort of particularly peculiar Halfling, hails from Bretonnia, and speaks Reikspiel with a quite outrageous accent. He finds the Characters at *The Templar's Arms*, or wherever else they are staying. Alphonse has various contacts at the court, especially among the kitchen staff, and has heard rumours of the Characters' problem-solving abilities. He considers these tales to almost certainly be exaggerated, but as he is not one to undersell his own reputation, Alphonse does not consider it a particularly grave sin.

WHY US?

If the Characters have not taken part in **Power Behind the Throne**, some of their other previous exploits have led Alphonse to believe they are the right people for the job. If they are truly forgettable individuals, then Alphonse, in a rare moment of poor judgement, has mistaken them for someone else. If this is the case, feel free to have fun with it. Alphonse will drop comments such as '*Surely this is no problem for ze 'eros of Nuln?*' or '*This must remind you of your time with ze Duke in Tilea, oui? You must tell me ze full histoire when we are done!*'

Alphonse, a noted private detective in Middenheim, is working on a kidnapping case and needs reliable, trustworthy help. He gives the Characters the information below. Either read this aloud, or feed it to them as a series of answers:

Mes amis, I am, as I am sure you know, the Old World's greatest detective. You 'ave 'eard of Alphonse, no?

Alphonse bows his head modestly. If the Characters suggest that they haven't heard of him, he looks annoyed, but continues.

'I 'ave been employed to ensure ze safety of ze son of Ludwig Orteli — a young lad named Sigismund — who 'as been abducted and ees being 'eld for ransom. Ze kidnappers demand 500 gold crowns for ze son's safe return, and quel disaster! Ze father 'as not the funds! If zey do not receive ze money by midnight, three days from now, ze villains 'ave promised to return Sigismund in — 'ow you say — tiny little bits. So, Alphonse will rescue 'im before zen!

He grins broadly and curls his moustache around one finger, allowing the Characters a moment to take this in before continuing.

I, Alphonse 'Ercule de Gascoigne, 'ave brilliantly tracked ze villains to zeir lair, where I am sure zey are 'olding ze young Orteli. I need ze assistance of several discreet individuals such as yourselves to scout out ze enemy's position, and zen, when the time ees right, rescue Sigismund. Will you 'elp?

If asked, Alphonse explains that the local authorities have not been called in because (in Alphonse's opinion, which Ludwig Orteli shares), they are a bunch of stupid louts who would probably mess the job up and only get Sigismund killed.

Alphonse offers to pay the Characters 30 gold crowns if they help him rescue Sigismund unharmed, 15 crowns if he is mostly alive, but nothing should he die. The Characters can argue him up to 50 gold crowns with a **Challenging (+0) Haggle** Test.

If the Characters agree to take the job, Alphonse tells them to meet him at a house he has rented near the kidnappers' hideout. He gives directions to Number 12 Wendenbahn in the Altquartier, a disreputable part of town. Alphonse insists that the Characters wear no armour better than leather, no helmets, and carry no large weapons that might be spotted by the kidnappers. This is for good reason, and Characters who fail to follow this stipulation may well tip off the kidnappers (see page 87).

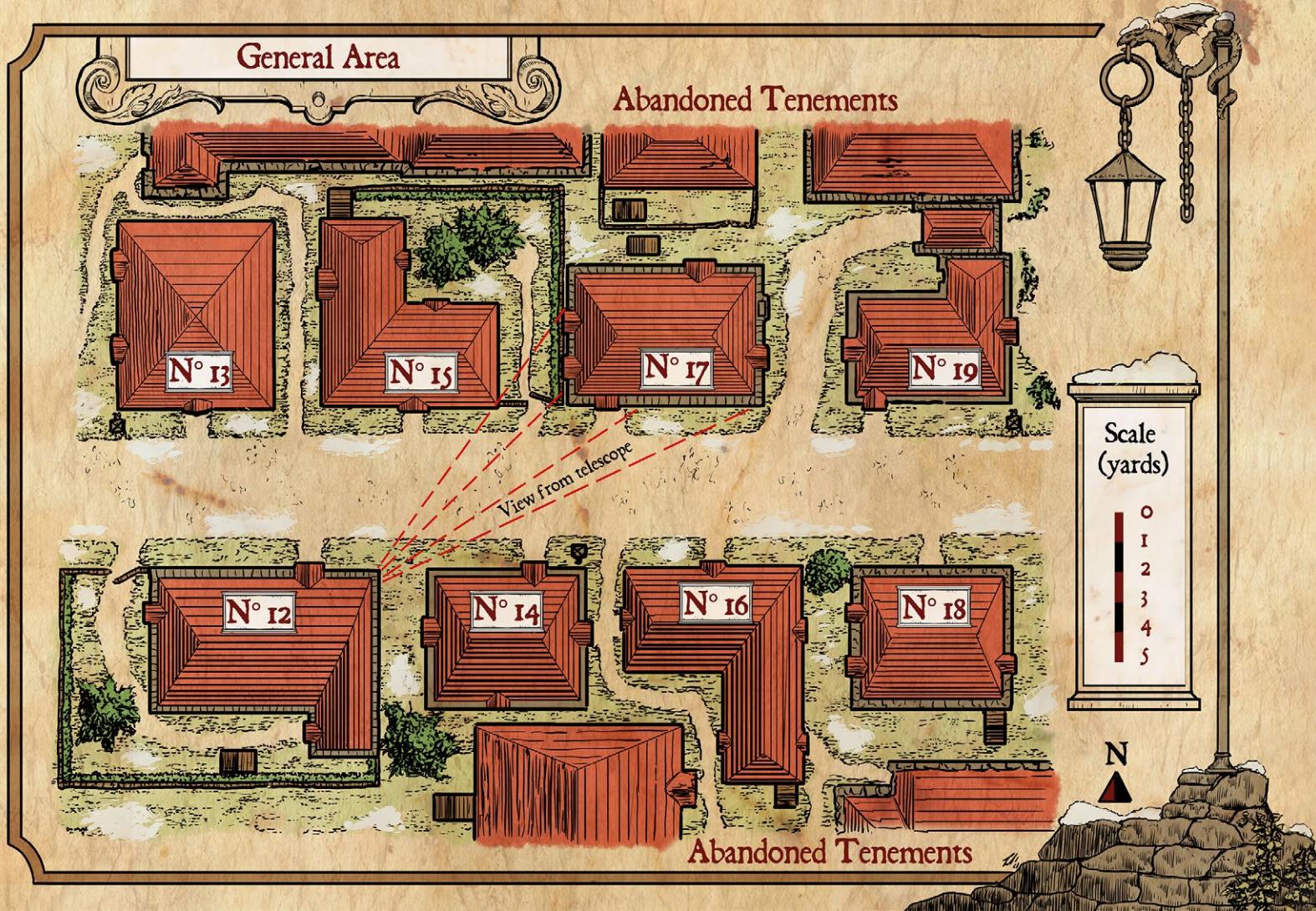
Broke Characters can wheedle an advance of 6 GC out of Alphonse to purchase necessary equipment but, given their reputation, demands for any more only lead Alphonse to ponder aloud if they are indeed the right people for the job.

CASING THE JOINT

The hideout should be deep within the seedy side of the GM's chosen city. For Middenheim, this would be the Altquartier, home to a large portion of Middenheim's underworld population. It is a maze of winding streets and alleys lined with rundown houses and tenements. During the day, the streets crawl with lowlives; during the night, they crawl with even less reputable sorts. Watch patrols are infrequent and heavily armed. For more on the Altquartier, see **Middenheim**, page 37. If you wish to set this adventure in Altdorf, the shadier parts of The East End (**Altdorf**, page 129) would work.

As the Characters head towards their destination, they have to run a heavy gauntlet of beggars and pickpockets. However, once they reach the street containing number 12 (a map of the street is below), the area becomes suspiciously empty. The locals know something is going on at number 17 — they always know something's up in this kind of situation — and the grapevine says it's unhealthy to linger in that neighbourhood just now.

Once inside number 12, Alphonse leads the Characters upstairs and gives them their assignments. He says that the kidnappers are holed up in number 17 across the street.



WE KICK IN THE DOOR

Alphonse painfully reminds the Characters that simply rushing in will put Sigismund's life at risk. If they do not seem to care for the damage this would do to Alphonse's reputation (the chief negative outcome that springs to his mind), he also points out that they will not get paid and, incidentally, will have the blood of an innocent young man on their hands. Not to mention the father's wrath.

However, some groups will insist on taking the direct approach. If they are indiscreet, the kidnappers waste no time in both defending themselves and heading to the cellar to do away with Sigismund should any Characters make it that far. They are quite willing to kill their hostage if it comes to it — after all, threats are only worth making if you mean to follow through.

Even if this reckless plan succeeds — and it shouldn't — Alphonse will be furious at the risks they took, and will pay them only if threatened with violence.

One Character is to watch the front of the house through the telescope (carefully surrounded by drawn curtains), while the others are to find a vantage point from which they can spy on the back of the house. They are to carefully note down (or remember, if none are literate) any arrivals and departures, plus anything they can see going on inside. Under no circumstances are they to do anything to make the kidnappers suspicious.

Alphonse is off to check some other leads concerning the kidnappers' criminal associates, and will return at midnight to take their reports.

THE TELESCOPE

The Character at the telescope has the easy job; all they have to do is stay awake and avoid falling out of the window. If the Character does not have the *Read/Write* Talent, insist that they do not take any notes themselves, but commit the various comings and goings of the kidnappers to memory for their report to Alphonse.

The Character at the scope can see the front door and into bedroom 1 and bedroom 3 (see map) on the first floor. On first inspection, they note that all other visible windows are shuttered, and the front door is in good condition. On a successful **Average (+20) Perception** Test, the Character notices that there is a skylight on the roof, which appears warped and slightly cracked.

The Rear

One or more Characters will have to find a good spot to watch the rear of number 17. Sensible precautions, such as moving stealthily, finding a good disguise, and a plausible excuse to be in the area if questioned, are required to avoid trouble. Characters who fail to take proper care, or who try to get too close to the house, should be chased off by Frau Koch from number 19, who has a mean temper and wields a rolling pin to match (see page 91)!

There are several good places from which to spy on the back of the house, including an obviously abandoned tenement directly behind number 17. The privy — mere feet from number 17's own outhouse — is even better, although a lot less comfortable for a spy. From their vantage points, the Characters can see the front and back of the house, into the kitchen on the ground floor, and the three bedrooms on the second. All other rooms have curtains drawn, apart from the broken skylight to the attic. Just what can be seen by keeping watch is covered in **The Surveillance** below.

See also **Sneaking About In Other People's Backyards** (page 86) for how to handle the Characters' movements during their surveillance.

THE INHABITANTS

There are six kidnappers, one ill-tempered dog, and one unhappy son in the house. Claudia Carbonetti, the mastermind of the operation, is vicious, evil, and cunning. Her right-hand thug, Paolo Gentile, is a mindless sadist who worships Claudia and unhesitatingly follows her orders to the letter. The others in the gang (Knud, Britta, Ilona, and Mikhail), are muscle hired specifically for this job. They follow Claudia's orders mainly because they are well paid, and they know what Paolo will do to them if they don't. Even so, they have no particular desire to die for 5 shillings a day, and of course are seen as entirely disposable by Claudia and Paolo.

Giuseppe the dog is Claudia's pet. A Tilean Manhound, Giuseppe is about as friendly and playful as a hungry Squig. The unfortunate victim Sigismund is tied hand and foot in the basement, and wishes he were anywhere else. All the kidnappers' descriptions and statistics may be found under **NPCs** (page 94-95).

SNEAKING ABOUT IN OTHER PEOPLE'S BACKYARDS

While the Characters are performing surveillance on the kidnappers' hideout, use Opposed Skill Tests to see whether they are spotted by any of the kidnappers or their neighbours (see **WFRP**, page 153 for guidance on Opposed Skill Tests). The Tests vary depending on the time of day and the Characters' Skills.

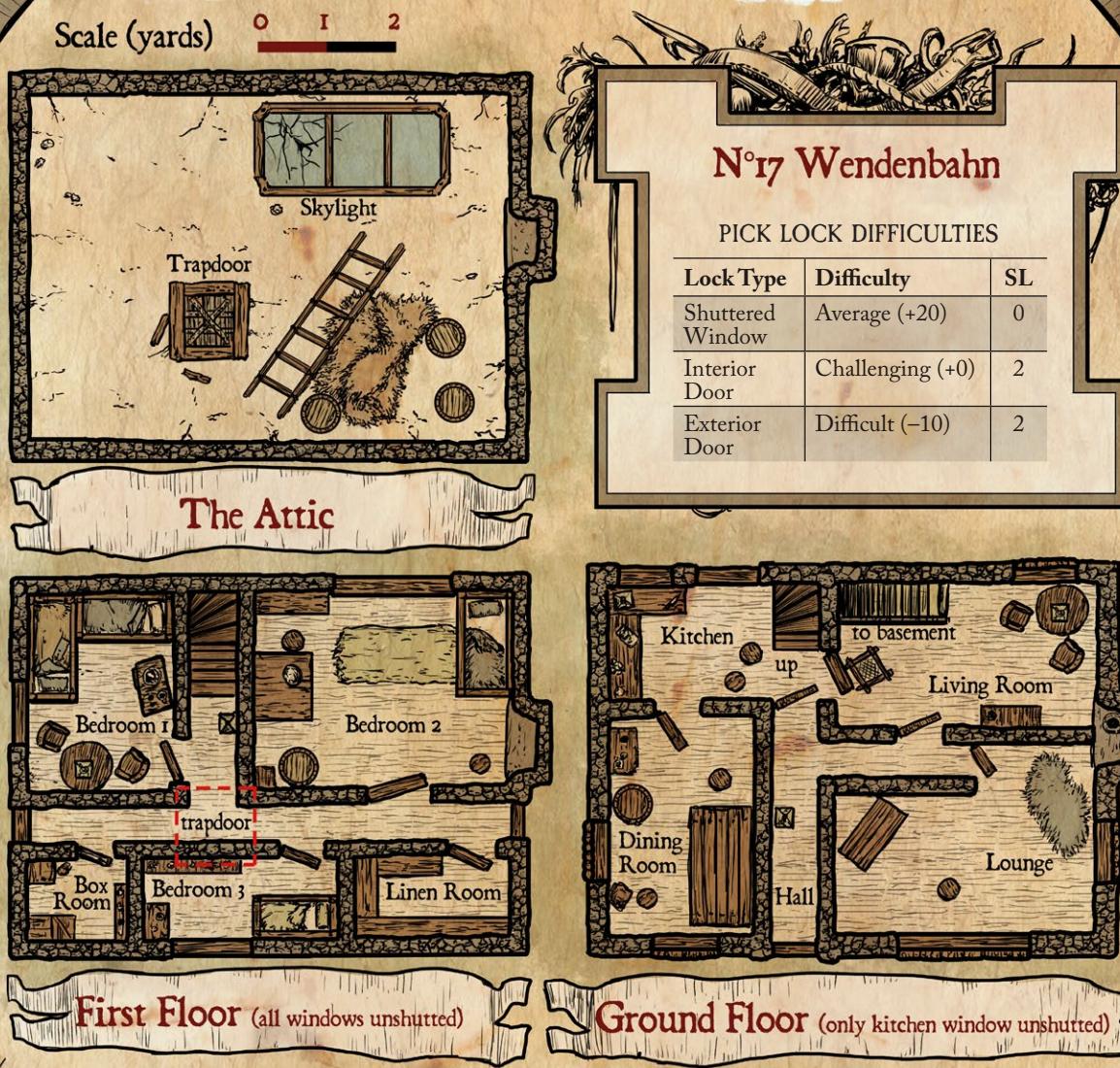
By Day

If a Character is acting suspiciously, is somewhere they shouldn't be, or might otherwise draw attention, any guards should make an opposed **Average (+20) Perception** Test resisted by the Character's **Challenging (+0) Stealth (Urban)** Test. This Test may become easier for the Character if they have taken efforts to disguise themselves or otherwise make themselves look like they fit in.

For example, they might dress as a beggar in a doorway nearby, or pass the house in the guise of a pie seller. In these cases, they may well draw the attention of the kidnappers or their neighbours, but this doesn't give the game away: they may just be told to move on, or asked for a pie, depending on the circumstances.

By Night

NPCs who are sleeping, drunk, or otherwise not paying attention must make a **Challenging (+0) Perception** Test at night, resisted by an **Average (+20) Stealth** Test, as it is generally much easier to sneak about at night. Some disguises will draw less attention at night, such as a Character pretending to be a drunken reveller relieving themselves in an alley. Others will be less effective — there are very few pie sellers who would brave Altquartier after dark.



MESSING ABOUT ON ROOFTOPS (NIGHT ONLY)

Houses in the area are either two or three storeys high. Two-storey houses are 6 yards high, whereas three-storey houses are 9 yards high.

Climbing

A **Difficult (-10) Climb** Test is sufficient to get atop a two-storey building, while a **Hard (-20) Climb** Test is required for a three-storey house. This difficulty may be lowered if the Characters have the right equipment or Talents, such as *Scale Sheer Surface* or a good length of rope and grapple.

Most buildings are scalable on the corners, where rickety drain pipes provide enough purchase to make the attempt. The flat front or side of a building requires the *Scale Sheer Surface* Talent to attempt at the modifiers above.

The fences between the backyards of buildings require a **Challenging (+0) Climb** Test to vault.

You may find the rules on jumping and falling to be of use should the Characters slip up when attempting to move between roofs (WFRP, page 166).

Making Noise

The slates on houses in the Altquartier are never new and rarely secure, and the patter of even small feet can sound incredibly loud when it is coming from the ceiling right above one's head. Remember to Test against the Perception of anyone sleeping in a house the Characters climb, even if they are otherwise being extremely quiet. To most citizens, it is quite obvious when something a good deal heavier than a pigeon is traipsing across their roof.



THE KIDNAPPERS' PLAN

After Claudia grabbed Sigismund, she and her band retired to the house. She then sent the ransom note (via an innocent hired messenger), which gave Orteli three days to raise 500 gold crowns or his son would be killed. Further, the note told Orteli to wait for instructions on how to hand over the money.

Claudia is now waiting for the deadline to expire, at which point she will send a message to Orteli telling him to go to a certain bar in the Altmarkt with the payment. There Paolo will take the money from him and return to the house.

If Orteli doesn't come up with the money, Claudia plans to send along a token of Sigismund's (say, a finger or toe) in the belief this will encourage Orteli's cooperation. If Paolo comes back with the money, Claudia will kill Sigismund (there's no sense in leaving witnesses, after all), then the gang will disperse. After going to ground for a few weeks, Claudia and Paolo plan to target another less tight-fisted victim.

As you may have gathered, Claudia is not a very nice person. Fortunately for Sigismund, Claudia hasn't taken into account the brilliant — nay, astonishing — Alphonse Hercules de Gascoigne, who performed the almost impossible task of tracing the paper used for the ransom note back to a vendor in the Altmarkt. The stall's proprietor, eager to cooperate with the funny-looking figure who was waving money around, gave Alphonse an accurate description of the '*shifty-looking number with the big, mean dog*' who bought the paper. For a detective of Alphonse's talents, tracing Claudia to her hideout was child's play.

Though she doesn't suspect that anyone knows where she is, Claudia is taking no chances. The victim is bound hand and foot and locked in the basement. Claudia, Paolo, and Giuseppe are stationed in the living room at all times; a guard is on duty in the hall, and another is in the kitchen. The remaining two off-duty guards stay upstairs in bedroom 1.

If anybody tries anything, Claudia expects the guards to buy her time to unlock the basement door, grab Sigismund, and threaten to kill him unless she and her band are allowed to escape unharmed. If things go badly, she sets her dog on Sigismund, hoping to make her escape while the rescuers save him.

MUMBLETY-PEG

A popular game in Middenheim, and indeed throughout the Empire, mumblety-peg has many variations, all dangerous. In Middenheim, players take turns tossing a dagger at their own outstretched foot. At the start of the game, the players drive a peg or knife into the ground and form a circle around it. The aim of the game is to get one's dagger as close as possible to your own foot, with whoever gets theirs the closest winning that round. Mumblety-peg is usually played to the first to win three rounds, though by long tradition anyone who hits their own foot is declared the winner by default. The player with the worst throws must pull the peg or knife out of the ground using only their teeth, likely mumbling curses at the others.

What one can draw from this is that cold nights on the Fauschlag are indeed long, and that there is often precious little to do by way of entertainment.

THE SURVEILLANCE

The following is a timetable of the events that transpire at number 17 during the Characters' watch.

Note: NPCs are listed by name, but as the Characters have no way of initially knowing the villains' names, consider describing them by their physical descriptions (see page 95): 'the brown-haired man', 'the tall, scared woman', and so on.

Start (noon)

Bedrooms 2 and 3 are empty, and remain that way. Bedroom 1 contains two men (Knud and Mikhail) playing cards. One woman (Britta) is in the kitchen, pottering around.

12:30 pm

A woman (Ilona) enters the kitchen and unbars the back door, letting Britta pass through. She bars the door behind her. Britta is gingerly carrying a bucket (which contains Paolo's, Claudia's, and Sigismund's waste). She takes the bucket into the outhouse, spends some time there on a personal matter, and returns to the back door.

Any Characters within 6 yards of the back door may, on a successful **Challenging (+0) Perception** Test, hear Britta knock four times, saying 'Let me in, it's Britta'. Britta is let back into the house, walking further inside past the kitchen.

1:00 pm

Britta returns to the kitchen, and Ilona goes elsewhere in the house. The front door opens and Ilona leaves; a big man (Paolo) closes and bars the door behind her. If the Characters think to follow her, Ilona heads to a local inn to pick up enough food for at least six people, plus a bloody haunch of raw meat.

2:00 pm

Ilona returns carrying a large basket. She knocks four times on the front door and says something. If a Character watching the exchange has the *Lip Reading* Talent, they can make a **Challenging (+0) Perception** Test. If successful, they can make out 'It's Ilona, let me in already! This basket is bloody heavy.' Paolo then opens the door, Ilona slips inside, and the door closes.

Several minutes pass, then any Characters at the rear see Ilona enter the kitchen, toss Britta some food and a bottle of ale, then proceed upstairs to provide Knud and Mikhail with the same.

3:00–11:30 pm

Knud, Mikhail, and Ilona finish their meal, make trips to the privy (following the same procedure as Britta to get back into the house, which means nearby Characters have the opportunity to learn their names), and then lie down for some shut-eye.

In the kitchen, Britta hangs around practising a version of mumblety-peg. She makes one more trip outside, this time accompanied by a big, mean-looking dog.

The dog, also on personal business, sniffs around the garden and the surrounding area, paying special interest to the undergrowth and other places any spying Characters may be holed up. Anyone hidden in the tenement or tenement's privy is safe from discovery; others are sniffed out if they don't think fast by throwing the dog some food or similar. If Giuseppe discovers a Character while Britta is away, they can attempt a **Hard (-20) Charm Animal** Test to encourage the Manhound to leave them alone.

11:30 pm

Ilona enters the kitchen, and she and Britta go to wake up Knud and Mikhail. The two pairs switch places: Ilona and Britta go to bed, Knud takes up watch in the kitchen, and Mikhail goes to an unknown post on the ground floor (the hall).

12:00–8:00 am

Bedroom 1 is quiet and dark. A bored Knud sits staring out the kitchen window. Mikhail pops in from time to time, refilling three mugs at a small barrel of rainwater, and poking Knud when he starts to doze.

8:00 am onwards

The dog is let outside again while Knud and Mikhail have a bit of breakfast. The guards change shifts at 11:00; then everything proceeds as yesterday.

ENTER ALPHONSE (ONCE AGAIN)

Alphonse returns to Number 17 at midnight that evening. He listens to the Characters' reports, turns his head on one side, twiddles his moustache thoughtfully, and says,

'Ah ha! Zat ees veery fascinating, no? Several zings present zemselves, do zey not? What do you zink, mes amis?'

Now is the time for the Characters to prove to Alphonse that his faith in them was not in vain. Alphonse coaxes, goads, and orders them to give their interpretation of the intelligence they have gathered, and asks for suggestions on how to rescue Sigismund.

Of course, the world's greatest detective has already deduced everything that can be gained from the evidence the Characters collected, but wants to hear their views anyway so he can show them how clever he is by criticising their plans.

ALPHONSE'S CONCLUSIONS

Alphonse has made a number of brilliant deductions about the situation, and is only too pleased to share them in as theatrical a manner as he possibly can.

Sigismund's Location

The lad isn't being held in the attic — there are no guards there — and if he was, the villains would have fixed the skylight. Obvious, of course! Sightings indicate that he isn't in any of the bedrooms. It's possible he could be locked in a wardrobe, but if so, one guard would be ordered to stay awake at all times in case he got out or started a ruckus. By extension, he probably isn't on the first floor either.

Therefore, if still alive, Sigismund is somewhere on the ground floor or in the basement. Since the kidnappers 'live' on the ground floor, it's more likely that he is imprisoned in the cellar.

Number of Villains

Six: two upstairs, one in the kitchen, plus three more somewhere else on the ground floor (Ilona's three tankards — don't the Characters remember such important details?).

Lines of Attack

Alphonse has figured out a number of ways the Characters might pull off a rescue. Again, he lets them make their own suggestions before chiming in with his genius. Though impressed, perhaps justifiably, by his own intellect, Alphonse does know a good plan when he hears one. He defers to the Characters in matters of violence as he concedes they are likely more experienced with it than he, and will be the ones responsible for carrying out the agreed-upon plan in any case.

Poisoning the Food

Something unpleasant could be introduced into the villains' grub at the inn. There are several potential drawbacks: the poison might be noticed, Sigismund could be affected, or the villains forewarned of the Characters' arrival.

Frontal Assault

Alternatively, Ilona could be ambushed during her foraging trip to the pub, and someone else disguised as her could walk up to the front door. Chances are that the 'password' is simply her name (just like the backdoor).

When the door opens, the other Characters, hidden nearby, could rush in and overpower the guards. Of course, the plan would fail if they use a different password, or if the kidnappers notice it is not Ilona before opening the door. Also, the impostor would have to hold the door alone until the other Characters, likely hidden some way away, arrive.

Rear Assault

A guard could be tackled in the outhouse and replaced by a suitable party member. The drawbacks here are that the guard in the kitchen might hear the scuffle, and the Characters must act quickly so as to not arouse suspicion.

Skylight Entry

Apparently the least-defended entrance, which may mean it is trapped. The skylight is also a long way from Sigismund's most likely location, and would involve a dangerous and possibly noisy trip across the rooftops.



PLANNING THE RESCUE

Now the Characters must decide on a plan of action. They should take stock of their resources to see what might be of help in rescuing Sigismund. Using Alphonse, you could remind the players of Skills and Talents they might have forgotten. Don't make their plan for them, but feel free to point out any obvious oversights or mistakes they are making.

You may be surprised at the brilliant plan the Players concoct. In normal circumstances, combat comes upon Characters suddenly — often somebody opens a door they shouldn't and combat begins that very instant. While this is often exciting, this type of encounter provides little time for the Characters to think, as they must react to the situation they find themselves in. Give the Players half an hour to exercise their clever imaginations and the resulting plan may surprise you.

Whatever plan the Players decide upon, play it straight. It is quite conceivable they dream up something so devious they will pull off the rescue without a fight. If so, let them. You shouldn't feel constrained to have a climactic melee at the end of the scenario if the situation doesn't warrant it.

PERCEPTION TESTS

Each time the Characters make a noticeable noise (tripping over something, falling down the ladder, etc.) make an **Average (+20)** Perception Test for the Guards upstairs if they are awake, or a **Challenging (+0)** Test if they are asleep. You need only make one Test for both of the Guards. Particularly loud noises, especially combat, are instead **Easy (+40)** if the guards are awake or **Average (+20)** if they are asleep. These are not **Opposed Tests** — no amount of stealth can quieten the sounds of combat.

If their plan has a lot of holes, the Characters are in for a hard time. If Claudia's gang discovers the Characters early, Sigismund's life and Alphonse's reputation are done for.



EXIT ALPHONSE

After the Characters come up with a plan, it's time for Alphonse to disappear. The detective is not a terrible fighter, but this is exactly the sort of thing he pays other people to take care of. If the Characters are short someone to play a key role in an otherwise sound plan, he may remain. If you are worried they may be able to stumble into combat and find themselves hopelessly outmatched, you may want him to stick around. In either case, do not allow his presence to diminish the Characters' sense of achievement by having him do too much — this should be their moment of glory (or ruin).

However, if you have decided to have Alphonse taking a back seat during the assault but the Characters insist on having him participate, there are other ways to have him support the assault without stealing the limelight. For example, as the Characters and Alphonse are crouched outside number 17, ready to attack Britta when she goes to the loo, a Watch patrol marches on to the street and begins pounding on doors, obviously conducting a search. Alphonse tells the Characters that he'll distract them for as long as he can, hopefully giving the Characters time to finish the assault.

If things get out of hand later and the Characters are in deep trouble, Alphonse can always show up at the last minute to bail them out. However, if the Characters have truly failed spectacularly, and especially if their plan was terrible, feel free to allow them to fail. Stories are much more compelling when success is not assured.

THE RESCUE

The actual break-in is as easy or difficult as the Characters make it for themselves. Claudia's objective in the event of trouble is to unlock the door to the basement, grab Sigismund (which takes 3 rounds) and get back upstairs (taking 2 rounds), while Paolo and Giuseppe buy her time. Paolo fires his Blunderbuss and then charges; Giuseppe runs straight in, biting away. Once Claudia is upstairs with Sigismund, she'll threaten the boy's life unless the Characters let her leave.

When all the swordplay and yelling starts, the guards attempt to rally to Claudia, but if they're badly outmatched they do their best to flee. They are only being paid so much, after all.

NUMBER 17 WENDENBAHN

Attic

The guards in bedroom 1 can make Perception Tests to notice entry from the attic. If they are awake, these are Challenging (+0) Tests opposed by the Characters' Stealth. If they are asleep, the Characters' Stealth Test becomes Easy(+40) instead.

Unless oiled, the skylight squeaks when opened. The drop from the skylight to the floor is 3 yards (the guards can make another Perception Test unless the Characters use a rope to avoid the fall). The place contains lots of damp old furniture, plates, and rugs that can trip Characters up. A **Challenging (+0) Perception** Test is required to avoid kicking over something loud unless they bring a light source or have the *Night Vision* Talent. The trapdoor to the first floor is also squeaky and the ladder has a broken step. Unless they think to check the ladder before descending, the first Character down must make a successful **Challenging (+0) Perception** Test to see the broken step or otherwise make a successful **Challenging (+0) Athletics** Test or fall, allowing the guards to make another Perception Test.

First Floor

The gang is only using bedroom 1 and typically has two guards inside, sleeping or playing cards (see **The Surveillance** on page 88 for a timeline of shifts). If alerted, the guards take 1 round to grab their weapons. If they are asleep, it takes them 3 rounds and they won't have time to don armour.

Ground Floor

Combat here results in Perception Tests as above. Both the hall and kitchen have a guard (armoured and with a weapon at hand). The living room contains Claudia, Paolo, and the dog. The pair sleep in turns, with Paolo having the day shift. Whoever is asleep takes 2 rounds to wake up, 1 round to get weapons, and will not have time to don armour. The dog wakes and attacks in 1 round.

THE RESOLUTION

There are two possible endings to this encounter: either the Characters capture or kill Claudia before she gets to Sigismund or Claudia gets a knife to his throat and delivers a very sincere 'Back off or the kid gets it.'

The latter results in a traditional standoff: Claudia can't escape, and the Characters can't get to Sigismund. A tense bargaining session ensues as Claudia and the Characters attempt to come to terms. Claudia offers to hand over Sigismund for money and safe passage (20 crowns will do it), though if pressed, the leader will accept just the safe passage.

However, the Characters must convince Claudia that they will let her pass safely. This is a real test of the Characters' ingenuity, and a possible solution is for one of their number to volunteer to take Sigismund's place. This is exceedingly dangerous, but Claudia would gain little benefit from killing the Character (there's no money in it), and the last thing she needs right now is more enemies. If a Character does something this heroic, reward them by sparing their life — Claudia drags them a couple of blocks, and then knocks them on the head and leaves.

Obviously, if Sigismund is killed or the kidnappers take him somewhere else, the Characters have failed. Sigismund's father will be distraught, and while there may be some talk of revenge against the Characters in the heat of the moment, they are merely the words of a grieving father and nothing more comes of it. Of course, Alphonse may not wish to associate with them again unless the failure was genuinely down to misfortune rather than recklessness.

Spin-offs From the Scenario

If you wish, there are several directions you could take after the adventure's conclusion.

A Family Affair

Claudia is a minor member of a small Tilean criminal group, *Masnada*, with operations throughout the Empire. She planned this kidnapping operation on her own as a way to make up a loan owed to the family back in Miragliano. Unfortunately, her failure has left a stain on Claudia's family honour, and a debt unpaid to boot. Claudia's siblings, a trio of particularly dangerous bandits who cut their teeth raiding caravans returning from the Border Princes, are sure to seek their revenge on the Characters.

The Big Cheese

Claudia has no particular affiliation with any of Middenheim's Low Kings, the crime lords that rule the city's underworld. However, attempting such a kidnapping without their approval would obviously have been a terrible idea. Edam Gouda (**Middenheim**, page 131) was promised 20 percent of the takings, some 100 gold crowns, for his permission to proceed with the kidnapping. The Characters' interference has left Gouda out of pocket, and The Big Cheese will be quite unhappy with them until paid. He doesn't expect the full hundred crowns — the Characters were just doing business, after all — but he expects a cut of whatever they were paid.

An agent of the Low King will arrive looking for payment the night after the kidnapping is foiled. How the Characters proceed is up to them. Should they pay, Edam is as good as his word, but may even attempt to hire the Characters in the future. If they refuse, the following night a gang of thugs will call to remind them why it might be easier just to pay up.

If the Characters rescue Sigismund, his prosperous (but mean) father will be delighted. They receive many dinner invitations

where they can mingle with the good and the great of Middenheim — should they not already have contacts in that group. In this way, the adventure may also work well before the events of **Power Behind the Throne** take place, as it gives the Characters access to powerful NPCs who might not otherwise give them the time of day.

If the Characters made a mess of things and got Sigismund killed — and lived to tell the tale — there's always the chance that either Sigismund's family or any survivors of the gang will come looking for them. Perhaps Claudia (if she lives) fingers them as co-conspirators, or even the masterminds of the entire affair! It's the sort of trick that she would appeal to her, especially if it might get her out of a tight spot.

EXPERIENCE AWARDS

As well as the usual rewards for good roleplaying, you may reward the Characters with the following experience points.

- 💀 20–100 XP for quality of planning. Reward both common sense and ingenious (but not foolhardy!) ideas. Feel free to give a higher award to the Character who consistently came up with the most clever suggestions.
- 💀 15 XP for dealing with each of the kidnappers — and the dog! Capturing Claudia alive and handing her over to the authorities is worth an extra 20 points each, and nets the Characters substantial reward money — Claudia is wanted on a number of charges from extortion to arson.
- 💀 30 XP for rescuing Sigismund (more or less) intact.



MEET THE NEIGHBOURS

There is more to Wendenbahn's residents than the Characters and the kidnappers! Many of the houses are occupied, and the residents are unlikely to take well to Characters drawing them into whatever problems they are attempting to solve.

Number 12 (2 storeys): Alphonse Hercules de Gascoigne and company.

Number 13 (3 storeys): Empty.

Number 14 (3 storeys): Herr and Frau Meisner. Timid local shopkeepers who don't want any trouble; easily intimidated or bribed to turn a blind eye. Use the Human profile from **WFRP** page 311, with the following additional Skills: Perception 43, Trade (Grocer) 54.

Number 15 (3 storeys): Kurt, Burt, and Gert. Local labourers, work all day, drink all night; easily bribed or conned (will probably sleep through all the excitement anyway). Use the Human profile from **WFRP** page 311, with the following additional Skills: Perception 40, but any Perception Tests made at night are at a -20 penalty.

Number 16 (2 storeys): Herr Grundrich and his son are coppersmiths who are suspicious and not that stupid. Tend to shoot prowlers first; never ask questions later. Use the Human profile from **WFRP** page 311, with the following additional Skills: Perception 45, Ranged (Crossbow) 45. A Crossbow and 12 bolts are kept close at hand.

Number 17 (3 storeys): The kidnappers.

Number 18 (3 storeys): Fraus Petra and Marie, performers at a local inn. They pay the local Watch and Edam Gouda for protection, and don't hesitate to call on either if they are threatened. They are open to bribery, but have expensive tastes and are unlikely to pay attention to anything less than gold coinage. Use the Human profile from **WFRP** page 311, with the following additional Skills: Charm 40, Haggle 34, Perception 36, Perform 42.

Number 19 (2 storeys): Frau Else Koch and Vlad, her incredibly vicious dog which she believes is possessed by the spirit of a dead Kisvilite Tsar. She is eccentric, suspicious, and ill-tempered towards anyone Vlad takes a dislike to, which is almost everyone. Use the Human profile from **WFRP** page 311, with the following additional Skills: Perception 50, Melee (Basic) 40. Any time she is encountered, Frau Koch has a 50% chance of carrying her weighty Dwarf-made rolling pin — Weapon (Rolling Pin) +7. Vlad uses the Dog profile from **WFRP** page 315 with the following optional Traits: Trained (Broken, Guard).

ALPHONSE HERCULES DE GASGOIGNE

Alphonse appears to be of indeterminate age (he's actually 96), with slicked black hair and a large waxed moustache. His green eyes glitter with amusement and an enviably vigorous intellect. Standing a minuscule 3'7", it is impossible to take this funny little soul seriously, which is precisely the mistake so many criminals have made!

The truth is Alphonse is a brilliant, inventive, observant, and generally incomparable private detective. Multi-skilled and supremely self-confident, he comes and goes as he pleases, never misses a clue, and thus far has yet to let his quarry escape. His sharp eyes and attention to detail allow him to learn an incredible amount in a short time. These abilities allow him to do a lot of direct investigation, though when necessary Alphonse is not too proud to don a disguise and employ his considerable thieving talents to score more sensitive information.

He has spent much time in Altdorf, Middenheim, Salzenmund, and Marienburg. And, of course, Bretonnia. Despite being a master of disguise, his build and odd looks mean he usually operates overtly, and as such is respected by quite a few high-placed individuals who have had cause to hire him. With a reputation second to none, Alphonse is in great demand as an investigator, especially by people in high society who value discretion as much as ability. He isn't greedy — he accepts or rejects cases on the basis of their merit — and he doesn't betray the confidence of his employers.

ALPHONSE HERCULES DE GASGOIGNE – DETECTIVE, FORMER THIEF (SILVER 3)

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
3	42	51	37	32	60	75	65	75	59	63	11

Traits: Armour 1, Weapon (Dagger) +5, Size (Small)

Skills: Athletics 85, Charm 83, Climb 53, Consume Alcohol 42, Cool 69, Dodge 75, Endurance 42, Gossip 73, Intuition 80, Language (Reikspiel 76, Mootish 80), Lore (Altdorf 85, Bretonnia 90, Criminals 90, Law 85, Middenheim 90, Nuln 80), Melee (Basic 52, Brawling 62), Perception 80, Pick Lock 75, Sleight of Hand 75, Stealth (Urban) 85, Track 70

Talents: Acute Sense (Hearing, Sight, Smell), Alley Cat, Break and Enter, Etiquette (Criminals, Nobles), Read/Write, Secret Signs (Thief), Shadow, Speed Reader, Sixth Sense, Strike to Stun, Tenacious, Tower of Memories

Trappings: Ring of Subduction, Leather Jack, Fine Clothes, Dirty Clothes, Magnifying Glass, Lockpick, Dagger, Leather Jerkin, Poisoned Dagger in Sheath, 1d10 Gold Crowns



Assuming the Characters were successful in their assignment, Alphonse is prepared to tutor Characters who are willing to put up with his idiosyncrasies. Halflings receive a +10 to any Fellowship-based Tests they make with him.

RING OF SUBDUCTION

Believed to have been made by the College of Light on the command of Magnus the Pious, this ring was given to Witch Hunter Helmuth Klausner as a gift to aid him in his perilous work. The ring was lost during service and has been sought after by the Temple of Sigmar ever since. Quite how it came into Alphonse's possession is something of a mystery, though what the temple of Sigmar would do to him if they found out is far less obscure.

The ring is tuned to react to objects and people who attract or bend the Winds of Magic. Whenever the wearer is within 3 yards of a magic item, magical creature, or a spellcaster, the wearer feels a slight tingle in their hand. This does not tell them who or what in the vicinity is magical, only that something nearby is. The ring is exquisitely and ingeniously made, and functions even in the raging torrents of *Ghur* that wash over Middenheim. Its value is difficult to calculate, but it is surely worth several hundred crowns to the right person.



CLAUDIA CARBONETTI

Claudia is a vicious and evil brute, but she does have a certain native cunning. She hails from Miragliano, and together with her younger siblings is currently setting up a branch of 'the family business' in Middenheim. She walks with a sense of casual menace, and most have difficulty meeting her gaze. She is middle-aged, with olive brown skin and an unnerving gaze.



PAOLO GENTILE

Paolo came with Claudia to Middenheim. While completely loyal to Claudia, Paolo's pathological sadism sometimes causes problems for his boss. It is completely useless to ask Paolo to interrogate anyone, since the victim usually dies before they have a chance to answer any questions.

CLAUDIA CARBONETTI – GANG BOSS (SILVER 3)

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	45	38	42	54	35	33	28	41	35	28	17

Traits: Armour 2, Ranged (Crossbow Pistol) +10, Weapon (Knuckleduster +10, Sword +10)

Skills: Consume Alcohol 69, Cool 50, Dodge 48, Endurance 69, Intimidate 52, Language (Reikspiel) 51, Leadership 38, Lore (Tilea) 56, Melee (Basic 55, Brawling 65), Perception 45, Ranged (Crossbow) 48, Stealth (Urban) 43

Talents: Criminal, Dirty Fighting 2, Etiquette (Criminals), Fearless (Watchmen), Menacing, Secret Signs (Thief), Strike Mighty Blow 2

Trappings: Mail Armour, Crossbow Pistol and 12 bolts, Knuckleduster, 2d10 Silver Shillings

PAOLO GENTILE – THUG, FORMER INTERROGATOR

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	55	28	51	41	32	30	38	28	30	22	17

Traits: Armour 1, Ranged (Blunderbuss) +8, Weapon (Sword) +9

Skills: Consume Alcohol 51, Cool 40, Dodge 45, Intimidate 61, Language (Reikspiel) 51, Lore (Tilea) 56, Melee (Basic 65, Brawling 60), Perception 42, Ranged (Blunderbuss) 48, Stealth (Urban) 43

Talents: Criminal, Etiquette (Criminals), Menacing

Trappings: Leather Jack, Hand Weapon (Sword), Blunderbuss and 4 Shots, Implements of Torture, 1d10 Silver Shillings



GIUSEPPE THE DOG

Giuseppe is a Tilean Manhound, a vicious terrier-like brute bred for mayhem. He is completely loyal to Claudia and attacks in a frenzy when given a verbal or hand signal. Giuseppe is midnight black, wears a spiked collar, and has ugly scars on his back gained from many previous combats.

GIUSEPPE THE DOG – TILEAN MANHOUND

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	45	–	30	30	30	25	–	15	10	15	10

Traits: Armour 1, Bestial, Frenzy, Night Vision, Stride, Bite +6



KNUD, BRITTA, ILONA, AND MIKHAIL

These toughs are freelance legbreakers, hired via Claudia's contacts with Edam Gouda. None are particularly innovative, and none would risk their neck to save another. Knud is 5'10" and blond; Britta is 5'9" and has brown hair; Ilona is 5'5" and Mikhail is 6'2", both with black hair.

KNUD, BRITTA, ILONA, AND MIKHAIL – THUGS

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	15

Traits: Armour 1, Weapon (Knuckledusters +6, Sword +7)

Skills: Melee (Basic 45, Brawling 40), Perception 40

Talents: Dirty Fighting, Hardy

Trappings: Leather Jack, Hand Weapon (Sword), Knuckledusters, Pouch Containing 2d10 Brass Pennies

CHAPTER 14

Horror in the Darkness

The Oberholzbek Mine is the site of a small community in the Middle Mountains. In recent weeks, two miners have gone missing in the tunnels and now the other miners are too scared to work. A menacing Brood Horror (see page 51) has made its lair within the mine following the deaths of its Clan Moulder handlers.

There are three ways to get the Characters involved. They could be passing through the village for some reason, in which case the mayor of the village, Johann Mulderbek, approaches them and tries to hire their help. Alternatively, Johann may approach them in a tavern in a larger town, offering to pay for their assistance. This may be easier, since it avoids Character worries about getting to places on time if they are just passing through. Johann approaches the Characters rather than the authorities because the miners at Oberholzbek have not paid full due taxes on their silver for some years (having declared a lower income than they actually obtained), so he is extremely reluctant to have officials — even militia — anywhere near the place.

The third way is for Johann to have voiced concerns to the authorities in Middenheim about goings-on at the mine during **The Horned Rat**. In this case, the Characters can be asked to investigate Oberholzbek whilst they deal with the series of similar events after their audience with the Graf.

BRIEFING FOR THE CHARACTERS

Johann's story is simple. He is the mayor of a village called Oberholzbek. The sole source of income for the villagers is a small silver mine. The yield is meagre, but it is just enough to get by on. However, two men have recently disappeared in the mine. Axel Muller vanished 19 days before the Characters meet Johann, and Kurt Zondervan vanished 8 days ago. They were alone, doing maintenance work, when they vanished. No trace of their bodies has been found, but some of their equipment was recovered, littered over some distance.

Noises have also been heard recently, coming from the deepest recesses of the mine. The villagers are now terrified and dare not enter. They are desperate, since they have no other source of income, and if the mines are not maintained they may fall into disrepair and become unworkable. The Characters cannot delay if they are going to help. Johann offers each Character 3 GC if they locate and slay the creatures that killed or captured Axel and Kurt. If the Characters make a successful opposed **Haggle** Test (Johann's Haggle score is 42), the mayor can be pushed up to 5 GC each, but the village cannot afford to pay more. If the Characters are prepared to help, Johann and the other villagers are prepared to give them all normal supplies, and also provide the two Davrich Lamps (see **WFRP**, page 309) they have.

oberholzbek

The mining community consists of 36 adult occupants, most of whom are miners. No map of the village is given here, since it is not needed in play. There are no notable buildings and the average house is a modest affair. There is one tavern with a common room called the *Pit Prop*, which has a small stable beside it, and a smithy, which doubles as a trading store. There is no priest and no militia in the village.

Lukas Schultz runs the *Pit Prop* with his barmaid Gretchen; both are surly sorts, but honest. Josef Hartmann is a jack-of-all-trades who owns the smithy; he can forge iron (and makes simple items for use in mining), shoe a horse, construct a fair wagon, and suchlike. He and Johann take care of the maintenance of the mines, with Kurt and Axel's help. Wilhelm Koch and Martina Kurtz are special cases, and are dealt with below.





VILLAGE ENQUIRIES

If the Characters make no attempt to ask questions of the villagers, hold them up for a little time while Johann gets the equipment they may need. As they wait, anxious villagers badger the Characters with questions and introduce some of the information here.

If the Characters enquire, make it clear the villagers do not have much money and that they cannot afford more lost mining time — get their desperation across. A sanguine villager could say something like:

'We all hope one day we'll find the big one, the vein of pure silver — but it's been scavengings only for as long as anyone can remember, and the big one is just a dream.'

Greedy Characters may consider taking the village over and running the mine themselves. If they try this, the best way to deal with the situation is to let them seem to get away with it. Then, while the Characters are still resident, Imperial tax collectors arrive, with well-armed escorts, having discovered the villagers' falsified tax payments. They inevitably hold the party responsible.

If the Characters ask about the missing villagers, they discover only that there was nothing unusual about the men, nor about the time of their disappearances. Axel was a married man of 35, Kurt a youth of 17. Axel was a drunken lout, while Kurt was a solitary, introverted, and spotty youth. Axel's wife Etelka is still in mourning after the death of her husband, despite his unpleasantness, and can give the Characters no useful information. Map 1 shows the areas where the miners' gear was found, if the Characters ask for this (irrelevant) detail.



Mapping the Mines

Johann does have a map of the mines and is bound to offer it to the party. Map 1 is the GM's map of the mines, showing the Brood Horror's tunnels as well as the worked passages within the mine. The map Johann gives the Characters only shows the latter. The mines are safe enough, although small pockets of gas build up in places from time to time. It's harmless to breathe this gas but it is flammable, making the careful use of Davrich Lamps essential. See **Down in the Mines** (page 100) for more information.

Village Threats

Bandits have not tried to raid the village in years — the money is not worth it. Hence there is little need for a militia. Orcs have been sighted nearby recently, and this has sparked significant concern, but Baron Holzbek has been too busy trying to suppress the Blackweb Forest Goblins to the south to despatch troops to drive the Orcs back. The working folk of the village have leather jacks and can use pickaxe handles to good effect, if need be.

There are two important NPCs whose information may help and intrigue the Characters, and these are now dealt with.

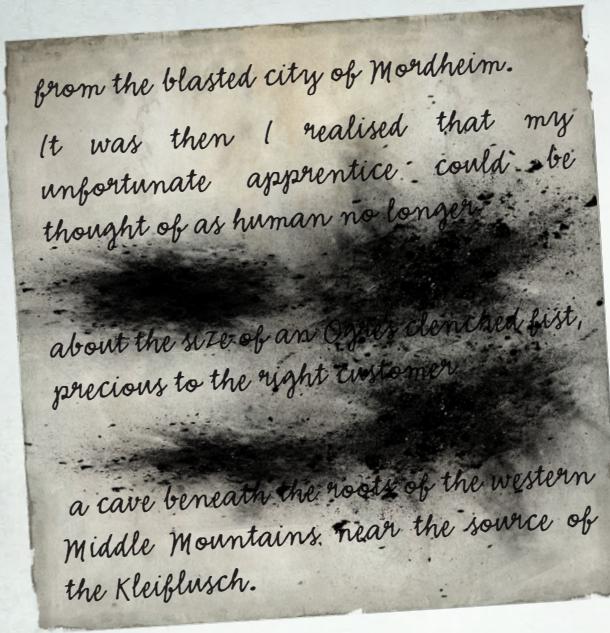
Wilhelm Koch

Wilhelm imposes himself upon the Characters at any time, as you see fit. He suffers from a form of paranoia, and while he sounds rational to begin with, he slowly slips into deluded monomania. He believes the end of the world is at hand, and that the creature in the mines is a monstrous Daemon called Frau Jägerin who has an insatiable thirst for human blood. After introducing Koch as quite sensible and soft-spoken, begin to slowly emphasise his unhinged state.

If any Character listening to this hypothesis manages to avoid laughing at Koch, he imparts the one useful piece of information he does have. This is not the first time something has appeared down in the mine. Fifty years ago, a wizard had been down the mine, searching for something. Koch asserts that she summoned the Daemon to the mines, and he believes that now another wizard must have summoned Frau Jägerin again. He openly suspects any obvious magic-using Characters.

This is mostly nonsense, of course, but it does contain a germ of truth. The important thing is to try to get the Characters interested that a wizard may be involved. If they ask around, other villagers may remember something about a visiting wizard, but no one knows what she may have been searching for.

If the Characters ask Wilhelm more about the missing wizard, he becomes tight-lipped and protective. However, if they insist on getting more from him and pass a **Difficult (-10) Charm** Test, he fetches a piece of old vellum from his cottage. The sheet is stained by long years of handling, and the writing on it is hard to make out in places and utterly obliterated in others.



‘... from the blasted city of Mordheim... it was then I realised that my unfortunate apprentice could be thought of as human no longer... about the size of an Ogre’s clenched fist, precious to the right customer... a cave beneath the roots of the western Middle Mountains near the source of the Kleiflusch...’

Wilhelm says he found the parchment following the disappearance of the wizard. Oberholzbek is indeed in the foothills of the Middle Mountains, close to the source of the Kleiflusch.

Martina Kurtz, Mine Foreman

Martina has a guilty secret of sorts. A month ago, she was approached by a man called Karlinsel Spedklingeln, a wizard travelling with his warrior henchman, who asked Kurtz to show them the layout of the mine, paying him 3 GC for the information. These two had failed in their attempts to get Johann to let them into the mines (see **Getting Equipped** for details). Karlinsel Spedklingeln said that he was searching for a lost magical treasure in the mine, but if Martina spoke of this to anyone, she would be very sorry afterwards. Martina showed them Johann’s map, and went down with them on two evenings, after normal working hours. They went alone a third time, and never came back. Martina has no idea what happened to them, but Axel disappeared soon afterwards.

Martina knows about Wilhelm Koch’s rantings. Although she never took them seriously in the past, she is afraid that the wizard he took down the mine did indeed summon a Daemon, which is now devouring villagers. Martina is even more afraid that someone may find out what she has done.

Obviously, he is not going to release this information to the Characters easily. Although his information should be made available, the Characters must approach him carefully to learn what he knows.

On first contact, allow the Characters a **Difficult (-10) Intuition** Test to detect that Martina is tense and nervous, even by comparison with other villagers. To arouse Character suspicions further, Martina hangs around the Characters often. He is torn between conflicting drives, fearing that the Characters may learn of what he has done but also desperately hoping that they can fix the terrible mess he thinks he has caused.

You may decide that if and when the Characters go to consult Johann’s map, they find it missing. Johann knows that Martina is the only person who has access to it. (In fact, Martina did borrow it and has forgotten to return it.) This worries Johann, and he arranges a thorough interrogation of Martina in the *Pit Prop*. If the Characters get Martina drunk, she might let something slip, or even confess her story to a sympathetic Character who promises not to tell Johann or to let other villagers know. To do this, the Characters must match Martina for drinks and she must fail at least two *Consume Alcohol* Tests. If she confesses to them, and they shop him to Johann, angry villagers run Martina out of town.

GETTING EQUIPPED

The Characters probably need wooden poles, ropes, and similar equipment, which the villagers are happy to lend. Weapons are another matter; the Characters should have their own, and the villagers have only a handful of ordinary maces, bows, and pickaxes between them, in addition to a few knives and daggers. The miners don’t use songbirds to search for gaseous dangers in the tunnels — they are unaware of the trick — and blackdamp is not present in lethal concentrations. Characters who pass a **Hard (-20) Trade (Miner) or Lore (Geology)** Test know of the trick, but acquiring a bird would be quite difficult. Requests for other common items such as roughspun sacks or face coverings are granted.

The most important items are lamps. Because of the odd gas pocket and the fact the mines are unlit, lanterns are essential. The villagers are happy to loan each character a simple lamp. Martina and Johann possess Davrich Lamps (*WFRP*, page 309), and whilst they are willing to lend these to the Characters, they are precious items that must be returned.

One vial of oil keeps a lantern burning for 4 hours at full brightness, or 8 hours with the strength of a candle. Make sure you keep note of how many vials of oil the Characters take and how much they consume. Impose sensible limits on how many vials each Character can carry, depending on what other supplies they have. If a Character insists on carrying some ridiculous number of vials of oil, impose penalties to Movement rate, Initiative, and Agility as you see fit.



THE HORROR IN THE MINES

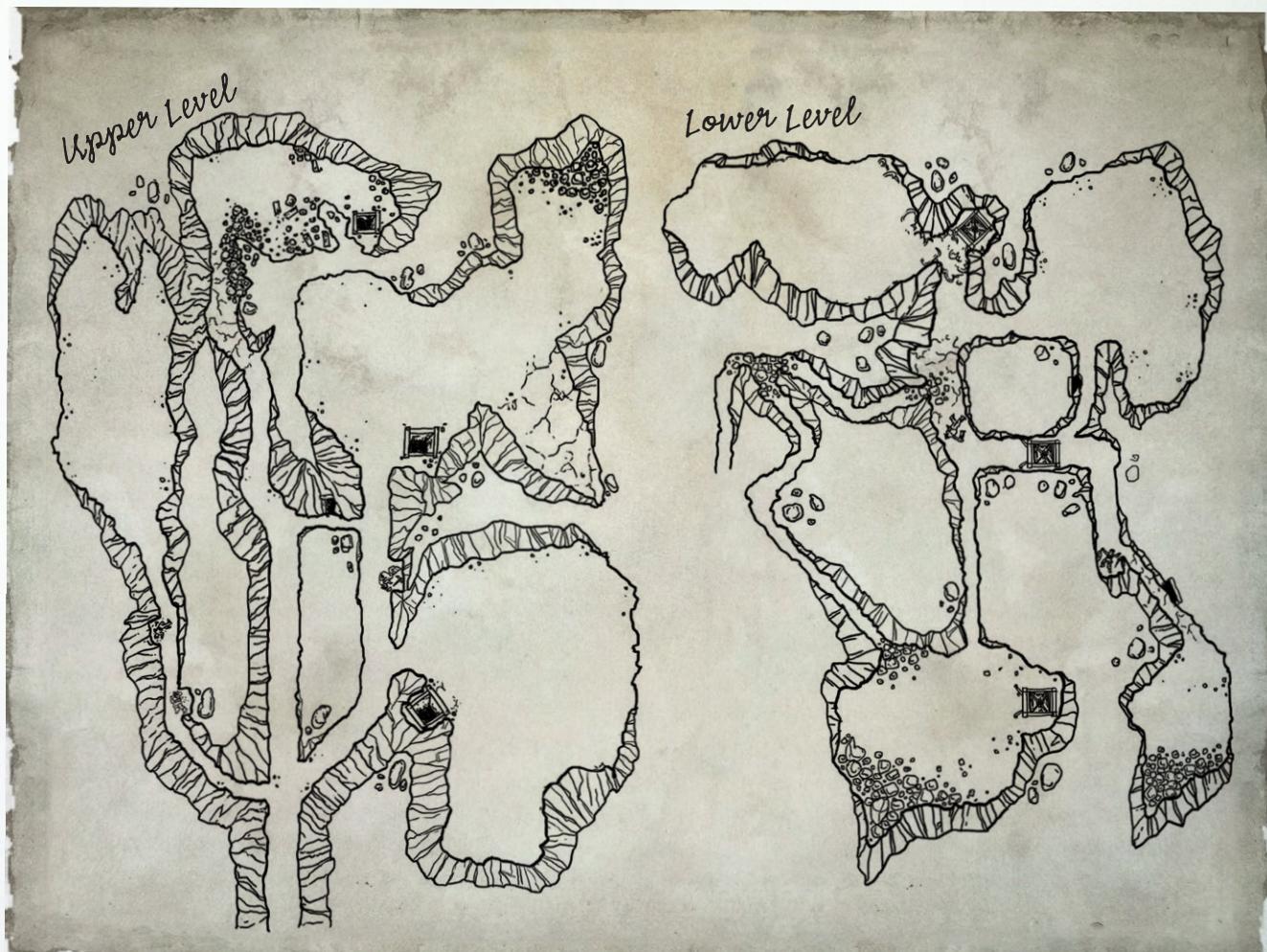
The creature in the mines is a Brood Horror (see page 51), a bloated giant rat of monstrous proportions bred for war by Clan Moulder. The creature's handlers were transporting it to Under-Middenheim on the orders of Master Moulder Skree. Castellan-Warlord Gnawretch Skrray, whilst publicly approving the addition of a Brood Horror to Under-Middenheim's arsenal, privately feared that such a beast would tip the balance of power too greatly in Clan Moulder's favour. He sent a scouting party to intercept and slay the Packmasters as they transported the Brood Horror.

The creature ran wild and burrowed into the rock and soil, emerging into a chamber underneath the mines. From here it tunnelled out into the passages at large. It has eaten the missing men, the wizard and his henchman into the bargain.

The Brood Horror made its way to the chamber because it was attracted by the presence of a large shard of Warpstone. A warlock and his apprentices had hidden the warpstone there in 2000 IC. Then fifty years ago a wizard arrived, chasing rumours of the hidden stone. She ventured into the mines, tried to teleport into the chamber, but died as the result of a magical mishap. More recently, Karlinsel Spedklingeln and his companion entered the mine, and they were consumed by the Brood Horror.

The Characters are unlikely to know or discover any of this, of course, but they should probably realise that the appearance of a wizard in the mines seems to be associated with the appearance of a ravenous monster. Wizards among the Characters would be wise to fear the mines.

Any Character with *Second Sight* who goes near the mine and passes a **Difficult (-10) Perception** Test senses the presence of *Dhar*. If that Character is familiar with Warpstone, they feel the swirling *Dhar* leaching from the mine is consistent with Warpstone. The Brood Horror remains close to the corrupted stone, from which it derives a sense of familiarity and comfort.





DOWN IN THE MINES

The mines are pitch-black and the air is dank and musty. Dripping water can be heard in the distance, there are faint, occasional sounds of wood creaking, and noises echo loudly. The tunnel walls have wet patches, small outcrops of moss and lichens, and the floors are sometimes uneven and rocky. Map 1 shows some specific details in individual areas.

The Brood Horror's tunnels are rock-strewn and irregular, although they are always wide enough for two Characters to walk side by side. In these tunnels, which are marked separately on Map 1. It will be very clear to the Characters where the mine passages end and Brood Horror tunnels begin, even if they don't have Johann's map. Describe the junction points clearly to them: *'It looks as if something has tunneled through here; there are rock chunks all over the floor and no supports'*, and so on.

Gas Pockets

Map 1 shows which areas have significant concentrations of gas in them. You may change these around on different days, should the Characters spend several days in the mines.

A smell like rotten eggs indicates the presence of the highly flammable firedamp, the most feared of all underground gases. Characters must pass a **Difficult (-10) Perception** Test to smell the gas before it is too late. The gas pocket occupies the full width of the passage.

The chance of an explosion is a cumulative 5% for every yard a Character travels through the gas pocket with a naked flame.

If an explosion occurs, the gas ignites with a flash and a bang. Each Character loses 1d10 Wounds, modified by Armour Points and Toughness Bonus, and must succeed a **Challenging (+0) Endurance** Test or gain the *Prone* Condition. Additionally, all Characters gain Toughness Bonus – SL *Deafened* and *Stunned* Conditions and 1 *Ablaze* Condition.

There is also a chance that an explosion triggers a cave-in (see below).

The gas is also slightly deleterious to the senses. It does not affect Characters immediately. However, after 8 hours in the mines, Characters suffer a -10 penalty to all Agility-based Tests. The villagers are habituated to the gas, and this effect does not influence them much during a normal working shift. The villagers do not mention the gas's effects on the senses, unless the Characters specifically ask about hazards. Typically, this penalty fades after the Character has spent two hours in the fresh air. Any technique that could be used to remove a *Poisoned* Condition can be used to help someone recover from the gas.

Cave-ins

The mines have not been maintained for a week and the odd pit prop is sagging a little, there are pools of water on the floor caused by slow leaks from above, and ominous creaking noises can be heard. The chance of a cave-in is 10% per 12-hour period. When one does occur, it takes place at a random point in the mine. Typically, a section of wall has caved in, leaving the ceiling mostly intact. All in the area must make a **Challenging (+0) Athletics** Test. Those who fail the Test are hit on the head by falling rocks, taking 5 Damage that can be reduced by Toughness Bonus and any armour worn on the head.

The rubble fills an area equal to 3 square yards and requires 1d10 hours of work to clear. The total time needed is reduced by 1 hour (to a minimum of 1 hour) for each additional Character working to clear the blockage.

In rarer cases, the ceiling of the mine may give way, causing a stretch of passage 2d10 yards long to become completely blocked. If the Characters are caught in a cave-in, all in the area must make a **Challenging (+0) Athletics** Test. Those who fail take 7 Damage that can be reduced by Toughness Bonus and any armour worn on the head, and must then succeed on an **Average (+20) Strength** Test to pull themselves out of the rubble. Characters may attempt this Test once per round. Clearing a completely blocked passage requires 2d10 hours of work per 3 square yards, with the total time needed being reduced by 2 hours (to a minimum of 1 hour) for each additional Character working to clear it.



Be careful with cave-ins. It is better to use them as a plot device to trap or steer the Characters than to crush your party into pulp. A very loud noise, a fumble while trying to move some debris, or any similar occurrence has a 10% chance to cause a minor collapse, while any explosion has a 25% chance of causing a minor collapse and may even cause the ceiling to give way if the Characters are particularly cavalier about casting destructive spells.

Mapping and Movement

Even if the Characters have a copy of Johann's map, they have to stop and check their bearings, so you should insist on a cautious movement rate unless combat, or running like the blazes, is involved.

If the Characters insist on moving faster, or are forced to do so (for example, because of the fear induced by the Brood Horror), they must succeed on a **Difficult (-10) Navigation** Test to not become lost. Additionally, an **Average (+20) Agility** Test is required each round the Characters spend running. On a failure, the Character trips and falls, suffering a *Prone* Condition.

PLAYING THE BROOD HORROR

The Brood Horror is an enormous and bloated gigantic rat. Fleshy and hairless, both front and back legs end in iron-hard claws that can be used for tunnelling through stone or tearing apart the enemies of the Skaven.

The Brood Horror is massive and vicious. In a confined area it is a deadly enemy indeed, capable of inflicting lethal damage very quickly. The Characters must try to lure it into an area where several people can get around the creature and attack it, or to get into a position where they can use missile fire and ranged spells while the creature cannot get at them. This can only be done with very narrow passages where the Brood Horror cannot follow, but where a line of sight can be established. Map 1 shows the few such places where this can be done. Luring the monster is not too difficult, since the Brood Horror is ravenous and will certainly chase the Characters. The Brood Horror will not leave the mine if the Characters retreat to the surface.

Brood Horrors are not intelligent. It is not obvious to the Brood Horror that following prey towards a narrow passage where it cannot follow, but down which they can launch missile attacks, is stupid. To represent the monstrosity's low intelligence, it falls for any trick once. These may include the narrow passage plus missile fire trick, the use of a decoy and a rear attack, an ambush lure, the use of a (very strong) trip rope, using a tethered animal as bait for an ambush, and so on. The Brood Horror has a simple goal: to get at people in the mines and eat them.

The Brood Horror is able to tunnel through rock. So powerful are its claws and jaws that it can move through solid rock with an effective movement rate of 2. This allows it to bypass obstacles (such as narrow passages) and take the most direct route to its prey. The Characters may not be fully aware of this, and it is quite fair to surprise them.

Rising Horror

The Brood Horror cannot ascend the iron ladders in the shafts (see below), but it can climb between levels by tunnelling through rock. Obviously it can't do this in a vertical line. When the Brood Horror ascends a level (from its tunnels to the lower mines, or from the lower to the upper mines) by tunnelling, it takes 20 rounds, emerging at a spot 1d10 yards away from where it began tunnelling upwards on the lower level, leaving an irregular winding passage behind. This will leave a pile of rubble on the lower level below the passage. Map 1 shows the two ascending tunnels the Brood Horror has already dug from its lair to the lower mines. It can ascend and descend these tunnels at a movement rate of.

Wounded Horror

If the Brood Horror is reduced to 10 or fewer Wounds, it backs off and tries to hide in the tunnel complex it has created. Its high movement rate should enable it to escape and outrun the Characters. It retreats back to the sealed cavern marked on Map 1. The Brood Horror will not sally forth again until it has regenerated back to 25 or more Wounds. It will almost certainly have to be hunted down to this chamber and killed here. Note that the two entrances allow the Characters the possibility of creating a diversion at one entrance to distract the Brood Horror and catch it off guard, if they can move through the other entrance quickly enough.

MINE LOCATIONS

Map 1 notes many of these, such as major mine faces and abandoned mine faces. While these are self-explanatory, a number of locations on the map require further details.

Alcoves

The map indicates alcoves along the passageways. These are small recesses off main mine tunnels that are used to store rope, sacks, boxes, and the like. They usually have a couple of strong wooden boxes on which miners can sit and eat or drink during working hours. The lamps here have run out of fuel and there is no spare oil hidden away.

Partially Collapsed Mine Sections

The map shows certain areas where minor collapses have already occurred. In passages, these partly block the way. In mine-face chambers, they provide rock cover that Characters can hide behind. This is important when Characters consider the possibility of luring the Brood Horror into an ambush.



Shafts

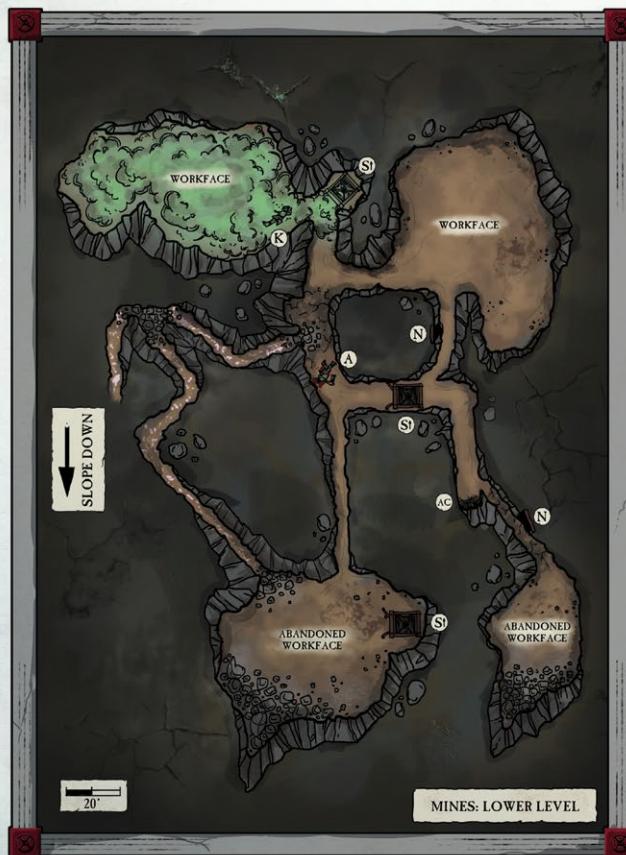
These vertical shafts lead from the upper to the lower mine levels. They are 15 yards deep and 3 yards across. On two sides, iron rungs have been driven into the rock to create sturdy ladders (they have to take the weight of miners with sacks of ore). Use standard climbing rules when the Characters climb the shafts.

Weak Areas

The pit props and supports here are particularly weak. Ominously creaking wood and dust falls are typical in these areas. You can use them to unnerve the Characters, or to increase the chances of a minor cave-in.

Rock Debris

These are piles of rock that hamper, but do not totally prevent, Character movement. They are caused by the tunnelling Brood Horror, or a pit prop collapsing, leading to part of the wall or ceiling giving way. It takes the Characters twice as long to bypass them as their normal movement rate. If Characters have (or want) to run through the debris, they must make an **Average (+20) Agility** Test. Those who fail suffer the *Prone* Condition.





ENDING THE ADVENTURE

The townspeople pay the Characters promptly when they emerge with evidence of the Brood Horror's death, and begin to restart maintenance work on the upper mine levels. There should be nothing in particular to delay the Characters.

Experience Points

- 20 XP per Character for roleplaying in Oberholzbek.
- 20 XP each for careful planning (getting supplies, asking about a map, planning a course of action, and so on).
- 50 XP per Character for killing the Brood Horror.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS



Martina Kurtz

Martina is a strong young woman of 26, 5'10", with short black hair and green eyes. She is a miner, and does not dress conspicuously. Kurtz is the foreman of the mine, and Johann will introduce her to the Characters in this capacity.

MARTINA KURTZ – MINE FOREMAN (SILVER 5)

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	45	30	55	45	54	33	34	28	43	38	21

Traits: Armour 1, Weapon (Pick) +9

Skills: Climb 65, Consume Alcohol 65, Cool 53, Endurance 60, Evaluate 48, Haggle 48, Intuition 44, Leadership 43, Lore (Middle Mountains) 38, Melee (Basic 60, Two-Handed 60), Outdoor Survival 48, Perception 69

Talents: Doomed (*Secrets return to haunt thee, friends return to taunt thee*), Hardy, Read/Write, Strider (Rocky), Tunnel Rat, Very Strong

Trappings: Whistle, Leather Jack, Leather Hipflask, Pick, Spade, Davrich Lamp



Wilhelm Koch

He is some 60 years old, with unkempt grey hair and beard, a stooping 5' 8" tall, and built like a scarecrow. His soft-spoken voice belies a simmering obsession that threatens to overflow at any moment. While Wilhelm is no stranger to ridicule, he reacts poorly if anyone calls him deluded to his face. If the Characters indulge him, he will talk all day about his various theories — that the mine was dug by a great worm, that Morrslieb is actually a collective delusion that doesn't truly exist, and that a species of sapient ratmen rule the dark places beneath the world, awaiting the day when their Horned God calls them forth to swallow the world.

WILHELM KOCH – PROSPECTOR (BRASS 2)

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	26	24	35	40	34	33	25	22	22	22	13

Traits: Armour 1, Weapon (Pick) +7

Skills: Cool 32, Endurance 55, Haggle 42, Intuition 44, Lore (Middle Mountains) 42, Melee (Basic 36, Two-Handed 36), Outdoor Survival 42, Perception 44

Talents: Doomed (*Lose thyself slowly, piece by piece*)

Mental Corruption: Erratic Fantasist, Suspicious Mind

Trappings: Roughspun Robes over Leather Jack, Dagger, Pick

CHAPTER 15

THE RETURN OF THE GRAVELORD

The Return of the Gravelord continues the adventures of the necromancer Hans Gräber, which began in the **Death on the Reik Companion** with 'The Vengeance of the Gravelord' and continued in the **Power Behind the Throne Companion** in 'Flying Death Skulls'. In this instalment of this optional B-plot to **The Enemy Within**, Gräber pops up to annoy the Characters several more times and becomes convinced — quite wrongly — that they have taken on a quest to defeat him.

THE STORY SO FAR

Hans Gräber was a junior monk at a Sigmarite monastery near Dunkelberg, renowned for its scholarship into the history and legends of the First Emperor. It was in the monastery's library that he first read of Heinrich Kemmler, the infamous Lichemaster. The young Hans burned to know more about the forbidden Lore of Necromancy and those who practised it.

His studies eventually led him into the forbidden rooms of the monastery's library, and after several warnings he was expelled. He swore revenge against Father Marcus, the head of the monastery, and when the Characters first encountered him in 'The Vengeance of the Gravelord', he planned to exact it.

Although he survived that encounter, fate decreed that he should cross paths with the Characters again, on the road to Middenheim at the start of **Power Behind the Throne**. Gräber had another slight to avenge, this time against the population of the remote, vine-growing village of Pritzstock. His Flying Death Skulls caused panic for a while, until the Characters defeated him and destroyed them. They may even have thought

him dead — but as the many people who have claimed the head of Heinrich Kemmler can readily attest, one can never trust a necromancer to stay dead.

Like the Characters, Gräber was on his way to Middenheim before he was distracted by his petty revenge on Pritzstock. His original purpose was a darker one. Among the names he encountered in his studies were those of Dieter Helsnicht, the Doomboss of Middenheim; Melkhior the Ancient, the first Necrarch; and Zacharias the Everliving, who had studied under both of them. The forbidden tomes he consulted disagreed on whether these legendary necromancers had been destroyed, but every account agreed on one point: all had been active in the Forest of Shadows to the north of the Middle Mountains.

Gräber set out for Middenheim, determined to learn more — and to make his way to this ancient hotbed of necromancy, find these legends if they still lived, and make an alliance with them. In his overheated imagination, such great necromancers could not fail to recognise him as an equal, and they would surely not refuse to share their secrets.

As usual, Gräber has overestimated both his own powers and the respect which he believes is his due. He has never been one to let reason or reality stand in the way of his glorious imaginings, though, and by this stage he is even willing to believe that the Characters are dogged archenemies who have devoted their lives to defeating him. Of course, their encounters with him take place completely by chance and they probably see them as an inconvenience rather than a sacred quest.

FOR GROGNARDS: DIETER HELSNICHT

The name of Dieter Helsnicht will be familiar to *Warhammer Fantasy Battles* grognards from the Undead and Vampire Counts army books. A powerful Middenheimer wizard during the Age of Three Emperors, Dieter read the legends of Nagash and made the unholy pilgrimage to Nagashizzar. He returned to Middenheim a changed man, and it was only a matter of time before grim rumours led the authorities to his door.

Helsnicht escaped on the back of a Manticore, and it was widely thought he established a hidden fortress deep in the Forest of Shadows, where he conducted his foul research and trained junior necromancers as apprentices. He returned a few years later at the head of an Undead army, ravaging the north and striking terror into the populace until he was stopped at the Battle of Beeckerhoven in 1244 IC. His Manticore mount fled the battlefield carrying his fallen body, which was never recovered.

Helsnicht survived his wound, and would threaten Middenheim and the north many more times from his secret fortress deep in the Forest of Shadows, mounted on his Manticore and carrying a Chaos Runesword. He became one of the world's most dread necromancers, and many deluded souls sought his tutelage.





RUNNING THIS ADVENTURE

This adventure falls into five parts, which take place at various points during **The Horned Rat**.

Part One: The Shadow of the Gravelord takes place during the events of **Mysterious Thefts**, chapter 10 of **The Horned Rat**. As reports of various missing items are investigated, curious news reaches the Characters — the Library of the Collegium Theologica has been robbed for the second night in a row.

Part Two: The Restless Dead takes place during the next chapter as the Characters make their way to the Picket. While they have yet to catch sight of the Gravelord, there is no doubt he is nearby.

Part Three: Lindenheim to the Skin takes place shortly thereafter as Gräber discovers the inhabitants of Lindenheim are not like other villagers. So, too, might the Characters.

Part Four: Don't Picket takes place during **The Picket**, chapter 18 of **The Horned Rat**. As the party approaches the Picket, Gräber realises they are nearby and convinces himself that they are going to the Picket to raise an army so they can hunt him through the mountains. His efforts to prevent this add to the Characters' already complicated lives.

Part Five: Carrion Over the Mountains takes place as **The Horned Rat** concludes. Knowing nothing of the battles at Brass Keep and Karak Skygg, Gräber assumes that Baron Heinrich's Dwarf balloon is scouring the Middle Mountains for him, and takes action to thwart his supposed pursuers.

FOR GROGNARDS: MELKHIOR AND ZACHARIAS

Grognard players of Warhammer Fantasy Battles will recall that Melkhior the Ancient is the first of the Necrarch line of Vampires. Created by Nagash's student W'soran, 'the Father of Vampires', Melkhior learned all he could of necromancy at the court of Nagash before betraying and destroying W'soran and taking the great Book of Nagash from his former master's library.

Melkhior fled north, establishing himself in a hidden fortress in the Forest of Shadows and devoting himself to dreams of a world where there are no living creatures, only the Undead. Many were drawn there by ambition and curiosity: the most promising of them became his apprentices, while the rest died slowly and painfully in his increasingly crazed experiments. Of all those who studied the necromantic arts with Melkhior, the most ambitious, the most powerful, and the most unscrupulous was Zacharias, whom some call the Everliving.

Little is known of his life before he succumbed to the lure of necromancy. He studied under the tutelage of Dieter Helsnicht, and it was while under this great necromancer's mentorship that Zacharias discovered the location of Melkhior's hidden tower. Crossing the Forest of Shadows in secret, he planned to break into the tower and steal the dread Book of Nagash — the same accursed tome that Melkhior had stolen from his own master W'soran. Zacharias was caught before he could make off with his prize, but he had impressed Melkhior, who bestowed vampiric immortality upon him and made him his pupil.

Melkhior taught his acolyte almost everything he knew, but never let Zacharias near his precious Book of Nagash. One night, as Melkhior was feasting on the blood of his unfortunate servants, Zacharias boldly crept into his master's chamber, where the unholy Book of Nagash rested in a great lectern. Unfortunately for Zacharias, Melkhior returned unexpectedly, invigorated by the blood of his dead slaves and at the height of his strength.

Gravely wounded, Zacharias fled into the Middle Mountains. For a year, the minions of Melkhior searched for him without success. Creeping from one cave to another, weakened by his wounds and starving from lack of blood, Zacharias succumbed to a deathlike torpor that lasted for more than a decade. It ended only when a Dragon made a nest there, unaware of his presence. Awaking, Zacharias bit deep into the soft, exposed flesh of the Dragon's underside, draining its life to fortify his own.

Refreshed by this feast, Zacharias raised the Dragon from death, and flew on its back to Melkhior's keep. The tower was all but destroyed, and what became of Melkhior, no one knows. Some say Zacharias drank his blood as he had drunk the blood of the Dragon, and gained his master's powers by doing so. Others believe that Melkhior escaped and is in hiding, preparing his revenge. Since then, Zacharias has remained in the Forest of Shadows, shut in the restored tower and poring obsessively over the Book of Nagash.



BUT HE'S DEAD!

By the end of 'Flying Death Skulls', it is possible that the Characters may have captured or killed Gräber. If that is the case, never fear. He is both a necromancer and an archenemy, and either count is sufficient to justify his return. The conclusion of that scenario gives some suggestions as to how Gräber could get around the inconvenience of dying and be able to return for this adventure.

PART ONE: THE SHADOW OF THE GRAVELORD

This scene takes place during **Chapter 10: Mysterious Thefts** of **The Horned Rat**. The day after the Characters interview Agnise Fuensterburg, there is a second break-in at the Collegium Theologica. Despite the increased guard presence — Schutzmann assigned two of the Watch to keep an eye on things there — someone was able to enter the library and escape unseen with a number of tomes related to necromancy and the undead. However, what sets this apart from the previous theft is that there is a suspect. Professor Gunter Krämer, an elderly scholar of botany, was seen by the guards entering the library after hours. He had every right to be there and the guards on duty waved him through. An hour later, the two guards realised that neither had seen him leave, and one entered the library to find an entire shelf of books in disarray, but no sign of the professor. After alerting Agnise Fuensterburg, reshelfing the books, and checking it against the catalog, it was apparent some volumes were missing. Each of the missing items dealt with the undead and the various necromancers that have troubled Middenheim over its long history.

WHAT HAPPENED?

In fact, Professor Krämer was dead before he ever entered the library, murdered and raised by the Gravelord to infiltrate the building after he noted the increased security. The Professor walked past the guards, gathered every book on the shelf (zombies not being noted readers), and showed them one at a time to his master, who waited just outside beyond a barred window. The Gravelord would have had his servant simply walk out with the books, but he did not trust the creature to be able to get past the guards a second time, especially if asked to explain the sizable pile of books he was laden down with.

The unfortunate corpse of Professor Krämer has, at the Gravelord's orders, hidden itself away in a storage cupboard beneath the stairs. It has yet to be found as the cupboard is far too small to hide a living person of the Professor's size, and the zombie pulverised most of its bones squeezing inside.

This is a prelude to the adventure, intended to foreshadow the later incidents and let the Players know that Gräber will be crossing their path again. Although there is no immediate threat, the Characters should call to mind their previous encounters with this megalomaniacal but somewhat ridiculous necromancer.

A SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT

During the early stages of **The Horned Rat**, the Characters work with Watch Commander Ulrich Schutzmann investigating the remnants of the Purple Hand in Middenheim, and from there pursuing rumours of and connections to the Skaven. This adventure begins with one more tale that can be woven into the many threads of conspiracy and plot that come to light during this part of **The Enemy Within**.

The Characters are informed of the theft a few hours after it is discovered the following morning. Though the method and style is clearly different, as the original thief left behind no mess, it would be foolish not to investigate whether the thefts are related. If the Characters have already met the Low King Bleyden, he assured them that he had nothing to do with it, but even so most Characters will wish to know what happened. If they seem reluctant to investigate, have the Ranaldan or Schutzmann point out that whoever hired Bleyden may have hired others as well. The Characters would do well to at least ascertain what was taken to see if it is related to any of the already missing items.

AT THE COLLEGIUM

The Characters arrive at the college to the guards turning away angry scholars from the building's imposing doors. Without so much as looking at them, the guards give the Characters the same treatment, saying *'I apologise, but the library is currently closed. Watch business.'* However, if the Characters flash Schutzmann's seal, or remind the guards that they were here only yesterday, the pair sheepishly let them inside.

Interviewing Agnise

Agnise Fuensterburg is busy consulting the library catalogue as the Characters enter, but looks up and gives them an exasperated sigh as they walk in. She is not displeased to see the Characters, but is understandably frustrated with the plague of larceny infecting her library. She offers the Characters a seat but otherwise wishes to get right down to business.

Agnise can, once again, provide a list of the stolen books, as well as the following information.

Characters succeeding on an **Average (+20) Charm** Test can learn from Agnise that she suspects the guards simply fell asleep, failing to notice either Professor Krämer leave or the thief enter and make off with the books.



LITERARY LARCENY

The following books are missing from the library.

Bile and Darkness: A Guide to Necromancers of the Middle Mountains by Henrietta Gotenfrau, on the various necromancers to trouble Middenheim, written in 2415 IC.

Dead is Better, a treatise on the cursed nature of the undead and the methods and means of their disposal, written by Malthus Morto in 1984 IC. Agnise chimes in that this work is widely considered to be quite useless, and has been blamed for the deaths of countless Witch Hunters over the years.

Tell No Tales, a translation of a Tilean volume consisting of seven transcripts, purported to be conversations between a Tilean sailor and an undead Khemrian noblewoman. The book deals with the types and nature of various creatures, such as Skeletons, Zombies, Vampires, and more. It ends with the sailor leaving his home behind to return to Khemri in search of the noblewoman. Agnise mentions lightly that some find the tome morosely romantic, but that she has never had time to read it. Published in 2115 IC.



unheard of for scholars to keep odd hours. Gregor notes that he walked with an unsteady gait, but he thought it to be more a matter of his advanced age than any drunkenness. About an hour later, wishing to lock the door, Ilse entered the library looking for Krämer. She found the books from one shelf strewn across the floor and the professor missing. She points out that the library was particularly cold, as though a window had been left open, but when she checked all were closed. If the Characters think to ask if the windows were all locked — you may allow them a **Challenging (+0) Intuition** Test to think of this — Ilse mentions that in fact one was not, but she didn't think much of it as the window had bars on the outside with gaps less than a hand thick. There is no way the professor could have left via the window.

Investigation of the library itself confirms this story, as it is indeed what happened.



TIRED TROOPERS

Gregor and Ilse were the guards on watch during the theft, and the pair have remained in the library awaiting whatever investigators look into the matter. Both are somewhat nervous, as they fear they will be blamed for the theft, but both enjoy a deserved reputation as conscientious members of the Watch and hope it will carry them through. Neither slept last night, and both are quite tired. As the Characters approach, in fact, they hear Gregor mention that he's been awake so long he's starting to hear things. If asked what he is referring to, he says he swears he could hear some banging coming from the wall by the stairs, but suspects he is simply tired.

Gregor and Ilse both give the same story whether interviewed alone or together, and it is the truth of what they have seen. Gregor is careful and deliberate, while Ilse is inclined to include fairly incidental details in her explanation — *'It was two bells after midnight, which I remember as I saw two black cats wander by just then and I thought well, what a coincidence! You don't see many cats these days, might be the pox. Anyway, the professor wanders up and ...'*

Regardless, both deliver the same general story. The professor arrived late at night, sometime after midnight. Both heard him say *'I am Professor Krämer, please let me in'*, though Ilse notes that his voice sounded like that of a much younger man. The pair unlocked the door and allowed him entrance, as it is not



THE KNOCKING IN THE WALLS

If the Characters search the library, allow them to make **Challenging (+0) Perception** Tests. Depending on the results, they uncover the following facts. If a Character would discover the professor, leave this until last.

THE KNOCKING IN THE WALLS

SL	Result
-3 SL or worse	A wine stain
0 SL	Bile by the shelves
1 or more SL	Fingerprints by a window
2 or more SL	Professor Krämer

Wine Stain

Entirely a red herring, the wine stain was made by some students who snuck in to dispose of a bottle of altar wine while no one was looking. Feel free to continue adding details to your description of the stain's colour, shape, texture, scent and so on for as long as the Character continues to investigate it.

Bile

The professor's last meal, finally expelled by a stomach no longer capable of digesting it, lies just in front of the window where the creature passed books out to the Gravelord. Agnise has noted the smell, but has yet to find its source.

Fingerprints

The window is covered in smudged fingerprints where the creature struggled to open it. Characters who think to open the window will discover the professor's severed fingertip jammed into the frame, lost when the window slammed shut on the creature's hand.

Professor Krämer

The unfortunate professor is well and truly dead, raised as a Zombie by the Gravelord, who then used him to access the library and pass the three missing books through the window. Of course, the zombie had to first hold each and every book up where the Gravelord could see it, hence why the entire shelf was cleared. Then, at his master's orders, the professor stuffed himself into a cupboard beneath the stairs leading to the reading rooms above, and which could barely fit a Halfling standing upright. The Characters can follow the sounds of his knocking — the creature is still trying to fit itself further into the cupboard due to the Gravelord's poorly worded order — to find this hiding place. The Zombie is a mess of cold flesh and broken bone, limbs and neck at unnatural angles.

Opening the door causes the creature's hand to fall out of the cupboard, the frayed sinews no longer enough to hold the door closed. The guards or Agnise can all easily identify the creature as the late professor from what remains of his face and his rather striking turquoise brocade. The guards both shudder grimly, while Agnise lets out a shriek that brings anyone who hears it running.

With a **Difficult (-10) Perception** Test a Character may spot, nestled into his shirt pocket, a note that reads, '*In Death I Served the Gravelord!*'

If the Characters do not locate the professor, Agnise is drawn by his knocking shortly after they leave, her terrified shriek audible just as they begin to walk away from the library.

REPORTING BACK

There is little else to find in the library, and once the Characters have seen the note and recognised their old nemesis is now in the city, the scene has served its purpose. They may wish to dispose of the professor themselves, in which case describe the rather awful job involved in prying the thing out of the cupboard without getting bitten in as much detail as you like.

If any Character wonders aloud how the creature was able to talk its way past the guards, and in a younger man's voice at that, you may allow any Character to make an **Average (+20) Lore (Magic)** Test to recall that the spell *Murmured Whisper* (WFRP, page 241) allows a Character to throw their voice quite perfectly. This is exactly what the Gravelord did, watching his puppet approach the guards from the nearby shadows.

Once the Characters have reported back to Schutzmamn, he is distraught at the idea of a necromancer in the city, but also notes that this would appear to be an unrelated incident. He urges the Characters to investigate this matter if they have time, and circulates the necromancer's description — assuming the Characters can provide it from their previous encounters — to the Watch.

A few hours later this pays off, as someone matching that description was seen leaving the city about an hour after the theft at the Collegium. In light of the various disturbances, the guards had orders to let no one leave, but this person was clearly some kind of wizard: he cast a spell that made the guards step back in terror, and was gone before they recovered. A **Challenging (+0) Lore (Magic)** Test allows a Character to surmise that the spell was either the Arcane Spell *Terrifying* or a very successful casting of *Fearsome*. If they think to ask, they are told that this incident happened at the eastern city gates.

PART TWO: THE RESTLESS DEAD

This incident takes place when the Characters reach Hohenfahrt on their way to the Picket, during chapter 17 of **The Horned Rat**. Like Part 1, it is intended mainly to foreshadow the later encounters, although some Players may take some satisfaction in the thought that they are gaining on the annoying necromancer.

WATCHING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

As they approach the village, the Characters are challenged by a group of locals who have apparently decided to question everyone coming along the Middenheim road. Their leader is dressed in leather armour and carries a spear. He looks like he might be a member of the village militia, but the others are villagers and local farmers armed with an assortment of chair-leg clubs and agricultural implements. One carries a blunderbuss that looks older than he is.

A few successful **Easy (+40) Charm** or **Gossip** Tests reveals the reason for the villagers' watchfulness: last night, all the graves in Hohenfahrt's burying-ground were opened — from the inside, one villager tries to explain, although few of his neighbours believe him — and several generations of ancestors are now missing. They would very much like to know if these 'furriners' know anything about it.

Travelling wizards are greeted with particular suspicion, and this deep into Middenland, priests and other devout followers of Sigmar are greeted with even less cordiality. However, given good manners, reasonable roleplaying, and average or better dice rolls, the Characters should eventually be able to make it past the road block and into Hohenfahrt itself.

THE FORESTERS' ARMS

At the *Foresters' Arms* (or wherever else the Characters decide to stop) everyone is talking about the strange events of the previous night. The Characters can overhear the following rumours while in the village.

'It's grave robbers, I tell ye. From the city, most like. Them physicians will pay a pretty penny for a corpse, so I've heard tell, though I always thought they preferred 'em fresh. I never understood what they want them for, though — once you're dead, you're not like to get better, whatever the medicine!'

'Grave robbers, my Aunt Fanny. They weren't dug up — they were raised. You only have to look at the earth to see it was pushed up from below. There's a necromancer about, you mark my words. They never did catch that Dieter Helsnicht, did they — no, not in any of the stories — and everyone knows a necromancer can live forever.'

'Now, that's just rubbish. Those stories of the Doomblood go back to the Three Emperors. When's the last time Helsnicht was heard of? Has he been sitting in the forest whittling sticks these hundreds of years? No, he's dead all right — really dead, I mean. This was someone else. Or something.'

'I'll tell you what it was — Beastmen. All over the forest, they are. They're careful not to be seen, that's all, or they make sure no one who sees 'em lives to tell of it. Here's the truth: it's been a bad year for weather. We all know the harvest's close to worthless, don't we? And it's not just farmers go hungry in a bad year. Them Beastmen's been driven out by hunger, and they dug up the graves for the bodies and bones. They eat people, living or dead — everyone knows that. It's Beastmen, or I'm a Reiklander.'





'Keep your Beastmen. I know what's afoot here. It's witch hunters — them Sigmarites from Altdorf. No, no, hear me out. Things are getting tense between north and south, and everyone knows there's a war coming. Well, I know it, Franz, it stands to reason. You'd know it too if you paid attention to the world around you. Anyway, a bunch of witch hunters likely dug up all our dead to make it look like there's some kind of necromancy afoot, just so they'd have an excuse to come in and burn us all. They Reiklanders are soft, as we're all well aware, and they'll stoop to anything so there's a few less of us on the battlefield when the time comes. Here — you lot aren't from round here, are you? Any of you from the Reikland? Any of you put Sigmar over Ulric? Any of you witch hunters?'

These and even wilder ideas can be heard throughout the evening, and the Characters could find themselves in quite an uncomfortable position if they give anyone reason to suspect them of being involved. Feel free to improvise further rumours if needed: as the ale continues to flow, the theories and accusations become less and less reliant on common sense, or reality.



THE GRAVEYARD

Investigating the graveyard does not add much to what the Characters already know. The graves are indeed open and empty, a successful **Difficult (-10) Perception** Test reveals distinct signs that they were not dug up from the outside — it seems that the occupants clawed their way out.

The ground around the graves is full of footprints, some of shod feet, some bare, and some ... not. A successful **Lore (Medicine)** or **Lore (Necromancy)** Test identifies the third class of prints as having been made by bony, fleshless feet. The tracks all head off toward the north-east. The careless shambling group is easily followed with an **Easy (+40) Track** Test. They lead into the forest for about fifty yards before turning to the right and running parallel to the road, but out of sight from it.

The Gravelord's Plan

Everything here bears out the suspicions that the Players have probably already formed. During the night, Gräber cast the spells *Raise Dead* and *Reanimate* several times by the graveyard, providing himself with an Undead escort and fighting force on the next leg of his journey. He intends to travel across the Middle Mountains into the Forest of Shadows to continue his search for the three legendary necromancers Dieter Helsnicht, Zacharias the Everliving, and Melkhior the Ancient.

LEAVING HOHENFAHRT

The Characters now know that they are less than a day behind the necromancer, and rather than spend the night in Hohenfahrt they may decide to press on in the hope of overtaking him. This draws some comments from the locals, expressing doubts as to their good sense, sanity, or respectability. The denizens of Hohenfahrt are notoriously insular, but even they would not wish to put travellers on the road when the restless dead are about. This is doubly true if the strangers look well armed — should the zombies return, the villagers will have time to escape while the creatures are chewing on them. The landlord of the *Foresters' Arms*, a gloomy Wastlander named Georg Bentinck, is particularly vocal in this regard, pointing out that he has two very nice rooms available for a very reasonable price. This is particularly helpful, as it will also increase the Characters' chances of running into Valeria during 'Suspicious Behaviour' (**The Horned Rat**, page 112).

Whenever the Characters leave Hohenfahrt, the necromancer's trail leads them directly to Lindenheim. Even if they leave immediately, Gräber reaches the village before them.



PART THREE: LEAVING FOR LINDENHEIM

Whether travelling by night or day, the party is about five miles from Lindenheim when the weather changes. Such things are not uncommon in the foothills, especially in late afternoon after a summer day's heat or at night as the sunless air cools and can no longer hold as much moisture.

A rumble of thunder is the only warning. The sky darkens: day becomes almost as dark as night, or if it's night the stars are hidden and cannot be used to navigate. Then rain comes down in great sheets, its hiss muffling all noises, imposing a -20 penalty to all Perception and Navigation Tests. The occasional flash of lightning does nothing to help matters, giving everyone one *Blinded* Condition that takes two rounds to clear.

Worse still, the road becomes a rutted stream, with no hope of identifying any footprints. However, the trail of trampled undergrowth is still just about discernable, requiring a **Challenging (+0) Track** Test from now on.

The storm begins to abate as the party approaches Lindenheim — if they decide to find shelter and wait it out, it lasts for about an hour. They reach the strangely pristine village wet, bedraggled, and mud-stained, applying a -20 to any Fellowship-based Tests when dealing with those of Silver 2 status or higher. The idyllic charm of the village is undiminished by the rain — in fact, it is enhanced if anything. Rays of sunshine peek through the clouds, making the spotless cottages glisten and the surrounding fields look almost too green to be real.

NIGHT'S DARK TERRORS

Travelling through the forest at night — even along a road — is not an undertaking for the faint of heart. Ambushes by Beastmen, bandits, and other foes can challenge the Characters, but perhaps worse — for those Characters without *Night Vision* — are the unexplained rustles and snaps of things moving through the undergrowth, just a few yards away. Is it the sound of a monster stalking the party, or just some harmless creature going about its business? Screech owls fly almost silently, alighting on a branch just a few yards away before letting loose a blood-curdling scream that can take anyone by surprise.

A good way to work on the nerves of night-travelling Characters — and their Players — is to describe unexplained sounds from time to time, adding just enough encounters to keep the players from dismissing everything they hear. One serious encounter every other night will be plenty, but timing is critical.

Keep the Players guessing, so that every noise ratchets up the tension just a little more. If a noise is particularly sudden and unexpected, you might require a *Fear (1)* Test.

NOTHING TO SEE HERE

The village of Lindenheim is a community of foresters and smallholders, centred on the Lindenheim Trading Post, a hub for the region's merchants, farmers, foresters, and trappers to do business. As such, the village is somewhat more wealthy than might be expected for such a settlement, and the locals have spent their wealth on maintaining one of the more picturesque villages in the Empire. As the Characters make their way through the village, they may see a few things that give them pause.

Burning Waste

In the distance, a handful of villagers are tending a large bonfire, which smokes fitfully. It seems to be made of wet brushwood, although people are bringing dry fuel from their own homes to help it burn brighter.

If the Characters leave the road to get a better look at the bonfire, they are challenged and directed, politely but forcefully, toward the village centre and its inn, the *Orchard View* (which shockingly lacks any orchards within sight). The villagers explain they are simply burning some rubbish, as villagers everywhere must do from time to time, and since the local laws on trespassing are quite strict, it would be better for everyone if the visitors kept to the road. The Characters are left with the choice of respecting their wishes or causing an incident.

If any Character is able to approach the fire undetected, they see that beneath a covering of brushwood, the bonfire consists of a mix of wood, dead bodies, and bones. The wind may shift as the Characters pass by, blowing the smell of smoke toward them — and with it, the tang of burning flesh, detected with a **Challenging (+0) Perception** Test.

Signs of Trouble

Despite the rain, it is clear that a large group of *something* came out of the woods and headed toward the village. Undergrowth is flattened, just as in the trail the Characters may have followed from Hohenfahrt. A successful **Hard (-20) Perception** or **Track** Test allows a Character to spy a footprint here and there that has not been completely obliterated by the rain — or by a small crew of villagers who are busily shovelling and sweeping, wiping out these unsightly traces.

If questioned, they politely respond that they are simply repairing some damage caused by the storm and by a herd of deer that stampeded out of the woods, apparently panicked by the lightning. The people of Lindenheim like their village to be neat and tidy, they explain, and repairs are best made promptly before things have time to deteriorate.

The Characters hear a similar story from a small crew of villagers who are scrubbing and repainting darkened spots on a couple of cottages close to the road. Lightning struck close by, they say, giving everyone a fright and blackening the fronts of the two buildings. This completely ruined the look of them, and must be repaired right away.



Respect for the Dead

Lindenheim's graveyard stands a little way out of the village, on the road that leads toward the Picket. There as elsewhere, a small crew of villagers is busy tending to the graves, apparently filling a couple of them in. A **Challenging (+0) Perception** Test reveals that this seems odd because their headstones are far from new.

Once again, the villagers explain this as routine maintenance, saying that the heavy rain caused a little localised subsidence which gave the graveyard an unappealing look. The dead deserve respect, they say, and that extends to fresh flowers and neatly tended graves. A second **Challenging (+0) Perception** Test allows a Character to catch sight of a stiff, dead hand sticking up through the gravedirt as one of the villagers heaps fresh soil on it. In what must surely be a trick of the light or an effect of the rain, the hand seems to form a fist as earth is thrown over it, as though grasping at something unseen.

A WELL-ORDERED COMMUNITY

Lindenheim is a very well-ordered and peaceful community. The villagers like it that way, and they are prepared to go to considerable lengths to make sure that everything remains peaceful and orderly, for the common good.

'The common good' is something of an obsession in Lindenheim, and the longer the Characters talk to the villagers, the more frequently they hear the phrase. The villagers have no intention of admitting to anyone that anything as distasteful as an undead attack occurred here, last night or at any other time in the village's history. Characters who pay no heed to the villagers' increasingly emphatic hints about minding their own business may come to regret it. Should they keep to themselves, they have little trouble in Lindenheim, but if they seem likely to carry away stories that would paint the village in a poor light, they may not be so fortunate.

THE COMMON GOOD

If the Characters have poked their nose in where it is not wanted, and choose to stay at the *Orchard View* that night, the proprietor Arhaus Gubentrots, a Middenlander affecting a refined accent he most certainly was not born with, drills them intensively about what they know. He pretends to know little of what goes on in the village, asking the Characters what they have seen. If they reveal they have suspicions, especially of anything related to the undead, the innkeeper forms a plot to poison the Characters via a nightcap offered '*on the house*' before they leave the bar for their rooms that night.





Have whichever Character does most of the talking make a **Hard (-20) Charm** Test. If they fail, Gubentrots attempts the poisoning, offering a shot of Bretonnian brandy (actually a common local brew with a fancy label that says 'Bret-hon-ian Brandy' and little else). This has been laced with Spit (**WFRP**, page 307), a hallucinogen that dulls the mind and provides visions of what the user truly desires. If the Characters made any quips about the lack of an orchard at Orchard View, you may forgo the Charm Test, as Gubentrots is quite sensitive about the inn's name and will go ahead and poison them regardless of how charming they have been.

Once all the Characters are disabled by the drug, or at least appear to be, a group of locals enter the bar, solemnly intoning '*The common good*' before grabbing the Characters, tying them up, and throwing them on the remains of the day's bonfire, which they then attempt to rekindle. The Characters come to around the time the flames are getting started, and have to move quickly to escape.

Should the Characters not all take the poisoned drink, or detect its presence via a **Difficult (-10) Perception** Test, Gubentrots assesses the situation before signalling for aid. If most of the Characters are affected by the dose of Spit, he pretends to be terribly concerned and sends the lucid Characters for a doktor. In fact a group of locals, two for each Character, are waiting for them in ambush just outside the inn. If most of the Characters are unaffected, Gubentrots says he will go for the doktor himself. He gathers up more villagers, returning with a group of at least twice as many people as the Characters. He declares to anyone else in the inn that the Characters are heretics in conflict with '*The common good*', and attempts to drag them from the bar to the bonfire.

In either case, the Characters will likely be hesitant to return to Lindenheim. Assuming the Characters survive, any of the surviving villagers or Gubentrots himself will tell them the truth of what happened if threatened. A necromancer appeared at the start of the storm and raised many of the town's dead to accompany the great many zombies and skeletons that already shuffled alongside him. The villagers rose up and resisted the necromancer, who responded with some very poorly aimed blasts of magic and ineffectual monologuing about his '*right to rule all the living by writ of his mastery over all of the dead*'. After he was hit in the head with a thrown boot, he fled back to the forests. Lindenheimers are a tough lot, obsessed with the prestige and status of their tiny village, and the entire population rushed to its defence. They drove back the Zombies, who, without the leadership of a talented necromancer, were quite ineffective. The villagers then began the process of covering the entire thing up.

PART FOUR: DON'T PICKET

This incident takes place during chapter 18 of **The Horned Rat**, as the Characters arrive at the Picket. Shaken by his defeat at Lindenheim, Gräber spent the day watching the village from the forest in the hope of learning their secret. He is convinced that the 'Holy Boot' that almost struck him dead must certainly be the work of a powerful priest of Morr or similar blessed individual, though he wished to be certain of it before making his move against them. He recognised the Characters when they arrived, and was horrified when they started talking to the villagers and inspecting the damage from his attack. The villagers were talking to them very earnestly, and seemed to be telling them all about it.

To Gräber's self-obsessed mind, there was only one explanation: the Characters must be an elite group of witch hunters, probably hired by his archenemy Father Marcus, and dedicated to hunting him down. Having failed to kill him on the Reik, at Altdorf, and at Pritzstock, they must have tracked him from Middenheim and followed him into the foothills. Now, clearly, they have come to the Picket to recruit an army to hunt him through the mountains.

The Characters, of course, will see things differently. This strange and annoying necromancer has been complicating their lives ever since he attacked their barge on the way to Altdorf, and based on how often their paths cross, some of the party may well conclude — erroneously, but not unreasonably — that he is out to get them for some reason of his own.

SKULDUGGERY BY NIGHT

The first night the Characters are at the Picket, they will have a lot on their plate. In addition to the frosty reception they receive, they must also investigate the possibility of a smuggler at work, contend with the terrible reputation they have been afflicted with by whoever spread rumours of them before they arrived, and consider the implications of an upcoming Skaven attack on Brass Keep. The last thing they need is one more complication — but, of course, Gräber provides it.

Using the same ritual he used in Pritzstock (see **Power Behind the Throne Companion**), he enchants a skull provided by a loyal servant and sends it into the depot to spy on the Characters. Unlike the Pritzstock skulls, which were intended to spread fear and alarm, this one needs to avoid attention. To that end, Gräber has blackened it with campfire ash and done his best to magically subdue the flames that surround skulls subject to the spell. However, this cannot hide the reddish glow in the eyes of an active skull. Noticing the skull is an **Easy (+20) Perception** Test if it is facing the onlooker, but **Very Hard (-30)** if it is not.

The full rules for Flying Death Skulls may be found in the **Power Behind the Throne Companion**, page 117, in the adventure of that name. For the purposes of this incident, you only need the profile given at the end of this adventure, and the information in the box.

Gräber's first priority is to have the skull find out where the Characters are, and then track them to try to learn what they are doing. He tries to make sure it is not seen, as it flits from building to building, peering in windows as it goes.

There are no scripted events here: the GM should feel free to improvise, giving the Characters a glimpse of the skull (or, more likely, the glowing red points of its eyes) here and there as they try to deal with whatever else is going on at the time. A few examples are below.

The Face at the Window

The Characters are in a building, perhaps at dinner with some of the Picket's officers, when one of them or perhaps a companion notices a red light outside the window. The skull is peeking in at the Characters, and withdraws the moment Gräber realises it has been spotted.

By the time anyone makes it out of the building, the skull is gone. It may have gone to ground somewhere in the compound — behind a pile of equipment, for example, or even hiding face-down in the kitchen midden — or Gräber might have flown it back over the depot wall and back into the forest. If it is still in the compound, there may be a slim chance of finding it with a determined search; if it has returned to its master in the forest, there is no chance at all.



A Strange Bird

The Characters are alerted by shouts from over by the mess, followed by the reports of a few pistols. They arrive on the scene to find a small group of pistoliers peering excitedly up at the night sky. Their accounts vary, but all agree that *something* flew over their heads, about twenty feet up, as they were leaving the mess. Some say it was a night-bird, others a bat, and others still that it was something else entirely. All mention its two glowing red eyes and agree that at least one of their shots hit the thing.

Searching the ground outside the mess hall — a **Difficult (-10) Perception** Test in the darkness, reduced to **Challenging (+0)** by *Night Vision* — turns up a fragment of unmistakably Human jawbone. Most of the mandible is covered with soot and ash. A Physician or similar Character may be able to venture, on a successful **Average (+20) Lore (Medicine)** Test, that it has been a long time dead and probably buried. It is evident that indeed one of the pistoliers connected, blasting the jawbone from the skull.

Those with *Second Sight* see lingering wisps of *Dhar* on the thing, an almost sure sign of necromancy. If the user has had previous experience with the Gravelord's magic, they recognise it as bearing the unmistakable imprint of his work.

A Minor Disturbance

The Characters are passing close by the stables when they hear the scream of panicking horses. Gräber sent his skull into the building to watch the party surreptitiously through the narrow windows, but failed to anticipate the effect that the unnatural thing would have on the high-strung cavalry mounts stabled there.

The GM can decide how badly the horses panic at the sight of the skull. One or two might kick down the doors of their stalls and run out into the depot, requiring some time and several good **Animal Handling** Tests to recover them. A groom might be trampled in the process, requiring healing. In the worst case, the groom might have been carrying a lantern and dropped it in the disturbance, setting a pile of straw alight, dooming all the remaining horses unless the fire is brought under control quickly.

Cavalry commander Jochem Muratz is on the scene quickly, accompanied by three or four of his most senior officers and demanding to know what is going on. Unless he sees the skull himself, or is told of it by one of his own cavalrymen, he dismisses anything the Characters say about it. Instead, he concludes — especially if the Characters are in the stables when he arrives — that they are saboteurs or worse, who tried to injure his horses and are now trying to fob him off with ridiculous excuses.



If the Characters are unable to convince Muratz of their innocence, they find themselves seized by several cavalrymen apiece and dragged behind the cavalry barracks. There, depending on their relative social status, the Characters face a brutal beating (a 'sound thrashing' as Muratz puts it) or a duel.

A Need for Discretion

There are several times during this chapter of **The Horned Rat** when the Characters will not want to be seen or heard. They may be trying to search the quartermaster's offices, for example, or to spy on the Picket Commander or her officers. Any such occasion provides a perfect opportunity for Gräber's flying skull to cause problems.

As it peers into the window of whichever building they are trying to search, the skull might attract attention. Even if its red eyes are facing away from an observer, their unnatural glow will reflect in the glass, and be particularly noticeable after dark. People who come to investigate the strange light may very well stumble upon the Characters. Or, if they have been sensible enough to post a lookout, someone else's approach forces them to abandon their search temporarily.

To make things worse, the skull might bump into something as Gräber becomes so intent on seeing what the Characters are up to that he neglects the fine control of his magical drone. The results of this could range from annoying but trivial, such as a loud collision or a broken window, to the potentially catastrophic, such as a knocked-over oil lamp.

SEARCHING THE FOREST

The Characters may already have realised that their path has crossed the Gravelord's once more, but the appearance of a Flying Death Skull confirms it beyond any doubt. The thing is too small, and moves too quickly in the darkness, for anyone to be able to follow it to its master; and since it flies, it leaves no trail that can be followed. Even so, Characters who are confident in their outdoor skills may decide to scour the woods — as, perhaps, they did around Pritzstock — in an attempt to find the necromancer or his lair.

It would take weeks to search the surrounding forest thoroughly, and even if the Characters do stumble upon a small patch of flattened brush where Gräber crouched while controlling his flying skull, and even if they do manage to follow his trail back from there to a makeshift campsite among a particularly dense stand of trees, he is gone by the time they get there, having decided to resume his journey (see below). Meanwhile, the Characters have wasted precious time and matters at the depot could be getting out of hand, making their task there considerably harder.

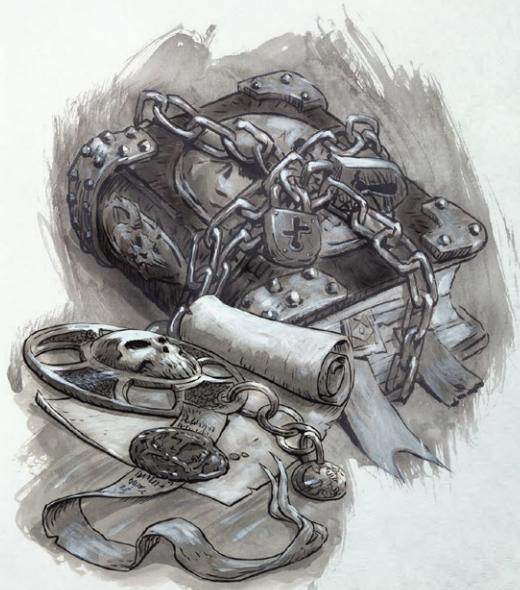
A STRATEGIC WITHDRAWAL

After investigating the Characters for a couple of nights — longer if the Players find the experience entertaining, shorter if the attendant complications seriously threaten their chances of success — Gräber recalls his skull and leaves the area.

He has decided that, if they are raising an army, they are not being especially quick about it. If he is honest with himself, he might admit to being disappointed and a little offended that his presence does not seem to merit a more urgent response. Of course, he cannot imagine any other reason for the Characters to be at the depot; in his mind everything revolves around him.

Perhaps, he thinks, the Characters are simply hiding in the hold, surrounded by troops, and hoping he will go away. He should raise a horde to destroy the fortress — being sure to leave a few survivors to spread the tale of his victory, of course — but attacking a fortified military position is rather different to ransacking a town like Lindenheim. Also, he tells himself, he has better things to do than play cat and mouse with a handful of witch hunters he has already defeated once. Whatever actually transpired at Pritzstock, he has mentally recast the events to constitute a brilliant victory on his part and a humiliating defeat for the Characters.

So, inexplicably to the Characters, the skull simply stops appearing. Gräber moves away to the north, working his way around the Picket and heading over the mountains toward the Forest of Shadows. The Characters, freed from his harassment for the moment, are free to follow the rest of the adventure, from Brass Keep to Karak Skygg. As they fight their way through the hazards of the mountains and the ancient Dwarf hold beyond, they may forget the Gravelord altogether — which will make the final part of this adventure even more of a surprise.





PART FIVE: CARRION OVER THE MOUNTAINS

The end of **The Horned Rat** sees the Characters escaping from an exploding Karak Skygg in a balloon, along with Baron Heinrich Todbringer and, possibly, a few other powerful NPCs. The course is set for Middenheim, and everyone has time to treat their wounds (and perhaps hide their mutations, for the more unfortunate) and to bask in the glow of having saved the Old World from almost certain annihilation. It is a rare moment of triumph — this being **WFRP**, it deserves to be interrupted.



HE THOUGHT SO ALL ALONG

Although Gräber left the vicinity of the depot when the Characters set off for Brass Keep or a little earlier, his reasons for doing so bothered him. It was clear, from his egomaniacal point of view, that an army was being raised against him, and even if he did not want to delay his journey for too long to defeat it — for he is the Gravelord, and therefore his victory is inevitable — he could not help feeling that he ought to do *something*.

He wrestled with this feeling for several days as he made his way over the mountains toward the Forest of Shadows. His intention was to visit the cave where the defeated Zacharias had hidden, and where he had met the Dragon whose blood restored him. Instead, from a vantage point high above the mountains' more passable valleys, he spied a small group making their way through the pass. It was just as he thought — the Characters were indeed after him personally, for why else would they make their way into such inhospitable terrain as the peaks of the Middle Mountains?

Hiding among the rocks above a narrow pass, he saw them cross below him. The fools clearly had no idea where he was. As he watched, they made their way into what appeared to be the mouth of a Dwarf hold. The fools obviously had no idea where he was!

Immediately, a plan began to form in his mind. He would wait until the Characters were inside the hold, and ambush them as they came out. He would finally be rid of their bothersome pursuit and, having done away with his most fiendish and persistent enemies, the name of the Gravelord would finally be whispered in the fearful tones reserved for Helsnicht, Melkhior, and Zacharias. Once he met with these vaunted necromancers, for surely they still existed, they were bound to treat him with due respect when he demanded their tutelage.

The Gravelord spent several hours getting into position, marshalling his remaining forces, and preparing for an attack on Karak Skygg. Even as he approached Karak Skygg, the rumblings from within gave him pause. When he witnessed the final fate of the karak and the Moonbreaker cannon, even his inflated ego was momentarily dumbstruck.

Just as he was wondering what to do, Gräber saw a great balloon flying away from the peak as its crew winched up a platform holding a group of figures that seemed familiar, even at this distance. He knew that this was his chance for revenge.

SOMETHING IN THE AIR

This incident takes place just when the Players start to think that the adventure is over. This may be as soon as they board the balloon, or after an hour or two in the air. The moment the Characters stop scanning the horizon for further enemies and start thinking about what they will do when they return to Middenheim, it begins.

Enemy Dead, a Head

Gräber's first move is to confirm his suspicion that the Characters — those dogged adversaries who have caused him so much trouble — are indeed aboard the balloon. He does this by enchanting another skull and sending it up to take a look.

A shout goes up from the crew as the thing zips along the deck at shoulder height, whipping around obstacles and onlookers before coming to a hover in front of the Characters. They barely have time to notice that it has something in its jaws before it drops it to the deck and dives over the nearest rail, dropping back toward the ground at high speed.



All this happens very quickly. The Characters can make one round of attacks against the skull, and so can any NPCs who make a **Challenging (+0) Cool** Test to get over their surprise at the thing's sudden appearance. The object it dropped on the deck is a folded note: when it is opened, any Characters who encountered Gräber's Carrion in 'The Vengeance of the Gravelord' can recognise the handwriting. It reads: '*Tremble Before the Wrath of the Gravelord*'

Dead from Above

Gräber's plan is to disable the balloon and force it to the ground, so that its passengers and crew will be at his mercy. The quickest way to achieve this is to put a large number of holes in its gas bag.

A minute or so after receiving the Gravelord's message, several things happen at once.

Three Carrion rise up from the ground — Gräber managed to repair any damage from their previous encounter — each clutching something in its talons. A second or two later, a larger creature flaps laboriously into the air, with a rider on its back and a similar something grasped in each clawed foot.

Any Character who makes a successful **Very Hard (-30) Perception** Test can identify the rider as Gräber (if they have seen him before) and the flying monsters' burdens as Skeletons. There are five Skeletons in total: each Carrion has one Skeleton in its claws, and Gräber's Abyssal Terror (see page 120) carries one in each foot. The Test may be repeated each round, its Difficulty decreasing one step per round as the creatures come closer.

Gräber's plan is to drop the Skeletons on the top of the balloon and order them to slash it to ribbons. It takes four rounds for his flying creatures to climb above the balloon, during which time they may be attacked with spells and ranged weapons. On the fifth round, the balloon itself blocks any line of sight from the deck as the creatures drop their Skeletons.

Skeletons that make a **Challenging (+0) Athletics** Test are able to hold on; those that fail slide off and plummet to the ground. The next round, each Skeleton draws a knife from its teeth and begins to stab and tear at the balloon's canopy.

The balloon can take 200 points of damage before it starts losing height and is eventually forced down. Each round, each Skeleton inflicts 4 points of damage. If all five are stabbing away, they cause 20 points of damage per round — which means that the balloon's passengers and crew have only 10 rounds to prevent them from causing catastrophic damage.

CLAMBERING ABOUT

Clearly, the balloon is doomed unless someone deals with the Skeletons. Any Character can scale the rigging that secures the balloon to its gondola and the wide-mesh rope net that encloses the gas bag. Characters must make a **Climb** test each round to keep their footing. On a success they can move about normally, clambering about at up to their **Movement** in yards each round. On a **Marginal Failure** (0 to -1 SL) they may attack as normal, but they are unable to move about on this turn. On a **Failure** (-2 to -3 SL) it is all the Character can do to cling on, and they may make no other action or movement. On an **Impressive Failure** (-4 to -5 SL) or worse they fall, plummeting either down on to the deck of the ship if they are lucky (that is, spend a Fortune Point) or out of the balloon and to their deaths if not. A nearby Character may make a **Challenging (+0) Initiative** Test to grab a falling Character. If they succeed they may make a **Difficult (+0) Strength** Test on their turn to swing the Character back on to the balloon — with an **Impressive Failure** (-4 to -5 SL) or worse seeing both characters plummeting off the balloon instead.

Fighting the Skeletons

Once within reach of a Skeleton, fighting will not be easy. Most Characters will require both feet and one hand to hold on to the balloon. These restricted circumstances impose a -10 penalty to all attack rolls.

Any attack that is badly botched — an Impressive or Astounding Failure — or any wounding blow requires the Character to make a successful **Easy (+40) Athletics** Test or lose their grip, sliding down the canopy of the balloon until they can grasp a rope and save themselves from a long, long fall. Even if successful, the Character must make a **Hard (-20) Dexterity** Test or drop any handheld item as they scramble to prevent themselves falling. By the end of the process, they have to spend 2 rounds climbing back up to attack the Skeleton, making Tests along the way as detailed above.

The Skeletons defend themselves with their knives, but suffer the same difficulties as any Characters attacking them. They use the standard profile from the **WFRP** rulebook (page 327), but are unarmoured and their Knives count as a Weapon +4.

After destroying a Skeleton, a Character must climb for 2 rounds to reach the next one.

IT GETS WORSE

Gräber, being a genius, has foreseen that his enemies will probably climb up and try to destroy his Skeletons before they can damage the balloon too badly. As the Characters climb up (or watch others climb) to deal with the Skeletons, something dark and smoky rises from the ground below, boiling upward toward the balloon. As the dark cloud passes by the gondola, those on deck can see that it is a swarm of massive bats.

Close behind the swarm are two much larger bats: their bodies are as long as a man's, and their wingspan must be twenty feet at least. Many Characters will assume that these are Giant Bats, but a successful **Challenging (+0) Lore (Undead)** Test identifies them as Undead: the dread Fell Bats feared by the folk of Sylvania.

As if these were not bad enough, anyone watching Gräber on his Abyssal Terror sees that, although he makes no move to come closer, he is making gestures that look very much like the casting of a spell. At the end of the first round, three disembodied skulls hover at his shoulder.

Each round, the GM should roll once on the table below for each Character climbing or fighting on the outside of the balloon. They are attacked by the creature indicated on the table or targeted by one of the Gravelord's spells. All these attacks take place at the end of the round. Players may choose to spend a Fortune point instead of rolling, which ensures their Character is not attacked that round.

IT GETS WORSE

1d10	Event
1–5	No attack
6–7	Skeletons
8	Flying Death Skull
9	Carrion
10	Spell: roll 1d10: 1–3: Screaming Skull 4–6: Chain Attack 7–10: Steal Life

Ignore impossible results. Gräber can cast only one spell per round, and no creature can attack more than once. For example, if all the surviving Carrion have already attacked in this round, a further roll of 7 is treated as 'no attack'.

Just like wounding attacks from the Skeletons, any wounding attack generated on this table forces the victim to make an **Easy (+40) Athletics** Test or risk losing their grip on the balloon.

Squadron Scramble!

Characters who have the ability to fly via the *Fly* spell can choose to attack the Skeletons or protect their comrades on the balloon by engaging the Gravelord's airborne units in battle.

This is easier than they might suppose, since any flying Characters have the enemy's undivided attention. If anyone is flying, no one on the balloon is attacked. Instead, all attacks are focused on the flying Character. This includes the Carrion, any Flying Death Skulls, and Gräber's spells.

Once any flying threats have been defeated or forced back on to the balloon, attacks on the balloon resume their normal pattern.

I Got One!

Characters who are not climbing the balloon may provide supporting fire to those who are. Any creature that receives a wounding hit may not attack until the next round.

Boarders Repelled

Once all the Skeletons have been destroyed, Gräber's force changes tactics. Any surviving Carrion land on the top of the balloon and start tearing into it with their beaks, causing 9 points of damage each per round. A roll of 7 on the table above is treated as 'no attack'.

Any Character on the outside of the balloon can attack the Carrion in the same way as the Skeletons (see **Fighting the Skeletons** above). Meanwhile, Gräber and any other surviving monsters keep attacking as before.

THE GRAVELORD TRIUMPHANT

If the balloon suffers 200 points of damage, it begins to lose altitude, reaching the ground in five rounds. This will not be a crashing freefall, as solid Dwarf redundancy in the balloon's manufacture means that it is all but impossible to drain every gas bag at once. Still, everyone will suffer the effects of a 3 yard fall when the balloon does come crashing to the earth (see **WFRP** page 166 for rules on falling damage). This still gives its passengers and crew time to destroy Gräber's force, or at least weaken it so that he abandons his plan to turn twenty or so Skeletons on them as they land, while delivering another of his bombastic speeches. Instead, he slinks off into the forest, leaving the Characters and their companions with a long delay as they repair the balloon.



THE GRAVELORD DEFEATED

Gräber retreats if he loses all three of his Carrion, or if he loses more than half his Wounds. If his Abyssal Terror is killed, he loses control of the rest of his forces as he struggles to avert a crash landing: any surviving Flying Death Skulls become inert and fall from the sky; and any surviving Carrion break off their attacks and follow their master to the ground. Only the Skeletons remain, doggedly hacking at the balloon's skin until they are destroyed.

EXPERIENCE POINT AWARDS

The GM can award the following Experience Points for this adventure, with bonus awards for bright ideas and good roleplaying.

- 💀 5 points per rumour recovered from the Collegium Theologica.
- 💀 5–10 points per Character for dealing with the inhabitants of Hohenfahrt.
- 💀 5–10 points per Character for dealing with the inhabitants of Lindenheim.
- 💀 5 points per Character involved for destroying each Skeleton or Flying Death Skull.
- 💀 10 points per Character involved for destroying each Carrion.
- 💀 20 points per Character involved for wounding Gräber badly enough to make him break off the attack.
- 💀 25 points per Character involved for resolving the final encounter without the balloon being forced to the ground.

NPCS AND MONSTERS

HANS GRÄBER, 'THE GRAVELORD'

'The Gravelord' is a scrawny Human with black, straight hair in a disheveled pudding-bowl cut; pale blue eyes; and a pointed, turned-up nose. With his small size and whining voice, Gräber looks and sounds ten years younger than his true age, and this bothers him immensely. Violently sensitive to slights both real and imagined, he has turned his almost superhuman propensity for learning and his overwrought imagination into a means of revenge against everyone who has ever slighted him, everyone who ever will — in fact, everyone. By means of his 'Gravelord' persona — an attempt to emulate his hero Heinrich Kemmler, 'the Lichemaster' — and his carefully planned, theatrical attacks, Gräber seeks to spread fear and earn respect, humiliating all who cross him in revenge for all the humiliation that he feels the world has visited upon him. While vain and rather ridiculous, he is far from stupid, and although he would hate to admit it — especially to himself — his ability to be underestimated is one of his more powerful weapons.



HANS GRÄBER

LEVEL 1 MONK, LEVEL 4 WIZARD (NECROMANCER)

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	34	39	27	32	35	42	44	56	47	32	12

Traits: Clever, Prejudice (those who do not fear him), Stealthy, Weapon (Staff)+7

Skills: Channelling (Death 56, Necromancy 66), Cool 55, Intuition 48, Language (Magick) 67, Lore (Magic 65, Necromancy 70, Theology 61), Melee (Polearm) 44, Perception 49, Perform (Bombastic Speeches) 33, Research 65, Stealth (Rural) 45

Talents: Aethyric Attunement 2, Arcane Magic (Death, Necromancy), Beneath Notice, Bookish, Fearless (mortals), Instinctive Diction, Iron Will, Magical Sense, Nose for Trouble, Petty Magic, Read/Write, Savant (Necromancy), Sixth Sense, Strong-minded

Spells: All Lore of Death and Lore of Necromancy spells, at GM's discretion

Trappings: Dagger, Spell Ingredients, Bedroll, Necromantic Tomes, Purse with 5 GCs 17/6

Note: The GM should decide how many books Gräber has, and which spells, if any, they contain. PCs trying to learn this forbidden magic, or even being found in possession of the tomes, could face serious consequences.



ABYSSAL TERROR

Created from the skin, bones and putrid flesh of an assortment of creatures, Gräber's Abyssal Terror is his most prized creation. It shrieks dreadfully as it carries him aloft, and mounted on it the necromancer feels even more invulnerable than usual.

ABYSSAL TERROR

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	65	—	60	55	15	45	—	10	50	—	84

Traits: Armour 2, Bite +10, Weapon (Claws) +12, Fear 2, Flight 75, Size (Enormous), Trained (Broken, Mount, War), Undead

CARRION

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	43	—	30	30	40	30	—	10	30	—	21

Traits: Beak +9, 2 Claws +7, Fear 3, Flight 100, Night Vision, Size (Large), Trained (War), Undead

FLYING DEATH SKULLS

While still pleased with his creations, Gräber has become less enchanted by these monstrosities since his last encounter with the Characters. Created using an obscure ritual, a Flying Death Skull looks identical to a normal, dead skull until it becomes active under the control of the spellcaster. Its eyes glow and eerie red and it moves under the control of its master, who can see through its empty eye-sockets (but not hear through its nonexistent ears). It remains under Gräber's control until it is reduced to zero Wounds, or until he is distracted, by being attacked, for example

FLYING DEATH SKULLS

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
*	41	—	35	37	41	34	30	—	—	—	11

Traits: Bite +4, Construct, Fear 2, Flight 100*, Night Vision, Size (Little), Undead, Unstable

Optional: Infected

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from the blasted city of Mordheim.

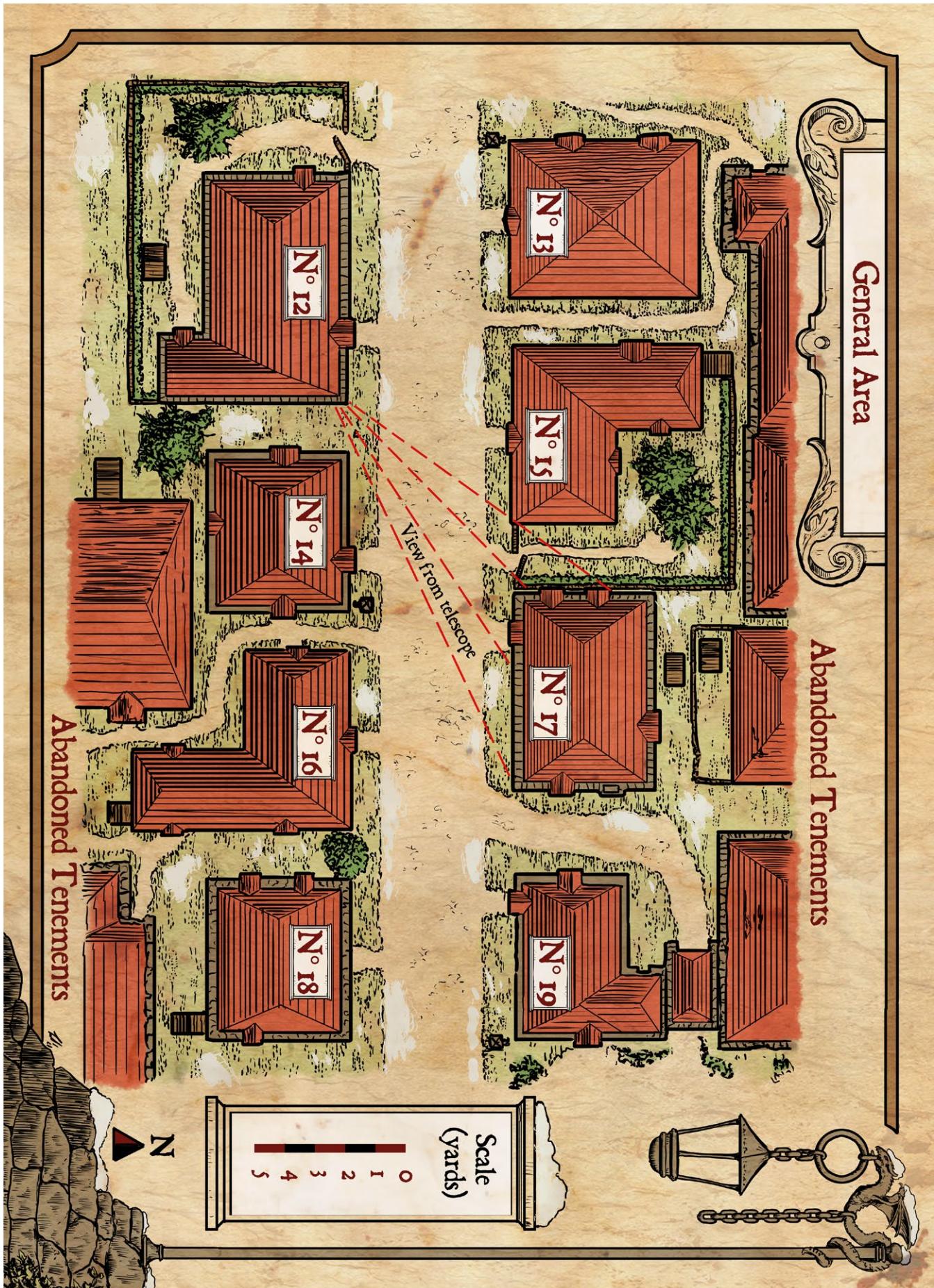
It was then I realised that my unfortunate apprentice could be thought of as human no longer.

about the size of an Ogre's clenched fist,
precious to the right customer.

a cave beneath the roots of the western
Middle Mountains, near the source of
the Kleibusch.

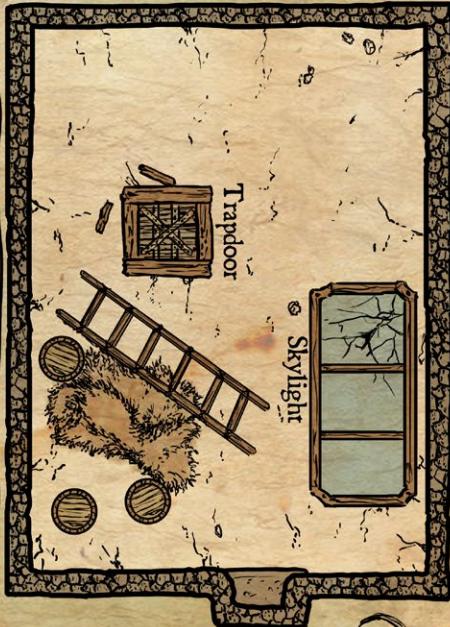




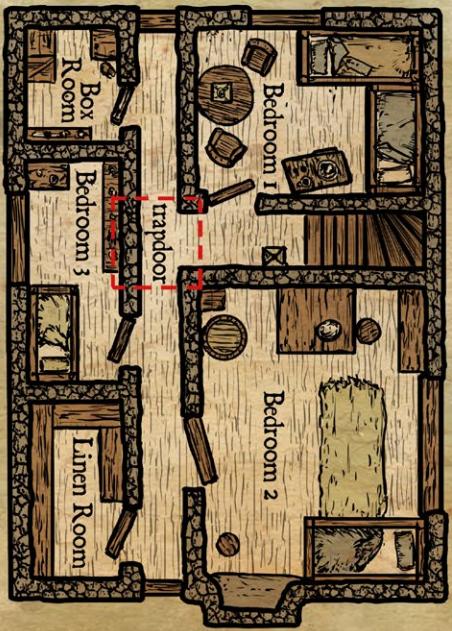


Scale (yards)

0 1 2



The Attic



First Floor (all windows unshuttered)



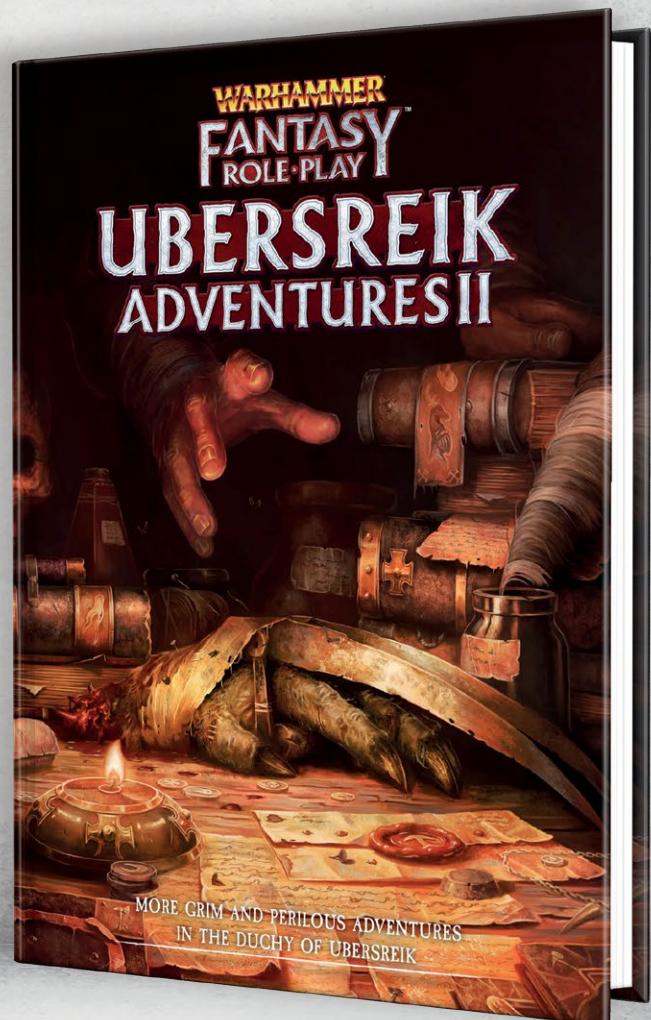
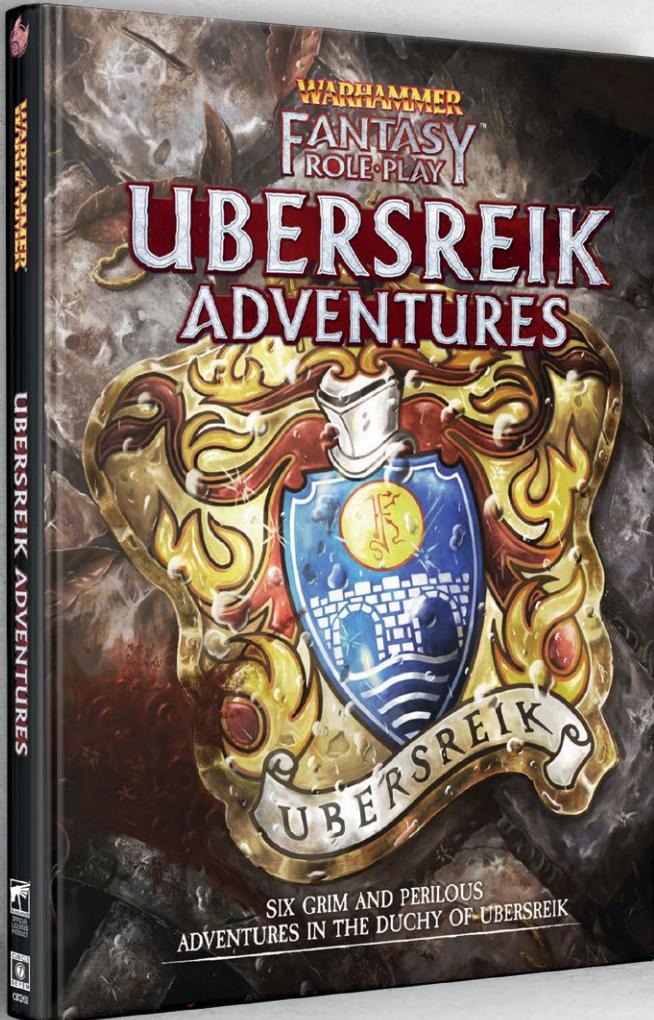
Ground Floor (only kitchen window unshuttered)

N°17 Wendenbahn



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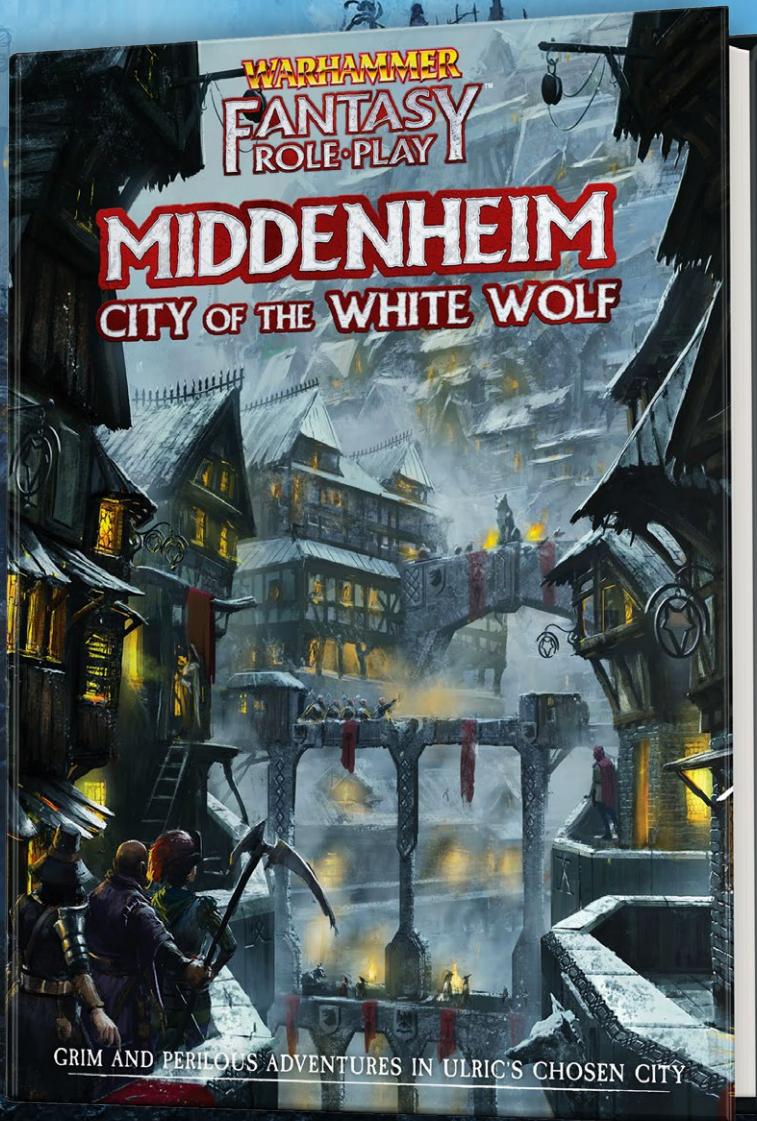
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