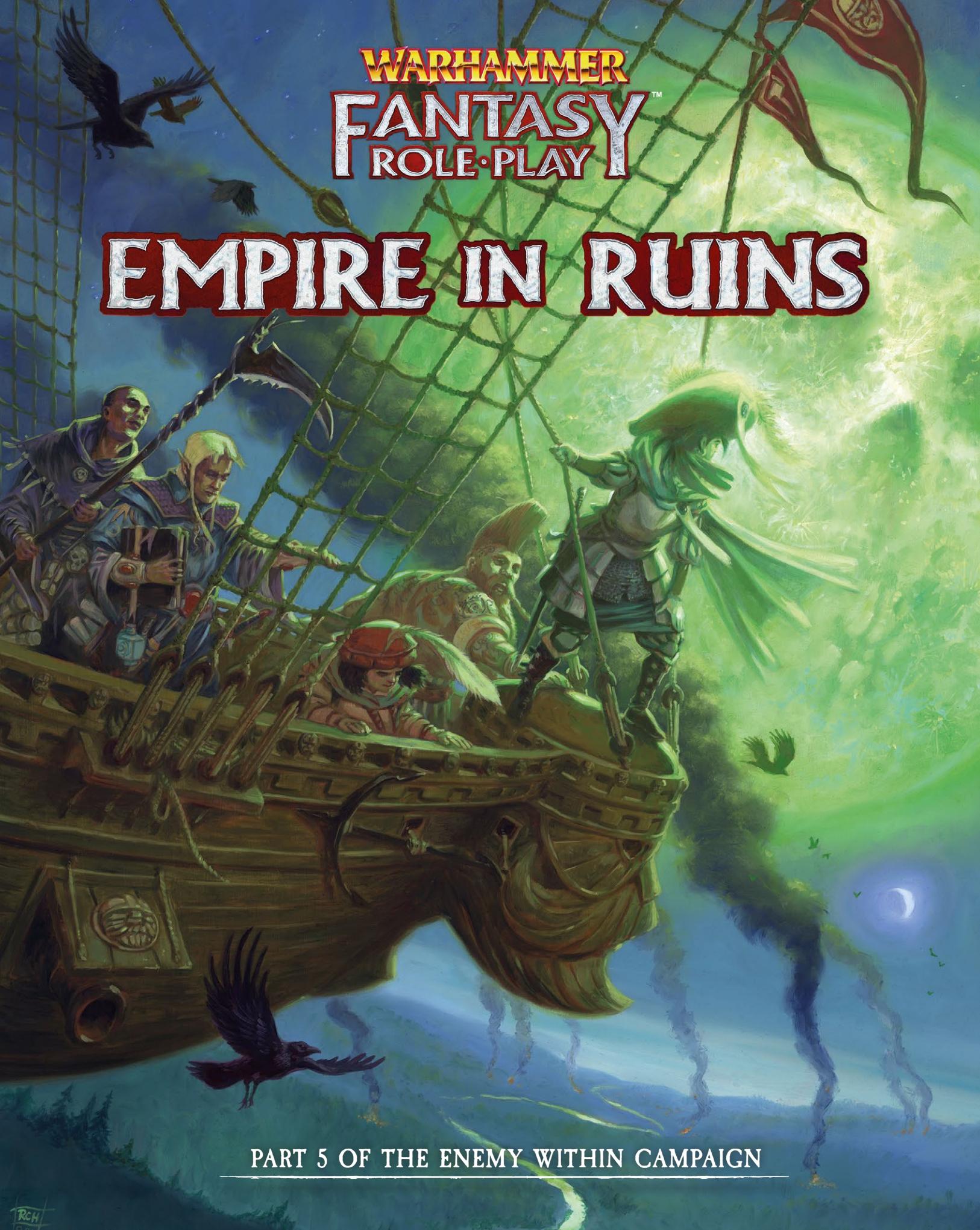


WARHAMMER
FANTASY
ROLE-PLAY™

EMPIRE IN RUINS



PART 5 OF THE ENEMY WITHIN CAMPAIGN



CREDITS

● **Enemy Within Directors Cut:** Graeme Davis

● **Writing:** Dave Allen, Graeme Davis, John Foody, TS Luikart, Pádraig Murphy, Clive Oldfield, Dylan Owen, Anthony Ragan, KC Shi, Simon Wileman

● **Illustration:** Camille Alquier, Mauro Alocchi, John Blanche, Benoît Blary, Dave Gallagher, Ralph Horsley, Álvaro Jiménez, Dániel Kovács, Josef Kucera, Victor Leza, Antonio De Luca, Yugin Mafoli, Sam Manley, Clara Marie Morin, JG O'Donoghue, Scott Purdy, Erin Rea, Runa Rosenberger ● **Cartography:** Jared Blando, Dániel Kovács, Jérôme Huguenin

● **Cover Illustration:** Ralph Horsley ● **Editing:** Síne Quinn ● **Proofing:** Tim Cox

● **Graphic Design:** Michael Fitzpatrick, Rachael Macken, Rory McCormack, Pádraig Murphy

● **Production Team:** Dave Allen, Anthony Burke, Emmet Byrne, Walt Ciechanowski, Elaine Connolly, Federica Costantini, Zak Dale-Cutterbuck, Donna King, Dániel Kovacs, Tim Korklewski, TS Luikart, Rachael Macken, Sam Manley, Rory McCormack, Dominic McDowall, Pádraig Murphy, Kieran Murphy, Eileen Murphy, Ceíre O'Donoghue, JG O'Donoghue, Andy Law, Síne Quinn, Christopher Walz

● **Heroes of the Hammer:** Dave Allen (Wolfie), Emmet Byrne (Toll) Zak Dale-Clutterbuck (Wilgrin), TS Luikart (Parry), Dominic McDowall (Felix), JG O'Donoghue (Amris), Märten Stormdal (Werther), Cian Whelan (Max)

● **Thanks:** Joe Logan, Alfred Nuñez

Publisher: Dominic McDowall

Special thanks to the Games Workshop Team

Published by: Cubicle 7 Entertainment Ltd, Unit 6, Block 3, City North Business Campus, Co. Meath, Ireland. Printed in China.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior permission of the publishers.

Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay 4th Edition © Copyright Games Workshop Limited 2021. Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay 4th Edition, the Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay 4th Edition logo, GW, Games Workshop, Warhammer, The Game of Fantasy Battles, the twin-tailed comet logo, and all associated logos, illustrations, images, names, creatures, races, vehicles, locations, weapons, characters, and the distinctive likeness thereof, are either ® or TM, and/or © Games Workshop Limited, variably registered around the world, and used under licence. Cubicle 7 Entertainment and the Cubicle 7 Entertainment logo are trademarks of Cubicle 7 Entertainment Limited. All rights reserved.



Last Edited: September 23rd 2021



CONTENTS



INTRODUCTION

Adventure Synopsis.....	5
Designs of the Great Architect.....	7
Journeys Through a Ruined Empire	15
Random Encounters.....	16
Dramatis Personae.....	17

CHAPTER I DIRIGIBLE IN DANGER

The Prisoners of Karak Skygge.....	36
The Flight Home.....	37
The Sky Wolf.....	37
Sights and Encounters.....	40
Nordland Rising.....	41
The Nordland Separatists	42
Interrogation.....	44

CHAPTER II CHILLY RECEPTION

Crowd Control	45
Inside the City.....	45
Rumours.....	46
Reporting to the Graf.....	47
Debrief with Schutzmann	48
At the Palace	49
After the Event.....	56

CHAPTER III JOURNEY TO SHINING ROCK

Late Night Gossip.....	57
The Altdorf Delegation Depart	57
The Middenheim Delegation Depart.....	58
Elvyra Kleinestun	59
Rebellious White Wolves	59
The Attack.....	62
Dealing with the First Group	63
Dealing with the Second Group.....	64
Dealing with the Third Group.....	65
Beate Moser	66

CHAPTER IV AN AUDIENCE WITH CROWN PRINCE WOLFGANG

The War Prize.....	67
Castle Reikguard	68
Interviewing Wolfgang.....	69
The Nine Eyes	71
Rooms of the Tutors.....	74

CHAPTER V THE MARCH OF UNITY

A Spy on the Road	75
The Parade	76
The Emperors Party.....	77
Plots at the Parade.....	78
Events.....	80
Aftermath.....	83

CHAPTER VI THE WEDDING

The Day after the Parade	84
The Wedding Day	89
Here Comes the Bride.....	90
Chasing Wasmeier.....	92

CHAPTER VII THE EMERGENCY CONCLAVE

The High and the Mighty Angry.....	93
The Council Meeting	95
Experience Awards.....	100

CHAPTER VIII WANTED, BOLD ADVENTURERS!

To Find Ghal Maraz	102
The Emperor's Physician	103
Consultations with Fassbinder	106
Extra Research.....	108
Experience Awards.....	111

CHAPTER IX ALTDORF TO BLACK FIRE PASS

The Carroburg	112
Off to Kemperbad	114
Kemperbad to Nuln.....	115
Welcome to Nuln, Enjoy Your Stay.....	118
Nuln to Streissen	121
Stress in Streissen	122
Averheim.....	127
Grenzstadt.....	128
Off to Black Fire Pass	129

CHAPTER X IN SIGMAR'S FOOTSTEPS

Gideon's Plan.....	130
Black Fire Pass.....	131
Finding the Lost Gorge.....	134
The Madcraw Clan.....	138

CHAPTER XI CAVES OF CHAOS

Entering the Caves	147
The Resting Place of Ghal Maraz.....	148
A Helping Hand	149
Locations.....	149
The Gorge — After the Deluge.....	160
Rewards	161

CHAPTER XII BLACK FIRE PASS TO ALTDORF

The First Link	162
Under New Management	165
The Cult of the Broken Fingers	169
The Battle of Wolfshügel	170
A Dwarf Named Thirteen	173
The Horde of Drexol the Extinction	174
Rewards	176

CHAPTER XIII THE EMPIRE SAVED

According To Plan	177
Arrival	178
In the City	179
Old Friends	181
Endgame	182
Investigations	184
The Great Ceremony	186
Incarnations of Sheerargetru	188
Aftermath and ... Rewards?	192
The Wages of Heroism	194
Experience Points and Rewards	195



◆ INTRODUCTION ◆



Welcome to **Empire in Ruins**, fifth and final volume in the Director's Cut edition of the **Enemy Within** campaign. While it can be played on its own, it has been designed to be played after completing volume 4, **The Horned Rat**. This book contains everything you need to play the adventure, except for the **WFRP** 4th edition rulebook.

If you are looking for more options, side quests, and background information, the **Empire in Ruins Companion** includes a wealth of supplemental material you can use to make this final chapter of the **Enemy Within** campaign even more entertaining.

If you do not possess the earlier volumes of **the Enemy Within**, we strongly recommend you find them and play through them before commencing **Empire in Ruins**. However, some ideas are given for starting with this adventure on page 35.

A HIDDEN HISTORY

The real history of the Empire is different to the one taught by scholars. Most people believe that Sigmar designed, or at least approved of the system of electors and emperors before he departed the Empire circa 50 IC. They assume that he handed his hammer, Ghal Maraz, down to his successor, intending it to stand as a sign of his approval and a symbol of the uninterrupted rule of emperors tracing their authority back to him.

In fact, the hammer wielded by the emperor is not the same Ghal Maraz that was gifted to Sigmar. It is a mighty magical weapon, blessed by Sigmarite priests and constructed by skilled Dwarf Runesmiths, but it is merely an imitation.

Ghal Maraz itself is in a cave deep within the Black Mountains. During his final journey Sigmar was confronted by Sheerargetru, an immense and powerful Lord of Change who had tried to influence the creation of Ghal Maraz and who resented its wielder. The hero fought the Daemon, a titanic struggle that left its mark on the mountainsides. Sigmar could not destroy Sheerargetru, but he was able to trap the Daemon deep inside a cave, surrendering Ghal Maraz in the process. Only the immense magical energy worked during the Hammer's forging could restrain the Daemon.

Sigmar passed into legend, and Sheerargetru raged against his bonds. For a thousand years he languished in the cave. Then the Daemon discovered a weak link, providing it with enough freedom to project a sliver of its consciousness into the mortal world. Sheerargetru's influence was felt by corrupt folk all over the Empire, but it concentrated on Altdorf, a nexus of magical power and the site with most significance to Sigmar. It was able to instil prophetic visions in those able to perceive the winds of magic. Weak and disoriented, Sheerargetru was not able to communicate clearly, but a body of arcane lore developed inspired by its psychic projections.





Amongst scholars of the arcane and worshippers of the ruinous powers, several schools of thought developed as a result of Sheerargetru's efforts. In its delirium the Daemon let slip information that would both help and hinder it. It inspired the creation of the Purple Hand, luring the cultists into the worship of Tzeentch with the secrets of attaining temporal power. It surrendered techniques needed to master sorcery, leading to prophecies foretelling of a Champion in Shadows — a fabled sorcerer of such power that all Tzeentch's followers would have to respect and heed them.

The Daemon Gideon was the first to realise that hidden within this body of lore were clues to the location of the trapped Daemon and formulae which, if followed, would see Sheerargetru made manifest in all its glory once more. Gideon knew that by rescuing the Daemon he could win favour with Tzeentch, the gratitude of Sheerargetru, and the desolation of the Empire.

Gideon had a problem. Human allies who made such useful pawns in arranging affairs in the mortal world may worship Tzeentch, but they tend to do so in order to attain temporal power. Many of them would baulk at the thought of unleashing Daemons in the heart of Altdorf, as doing so would destroy the very institutions they sought to control.

So Gideon fooled his mortal allies, encouraging them in the belief that by weakening the Empire and preparing the conditions most suitable for Sheerargetru's return, they were facilitating their own rise.

Gideon encouraged the Purple Hand's convoluted structure with its secretive ordos and confusing ever-changing coded messages. The Magisters of the Purple Hand thought that they were merely taking measures to protect themselves as they rose to power, but it also prevented them from realising that they were being put to a greater, self-destructive purpose. They have weakened the Empire to such a point that it is collapsing into civil strife, but they do not realise the aim of such disruption is to leave Altdorf unguarded against Daemonic manifestation.

Gideon needed a suitable vessel in order to return Sheerargetru to its former magnificence. Cult leaders could potentially make suitable hosts for Sheerargetru, as would scholars of the arcane, but the best vessel would be an ambitious soul, of royal bearing, knowledgeable, with mastery of many skills — an individual whose corruption would symbolise victory over all that Sigmar had fought for.

Gideon mustered the resources of several cults to see to it that Crown Prince Wolfgang Holswig Abenauer, heir apparent to the Imperial throne, was tutored by experts who were themselves steeped in Tzeentchian lore. From across the Old World, nine learned people were recruited, each a member of a cult dedicated to expertise in a particular field. The Crown

Prince, now a young man, is the perfect heir: cultured, refined, enlightened, and wise. The Purple Hand, who have worked with Gideon to facilitate and fund this circumstance, believe that Crown Prince Wolfgang is the perfect leader to reunite the shattered Empire, and heap rewards on them as a consequence.

Gideon spun a different story to one member of the Purple Hand. He explained to Kastor Lieberung of Nuln that the Crown Prince would not only make a pliable emperor, but could rise to become the fabled Champion in Shadows. He encouraged Kastor to travel the Empire, risking exposure of the Purple Hand in the process. Gideon worked subtle changes on Kastor's appearance, and left clues about Kastor's activities where they could be discovered by enemies of Chaos.

The final circumstance Gideon needs to arrange in order to bring about Sheerargetru's manifestation is the removal of Ghal Maraz. Even after 2500 years, during which much of its magical energy has depleted, the Hammer will not suffer a follower of Chaos to grasp it. Through manipulating Kastor into exposing the Purple Hand, Gideon intends to set a party of adventurers on a path to recover the Hammer and unleash the Daemon.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The Characters begin the adventure just after Baron Heinrich Todbringer rescues them from Karak Skygg. He takes them back to Middenheim in his dirigible, *The Sky Wolf*. They are attacked by rebels from Nordland, who wish to win independence from the rule of Graf Boris Todbringer.

Return to Middenheim

Reaching Middenheim, the Characters discover that the Empire has become increasingly riven during their departure. War between Ostland and Talabecland has grown intense, quarrels between nobles in Averland and Hochland have led to conflict, the rulers of Nuln and Sudenland rattle sabres at one another, and Middenheim itself is growing increasingly insecure regarding its borders. The blame for this parlous state is placed firmly at the feet of Karl-Franz, whose recent edicts have sparked consternation.

Visitors from Altdorf

A delegation from Altdorf is in Middenheim led by High Capitular Volkmar. The Characters are invited to a conclave between the party from Altdorf and Middenheim's rulers. The Characters are also introduced to Yann Zuntermein, head of the Altdorf Purple Hand and an accomplished spy. The Capitular has two proposals he wishes to make in order to prevent the exacerbation of the conflicts in the Empire: a meeting and a marriage. The first is for Ar-Ulric and the Grand Theogonist to meet at Shining Rock, a site holy to both Sigmar and Ulric, to make a show of unity between the religious sects in the Empire. The second is to extend an offer of marriage from Crown Prince Wolfgang to Katarina Todbringer. Boris accepts the first offer, but Katarina refuses the second.



Middenheim to Shining Rock

The Characters travel to Shining Rock. They are reunited with old acquaintances who have surprising insights into the Emperor's health, but who unwittingly sow seeds about the legitimacy of his rule.

The Shrine Attacked

The meeting at Shining Rock goes sour when the party comes under attack from the Bearers of the Blood, a band of Ulrican extremists. As several members of the Altdorf delegation are hurt, recriminations between the two sides grow heated and are only assuaged when Katarina agrees to marry Crown Prince Wolfgang.

Questioning the Groom to Be

The Characters are sent to Castle Reikguard in order to appraise Wolfgang's character. They find him to be almost too perfect, and may come to suspect that he is being tutored by followers of Tzeentch.



A Parade at Altdorf

The Characters return to Altdorf to find that the entourages of several noble families have arrived in the city. The Emperor seeks to impress the Middenheimers with a show of military strength and to hold a conclave after the wedding to discuss reuniting the Empire. As the nobles preen and gossip, the Characters must negotiate a minefield of personalities, ambitions, and grievances using the high-level contacts they made in **Power Behind the Throne**, **The Horned Rat**, and elsewhere.

A Wedding Interrupted

The wedding goes ahead, but is interrupted by a Nordlander assassin who shoots at Katarina, just before the vows are exchanged. It is up to the Characters to prevent a tragedy, but either way the wedding is off.

The Shattering of Ghal Maraz

The assassin's actions overshadow the planned conclave, and Boris Todbringer even lashes out in anger at Karl-Franz. The impossible happens: Ghal Maraz is shattered, something that would never happen to the true Hammer of Sigmar.

As events unfold, the Characters may realise that the Karl-Franz they see before them is as false as his hammer. They may rescue Emperor Karl-Franz from a plot that kept him enfeebled for months, and restore him to his former strength and stature.

War Looms Large

It is clear that the Empire will collapse into total war unless the Emperor's authority is restored — without Ghal Maraz this is not likely to happen. Research and adventure lead to its resting place, a cave in a hidden valley infested with Night Goblins. After securing the divine weapon, the Characters return to Altdorf, navigating the machinations of Marius Lietddorf and Emmanuelle von Liebwitz as they do so.

The Hammer Returned

In their absence, things have gone from bad to worse. The influence of Chaos on the capital is stronger than ever, and the Electors are preparing for war. At a ceremony to mark the return of Ghal Maraz, Sheerargetru makes its bid to manifest and spread Chaos throughout the Empire.

The Empire Renewed

Provided the Characters defy the Daemon, the revitalised Karl-Franz has a firm grip on the throne and is supported by Graf Boris Todbringer, the acknowledged leader of the Ulrican north. Some Electors are dead, and some are stripped of their titles as punishment for their disloyalty. The Empire's territories are re-organised in a series of reforms aimed at strengthening and stabilising the Empire.

The campaign ends with the Characters having saved the Empire, and with it, the whole of the Old World. However, another threat is already growing. The forces of Chaos are roused, and are not easily swayed from their course.

DESIGNS OF THE GREAT ARCHITECT

Even as the Characters and their allies scramble to keep the peace, the forces of Chaos work tirelessly to stop them. Indeed, the attempt to rouse an ancient and powerful servant of Tzeentch is centuries in the making. As is his nature, the Lord of Change works his will through numerous, often competing, agents of change.

GIDEON

The shapeshifting Daemon known as Gideon is alive and at large in the Old World once again. After his performance in Bögenhafen, he is either looking to redeem himself in the eyes of the Great Mutator (if the Characters foiled his plot), or given a prestigious new mission (if he opened up a daemonic portal in the town).

Gideon has been given the task of liberating Sheerargetru. He has made certain preparations over the years in order to pave the way for the return of the mighty Exalted Daemon. He needs to complete two tasks in order to do this: prepare a vessel for the demon and retrieve the real Hammer.

Gideon has prepared several vessels, the first and best of these is Crown Prince Wolfgang. Gideon has seen to it that he has been tutored by servants of Tzeentch throughout his youth, and whilst the Prince is the consummate gentleman, his mind and body have been subtly prepared to provide the perfect host for Sheerargetru. Gideon has prepared alternative vessels in the event of the Prince's death, but they are inferior specimens.

The other task Gideon needs to complete in order to facilitate Sheerargetru's manifestation is to retrieve Ghal Maraz. However, he cannot touch the weapon himself as the very presence of Sigmar's Hammer is inimical to creatures of Chaos. So he has conspired for a group of adventurers to retrieve it at the time most conducive to his plans.

THE NINE EYES

Throughout the Empire there are nine small and secretive cults that Gideon has encouraged and patronised over the centuries. Each of these cults is dedicated to gathering knowledge and secrets on a particular topic, and their inner circles include some of the most learned and informed people in the Empire. Nearly nine years ago Gideon approached each of the cults and asked their most erudite members to provide tutelage to Crown Prince Wolfgang. These tutors are collectively known as the Nine Eyes.

Gideon has used the Nine Eyes to provide Crown Prince Wolfgang with a superb and cosmopolitan education, but their teachings have also had an insidious effect on the Crown Prince, who has unwittingly been turned into the perfect vessel for daemonic possession.

The Nine Eyes have also been made Gideon's unwitting stooges. Whilst they share an inkling that they are all serving Tzeentch's grand plans, they do not realise that they are intended to become the vessels for daemonic possession themselves.





THE NINE EYES

Tutor	Cult	Home Town	Speciality
Kathe Ruttmann	Vigilant Eye	Bögenhafen	History and politics
Per Haldestaake	Fractured Eye	Ubersreik	Trade secrets and technical expertise
Wilhelmina Novak	Withering Eye	Altdorf	Magic
Wolfie Jessner	Wandering Eye	Middenheim	Rural affairs and the Empire's North
Ingrid Rademakers	Eagle Eye	Talabheim	Natural history and fencing
Wulfrum Ahlquist	Public Eye	Nuln	Society and Human nature
Gustav Klaus	Kaleidoscope Eye	Bechafen	Non-Human species
Gislind Ursin	Hollow Eye	Averheim	Culture and philosophy
Vatheck Fulci	Far Eye	Remas	Geography and foreign affairs

THE PURPLE HAND

The Purple Hand used to be the largest and most successful cult of Tzeentch in the Empire, but over the last year they have been rocked by misfortune. One of their senior members went missing, possibly rogue, after being told to collect a significant inheritance. Soon after this the cult in Middenheim was smashed through the efforts of Ulrich Schutzmann and the Komission of Investigation into Threats Unknown to Middenheim.

The cult is still active and dangerous in other parts of the Empire. However, many members are compromised, either as a result of counter-cult activity, or because of Gideon's orchestration.

YANN ZUNTERMEIN

Zuntermein is head of the Altdorf cell of the Purple Hand. He is one of Altdorf's most accomplished spies and has infiltrated many high-ranking organisations. He worships Tzeentch under the misguided impression that doing so will lead to his own advancement. He worships change and instability, but only insofar as he believes he will benefit from it. He has been working alongside Gideon to promote division throughout the Empire, to poison the Emperor, and to establish Crown Prince Wolfgang as a suitable heir. However, Zuntermein is not aware that Gideon plans for a Daemon to possess Crown Prince Wolfgang. He thinks the Nine Eyes are merely in the process of preparing the Crown Prince to share ideological goals with the Purple Hand.

Throughout **Empire in Ruins**, Zuntermein pursues his intended goals of trying to sow discord between the provinces, edge the Empire towards civil war, remove his enemies, and have Crown Prince Wolfgang rise to power and reunite the Empire.

KASTOR LIEBERUNG

Kastor Lieberung is dead, but before he died Gideon convinced him to try to facilitate an old prophecy. Kastor had been the Magister Impedimentae of the Nuln cell of the Purple Hand, and like most of his fellow cultists, he was largely kept in the dark about the schemes of other cells.

This struck Kastor as unsatisfactory. He believed the cult could only achieve its potential if it acted as a more coherent unit with coherent goals. He was encouraged in his beliefs by Gideon, who informed Kastor of an ancient piece of Tzeentchian lore prophesying that a Champion in Shadows might one day unite faithful worshippers of Tzeentch. Before he died, Kastor hoped that this prophecy would lead to a unified Purple Hand. Gideon hopes that it will lead to the destruction of the Empire.

Kastor had gone some way to laying the groundwork for unifying the Purple Hand, and he had also been instrumental in recruiting the Nine Eyes. Unfortunately for him, he was lured to Bögenhafen to collect a fake inheritance, and slain by mutants who waylaid his coach.

KARL-HEINZ WASMEIER

Wasmeier seems a spent force. He poured all his resources into his plan to replace Middenheim's Graf with a Doppelgänger. This plan — which Zuntermein had derided from the start for its inelegance — failed, and Wasmeier was forced to flee.

During the course of **Empire in Ruins**, Wasmeier tries to inveigle himself back into the Purple Hand. Zuntermein uses Wasmeier as an agent to help stir up Nordlander separatists, but beyond that he sees his old rival as little more than a liability.



For his part, Wasmeier realises that the only way he is likely to climb to a senior position in the cult again is if he gets rid of Zuntermein. Wasmeier and Zuntermein develop such mutual resentment that they may even try to alert the Characters to one another's presence during the adventure. If Wasmeier can get to Zuntermein before Zuntermein gets to him, maybe he won't be such a spent force after all.

ELVYRA KLEINESTUN

Elvyra is not a worshipper of Tzeentch, but she is one of Gideon's unwitting pawns. He took the guise of the Daemonologist in Altdorf who tried to have her kidnapped during **Death on the Reik**. Since the Characters last saw Elvyra, he has managed to twist her to his ends using more subtle forms of persuasion. He has used Zuntermein to raise her up in the world. Now she is the personal pharmacist to none other than the Grand Theogonist Yorri XV.

Whilst Elvyra serves the Grand Theogonist loyally, she has been driven to believe that it is necessary to inform Boris Todbringer that the hammer wielded by the Emperor is not actually Sigmar's Hammer. She has been led to believe that this is a wise course of action.

THE RED CROWN

Both Sheerargetru's psychic projections and Gideon's manipulations have influenced the Red Crown's actions as more of an indirect consequence than a consolidated part of the plan. The Red Crown cult play a small role in the upcoming turmoil, as the Beastmen they rile up throughout the Reikland prove a drain on military resources, leaving Altdorf vulnerable at the most convenient time for Sheerargetru's manifestation.

GHAL-MARAZ

The Empire's people would be shocked to learn that Sigmar's Hammer lies in a cave within the Black Mountains. As far as they are concerned, it is in the Emperor's possession, and has been ever since Sigmar left it in the keeping of his people nearly 2500 years ago.

But this isn't the case. The hammer wielded by the Emperors is no doubt a mighty artefact, but it is merely an imitation of Ghal-Maraz, forged by the Sigmarite cult in its early days. In the centuries since, the origin of this hammer has been forgotten.

Whilst the early Sigmarites may have honestly acknowledged that it was a mere spiritual successor of Ghal-Maraz, these days people think the Emperor's hammer is the self-same weapon wielded by Sigmar during his conquests.

There are some who suspect the truth, and who sense an opportunity to reveal that the iconic symbol of royal power and Sigmarite supremacy is merely a fraud.

FACTIONS IN THE EMPIRE

The Empire teeters ever closer to the brink of total war. Already Ostland and Talabecland are at one another's throats, and other nobles continue to jockey for position, power, and prestige.

EMPEROR KARL-FRANZ

Karl-Franz is confined to his bed, suffering from a lingering malaise and further weakened through the malpractice of his personal physician, Henrik Kappelmuller, a member of the Altdorf Purple Hand. His double, Hermann von Feilbach, a member of the Reiksguard's Inner Circle, does his best to cover up for the fact that the Emperor is ill, but rumours are spreading throughout the Empire. Hermann is loyal, but he is also naïve and like many in Altdorf he has been influenced by Yann Zuntermein. Through careful manipulation, Zuntermein has persuaded Karl-Franz to order the takeover of Ubersreik, and the signing of the notorious mutant edict.



Having offended his nobility by deposing the Jungfreud family of Ubersreik, and having alienated the Sigmarite priesthood by his defence of mutants, Karl-Franz is steadily losing his grip on the Empire he was trusted to govern and unite.

MIDDENHEIM AND MIDDENLAND

In the city of Middenheim people are increasingly angry with Emperor Karl-Franz. They feel that the recent mutant edict is weak, hypocritical, and liable to encourage the spread of Chaos worship. They suspect agitators from Altdorf of stirring up trouble with Nordland and blinding them to the dangers posed by the Purple Hand.



Newly anointed Ar-Ulric Emil Valgeir is far more aggressive in his defence of Ulrican values than his predecessor, and secretly spoils for a fight with the Sigmarites of the south. He has lifted the ban on the Sons of Ulric, despite the fact that the sect wishes to depose him in favour of one their own. Now these sectarian zealots preach openly in Middenheim.

In Middenland the von Bildhofen family is increasingly torn. Related to the Todbringers by marriage, they have loyalties to Middenheim, yet they also remember their forebear Magnus von Bildhofen, known as Magnus the Pious — one of the greatest Sigmarite Emperors to have sat on the throne.



NORDLAND

Nordland joined the Empire in 767 IC, after centuries on the edge of Sigmar's domains. In the intervening millennia it became a province in its own right, never as powerful or politically important as wealthier regions in the south, but significant enough to hold electoral status. It even produced an Emperor: the universally loathed Hjalmar the Tyrannical. But Imperial provinces' fortunes fluctuate over the centuries, and Nordland is now ruled by Middenheim and governed by the puppet Baron Werner Nikse, an enthusiastic relative-by-marriage to the Todbringers.

Many Nordlanders resent Middenheim rule, calling back to times past when Nordland determined its own fate and took its place with the Electors. The separatist movement has no central control or organisation, but pockets of rebellion have arisen throughout the province. Some signal their allegiance with an hourglass emblem, which echoes a symbol of defiance used by Count Ostrein of Nordland in 2015 IC against the armies of Middenheim at the Battle of Elstwater Keep.

It is an open secret that Nordmarshall Theodoric Gausser supports independence from Middenheim, as his ancestors ruled Nordland in the past and harbour a rivalry with the Nikses. While Gausser proclaims public condemnations of violence or destruction for the Nordland cause, he plots to overthrow the Nikses. To this end, he has made alliances in Altdorf and elsewhere, plotting to return Electoral authority to a province he will rule.

NULN, WISSENLAND, AND SUDENLAND

Sudenland is a small and impoverished province to the south of the Empire. It stands within the borders of the former realm of Solland, a once prosperous province that was torn apart by the invasion of the Orc Warlord Gorbad Ironclaw in 1707 IC. The city state of Nuln lies to the north of Sudenland. It also bore the brunt of Gorbad's rage, and bitter recrimination flew between the nobles of Nuln and Sudenland as to who paid a heavier price during the Orc's predations.

The county of Wissenland, attached to Nuln, lies between the city state and Sudenland. Whilst the borders of the county were drawn following the restoration of Imperial authority following Gorbad's eventual withdrawal, there are many in Sudenland who feel that estates granted to Wissenlander nobles extend over lands that ought rightfully to belong to a restored Solland. Elector Etelka Toppenheimer, the current elector of Sudenland, is their most vocal champion. She has also been so rash as to declare that, were she to have her way, the Toppenheimers would rule Nuln as they did in previous centuries.

Emmanuelle von Liebwitz of Nuln longs to be rid of the Toppenheimers, and hopes to take advantage of the fact that Etelka has recklessly promised her crown to her adopted son, Basil, leaving her 12 natural children dismayed and rebellious. Were Emmanuelle to be provided with a credible justification for declaring war on Sudenland, she would be eager to make the best of it.

OSTLAND, TALABECLAND, AND HOCHLAND

Ostland and Talabecland have enjoyed a spotted history. Ostland is a fiercely Sigmarite province; whilst the folk of Talabecland pay Ulric great regard as the brother of their divine patron Taal. During the Age of Wars the centre of the Ulrican cult moved to Talabheim, and skirmishes between the two provinces were sporadic but frequent.

Belligerent Talabeclanders have argued that it would be a simple matter to squeeze Ostland between their forces and the borders of Kislev, but Ostland has proved a staunch bastion, and since the reunification of the Empire under Magnus the Pious, the two provinces have enjoyed an uneasy peace.

Sorrow has befallen Ostland a number of times in recent years. Their beloved ruler, Ostwald von Konigswald, had won himself a reputation as a heroic adventurer in his youth, but now few speak his name. Rumours suggest that Ostwald had been possessed by a dark power and that his death at the hands of a Sudenland baron was a mercy. Proud Ostlanders rankled at the fact that their champion had been revealed to be corrupt and treasonous. Refusing to be humbled, they turned to the hot-headed Hans-Hals von Tasseninck to rule in Ostwald's stead.

Hans-Hals's son, Crown Prince Hergard, led an expedition into the middle mountains where he was slain by a Skaven agent working on a tip-off from the Purple Hand. Purple Hand agents have spread rumours that the Crown Prince Hergard's murderers were mercenaries under the command of Grand Duke Gustav Krieglitz of Talabecland. Diplomatic attempts to persuade the two noble houses to set aside their differences have failed, and the provinces have already engaged in multiple skirmishes that are threatening to escalate into outright war.

Hochland, an area to the north of Talabecland, separated from the rest of the province by the river Talabec and largely Sigmarite, grows dissatisfied with their rulers in Talabheim, and demands increased autonomy. To the east the region of Ostermark, also Sigmarite, recall a time when they ruled themselves rather than defer to Talabecland.



THE TURMOIL

The period of unrest that develops over the course of Empire in Ruins comes to be known as the Turmoil. During this period, old scores are settled and new grievances established. Some of these changes happen in front of the Characters' eyes, whilst others occur in distant provinces or during the aftermath of the adventure.

Electors prior to the Turmoil	Electors after the Turmoil
Ludmilla Alptraum the Grand Countess of Averland	Marius Leitdorf the Grand Count of Averland
Boris Todbringer the Grand Duke of Middenheim	Boris Todbringer the Grand Duke of Middenland
Leopold Bildhofen the Grand Duke of Middenland	Theodric Gausser the Grand Baron of Nordland
Emmanuelle von Liebwitz the Grand Countess of Nuln	Emmanuelle von Liebwitz the Grand Countess of Wissenland
Hans-Hals Tasseninck the Grand Prince of Ostland	Valmir von Raukov the Grand Prince of Ostland
Karl-Franz Holswig-Schliestein the Grand Prince of Reikland	Karl-Franz Holswig-Schliestein the Grand Prince of Reikland
Alberich Haupt-Anderssen the Grand Duke of Stirland	Alberich Haupt-Anderssen the Grand Count of Stirland
Elise Krieglitz-Untern the Grand Duchess of Talabheim	Wolfram Hertwig the Grand Chancellor of Ostermark
Gustav Krieglitz the Grand Duke of Talabecland	Helmut Feuerbach the Grand Duke of Talabecland
Etelka Toppenheimer the Grand Baroness of Sudenland	Aldebrand Ludenhof the Grand Baron of Hochland
Hisme Stoutheart the Elder of the Moot	Hisme Stoutheart the Elder of the Moot
Yorri the Grand Theogonist of Sigmar	Volkmar the Grand Theogonist of Sigmar
Aglim the Arch Lector of the East	Esmer the Arch Lector of the East
Kaslain the Arch Lector of the South	Kaslain the Arch Lector of the South
Ar-Ulric Jarrick Valgeir	Ar-Ulric Emil Valgeir

Whilst the adventure focuses on the Characters' efforts to find and retrieve Ghal Maraz, the fact that the Empire is collapsing into civil war ought to be on everybody's lips. Stories of battles, sieges, and atrocities — often wildly exaggerated — are shared by every group of travellers and swapped over every tavern table. Even peaceful parts of the Empire are affected by war, with shortages of trade goods, groups of refugees, foraging bands of warriors, and worries that the violence might spread.

As GM you should balance the need to get the Characters to focus on their mission with depicting the increasing disaster befalling their country. Repercussions of war should never be far away, but also never so overwhelming that they distract from the plot.





HOW HAS THE PURPLE HAND INFLUENCED THE TURMOIL?

The conflict proliferating throughout the Empire has many causes, and might even have arisen without the guiding influence of the Purple Hand. However, they have been careful to push fractious elements and destabilising agendas so many of the conflicts gaining traction are doing so, or at least doing so *now*, because of the Purple Hand.

The details of each of these operations are not the focus of this adventure. However, the situation around the Ubersreik takeover provides a good example of how the Altdorf cell of the Purple Hand, in particular, go about using proxies and red herrings to achieve their aims — whilst keeping their own key agents' hands clean.

In the case of the Ubersreik situation, Yann Zuntermein of the Purple Hand had worked his way into the ranks of the Black Chamber, and had earned the trust of Liepmund Holzkrug, the Lord High Ambassador. Zuntermein learned that Holzkrug resented the Holswig-Schleistein family and wished to see them humiliated.

Together they concocted a body of doctored evidence suggesting that the von Jungfreud family had expansionist ambitions, mostly by twisting accounts of the Jungfreud feud with the Wallensteins of Auerswald, and making it appear that Jungfreud paranoia in this regard was leading them to prepare for war with the Reikland in general.

Immanuel-Ferrand, Karl-Franz's uncle and a member of the Empire's Council of State, is a brilliant man, but has a notable flaw. He firmly believes that Sigmar desired his empire to be centralised, and that the Emperor ought to have greater control over the affairs of other noble estates and provinces. That this is his overarching goal made it easy for Zuntermein and Holzkrug to feed him information on the apparently rebellious Jungfreuds, have him take note of it, and then leave it to him to develop the idea that it would be necessary to take Ubersreik and bring a powerful noble family to heel.

The Emperor, who would normally decry such actions, approved Immanuel-Ferrand's proposals; though on the day he was to review them, his doctor administered a particularly strong dose of medicine with a noted side effect of increased suggestibility of mind.

The ensuing takeover of the town was a debacle. Whilst the Jungfreuds were by no means enlightened rulers, they were not tyrants either, and many of their subjects rankled at the notion of being 'liberated' by Altdorf. Resistance to the occupation occurred immediately, and much of it was spontaneous rebellion by the common folk, undirected by the Jungfreuds who retreated to their ancestral home, Black Rock Castle.

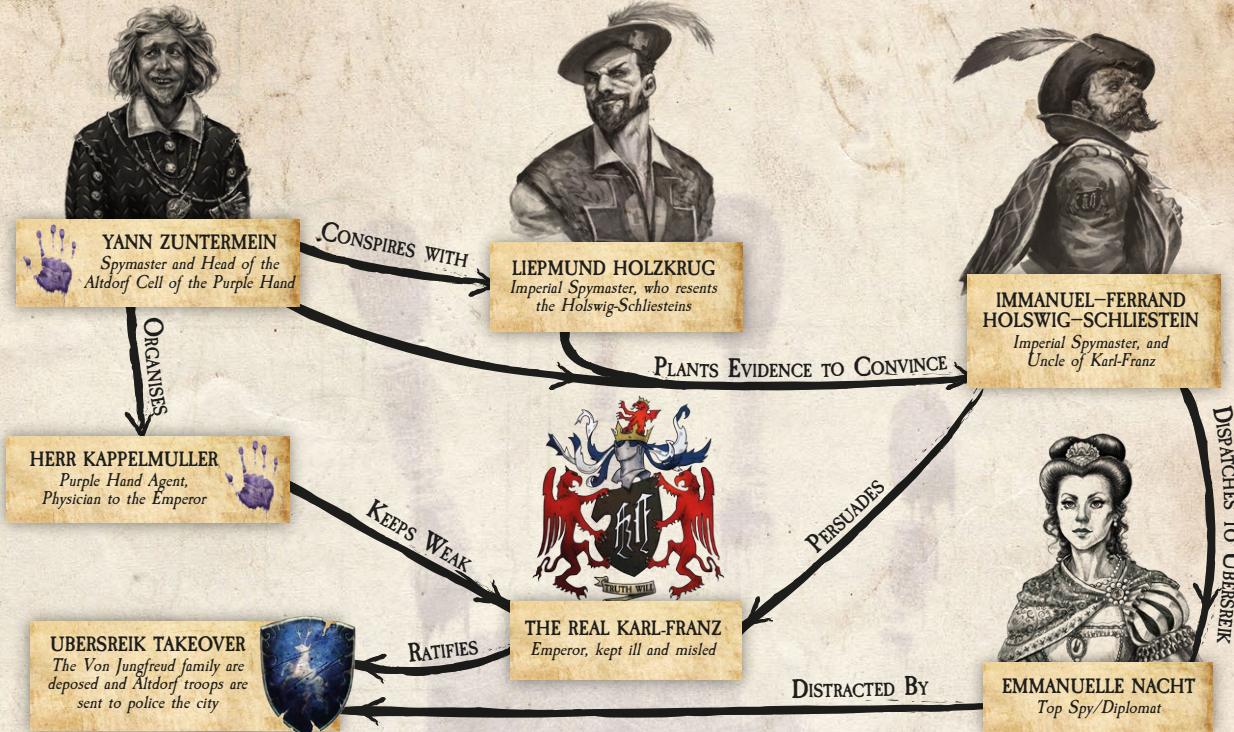
Worse, the takeover of the town stood as evidence in the eyes of every noble in the Empire that Karl-Franz would move to possess their suzerains if he so desired. His reputation for even-handed statesmanship was ruined overnight, and nobles throughout the Empire sought to expand their retinues of trained soldiers to display their intent to defend themselves. Immanuel-Ferrand despatched his best agent, Emmanuelle Nacht, to help quell the unrest and gather information. This is of significant relief to Yann Zuntermein — Nacht was one of the few spies in Altdorf who was making inroads into the Purple Hand.



No one knows Holzkrug and Zuntermein gathered evidence used to persuade the Holswig-Schleisteins to depose the Jungfreuds. In particular, Holzkrug is keen to make a public show of condemning the rash decision to occupy Ubersreik. Whilst Zuntermein values his relationship with Holzkrug, he knows the Lord Ambassador would never willingly consort with Chaos. If Holzkrug were to ever turn on Zuntermein, Zuntermein could use his knowledge of Holzkrug's part in this affair as leverage.



PLOTS OF THE PURPLE HAND



Phenomenon	Cells Involved	Effect
Sick Emperor	Altdorf	Henrik Kappelmuller of the Altdorf cell of the Purple Hand has infiltrated the Emperor's privy council, and slips the Emperor soporific concoctions to keep him sleepy and confused. The pharmacist Elvyra Kleinestun is positioned to take the fall if Kappelmuller is accused of malfeasance.
Mutant Edict	Altdorf	Having weakened the Emperor, the Purple Hand in Altdorf manipulated Shallyan reformers to persuade him of the wisdom of the Mutant Edict.
Ubersreik Takeover	Altdorf	Yann Zuntermein was able to play off two rivals in the Black Chamber to the end of persuading the suggestible Emperor to depose the Jungfreuds of Ubersreik.
Nordlander Unrest	Altdorf and Middenheim	Agents from Altdorf have been persuading the Gausser family that the time is right to depose the Nikses, whilst Wasmeier supplied the separatists with information on how to assassinate members of Middenheim's court.
Death of Crown Prince von Tasseninck	Altdorf, Wolfenburg, and Middenheim	A rare example of effective coordination between cells. Altdorf made sure the prince's expedition was tracked and poorly equipped, Middenheim employed the Skaven Snikkit to assassinate the prince, and agents in Wolfenburg spread rumours blaming the von Krieglitz family of Talabecland.
Quarrels between Averland Nobility	Averheim	An old feud between the Alptraus and Lietdorfs. Even without the Purple Hand of Averheim riling things up, eventually this would have led to violence.
Emmanuelle von Liebwitz's Southern Ambitions	Nuln	Having been provoked by the Toppenheimers on several occasions, Grand Countess Emmanuelle would probably wish to conquer Sudenland without the aid of the Purple Hand, though they are working hard to spread inflammatory rumours and compromising information to help speed the process.



THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DATE

Gideon has many criteria he needs to meet in order to perform a perfect summoning of Sheerargetru. One of these is a ceremony to be held at nine in the morning on the ninth of Brauzeit, the ninth month. This date and time is auspicious.

If you have been tracking the days and weeks since the start of the campaign, and are commencing *Empire in Ruins* shortly before, or just after this date, then do not let it worry you – Gideon has missed his chance and does as best he can to meet the remaining criteria.

If you have not been keeping close track of the passage of time in your campaign, then we suggest the following as a rough guide to how much progress the Characters made and the date upon which they commence *Empire in Ruins*.

This gives Gideon seven weeks before the best date to have the Hammer returned to Altdorf. Gideon does all he can to ensure that the Characters bring Ghal Maraz to Altdorf a day or two before the ninth of Brauzeit. If they are ahead of schedule, he places obstacles in their way or tries to tempt them from their path. If they are delayed, Gideon tries to smooth their progress. Hints as to how he might do this are given throughout *Empire in Ruins*.

If the players delay beyond the date, or if they figure out that they are expected to deliver the Hammer according to Gideon's schedule and wait for the date to pass, then Gideon gives up trying to prod them. The date is just one part of an intricate puzzle, after all.

THE ENEMY WITHIN APPROXIMATE DATES

Adventure	Start Date	Duration
Enemy in Shadows	24th Jahrdrung	2 weeks
Death on the Reik	6th Pflugzeit	10 weeks
Power Behind the Throne	20th Sommerzeit	4 weeks
The Horned Rat	19th Vorgeheim	4 weeks
Empire in Ruins	18th Nachgeheim	–

PARTY ALLEGIANCE

At the start of *Empire in Ruins* the Characters should feel that they are reasonably well regarded by the grandees of Middenheim. After all, they should have been instrumental in saving the Graf's life and enlightening Middenheimers to the full extent of the Skaven menace. However, they are also likely regarded by many Middenheimers as rather too southern and Sigmarite to truly have the best interests of Middenheim and Ulric at heart.

During *Empire in Ruins*, there are several occasions where the apparent loyalties of the party will affect how people deal with them. Should the Characters advocate for Sigmarite interests at one juncture it may serve them well in the short term, but have consequences later on. Keep a log of the Characters' behaviour throughout the adventure. If they behave in overtly partisan fashion, it will adjust their score up or down on the table below. Depending on how partisan the Characters are perceived as being, they apply Fellowship Test modifiers based on this table. Particular NPCs may also react to the Characters based on this perception, or try to manipulate them using different arguments or appeals.

For the purpose of this table, Ulrican and Sigmarite do not necessarily indicate religious allegiance, rather that the Characters are (rightly or wrongly) seen as supporting the Ulrican factions (Middenheim, Middenland, and Talabheim) or Sigmarite ones (Ostland, Reikland, Averheim, and Nuln).

If the Characters have been following the plot of the *Enemy Within* more or less as it is written, they start with a score of -2, indicating that they are neutral but on the cusp of being perceived as moderately Ulrican.

THE EFFECTS OF ALLEGIANCE

Score	Perceived	Fellowship Test Modifiers
6 or more	Sigmarite Partisans	Sigmarite Partisans (+1 SL), Neutral (-1 SL), Ulrican Moderates (-2 SL), Ulrican Partisans (-3 SL)
3 to 5	Sigmarite Moderates	Ulrican Moderates (-1 SL), Ulrican Partisans (-2 SL)
-2 to 2	Neutral	Sigmarite Partisans (-1 SL), Ulrican Partisans (-1 SL)
-3 to -5	Ulrican Moderates	Sigmarite Moderates (-1 SL), Sigmarite Partisans (-2 SL)
-6 or less	Ulrican Partisans	Ulrican Partisans (+1 SL), Neutral (-1 SL), Sigmarite Moderates (-2 SL), Sigmarite Partisans (-3 SL)

JOURNEYS THROUGH A RUINED EMPIRE

During the events of **Empire in Ruins**, the Characters must undertake several journeys by road or river. Comprehensive rules for road travel can be found in the **Enemy in Shadows Companion**; river travel is examined in the **Death on the Reik Companion**.

If you don't have these books, or if you want to cover travel in a more abstract way, this table shows the average times it takes to complete a section of the journey. These are the various journeys the Characters need to make to complete the adventure (in addition to journeying inside Black Fire Pass, which is covered in more detail in the adventure itself). Boat travel assumes the Characters are using a fast boat such as *The Carroburg*, which is placed at their convenience during the adventure. If they travel by another vessel, then journeys by boat are likely to take 33% more time to complete.

The travel times listed here assume a comfortable, moderate pace. Characters who announce they want to travel as fast as possible could reduce these times by 33% by passing a **Challenging (+0) Endurance** Test for each day of travel. Failure indicates that the testing Character receives a *Fatigued* Condition, and may even suffer further disaster such as damage to their boat, or injury to their horse.

Note: The effects of war and disorder will be seen on roads and rivers as the Characters travel during the adventure. As events proceed this will become notably worse.

The Middenheim to Altdorf road that they journey on at the start is well made and uncongested, whilst the roads they travel in Averheim are muddy, rutted, and teeming with refugees.

GIDEON AND THE 9TH OF BRAUZEIT

Gideon would like the Characters to reach Altdorf a day or two before this important date. Delaying them during their journey is the best way to do this, and Gideon is likely to play any number of the following tricks on the party to prevent them from arriving ahead of his schedule.

- Putting a breach in the hull of their boat, requiring them to have it repaired.
- Burning or sinking their boat, requiring them to find a replacement.
- Hamstringing a horse, requiring them to get a replacement.
- Feeding their horse poisonous fodder, requiring them to wait a day or two whilst the animal recovers.
- Digging up a section of the road, causing a traffic jam that delays them for a few hours.

Any time Gideon tries to delay the Characters, there is a chance that someone spots him engaging in the sabotage. If the Characters ask around after anyone who was seen loitering near their boat, or interfering with their horses, then call for them to take a **Challenging (+0) Gossip** Test. If they pass they may get the description of a young boy, no more than 12, with a wide grin and a pudding bowl haircut in the vicinity.

SUGGESTED JOURNEY TIMES

Stage of Journey	Approximate Distance (Miles)	By Boat	On Horseback	On Foot
Middenheim to Shining Rock	50	—	1 day	3 days
Shining Rock to Altdorf	300	—	5 days	15 days
Altdorf to Castle Reikguard	60	3 days	2 days	3 days
Castle Reikguard to Altdorf	60	2 days	2 days	3 days
Altdorf to Kemperbad	120	6 days	4 days	6 days
Kemperbad to Nuln	130	6 days	4 days	6 days
Nuln to Streissen	150	7 days	5 days	7 days
Streissen to Averheim	20	1 day	1 day	1 day
Averheim to Grenzstadt	150	—	5 days	7 days
Grenzstadt to Averheim	150	—	5 days	7 days
Averheim to Streissen	20	1 day	1 day	1 day
Streissen to Nuln	150	4 days	5 days	7 days
Nuln to Diesdorf	130	4 days	4 days	6 days
Diesdorf to Altdorf	120	5 days	4 days	6 days



RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

War has come to the Empire. There is increasing unrest. Minor nobles and petty warlords take opportunities as they present themselves. Law and order have begun to break down in localised areas. The Characters have better things to do than act as a police force, and they are likely to be untroubled by a lot of the minor unrest. Random encounters ought to be used to emphasise that the Empire is descending into chaos and war, but should not distract the Players too much from the plot and themes of the adventure.

Drown the Northerner

A band of villagers are out at the riverbank attaching heavy weights to a terrified woman. They plan on throwing her in the river to see if she floats. Her only crime, it seems, is having a Middenheim accent.

Mercenary Camp

The Characters pass a sprawling camp of soldiers, campfires, and bivouacs spread throughout a large area of forest. Guards are posted at regular intervals and keep a close eye on the Characters, although they are generally friendly. This is a battalion of Reikland Troops, the 7th Reikland Foot (called '*The Never Dies*'), heading to Altdorf and beyond.

Looters

The Characters pass an ancient Oak tree from which six people have been hung. Their hands have been cut off and are nowhere to be seen. A sign saying 'Looters' hangs around the neck of one. The crows have feasted on their bodies and the smell is terrible. There is nothing to indicate who they are except their clothes are of poor quality.

On Their Way to War

The Characters hear barked orders from behind them. Soon a unit of infantry passes them, heading north. They count over a hundred troops, mostly new recruits. If the Characters are on the road, they are expected to get out of the way.

A Broken Man

Sitting on a stump at the side of the road is Old Dirk. A skinny sheep dog is tied with a rope to a root and a well-worn pitchfork stands against a tree. His face is bruised and he stifles tears as he asks the Characters for any alms they can spare. He says that soldiers came and stole all his animals for provisions, besides his dog, '*Captain*'. When he complained they beat him and his sons before robbing their home. He has been driven to begging so that he can feed his family, including '*poor little Sylvia, only just born*'.

Old Dirk is a swindler looking to make an easy shilling or two of travellers. He sticks to his story whatever he is threatened with. The dog and pitchfork are stolen.

THROWN TO THE WOLF

In his youth, the Ulrican priest Griswald Voit marched to war half a dozen times. But due to inclement weather, indecisive leadership, and poorly timed charges, he never fought a single battle. Others might count themselves blessed with such incredible luck, but Griswald always thought he had somehow offended his god. He drilled relentlessly, praying for a chance to prove himself, but despite his efforts he retired having accomplished nothing more than trooping along one muddy road to the next, his well-worn boots and good knowledge of the terrain hardly count as souvenirs. Now he is an old man whose knees swell in the rain, tending a rural Ulrican shrine and watching Sigmarite influence glow along Middenland's border.

As the tensions between provinces grows, Griswald might finally get his war. The tension is obvious as soon as the Characters enter town. Shouting matches in the pub turn to all-out brawls, and the local Sigmarite priest spends the weekly service disparaging, '*the savagery of wolves*' in a thinly veiled stab at Ulric's order. In answer, Griswald hammers on the chapel doors nightly, waving his battle-axe and demanding the Sigmarites answer for their insults. Once the Characters grasp the local politics but before Griswald notices them, his grandson Wigbert pulls them aside.

Wigbert offers the Characters a deal. He can pay them well if they pose as Sigmarite priests, give Griswald a convincing duel, and then throw the fight before the old man hurts himself. If they don't, then Wigbert worries Griswald will either get himself killed or arrested. The party is his only chance, Wigbert can't turn to anyone else in town without his grandfather recognising them. Wigbert emphasises his grandfather is ageing and inexperienced, he recounts Griswald's story if it seems like it might convince the Characters to cooperate.

However they manage to convince Griswald that they represent Sigmar's faithful, Griswald faces as many Characters as they dare bring against him. But though he seems stooped and frail, the winter wind howls around him as he sheds his fur cloak. Soon it becomes clear that decades of continuous training, pent-up battle fury, and divine favour have made Griswald a surprisingly dangerous foe. If the Characters hold back, then he punishes them accordingly.

If the Characters do tackle Griswald, use the profile for Beate Moser on page 66 to represent the aged, but far from powerless, old priest.





DRAMATIS PERSONAE



Chaos Cultists

The Purple Hand has been dealt a severe blow by the Characters' actions in **The Horned Rat**. Word has spread of their organisation and throughout the Empire they are being persecuted by Witch Hunters and vigilant wizards. Still, many of them remain active and seek vengeance against the people thought culpable of blowing their cover: Kastor Lieberung and his associates. Unless otherwise mentioned, every third cultist is armed with a crossbow; others carry swords or axes.

CHAOS CULTISTS - SILVER 2

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	40	40	35	35	34	35	34	35	41	30	13

Traits: Animosity (Kastor and Friends), Armour 1, Ranged (Crossbow) +9 (60), Weapon (Hand Weapon) +7

Skills: Athletics 45, Cool 51, Dodge 45, Melee (Basic) 50, Perception 44, Ranged (Crossbow) 50

Trappings: Leather Jacket, Sword, Crossbow and 12 Bolts, Purse containing 2d10 Shillings

Religious Fanatic

As the Empire descends into civil war, religious divides throughout the nation grow more distinct. In Middenheim and Middenland, the Sons of Ulric rove the countryside. They are convinced that the blood descendants of Ulric are among their ranks, and they demand that the right to be named Ulric's High Priest belongs only to them. In Sigmarite lands, groups of rootless flagellants band together. They mortify their own flesh with whips and scourges, but given the chance they are eager to turn those weapons on the enemies of their god.

The profile represents a determined pilgrim of any particular faith. Ideas for adjusting this profile to specifically represent a Son of Ulric or a Sigmarite Flagellant are given below.

RELIGIOUS FANATIC - BRASS 1

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	45	30	40	40	35	35	35	30	35	30	15

Traits: Hatred (Enemies of the faith), Prejudice (Those who do not share their faith), Weapon (Hand Weapon) +8

Skills: Athletics 55, Cool 45, Dodge 45, Intimidate 50, Melee (Basic) 55

Talents: Frenzy, Implacable

Sons of Ulric: Sons of Ulric have the Furious Assault Talent and a Melee (basic) of 60.

Flagellant: Sigmarite Flagellants have the Berserk Charge Talent, their Melee (Basic) Skill becomes Melee (Flail). They wield Flails that provide them with the Weapon (Flail) +9 Trait.

Peasants

The Characters may meet groups of refugees, rural townsfolk, and paranoid villagers during their travels. Whilst these groups are not necessarily hostile, they may react badly to the Characters if they perceive them to be a threat.

PEASANTS - BRASS 2

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	40	30	40	40	30	40	30	30	30	30	15

Traits: Armour 1, Weapon (Axe) +8

Skills: Athletics 50, Haggle 40, Melee (Basic) 45

Trappings: Leather Jerkin, Axe, Purse containing 2d10 Pennies

Servants

The Characters are often surrounded by servants during the early stages of the adventure. Whilst most servants treat them deferentially, they are notorious for sharing gossip, passing information on to spies and alerting their masters should they spot anything untoward.

SERVANTS - SILVER 1

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	30	30	40	40	40	40	30	30	30	30	15

Traits: Weapon (Dagger) +6

Skills: Athletics 50, Dodge 50, Melee (Basic) 35, Perception 50, Stealth (Urban) 50

Senior Servants

Senior maids, stewards, and wardens owe a comfortable life and handsome wage to their noble employers. In response they are highly protective of their masters' and mistresses' needs, and keenly perceptive of threats.

SENIOR SERVANTS - SILVER 3

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	35	30	45	45	45	45	35	40	40	35	16

Traits: Armour 1, Weapon (Sword) +8

Skills: Athletics 55, Cool 45, Dodge 55, Melee (Basic) 35, Perception 60, Stealth (Urban) 60

Talents: Strike to Stun

Trappings: Leather Jack, Sword



Knight

The warrior elite of the Empire are heavily armoured knights. It costs a great deal of money to train and equip a knight, so most are drawn from the nobility. The temples also sponsor squadrons of knights, known as Templars. These religious knights are not always aristocratic, as the temples will sponsor common folk, if they show enough devotion and talent. Even so the vast majority of knights are both fierce warriors and the scions of high society. The profile represents a generic knight, but those associated with a particular order or tradition may benefit from additional skills or talents as explained below.

Knights Panther: Dedicated to the integrity of Imperial Union, the Knights Panther are considered the archetypal knight. Those in the service of Middenheim are strangely dedicated to the Graf and his family. They benefit from the *Implacable* and *Supportive* Talents when fighting in the defence of the Todbringers.

White Wolves: To honour Ulric these Templars fight with no helmets. They do not benefit from Armour if struck on the head. They use Warhammers and so have Melee (Two-Handed) 60 and the Weapon (Two-Handed Warhammer) +12 Trait.

Knights of the Fiery Heart: In order to join the order of the Fiery Heart a Knight must have spent some time as a Priest of Sigmar. They have the *Miracles (Sigmar)* Trait, and the following Miracles of Sigmar: *Beacon of Righteous Virtue*, *Sigmar's Fiery Hammer*, and *Soulfire*.

Reiksguard: The bodyguard of the Imperial family. Members of the Reiksguard have the *Commanding Presence*, *Iron Will*, and *Supportive* Talents.

KNIGHT – SILVER 5

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	50	30	50	35	50	45	35	30	40	40	15

Traits: Armour 4, Weapon (Sword) +10, Weapon (Lance) +12

Skills: Athletics 55, Cool 50, Dodge 55, Heal 40, Intimidate 60, Melee (Basic 60, Cavalry 60), Ride (Horse) 60

Talents: Roughrider, Strike Mighty Blow

Trappings: Warhorse, Suit of Plate Armour, Lance, Sword, Purse containing 5d10 Shillings

NOBLES

There are a number of times in the adventure when the Characters spend time in the company of minor nobles and their households. If you need a profile for a noble who isn't described elsewhere in the book use the profile for a knight, but ignore the Armour and Weapon (Lance) Traits.

Knight Preceptor

Veteran knights may be known by a number of titles depending on the order to which they belong, such as squadron sergeants, first knights, cleric-captains, and preceptors. In order to rise to such a position a knight must prove themselves a highly skilled warrior, an inspiration to other knights, and someone who embodies the values and oaths of their order with integrity.

KNIGHT PRECEPTOR – GOLD 2

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	55	30	60	35	55	55	35	30	50	40	17

Traits: Armour 4, Weapon (Sword) +11, Weapon (Lance) +13

Skills: Athletics 65, Cool 60, Dodge 65, Heal 55, Intimidate 75, Leadership 55, Melee (Basic 70, Cavalry 70), Ride (Horse) 70

Talents: Roughrider, Strike Mighty Blow, Unshakable

Soldiers

Soldiers are on the march all over the Empire. Many of them are reluctant recruits who hope to win a little loot and return home safely, but there are hotheads in every regiment who clamour for war. Most carry a sword or crossbow as a primary weapon. Guards and watchmen also use this profile, but add Perception 55 to the listed skills.

SOLDIERS – SILVER 3

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	45	45	35	40	40	30	30	30	40	30	15

Traits: Armour 2, Ranged (Crossbow) +9 (60), Weapon (Sword) +7, Weapon (Halberd) +7

Skills: Athletics 40, Cool 50, Dodge 40, Melee (Basic 55, Polearm 55), Ranged (Crossbow) 55

Trappings: Mail Shirt, Sword, Crossbow and 12 Bolts or Halberd, Purse containing 3d10 Shillings

Sergeants

Army officers can use the profile given below.

SERGEANTS – SILVER 5

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	55	55	35	45	40	30	30	30	50	40	16

Traits: Armour 3, Ranged (Pistol) +8 (20), Weapon (Sword) +7

Skills: Athletics 40, Cool 60, Dodge 45, Intuition 55, Leadership 60, Melee (Basic) 75, Perception 55, Ranged (Blackpowder) 65

Trappings: Mail Shirt, Breastplate, Helmet, Sword, Brace of 2 Pistols with Bullets and Powder for 12 Shots, Symbol of Rank, Purse containing 5d10 Shillings



GRAF LIEPMUND HOLZKRUG

Lord High Ambassador

The Black Chamber is Reikland's foremost intelligence network, and the best equipped espionage organisation in the Empire. The notorious Black Isle in Altdorf is their headquarters, but they have operatives and safe houses throughout the Old World.

Liepmund Holzkrug, the high lord ambassador of the Reikland Council, runs the inner circle of the Black Chamber. Many in Altdorf doubt the wisdom of his appointment, as the Holzkrug family are historic rivals of the Holswig-Schliestein dynasty. Yet, whilst Liepmund is fiery and ambitious, all evidence suggests that he is loyal to the Emperor.

Liepmund is a vindictive man, and runs the group with a ferocious attention to detail and a ruthless need for obedience. He is obsessed with the threat from Bretonnia and Marienburg, and demands each member of the Inner Circle redouble their efforts against both. He is a keen hunter, who puts skills he has learned tracking and bagging game to practice in his approach to statecraft.

Goals

Holzkrug seeks to destabilise the Empire out of spite towards the Holswig-Schliestein family. He wishes to ensure that the Jungfreud family of Ubersreik remain under suspicion not because he holds great animus towards them, but because the more he can get them and the Emperor to fight, the worse it looks for the Emperor in the long term. He privately arranges for doctored evidence of Jungfreud insubordination to be discovered by the Emperor's agents, whilst publically decrying the rash takeover of Ubersreik. So far, his part in persuading the Emperor to depose of the Jungfreuds is plausibly deniable and Holzkrug is keen to keep it that way. Holzkrug seeks to make the situation worse by ensuring that High Capitular Volkmar's diplomatic mission to Middenheim descends into farce.

Knowledge

Holzkrug knows the Emperor is ill and that a double takes his place in public.

Misconceptions and Weaknesses

Holzkrug believes his adjunct, Yann Zuntermein, shares his goals. He does not realise Yann is the head of the Purple Hand in Altdorf.

LIEPMUND HOLZKRUG HUMAN SPYMASTER (GOLD 4)

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	65	53	46	49	58	57	57	63	60	57	18

Traits: Ranged (Pistol) +11 (20), Weapon (Rapier) +8

Skills: Athletics 72, Bribery 77, Charm 77, Charm Animal 70, Climb 56, Cool 80, Consume Alcohol 69, Dodge 72, Endurance 64, Entertain (Act) 72, Gamble 83, Gossip 77, Haggle 77, Intimidate 66, Intuition 78, Language (Bretonnian 66, Classical 73, Wastelander 68), Leadership 77, Lore (Altdorf 83, Beasts 73, Heraldry 83, History 78, Politics 83, Reikland 83), Melee (Basic 85, Fencing 90), Outdoor Survival 78, Perception 78, Ranged (Bow 73, Blackpowder 73), Ride (Horse) 77, Secret Signs (Black Chamber 83, Hunter 83), Set Trap 72, Sleight of Hand 77, Stealth (Rural 67, Urban 77), Track 78

Talents: Accurate Shot 2, Blather, Briber, Carouser, Doomed, Etiquette (Nobles), Feint, Gregarious, Luck, Noble Blood, Read/Write, Riposte, Schemer, Shadow, Trapper, Wealthy 5

Trappings: Rapier, Brace of Pistols loaded with Bullets and Powder, Fine Set of Blue and Red Clothing decorated with Holzkrug Family Crest, Quill and Ink, 10 Sheets of Parchment, Purse containing 10 GCs



IMMANUEL-FERRAND HOLSWIG-SCHLIESTEIN

Grey Guardian and High Chancellor of the Realm

Immanuel-Ferrand is an uncle of the Emperor, and an important Imperial spymaster. He keeps his own clandestine network, the Graukappen, who are the arm of the Black Chamber responsible for gathering intelligence and acting against hostile forces outside Altdorf. He is a member of the Grey Order, but has not sought power within the ranks of the Shadowmancers for fear that it would compromise his political standing.

Immanuel-Ferrand sits on the Council of State. As high chancellor of the realm, he is more politically powerful than Liepmund Holzkrug, though Liepmund directs the Black Chamber as a whole, making him a more powerful member of the spy network than Immanuel-Ferrand. Publicly the two men are staunch allies and fast friends, but privately they are deeply suspicious of one another.

Immanuel-Ferrand is normally a careful diplomat, but a notable flaw has allowed rivals to exploit him. He is myopic in his belief that the Empire would benefit if power were centralised, and he thinks Karl-Franz is worthy of absolute authority. Yann Zuntermein used doctored evidence to influence Immanuel-Ferrand to help persuade the Emperor to order the reckless deposition of the Jungfreuds of Ubersreik. Immanuel-Ferrand was led to believe that the Jungfreuds were planning to wage war on their neighbours, but since the takeover, evidence to support this belief has proved elusive. He has not yet figured out that he has been played by other spies.

Goals

Immanuel-Ferrand is torn between two conflicting goals. He is in denial of the fact that the takeover of Ubersreik is going badly. On one hand, he would be relieved if the occupation were brought to an end. On the other hand, he grasps at any opportunity to be proved right about the Jungfreuds' treachery and the wisdom of making Karl-Franz an absolute ruler.

Knowledge

Immanuel-Ferrand knows the Emperor is ill and that a double takes his place in public.

Misconceptions and Weaknesses

Immanuel-Ferrand believes that despite their objections to the Ubersreik takeover, Holzkrug and Zuntermein are loyal men of the Empire. He would need to be presented with solid evidence before altering this point of view.

Allegiance

Moderate Sigmomite.



IMMANUEL-FERRAND HOLSWIG-SCHLIESTEIN HUMAN SPYMASTER (GOLD 4)

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	59	31	55	55	57	58	38	64	59	64	14

Traits: Weapon (Sword) +11

Skills: Athletics 73, Animal Care 79, Bribery 84, Channelling (*Ulg*) 74, Charm 84, Charm Animal 74, Cool 79, Consume Alcohol 75, Drive 74, Dodge 78, Endurance 65, Gamble 84, Gossip 84, Haggle 84, Heal 79, Intimidate 75, Intuition 77, Language (Battle 74, Bretonian 67, Classical 74, Magick 74, Wastelander 69), Leadership 84, Lore (Altdorf 84, Heraldry 84, History 79, Politics 84, Reikland 84, Warfare 74), Melee (Basic 79, Cavalry 79, Fencing 79, Polearm 64), Navigation 77, Perception 77, Ranged (Bow 41, Blackpowder 41), Ride (Horse) 78, Row 75, Secret Signs (Black Chamber) 84, Sleight of Hand 58, Stealth (Urban) 78, Track 77, Trade (Farrier) 53

Talents: Arcane Magic (Lore of Shadows), Blather, Carouser, Commanding Presence, Doomed (*All the shades ye seek to bend o'ercome thee in the end*), Etiquette (Nobles, Servants, Soldiers), Gregarious, Luck, Noble Blood, Petty Magic, Read/Write, Roughrider, Schemer, Strike Mighty Blow 2, Wealthy 7

Trappings: Sword, Fine Set of Grey Clothing decorated with Holswig-Schliestein Family Crest, Hooded Green Velvet Cloak, Quill and Ink, 10 Sheets of Parchment, Purse containing 14 GCs

SPELLS

Petty Magic Spells: Dart, Eavesdrop, Magic Flame, Open Lock, Sounds, Twitch

Arcane Spells: Choking Shadows, Entangle, Illusion, Mystifying Miasma, Terrifying



YANN ZUNTERMEIN
Head of the Spionwerber, and Magister Magistri

Yann Zuntermein is Graf Liepmund's adjunct. The head of the Black Chambers recruitment arm (the Spionwerber), he diverts the Black Chamber away from Chaos cults. He is a member of the Chamber's Inner Circle and magister magistri of the Altdorf cell of the Purple Hand.

Zuntermein is a very tall man, standing a little over 6 feet. He looks every one of his 58 years, with rather rheumy blue eyes and unkempt light-brown hair. He is an odd character: slightly bumbling, with a taste for cheap costume rather than expensive tailoring. He speaks in a rather disconnected, pretentious manner – a mix of philosophical digressions, proverbs, children's fables, and smatterings of Bretonnian poetry.

Beneath this dishevelled exterior is a sharp mind. The head of the Altdorf cell of the Purple Hand runs a tight ship. He doesn't even know his fellow magisters, and may only surmise at their identities. Under his direction, Altdorf's Ordo Terribilis, the branch of the Purple Hand that concentrates on developing strategies and ideas, are embedded among the spies and diplomats of the Black Chamber, and concentrate on gathering and manipulating intelligence.

Goals

Zuntermein wishes to see the Empire destabilised and the Emperor sicken and die. Zuntermein's plan entails the Crown Prince first becoming prince regent for the ailing Emperor and then ascending to the throne in his own right. He will then be among those who promote Crown Prince Wolfgang to become heir. He believes Wolfgang has been prepared to be sympathetic to the Purple Hand and their cause, enabling him to become a power behind the throne.

Knowledge

Zuntermein knows the Emperor is ill and that a double takes his place. Henrik Kappelmuller maintains this illness, and is one of Zuntermein's agents. He knows the Nine Eyes have left the Crown Prince open to Tzeentchian sympathies. He knows Holzkrug dislikes the Emperor and works against him. He knows Wasmeier has agents promoting revolution in Nordland.

Misconceptions and Weaknesses: Unaware that the Crown Prince has been subverted by Kastor Lieberung and Gideon.

YANN ZUNTERMEIN – AGENT (GOLD I)

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	53	32	33	35	60	53	40	65	64	58	15

Traits: Weapon (Sword) +7

Skills: Bribery 78, Channelling (Dhar) 84, Charm 78, Climb 53, Consume Alcohol 50, Cool 84, Dodge 68, Entertain (Act) 78, Evaluate 68, Gamble 80, Gossip 90, Haggle 85, Intimidate 53, Intuition 80, Language (Bretonnian 75, Dark Tongue 75, Magick 80), Leadership 78, Lore (Altdorf 85, Averland 75, Bretonnia 70, Law 70, Middenland 70, Middenheim 70, Nuln 75, Ostland 70, Nordland 75, Politics 75, Stirland 80, Talabheim 75, Talabecland 80, Tilea 70, Theology 70, Tzeentch 85, Wasteland 75), Melee (Basic) 73, Perception 80, Research 70, Secret Signs (Black Chamber 85, Purple Hand 85), Sleight of Hand 60, Stealth (Urban 73, Rural 73)

Talents: Arcane Lore (Daemonology), Beneath Notice, Blather, Bookish, Carouser, Chaos Magic (Tzeentch), Commanding Presence, Criminal, Disciple of Change, Doomed (*Severed heads, eroding eyes rupture asunder, roaring gullet erupts, terrible ravaging unnatural*), Etiquette (Nobles, Scholars), Frightening, Gregarious, Read/Write, Lip Reading, Magical Sense, Master of Disguise, Petty Magic, Savant (Law), Secret Identity, Shadow, Super Numerate

Trappings: Respectable but Cheap Clothing, Sigmarite Icons, Purse containing 7 crowns, Sword, 3 Doses of Black Lotus, 3 Doses of Heartkill (a slow-acting variant, takes 2d10 hours to take effect)

SPELLS

Petty Magic Spells: Drain, Eavesdrop, Magic Flame, Open Lock, Sounds, Warning

Arcane Spells: Corrosive Blood, Distracting, Entangle, Manifest Lesser Daemon, Octagram, Teleport, Ward

Lore of Tzeentch Spells: Bolt of Change, Boon of Tzeentch, Blue Fire of Tzeentch, Curse of Tzeentch, The Flickering Flames of Fickle Fate, Pink Fire of Tzeentch, The Purple Hand, Treason of Tzeentch, Tzeentch's Firestorm, Tzeentch's Golden Aura, Sense the Skein, Word of Tzeentch



WOLFGANG HOLSWIG-ABENHAUER

Crown Prince of the Reikland

According to rumour, Crown Prince Wolfgang is many things: a hideous mutant, a revolutionary bent on seizing the Empire through military force, and the architect of blunders such as the Ubersreik takeover and Mutant Edict. In truth, the Crown Prince is an upstanding young gentleman, dedicated to the integrity of the Empire with ambitions to rule wisely and institute reasonable, careful reforms. He is intelligent, cultured, insightful, sensitive, and courageous (not forgetting exceptionally handsome).

So why is he a prize asset of the Altdorf Purple Hand?

As a child, nine tutors were found for Wolfgang, experts in a wide range of skills from across the Old World. Thanks to them, he has received a comprehensive and cosmopolitan education. However, these tutors, known as the Nine Eyes, are dedicated to subverting knowledge in the cause of their true master, Tzeentch. The Crown Prince is not a worshipper of Chaos – it is the one area in which he is notably ignorant – but through his tutors' influence, he is primed to be sympathetic towards the Purple Hand.

Or, he would be had Kastor Lieberung not subverted this plot. The very man who recruited the Nine Eyes wished the Crown Prince to be more than a political pawn. If Kastor's plans bear fruit, Wolfgang will never be satisfied to just rule for the benefit of a single cult, but will seek out Engrim van Horstmann to instruct him in becoming the fabled Champion in Shadows – greatest sorcerer-champion of Tzeentch ever known.

But the promise of a Champion of Shadows is just bait, planted by the daemon Gideon in ages past. A mortal man prepared in such a way makes the perfect vessel for Sheerargetru's return.

Goals

Consciously, the Crown Prince wishes to serve his family and nation, promote unity, and prove a worthy example to fellow nobles and future subjects. Subliminal coding implanted through his tuition is leading to increasing sympathies with those who seek more radical reform.

Knowledge

The Crown Prince knows that the Emperor is ill and has a double for public appearances.

Misconceptions and Weaknesses

The Crown Prince thinks Yann Zuntermein is a loyal servant of the Empire and that the Nine Eyes are beyond reproach.

Allegiance

Moderate Sigmarite.



WOLFGANG HOLSWIG-ABENHAUER HEIR APPARENT (GOLD 10)

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	57	31	34	48	58	47	55	65	65	65	15

Traits: Weapon (Rapier) +7, Regenerate

Skills: Athletics 67, Bribery 70, Charm 80, Consume Alcohol 63, Dodge 67, Endurance 58, Entertain (Storytelling) 75, Gamble 80, Gossip 75, Haggle 75, Heal 75, Intimidate 49, Intuition 78, Language (Bretonnian 75, Classical 80, Khazalid 80), Lore (Engineering 75, Geology 75, Heraldry 80, History 80, Law 75, Magick 70, Politics 75, Reikland 85, Science 80, Theology 80), Melee (Fencing) 77, Perception 68, Research 80, Ride (Horse) 62

Talents: Argumentative, Attractive, Blather 3, Bookish 2, Cat-tongued, Commanding Presence 3, Dealmaker, Distract, Doomed (*Shell harbouring embryonic entity, released amid rite, gaining entry through repeated utterances*), Etiquette (Nobles 2, Scholars, Servants 2, Soldiers), Feint, Gregarious, Inspiring, Iron Will, Linguistics, Luck 2, Master Orator, Nimble Fingered, Noble Blood, Public Speaker, Read/Write, Resistance (Disease), Schemer, Speedreader, Tenacious, Tower of Memories, Wealthy 10

Trappings: Clothing (Best Quality), Jewellery worth no less than 150 GC, Amulet of Jade (grants the wearer the Regenerate Creature Trait), Writing Kit and Several Sheets of Parchment, Rapier



VOLKMAR 'THE GRIM' VON HINDENSTERN

High Capitular of Sigmar

Volkmar is the high capitular of the Sigmarite Cult in Altdorf, a position almost as vaunted as that of Arch Lector. He is an experienced warrior priest, who has earned renown not only for his deep knowledge and devotion to Sigmarite doctrine, but also because he is an effective and inspiring battlefield commander.

Volkmar is a man of deeds, not words, and prefers to let his actions speak for themselves. He is serious to a fault, and his unsmiling blunt nature wins him admirers, but few friends.

Volkmar has a single-minded obsession with rooting out and destroying the followers of Chaos. Whilst this is not unusual for a follower of Sigmar, the energy and focus by which he pursues this goal consumes him totally. When he isn't on the battlefield, he tirelessly researches tomes in the chambers beneath the Grand Cathedral, searching for any key to the defiance of the dark that his predecessors may have overlooked.

Goals

Volkmar wishes to serve the Cult of Sigmar, keep the Empire stable, and oppose Chaos. This opposition to the forces of the Ruinous Powers concerns all Sigmarites, but Volkmar takes it particularly seriously, spending every free moment engaged in research in the Cathedral vaults.

He feels that Yorri is rather too compromising as Grand Theogonist. Whilst he respects Yorri's authority, he nurses a desire to see a more hard-line priest — such as himself — in the role.

Knowledge

Volkmar knows the Emperor is ill and that a double takes his place in public. His single-minded pursuit of arcane lore blinds him to threats underneath his nose.

Misconceptions and Weaknesses

Volkmar's disinterest in politics leaves him rather ignorant of what is going on, but neither does he have particular misconceptions.

Allegiance

Partisan Sigmarite.

VOLKMAR 'THE GRIM' VON HINDENSTERN LECTOR (GOLD 2)

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	64	37	50	57	58	52	38	75	75	55	22

Traits: Armour 4,

Weapon (Two-Handed Warhammer) +11

Skills: Athletics 77, Art (Writing) 53, Charm 65, Cool 105, Endurance 77, Entertain (Speeches 65, Storytelling 65), Gossip 70, Heal 90, Intimidate 75, Intuition 78, Language (Battle 90, Classical 85, Khazalid 90), Leadership 75, Lore (Heraldry 80, History 85, Politics 80, Reikland 80, Theology 85, Warfare 85), Melee (Basic 84, Two-Handed 84), Perception 78, Pray 95, Research 80

Talents: Bless (Sigmar), Bookish, Combat Aware, Doomed (*Thy end is not thy end, would thee though it were*), Holy Hatred, Holy Visions, Impassioned Zeal, Inspiring, Invoke (Sigmar), Pure Soul, Read/Write, Savant (Theology), Warleader

Trappings: Full Plate Armour, Two-Handed Warhammer.

BLESSINGS AND MIRACLES

Blessings: Battle, Courage, Might, Recuperation, Righteousness, Tenacity

Miracles of Sigmar: Beacon of Righteous Virtue, Sigmar's Fiery Hammer, Twin-tailed Comet, Vanquish the Unrighteous



GRAND THEOGONIST YORRI XV

High Priest of Altdorf

The Grand Theogonist is the head of the Cult of Sigmar and the single most powerful religious official in The Empire. The office is important because the Grand Theogonist is an elector (and can rely on the Arch Lector of the East and Arch Lector of the South, also electors, to vote in support of his choice). By tradition the Grand Theogonist also holds the offices of Arch Lector of the West, Theogonist of the Empire, and high priest of Altdorf (these place him under certain ceremonial expectations, such as sermonising in the Grand Cathedral, but don't grant him powers beyond those he holds as Grand Theogonist).

Yorri sits on the Council of State in his capacity as high confessor. He wields such power in this role that he arguably has more autonomy to make nation-shaking decisions than the Emperor, for none could gainsay him in rulings over Sigmarite dogma. In practice, Yorri is moderate and cautious in his approach, and embodies in himself the values he extols to others. He could make radical decisions, but fears schisms and instability.

Yorri is conflicted about many of the changes taking place in the Empire. He is somewhat supportive of Immanuel-Ferrand's desire to see power centralised – after all, the Emperor stands as Sigmar's representative – but he also feels the takeover of Ubersreik is a blunder. The instability that followed is a horror to him, but he keeps a cool public face.

Goals

Yorri wants stability in the Empire. If it were up to him, he would make serious concessions to secure peace. He knows his fellow Sigmarites expect more though, so for their sake he is prepared to take a hard line if he meets resistance or disrespect. He is dismayed by the Emperor's mutant edict, but feels it is an artefact of Karl-Franz's illness and tries to avoid being drawn into debate about it.

Knowledge

Yorri knows the Emperor is ill and that a double takes his place in public. He is aware that the hammer borne by the Emperor is unlikely to be the one wielded by Sigmar, but does not let it trouble him.

Misconceptions and Weaknesses

Yorri is rather incurious about why the Emperor is ill and trusts the Privy Council in its decisions.

Allegiance

Moderate Sigmarite.



YORRI XV – LECTOR (GOLD 2)

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	55	37	48	58	55	55	38	75	70	75	21

Traits: Armour 4, Regenerate, Weapon (Warhammer) +8

Skills: Athletics 75, Art (Writing) 58, Charm 95, Cool 90, Dodge 75, Endurance 78, Entertain (Speeches 95, Storytelling 95), Gossip 95, Heal 95, Intimidate 68, Intuition 75, Language (Classical 95, Khazalid 95), Leadership 90, Lore (Heraldry 80, History 95, Politics 80, Reikland 85, Theology 105), Melee (Basic) 65, Perception 70, Pray 95, Research 85

Talents: Bless (Sigmar), Bookish, Doomed

(Sigmar harried exalted entity, raging arcane riotous gigantic entity, traitors repetitive utterances), Holy Visions, Impassioned Zeal, Inspiring, Invoke (Sigmar), Read/Write, Savant (Theology), Stout-Hearted, Strong-Minded, Warleader,

Trappings: The Jade Griffon, Staff of Command, Full Plate Armour, Warhammer.

The Jade Griffon: This amulet is a wide carving of deep-green stone affixed to the Grand Theogonist's breastplate. It is reputed to have been blessed by Magnus the Pious, and grants its wearer the Regenerate Creature Trait.

Staff of Command: When carrying the Staff of Command, the Grand Theogonist benefits from a permanent Blessing of Might (add +10 to his S).

BLESSINGS AND MIRACLES

Blessings: Battle, Charisma, Conscience, Courage, Finesse, Fortune, Protection, Recuperation

Miracles of Sigmar: Beacon of Righteous Virtue, Heed Not the Witch, Sigmar's Fiery Hammer, Soulfire, Twin-tailed Comet, Vanquish the Unrighteous



EMMANUELLE VON LIEBWITZ

Elector and Countess of Nuln

The Grand Countess of Nuln is a childhood friend of the Emperor, and widely rumoured to have used this relationship to secure her own rise to power. Known for her opulent balls, trend-setting fashions, and many romances, she is reputed to be the most powerful woman in the Empire. It is a truth universally acknowledged that any unmarried gentleman in possession of a good fortune must be in want of her. It is commonly attested that she is hot-tempered and politically naïve, though those who know her dismiss such rumours as the wishful thinking of those envious of her position. She is a careful and clever political player, but not without caprice — as a number of co-conspirators would attest, if they still lived.

Emmanuelle has faced down her share of horrors, and narrowly avoided disaster during Altdorf's Great Fog Riots and a chain of events that saw a portion of Nuln destroyed eight years ago, known by those not too blind to see it as the work of the Skaven. Emmanuelle emerged from the aftermath a stronger ruler, but with an edge of ruthlessness when it comes to the pursuit of her own protection.

Goals

Emmanuelle is a strong and beloved ruler, in contrast to the more feckless Grand Countess of Sudenland, whose lands border Emmanuelle's suzerain. During **Empire in Ruins** Emmanuelle's chief obsession is to obtain a license to annex the neighbouring province. She has already been informed of some sinister goings on in Pfeildorf from her respected advisor Elspeth von Draken, but lacks the conclusive evidence that would justify military action.

Knowledge

Emmanuelle realises at first sight that the Emperor's double is not Karl-Franz.

Misconceptions and Weaknesses

Emmanuelle lacks good reason to declare war on Sudenland and would be in the debt of anyone who could provide such a thing. She underestimates the seriousness of the conflicts between provinces in the Empire's north.

Allegiance

Moderate Sigmarite.

EMMANUELLE VON LIEBWITZ ELECTOR COUNTESS (GOLD 15)

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	48	31	31	38	67	51	57	59	68	80	15

Traits: Weapon (Magical Dagger) +6

Skills: Art (Calligraphy) 62, Bribery 105, Charm 115, Consume Alcohol 63, Cool 73, Endurance 48, Entertain (Singing) 90, Evaluate 64, Gamble 89, Gossip 110, Hagggle 100, Intimidate 63, Intuition 93, Language (Classical 64, Merogen 60, Tilean 79), Leadership 100, Lore (The Arts 69, The Empire 74, Heraldry 84, History 72, Law 64, Nuln 89, Politics 79, Wissenland 69), Melee (Fencing) 54, Perform (Dancing) 76, Perception 91, Play (Harpsichord 64, Virginal 62, Violin 67), Ride (Horse 71, Pegasus 56), Sleight of Hand 62

Talents: Alley Cat, Ambidextrous 2, Argumentative, Attractive 8, Blather 5, Briber, Carouser 3, Cat-tongued 2, Commanding Presence 6, Dealmaker, Doomed (*Thy end is not thy end*), Etiquette (Nobles) 8, Frightening 2, Gregarious 4, Inspiring 4, Iron Will, Lip Reading, Luck 4, Master Orator 5, Nimble Fingered, Noble Blood, Public Speaker 8, Read/Write, Resistance (Disease), Schemer 5, Tenacious 2, Warleader, Wealthy 25

Trappings: Emmanuelle could conceivably equip herself with anything the treasury of Nuln could afford. In public she typically restrains herself to Best Quality Royal Garb, including Jewellery worth no less than 300 GC, and a small but exquisite Dagger (Every wounding hit inflicts 1 *Bleeding* Condition).



HERMANN VON FEILBACH

The Emperor's Double

Hermann von Feilbach is a minor noble from one of the fiefs in the vicinity of Altdorf. After joining the Reiksguard as a young man, he was immediately made a figure of fun for his resemblance to Crown Prince (as he was then) Karl-Franz.

As both men grew older, and ever more alike in looks, Hermann came to the attention of Karl-Franz's uncle, Immanuel-Ferrand Holswig-Schliestein. The spymaster saw the potential for a lookalike to help confuse the Emperor's enemies and rivals. Hermann was inducted into the Black Chamber, taught the art of spycraft, and given new names and identities.

Goals

Hermann considers himself a knight, first and foremost, and the business of spying and pretending to be someone else does not sit well with him, even if such pretences complement his oaths to protect the Emperor. He would dearly love to be relieved of his burdensome and inauthentic double life.

Knowledge

Hermann knows the Emperor is ill but has no particular insights beyond that. He has only a passing knowledge of Imperial politics, but knows that his role requires him to nod wisely and say very little about any matter brought before him.

Misconceptions and Weaknesses

Hermann has spent time in the Black Chamber and believes Leipmund Holzkrug and Yann Zuntermein to be loyal servants of Karl-Franz.

Allegiance

Moderate Sigmarite.



HERMANN VON FEILBACH FIRST KNIGHT (GOLD 2)

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	66	37	51	38	52	64	55	44	59	51	16

Traits: Armour 4, Magic Resistance 2, Ward 8+, Weapon (Two-Handed Warhammer) +10

Skills: Athletics 84, Animal Care 63, Bribery 62, Charm 65, Charm Animal 71, Consume Alcohol 54, Cool 73, Dodge 77, Endurance 52, Entertain (Acting) 69, Gossip 65, Heal 60, Intimidate 75, Language (Battle) 66, Leadership 66, Lore (Heraldry) 63, Melee (Basic 82, Fencing 73, Two-Handed 83), Perception 71, Ride (Horse) 85, Stealth (Urban) 80, Trade (Farrier) 61

Talents: Carouser, Doomed (*Morr sends a maiden*), Etiquette (Nobles), Menacing, Noble Blood, Read/Write, Secret Identity, Shadow, Shieldsman, Strike Mighty Blow

Trappings: Full Plate Armour, the Silver Seal, the Imitation Ghal Maraz (Magical Two-Handed Warhammer)

VON FEILBACH'S MAGIC ITEMS

The Imitation Ghal Maraz

A once-potent magical artefact combining Dwarf Runesmithery and Sigmarite blessings, the imitation Ghal Maraz has diminished in power over recent years. As Sigmar's Empire weakens from within, his divine presence grows faint.

Magical Weapon: The imitation Ghal Maraz is magical and can injure creatures noted as immune to non-magical attacks.

Radiant Nimbus: The hammer gives off a faint glow of holy power. Creatures with the Unstable Trait engaged with the bearer lose 1 wound at the end of each turn.

Rune of Goblin Bane: Add the Impact quality to the weapon if the target is an Orc, Goblin, Snotling, or Hobgoblin.

Rune of Fire: Targets struck receive an *Ablaze* Condition.

The Silver Seal

The warrior mage Fredrik von Tarnus crafted this artefact for Magnus the Pious following the Great War against Chaos. The wearer of the seal benefits from the following Creature Traits: Ward 8+ and Magic Resistance 2.



THE TODBRINGERS

The most important noble house in Middenheim, the Todbringers have ruled the city state since the time of Magnus the Pious. Whilst they have not been the strongest supporters of Karl-Franz, they have balanced their Ulrican faith with loyalty to the Empire as a whole.

As Grand Count (known locally as 'Graf'), Boris Todbringer rules the city of Middenheim and its surrounding territories. His legitimate son, Stefan, is unwell and under the constant care of the court physician. He is close to his illegitimate children, Heinrich and Katarina, in whom he places much trust and responsibility.



GRAF BORIS TODBRINGER

At 6' 1", the Graf is an imposing figure. Boris is increasingly confident and independent since his recent bout of melancholy. He regards the Characters who saved his life during the events of **Power Behind the Throne** with great regard and, whilst he does not let his noble dignity slip, is very keen to see them promoted and kept within his ambit.

Boris is growing impatient with the Emperor's Court in Altdorf. He is dismayed by the recent Mutant Edict (Altdorfers have long complained that Middenheim's attitude to magical instruction is too lenient, but now they outlaw persecution of mutants?) and the takeover of Ubersreik (no true Emperor would so rudely depose a major noble house). He also suspects Altdorf of sponsoring rebellious Nordlanders and believes they have their own problems with the Purple Hand.

GRAF BORIS TODBRINGER, IMPERIAL ELECTOR NOBLE LORD (GOLD 7)

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	71	42	52	57	68	53	55	62	68	66	26

Traits: Animosity (those he feels have wronged him)

Skills: Art (Calligraphy) 75, Athletics 73, Bribery 86, Charm 86, Consume Alcohol 62, Cool 88, Dodge 73, Drive 73, Endurance 77, Entertain (Speeches 76, Storytelling 71), Evaluate 72, Gamble 72, Gossip 81, Haggle 81, Heal 67, Intimidate 72, Intuition 88, Language (Ancient Teutogen 72, Battle 72, Classical 82, Khazalid 67), Leadership 91, Lore (Arts 72, Empire 72, History 77, Law 72, Middenheim 82, Middenland 82, Nordland 77, Politics 77, Warfare 82), Melee (Basic 91, Cavalry 87, Fencing 81), Navigation 88, Outdoor Survival 82, Perception 83, Perform (Dancing) 63, Play (Harpsichord) 65, Ranged (Bow) 62, Ride (Horse) 73

Talents: Beat Blade 2, Blather 2, Carouser, Combat Reflexes 3, Commanding Presence 3, Dealmaker, Disarm 2, Distract, Doomed (*Vengeance made for vengeance repaid, be then dragged down, ript, and slayd*), Etiquette (Guilders, Nobles, Soldiers), Feint 2, Gregarious, Hardy, Inspiring 3, Iron Will 3, Luck 2, Noble Blood, Public Speaking 2, Read/Write, Reversal, Riposte 2, Step Aside 2, Stout-hearted 2, Tenacious, Warleader 2, Wealthy 10

Trappings: The Middenland Runefang (*Peak Leveller*), Full Plate (Best Quality), Grand Duchy of Middenheim, Wardenship of the Barony of Nordland, Royal Garb (Best Quality), The Middenheim City Coffers and Crown Jewels, Various Lands and Estates throughout the Empire



BARON HEINRICH TODBRINGER

Heinrich is a giant of a man, standing 6' 11" with a powerful build, dark auburn hair, and blue-grey eyes. He is also every bit as intimidating intellectually as he is physically. He is a confident, self-assured man, and has often borne the weight of his family's concerns. He cares deeply for the future of Middenheim. His illegitimate birth limits his ability to take action without being accused of usurpation, and he serves the city by engaging in diplomatic missions.

When expecting trouble, or if he wants to make an impression, Heinrich wears a full suit of plate armour and carries the magical two-handed sword, *Rathewer*, which enjoys the *Impact* Quality when used against Skaven. He is said to have acquired this weapon during a prolonged diplomatic mission to the court of the Tilean City State of Miragliano.

BARON HEINRICH TODBRINGER – ENVOY (GOLD 2) FORMER ADVISOR, FORMER WARDEN

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	45	46	61	52	36	44	31	49	51	44	22

Skills: Athletics 54, Cool 61, Consume Alcohol 57, Charm 54, Drive 54, Dodge 54, Endurance 62, Gossip 54, Intuition 46, Lore (Middenheim 59, Ostland 54, Altdorf 54), Melee (Basic) 55, Perception 46, Ride (Horse) 54, Row 66, Secret Signs (Middenheim Spy Network) 54, Stealth (Urban 59, Rural 54)

Talents: Etiquette (Nobles), Night Vision, Read/Write, Seasoned Traveller, Strike to Stun

Trappings: Bundle of Diplomatic Papers, Fine but Sensible Courtly Dress, Ring of Spies throughout Middenheim



THE 'PRINCESS': KATARINA TODBRINGER

The Graf's daughter is referred to as 'the Princess', though she has no official claim to the title. She is 19 and petite, with strawberry-blond hair and light-blue eyes. She has a small dimple on her chin, and delicate hands and feet. Katarina is a sweet and kindly soul, with a refined aesthetic sense and delightful manners. While some think her naive and ill-informed about many political matters, she has recently taken a greater interest in affairs of state. She has a strong sense of fairness and justice, and is not lacking in courage. She is very interested in good works and is a prominent patron, via her ladies in waiting, of the orphanage run by the Temple of Shallya. She has an exquisite dress sense. The little make-up and jewellery she does wear is of dazzling quality.

KATARINA TODBRINGER – NOBLE (GOLD 3)

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	38	32	31	31	42	32	44	34	37	51	12

Skills: Bribery 61, Charm 71, Consume Alcohol 41, Cool 40, Evaluate 37, Gamble 39, Gossip 64, Intimidate 41, Language (Classical) 49, Leadership 66, Lore (Heraldry 45, Middenheim 49, Politics 39), Melee (Fencing) 43, Play (Lute) 59, Ride (Horse) 42

Talents: Attractive, Coolheaded, Doomed (*A whistling wind from the North bites deep*), Etiquette (Nobles), Noble Blood, Read/Write

Possessions: Court Clothing (Best Quality), Jewellery worth 50 Gold Crowns, Magical Golden Necklace depicting the Todbringer Coat of Arms (grants 3 AP on all locations and the Trait *Magic Resistance* 3. This necklace would be worth at least 25 gold crowns to those who didn't realise its properties, and at least 250 crowns to those who did.)



AR-ULRIC EMIL VALGEIR

High Preist of Ulric

The Valgiers are one of Middenheim's most celebrated noble families. They have achieved a lengthy and stable legacy in part because they have never sought to rule Middenheim, instead nurturing a close relationship over many generations with the religious power base in the city, the cult of Ulric. Over the centuries so many Valgeirs have attained the rank of Ar-Ulric that Middenheim's more boorish rascals joke that it is a surprise they aren't extinct, given all the vows of chastity their first sons have sworn. The family, on the contrary, is large, extended, and mutually supportive.

Ar-Ulric is the supreme head of the cult of Ulric in Middenheim and throughout the Empire. Emil was long tipped to be anointed Ar-Ulric, but preferred to serve the god as the greatest of his Templars, the Grand Master of the Knight of the White Wolf. Instead his younger brother Jarrick earned the rank of Ulric's High Priest. As a result of the events of *Power Behind the Throne*, Jarrick became compromised, abandoned his office, and went adventuring to the north.

Emil, who is now too elderly and stiff to make a fine knight, has been raised to the position of Ar-Ulric in Jarrick's stead. He is a harsher priest than his brother, and is encouraging a belligerent strain of Ulrican tradition to flourish in Middenheim.

Goals

Emil seeks Ulrican supremacy in the north. He did not necessarily intend the wave of anti-Sigmarite feeling his example has unleashed, but it does not concern him.

Knowledge

Emil knows nothing of importance to the plot.

Misconceptions and Weaknesses

Emil believes his relaxed attitude towards the Sons of Ulric, who were prevented from assembly by Ar-Ulric Jarrick, will win him their respect. He has not realised that they will only be satisfied when one of them is made Ar-Ulric.

Allegiance

Partisan Ulrican.

AR-ULRIC EMIL VALGEIR LECTOR (GOLD 2)

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	67	33	56	56	58	52	36	50	51	50	20

Traits: Armour 4, Immunity (Fire), Magic Resistance 2, Ward 2, Weapon (Hammer-axe of Skoll) +12

Skills: Athletics 67, Animal Care 65, Bribery 60, Charm 60, Charm Animal 66, Consume Alcohol 76, Cool 71, Dodge 67, Endurance 71, Entertain (Speeches 70, Storytelling 65), Gamble 65, Gossip 65, Haggle 63, Heal 70, Intimidate 76, Intuition 78, Language (Battle 70, Classical 65, Heraldry 65, Teutogen 65), Leadership 70, Lore (Middenheim 65, Theology 65, Politics 65, Warfare 70), Melee (Basic 87, Cavalry 87, Two-Handed 87), Perception 78, Pray 70, Research 60, Ride (Horse) 72, Trade (Farrier) 51

Talents: Blather, Bless (Ulric), Bookish, Combat Aware, Doomed (*Raised through the death of one that looks like another, cast down by the raising of one who looks like another*), Etiquette (Nobles, Soldiers), Fearless (Beastmen, Outlaws), Inspiring, Invoke (Ulric), Read/Write, Roughrider, Strike Mighty Blow, Super Numerate, Supportive, Warleader

Trappings: Blue and Grey Robes, Staff of Office, Hammer-axe of Skoll, Wolfplate.

Hammer-axe of Skoll: A legendary two-handed weapon said to have been carried by Ar-Ulrics since the time of Sigmar. The weapon is magical. Furthermore, when it is wielded with intent by a Blessed follower of Ulric they should make a **Challenging (+0) Pray** Test. For every +SL they achieve they may choose one of the following weapon qualities: *Damaging*, *Impact*, *Impale*, or *Penetrating*.

Wolfplate: While worn, it grants 4 AP to all locations and grants the following traits to the wearer: *Immunity (Fire)*, *Magic Resistance (2)*, *Ward (2)*.

BLESSINGS AND MIRACLES

Blessings: Battle, Courage, Might, Protection, Recuperation

Miracles of Ulric: Hoarfrost's Chill, Ulric's Fury, Pelt of the Winter Wolf, The Snow King's Judgement, Winter's Bite



VEIRAN THUGENHEIM

*First Knight of The Knights Panther
of Middenheim, and Friend of the Graf*

The Thugenheims are one of Middenheim's noble families, known for hosting opulent parties in their large estates to the western side of the Grand Duchy. They have had a long history of cooperation with the Todbringer family, which is emphasised by their close association with Middenheim's order of the Knights Panther, who are also famed for their loyalty to the Todbringers. Stories are told that some sort of pact between the Todbringers and the knights was forged during the crusades to Araby. The fact that a number of Thugenheims' ancestors fought in the crusades gives credence to these rumours.

Whatever the truth, the fact is that the Thugenheims have emphasised loyalty to the Todbringers as a core value for generations. Veiran, the current head of the Thugenheim household, is a cherished companion of Graf Boris and a preceptor of the Knights Panther in Middenheim.

Veiran is boisterous and good humoured, often willing to play the fool and smooth over tensions with bonhomie. Behind this front, he is focused and ruthless in identifying and eliminating threats to Middenheim's security.

Goals

Veiran wishes to re-establish himself as the Graf's closest aide and confidant following his absence. This may bring him into conflict with the Characters — they solved a serious threat to Boris whilst Veiran was in Wolfenburg, so he feels a need to retain his position as favourite.

Veiran has great faith in the military prowess of Middenheim, and will support the Graf even should Boris decide to make war on the southern provinces.

Knowledge

Veiran has no particular insights into the events of the adventure. He overestimates the north's fervour for war. The Todbringers are not quite as confident in themselves as Veiran is.

Misconceptions and Weaknesses

Veiran perceives Altdorfers' actions as motivated by malice, which isn't always the case.

Allegiance

Moderate Ulrican.



VEIRAN THUGENHEIM FIRST KNIGHT (GOLD 2)

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	62	33	52	35	58	63	43	42	58	58	16

Traits: Armour 4, Weapon (Two-Handed Warhammer) +10

Skills: Athletics 83, Animal Care 62, Charm 78, Charm Animal 78, Consume Alcohol 55, Cool 78, Dodge 83, Endurance 55, Heal 62, Intimidate 72, Language (Battle) 62, Leadership 73, Lore (Heraldry) 57, Melee (Battle 82, Cavalry 82), Ride (Horse) 83, Trade (Farrier) 58

Talents: Carouser, Doomed (*Duty's proof underhoof, to die for an eye*), Etiquette (Nobles), Luck, Menacing, Noble Blood, Read/Write, Savvy, Shieldsman, Strike Mighty Blow, Warrior Born

Trappings: Full Plate Armour, The Fang of Horros (magical sword)

The Fang of Horros: This enchanted blade is a beautiful cold-blue steel, enticing to all that behold it. As well as counting as magical and inflicting extra damage, it has the fine, unbreakable and damaging qualities.

**MALTHE BARTHELM, NORDLANDER ASSASSIN**

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	64	58	47	36	55	41	45	34	34	44	13

Traits: Armour 2, Ranged (Pistol) +9 (20), Weapon (Sword) +8

Skills: Animal Care 44, Charm 54, Charm Animal 39, Consume Alcohol 46, Cool 54, Endurance 41, Evaluate 37, Gossip 54, Intimidate 57, Intuition 60, Language (Battle Tongue) 44, Leadership 57, Lore (Nordland) 54, Lore (Reikland) 37, Melee (Basic) 87, Melee (Cavalry) 74, Outdoor Survival 54, Perception 65, Ranged (Blackpowder) 73, Ride (Horse) 61

Talents: Combat Aware, Combat Reflexes, Crack the whip, Doomed (*To bring death to the death bringers shall bring about thine own*), Etiquette (Soldiers), Fast Shot, Gunner, Noble Blood, Read/Write, Suave

Trappings: Cavalry uniform incorporating breastplate, expensive sword, three pistols (each loaded with bullet and powder), Badge depicting an hourglass symbol, Pendant decorated with the twin-tailed comet worth 2 GC, Purse containing 3 GC

MALTHE BARTHELM

Nordlander assassin

Malthe Barthelm is the first son of Baron Harman Barthelm, a minor noble who commands a small border regiment in the Nordland State Army. The Barthelms have served the military for generations and Malthe joined the Pistoliers in his father's footsteps. After years of campaigning and earning several honours in combat against Norse, Beastmen and Orcs, he expected to be elevated to the officer class. But despite his prowess, Baron Nikse intervened and the Sigmarite Barthelm lost out to a dissolute Ulrican from Middenheim. Malthe seethed as he witnessed his superior's incompetence, and he slowly grew to hate Middenheim and its power over Nordland.

Barthelm turned his anger inwards, until a 'chance' meeting with Wasmeier after he escaped Middenheim. The former Law Lord fanned the flames of the young Nordlander's resentment and radicalised him. He put him in contact with hardline separatists and watched as Barthelm became convinced that nothing less than direct action and his own martyrdom would overturn Middenheim rule.

The young noble has an intense look with an unblinking stare; sports a neat red beard and his immaculate pistolier uniform. The Nordland pistoliers are less flashy than their Reikland and Averlander equivalents, but they still take pride in their appearance. He wears a Sigmarite comet pendant and an hourglass badge. He is not a raving fanatic. He is composed and utterly convinced the only way to liberate Nordland from the Middenheim yoke is to strike at their beloved daughter. He is likely to pay with his life, but it's a small price for freedom.

Goals

Barthelm is determined that the only way to liberate Nordland is to strike directly at the Todbringers. During the events of Empire in Ruins he will get his chance to get close to the ruling family of Middenheim, and will take the opportunity to inflict as much damage as he can.

Knowledge

Barthelm does not know much of the wider events. He does know that Wasmeier is helping organise Nordland resistance, but this is a secret he is determined to keep.

Misconceptions and Weaknesses

He believes Law Lord Wasmeier was ousted from his position in Middenheim due to his support for a free Nordland. He knows nothing of the man's involvement with the Purple Hand.

Allegiance

Moderate Sigmarite.



KARL-HEINZ WASMEIER

The Fallen Magister Magistri of Middenheim

Karl-Heinz is about 40, tall, of slight build, with medium-length wavy brown hair and intense dark-brown eyes. Since his flight from the Fauschlag, he has been increasingly sidelined by the wider cult, and left starved and tattered from his travails in the wilderness. The Middenheim cell he once headed has been broken apart and his best agents have been unmasked or eliminated. Zuntermein, who he only knows as the Altdorf Magister Magistri, has kept him frozen out of the Altdorf cell, and the only mission he has been given is the organisation of his last Nordland assets — who are probably now all dead. Despite this, Wasmeier is still a dangerous sorcerer and if he is cornered, he fights bravely with all the tools he has at his disposal. Tzeentch still has a plan for Wasmeier, and has gifted him with greater magical insight since his time in Middenheim, but beyond that he is an increasingly broken man.

KARL-HEINZ WASMEIER DISGRACED BARRISTER (BRASS 1)

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	33	32	24	46	58	53	55	64	57	64	15

Traits: Weapon (Dagger) +5

Skills: Bribery 84, Channelling (Dhar) 82, Charm 84, Consume Alcohol 61, Cool 80, Dodge 68, Endurance 66, Entertain (Acting) 74, Evaluate 77, Gossip 82, Haggle 84, Intimidate 44, Intuition 73, Language (Classical 84, Magick 89), Leadership 84, Lore (Middenheim 79, Law 84, Politics 79, Theology 74, Tzeentch 84), Melee (Basic) 43, Perception 78, Research 84, Secret Signs (Purple Hand 84, Wasmeier's Cipher 89), Sleight of Hand 75, Stealth (Urban) 63

Talents: Argumentative, Beneath Notice, Blather, Bookish, Cat-tongued, Chaos Magic (Tzeentch), Commanding Presence, Criminal, Disciple of Change, Doomed (*No juggler ought tarry too long afront the hostile crowd*), Etiquette (Guilders, Nobles, Scholars), Gregarious, Read/Write, Magical Sense, Master of Disguise, Petty Magic, Savant (Law), Schemer, Secret Identity, Speedreader, Super Numerate, Supportive

Possessions: The Clothes on His Back, 2d10 Brass Pennies, Seething Rage.

SPELLS

Petty Magic Spells: Dazzle, Dart, Eavesdrop, Magic Flame, Warning

Arcane Spells: Aethyric Armour, Aethyric Arms, Bridge, Drop, Flight, Push

Lore of Tzeentch Spells: Bolt of Change, Boon of Tzeentch, Blue Fire of Tzeentch, Curse of Tzeentch, Master of Fortune, Pink Fire of Tzeentch, Treason of Tzeentch, Tzeentch's Firestorm, Tzeentch's Golden Aura, Word of Tzeentch



Goals

Wasmeier wishes to become an important member of the Altdorf cell of the Purple Hand, winning back the prestige he used to enjoy in Middenheim by arranging for the assassination of Katarina Todbringer. As the adventure progresses, he realises how little Zuntermein respects him, and so his goals turn to revenge against Zuntermein and against the Characters who robbed him of his victory.

Knowledge

Wasmeier knows Zuntermein is planning something big, but is vague on the details. He knows about his own plots to provoke an uprising in Nordland.

Misconceptions and Weaknesses

Wasmeier is effectively being frozen out, seen by his fellow cultists as a liability. If Zuntermein can use Wasmeier to attract the attention of anyone who comes close to discovering his own plans, such as the Characters, he will not hesitate.

Allegiance

Neutral (Tzeentch), himself.



COLONEL OLAF SIEVERS

Frontiersman and Patriot

The Imperial Ostlanders were raised during Emperor Dieter IV's reign. Gerson von Tasseninck had boasted that a regiment of self-sufficient mountain men would prove as effective as artillery barrages or squadrons of knights in defying the Goblin horde of Grom the Paunch. The Imperial Ostlanders were mustered and, whilst they won no major battles against Grom's main force, there's no doubt their skirmishing, scouting, and information-gathering saved many lives. Ever since that time, both Wolfenburg and Altdorf have sponsored them to patrol the Empire's perimeter to look out for threats.

The Sievers family have served in the Imperial Ostlanders for generations. Since childhood, Olaf Sievers trained in the use of sword, bow, and halberd for the express purpose of confronting Orcs. The family are not noble, but have served with great distinction in the military. As a result, they are held in high regard by both commoners and aristocrats.

Colonel Sievers is a man of action, more comfortable ranging through the mountains than he is hobnobbing with counts and barons in Altdorf. Recently he has been forced to try and learn to navigate high society, for he has come to understand the terrible threat that is posed by Orcs and Goblins massing in the Badlands to the south of Black Fire Pass. The Orcs are growing in numbers and confidence — if they aren't checked they may invade the Empire in force once again.

COLONEL OLAF SIEVERS OFFICER (GOLD I)

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	60	56	37	58	60	33	33	30	62	25	18

Traits: Armour (Mail shirt) 2, Ranged (Bow) +6, Weapon (Sword) +7, Weapon (Polearm) +7

Skills: Athletics 53, Climb 57, Consume Alcohol 78, Cool 77, Dodge 53, Endurance 78, Gamble 45, Gossip 30, Haggle 30, Heal 45, Language (Battle Tongue) 50, Lore (Ostland) 45, Warfare 45, Melee (Basic 70, Polearm 65), Outdoor Survival 55, Navigation 45, Perception 70, Ranged (Bow) 71, Stealth (Rural) 53

Talents: Combat Aware, Doomed (*Seekest thou not what others have forgot*), Etiquette (Soldiers), Stout-Hearted, War Leader

Trappings: Sword, Bow, Halberd, Uniform, Grey Surcoat, Cloak

Goals

Sievers is concerned about developments south of the Black Mountains and Karl-Franz's behaviour. If he cannot get support from nobles in Altdorf, he may resort to more immediate measures to confront the threat. This is a weakness Gideon may exploit if the Characters fail to retrieve the Hammer and release Sheerargetru.

Knowledge

Colonel Sievers has no knowledge of particular relevance to the adventure.

Misconceptions and Weaknesses

His preoccupations have perhaps blinded him to the brewing civil war.

Allegiance

Moderate Sigmarite.

EMPIRE IN RUINS



CHAPTER 1

DIRIGIBLE IN DANGER



In this chapter, the Characters journey to Middenheim from the destroyed Dwarffold of Karak-Skygg. On the way, they learn things in the Empire have grown worse in their absence, and hear worrying news about the situation that awaits them.

Empire in Ruins has been written to follow on from **The Horned Rat**. The Characters have just escaped from a Dwarffold overrun by Skaven, and are on a balloon headed back to Middenheim with Baron Heinrich Todbringer and Veiran Thugenheim. If the party has just finished playing **The Horned Rat**, go directly to the next section. We strongly recommend that you play the whole of the **Enemy Within** campaign before beginning **Empire in Ruins**.

It's possible that you have done that, that the party did not survive the challenges of **The Horned Rat**, and your players have to finish the campaign with new Characters. Here are a few suitable options for the GM to involve a new party.

New characters need experience. Between 3500 and 4000 should give them a fighting chance of completing **Empire in Ruins**. They also require character concepts that justify their being taken seriously by the rulers of Middenheim: noble adventurers, experienced soldiers, or powerful wizard lords.

The main challenge in starting this adventure with new Characters is to account for why they are aboard a balloon above the Middle Mountains, bound for Middenheim in the company of Baron Heinrich Todbringer. This may seem a daunting task, but there are ways to accomplish it without straining credulity.

THE PRISONERS OF KARAK SKYGG

Perhaps the Characters playing the Horned Rat perished within the abandoned hold of Karak Skygg. Maybe they died heroically preventing the Moonbreaker Cannon from firing. Maybe they failed in the attempt, and perished as dozens of Warpstone meteors streaked down from the shattered moon.

But the Characters were not the only Humans in the ruined hold. The Skaven had taken a small army of slaves to labour in their Warp forges. Whilst most were mutated wretches, captives of the Characters' calibre may have resided within. During the confusion that surrounded the firing or sabotage of the Moonbreaker cannon, they managed to escape and were picked up by Baron Heinrich as he flew in to investigate.

A DIPLOMATIC MISSION

The Empire is being torn apart by a growing resentments between an Ulrican faction and a Sigmarite faction. Ambassadors have been sent from the Emperor's court at Altdorf and the court of Graf Boris Todbringer in Middenheim to test allegiances and observe attitudes across the north, especially in the Barony of Nordland and the Grand Princedom of Ostland.

A HISTORIC SURVEY

The lost Dwarf holds of the Middle Mountains are the focus of much interest — from Dwarf loremasters, Human academics, and looters and treasure hunters. Baron Heinrich is a scholar as well as a soldier and diplomat, and while returning from Wolfenbürg he takes the opportunity to conduct an aerial survey of the Middle Mountains, looking for traces of old Dwarf roads and other ruins. The Characters are attached to the Baron's entourage in a way that suits their Careers and abilities. The trip's diplomatic business is concluded, and the journey home is expected to be pleasant and trouble-free.

WORRYING NEWS

Thanks to his network of informants, the Baron knows of troubles in Middenheim. He is hurrying home after hearing of an attempt on the life of Graf Boris Todbringer, his father and the most influential Elector in the North. He intends to take charge in Middenheim — if necessary — restore order, and find out who was responsible. In this circumstance, the Characters could be part of his entourage: soldiers, advisors, or servants.



THE FLIGHT HOME

The first part of this chapter gives the Characters an opportunity to learn what has happened in their absence and to brief Baron Heinrich on their experiences.

THE SKY WOLF

The Baron's balloon, along with its crew, was a gift to the city of Middenheim from its Dwarf community in recognition of the long association between Humans and Dwarfs in the city. The vessel consists of a large, sausage-shaped gas bag with a gondola as large as a river barge slung underneath. Both the balloon and the gondola are painted in the blue and white of Middenheim, and the city's arms of a white wolf and a castle are painted on both sides of the gas bag. A large banner streams from the stern of the gondola bearing the same device.

Handling the balloon involves manipulating instruments near the engine to control several rudders that alter the direction and altitude of the balloon. This procedure has aspects in common with handling a sailing boat, though it is more complex. A person with experience of handling a boat might be able to pilot the balloon. However, the balloon is also a work of intricate engineering. In order to represent this, whenever a **Sail Test** is called for in order to pilot the balloon, see if the Character making the test also possesses the **Lore (Engineer)** Skill. If not, any Sail Tests made to control the balloon are made with a penalty of -3 SL. This represents that someone with knowledge of sailing might be able to pilot the balloon, but that it takes engineering nous to master the process.

MOVING THE BALLOON

The balloon is equipped with steam-powered turbines, but also relies on using articulated fins to tack against headwinds. The balloon moves at a rather stately pace, little more than walking speed, but can be made to move much faster if the wind is behind it. Unless effort is made to climb higher the dirigible is assumed to cruise along at an altitude of 100 feet.

Roll on the Wind Table at the start of a journey to determine the strength and direction of the wind; thereafter check at dawn, midday, dusk, and midnight by rolling a d10.

A result of a 1 indicates that the wind has changed by 1 step, with equal chance of becoming stronger or lighter. *Calm* conditions can only change to *Light* wind, and *Very Strong* winds can only change to *Strong*. An observer can make a **Challenging (+0)** **Perception** Test to notice phenomena such as trees swaying, or clouds dispersing, that indicate waning or gathering winds.

WIND TABLE

Direction (d10)

	1–3	4–7	8–10
	Tailwind	Sidewind ¹	Headwind
1–2. Calm	—	—	—
3–4. Light	+5%	—	-5%
5–6. Bracing	+10%	+5% ²	-10%
7–8. Strong	+20%	+10% ²	-20%
9–10. Very Strong	+25%	— ³	— ³

Notes:

¹ Sidewinds have an equal chance of coming from port or starboard.

² The movement increase shown can only be achieved through tacking, which requires a successful Sail Test.

³ A successful Sail Test must be taken in order to land the balloon and disassemble its more fragile components before it is damaged by the high winds. If the balloon cannot land a successful **Difficult (-10)** Sail Test must be attempted to steer the balloon in such a way that it does not suffer damage. If the test is failed, roll on the Balloon Hit Location Chart and apply a Critical Hit to the location in question. The dirigible also loses 2d10 feet of altitude. This problem can be mitigated by turning the dirigible so that the wind is behind it, but this will mean the dirigible speeds off in that direction until the winds die down.

THE SKY WOLF

Item	Vehicle Encumbrance ¹	Carries	Motive Power	Move	Toughness	Wounds	Length (Yards)
Medium Dwarf Dirigible	180	120	Vanes and Fins or Steam Turbine	2 or 6	40	20	30

¹ Vehicle Encumbrance refers to the weight and bulk of the dirigible. Carries refers to the weight of the cargo it can hold. Sail tests suffer from a penalty of -1 SL for every 10% by which this capacity is exceeded.

THE STEAM ENGINE

Such is the ingenious design of the balloon that it cruises slowly (M2), even against the wind, due to the shape of its vanes and fins. However in order to move with any degree of speed the turbines must be employed.

The steam engine is powerful and can increase the dirigible's speed (M6). However it consumes coal greedily. The dirigible is carrying 90 Enc of coal when the Characters embark. For every 6 hours of use the steam engine consumes 10 Enc of coal. Coal is also burned at a higher rate if the dirigible is forced to take an evasive manoeuvre or continue to sail into *Very Strong* winds. The engine becomes very inefficient if pushed to these extremes, requiring coal to be expended at a rate of 1 Enc per turn.

The dirigible can use its steam engine to heat gas in the balloon, climbing to an altitude of 2000 ft. For every hour spent over 500 ft 2 Enc of coal are burned for every additional 500 ft.

DAMAGING THE DIRIGIBLE

The dirigible has a Toughness score that modifies damage taken, and a Wounds score indicating how much Damage it can take. To determine hit location either reverse the score on the attack dice, or roll d100 on the table below. The location is determined in part by the general direction the attack came from.

LOCATIONS

D100	Front	Side	Rear
01-50	Hull	Balloon	Engine
51-60	Deck	Deck	Deck
61-70	Engine	Engine	Hull
71-00	Balloon	Hull	Balloon



DIRIGIBLE CRITICAL HITS

If a double is rolled the dirigible takes a Critical Hit according to the location struck. In addition, every hit after the balloon's Wounds score reaches zero is Critical Damage.

Hull

Critical Hits cause breaches in the hull, and the cargo starts to spill out onto the ground below. Cargo spills at a rate of 1 Enc per turn for every Critical Hit the hull has suffered.

Flammable cargo hit by flaming missiles also starts to burn, and as the dirigible's cargo is coal this presents a major problem. To work out how bad the fire becomes, determine the initial intensity of the blaze: a number of *Ablaze* Conditions equal to the amount of damage the attack dealt. Each turn the dirigible takes that amount of damage again, and that Enc of coal is also consumed. At the end of each turn roll on the Fire Intensity table to see if the fire worsens.

FIRE INTENSITY TABLE

D10	Effect	Notes
1	Dies Down	Roll D10 and subtract the result from the intensity of the blaze. This is the number of <i>Ablaze</i> Conditions to be applied from the next turn onwards.
2-4	Steady Burn	The intensity of the blaze is maintained.
5-8	Intense Burn	Roll D10 and add the result to the intensity of the blaze. This is the number of <i>Ablaze</i> Conditions to be applied from the next turn onwards.
9-10	Fire Spreads	The intensity of the blaze is maintained, but the fire also spreads to the deck, breaking out there with d10 <i>Ablaze</i> Conditions.

There are firefighting measures on board, consisting of two pressurised canisters of water and two heavy damp cloths in waterproof wrapping. These items are kept by the engines. The canisters can be employed by passing an **Easy (+20)** **Trade (Engineer)** Test. If the test is passed they reduce the strength of a blaze by $2d10$. After this the canister is exhausted. The cloths are employed by passing a **Difficult (-10)** **Athletics** Test. If the test is passed, reduce the intensity of the blaze by d10. The cloths can be used three times before they become ineffective.

Deck

Wooden splinters fly around as the deck is shattered. Characters standing on the deck must pass a **Challenging (+0) Athletics** Test or suffer a Strength 5 hit from flying splinters.

Blast weapons that strike the deck likely catch Characters in their blast. Characters may make Dodge tests to avoid the blast, the difficulty of the dodge test depends on the size of the blast.

AVOIDING BLASTS

Blast Size	Effect
Blast +1 to Blast +2	Average (+20) Dodge Test
Blast +3 to Blast +4	Challenging (+0) Dodge Test
Blast +5 or more	Difficult (-10) Dodge Test

Fires on the deck still prove a problem, though the lack of coal here means they are easier to control. Should a fire start here roll on the Fire Intensity Table, but subtract 1 from the roll. Should the fire spread it adds an *Ablaze* Condition to the hull.

Engine

The rear portion of the deck is occupied by a steam engine that drives the ship's twin turbines. The engine consists of an iron furnace and brass mechanisms. Critical damage to engines reduces the speed of the vessel by 25% and imposes -1 SL to any subsequent Sail Tests.

Fires cannot spread to the engines. Anything flammable here is already burning.

Balloon

The balloon is actually made up of a number of smaller gas-filled sacks collected together within a huge reinforced leather covering. The covering is tough and fireproof.

For every Critical Hit the balloon takes, the maximum altitude the balloon can reach is reduced by 500 feet. This means that after four Critical Hits, the balloon sinks to the ground.

Fires here still prove a problem, not least because climbing the rigging to fight them requires a **Challenging (+0) Athletics** Test. Should a fire start here, roll on the Fire Intensity Table, but subtract 1 from the roll.

Crashing

If a sudden reduction in altitude brings the dirigible in contact with treetops or craggy rocks, the vessel crashes. Every Character and NPC aboard must make a **Challenging (+0) Dexterity** Test or fall overboard when the gondola thumps down, falling 20 yards to the ground, or spending a Fate point to land in the branches, unhurt but 2d10 yards from the ground.

The collapsing gas bag drapes over the gondola and the surrounding trees, dropping fragments of metal and leather all around. Every Character and NPC directly beneath the wreck is subject to a Damage +2 attack from the falling debris.

Repairs

The effects of a Critical Hit can be mitigated by someone with the right tools who spends 15 minutes on the repair and passes a **Hard (-20) Trade (Engineer)** Test. There are materials for up to three repairs on board.

Nabbi Nodrisson and Sindri Suttrisdottir

The engine is tended by Nabbi and Sindri, two Dwarfs from Middenheim's Dwarf Engineers' Guild. They do not like blundering manlings underfoot and are not afraid to say so.

NABBI NODRISSON AND SINDRI SUTTRISDOTTIR DWARF PILOTS AND ENGINEERS

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
3	45	49	34	40	35	25	55	42	35	19	13

Traits: Armour (Light 1), Weapon +7

Skills: Consume Alcohol 55, Cool 50, Endurance 50, Evaluate 45, Intimidate 39, Language (Guilder) 52, Lore (Engineer) 62, Navigation 52, Perception 45, Melee (Basic) 50, Sail 45, Trade (Engineer) 75

Talents: Magic Resistance, Night Vision, Read/Write, Strong-Minded, Sturdy, Tinker

Trappings: Leather Armour, Hand Weapon, Engineer's Kit, Telescope

REPORTING ON DISCOVERIES

If the Characters have played through **Power Behind the Throne** and comported themselves well, the Baron already knows a fair deal about them. His spy Nastassia has told him they are competent and trustworthy folks (assuming they are), so he finds it easy to break the ice with them and start sharing information. If the Characters ask how he knows so much about them he remains tight-lipped; he will never betray Nastassia.

If the Characters were not involved in **Power Behind the Throne**, or did not comport themselves well during that adventure, the Baron is cagey with them, and only opens up with his own ideas once they have set him at ease.

'The rest of our journey should be smooth enough,' he says. 'This seems like a good time to talk.' He motions the Characters into his cabin, where food and drink have been laid out.

The first part of this scene is fairly free-form, as the Baron receives the party's report on events since they left the Picket for Karak Skygg (**The Horned Rat**, page 136). If the party has not been to Karak Skygg (see page 36), you can go directly to the Baron's briefing. The information there may need to be adjusted to fit the situation.

If the players need prompting, the Baron asks the following questions, plus any others you might care to add.

- *What did you learn of the Skaven's plan?*
- *Do you think the danger has passed?*
- *What else did you find in the hold?*

THE BARON'S BRIEFING

The Baron briefs the party on happenings in the wider world. It may seem to the Characters that the Baron is surprisingly well informed for a man who was in Wolfenburg during **Power Behind the Throne** — his spy Nastassia was keeping him up to date via carrier pigeon.

The State of the North

'Things have grown worse in your absence. You are certain that the attempt on my father's life was the doing of this cult you mentioned? Well, others disagree, and Ar-Ulric Emil Valgeir is among them. He is convinced that Sigmarites are behind it, and preaches that the corruption you uncovered at court was engineered to discredit the faith of Ulric and weaken the north. Certainly, there are folk in Altdorf who are very free with accusations. Talabecland is lining up behind Middenheim, and there is talk of declaring my father a new Emperor of the North.'

Missing Persons

'Wasmeier's body has not been found, and until I see it myself I assume he survived. The Watch are rooting out the rest of this Purple Hand cult from Middenheim, along with the Jade Sceptre cult to which Wallenstein belonged. It's deeply troubling that two of the city's most influential posts were filled by cultists. Rumour has it that Witch Hunters of Sigmar plan to descend on Middenheim, determined to prove that every Ulrican is a servant of the Ruinous Powers. There has been friction, to put it mildly. The fact that Wallenstein was a Reiklander has not helped.'

Talabecland and Ostland

'There is no evidence that the Kriegitzes of Talabecland had anything to do with the death of Crown Prince von Tasseninck of Ostland, but his father will not listen to reason. Open war between the two provinces is now underway.'

SIGHTS AND ENCOUNTERS

The journey from Karak Skygg to Middenheim is a little under 80 miles, and takes two or three days depending on the wind. After their interview with the Baron, the Characters have nothing much to do except watch the Empire pass by beneath them — until events take another turn.

Distant Glimpses

Travelling by air, the Characters are immune to the unrest that stalks the countryside. Smoke drifts by from temples and villages burning below. Figures on the ground look like ants, but it is possible to make out reavers stalking the roads and forests, brands burning in their hands.

Here and there, military units are on the move: their banners cannot be identified without a telescope, but they march in ranks and their blue and white uniforms give away their origins as locally raised regiments. A successful **Average (+20) Lore (Heraldry)** Test picks out regiments sworn to the service of local noble families, such as the Kärzbudgers or the von Helsteins. All the troops are marching toward Middenheim.

The Characters may be tempted to intervene in events on the ground, especially if they see an atrocity like a village being burned. However, Baron Heinrich refuses to land. He is determined to return to Middenheim as quickly as possible. *'Delaying will save a few lives at the cost of many. I'd rather save many lives at the cost of a few.'*

Over the Eyrie

The balloon's course takes it over the Middle Mountains and across the monster-haunted Drakwald. Just as the mountains give way to the forest, call for the Characters to make **Hard (-20) Perception** Tests. Those who pass spot a pinnacle nearby topped with a pile of interlocking branches. Those looking through a telescope see that six downy Great Eagle chicks are bunched up in the nest, awaiting the return of their parents.

The Characters may be able to convince Baron Heinrich to avoid the area. This adds 6 hours to their journey but also means they don't rouse an angry pair of Great Eagles.

If they do not spot the nest, or continue without making evasive manoeuvres, the dirigible attracts the attention of the parent birds. They rise up from the forest in order to drive the dirigible away. The female bird slashes at the balloon itself, whilst the male bird attacks Characters on the decks.

Once the dirigible passes the nest and continues on its way, the eagles cease their attack.



GREAT EAGLE

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

Traits: Acute Sense (Vision: as the Character Talent), Fear 1, Flight (100), Size (Large), Skittish, Territorial, Weapon (Beak and Claws) +8

Malfunction

The steam engine begins belching smoke, and popping, grinding noises are heard from its interior. The Dwarf Engineers crowd around it, muttering and scratching their heads as the smoke grows thicker and the noises get louder.

Any Character with the **Trade (Engineer)** Skill may offer to help, although the Dwarfs need convincing before they allow a stranger to work on their engine. Any qualified Character offering to help must make a **Difficult (-10) Charm** Test, adding the sum of their levels in the Tinker, Craftsman (Engineer), and Master Tradesman (Engineering) Talents as a bonus. Success indicates that the Dwarfs allow the Character to help fix the engine, which requires 5 Success Levels on an Extended **Very Hard (-30) Trade (Engineer)** Test, using the Assistance rules (WFRP, page 155).

Characters without the Trade Engineer skill may still help. If they pass **Very Hard (-30) Perception** Tests they notice that one of the many gauges on the engine is climbing steeply into

the red. The gauge indicates steam pressure rising in one of the chambers, and if this is pointed out to the Dwarfs they curse themselves for being so stupid and safely vent the extra steam.

If the engine is not fixed within 12 Turns, a great gout of steam issues forth, this inflicts a Damage +7 hit on everyone close to the engine, and a Damage +5 hit on everyone on the deck. However, having vented the pressure, the engine is now safe.

You may decide to make the repair process more nerve-wracking using one or both of the following options:

Option 1: You're Making it Worse! Failure Levels subtract from the accumulated Success Levels. If the total reaches 5 Failure Levels the engine seizes completely, and the dirigible begins to lose altitude as if it took two Critical Hits to the balloon.

Option 2: Watch Your Hands! Any Impressive or worse failure causes a jet of steam or a sudden movement of the gears that forces the testing Character to make a successful **Average (+20) Dodge** Test or suffer a hit for +0 Damage to the hand.

NORDLAND RISING

This event occurs about an hour or so after the dirigible has begun to travel over the Drakwald Forest. There is a loud and shrill screaming noise from the north, Characters peering in that direction see five plumes of smoke rising from the forest floor. They are Helstorm rockets. The Characters only have two turns to act before the rockets reach the dirigible.

Turn One: One of the rockets goes haywire as a fin snaps off, and corkscrews into the air. Four other rockets fly to within 100 yards of the dirigible. They can be targeted by weapons with sufficient range, but are small and moving extremely fast, so any Ranged Tests to hit them are **Very Hard (-30)**.

If a warning is shouted to the Dwarf pilots, they can try and send the dirigible into an evasive manoeuvre by passing a **Hard (-20) Sail** Test.

Turn Two: The rockets fly to within 50 yd. They can be targeted as before.

Turn Three: The rockets reach the dirigible, attacking it on the side. To see if they hit, make a **Ranged (Engineering)** Test using Sepp Wurnhauser's skill of 49 for each rocket. The rockets are imprecise (-1 SL) and the dirigible is at extreme range (-3 SL), but the dirigible is also an Enormous Target (+4 SL). So for every d100 roll of 49 or less a rocket hits the dirigible. If the Dwarfs managed to make an evasive manoeuvre, Sepp must roll 39 or less. See page 42 for Sepp Wurnhauser and page 43 for the profile of the rockets.

As the smoke clears, Baron Heinrich starts screaming orders to the Dwarf pilots.

'No time to deal with this now! Steer clear of their position and fly low, then reset the course for Middenheim.'

Veiran Thugenheim does not concur.

'We all want to get home in one piece my lord, but there are miscreants down there who just made an attempt on your life, and they may send more rockets flying towards us at any moment. I suggest we land and take the fight to them.'

Baron Heinrich looks determined, and if the Characters do not express an opinion his wishes are obeyed. However, if they suggest that Veiran has the right idea, they find themselves at the front of a chorus, as the Dwarfs also believe that the best form of defence is offence. Sindir says:

'If they've got an unbitched Helstorm launcher down there they ain't going nowhere fast. We could get the drop on them, or at least put the artillery out of commission before they set it off again.'

If the Baron is unopposed, then the dirigible takes 2 hours to skirt the location, but they are spared further rocket fire as Sepp struggles to recalibrate his machine.

If Veiran wins the day, the Dwarfs are able to bring the dirigible down in a clearing 100 yards from where they first saw the rockets. Once the dirigible lands, the separatists responsible for the attack prepare to fight. They're confident they can get a few rockets off at the Baron and his entourage before coming to close quarters.

THE NORDLAND SEPARATISTS

The separatists shooting at the dirigible come from Neues Emskrank, a dilapidated coastal town where the dockside taverns seethe with anger. Middenheim had no hand in the slow decline of the town's fortunes, but fur trader Nielsa Klammer finds it easier to blame the Todbringers and their Salzenmund lackeys — the Nikses — than accept more complex causes. During a trip to Beeckerhoven, she was approached by Karl-Heinz Wasmeier, travelling in disguise and claiming to represent Nordmarshall Gausser. He told her Baron Heinrich's dirigible would soon fly back to Middenheim, and let slip that she could strike a blow for Nordland by shooting him down.

Klammer rounded up a crew of separatists and stole a Helstorm Rocket battery from the greatship *Queen of Tides*. They carted the weapon south with difficulty, where Wasmeier met them in an inn to provide details of the dirigible's flight. They continued to this secluded spot and waited. After a miserable day and night, the airship appeared on the horizon...

Nielsa Klammer

Klammer is a tough woman with thick grey plaits, a sealskin cap, and a remarkably toad-like face. She has a serious, hectoring tone of voice hardened from years of shouting at dockhands and fur hunters. There's a touch of fanaticism in her eye, but she's cynical and pragmatic enough to know that dying in the mountains has no political advantage. If she needs to surrender and undergo a public trial in Middenheim, she knows this could rally more support back in Nordland. Nielsa was manipulated by Wasmeier because he told her what she wanted to hear.

NIELSA KLAMMER – DEMAGOGUE

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	39	24	40	43	32	35	33	34	37	38	15

Traits: Animosity (Middenheimers), Armour (body and head) 2

Skills: Bribery 58, Charm 48, Consume Alcohol 56, Cool 52, Dodge 45, Drive 45, Entertain (Storytelling) 48, Evaluate 42, Gossip 41, Haggle 48, Intuition 38, Language (Norse) 37, Leadership 49, Lore (Nordland) 44, Perception 36, Melee (Basic) 48

Talents: Doomed (*From the clouds, a reckoning*), Embezzle, Read/Write

Trappings: Sealskin Cloak and Cap, Light Armour, Sword

Sepp Wurnhauser

Sepp served in the Imperial Second Fleet as a boatswain until he joined Nielsa's group. Although he never used a Helstorm Rocket Battery at sea, he is familiar enough with artillery to work out the basics — point it in the right direction, light the fuse, hide behind a rock. Sepp is an obsessive patriot and believes he's fighting for the righteous cause of Sigmar, Manann, and Nordland.

SEPP WURNHAUSER – ARTILLERIST

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	35	39	24	41	42	40	49	32	35	36	13

Traits: Animosity (Middenheimers), Armour (Light 1)

Skills: Athletics 42, Charm 37, Climb 35, Consume Alcohol 44, Lore (Nordland) 39, Lore (Engineer) 38, Dodge 43, Endurance 46, Entertain (Sing) 37, Evaluate 39, Gamble 36, Gossip 38, Language (Norse) 42, Melee (Basic) 40, Melee (Brawling) 39, Ranged (Blackpowder) 49, Engineering 49, Row 36, Sail 49, Swim 35

Talents: Read/Write, Sea Legs, Nimble fingered, Fisherman

Trappings: Leather Armour, Hand Weapon (Cutlass), Engineer's Kit, Telescope, Pistol with 3 Shots



Hanne, Boris, Niklas, Mikhal

The other separatists are easily influenced: an assemblage of various discontents from Neues Emskrank who blame their misfortune on Middenheim rule. They were incensed by Nielsa's quayside rhetoric and gladly went along with her plan.

HANNE, BORIS, NIKLAS, MIKHAL

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	36	30	40	37	30	38	28	28	24	25	11

Traits: Prejudice (Middenheimers), Armour 1, Weapon +8

Skills: Climb 42, Consume Alcohol 47, Dodge 45, Endurance 47, Row 50, Melee (Basic) 46, Outdoor Survival 38, Swim 50

Talents: Dirty Fighting, Sea Legs, Fisherman

Trappings: Leather Armour, Hand Axes

THE SEPARATISTS FIGHT

Changing the Helstorm's elevation in order to fire at ground targets takes the separatists 3 Rounds. A fortunate party may reach them before any rockets are fired. The Helstorm Rocket Battery is imprecise and erratic. It fires using Sepp's Ballistic Skill, but it's a **Hard (-20) Ranged (Engineering) Test** to hit an individual or pair and **Difficult (-10) Ranged (Engineering) Test** to hit a close group of 3 or more.

If the test fails by less than 10%, the rocket explodes nearby and does half damage. Sepp has four rockets remaining in the rack — there's no time to load more.

If attacked, the separatists fight back, bellowing slogans about freeing Nordland. If more than three are killed or incapacitated, the others surrender. If they face more than nine adversaries, they also drop their weapons.

HELSTORM ROCKET BATTERY

Master Engineer Herman Faulkstein invented this experimental weapon, inspired by a display of Cathayan fireworks in Altdorf. It consists of a wheeled artillery carriage with nine gunpowder-charged rockets affixed to a frame. The elevation can be adjusted to fire at targets on ground or air. It's not especially accurate and better suited to firing on large regiments than small parties on the ground.

Weapon	Range	Dam	Qualities and Flaws
Helstorm Rocket Battery	185	+12	Blackpowder, Blast +5, Dangerous, Imprecise

After initial trials, the Second Imperial Fleet expressed interest in mounting Helstorm Batteries on its Greatships, but few captains were keen to introduce an experimental explosive weapon on board.

INTERROGATION

If Nielsa or any of the other separatists survive, they reveal the following:

- 💀 *They're fighting to liberate Nordland from Middenheim.*
- 💀 *An agent of Nordmarshall Theodoric Gausser tipped them off about the course the airship would take.*
- 💀 *This was three days ago.*
- 💀 *They haven't actually met Gausser, but his agent was highly plausible.*
- 💀 *The agent introduced himself as Karl-Heinz. He was about 40, medium build and with brown wavy hair. He was cultured and intelligent. He wore decent clothes and a hat with a purple feather.*

Klammer and Sepp won't reveal anything about the 'agent', but the others are persuadable. If the Baron or Thugenheim is involved in the interrogation, they press the point about the link to Gausser — they don't like the Nordmarshall, but they know he's not stupid enough to show his hand like this.

They are incredulous he could know the dirigible's flight path as it changed when they investigated Karak Skygg.

If Nielsa is killed or forced to empty her satchel, the Characters find a note from Wasmeier in his handwriting — see below.

Baron Heinrich takes prisoners (against the advice of Thugenheim) and seizes remaining rockets. The carriage is too heavy to transport back to Middenheim.

Experience Awards

Good roleplaying and clever thinking should be rewarded, but there are additional XP for the following:

- 20 points for dealing with the rocket crew
- 10 points for advising the crew of the dirigible to avoid the eagles' nest
- 10 points for venting the steam safely
- 9 points for fighting off the Great Eagle attack



Baron Heinrich, Thugenheim, and the Graf's agents shall cross the mountains one or two days from now, taking this route across the sky. Bring him down and all Nordland shall sing your praises!

CHAPTER 2

CHILLY RECEPTION



In this chapter, the Characters reach Middenheim and witness growing anger towards Sigmarites and the south. They act as observers of a last-ditch attempt to calm the religious division between the Ulricans and the Sigmarites. Yorri XV, the Grand Theogonist of Sigmar, sends one of his greatest minds to Middenheim: High Capitular Volkmar von Hindenstern.

Volkmar has proposals to deliver. He wants Ar-Ulric to journey to the Shrine of the Shining Rock in order to make a grand gesture of unity and, to sweeten the deal, a request on behalf of Crown Prince Wolfgang, the Emperor's nephew and heir apparent, to wed Katarina Todbringer.

CROWD CONTROL

The roads get busier as the Characters draw close to Middenheim. In this time of uncertainty, people are flocking to the city, fleeing from raiders or hoping to sign up with Middenheim's forces for the war that now seems ineluctable. There are long lines of distressed and agitated people at the entrances to the city.

In an attempt to control the influx and maintain a semblance of order, booths have been set up before each entrance as city officials question everyone who wants to enter. Commercial cargoes are waved through, as is anyone who can prove they live in Middenheim, but refugees are directed to clusters of tents that stand on either side of the road, where impatient crowds are building up. The Characters have no trouble getting into the city. If Baron Heinrich is with them, a squad of watchmen rushes them to the nearest gate, pushing aside anyone in the way. If they are on their own, the Ducal commissions that Graf Boris gave them for their mission to the Picket in **The Horned Rat** is sufficient to have them waved through.

Heinrich spends a minute in conversation with the guard. If Characters listen in and pass a **Difficult (-10) Perception** Test they hear muttered phrases. *'Arrived without warning'*, *'something of an imposition'*, and *'reckon they must be getting desperate down there if they'll resort to this sort of thing'*. It is the guard who speaks, Heinrich keeps his voice low.

If Characters ask Heinrich what was said he says, *'looks like we will be finding out soon enough'*; if they press him further he says, *'a delegation has arrived from Altdorf, led by High Capitular Volkmar, an adjunct to Sigmar's Grand Theogonist'*.

INSIDE THE CITY

Inside the city the streets are as packed as they were at the start of Middenheim's Carnival in **Power Behind the Throne**, but the mood is very different — frantic rather than elated.

Refugees scuttle through the streets, carrying their possessions on their backs, or pushing them in carts as they scour the city for a place to stay. Every flophouse and hostelry is full to overflowing. Stables, warehouses, and derelict buildings are crammed with people. In places thugs are busy turfing out unfortunates who can no longer pay for a patch of damp stone floor.

Most of Middenheim's Sigmarites have fled the city or keep themselves indoors, but accusations of Sigmarite tendencies or southern sympathies are being used to settle old scores and target folk who never quite fitted in. In the Freiburg, the temple of Sigmar is surrounded by a dozen bored-looking watchmen. They take jeers from passers-by with good humour, but do nothing to prevent the walls being daubed with anti-Sigmarite slogans — though they step in to prevent serious damage. The Characters' can reach the palace safely without incident or attracting unwanted attention, but if they decide to become involved in a situation play it out.



RUMOURS

Along the way, the Characters have a chance to pick up the latest news and rumours. As always, they are a mixture of truth, half-truth, and outright fiction.

💀 *Graf Boris has declared himself the 'Wolf Emperor,' reviving a centuries old title. It's a sure sign that the north is breaking away – and not before time! Those pampered fools in Altdorf have had their way for too long!*

The Graf has made no such announcement, though there are plenty in Middenheim who would like him to do so.

💀 *The Greenskins are getting restless down south, and there has been fighting in Black Fire Pass. If the Empire is weakened by civil war they could overrun the south – unless the stalwart Counts of Sylvania and Averheim stop squabbling and put a stop to them.*

This refers to an earlier rumour (Enemy in Shadows, page 15) that interpreted the return of the Imperial Ostlanders as a sign that the Greenskins had been defeated. In fact, the opposite is true, and Colonel Sievers is in Altdorf to persuade the Emperor to strengthen the southern border.

💀 *There's going to be trouble in Ubersreik. The Jungfreuds are recruiting troops and planning to take the town back by force, and damn the Emperor. If the north secedes, the Emperor's word will lose all its power and the south will probably fall apart.*

Half-true. The Jungfreuds are angry at being ousted from Ubersreik, but their recruiting is mainly aimed at protecting themselves from their long-standing enemies.

💀 *There have been more battles on the border between Ostland and Talabecland, in defiance of the Emperor's orders to stand down. The Tassenincks still blame Grand Duke Gustav von Krieglitz of Talabecland for the death of Crown Prince Hergard in the Grey Mountains, and with Middenheim looking ready to establish a breakaway Wolf Empire in the north, Talabecland could very well do the same, splitting the Empire in three.*

True, but incomplete. While it is true that Talabeclanders have never been fond of Reiklanders and Altdorf's rule is resented by many, there is no organised movement to secede.

💀 *The Sigmarites are starting to give way over the religious troubles. Some of them still want to burn every good Ulrican, but the Grand Theogonist has sent one of his scholars to Middenheim for talks to resolve the whole business of heresy.*

True. Grand Theogonist Yorri XV has sent High Capitular Volkmar to conduct talks with Ar-Ulric.

💀 *The Emperor hasn't been seen in public for a while, according to some traders from Altdorf. They say he's busy trying to hold the Empire together, but more likely he's laying low for fear of Ulrican assassins.*

Partially true. Emperor Karl-Franz has been in seclusion as the Characters find out later in this adventure.

💀 *The cult of Ulric has chosen Emil Valgeir as our new Ar-Ulric. This is one in the eye for the Sigmarites, Emil's no milksop. He won't brook disrespect of our traditions.*

True.

💀 *The Emperor is dead, and has been replaced by a double that the court keeps around for security purposes. Someone at the court is ruling from the shadows in the dead Emperor's name!*

Partially true, the Emperor is very ill but his double is making public appearances to cover up the fact.

💀 *Southern rulers are using the Mutant Edict as a cover, recruiting Mutants and other creatures of Chaos into their armies as they prepare to march on Altdorf. This wicked law must be struck down, and Mutants consigned to the cleansing flames as they have always been.*

Untrue, though most Witch Hunters and many other Sigmarites are fully prepared to believe it.

💀 *Relations between Middenland and Stirland are uneasy. Stirland is a centre of Sigmarite belief, and has made strong representations to Middenland over the persecution of Sigmarite priests there. Grand Duke Leopold von Bildhofen of Middenland treats these complaints with barely disguised contempt. His public pronouncements are that he knows nothing of any attacks on Sigmarites.*

True.

💀 *The harvest has not been good this year. Grain has not grown well, although fruit is sound. Merchants are rubbing their hands at the thought of higher prices and fatter profits. There have already been bread riots in some cities.*

True.

💀 *The Crown Prince is a mutant, you know – with a tail and wings! That's why he hasn't been seen outside Castle Reikguard for ages, and it's why the Emperor has banned the killing of mutants.*

False, but the Characters may well have heard this rumour or one like it before now.

💀 *Minor nobles across the north are planning to denounce all followers of Sigmar as heretics! It can only be a matter of time before Graf Boris Todbringer gives his support to a religious war, and any Sigmarites who haven't fled before then will surely be burned!*

Things have not gone quite this far, but plenty of Sigmarites believe this rumour.

💀 *I saw a cat with two heads, eight legs and two tails. It heralds disaster I tell you! Disaster! Pardon! Two cats? I know what I saw.*

BEARERS OF THE BLOOD DEMONSTRATION

As the Characters make their way towards the Middenpalaz, they pass through the Square of Martials. There is a loud public demonstration occurring to one side of the square. There are a number of men and women standing around a hastily erected wooden platform. Their Ulrican sympathies are obvious at a glance. They are dressed in furs, many wearing wolf pelts with jaws and claws still attached, and they carry talismans such as the wolf's head and the axe.

Beate Moser, a tall, striking young woman with broad shoulders and long white hair is the most vocal of the group. She stands on the platform and delivers an excoriating polemic against Sigmarites, Altdorfers, and Ulrican moderates. Her tirade is peppered with allusions to Ulrican lore, a sample runs along these lines.

'The City of the White Wolf stomached the unseemly presence of one High Capitular of Sigmar, but we do not abide the presence of a second! Hindenstern must be sent back to Altdorf with his tail between his legs! Middenheim's misguided citizens who venerate Sigmar, Hammer of the Elderly, are merely tolerated — not welcomed! We knew mewling Jarrick was unfit to bear the Hammer Axe of Skoll, as are all those who do not feel Ulric's own blood rush through their veins! Now his brother has been granted his office. He may not have Ulric's blood, but he could at least bear his teeth and rid us of this turbulent Capitular!'

Baron Heinrich and Veiran Thugenheim make for the palace gates. Characters who try to read their reactions notice on a **Hard (-20) Intuition** Test that they seem confused.

If either of them is asked about the demonstration, they say, *'These people are extremists. The Sons of Ulric preach that only a person who can trace their ancestry to Ulric ought to be anointed as his High Priest. Of course, the official cult does not agree. Last thing I knew, they were banned from holding assembly in the city, obviously something has changed.'*

This is true. The Sons of Ulric may not respect the new Ar-Ulric, Emil Valgeir, but he has grudging admiration for them, and has lifted the prohibition on them gathering and demonstrating in Middenheim.

A Character wondering about the providence of the phrase 'Hammer of the Elderly' could work it out by passing a **Hard (-20) Lore (Theology)** Test. During his campaign to unify the Empire, Sigmar slew King Artur, then an old man, in order to bring Middenheim within his rule. It isn't considered a polite thing to highlight, but it is one of the grievances Ulricans cite when explaining their problems with Sigmarites. Veiran Thugenheim explains this to the Characters if they ask about it.

REPORTING TO THE GRAF

The guard on the palace has been doubled, but all seems peaceful outside. Upon identifying themselves, the party is handed off to a succession of guards, servants, and courtiers before being ushered into the Graf's audience chamber. The Graf sits on his throne, flanked by several guards from the Order of the Knights Panther.

When the Characters enter, everyone's attention is on High Capitular Werner Stoltz, Middenheim's most senior priest of Sigmar, who stands before the Graf. Characters passing a **Challenging (+0) Perception** Test notice that someone has trodden on the hem of his robe, leaving a smear of filth.

'The Grand Theogonist expresses his concern at recent events. He suggests urgent talks to mend relations between the faiths of Sigmar and Ulric. To that end, he has appointed High Capitular Volkmar Hindenstern as an ambassador extraordinary. The High Capitular wishes to speak to you forthwith regarding proposals the Cult of Sigmar believe will ameliorate tensions in the Empire.'

A moment of silence descends, but before the assembled advisors and ambassadors can respond to Stoltz's announcement, Baron Heinrich strides across the room and bows to his father. Graf Boris holds up a hand, and the conversation ceases. *'We shall resume this discussion shortly,'* he says. *'You'* — he indicates the Baron, Veiran Thugenheim, and the Characters — *'remain where you are, everyone else is dismissed.'*

Graf Boris motions the party to sit, and orders a liveried servant to bring refreshments. He wastes no time with preliminaries. First he turns to Heinrich.

'Baron, it is good to see you returned to us and in the company of the Komission as well. No doubt, you will tell us of your mission, but before I accept your debrief, I want to find out what has befallen my friends here since we last spoke.' He turns his attention to the Characters. *'First, I must apologise to you. Clearly the Skaven presented a greater threat than any of us had been willing to admit prior to your investigations. I wish I had paid more heed.'*

'Now we are beset by an infestation of Sigmarites. I'm minded to meet with this High Capitular and find out what the Grand Theogonist has to say, but my fierier subjects say we're showing weakness by so much as letting them stay in the city. What do you think?'

Characters passing a **Challenging (+0) Perception** Test notice that both Baron Heinrich and Veiran Thugenheim goggle in surprise as Graf Boris consults with them so respectfully.

If the Characters have strong opinions on the matter, the Graf hears them out. He responds accordingly to the following topics, if they are raised.

The High Capitular's Visit

The Graf is interested in the Characters' opinion of the wisdom of meeting the Sigmarites. Privately he has already decided to arrange a modest palace function tomorrow afternoon at which to receive the High Capitular and hear his proposals, but if the Characters have any suggestions or concerns, he listens to them and at least *pretends* to take their advice on board.

Karak Skygg

The topic of Karak Skygg is broached by the Graf, if the Characters do not raise it first. If the Characters succeeded in their missions, his is ebullient and congratulatory. If they did not, and northern Ostland has been showered with Warpstone, he is contrite, and says more ought to have been done to support the Characters before it came to this.

Kärzburdgers

If the Characters mention the Kärzburdgers, Graf Boris says that Emmiline von Kärzburdger recently arrived in Middenheim. She has asked to speak to him regarding the Characters' actions at the Picket. (See **The Horned Rat**, page 120.) If the Characters have nice things to say about Emmiline, the Graf asks whether she should be invited to the function he is planning. If not, he sends word that he is too busy with the Sigmarite delegation to meet with her at this time.

Skaven

The Graf is apologetic about failing to appreciate the degree of threat posed by the Skaven. He says he is working together with Middenheim's Dwarfs to investigate the degree to which they infest the Undercity. If the Characters have any leads to surviving members of the Cult of the Yellow Fang, he listens seriously. (See **The Horned Rat**, page 17.)

Nordland

If the Characters report on the Scourge-Riders (see **The Horned Rat**, page 89) or mention the Rocket Crew that attacked the dirigible, the Graf grows grave. He mentions that there have been numerous reports of reaving from Nordland, and that he has asked Baron Nikse to crack down on the rebels.

Wasmeier

No news.

Once the Characters have given their report, the Graf thanks them again for their service and suggests they retire to their rooms in the Templars Arms, or wherever else they might prefer to stay in the city. Baron Heinrich and Veiran Thugenheim remain in the audience chamber to give their own reports.

About an hour later, a liveried servant arrives at the Characters' lodgings with an invitation to attend an event at the palace at 7:00 p.m. tomorrow evening. High Capitular Volkmar is to be formally welcomed and asked to present his proposals.



DEBRIEF WITH SCHUTZMANN

If the Characters played through **The Horned Rat** they may decide to approach Ulrich Schutzmann, commander of Middenheim's Watch. He is at his office in the Square of Martials during the day. If they visit him, Ulrich is extremely gracious. He seems a little deferential and cautious, a Character passing a **Hard (-20) Intuition** Test can tell he is anxious. As one of the few open Sigmarites among Middenheim's high society, Ulrich is feeling increasingly friendless.

'Thank Sigmar, you are safe. You might have noticed things have become increasingly divided whilst you were away. My best code breakers have been searching through various papers found in the Windhund Haulage basement. With Gottfried Jarmund's help, I was hoping you could shed more light on them.'

Once Ulrich has the Characters' attention he asks them the following questions, depending on their previous experience and what he knows of it:

There seems to have been a lot of talk amongst members of the Purple Hand in Middenheim about Kastor Lieberung. Do you know who he is?

Kastor was expected to deliver a large amount of money about a month ago. Do you know what became of it?

He is often mentioned as proposing a consolidation of cult resources, sponsoring Nine Eyes, who will in turn produce a Champion in Shadows. Do you know what this might be about?

There seems to be a great deal of confusion as to whether or not the Purple Hand in Middenheim should be subservient to the Purple Hand in Altdorf, or elsewhere, or whether the cults in each city should run their own affairs. Kastor is the only member of the cult who seems to be known to cells in multiple cities. Do you know why this is?

How does a cult with no central authority become established in multiple cities, following the same modus operandi?

MIDDENHEIMERS IN ATTENDANCE



Name	Allegiances	Attitude
Graf Boris Todbringer	Middenheim and Ulric (moderate)	Whilst he is still a little flabby and uncertain from his period of withdrawal, the Graf is steadily returning to his former confidence and authority.
‘Princess’ Katarina Todbringer	Middenheim and Ulric (moderate)	Also growing in confidence. Katarina wishes to see war avoided, but also seeks to be taken seriously and shown due respect.
Baron Heinrich Todbringer	Middenheim and Ulric (moderate)	Bewildered by how much has changed during his absence. Keen to reassert control.
Veiran Thugenheim	Middenheim and Ulric (moderate)	Equally bewildered. Keen to show his support for the Todbringers.
Ar-Ulric Emil Valgeir	Ulric (partisan)	A fierce defender of Ulrican values and traditions, the new Ar-Ulric wishes to make it clear that he is a very different man to his predecessor.
Emmiline von Kärzburdger	Sigmar (moderate)	Only there if the Characters vouched for her earlier. Emmiline is pleased that she has been shown enough respect to be invited. Slightly paranoid that she and her family are being set up for future humiliation.
Hausmeister Breugal	Middenheim and Ulric (moderate)	Careful not to get involved in politics, the Hausmeister’s main concerns are the stage management of the event and to ensure the Graf is treated with due respect.
Bettie Greenhill	Neutral	Bettie scuttles between the kitchens and the dining room throughout the event, ensuring that food and drink are always available.



ALTDORFERS IN ATTENDANCE

Name	Allegiances	Attitude
High Capitular Volkmar von Hindenstern	Altdorf and Sigmar (partisan)	The High Capitular seeks only to serve his Grand Theogonist. A grim man, he is unsuited to social occasions and simply wants to make his proposals and leave.
Graf Liepmund Holzkrug	Neutral	The High Lord Ambassador purports to support Altdorf (moderate), but deeply resents the Emperor he purports to serve. A hunter, he is after two goals: war between Middenheim and Altdorf, and his own reputation to remain unblemished.
Quintus Fassbinder	Neutral	A little confused as to why he is there, this unorthodox scholar was selected to advise Liepmund Holzkrug, who seems to want little to do with him. Quintus is rather bored and in need of distraction.
Yann Zuntermein	The Purple Hand	A spy for Altdorf’s Black Chamber and advisor to Graf Holzkrug. He is keen to observe goings on, but also remains in the shadows. To this end, he has recommended several rather loud personalities to accompany the delegation in the hope that they will demand all the attention.
Gravin Luciana von Eckstein	Neutral	She purports support Altdorf (moderate), but is in fact neutral. Descended from Estallian nobility and tired of her life in Altdorf. She is a willing pawn of Altdorf’s Chancellor Tybalt and a worshipper of Solkan, god of vengeance.
Baron Ewald von Laue	Altdorf (partisan)	A Nordlander who lives in Altdorf and has no love for his native country. Overtly he is here to advise Graf Holzkrug on Nordland politics, but he has also been tasked by Imperial Chamberlain Graf von Bitternach, to gather information to support Nordland’s independence from Middenheim. He is a shameless toady to those more powerful than he is.

AT THE PALACE

The event is attended by a small group of diplomats representing Middenheim's interests, and another group of diplomats representing the interests of groups around the Empire. Servants circulate among the room with drinks and plates of food, but they know not to eavesdrop and guests know not to overindulge.

The room is guarded by a cadre of Knights Panther. The order is sworn to uphold the integrity of the Empire, and so is seen as a neutral presence by most guests. However, the order in Middenheim has had a long history of cooperation with the Todbringers, and those who realise this do not regard them as neutral at all.

The Middenheimers centre on the Graf and his household. They are largely in favour of a moderate solution to the rising tensions, but are willing to be bullish in the face of any 'Sigmarite nonsense'. However, the new Ar-Ulric, Emil Valgeir, is aggressive in his promotion of Ulrican interests and unwilling to compromise.

The Altdorfers are here to offer two proposals that are, on the face of it, sensible compromises. Whilst the leader of the Altdorf delegation is ostensibly High Capitular Volkmar; in fact, High Lord Ambassador Graf Holzkrug has organised the delegation. He is secretly a political enemy of the Emperor's family, the Holswig-Schliesteins. Graf Holzkrug hopes to achieve his mission, but also wishes to sow distrust during his visit. His team of diplomats have been chosen to cast him in a good light, their own quirks and hang-ups may lead to confusion and upset.

The Characters have earned the respect of Graf Boris. Whilst they might not know it, he respects their opinions. He judges them as uncorrupted by the ambitions of powerful nobles, save maybe for himself. He actively seeks their advice, and whilst certain decisions are inevitable, the Characters should feel that they have been instrumental in the process. Clever diplomacy from the Characters could earn them the respect of attendees and information that might be of use in the future.

19:00 – The Event Commences

The Characters are admitted to the palace's Great Dining Room. The furniture has been cleared to the sides of the room to encourage guests to mingle. Tables laden with plates of succulent delicacies and flagons of fine wine line one side of the room. A detail of Knights Panther stand guard at the door.

The Middenheim delegation is there when the Characters enter. They greet the Characters and are pleasant and polite, save for Breugal, who finds fault in the slightest breach of etiquette or suitable attire, and Ar-Ulric Emil, who is clearly brooding.

The Altdorf delegation arrives about five minutes after the Characters. Graf Holzkrug struts in as if he owns the place, friendly but overbearing. Yann Zuntermein follows, smiling

and unctuous, refusing to be drawn beyond preliminary greetings. Gravin von Ekstein is coldly polite and looks like she would rather be anywhere else. Baron von Laue is neurotic, a fish out of water who flatters everyone in the hope of making friends. Quintus Fassbinder is loudly appreciative of all the new experiences he is having on his first visit to Middenheim. The High Capitular is a serious man, with almost monosyllabic brevity of speech.

Characters passing an **Average (+20) Lore (Reikland)** Test or **Challenging (+0) Lore (Politics)** Test recall that Graf Holzkrug is a member of the Reikland Council handling the Grand Province's foreign affairs. With 3 SL or more, they also know that he is the scion of a former Imperial dynasty. On an **Easy(+40) Lore (Theology)** or **Average(+20) Lore (Politics)** Test Characters have heard that the High Capitular is regarded as stern and serious, but professional. The other guests are such minor figures that no one is likely to know of them.

Whilst the parties mingle the two men with the least in common also seem to be the most alike. On one side of the room Ar-Ulric stands apart, frowning and muttering under his breath; whilst to the other side, High Capitular Volkmar matches him glower for glower and pointedly refuses to make small talk.

19:05 – Pleased to meet you, Herr Lieberung

Shortly after the mingling commences the Characters are met by Quintus Fassbinder, who is gregarious to the point of mania. How this meeting goes will depend on whether the Lieberung lookalike is still with the party. If the lookalike is there, Fassbinder initially reacts with horror.

'Quintus Fassbinder at your service, distinguished professor of the — You? But I was told that you had perished! What in Sigmar's name are you doing here?' He then grasps the lookalike by the chin and twists their head from side to side in a surprisingly strong grasp. 'No ... no ... you aren't him. He had a sort of Tilean nose, and the eyebrows were less furry. I'm terribly sorry, I mistook you for an old acquaintance. Please excuse me.'

Quintus is embarrassed and crestfallen, but if the name Kastor Lieberung is brought up he becomes excited once again.

'So you know of Kastor? What a coincidence! Look, now is not the time, but we must talk more about this at some point. I believe we are to make a journey towards the south in one another's company if all goes well. We can talk then.'

If the lookalike is not in the group, Quintus merely introduces himself.

'Quintus Fassbinder at your service, distinguished professor of the Altdorf University, and who might you be?'

Quintus is keen to hear about the Characters and their story, particularly if they mention tangling with Chaos cults.

'You have suffered brushes with the worshippers of the ruinous gods? But this is my specialist area of study! I must speak to you more about this. This is neither the time nor the place, but I believe we will soon be travelling to Altdorf together. We can talk then.'

If Quitntus is asked how he knows the party will be going to Altdorf, he stutters and stares at his feet, mumbling that he has said too much and spoke out of turn. *'Things will be made clear soon enough, ignore me.'*



19:15 – First Outburst

The Altdorf delegation may consist of nobles and diplomats, but it is as if the delegation's members were chosen deliberately for their unsuitability — which is precisely the case. Holzkrug does not fear war between the provinces, he desires it. He is so resentful of the Emperor's family that he is happy to see the Empire in flames, especially if it humiliates Karl-Franz.

Of course, Holzkrug is not so reckless as to make his desires known, and the High Capitular would not appreciate any diplomatic sabotage. So Holzkrug appears to have put a respectable team of diplomats together, but he knows they have extreme personalities and will no doubt cause a scandal.

The Characters can burnish their own reputations here, justifying them as upstanding and unbiased individuals in the eyes of at least some of the attendees.

The first outburst comes from Gravin von Ekstein. A secret worshipper of the god Solkan, she has become increasingly intolerant and vengeful as a result. Characters who have announced that they are keeping an eye on the Gravin, or Graf Holzkrug, or Bettie Greenhill, notice on a **Hard (-20) Perception** Test that the Graf suddenly lurches backwards just as the Halfling passes by with a tray of drinks. Bettie jinks left

to avoid the Graf, collides with the Gravin, and spills several glasses of red wine down her sky blue taffeta dress, leaving a noticeable stain.

Whilst this would normally earn Bettie a stern rebuke, the Gravin's reaction is out of all proportion. She yells at the top of her voice, her Reikland accent inflected with an Estalian lilt, and her refined Altdorf manners replaced with hot Solkanite fire.

Gravin von Ekstein: *'You noxious little pipsqueak! Is this the way guests are treated in Middenheim? I'll see you skinned alive you scampering little rat!'*

Bettie Greenhill: *'Dear me, lovey, don't get angry. I'll pay for the dress if salt won't lift the stain out.'*

Gravin von Ekstein: *'Pay with your blood! Graf Boris, I insist you resolve to be rid of this bothersome Halfling as swiftly and permanently as possible! Retribution, I cry! Retribution!'*

Baron Heinrich: *'I'm sure there's no need, if Chef Greenhill says she can make amends then she will.'*

Gravin von Ekstein: *'Then it's war between our two cities after all, I tell you, WAR!'*

Everyone is shocked, even High Capitular Volkmar and Ar-Ulric Emil, who had previously been wholly engaged in staring daggers at each other, are taken aback. If a Character announces that they are trying to gauge the reactions of people in the room, they may notice on a **Very Hard (-30) Perception** Test that Graf Holzkrug's face betrays a flicker of satisfaction, before he too adopts a show of surprise.

The Characters have an opportunity to alleviate the situation before other people react. If they make moves to intervene, they find it fairly easy to defuse the situation. Gravin von Ekstein realises that she has overstepped her bounds, but as a proud Solkanite she would never admit to wrongdoing. On the other hand, Bettie is terrified that the southern noble will continue to demand her beheading.

Therefore, both parties are ready to cease escalations — provided someone else intervenes. The manner in which Characters get involved may affect how other folks regard them.

NOBLES IN ATTENDANCE

Gravin Luciana von Eckstein and Baron Ewald von Lüne are described in more detail in Altdorf: Crown of the Empire, whereas Emmiline von Kärburgen is described in The Horned Rat. Whilst they should not need to interact with the Characters if you require profiles for them and do not have either of these books use the information for Nobles as described on page 19.

If the Characters wait and see what other people do, Baron Heinrich steps in and asks Bettie to go to the kitchen. He then has a quiet word with Gravin von Ekstein and reassures her that the accident was unintentional. She bids him goodbye and returns to her guest room in one of the palace outbuildings.

If Characters accuse Graf Holzkrug of playing a part in the accident, he flatly denies it.

RESOLVING THE FIRST OUTBURST

Actions by the Characters	Effect
Defuse the situation in such a way that satisfies the honour of Gravin von Ekstein.	Add two to the party allegiance score.
Defuse the situation in an even-handed manner.	No effect.
Defuse the situation in such a way that protects the feelings of Bettie Greenhill.	Subtract two from the party allegiance score.

19:25 – Second Outburst

The second outburst is made by Graf Holzkrug. Anyone observing him talking to Thugenheim hears the conversation, which starts as a measured exchange but soon rises to a crescendo.

Veiran Thugenheim: *I am informed at least that you opposed the motion. If only more Altdorfers had been of your opinion.*

Graf Holzkrug: *'Preceptor you must know I always stand by my emperor in his decisions.'*

Veiran Thugenheim: *'But I'm told that privately you objected?'*

Graf Holzkrug: *'Maybe ... maybe not strongly enough. The emperor and his uncle were convinced that the Jungfreuds were swelling their retinues in preparation to rebel though ... sigh ... they never let me review the evidence that led them to this conclusion.'*

Veiran Thugenheim: *'And since the takeover of Ubersreik no evidence of rebellion has come to light?'*

Graf Holzkrug: *'No. On the contrary! It appears the Jungfreuds had done nothing untoward. By the Hammer! They were loyal! There are those at the palace who refuse to believe it yet, but the JUNGFREUDS WERE LOYAL AND THE TAKEOVER HAS BEEN AN INCALCULABLE BLUNDER!'*

Graf Holzkrug realises too late that he has raised his voice loud enough for the whole Middenpalaz staff to have heard him. He settles down and looks bashful. If a Character announces that they are trying to read his intention they notice on a **Very Hard** (-30) **Intuition** Test that his anger seems feigned.

If Characters are interested in discussing the takeover of Ubersreik, Holzkrug happily engages with them, but this time he purports to support the Emperor's right to depose the Jungfreuds — something other nobles present disagree with. How the Characters respond may affect how they are perceived.



RESOLVING THE SECOND OUTBURST

Opinions voiced by the Characters	Effect
Suggest that Karl-Franz ought to be able to depose nobles he feels may rebel against him.	Add two to the party allegiance score.
Even-handed or silent on the matter.	No effect.
Suggest that Karl-Franz stay out of other nobles' business.	Subtract two from the party allegiance score.

19:35 – Third Outburst

The third outburst is more of a toadying whine. Baron von Laue was once a minor noble of Nordland, but his capricious and craven currying of favour lost him the respect of his peers. He recently decamped to Altdorf, hoping that his obsequious manners would find him allies there. Unfortunately for him, he was assumed to be a patriotic Nordlander, and is now in the pocket of Altdorf nobles who hope to benefit from an independent Nordland.

Now Baron von Laue finds himself in Middenheim, who rule Nordland, working on behalf of agents who hope he will inspire revolution in Nordland, when in his heart he knows his fellows in Nordland regard him as a laughing stock. The fact that von Laue tries so hard to be a friend to all that he ends up an enemy to himself is about to take a further twist as Baron Heinrich suspects him of inflaming tensions between Middenheim and Nordland.

Baron Heinrich: *'Have you been in touch with any of your old friends in Salzenmund since your move to Altdorf?'*

Baron von Laue: *'My good Baron, of course, I have many friends in Salzenmund with whom I carry out warm and extensive correspondences.'*

Baron Heinrich: *'Are you a friend of the Nikses?'*

Baron von Laue: *'Pfft! New money, my Baron. Hardly anyone in Salzenmund pays them great heed.'*

Baron Heinrich: *'The Nikses? To whom the Todbringers are related by marriage and who rule Nordland?'*

Baron von Laue: *'The Nikses! Of course! Old family friends, dear Baron, many a cherished evening has been spent watching the ships come in with my good friend Baron ... ah ... Baron Werther by my side, sharing a bottle of rum.'*

The pair continue to talk, but a Character passing an **Easy (+40) Intuition** Test can tell Baron Heinrich is extremely unimpressed.

Baron Heinrich: *'What know you of the Gaußers?'*

Baron von Laue: *'Fine fellows, dear Baron! Why I cannot tell the number of times I have enjoyed the hospitality of the celebrated Gaußer family.'*



Baron Heinrich: *'You know, recently bandits from Nordland have been claiming to act in their name.'*

Baron von Laue: *'Rotters the lot of them, my Baron. Manann knows each and every Gaußer as a traitorous cur!'*

Baron Heinrich: *'I thought you said they were friends of yours?'*

Baron von Laue: *'Never and not so. NO VON LAUE WOULD HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE REBELLIOUS BENIGHTED GAUSSERS!'*

The conversation dies down after this, though if the Characters enquire, they find Baron von Laue has no particular knowledge of Nordland's noble families and simply tells people what he thinks they want to hear. Having been reminded that the Nikses manage affairs in Nordland for Graf Boris, and that the Gaußers defy Middenheim's rule, he now purports to uphold the sincere belief that the Nikses are fine rulers and the Gaußers traitorous ingrates. If the Characters voice their own ideas it may affect how they are perceived.

RESOLVING THE THIRD OUTBURST

Opinions voiced by the Characters	Effect
Suggest that Nordland's independence may not be a bad idea.	Add two to the party allegiance score.
Stay out of it.	No effect.
Suggest that Nordland be grateful for the patronage of Graf Boris.	Subtract two from the party allegiance score.

19:45 – The Propositions

Having watched the antics of the Altdorf delegation with growing disgust the High Capitular steps forward and gives a terse report of the two proposals he has been asked to put to the Todbringers. He strides into the centre of the room and strikes the floor with his staff of office.

My lords and ladies, now we are introduced I shall deliver my message. His high holiness the Grand Theogonist travels to the Shrine of the Shining Rock, symbol of unity and hope. He beseeches you, Ar-Ulric Emil Valgeir, to meet him, clasp hands in respect and vow to uphold the integrity of our Empire. And to say aloud that the heresy is a lie.

'My god is not a god of peace,' Ar-Ulric replies.

Nor mine,' the High Capitular replies. 'And if we can stand united against our enemies then our enemies have true cause for woe.'

People in the room seem rather humbled by the High Capitular's words, even Ar-Ulric broods in silence.

'Furthermore,' says the High Capitular, 'Crown Prince Wolfgang Holswig-Abenbauer extends his hand in marriage to Katarina Todbringer, daughter of the Graf of Middenheim. Now you will excuse me, I have a long journey to Shining Rock ahead. Send your answer before I leave in the morning.'

He leaves without ceremony and the rest of the Altdorf delegation trail out after him. Quintus is last to go, bidding everyone goodbye personally and with bathetic enthusiasm.



Eavesdropping

As well as the subplots there are occasions during the event when one NPC mentions sensitive information to another that the Characters could use as leverage, or as a clue to wider events. In order to overhear such an exchange, Characters must have announced to the GM that they are hovering close to one of the NPCs involved, but not so closely that the NPC would notice them eavesdropping.

Alternatively, if Characters announce at any time that they are looking to see if anything interesting is happening, call for them to make a **Challenging (+0) Perception** Test to notice the exchange.

In either case the Character must then make a **Stealth (Urban)** Test opposed by the **Perception** of the Character they are shadowing (or if they are sidling up to a pair of Characters, the higher Perception of the two). Characters with the *Beneath Notice* Talent automatically pass this test and hear the whole exchange.

A better way to overhear conversations would be to make use of the Petty Magic spell *Eavesdrop*, though Characters who are caught casting the spell incur the outrage of the person they are trying to listen to.

Opportunities to eavesdrop come up whenever it suits you as a GM, but in each case there ought to be at least two opportunities for Characters to notice that the NPCs in question are having a private conversation, and move to listen in if they wish.

Graf Boris and Veiran Thugenheim

Veiran Thugenheim: *'If we're concerned about sending the right message, we could dig the old Carroburg colours out of the vaults.'*

Boris Todbringer: *'Now that's an excellent idea. You have my blessing.'*

Veiran Thugenheim: *'I'll send Sergeant Hortiz for it before we leave.'*

Boris Todbringer: *'Preceptor, best do it yourself. I wouldn't want word of this reaching the wrong ears.'*

Veiran Thugenheim: *'Ah. Yes. Very good, my lord.'*

Veiran and the Graf have decided to present an old war banner, captured from a Reikland regiment in the Age of Wars, as a peace offering. The gift is mildly provocative, as explained later on page 67.

Baron Heinrich and Liepmund Holzkrug

Graf Holzkrug: *'Tensions between Ostland and Talabecland has been simmering for generations, and has more to do with control of Ostland's forests than the death of Crown Prince Hergard. I wouldn't blame yourself.'*

Heinrich Todbringer: *'I don't, we did all we could.'*

Graf Holzkrug: *'Based on the best intelligence Nastassia could gather, no doubt.'*

Heinrich Todbringer: *'My mind must be getting as foggy as Altdorf. I haven't a clue who you are talking about.'*

Graf Holzkrug: *'Well, if you did you could tell her the Black Chamber always has an opening.'*

Liepmund is trying to unnerve Heinrich by suggesting that his diplomatic mission to Ostland was a failure and by revealing that he knows the name of one of Middenheim's top spies (see **Power Behind the Throne**, page 86).

Yann Zuntermein and Quintus Fassbinder

Note: This opportunity only occurs if the Lieberung lookalike was accosted by Fassbinder earlier in the event.

Yann Zuntermein: *'Who are those folks amongst the Middenheim delegation? I'd have thought the Black Chamber had files on every mover and shaker amongst the court of Middenheim's Grand Duke, yet I've no idea who they may be.'*

Quintus Fassbinder: *'I believe them to be adventurers who have earned the Graf's trust. No, I don't know any of them.'*

Yann Zuntermein: *'Well, you seemed shocked to see that one. Who's that then? Baron Trister?'*

Quintus Fassbinder: *'Just a case of mistaken identity.'*

Zuntermein knew Kastor Lieberung fairly well, but maintains a poker face. A Character passing a **Hard (-20) Lore (History)** or **Challenging (+0) Lore (Theatre)** Tests recalls that Baron Trister was a famous missing person released after a long imprisonment in the Dwarf hold of Karak Kadrin.



Emmiline von Kärzburdger and Liepmund Holzkrug

Emmiline von Kärzburdger: *'Pleased to meet you, I am Emmiline of House von Kärzburdger.'*

Graf Holzkrug: *'Liepmund Holzkrug. Delighted to make your acquaintance. Kärzburdger? The name rings a bell...'*

Emmiline von Kärzburdger: *'It has not been a great name since the Great War.'*

Graf Holzkrug: *'A war can diminish a name ... and a war can make a name great again.'*

Emmiline von Kärzburdger: *'Let us pray to Sigmar it does not come to that.'*

Graf Holzkrug: *'Oh yes ... let's.'*

That they come from once great families that are now overshadowed is something Emmiline and Liepmund have in common. Liepmund is trying to sound out where Kärzburdger loyalties would lie if it came to conflict between Altdorf and Middenheim. Anyone listening in who passes a **Difficult (-10) Intuition** Test gets the impression that he knew exactly who she was before the conversation began.

LISTENING IN

SL	Effect
3 or more	Character can hear the whole exchange clearly and escapes notice.
0 to 2	Character hears everything one of the participants says.
-0 to -2	Character hears nothing.
-3 or less	Character hears nothing and the participants are aware that the Character is trying to listen in to their conversation.

AFTER THE EVENT

The Middenheimers remain in the dining room, though Emmiline von Kärzburdger, if she is there, does not stay any longer than it takes her to make formal goodbyes.

The Todbringers question the Characters on their interactions with members of the Altdorf delegation, particularly if they became embroiled in any disputes. Graf Boris is considering the proposals put forth by the High Capitular. Ar-Ulric does not want to meet the Grand Theogonist, but Baron Heinrich points out that if he does not go the Sigmarites could claim a moral high ground, having gone to Shining Rock and not been met by their opposite number.

Katarina keeps her own counsel about whether or not she wishes to accept the Crown Prince's marriage proposal, and remains tight-lipped if anyone asks her about it. None of the other Middenheimers broach the subject. She looks serious and grave, and any Character who tries to judge her reaction to the news and passes a **Hard (-20) Intuition** Test, gets the impression that she is not happy.

After hearing the Characters' opinions, Graf Boris asks them to retire to Law Lord Wasmeier's old office whilst he confers with his family and Ar-Ulric.

AN UNEXPECTED VISITOR

Half an hour later a servant knocks on the door and announces the Lady Katarina Todbringer. Katarina is accompanied by her chaperone, Hildegarde Zimperlich, and two of her ladies at court, Natasha Sinnlich and Petra Liebkosen. Any Character who makes an **Average (+20) Perception** Test can see that Katarina has something on her mind.

'Things have turned worse while you were away,' she says. 'People are calling for my father to declare himself Emperor of the North, and take a stand against Altdorf and Sigmar. If he does, it's war — and if he doesn't some pretender may try to take Middenheim.'

'We have decided we will accept the invitation to Shining Rock. Ar-Ulric is willing to meet the Grand Theogonist, briefly at least. I'd like you to join the party. You know the Reiklanders and you've been of service to my father, so I would like you to keep an eye on everyone. I'm afraid there are some who would welcome the chance to stir up more trouble — I don't know who, exactly, or even if I'm right — but I fear for our safety. Will you do this for me?'

If the Characters ask Katarina if she is willing to accept the marriage proposal, she looks unsure of herself. *I don't think it will come to that. Rapprochement between the cults of Sigmar and Ulric should do much to heal the rifts in the Empire, and avert further descent into civil war. I am sure Crown Prince Wolfgang is a wonderful man, but we have never even met.'*

The Characters are now free to return to their lodgings and prepare for the journey to Shining Rock.

Experience Awards

Good roleplaying and clever thinking should be rewarded, but there are additional XP for the following:

- ➊ 50 points for comporting themselves well during the reception
- ➋ 20 points for each successful eavesdropping the Characters carry out
- ➌ 20 points for pertinent questions to Boris and Katarina
- ➍ 9 points for offering to help with the tidying up



CHAPTER 3

JOURNEY TO SHINING ROCK

LATE NIGHT GOSSIP

Whilst it is late by the time the Characters finish at the palace, there is still an hour or so to call on local hosteries for drinks and gossip, even if most Middenheimers are returning to their homes. If the Characters stop off at a tavern for a nightcap they can catch up on rumours they missed from the previous chapter.

If Characters are canny they may keep an ear out for gossip circulating regarding the High Capitular's visit. They can learn the following news, if they pass a **Challenging (+0) Gossip** Test. (Note: If they are perceived as Sigmarite this is a **Hard (-20) Gossip** Test; if they are perceived as Ulrican it is an **Easy (+20) Gossip** Test). Alternatively, they can get this news from Alfric Half-Nose, an information broker at *Bretonnian House* Inn (*Middenheim*, page 39) in the Altquartier, for the price of 6 shillings.

Apparently the Sons of Ulric are preparing a little surprise for our Sigmarite friends. They're going to waylay them just as they pass by the Warrenburg on their way to the south. I'd stay out of it if I were you, things could get messy.'

The Sons of Ulric are preparing a nasty prank to play on the Sigmarites at the Warrenburg, though it is in fact a ruse designed to distract from the fact that most of them have travelled south in order to spring a much nastier surprise at Shining Rock.

THE ALTDORF DELEGATION DEPART

If the Characters are interested in the departure of the Altdorf delegation, they can either watch the palace gates or the viaducts from the city. At 8:20 a.m. the Altdorf delegation is ready to leave. The disposition of the delegation is.

- A vanguard of six Knights from the Order of the Fiery Heart.
- A coach within which ride High Capitular Volkmar, Gravin von Ekstein, Baron von Laue, Yann Zuntermein, Graf Holzkrug and Quintus Fassbinder.
- A rear-guard of 12 Knights from the Altdorf Chapter of the Order of the Knights Panther, plus about 20 men-at-arms and assorted hangers on.

This group then makes their way from the palace gates through the Square of Martials. There is a small group of Sons of Ulric still on the platform from which Beate was ranting a few days before, though she is absent. They subject the delegation to anti-Sigmarite abuse, but it's a token effort.

The delegation head towards Osttor and through the west gate. They make their way down the viaduct and then follow the road around the base of the Fauschlag that leads through the shantytown of the Warrenburg.

As they head towards the south, a pair of Sons of Ulric dart from the crowd and throw sods of muck at the coach, smearing it with stinking daub made from peat and wolf scat. The pair then flee into Warrenburg's maze of ramshackle huts and tents.

Whilst they are outraged, the knights and men-at-arms of the Altdorf delegation do not consider it worth chasing down these miscreants, mindful of the fact that violence occurring in Warrenburg's sprawling alleyways might instigate a riot for which they will no doubt be blamed.

If Characters wish to chase the Sons of Ulric, refer to the rules for Pursuits (see *WFRP*, page 166). The Sons of Ulric have a head start of 4. Athletics Tests must be made in order to close the distance, if any rolls of 96-00 are made during the chase it indicates that a Character has tripped over a tent or knocked over the wall of a shack, outraging the residents.

UPSHOTS OF THE WARRENBURG INCIDENT

Characters' Attitude to the Altdorf Delegation	Effects
Chase and kill the Sons of Ulric	Increase party allegiance by 3
Chase the Sons of Ulric	Increase party allegiance by 2
Warn the delegation that something may happen in the Warrenburg	Increase party allegiance by 1
Do nothing	No effect
Contribute to the humiliation of the Altdorfers	Decrease party allegiance by 1-3

If the Sons of Ulric are caught they fight hard using the profiles for Religious Fanatics on page 18. Whilst their prank was relatively petty, they are fierce and brave fighters who would sooner die than betray their fellow Ulricans.

If one or other of the Sons of Ulric is soundly beaten, disarmed, and intimidated they claim that they were acting on their own initiative but mutter darkly that *'this is just a taste of what we'll give the Sigmarites if they don't start showing proper respect.'*

If the Characters do not pay any attention to the Altdorf delegation leaving Middenheim, news starts to spread throughout the city that Ulrican fanatics threw muck at them as they passed by Warrenburg. Most people in Middenheim are shocked by the news and keen to disavow the Sons of Ulric, though many also find the humiliation of the High Capitular rather amusing.

THE MIDDENHEIM DELEGATION DEPART

The day following the departure of the Altdorf delegation the Middenheim delegation set out, following the same route. The disposition of the delegation is:

- 💀 A vanguard of six Knights from the Order of the White Wolf. Ar-Ulric, Graf Boris Todbringer and Baron Heinrich Todbringer ride with them.
- 💀 A coach carrying 'Princess' Katarina, Hildegarde Zimperlich, and Veiran Thugenheim.
- 💀 A rear-guard of 12 Knights from the Middenheim Chapter of the Order of the Knights Panther, plus about 20 men-at-arms and assorted hangers on.
- 💀 The Characters.

THE ROUTE

The procession follows the Middenheim–Altdorf highway as far as the turn-off for the Place of Shining Rock. The site is about 50 miles south of Middenheim, just north of the town of Malstedt. During the first day the delegation heads from Middenheim to Grubentreich, and arrives at Shining Rock close to noon the next day.

Sigmarite Refugees

Sigmarites from across the north are streaming south to escape persecution and the pending war. The wealthy travel in coaches with a string of carts carrying their belongings and an armed escort of fellow Sigmarites or hired mercenaries. The poor travel by foot or donkey-carts, carrying what they can, and banding together for safety. The party come upon a group of Sigmarites being asked to provide 'a toll for safe passage' by a menacing Ulrican mob, and have a chance to intervene.

The procession stops to help Sigmarites in trouble, although this causes grumbling among the escorting White Wolves — and initial terror among the Sigmarites, who fear that they are about to be massacred. Still, as Baron Heinrich points out, a delegation on its way to peace talks with the Grand Theogonist cannot permit Sigmarites to be slaughtered, much less slaughter them themselves.

THE LEGEND OF SHINING ROCK

The Place of Shining Rock is unique in the Empire in that it is sacred both to Sigmar and to Ulric. This is because each religion has its own version of the shrine's legend, in which its own deity is the lead.

Millennia ago, the god was resting at the site after a great battle against the forces of Chaos. Ambushed and unarmed (there are many variants on the tale, each giving a different reason why this was so), the god picked up a boulder to fight with. The rock was quickly shattered, leaving a long, sword-like shard in the god's hand. He killed five hundred enemies with this weapon before the forces of Chaos fled. The shard — a jagged outcrop several yards long — still lies where the god dropped it, and the shrine was built around it.

While Sigmarites and Ulricans disagree — sometimes violently — over which god wielded the Shining Rock in battle, neither side will profane the shrine by coming to blows within its sacred precinct.

ARRIVAL

The procession turns off the road by a painted boulder. The northern side of the boulder bears the wolf's head of Ulric in blue; while the southern side bears the twin-tailed comet of Sigmar in yellow. A short track leads to the shrine. To one side of this track a number of blue and red tents have been set up, the camp of the Altdorf delegation.

The Middenheim delegation begins to erect their own tents to the other side of the track. Whilst members from both delegations greet and mingle, especially Knights Panther who put on a show of friendship and express the desire to ensure the integrity of the Empire, the Grand Theogonist, High Capitular Volkmar, and Ar-Ulric remain conspicuously absent, lurking in their respective tents.

Characters may well like to get a feel for the disposition of the Altdorf camp. The Grand Theogonist is apparently there (though he never seems to leave his tent) and there are another 20 knights guarding him, drawn in equal numbers from the Order of the Knights Griffon, the Order of the Fiery Heart, and Altdorf's own chapter of the Knights Panther.

High Capitular Volkmar and Yann Zuntermein are amongst the Altdorf Delegation, but the coach has gone on to Altdorf. If the Characters express an interest in the coach, or where Graf Holzkrug, Baron von Laue, Gravina von Ekstein, or Quintus Fassbinder are, they are met with tight-lipped responses from the Knights and camp followers in the Altdorf camp. A successful **Difficult (-10) Gossip** Test reveals that the High Capitular was displeased by the diplomats' performance, and sent them on rather than endure their company any further.



ELVYRA KLEINESTUN

Elvyra Kleinstun, an innovative pharmacist, is among the Grand Theogonist's staff. The Characters may have met Elvyra in their previous adventures, and her experiences since then depend on their prior relationship. She spends a lot of time wandering around the camp and scouting about the woods nearby, looking for herbs to replenish her supplies.

If the Characters never met Elvyra then she is simply the Grand Theogonist's personal pharmacist. He is suffering from very disturbing nightmares and chronic blinding headaches, and she assists by preparing pain killing herbal preparations for him. If she is questioned as to how she became the Grand Theogonist's personal pharmacist, she tells her first story.

Alternatively, if the Characters met Elvyra in Bögenhafen (see **Enemy in Shadows**) but did not meet her later in Weissbruck (see **Death on the Reik**), or failed to rescue her from kidnappers (see **Death on the Reik**) then she is delighted to meet them again, and also tells them her first story.

If the Characters rescued Elvyra from the kidnappers, she is even more pleased to see them, and tells them her second story.

ELVYRA KLEINESTUN HUMAN MASTER APOTHECARY (SILVER 3)

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	31	24	27	53	59	36	69	65	64	62	18

Traits: Prejudice (Bookish folk), Weapon (Dagger) +4

Skills: Bribery 72, Charm 82, Dodge 41, Drive 74, Consume Alcohol 73, Cool 74, Endurance 58, Entertain (Acting 72, Storytelling 77), Evaluate 75, Gamble 70, Gossip 90, Haggle 80, Heal 85, Intuition 79, Language (Classical 80, Guilder 70), Leadership 67, Lore (Medicine 80, Plants 80, Reikland 70), Melee (Basic) 34, Perception 74, Secret Signs 75, Sleight of Hand 51, Trade (Apothecary 89, Poisoner 89)

Talents: Blather, Coolheaded, Concoct, Craftsman (Apothecary), Criminal 2, Doomed (*A sister thine, shall unleash a crime*), Etiquette (Criminals), Fast Hands, Field Dressing, Master Tradesman (Apothecary), Luck 2, Pharmacist, Read/Write, Resistance (Poison), Savvy, Sharp

Trappings: Bandages (10), Chest (containing 6 GCs 17/6), Dagger, Drugs and Herbs (availability as a City), Guild Licence, Key (for chest), Healing Draughts (10), Market Stall (Collapsible), Trade Tools (Apothecary)

Elvyra's First Story

Having attended the Shaffenfest in Bögenhafen last Mitterfruhl, Elvyra returned to her home in Weissbruck. She was accosted there by a gang of toughs who threw her on to a barge and said they were taking her to Alberich Hollzauber, a daemonologist who wanted her to help him create spell ingredients.

Elvyra says she was kept on a boat for some time before being rescued by agents of the Emperor, who had broken apart the daemonologist's operation and burned him at the stake. Upon learning that she was a talented pharmacist, they recommended her services to the court, where she soon found her home preparing soothing medications for the Grand Theogonist.

The Truth Behind the First Story

Elvyra does not mention that she was once a resident of Altdorf before moving to Weissbruck. She had been known there by her birth name, Gisel Schader. As Gisel she had made a small fortune for herself peddling Laughing Powder to the Reikerbahn poor, and made a few enemies amongst the Hooks and the Fish.

She moved to Weissbruck to start a new life, but Alberich Hollzauber was able to find out where she was and kidnapped her. Hollzauber, whilst a follower of Tzeentch, was regarded as a liability by the Purple Hand, and shortly before Elvyra reached Altdorf, he was approached by Yann Zuntermein and persuaded to leave the city.

Zuntermein, who by now possessed plenty of compromising information about Elvyra, persuaded her to take the post of personal pharmacist to the Grand Theogonist. Elvyra is relieved by this turn of events, but does not realise that Zuntermein is positioning her to take the blame — if his poisoning of the Emperor is ever discovered. A corrupt physician called Kappelmuller is keeping the Emperor weak and pliable for Zuntermein, and Elvyra is unwittingly providing him with the complex mixtures he requires.

Gideon tipped Zuntermein off about Elvyra, and the two of them have worked to prime her to spread sensationalist rumours that later prove catastrophic for the Empire.

Elvyra's Second Story

Life settled back to normal for Elvyra after the Characters left Weissbruck. Then a few weeks later she met a man in the *Happy Man* tavern who informed her that none other than the Grand Theogonist was looking for a skilled pharmacist to help ease his troubles. She moved to Altdorf a short while after, and has been a member of the Grand Theogonist's entourage ever since.

The Truth Behind the Second Story

Elvyra does not mention that Zuntermein was the man who came to speak to her in the *Happy Man*, or that he forced her arm by threatening to reveal her secret identity. As above, he has manipulated her into supplying Kappelmuller with substances and spreading harmful rumours.

Characters who played **Death on the Reik** may recall Elvyra had as her ward a young lady called Liza. If Elvyra is asked about the girl she grows morose and admits that looking after her niece was not compatible with the hard work involved in caring for the Grand Theogonist, and that the girl is now in the care of an 'excellent Shallyan institution in Altdorf'.

REBELLIOUS WHITE WOLVES

After the initial burst of activity taken to get the camp in good order and when things begin to settle down, the Characters may notice on a **Hard (-20) Perception** Test that two knights of the White Wolf, Weregardt Schlupmann and Wolfgang Munchburger, are at a remove from the rest of the delegation, engaged in a private conversation.

Weregardt Schlupmann: 'And you'll be coming too if you've got any sense. Sooner wrestle with Horros than be here tomorrow.'

Wolfgang Munchburger: 'We swore to stand by Ar-Ulric.'

Weregardt Schlupmann: 'No true Ar-Ulric bares his throat to the Grand Theogonist.'

Wolfgang Munchburger: 'Listen, if you leave I won't breathe a word, but here I remain.'

Weregardt Schlupmann: 'You risk the bite of Blitzbeil.'

A Character who passes an **Average (+20) Lore (Theology)** Test knows that Blitzbeil is the axe carried by Ulric in myth, and that Horros was a monstrous white wolf said to have plagued the lands around Middenheim.

If the knights are queried about their conversation, Wolfgang is as good as his word and says nothing. Weregardt is trying to warn his friend that the Sons of Ulric plan to attack the camp, but if questioned by the Characters he sticks to his story that he is merely disgusted by the thought of witnessing Ar-Ulric kowtow to the Grand Theogonist.

Thirty minutes after this conversation, Weregardt rides out of the camp and heads north. After five miles or so he reaches a junction where the road forks, running north to Middenheim and west to Grubentreich. He waits there until an hour after sundown, whereupon he gives a series of loud ululating war howls, a signal to a Sons of Ulric scout who waits in the undergrowth just out of sight of the road.

VEIRAN THUGENHEIM AND ELVYRA

This conversation occurs if the Characters themselves are not interested in Elvyra. If they are interested in her, she tries to explain her misgivings regarding courtly life in Altdorf directly to them, perhaps giving the impression that she is speaking too freely. If not, they may overhear her conversation with Veiran. This occurs after the camp has been set up and everyone has had a chance to rest and mingle.

Elvyra Kleinestun: 'I haven't been there for long. To be honest, it's not what you would expect from the stories.'

Veiran Thugenheim: 'Really? How so?'

Elvyra Kleinestun: 'Well, I can't understand why they don't give the Emperor more respect. I mean, I know he's meant to consider the advice of others before making decisions, but half the time they act like he isn't even in the room.'

Veiran Thugenheim: 'That's odd, but may be how he does things.'

Elvyra Kleinestun: 'Well, they don't seem to even treat the Hammer with much respect. I mean, when folk from other provinces are present, they expect everyone to fall silent if it's so much as looked at. But when it's just Altdorfers and Sigmarites in the room, they just treat it like a glorified paperweight.'

It is important that someone in the Middenheim delegation hears Elvyra's testimony about the shoddy manner in which the Emperor and the Hammer of Sigmar seem to be regarded. In this example she is being buttered up by Veiran Thugenheim, who realises that she is a source of unguarded information, but if the Characters act quickly to prevent her from being too candid to Veiran, she can share similar information with Chaperone Zimperlich, a member of the Middenheim Chapter of the Knights Panther, or even one of the Todbringers.

TENSE ENCOUNTERS - 3:00 P.M.

Shortly after 3:00 p.m. word goes round the camp that Ar-Ulric and the Grand Theogonist are due to meet at the boulder near the road. They will pray together in silence and agree to meet again in the morning for more in depth talks. People are encouraged to watch from a distance, but to make no sound that might undercut the solemnity of the event.

If the Characters watch, they see the two high priests approach the boulder and stand to either side of it in silent contemplation. They spend about five minutes by the boulder with their heads bowed. They murmur to one another (too far away for even Acute Senses to pick up, though if creative use of magic or miracles are used with subtlety a Character can get an impression that whilst both priests are gruff, they are in agreement that a gesture of unity is needed, even if they cannot agree the details).

They then turn from the boulder and head to their respective tents. News soon permeates around the camp that the priests spoke respectfully and have decided to spend the night inside the shrine, conducting a vigil with a few of their knights. There are grumbler among the Knights of the White Wolf and members of the Order of the Fiery Heart, but for the most part everyone is pleased at this progress.

During the evening Characters may decide whether or not to keep their eyes open. To ratchet up the paranoia a little the following events can be used to unnerve the party.

Inconvenienced

Characters passing a **Hard (-20) Perception** Test notice a suspicious rustling in the undergrowth. If investigated, this turns out to be a member of one group or the other answering a call of nature. For maximum misdirection and embarrassment, the inconvenienced party might be Emil Valgeir, accompanied by two Knights of the White Wolf who look like lurking Sons of Ulric when seen through the foliage from a distance.

A Friendly Bout

When no one is looking, a handful of White Wolves and Fiery Hearts disappear behind the shrine's main building to decide which fighting order is better. An **Easy (+40) Perception** Test is all that is needed to notice the sudden shouts and clash of arms. Characters might believe that an attack is underway, and not notice that the combatants are striking to stun. If they join the fight and cause injuries, both parties are angry with them.

Kitchen Nightmare

A great scream rings out, accompanied by a terrible crash. Every Character can attempt a **Challenging (+0) Perception** Test to realise that the noise came from one of the larger camp fires. Far from being an attack, the scream came from a junior priest charged with preparing dinner, who upset a pot of boiling soup and was badly scalded.

No one blames the Characters for rushing to the sound with weapons drawn, but the incident is harmless to everyone but the hapless priest.



THE ATTACK

It is late in the day, so the two delegations make camp for the night. Ar-Ulric Valgeir and The Grand Theogonist are inside the shrine, accompanied by three Knights of the White Wolf and three Knights from the Order of the Fiery Heart. The rest, including the Characters, stay in tents ranged to either side of the shrine complex: the Middenheim contingent on one side; the Altdorfers on the other.

Let the Characters make whatever preparations they wish for the night to come, and wait until they are convinced — or as convinced as they can be — that nothing is going to happen. At that precise moment, the camp is attacked. The Sons of Ulric have split into three groups, each hoping to achieve a particular goal before vanishing back into the forest.

Group one is the first to attack. They creep over the road from the east carrying a pot of red paint with which they plan to coat the boulder, obliterating the symbol of Sigmar. They then make a lot of noise, but beat a retreat if they are faced with determined opposition. Their true goal is to draw as many fighters from the camp as they can. There are six of them, and they are lightly armed — all the better to beat a hasty retreat.

INITIAL POSITIONS

Location	Warriors
Middenheim Camp	Graf Boris Todbringer, Baron Heinrich Todbringer, Veiran Thugenheim, 14 Knights
Altdorf Camp	High Capitular Volkmar, 35 Knights
Altdorf Camp	Ar-Ulric Emil Valgier, Grand Theogonist Yorri XV, 6 Knights

Group two attack next, they burst from the woods to the south and rampage through the Sigmarite camp. Their primary aim is to cause confusion rather than injury, but they attack any Knight of the Fiery Heart or Sigmarite Priest they encounter.

Finally, the third and largest group emerge from the woods to the west, making their way to the Shrine of the Shining Rock. Their goal is to kill the Grand Theogonist and humiliate Ar-Ulric. They are prepared to slay anyone who stands in their way.

Standing against them are the Characters and the following forces.

DEFENDERS OF THE CAMP

MIDDENHEIM ENCAMPMENT

Leader	Order	Effect
Boris Todbringer	<i>'Slay these miscreants! We mustn't let the Sons of Ulric sully Middenheim's good name.'</i>	8 Knights chase the Sons of Ulric. 6 remain in the camp.
Veiran Thugenheim	<i>'Protect your Graf!'</i>	3 Knights chase the Sons of Ulric. 11 remain in the camp.
Baron Heinrich	<i>'See to Ar-Ulric's safety!'</i>	3 Knights chase the Sons of Ulric. 3 remain in the camp. 8 head to the shrine.



ALTDORF ENCAMPMENT

Leader	Order	Effect
Cleric-Captain Konrad Metternich of the Fiery Heart	<i>'All righteous men of Sigmar to me! We will not be mocked!'</i>	15 Knights chase the Sons of Ulric. 15 remain in the camp. 5 head to the shrine.
Volkmar	<i>'Protect the Grand Theogonist! Let no Ulrican cur lay hands on him!'</i>	5 Knights chase the Sons of Ulric. 10 remain in the camp. 20 head to the shrine.
Yann Zuntermein	<i>'Remain at your posts! These mangy dogs are just looking to distract us!'</i>	5 Knights chase the Sons of Ulric. 25 remain in the camp. 5 head to the shrine.



DEALING WITH THE FIRST GROUP

The attack begins at 4:30 a.m. Six Sons of Ulric break from the treeline on the side of the road and run up to the boulder marking the turnoff to the shrine. They are dressed in dark furs and two of them carry a large pail of red paint between them. Anyone who is on watch can make a **Hard (-20) Perception** Test to spot them as they approach the boulder. It takes them three rounds to cross the road (they creep on tiptoe), and another round to daub red paint over the Sigmar side of the boulder.

If the Sons of Ulric are targeted by missile fire or magic before getting to the boulder, they abandon their pail and run back to the treeline (taking a single round to cover the ground at speed).

Once the Sons of Ulric have either vandalised the boulder, or made it back to the treeline, they start hollering at the top of their voices.

'Only a weak, old wolf bares his throat to Sigmarite scum!', 'The North Howls!' and 'Death to the Grand Theogonist!'

Characters who are awake can react to the group; whilst the rest of the camp is roused by the disturbance. If the Characters manage to chase and kill the Sons of Ulric within six rounds then the danger is passed. However, after six rounds various commanders in each camp begin bellowing orders.

In the Middenheim camp Boris, Heinrich and Thugenheim can be heard screaming orders. If the Characters want to back any of these courses of action up, they can do so by raising their voices and passing a **Difficult (-10) Leadership** Test. If the party is perceived as being Sigmarite this test is **Very hard (-30)**.

If the Characters do not intervene, the Knights obey their Graf. Then 8 of them go to chase the Sons of Ulric, whilst the rest remain in the camp.

Over in the Sigmarite camp things are less chaotic, though Zuntermein, the High Capitular, and a cleric-captain of the Fiery Heart can be heard. If the Characters want to back any of these people up, they can do so by raising their voices and passing a **Difficult (-10) Leadership** Test. If the party is perceived as being Ulrican this test is **Very hard (-30)**.

If the Characters do not intervene, the Knights obey High Capitular Volkmar. If Characters argue against High Capitular Volkmar's decision reduce the Party Allegiance score by 3.

If the Characters chase the Sons of Ulric, the quarry has a head start of 6. However, they never break ahead by more than 8 (they wish to keep pursuers on their tail rather than lose them). Characters may be able to chase the Sons of Ulric down, or kill them with missile fire or magic, and if they do so the chase is brought to an end. However, if Characters do not give chase then the Sons of Ulric are easily able to keep ahead of any Knights that run after them, and those Knights are be seen again until after the attack is concluded.



DEALING WITH THE SECOND GROUP

The second group of Sons of Ulric wait for 20 turns following whatever decisions were made following the racket raised by the first group. They then run into the Sigmarite camp, trumpeting upon shrill goat horns, before rampaging about causing as much chaos as they can.

There are 20 Sons of Ulric in the second group, commanded by Weregardt Schlupmann, the rebellious Knight of the White Wolf who left the camp the day before.

Depending on how the distraction worked there will be between 13 and 36 Knights opposing them, plus Boris Todbringer, Veiran Thugenheim, Baron Heinrich and High Capitular Volkmar. This is a suicidal attack by the Sons of Ulric, but they strive to inflict serious damage before they are subdued.

RESOLVING THE SECOND ATTACK

The struggle between the Knights and the Sons of the Ulric is represented by an extended **Melee (Basic)** Test against the Knights' **Melee (Basic)**. This is used to determine the general progress of the fight even though individual Knights may have found the time to mount up, form barricades, equip themselves with shields and so on. The difficulty of the test is modified according to the number of Knights in the camp.

Knights	Difficulty
11–17	Challenging (+0) Melee (Basic) Test
18–24	Average (+20) Melee (Basic) Test
25–30	Easy (+40) Melee (Basic) Test
31–36	Very Easy (+60) Melee (Basic) Test

A total of 30 SL must be accrued through the extended test before the Sons of Ulric break off the attack (by this point many of them are dead and the rest injured and routed). In addition the following can be added each round depending on other factors.

- 💀 +1 for each of the following NPCs still in the fight: Boris Todbringer, Veiran Thugenheim, Baron Heinrich and High Capitular Volkmar
- 💀 +1 for every critical hit a Character scores on a Son of Ulric
- 💀 +2 if a Character kills a Son of Ulric in a single turn of combat
- 💀 +3 if a Character kills Weregardt Schlupmann

However, every time the Knights fail on their **Melee (Basic)** Test roll on the Complications table opposite.

Any Characters who are still in the camp at this point may join in the fight against the Sons of Ulric. It is easy to find a combatant as the attackers run through the Sigmarite tents in no particular formation.

Any Character who wishes to engage an opponent in melee may do so, and a Character who wishes to target an opponent with a spell or missile fire must make an **Average (+20) Perception** Test. Success indicates that a good target can be spotted, failure indicates that the only target that can be located is engaged in melee with a Knight.

Whilst the Knights inevitably beat back the Sons of Ulric, the degree to which this is a lengthy and arduous process depends on the following test.

COMPLICATIONS DURING THE SECOND ATTACK

D100 roll	Result
01–42	A Son of Ulric charges into combat with a randomly selected Character in the area. The Son of Ulric derives the benefits from charging and may also benefit from outnumbering the Character if they are already engaged.
43–67	A Knight of the Fiery Heart is slain.
68–82	A Knight of the White Wolf is slain.
83–87	Veiran Thugenheim receives a critical hit that requires him to retire from the fight and seek medical attention.
88–92	Baron Heinrich receives a critical hit that requires him to retire from the fight and seek medical attention.
93–97	High Capitular Volkmar receives a critical hit that requires him to retire from the fight and seek medical attention.
98–00	Weregardt Schlupmann charges into combat with a randomly selected Character in the area. Weregardt derives the benefits from charging and may also benefit from outnumbering the Character if they are already engaged. If Weregardt is dead the attacker is a regular Son of Ulric.



DEALING WITH THE THIRD GROUP

The third group of Sons of Ulric act 5 rounds after the second group attacks. There are 30 Sons amongst this group led by Beate Moser. She gives vent to loud rousing rhetoric. *Ar-Ulric!* She cries as she runs towards the Shrine. *'The blood of the god of battle runs in my veins, does his spirit so much as stir within your heart?'* As she strikes at Knights of the Fiery Heart, she yells: *'Daemon worshipper!'* As she strikes at Knights of the White Wolf, *'Cur! Traitor!'*

Depending on how the distraction worked there are between 11 and 32 Knights opposing them, plus Ar-Ulric Emil Valgier and Grand Theogonist Yorri XV. Whilst this attack is rather less suicidal than the other the Shrine is a defensible structure and it is hard for the Sons to bring their weight of numbers to bear.

Any Characters at the Shrine may join the fight against the Sons of Ulric. It is easy to find a combatant as the attackers are funnelled into the few entrances to the Shrine. Any Character who wishes to engage an opponent in melee may do so, and any Character who wishes to target an opponent with a spell or missile fire must make an **Challenging (+0) Perception** Test. Success indicates that a target can be spotted, failure indicates that the only target that can be seen this turn is already engaged in melee.

RESOLVING THE THIRD ATTACK

The struggle between the Knights and the Sons of the Ulric is represented by an extended **Melee (Basic)** Test using the Knights' **Melee (Basic)**. The difficulty of the test is modified according to the number of Knights at the Shrine.

Knights	Difficulty
11–12	Difficult (–10) Melee (Basic) Test
13–18	Challenging (+0) Melee (Basic) Test
19–24	Average (+20) Melee (Basic) Test
25–30	Easy (+40) Melee (Basic) Test
31–32	Very Easy (+60) Melee (Basic) Test

A total of 40 SL must be accrued through the extended test before the Sons of Ulric break off the attack. In addition, the following can be added each round depending on other factors.

- +1 for each of the following NPCs still in the fight: Ar-Ulric Emil Valgier and Grand Theogonist Yorri XV
- +1 for every critical hit a Character scores on a Son of Ulric
- +2 if a Character kills a Son of Ulric in a single turn of combat
- +3 if a Character kills Beate Moser

However, every time the Knights fail on their **Melee (Basic)** Test roll on the Complications table on the right.



COMPLICATIONS DURING THE THIRD ATTACK

D100 roll	Result
01–42	A Son of Ulric charges into combat with a randomly selected Character in the area. The Son of Ulric derives the benefits from charging and may also benefit from outnumbering the Character if they are already engaged.
43–67	A Knight of the Fiery Heart is slain.
68–82	A Knight of the White Wolf is slain.
83–89	Ar-Ulric is grappled to the ground, his white wolf pelt is ripped from him and flung into the mud outside the temple.
88–95	Grand Theogonist Yorri XV receives a randomly generated critical hit.
96–00	Beate Moser charges into combat with a randomly selected Character in the area. Beate derives the benefits from charging and may also benefit from outnumbering the Character if they are already engaged. If Beate is dead the attacker is a regular Son of Ulric.



BEATE MOSER

Ulric's favour is embodied in a strong young woman with flashing blue eyes and snow white hair. Beate knows how to invoke the miracles of her god and no one doubts her zeal. What folk do doubt is her claim to be a descendant of the White Wolf, though the Sons of Ulric take her seriously.

Beate is a leading light of the Bearers of the Blood, a sect of the Sons who are militant in their desire to see Ar-Ulric replaced with one of their own. The group were banned from assembling in Middenheim, but now Ar-Ulric Emil has been anointed Ulric's High Priest and the Bearers can meet again.

Beate had hoped to make gains in Middenheim by moderating the group, but the surprising leniency of the new Ar-Ulric has encouraged her compatriots to agitate for direct action. Beate has been left with little choice, either she seizes the opportunity to lead the Sons to war, or fades into irrelevance.

BEATE MOSER

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	41	44	42	41	35	29	45	40	40	37	20

Skills: Athletics 43, Charm 47, Climb 54, Cool 55, Consume Alcohol 56, Dodge 44, Endurance 56, Entertain (Storytelling) 44, Gossip 45, Haggle 44, Intuition 49, Leadership 49, Lore (Beasts 47, Politics 51, Theology 58), Outdoor Survival 52, Perception 49, Pray 57

Talents: Alley Cat, Argumentative, Blather, Bless (Ulric), Doomed (*When abandoned and alone, Morr shall befriend thee*), Gregarious, Hardy (+4 Wounds already added to profile), Holy Visions, Impassioned Zeal, Public Speaker, Read/Write, Rover

BLESSINGS AND MIRACLES

Blessings: Battle, Courage, Might, Protection, Recuperation

Miracles of Ulric: Hoarfrost's Chill, Ulric's Fury, Winter's Bite

AFTERMATH

Whilst the attack by the Sons of Ulric is not likely to be very deadly, it causes a great deal of injury and chaos and forces the breakdown of relations between Ar-Ulric and the Grand Theogonist, both of whom return to their tents after the attack in moods of pronounced wrathful sulking.

Over the next few hours it becomes clear that the more partisan of the Sigmarites wish to return to Altdorf, and whilst nothing is said directly to any member of the Middenheim delegation, mutterings along the lines of '*what else can you expect trying to negotiate with northern savages?*' can be heard from passing knights. The Characters can try to pour oil on troubled waters, but the mood remains unremittingly grim.

Elyra Kleinstun, if she has not yet had a chance, is even more desperate to tell members of the Middenheim party that all is not as it seems in the court of Altdorf. She has the misguided belief that this may spare them wounded pride at this time.

After the dust has settled the Characters are summoned to 'Princess' Katarina's tent. After greeting them she says the following:

'Thank you so much for all that you have done for my family these recent weeks. I now have another task I want to charge you with. If we are going to heal the rifts in our Empire we must all make sacrifices. I want you to travel south to Castle Reikguard. Tell Crown Prince Wolfgang that I accept his offer. We are to be married in Altdorf at his earliest convenience.'

Experience Awards

Good roleplaying and clever thinking should be rewarded, but there are additional XP for the following:

- ➊ 45 points if the Sons of Ulric were beaten back before they inflict any serious casualties
- ➋ 30 points if the Characters encourage leaders in the camp not to fall for the distraction caused by the first group
- ➌ 30 points for killing Beate Moser
- ➍ 30 points for killing Weregardt Schlupmann
- ➎ 20 points for preventing harm or humiliation to either of the High Priests
- ➏ 15 points for effectively anticipating trouble before the attack
- ➐ 9 points for anticipating that the Altdorf delegation might be harassed leaving Middenheim

The Party Allegiance score may be modified by between +2 (if the Characters tended to act in such a way that spares injury to the Altdorf delegation) to -2 (if they tended to support the Middenheim delegation).

CHAPTER 4

AN AUDIENCE WITH CROWN PRINCE WOLFGANG

THE WAR PRIZE

There is a great deal of gossip around the two camps as news of Katarina's acceptance of the marriage proposal spreads. People generally express relief at this outcome, though a few partisans amongst the knightly orders continue to grumble. Whilst the two high priests do not make an appearance, word is that they are both rather relieved that the 'Princess' has spared them the need to talk with one another again. Talk even starts to permeate throughout the camp that a military parade will be arranged in Altdorf to herald the happy couple, and two members of the Knights Panther ride north to Middenheim in order to organise some of the city's troops to participate.

Whilst the Characters prepare for their journey, they are interrupted by Baron Heinrich, who has concerns.

'There are a lot of strange rumours regarding Crown Prince Wolfgang. There are those who say he is a mutant, and others who say he is gathering troops to his side in preparation for rebellion. Still others say he is a man of wild temper, a spoiled southern brat who exhibits the worst aspects of Unberogen entitlement. Have you heard anything of this sort yourselves?'

He waits for the Characters to provide their answers.

'We would like you to travel south and deliver news of Katarina's acceptance to the Crown Prince. But do not hurry back from Castle Reikguard. Spend a little time with the man and try to get a measure of him. We want to know if he has had anything to do with this Mutant Edict, or the Ubersreik takeover. What sort of ruler does he plan to be? But most importantly, why does he wish to marry my sister? By the time you are finished there, we will be in Altdorf. Seek us out at the Helstein Manor in Mauerblumchen to give your report.'

Veiran's Proposal

Just as the Characters are readying to set off they are approached by Veiran Thugenheim, who carries a folded red and white cloth. He proffers it to them, saying:

'As a member of the Knights Panther, I am sworn to act in the best interests of national unity and to protect the Graf of Middenheim: tasks that will grow increasingly fraught if the Empire should fall to civil war. With the Graf's permission, I have brought a relic of a previous age from the Middenpalaz vaults. This is an enchanted war banner taken at Carroburg during the Age of Wars.'

He unfurls the standard. It is fine quality, but getting threadbare at the edges. It depicts symbols of Sigmar and the Reikland in antiquated styling. To those with magical sight who pass a **Hard (-20) Perception** Test it glitters faintly with interwoven threads of *Aqshy* and *Chamon*. The bearer of this banner benefits from +1 SL to successful Leadership Tests.

'We brought it here to present to the Sigmarite delegation as a sign of rapprochement, but I am convinced that it would make more impact if you delivered it to the Crown Prince as a prenuptial gift.'

Thugenheim is not being wholly honest. His loyalty lies first to his friend and liege lord Graf Boris. Any suspicious Character can make a **Very Hard (-30) Intuition** Test. If the test is passed, they detect a mischievous glint in Thugenheim's eye as he presents them with the banner.



If the Characters ask Thugenheim for more details why the banner was not presented to the Sigmarites at Shining Rock, he initially says, *'Given our troubles with the Sons of Ulric it was not thought diplomatic to raise the spectre of old conflicts at such a time, even in the spirit of reconciliation.'* Pressed further, he says, *'We didn't come to this decision without careful consultation. We spoke to some of the more measured delegates among the Reikland delegation, who agreed that it would make a greater impact if presented to the Crown Prince.'*

Thugenheim was actually approached by Yann Zuntermein. He had been tipped off as to the existence of the banner, and persuaded Thugenheim to send it to the Crown Prince.

Seeking Clarification

If the Characters seek further opinions from the Ulrican side as to what to do about the banner, they find people are either in agreement with Thugenheim, or think it makes little difference. Only Ar-Ulric Emil Valgeir resents the surrender of the war prize. *'The capture of this standard was achieved through the exercise of Ulrican might and the shedding of Ulrican blood. We should not proffer it meekly; the Sigmarites should plead for its return.'* Even staunch Ulricans amongst the Middenheim delegation think that Ar-Ulric, whilst due all respect, is being unreasonable.

Should the Characters seek to consult the Sigmarites about the gift, Thugenheim tries to dissuade them: *'You'll spoil the surprise!'* Furthermore, Zuntermein tries to intercept them and assure them of the wisdom of the plan. *'Ah, I believe that you are the intrepid folk due to meet the Crown Prince. I do hope you find him cordial. Between you and me, I hear you are to make him a present of the old Carroburg banner. A fine idea! I wholeheartedly approve. Unfurl and flourish it as soon as you see Castle Reikguard!'*

However, other Sigmarites are less impressed and if the Characters ask anyone with a religious or military background in the opposite camp they are treated with disdain. *'A rotten old banner, long forgotten about. What is achieved by this gift other than to keep us mindful of Ulrican ferocity?'*

Characters can also query the banner's provenance themselves by passing a **Hard (-20) Lore (History) or Lore (Heraldry)** Test. Those who pass get a sense that whilst the banner is an appropriate gift in the eyes of the public, there is an underlying message of 'remember that time we beat you'. Of course, Thugenheim and others in the Ulrican camp deny this.

The intrigue over the banner seems a minor controversy, but the characters subsequent behaviour could have ramifications.

THE BANNER'S EFFECT ON PARTY ALLEGIANCE

Characters' Attitude to the Banner	Effects
Refuse to take it	Suspected of Sigmarite bias — increase party allegiance by 3.
Cast it aside during the journey	Suspected of Sigmarite bias — increase party allegiance by 2. Also check to see if the action is spotted by a spy (see page 75).
Discreetly lose it during the journey	Suspected of Sigmarite bias — increase party allegiance by 1. Also check to see if the action is spotted by a spy (see page 75).
Make a discreet private gift of it to Crown Prince Wolfgang	This is the safest option — there are no other effects.
Make an open show of giving it to Crown Prince Wolfgang	Suspected of Ulrican bias — decrease party allegiance by 2
Unfurl and fly it during the journey	Suspected of Ulrican bias — decrease party allegiance by 3

CASTLE REIKGUARD

Castle Reikguard sits on a promontory overlooking the Reik Marshes, above the confluence of the Teufel and the Reik. It is the headquarters of the Grand Order of the Reiksguard: an elite, secular order of knights sworn to defend the Reikland and the Imperial bloodline.

The tall keep and flanking towers rise more than 200 feet from the top of the promontory, dominating the surrounding area. A strong curtain wall surrounds the complex, dotted with lesser towers. The main gatehouse is at the south, overlooking a broad plain that has been cleared of trees and other obstacles so that it is impossible to approach the castle unseen.

Castle Reikguard is a striking building, tall and imposing, built above the Reik on a steep cliff side. Pennants depicting the heraldry of the Reiksguard as well as the coat of arms of the Emperor's family can be seen fluttering from towers and turrets, and intricate Dwarf runes are carved into the stonework.

Castle Reikguard is known throughout the Empire as the military headquarters of the Reiksguard Knights. It is devoted to providing the order with training grounds, barracks, armouries and adjunct facilities for relaxation and religious observance.

Since the invasion of Gorbad Ironclaw in 1707 IC it has also served as a bolthole for the Emperor and his family in times of crisis. It was heavily refortified after Gorbad's forces withdrew, and incorporates runic devices designed by Dwarf architects that repel magic.

Within the walls of Castle Reikguard, all Language (Magick) and Channelling Tests suffer a penalty of -3 SL. Those made to cast spells from the lores of Witchcraft, Necromancy, Daemonology, and all Chaos magic suffer a penalty of -6 SL. It is considered highly impolitic to cast a spell here.

The Reiksguard are predominantly Sigmarite. Whilst they treat the Characters professionally during their visit, their attitude is coloured by the party allegiance. If the party are perceived as Sigmarite, they are received warmly and offered any assistance they might require. Whereas if they are perceived as Ulrican, they are afforded cold respect and left to look after themselves.

INTERVIEWING WOLFGANG

Wolfgang is happy to meet the Characters and allow them to interview him. He does not have the demand for respect and protocol that many aristocrats in the Empire demand. As long as the Characters are not rude or aggressive, he speaks to them as equals. If they are disrespectful, he expresses sadness that there is such hate and division in the Empire, but summons guards to gently but firmly escort them from the fortress.

Despite his youth, Wolfgang is a man of great integrity and intelligence. He tries his best to answer any questions the Characters put to him in good faith, and only demurs if he feels an answer risks genuine jeopardy to others. He is well versed in most subjects and lines of argument. Only on the subject of Tzeentch is his attitude out of character, he knows little and does not seem to care.

What is your part in the Mutant Edict?

I was rather taken aback by the proclamation, but I was happy to see it made. Sigmarites deplore mutation and there is evidence to suggest that corruption of the body correlates with corruption of the mind, but I am inclined to heed those Verenans and Shallyans who insist that we treat individuals justly despite their outward appearance. It was hastily done, I cannot deny, but I think it is just in its intentions.

Why do you wish to marry Katarina?

My driving motive is to bridge the rift between Ulrican and Sigmarite in our Empire. The Todbringers are deemed by all but the most fanatical Ulricans to be worthy exemplars, and Katarina is well liked in Middenheim. Our union will stand as evidence that the two faiths can coexist in harmony. Her birth might stand against her in the eyes of my snobbier subjects, but only the most myopic of them would overlook the quality of her character.

How would you bring peace to the Empire?

By marrying the daughter of Graf Boris. Our union should allay much of the fears folk have about creeping supremacism from either Sigmarites or Ulricans.

What about Ostland and Talabecland?

The war between Talabecland and Ostland strikes me as a quarrel between nobles grown out of hand. I would urge the Prime Estates to join me to find a way of disposing of any count who allowed a personal vendetta to proliferate into open war.

What of the Ubersreik Situation?

I hesitate to criticise Karl-Franz's actions, and the Jungfreuds have their flaws, but I cannot fathom why he was so hasty to project power in the way he did. Given the situation is what it is, I think the best way to resolve matters is to work out some sort of solution that allows the Jungfreuds to save face without facilitating a slide back to their habitual regime, which was rather stultifying.

Nordland seem restless.

With regard to Nordland, I will punish those who commit crimes. But if people there desire autonomy, I feel it is foolish to deny them.

What sort of ruler do you want to be?

I feel that the Empire's people deserve a change. I have a passing familiarity with the arguments put forth by New Millennialists and Brustellites, and whilst I find them steeped in resentment and bloodthirst, I can see that they herald a need to reform. I plan to establish a constitution along the lines of certain of the Tilean republics, obliging the aristocracy to obey common law and giving greater import to advisory councils, like Middenheim's Burgerlich Komisionen. My hope would be that decision-making is clearer, with more investment for the masses.

You want to be more democratic?

Not heedlessly. I still think there is some benefit to the notion of lifelong preparation for rule, and we can't have that without an aristocracy of some sort. But I think the loudest voices in the Empire tend to be older, Unberogen, and male. Not that there is anything wrong with that — I am myself Unberogen and male and aspire to be old — but other perspectives require representation.

Are you a Sigmarite?

I am, but I do not see how this precludes me from being an Ulrican. The gods are real and to be revered. The division between Ulricans and Sigmarites is a matter of mortal frailty, not divine intent.

What are you going to do about the Skaven?

It is a constant frustration to me that the Empire's people prove so complacent as to the genuine and serious threat posed by the Skaven. Here, you can see correspondence between myself and High King Thorgrim of the Karaz Ankor. I promised him that under my rule the Empire will be vigilant of the Skaven menace.

Regiments of our state troops will be seconded regularly to assist in tunnel fighting in the World's Edge Mountains — this is the best way to demonstrate the reality of the Skaven to our people. In return, High King Thorgrim has agreed to help re-engineer the walls of the Empire's cities, and assist in ridding our lands of Goblins and Beastmen. One does not break one's word to the Dwarf High King.'

What are you going to do about Marienburg?

I think it would cause lasting resentment to pressure them into rejoining the Empire. I hope in time that we can persuade them that it is to our mutual benefit for them to return. Trade would benefit, and they could retain much of their independence and customs.'

Do you know of the Purple Hand? The Champion in Shadows?

'I do not.'

Who are the Nine Eyes?

'Ah! I must say I'm surprised to hear them brought up. How did you come to hear about them?'

The Crown Prince is concerned here that there is a spy in his household. If his mind is set at ease on this point he continues.

'I have been lucky enough to receive a comprehensive education. Since I was young man, I have been tutored by some of the finest minds in the Empire. There are nine of them and, in recognition of their keen perception, they are informally known as the Nine Eyes.'

You may not know it, but you are being groomed to become a champion of darkness!

'Please, I've received you with respect. Spare me this nonsense.'

SERMO INTERRUPTUS

Crown Prince Wolfgang takes his interview with the Characters seriously, but they are not his sole concern. He has an open door policy with regard to the many collaborators and advisors he works with.

At three points during his interview with the Characters, other parties interject in order to give him status reports on projects he is involved in at this time.

During each of these interruptions, the Crown Prince says to the Characters, *'I am so sorry, but I must speak with this person. It won't take a moment'*. He receives the report and accepts praise that comes to him briskly but graciously. He is not falsely humble but he does not demand further credit either.

The first interruption is from Preceptor Leberecht von Hardenburg, a much decorated Knight Panther who strides into the room, snaps to attention and givies a brisk salute.

Leberecht: *'Your majesty. The duke of Parravon has agreed to your proposal. He says he is ready to muster his forces according to any sensible schedule you set. With his cooperation we can lay siege to Blood Keep from both east and west at once.'*

Wolfgang: *'Preceptor, it is good to see you again! The menace of Blood Keep has blighted both of our borders for too long. I am pleased to hear that the duke is so gracious. It seems not everyone has forgotten the benefits of comity.'*

Leberecht: *'Your majesty, it is more than that. The Bretonnians have rarely been so cooperative in terms of military alliance. Your manner with their ambassador secured their faith in this endeavour.'*

Wolfgang: *'I pray we have the soldiers to spare. Thank you, Leberecht. Please accept the hospitality of Castle Reikguard until such a time as I can take a detailed debrief. You are dismissed.'*

The second interruption comes from Claudia Karll, a Shallyan Priestess who has arrived from Altdorf to thank the Crown Prince for his recent charitable work with the cult.

Claudia: *'Your majesty, my apologies, but I am only stopping off briefly on my way back to the capital from Nuln. I just wanted to thank you personally for the generous assistance you have provided to our hospice in recent months.'*

Wolfgang: *'Priestess, please don't let any perceived need to thank me delay you. Any noble son of the Reikland could do the same.'*

Claudia: *'Then why don't they? It's not just the money, your majesty; you have provided our patients with your time and your fellowship as few other noble personages do.'*

Wolfgang: *'Thank you for your kind words.'*

The third interruption comes from Hans Bauer, a farmer who tends an estate in the shadow of the castle. He is a humble man who dresses in a rough, beige shift and nervously holds a worn hat in his hands.

Hans: *'Milord, beggen yer pardon, I were just wanten to give my regards. The knights at the gatehouse said you woulde mine if I speaks to ye briefly.'*

Wolfgang: *'Not at all, Hans, not at all. I'm sure my friends here won't mind if you wish to interrupt us just one minute.'*

Hans: *'Et's just me and the missus, milord. We tried what you said and it seems to 'ave worked for us, and now we're expecten our first child, milord.'*

Wolfgang: *'Wonderful news! I'm so pleased for you, Hans. Please give my best wishes to Heidi.'*

THE NINE EYES

As their meeting with Crown Prince Wolfgang concludes, Kathe Ruttman, a secret member of the Vigilant Eye, knocks on the door of the room and lets herself in. She is an elderly lady dressed in simple grey robes, and in her arms she carries four large scrolls. The Crown Prince stands and bows to her.

'Learned tutor, these people are scions of the Graf of Middenheim. We are just concluding our meeting. If you could just give us a second to say goodbyes.'



MEMBER OF THE NINE EYES HUMAN PROFESSOR (GOLD I)

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	49	42	31	41	44	46	44	65	53	53	16

Skills: Art (Writing) 69, Athletics 56, Bribery 63, Charm 66, Climb 41, Cool 68, Consume Alcohol 61, Dodge 66, Entertain (Lecture 73, Rhetoric 63, Storytelling 73), Endurance 51, Evaluate 68, Gamble 80, Gossip 73, Haggle 78, Intimidate 41, Intuition 56, Language (Classical 85, Any *85), Leadership 58, Lore (Tzeentch 90, Any * 90), Melee (Basic 52), Navigation 75, Perception 64, Research 85, Trade (Printing) 54

Talents: Argumentative, Blather, Bookish 3, Carouser, Doomed (*So here every ending reached, arcane rite gathers experts to render unreality*), Etiquette (Nobles, Scholars), Gregarious, Linguistics, Panhandle, Public Speaker, Savant (Any*) 3, Read/Write, Speedreader, Super Numerate, Tower of Memories 2

* When it comes to the Lore Skill, Language Skill and Savant Talent, each of the Nine Eyes has whatever is appropriate for their specialist area of expertise (see page 74).

Kathe acknowledges him with a brisk nod, walks over to a table, and begins to lay out her scrolls. They are exhaustive accounts of key moments in the Empire's history:

Didrick the Unjust, a Compendium of his Blunders and Contentions by Professor Scheydt; *Seven Key Battles of the Age of Wars* by Kurt Muller, Scholar, University of Altdorf; *Fassbinder's Astonishing Summary of Sigmarian Controversies: The Unique Divine Nature of Sigmar* by Hans Pfaff, Scholar, University of Altdorf.

The scrolls are all copies of papers produced by scholars at the University of Altdorf, and are dense, serious works. Kathe is keen to commence her lessons, but briefly remarks on the scrolls if asked about them. She is not rude, but lets the Characters know she has only so much time to devote to questions before she must commence her lesson.

A much maligned Emperor, and with good reason, Didrick was a tyrant with a marked propensity to order extensive redrafting of Imperial law to suit himself and his cronies. A true Emperor should be careful to live by the laws he expects his subjects to obey.'

Muller is an exemplary scholar, determined to marry accounts from various sides of the conflict and to delineate between knowledge agreed upon by bitter enemies and that which is only purported to have happened according to one side. A true historian.'

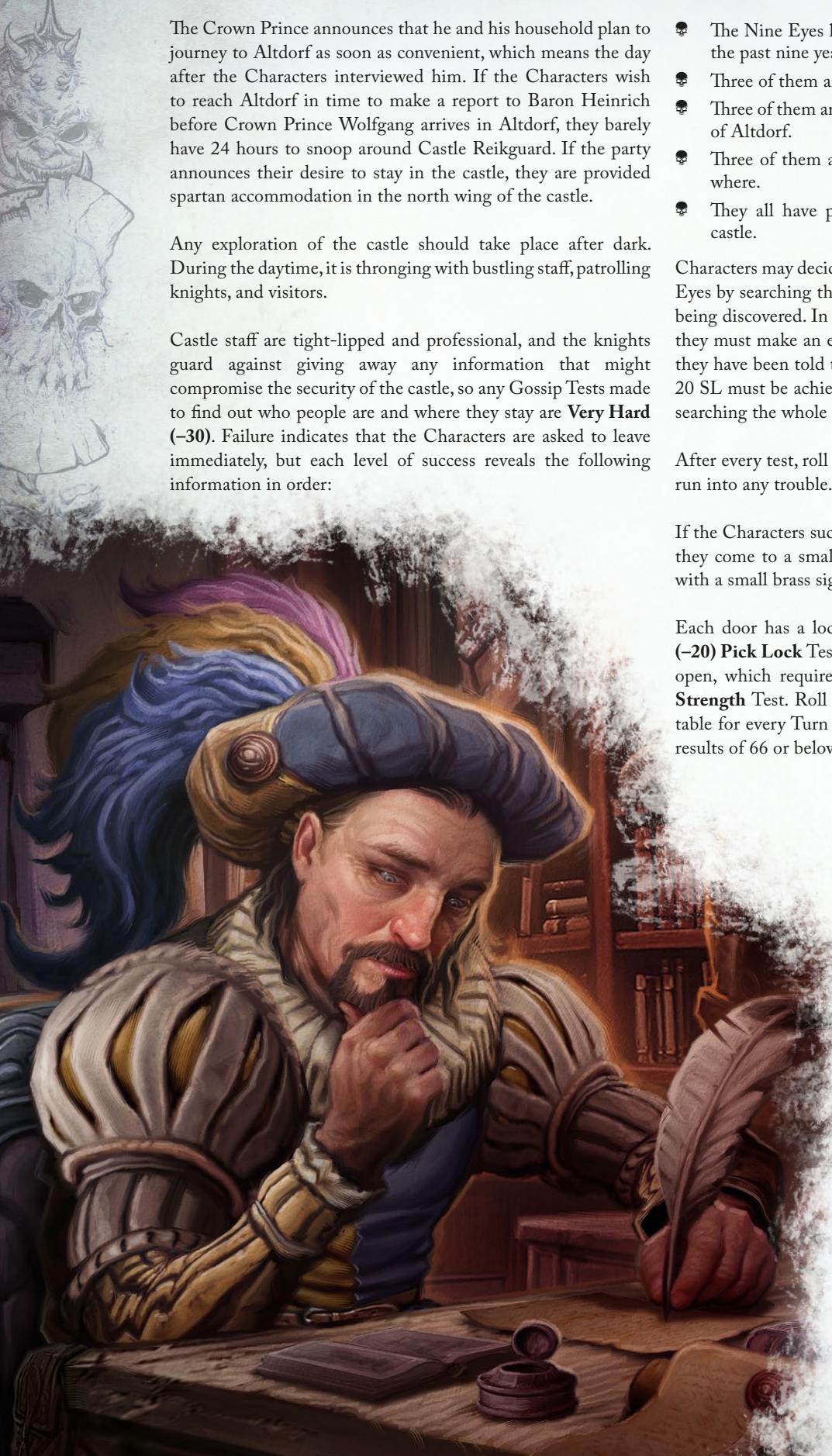
Fassbinder has some rum thoughts about accounts of Sigmar's last journey, and his notions on the true fate of Ghal Maraz are borderline heretical. A crank with a propensity to favour wild anecdote over solid research. I include him here as an example of how not to pursue scholarship.'

Pfaff is a staunch Sigmarite who believes the Heldenhammer alone represents humanity among the pantheon of the gods. I regard his paper as a fine example of polemic: he makes fine arguments, but rather too easily dismisses notions that would complicate his model.'

Investigating the Nine Eyes

This section is intended for proactive Characters. Many may have no knowledge of or interest in the Nine Eyes, and if this is the case, the strange tutors simply join the Crown Prince's party when it sets off for Altdorf.

Characters may be suspicious of the Nine Eyes, depending on how much they recall of earlier mentions of such things (for example, the Declaration of Change handout in **The Horned Rat**, page 38). If they wish to investigate, remind them that they are in a castle heavily patrolled by members of the Reiksguard, and that any provocative actions they take may contribute to the instability of the Empire.



The Crown Prince announces that he and his household plan to journey to Altdorf as soon as convenient, which means the day after the Characters interviewed him. If the Characters wish to reach Altdorf in time to make a report to Baron Heinrich before Crown Prince Wolfgang arrives in Altdorf, they barely have 24 hours to snoop around Castle Reikguard. If the party announces their desire to stay in the castle, they are provided spartan accommodation in the north wing of the castle.

Any exploration of the castle should take place after dark. During the daytime, it is thronging with bustling staff, patrolling knights, and visitors.

Castle staff are tight-lipped and professional, and the knights guard against giving away any information that might compromise the security of the castle, so any Gossip Tests made to find out who people are and where they stay are **Very Hard (-30)**. Failure indicates that the Characters are asked to leave immediately, but each level of success reveals the following information in order:

- 💀 The Nine Eyes have been tutors to the Crown Prince for the past nine years.
- 💀 Three of them are currently at the castle.
- 💀 Three of them are preparing their lessons at the University of Altdorf.
- 💀 Three of them are further abroad; no one knows exactly where.
- 💀 They all have private quarters in the east wing of the castle.

Characters may decide to try and locate the quarters of the Nine Eyes by searching the castle. This is likely to end up with them being discovered. In order to find the quarters in the east wing, they must make an extended **Difficult (+0) Perception** Test. If they have been told the Nine Eyes reside in the east wing then 20 SL must be achieved before they find the rooms. If they are searching the whole castle they must reach 50 SL.

After every test, roll on the table below to see if the Characters run into any trouble.

If the Characters succeed the extended test to search the castle, they come to a small corridor lined with nine doorways, each with a small brass sign.

Each door has a lock requiring 10 SL on an extended **Hard (-20) Pick Lock** Test to open. Alternatively they can be forced open, which requires 17 SL on an extended **Difficult (-10) Strength** Test. Roll again on the Exploring Castle Reikguard table for every Turn a Character tries to force a door, ignoring results of 66 or below.

EXPLORING CASTLE REIKGUARD

D100 Roll	Result
01–50	Nothing. The Characters search can continue unimpeded.
51–61	Just the Place! The Characters feel that if they were eccentric tutors they would want access to a related place they have stumbled across, such as a bookshelf or study. One of them can make a Challenging (+0) Intuition Test, and any SL resulting from that test added or subtracted from their current total.
62–66	A Clue! Those scuff marks might be made by a shuffling old tutor. That torn bit of parchment looks like it came from an academic treatise. One Character can make an Average (+20) Track Test, and any SL resulting from that test can be added or subtracted from their current total.
67–00	Footsteps! The Characters hear footsteps approaching. They have two Rounds to prepare. If they wish to hide, there are many convenient alcoves, arrow slits, suits of armour, and arrases throughout the castle. Whoever is making the noise will spot a Character on an opposed Perception/Stealth (Urban) Test. Roll d100 to determine who made the footsteps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 01–45: Junior Servant 46–60: Senior Servant 61–80: Patrolling Knight 81–96: Pair of Patrolling Knights 97–99: One of the resident Nine Eyes (Kathe Ruttman, Per Haldestaake, or Ingrid Rademakers) 00: Crown Prince Wolfgang

INFRACTIONS AND PARTY ALLEGIANCE

The Reiksguard at the castle really do own the place and have zero tolerance for anyone behaving in a suspicious manner. If they catch people sneaking about, or asking too many pointed questions, they gently but firmly escort them from the premises.

- 💀 If the party is perceived as Sigmarite, they may attempt a Difficult (-10) Charm Test to fast talk their way out of trouble. If the test is passed, they are returned to their quarters. A second infraction requires a Hard (-20) Charm Test, a third a Very Hard (-30) Charm Test, and the fourth attempt sees them expelled from the castle.
- 💀 If the party is perceived as neutral, they may make one Very Hard (-30) Charm Test to avoid being expelled on the first infraction.
- 💀 If the party is perceived as being Ulrican, they are expelled with prejudice as soon as they are caught doing anything suspicious.

Note: An infraction here is something as innocent as asking a pointed question or being found outside their quarters.

If Characters are caught picking locks or rummaging about in other people's rooms, they are expelled immediately no matter their allegiance.



Each room contains the items listed in the table below. Aside from any details listed, each of the rooms contains a narrow, single bed, a wooden cabinet, and several shelves for books and artefacts.

The Nine Eyes are all elderly scholars. They are steeped in the worship of Tzeentch, but admit to nothing beyond being loyal tutors to the Crown Prince. None of them bear any mark that might identify them as a member of a cult, or own cult artefacts (though Characters who explored Karak Skygg in **The Horned Rat** may have legitimate suspicions about the broken mirror in Gustav's room).

Whilst Ingrid puts up such an immediate and violent defence that Characters may be forgiven for killing her, other Nine Eyes do not react violently. Their death is seen as murder. However, if they are disposed of silently and carefully, their disappearance does not arouse suspicion. They often make unplanned journeys to research obscure lore, and in the confusion of the Crown Prince's journey to Altdorf it is assumed that they took the opportunity to depart for their own reasons.

Experience Awards

Good roleplaying and clever thinking should be rewarded, but there are additional XP for the following:

- ➊ 40 points for eliminating the three Nine Eye tutors at the castle without arousing suspicion
- ➋ 30 points for delivering the war prize in a discreet manner
- ➌ 20 points for carrying out a thorough interview of the Crown Prince
- ➍ 15 points for each of the Nine Eyes eliminated
- ➎ 9 points for the first Character who voices the opinion that Crown Prince Wolfgang is too good to be true.

If the party were already perceived as Ulrican on entering the castle, and subsequently behaved in a suspicious manner, reduce the party allegiance by 2.

ROOMS OF THE TUTORS

Sign on Door	State of Room
The Vigilant Eye	The room is occupied by Kathe Ruttmann. Bookcases filled with historical and political texts line the walls. A searching Character who passes a Very Hard (-30) Perception Test finds a scrap of an obscure prophetic text. See the handout <i>The Dream Sights of Bertoldt the Malleun</i> on page 109.
The Fractured Eye	Inside, Per Haldestaake sleeps heavily, is not roused even if his door is broken down, and only wakes on being shaken. He has just returned from Altdorf and his bags are still unpacked. They contain handwritten notes detailing expert techniques employed by various artisans and professionals.
The Withering Eye	Wilhelmina Novak left for Altdorf recently. Her room is spotless and the many bookshelves here are bare. A colourful mural depicting the eight winds of magic arranged as a wheel is painted on one wall.
The Wandering Eye	Wolfie Jessner left for Middenheim a month ago. His room is mostly bare, but dozens of wax seals have been peeled away from whatever correspondence they were once attached to and piled in one corner. With a Hard (-20) Perception Test, a Character notice leaves of paper behind a bookshelf. These are a private diary, where Wolfie expresses concerns that some of his fellow tutors are worshippers of dark powers.
The Eagle Eye	Ingrid Rademakers sleeps lightly. Unlike the other Nine Eyes, if she is disturbed she snatches up a rapier and defends herself with gusto. She has Melee (Fencing) 88 and the following Talents: Beat Blade, Distract, Feint, Riposte. Her room contains a number of geological samples, the bones of assorted animals, several beautifully illuminated bestiaries, and a rack of fine fencing weapons.
The Public Eye	Wulfrum Ahlquist is currently studying in Altdorf. His room is bare and dusty, aside from a small scrap of paper taken from an odd religions text for children. See handout <i>Virtuous Visions Volume V: Auntie Augusta's Awesome Auguries</i> on page 108.
The Kaleidoscope Eye	The occupant, Gustav Klaus, has been away for some time and the room is very dusty. Artefacts include a string of Orc teeth, diagrams of the autopsy of an Ogre, a pickled Snotling, and a book on Khazalid. Underneath the bed is a small gold-backed mirror that has been shattered into nine pieces.
The Hollow Eye	Gislind Ursin left for Altdorf several weeks ago. Her bookshelf holds folios of dramas by the playwrights Tarradasch, Sierck, Malvosin, and Pikewaver. A copy of von Deihl's <i>Strange Flower</i> is left open by the bed. With a Difficult (-10) Intuition Test, a Character may glean that someone interested in von Deihl's work may sympathise with Mutants.
The Far Eye	Vatheck Fulci is currently travelling from the Border Princes to Altdorf. His room is old and dusty. His desk is littered with numerous charts and maps of distant lands.

CHAPTER 5

THE MARCH OF UNITY

A SPY ON THE ROAD

The journey from Castle Reikguard back to Altdorf is straightforward, and relatively quick on horseback. The Characters ought to be at least a day ahead of the Crown Prince unless they used up all their spare time at Castle Reikguard.

There is a sense of peace throughout the Reikland. News of the upcoming wedding is spreading throughout the province and provides common folk with a great sense of relief. On their journey, if the Characters mention they are on their way to the capital, people might ask if they are attending the wedding and, if so, can they pass on good wishes. Only the most maladjusted of churls would opine that the Princess is too low born and Ulrican to be marrying the Crown Prince.

During the journey the Characters should have several opportunities to spot that they are being followed at a distance by a Halfling on a pony. This is Hugo Bottomdown, a rather incompetent spy in the employment of Etelka Toppenheimer of Sudenland. She has ordered Hugo to keep an eye on Castle Reikguard, and he is fixated on the Characters.

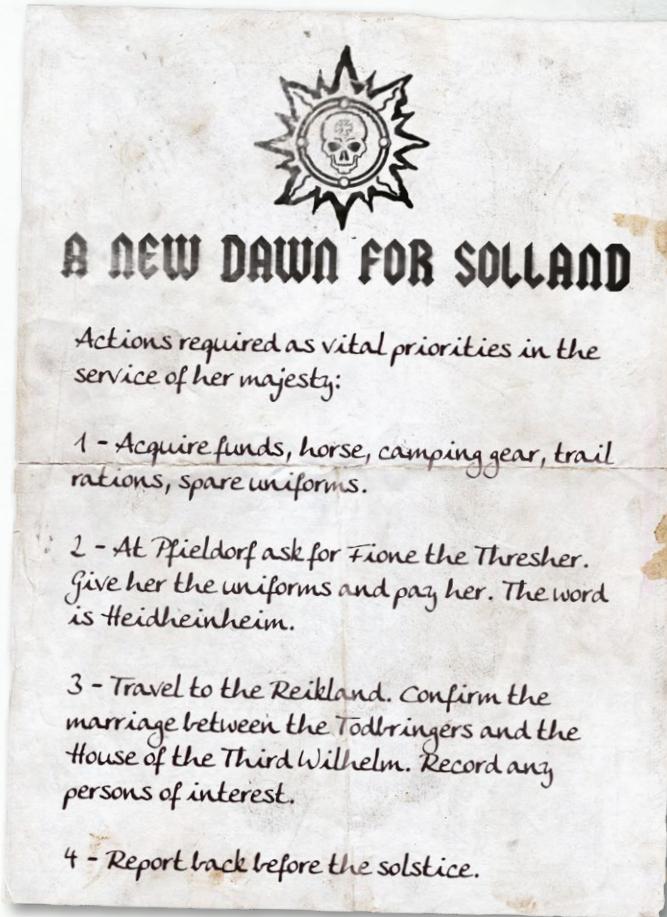
If Hugo notices that he has been spotted, he guides his horse into the undergrowth by the side of the road to escape notice. However, once he thinks the coast is clear, he will ride hard to catch up with the Characters and continue to shadow them.

If Hugo is cornered, he becomes indignant.

'Very well, I may have been keeping tabs on you. I act in the interests of a noble elector of our great Empire, and you must let me work unhindered! Now, I will be kind enough to assume that you are not up to anything untoward. You go your way, and I shall go mine.'

If the Characters let Hugo go, he resumes following them after an hour. If he is threatened, he proves surprisingly dedicated to his role, fights with fierce bravery, and even carries a small vial of poison with which to end his own life if he is captured. He never reveals which elector hired him.

Hugo carries a note from his employer on him, which he may either drop, if the Characters do not search him; or have upon his person if they do. Whilst the handout may provide some clues that Hugo was commissioned by someone in Sudenland (Pfeildorf is the capital, and Solland an older and grander province that Toppenheimer hopes to emulate) the true import of this information becomes apparent later.



The Handout reads:

A New Dawn for Solland

Actions required as vital priorities in the service of her majesty:

1. Acquire horse, camping gear, trail rations, spare uniforms.
2. At Pfeildorf ask for Fione the Thresher. Give her the uniforms and pay her. The word is Heideinheim.
3. Travel to the Reikland. Confirm the marriage between the Todbringers and the House of the Third Wilhelm. Record any persons of interest.
4. Report back before the solstice.

The Return to Altdorf

The Characters may be shocked to see so many soldiers camped outside Altdorf. At first they might even think the city may be under siege. Fortunately, it becomes clear that these troops are gathered to partake in a great parade to mark the wedding.

The Characters can make their way to Helstein Manor in Mauerblumchen (**Altdorf**, page 63). For political reasons the Todbringers do not keep their own estate in Altdorf, but stay at the lavish townhouse of their loyal subjects, the noble Helsteins of Middenheim. Ar-Ulric, Veiran Thugenheim, and the Todbringers are all here.

Baron Heinrich debriefs the Characters, as the other members of the household are busy with the wedding preparations. He reviews their questions to the Crown Prince and gently cajoles them if they forgot to ask an obvious question.

Wilhelmina Novak (of the Withering Eye), Wulfrum Ahlquist (of the Public Eye), and Gislind Ursin (of the Hollow Eye) are all in Altdorf at this time, preparing lessons for the Crown Prince at the University of Altdorf. Should the Characters wish to track them down they can do so. The three tutors dress in the same grey robes as their comrades at the castle.

Though formidable, the tutors are socially awkward. They are more comfortable behind a podium than mixing with other academics, or holding forth in front of awed (or bored) students.

If the Characters want to do away with them quietly, this is not hard. But the trio never reveal anything about their background or motives — no matter how carefully they are questioned.

THE PARADE

The impending nuptials deserve a public display of celebration and what better way to signal a great alliance than a military parade to showcase the might of the Empire united? Such an occasion demands an audience of the most exalted individuals in Sigmar's Realm, those who wield such power that nations could crumble before their armies.

No less than three Elector Counts (Reikland, Middenheim, and Nuln) and two Cult Electors (Sigmar and Ulric) attend this great event.

The Characters are also invited. Katarina and Heinrich Todbringer secured them an invitation, knowing they are useful observers, and able to handle any difficult situations which might arise. This is a great display of shared military might with countless standards, drums, and blaring horns marching across the artillery fields outside the city walls.

The sun is shining and there is just enough wind to keep banners flying. In the midst of all this pomp and ceremony, there are notable absences — the wizards have declined to participate, there are no mercenaries, and the Emperor knows better than to insist Elves or Dwarfs join such a display.

The parade starts at 2:00 p.m and continues until 7:30 p.m.

THE PAVILION

The Royal spectators watch the parade from a newly raised pavilion. The arms of the Reikland, Middenheim, and Nuln fly from the tent, to reflect the presence of three Elector Counts. There is a large crowd of Altdorfers kept safely away from the pavilion, corralled behind a wooden barrier. The guests sit around three sides of a long table with a fine view of the parade ground, but events in the tent are more diverting than the display. Most make a cursory effort to watch the proceedings, but often move seats and stand to talk in small groups. Servants continually refresh the table with a supply of victuals and wines.

MIXING IN THE HIGHEST SOCIETY

The party knows the Middenheim court and the Graf, so they are used to socialising with the nobility. But never before have they been part of a small gathering which apparently includes the Emperor, another Elector Count, and many powerful courtiers. The party has the opportunity to observe these exalted individuals and, if they are tactful and follow the correct protocol, perhaps even talk with them.

The Characters cannot approach the Emperor's double directly. If any Character wants to speak with him, they need a high-ranking go-between (such as the Graf, Holzkrug, or Emmanuelle) to vouch for them. Alternatively, von Fielbach (who is playing 'Emperor') may request their company for a moment. He largely avoids socialising to avoid close scrutiny. Countess Emmanuelle is more accessible. She is curious about the current dispositions of Middenheim and Reikland, so she may speak directly to the Characters — if she thinks they know something or seem amusing. Should they wish to approach the countess, her high steward permits them.

DIDN'T WE MEET AT THE OPERA?

If the Party has played 'A Night at the Opera' (**Rough Nights and Hard Days**, page 36), they may have met the countess. If they made a good impression, she greets them with condescending approval. Otherwise, she'll pretend to have forgotten them in their entirety.

They see a different side to the countess here. Despite her reputation, she is an adept politician, who makes astute observations about the situation. She uses her observations to her advantage.

The other notables can be approached directly — the Characters wouldn't be here if they were people of no consequence. The PCs do need a good opening to address such important people in conversation. Needless to say, the Characters are expected to dress in their finest. Anyone in the tent with a military standing wears dress uniform, but not armour. Countess Emmanuelle has an especially fine tunic that is somehow both formal *and* the height of fashion.

WHOSE SIDE ARE YOU ON?

The Characters' behaviour here influences their reputation as supporters of the Sigmarite or Ulrican faction. If they lend vocal support to one party over the other, they change their allegiance score.

Remember: this is about reputation, not reality. During the event, keep track of each time the Characters act in favour of moderate or partisan Sigmarites and Ulricans. At the end, take a view of where they ended up and change their score by somewhere between -2 and +2 accordingly.

THE EMPEROR'S PARTY

The 'Emperor' (von Fieldbach) — is here to present the Middenheimers a healthy, vigorous 'Karl Franz'. He remains quiet and distant from the proceedings to avoid close scrutiny, aided by two High Helm knights, a cadre within the Reiksguard. **Moderate Sigmarite.**



Grand Theogonist Yorri XV — accompanied by two Knights Griffon, the Grand Theogonist is dressed in full priestly regalia. He is keen to smooth the discord with the Ulricans. After all, the marriage should place them tactfully under the wing of the Reikland. This occasion should placate the Middenheimers. **Moderate Sigmarite.**

High Capitular Volkmar — a less compromising priest than Yorri, Volkmar is not here to show weakness to the Cult of Ulric, or make any concessions. He doesn't do small talk. **Partisan Sigmarite.**

Graf Liepmund Holzkrug — the High Lord Ambassador puts on the charm, particularly for Countess Emmanuelle, Graf Boris, and Ambassador Yabo Chao. He scrutinises the important guests for weaknesses which he, or his spies, might exploit in future. **Moderate Sigmarite.**

Yann Zuntermein — the head of the Altdorf Ordo Terribilis is here with Holzkrug as a member of the Black Chamber's Inner Circle. He observes and sows discord between the various parties in attendance. **Moderate Sigmarite in appearance.**

Grey Guardian Immanuel-Ferrand Holswig-Schliestein — the High Chancellor proposed this parade to demonstrate Reikland's military might. He argues in favour of centralising the Empire, stopping short of anything which causes obvious offence. **Partisan Sigmarite.**

THE MIDDENHEIM DELEGATION

Graf Boris Todbringer — the Graf is not happy to give away his daughter, but he's persuaded that peace in the Empire should take precedence. He maintains a polite distance from the Emperor's party and broods on the price he is paying. **Moderate Ulrican.**

Veiran Thugenheim — the preceptor of the Knights Panther is in good spirits and, at first, thoroughly enjoys the parade. As he realises the power of the Reikland forces, he becomes perturbed and makes sarcastic comments about the Altdorf regiments. **Moderate Ulrican.**

Ar-Ulric Valgeir — the High Priest does not like Altdorf and is unimpressed by '*preening southerners marching about in fancy frills*'. He sticks with the Ulricans but keeps his opinions largely to himself, bar the occasional growl. **Partisan Ulrican**

Katarina Todbringer — the 'Princess' is resigned to her situation. This is a dull occasion to be endured, but she's curious to know what agendas are at play in the pavilion. She asks the characters to make enquiries if they hold back. **Moderate Ulrican.**

Hildegarde Zimperlich — the chaperone knows her place and will go with the Graf's wishes, even though she wholeheartedly disapproves of her ward marrying a Reiklander. This doesn't stop her making critical comments about everything in sight. **Moderate Ulrican.**

Lord Malthe Barthelm — a young Nordlander whose father, Harman Barthelm, is a commander in the Nordland State Army. Malthe is out of his depth, but quietly plays his role as loyal vassal of the Graf. He's secretly a Nordland separatist and plans to assassinate Katarina at the wedding tomorrow. **Moderate Ulrican in appearance, Partisan Sigmarite in reality.**

OTHERS

Countess Emmanuelle von Liebwitz — a sharp-witted political player. Emmanuelle is here to advance her aim to take over Sudenland. She is accompanied by High Steward Hildemar Kalb and Moritz Arbogast, a Knight of the Blazing Sun. Moritz was chosen deliberately as he is neither a Sigmarite nor an Ulrican. **Moderate Sigmarite.**

Colonel Sievers — the frontier commander is in Altdorf trying to raise an army to attack the Orcs massing in the Badlands. He is uncomfortable in this refined setting and has no luck persuading Karl-Franz of the threat. **Moderate Sigmarite.**

There are several dozen guards, servants, and officious factotums busying themselves with security and catering to the whims of the guests.

PLOTS AT THE PARADE

During the parade, several parties are working to their own agenda.

PLOT 1 – THE DOUBLE

The Emperor's double is here to give the impression Karl-Franz is in sound mind and body, ready for the joyous alliance of two of the Empire's greatest families. Unfortunately for him, this is the first time he's been faced with Emmanuelle and Boris, who may see through the sham and take offence. The Characters could discover this isn't the real Emperor — and perhaps wonder why Karl-Franz is absent.

PLOT 2 – FUEL TO THE FIRE

Zuntermein sees the parade as the perfect opportunity to stir the pot and advance the likelihood of civil war. He is subtle, but works carefully to stoke hostility between factions. The Characters could sense that Zuntermein is manipulating the situation and suspect his motives.

PLOT 3 – I JUST NEED AN ARMY

Colonel Sievers was invited to the parade as a trusted subordinate to the Emperor. He hopes to use this opportunity to persuade Karl-Franz to take swift action against the Orcs in the Badlands.

But the Colonel is a fish out of water, more comfortable stalking Greenskins in the mountains than negotiating politics in the capital. The Characters become acquainted with Sievers and possibly help him talk with the 'Emperor'.

PLOT 4 – POLITICAL LEVERAGE

Countess Emmanuelle von Liebewitz seeks political advantage and to negotiate support for her claim to Sudenland. She wishes to talk with Immanuel-Ferrand Holswig-Schliestein, assuming his support for the annexation of Ubersreik makes him a likely ally. She plans to use the false Emperor as leverage. The Characters could help Emmanuelle and gain her gratitude or just learn more about the situation in the south.

PLOT 5 – PORCINE PRANKS

This gathering of the exalted ruling classes is a perfect opportunity for a priestess of Ranald to cause mischief. Petra Schneller has painted three large sows in the colours of Altdorf (blue and red), Middenheim (blue and white), and Nuln (black with a crude yellow lion). She's given them ale and a dose of Ranald's Delight. The plan is to unleash them in the pavilion at an opportune moment. The Characters can deal with the mayhem and impress everyone with their hog-handling prowess.



THE MARCHING FORMATIONS

Although much of the military parade is a backdrop to the intrigue and events in the pavilion, it's important the Characters know what's happening on the field. Whilst this is ostensibly a display of combined Reikland and Middenheim forces, the latter had few regiments in marching distance of the city when the order was despatched – and they are sorely (and intentionally) under-represented. Each regiment carries its banner and all salute the pavilion as they pass.

Time	Event
2:00–2:20p.m.	The High Command — Reiksmarshall Kurt Helborg leads the parade, holding aloft his Runefang at the head of the command section. Accompanying him are mounted standard bearers carrying the colours of the Emperor, the Reikland, Middenheim, Graf Todbringer, Altdorf, Countess von Liebwitz, and Nuln, in that order. Several heralds blow fanfare trumpets and march proudly alongside.
2:20–2:40p.m.	Knightly Orders and Pistolkorps — The Reiksguard lead, with the Inner Circle to the fore, followed by preceptors and several 'banners' of knights, their steel armour glinting brightly in the sun. A regiment of Knights Panther follow, including many from the Middenheim chapter. The Knights of the Blazing Sun have sent sufficient knights to serve their duty to the Emperor and no more. Three regiments of pistoliers follow, drawn from Nuln, Middenheim, and the Reikland. Several Reiklanders fire into the air, startling the Middenheim horses, but the riders bring them under control.
2:40–3:30 p.m.	Regiments of Foot — The Carroburg Greatswords lead the infantry, carrying their zweihanders over their shoulders. They fly their own banner and the 'wedding gift' from Middenheim (assuming the Characters gave it to the Crown Prince). Teutogen Guard — Ar-Ulric's personal bodyguards glower at the crowd as they pass. They salute with the Ulrican sign of the wolf. Nuln Greatswords — The Countess' personal honour guards accompanied her to Altdorf. She winks at them as they pass. Imperial Palace Guard , foot knights of the Reiksguard, including a band of High Helms.
3:30–4:10p.m.	State Regiments — A full battalion of Altdorf Halberds from Hammerpfad's barracks, led by the famous Company of Honour with Captain Otto Helstein leading. Several companies of Reikland Halberds follow. Keen observers see notable absences, thanks to the force occupying Ubersreik. Middenheim is represented only by the Swords of Ulric , who march with heads held high and no attempt to keep a tight formation.
4:10–5:00p.m.	Artillery — A loud clanking heralds the arrival of the Steam Tank Conqueror with an Imperial engineer standing in the hatch. The crowd cheers with enthusiasm. A battery of Great Cannon follow, pulled on limbers by strong dray horses and accompanied by their crews. A motley collection of Helblaster Volley Guns , Helstorm Rocket Batteries , and several other experimental weapons — A small company of Imperial engineers accompany them, looking almost as eccentric as their inventions. Another Steam Tank follows, <i>The Indomitable</i> . It has problems with its steering and causes a serious incident (see 4:40 p.m. on "4:40 p.m." on page 82). A regiment of Imperial Outriders trot after the mayhem caused by the Steam Tank. Another battery of Great Cannon follow and halt for their well-drilled crews to swiftly unlimber the guns ready for the artillery demonstration.
5:00–5:45p.m.	Artillery demonstration — The first shot scatters every bird within 2 miles.
5:45–6:15p.m.	Regiments of Foot — Several companies of Handgunners from Altdorf and the Reikland. Their guns are polished to an impressive shine. They are followed by regiments of Crossbowmen , with just one Middenheim contingent amongst the sea of Altdorf and Reikland livery. Altdorf Spears march past, a little less disciplined than their fellow soldiers. Some wave to relatives and friends in the crowd. The Fighting Cocks are a company of Halflings attached to the Altdorf garrison. They were especially keen to join the parade. They waddle along in loose formation, beaming with pride.
6:15–6:30p.m.	Respite — A brief pause in proceedings while stewards lay out the 'battleground' for the mock battle.
6:30–7:00p.m.	Mock battle — A staged event with Altdorf and Middenheim swordsmen sparring in mock combat as a demonstration of fighting prowess. It starts out rather tame, but later escalates.
7:00–7:20p.m.	Closing Parade — The Knights Griffon are led by Grandmaster Bacham, who has taken umbrage at their place in the parade. The parade ends with another company of Reiksguard , the last of which carries the Emperor's colours once again.



EVENTS

As the following incidents unfold in the pavilion, the Players need to choose what to do — they can strike up conversations, involve themselves in what happens, or eavesdrop. Many of the conversations are happening simultaneously, so their decisions determine what they learn and who they impress.

1:45 P.M.

The Middenheim party arrives along with the Characters. The Emperor's party is already in the pavilion with 'Karl-Franz' on a throne-like chair in the centre, overlooking the artillery ground. There are formal greetings between Graf Boris and 'Karl-Franz' before anyone takes a seat.

Colonel Sievers salutes the Emperor and attempts to approach, but one of the High Helms politely tells him later would be preferable. An observer can take an **Opposed Test — Intuition vs von Fielbach's Cool** to notice 'Karl-Franz' did not recognise the colonel. Thugenheim explains Sievers' identity to Katarina, adding that he has an impressive reputation but it's unusual to see him in the city rather than campaigning in the mountains.

2:00 P.M.

Just as the parade begins, Countess Emmanuelle sweeps in and gives 'Karl-Franz' and Boris an elegant wave. She speaks loudly for all to hear, *'What a gathering. It rather reminds me of the event your father arranged for your 16th birthday, Your Majesty.'* The 'Emperor' smiles and nods.

The parade begins accompanied by a cadence of clapping from the crowd. Thugenheim is enthusiastic. Most of the group watch attentively, but Holzkrug, Immanuel-Ferrand, and Zuntermein talk amongst themselves. Katarina offers to introduce the Characters to anyone other than the Emperor, Yorri, or Volkmar.

2:15 P.M.

A servant passes around the room with goblets of wine. Emmanuelle and Holzkrug are deep in conversation, but as they sip the wine, the high ambassador splutters: *'What is this? Reik water?'* The countess laughs, tastes hers, and pulls a face: *'Ugh. Someone should have a word with Ermine.'* She points at a sour-faced woman — Ermine Liebwitz von Decker und Hanulf, a distant relation of Emmanuelle and steward of the Imperial Wine Cellars. The Characters could take this cue and persuade Ermine to bring a better vintage with an **Average (+20) Bribery** Test or a threat to her position. They shall meet her again in Chapter 7.

Zuntermein asks Volkmar and Ar-Ulric to enlighten him on how their cults fare against worshippers of the Ruinous Powers. The two priests give pious and pointed responses intended to make the other look lax. If they are close, Zuntermein addresses the Characters, *'I believe you have exposed some followers of the Ruinous Powers in Middenheim — am I correct?'* Their response affects their standing with the Sigmarite or Ulrican factions, depending on whether Middenheim comes out of their account badly. Zuntermein is also keen to discover what they know of the Purple Hand, and asks more questions than anyone else.

2:30 P.M.

Colonel Sievers corners a functionary and begins relaying a detailed anecdote about tracking and fighting Orcs in the Black Mountains. He asks a Character to 'play the Orc' and demonstrates how to eviscerate an Orc. The volunteer makes a **Challenging (+0) Test** using **Entertain (Acting)** or **Melee** to determine how convincing they are — this may impress Sievers. He continues to talk about the best ways to defeat Greenskins (*'Get 'em fighting each other — they can't help themselves'*) and explains why he wants to speak with the Emperor: *'Do you know him? I thought I did, but he's very distant these days.'*

2:40 P.M.

There are some reactions when the Carroburg Greatswords march past with the banner given to the Crown Prince by Middenheim. Thugenheim smiles with a mischievous twinkle in his eye. Volkmar and Yorri glower at Graf Boris. Lord Barthelm comments: *'Isn't that the banner Middenheim won at Carroburg? How did they get it back?'* The Characters may choose to explain.

Servants bring a covered platter to the table and reveal an Altdorf delicacy favoured by the wealthy — Reik elvers stewed in pear brandy. Etiquette dictates how they should be eaten. One must offer thanks to Manann, then slurp the baby eels without chewing, biting, or gagging as they slip down the throat. Characters know this on a successful **Hard (-20) Charm** Test (+40 if they have **Etiquette (Nobles)**) — and may otherwise embarrass themselves.

2:50 P.M.

If they pass a **Challenging (+0) Intuition** Test, the Characters notice a servant behaving oddly by the rear tent wall. She keeps checking through a gap in the canvas. This is Petra Schneller, priestess of Ranald, disguised as a serving maid. If challenged, she explains she's waiting for the pork to arrive.

Katarina speaks in hushed tones with Zimperlich. If the Characters eavesdrop:

Zimperlich: *These people, dear, they're typical decadent southerners. And that one (pointing at Yabo Chao) — she's a foreign agent!*

Katarina: *Hildegarde, please. Not here.*

Zimperlich: *Of course, your Highness. But that Nulner — please, I implore you, have no dealings with her. She'll corrupt an innocent like you.*

Thugenheim asks Immanuel-Ferrand what tactics they employed at Ubersreik, not intending to cause offence. The Grey Guardian bristles. *'They were about to declare war. We had no option. And how goes it with Nordland?'* It's Thugenheim's turn to frown. He asks Barthelm, *'Lord Barthelm, how does it go? You've dealt with the troublemakers, haven't you?'* but the Nordlander gives a noncommittal grunt. The Characters could choose to recount their own experiences.

3:00 P.M.

Countess Emmanuelle is talking with the 'Emperor'. The Characters can eavesdrop:

Countess: *The Toppeneimers are no different to the Jungfreuds. They sow discord, look beyond their borders, and revive old claims.*

Emperor's Double: *I'm not sure now is the time. There are too many other matters.*

Countess: *Your 'Majesty', but how would you know?*

Emperor's Double: *I beg your pardon?*

Countess: *Do you speak with Karl-Franz to learn your lines, or does Holzkrug write them for you?*

Emperor's Double: *What lines?*

Countess: *Oh come on. You might fool this lot, but I've known him since we were children. You've been avoiding Todbringer all day. Where is Karl-Franz? Is he truly ill?*

Von Fielbach is crestfallen. The Countess leaves him with an exaggerated curtsey.

Across the room, Yorri leads a prayer to Sigmar in praise of the Empire — his response to the Teutogen Guard's Ulrican salute. Everyone other than Ar-Ulric joins in, with varying levels of enthusiasm. The Characters' behaviour affects their perceived allegiance.

3:15 P.M.

A woman laughs outside the tent and three crazed pigs charge in through a flap in the canvas. They are painted in the colours of Altdorf, Middenheim, and Nuln, and are in a state of wild intoxication. It's mayhem. Nobles don't know how to handle pigs. Sievers, Ar-Ulric, and the High Helms draw their swords. Zimperlich almost faints. Others hide behind chairs.

The Characters really should help. Catching an over-stimulated pig requires a successful **Grapple** (see **WFRP**, page 163). Alternatively, they could use magic or try to corner them or as a last resort, they could attempt to attack the poor beasts.

If the Characters fail or don't intervene, Sievers eviscerates the Altdorf pig, spraying blood on Immanuel-Ferrand's cloak. The Middenheim pig leaps into the crowd and disappears. The Reikland pig settles at Emmanuelle's feet and goes to sleep. She smiles and strokes its head.

The guests thank or berate the Characters depending on the outcome. As servants clear up, Ar-Ulric comments on law and order in Altdorf. The 'Emperor' speaks up. *'Let me reassure you that we will do everything in our Imperial power to locate and punish those responsible for this frenzied hog incident.'* He's not a good speaker and few are convinced.

Petra Schneller is nowhere to be found, but she is now greatly favoured by Ranald.

DRUNKEN HERALDIC PIGS

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
6	35	-	33	38	33	45	-	10	10	-	7

Traits: Bestial, Skittish, Frenzy, Weapon (Bite) +6

3:30 P.M.

As yet another column of Altdorf troops march past, Graf Boris, Katarina, and Thugenheim talk quietly. If the Characters eavesdrop:

Thugenheim: *It's a show of strength. It's got Holswig-Schleistein or Holzkrug's mark all over it.*

Graf Boris: *Perhaps, but is it a provocation?*

Thugenheim: *It's provoking me ... we're powerful, but Middenheim can't raise a force like this.*

Graf Boris: *Katarina, what do you think?*

Katarina: *They're sending us a message, but it's about our role in an alliance. They're not setting us up as the next Ubersreik.*

Thugenheim is a little surprised at Katarina's astute answer — she has matured in the last few months.

Meanwhile, Sievers sits alone eating venison and radish soup, after Holzkrug and Zuntermein brushed him off. He spills it on his lap and curses.

**4:00 P.M.**

Zuntermein says something to Holzkrug and Immanuel-Ferrand. The former responds sharply. *'Well, you know my view. It was no way to treat a sovereign noble like Jungfreud.'* Immanuel-Ferrand sighs, *'We all know your opinion, Liepmund. But how are we to handle Norse raids and squabbling in the Eastern provinces if we can't get our own house in order?'* Holzkrug turns to the nearest Character, *'We've been over this so many times; let's hear a fresh view. What's your name again? What do you think? Should we have left Ubersreik to its own devices?'*

Holzkrug, Emmanuelle, Graf Boris, the 'Emperor', Immanuel-Ferrand, Zuntermein, and Lord Barthelm all turn to the Character to await their response. Anything they say should impress some people and annoy others.

4:40 P.M.

Steam Tank *The Indomitable* chugs along the parade ground, but a sickening crunch echoes from inside its metal shell. The war engine veers sharply off course and steam vents from the hatch. A choking engineer climbs out and jumps to the ground as the Steam Tank careens out of control towards the crowd — and the pavilion!

Onlookers run screaming from the crowd, clearing a path for the Characters. They need to act fast. Here are a few options, although imaginative players may have other ideas.

They can attempt to stop the tank by climbing inside. This takes a successful **Difficult (-10) Climb** Test to enter the hatch. Finally, a **Challenging (+0) Lore (Engineering)** Test to pull the right levers or uncouple the right mechanism.

They could damage the mechanism at the rear of the tank. Hitting it requires an **Average (+20) WS** Test (or appropriate **Casting** Test), but it has T 80 and they must inflict 8 Wounds to disable the mechanism.

They could build a buffer to stop the tank. *The Indomitable* is moving fast and has considerable momentum, but a large pile of hay bales and wooden crates could work. This requires 5 successful **Strength** Tests in 3 rounds to pile up whatever is at hand to create a buffer in time.

They could help an evacuation of the pavilion and let the Tank do its worst. This isn't particularly heroic, but good fortune saves the day ... just before it reaches the front of the tent, there is a tearing sound and *The Indomitable*'s boiler falls off, bringing it to a dead stop. The cannon's muzzle stops exactly where Zimperlich's head was a few moments before.

As everyone brushes themselves down and pretends they weren't scared, a crew of Engineers tow away *The Indomitable* and the parade continues. If the party causes too much damage, the Imperial Engineers are very unhappy about it.

5:00 P.M.

The artillery demonstration is deafening. Every 10 seconds, the well-drilled crews fire another shot into the distance. Conversation is almost impossible, but some use the noise to cover their discussions.

If the Characters use *Lipreading*, they'll see the Emperor's double talking with Holzkrug. *'I can't keep this up. The countess knows. Todbringer suspects.'* The High Ambassador reacts: *'What are we supposed to do? Karl-Franz gets worse every day. Doctor Kappelmuller may need to up the dosage.'*

5:30 P.M.

Countess Emmanuelle is making polite small talk with Katarina. Zimperlich looks on with pursed lips as servants deliver a plethora of sweetmeats, desserts, and confections. She leans over to Lord Barthelm and speaks at a volume intended to carry. *'I think I'll pass, Lord Barthelm. I find the dessert overdressed to compensate for its lack of taste. It spoils the appetite. Bring me a northern delicacy, fresh and unpretentious.'*

Emmanuelle looks up. *'Try the cheese. They say it's been ripening on the shelf since the reign of Emperor Magnus.'*

Zimperlich splutters and prepares for a return salvo. If the Characters don't de-escalate the situation, thinly veiled insults fly back and forth. Katarina is mortified, and Zimperlich is eventually escorted out of the pavilion by Thugenheim, who struggles not to laugh.

6:30 P.M.

Two regiments face one another across the parade ground, armed with wooden swords and shields. The Swords of Ulric represent Middenheim, facing Steil's Swords (formally the Altdorf 3rd). This is a display of ordered swordsmanship and each combatant faces a matched adversary to go through a choreographed series of thrusts and parries. It's accomplished, but lacks drama.

Ar-Ulric praises the Middenheimers' contained savagery. Immanuel-Ferrand comments on the elegant discipline of Steil's Swords. The combatants move around and switch adversaries.

Towards the end of the battle, Maximillian Steil, the Altdorfer captain, starts playing to the crowd and makes several reckless thrusts at his Middenheimer opponent. The fight becomes more aggressive and Steil accidentally draws blood. Ar-Ulric, Thugenheim, and Graf Boris leap to their feet. The Middenheim swordsman fights back and hits Steil on the side of his head with the flat of his blade. The crowd boos as the mock battle becomes more serious. Protests break out in the pavilion.

The Characters can try to call a halt to the battle — perhaps by petitioning the 'Emperor' to halt proceedings. If they don't take action, Holzkrug eventually urges Von Fielbach to stop the battle. The 'Emperor' stands, applauds, and gestures for the battle to end.

6:50 P.M.

Countess Emmanuelle whispers emphatically to Immanuel-Ferrand. Eavesdropping reveals her ultimatum: *'Make no mistake, I shall act. Sudenland is no different to Ubersreik. The Toppenheimers will fall. Should you object, I shall tell the other Electors about the false Emperor. Do you understand?'*

7:00

The parade comes to a close. The Middenheim party looks morose or annoyed. The 'Emperor' is rattled. A **Challenging (+0) Intuition** Test reveals that only Zuntermein cracks a sly grin as he leaves.

AFTERMATH

The wedding is going ahead, but this display of unity has sown disquiet amongst the Ulricans in particular. The party's actions should have helped or hindered their reputation with the Sigmarites, Ulricans, and others. There are several other potential outcomes:

- 💀 They may have suspicions Karl-Franz is ill and von Fielbach is a double.
- 💀 They may suspect Zuntermein is more than he appears.
- 💀 They may have learned something about the unrest in Ubersreik and Emmanuelle's plans for Sudenland.

Experience Awards

Good roleplaying and clever thinking should be rewarded, but there are additional XP for the following:

- 40 points for stopping the runaway Steam Tank
- 30 points for efficiently dealing with the pigs
- 20 points for each time the Characters defuse a disagreement between the Middenheimers and Altdorfers
- 15 points for calling a halt to the battle before it gets out of hand
- 9 points for appropriate comments made during the war of words between Hildegarde Zimperlich and Grand Countess Emmanuelle



CHAPTER 6

THE WEDDING

THE DAY AFTER THE PARADE

Now that the Parade of Unity is concluded, the courtiers head back to their town houses or palace suites. The wedding is planned to occur the day after tomorrow, and the Characters might decide merely to relax until the event.

Proactive Characters may undertake their own investigations. You may wish to provide more or less helpful guidance to the Characters depending on how quickly they are homing in on key antagonists or plot points. For example, if asked their opinion of what the Characters should be doing before the wedding the following NPCs could provide advice, depending on whether or not the Characters need help engaging with the plot, or whether they could use a little distraction.

WEDDING PLANNERS

If Characters decide to follow a particular line of enquiry during the day, they ought to decide whether they are trying to locate the individual or place concerned, or see if they can pick up any interesting gossip about an individual.

Many individuals are unattainable or only active at a given time. It is up to you to keep track of when the Characters are observing an individual.

If they miss something interesting it is too bad. In order to find an individual extended Perception Tests are required. Every test taken corresponds to 20 minutes searching.

Example: Hugo Greendale searches for Lord Bathelm. This requires an extended **Hard** (-20) Perception Test to a total of 20 SL. It takes Hugo 8 tests to accrue 20 SL, meaning he took 160 minutes. He started his search at 10:00 a.m., so when he locates Lord Bathelm it is 12:40 p.m.. He spots the Nobleman enjoying a pie in Karnevalplatz.

Gossip tests are mentioned as occurring only after a certain amount of time has been spent on them. In this circumstance you should ask the players how much time they are investing. If they give too short a time, the test automatically fails. If more time is spent than necessary, the GM should make the test easier by 1 step for every 20 minutes extra the Characters spend gossiping.

Example: Hugo heads to the Street of a Hundred Taverns to try and find out more about Lord Barthelm. He elects to spend 45 minutes gossiping in order to find out about the Nordlander. This is less than the hour needed, so the time is wasted. Later he spends 45 minutes asking around about Elvyra Kleinestun. This is 25 minutes more than the 20 minutes required, so the Challenging Gossip Test becomes Average.

LEADS AND DISTRACTIONS

NPC	Advice if Characters are Floundering	Advice if Characters need Distracting
Boris Todbringer	<i>'Perhaps you could wander round the Cathedral, see to it that the Sigmarites do a proper job with the wedding preparations.'</i>	<i>'Whoever was that bounder who released those cursed pigs? Find out and see if you can bring them to justice.'</i>
Heinrich Todbringer	<i>'Did you notice anything odd about the way Emmanuelle von Liebwitz behaved towards the Emperor today? Perhaps you could talk to her people about it?'</i>	<i>'There may be trouble brewing with the Imperial School of Engineers. I wonder if their mishap with the tank today was entirely accidental.'</i>
Katarina Todbringer	<i>'Who was notable by his absence at the parade? Crown Prince Wolfgang. Perhaps you could find out why?'</i>	<i>'The Cathayan lady didn't seem too bothered by those pigs. I wonder if she had a hand in that little lark.'</i>
Veiran Thugenheim	<i>'Take a break and enjoy yourselves on the Street of a Hundred Taverns, but keep your ears open.'</i>	<i>'Graf Holzkrug is most definitely up to no good, see if you can find out what.'</i>
Ar-Ulric	<i>'That woman, Elvyra was it? Isn't she the Grand Theogonist's pharmacist? Flies on those walls probably see interesting sights.'</i>	<i>'High Capitular Volkmar is clearly up to something sinister. Where was he today? See if you can find out.'</i>

Crown Prince Wolfgang

Locating: From dawn until late Wolfgang helps out at Altdorf's High Temple of Shallya. The Characters look for him there, in which case they find him, or they don't. He is there incognito, dressed down in a simple white woollen robe and cap, but the Characters have no trouble recognising him. He helps by fetching things for patients and priests. He is too busy to converse, but does greet the Characters warmly. If he is asked why he wasn't at the parade he shrugs. *'It didn't seem fitting to begin my relationship with the Princess during a show of jingoism. The Nine Eyes taught me that patience is a virtue. I will be pleased to meet her tomorrow, at the altar.'* This is the first time the Crown Prince has mentioned the Nine Eyes without prompting. If asked about them, he reveals that they are his tutors and that three of them are preparing lessons at the University.

Gossip: It takes no effort to spark up a conversation about the Crown Prince with any townsfolk, though most of it revolves around lurid theories that he is a mutant, a rebel, a spoiled brat, or a tyrant. If an hour is spent an **Average (+20) Gossip** Test can be made. If this is passed the Characters overhear a soldier from the Reikland 1st Regiment of Foot say, *'If I were the Crown Prince, there's no way I'd agree to marry the Wolf Princess. Not whilst the Grand Countess of Nuln remains unattached. This is how we know Karl-Franz must still carry a candle for Emmanuelle, otherwise Wolfgang would march us into Sudenland in order to make it a wedding gift.'* Asked to elaborate, the man grows bashful and apologises for speaking out of turn.

Elvyra Kleinestun

Locating: Elvyra spends her time at her modest Zwillingsgrab abode. Finding her requires an extended **Average (+20) Perception** Test to a total of 5 SL.

She spends her day at home, apart from a trip to an apothecary at 2:00 p.m., returning 40 minutes later. She spends the next couple of hours preparing ingredients. At 5:00 p.m. she journeys to the nearby Ogasse district, where she buys laughing powder from a bawd who works with the Fish smuggling gang. She returns home at 6:00 p.m. and mixes medicine. At 8:00 p.m. she journeys to the north entrance of the Imperial Palace. At 8:30 p.m. she hands a Reiksguard Knight on duty a packet of medicine. A Character eavesdropping against her Perception overhears her say, *'Please see that Doctor Kappelmuller gets this as soon as possible.'*

Gossip: If an hour is spent a **Challenging (+0) Gossip** Test can be made. If this is passed the Characters meet a rather shady character with three brown teeth and halitosis that could stun an Orc. *'Oh yeah, I've heard she calls herself Kleinestun these days, but when I knew her she went by "Gisel Schader". Had half the inebrates of the Reikerbahn hooked on her so-called medicine. Come the revolution, she'll be seen swinging alongside her noble patrons.'*

Graf Liepmund von Holzkrug

Locating: The Graf spends the morning at the Black Isle and attempts to find him are futile. At 12:00 p.m. (noon) he leaves and wanders the city's South Bank. Finding him from now on requires an extended **Difficult (-10) Perception** Test to a total of 25 SL. At 3:00 p.m. he heads to the Street of a Hundred Taverns and visits *'The Crown and Two Chairmen'*. He drinks with old friends from the League of Karl-Franz, a snobby scholars' club. A Character can try to eavesdrop in on his conversation (opposed by his Perception). If they succeed they hear him say, *'Ah, Baronet! So pleased you could join us. Now, last time we spoke you dropped a tasty morsel about a rather inflammatory speech uttered by the younger Jungfreud over dinner, you wouldn't happen to have anything more of that nature to report would you? Even Immanuelle-Ferrand's running out of steam for this Ubersreik business and I need to dig something up.'* At 5:00 p.m. he hails a coach and rides back to the Black Isle. The coach waits. He emerges at 7:00 p.m. with a sheaf of papers. The coach takes him to Karl-Franz Park. He sits on a bench and reads for an hour, then curses the waning light and heads back to his Mauerblumchen mansion. Any Character who passes a **Hard (-20) Perception** Test sees that he drops a piece of paper on the bench. It is a report of troops loyal to the Jungfreud family garrisoning the mining town of Hugeldal near Ubersreik. This garrison has swollen by 50 mercenary crossbowmen and six Ogres since the takeover of Ubersreik. The Graf left the paper hoping that it inflames tensions between Altdorf and Ubersreik. **Gossip:** If 10 minutes are spent an **Easy (+40) Gossip** is required to get a sense that people in Altdorf regard him as a fine ambassador, daring huntsman and consummate gentleman. Good to his friends, and ruthless to his enemies.

Grand Cathedral of Sigmar

The Grand Cathedral is thronging with priests and initiates of Sigmar, and Knights of the Order of the Fiery Heart. Everything seems to be progressing well in order to prepare for the wedding. Banners depicting the iconography of Ulric and Middenheim are displayed, though less prominently than those depicting the arms of the Emperor's family, Altdorf, or Sigmar. If the Characters protest about this it does little good, the priests might adjust a banner slightly in order to stop a fuss, but if they argue vociferously the Party Allegiance score should be reduced by 1–3 points.

If Characters express an interest in the integrity of the building, they notice on an extended **Average (+20) Perception** Test to a total of 10 SL that one of the side doors has a loose bolt, and could be forced open with a firm shove. If this is pointed out to a knight or initiate, they see to it that the door is fixed.

If they are at the Grand Cathedral between 1:00–3:30 p.m. they may make a **Very Hard (-30) Perception** Test to notice Lord Barthelm wandering around. Volkmar is here throughout the day.

Grand Countess Emmanuelle von Liebwitz

Locating: Emmanuelle keeps a lavish townhouse in Mauerblumchen, and Characters looking for her are directed to the address. There is a queue. Most single noblemen in Altdorf wish to court the Countess, and a stream of servants bearing gifts and invitations line the garden path. The house is well guarded by Halberdiers in the severe black uniforms of Nuln. If the Characters wait for an hour they are greeted by Margarethe Savinien, a spry woman in her late 60s who is one of Emmanuelle's loyal maids.

Margarethe has been briefed to try and get as much information on the Characters as she can. Emmanuelle thinks that they are spies working for the Todbringers. She has given Margarethe several titbits of information to feed the Characters, but only so long as they are happy to reveal interesting information about their own relationships. Margarethe is a fine judge of character, so if she is lied to test against her Intuition of 77. She concludes the conversation if she spots a lie. If a Character reveals a significant piece of information about themselves or the court of Middenheim they may be told in return:

- 💀 The Grand Countess and Karl-Franz are old friends and staunch allies.
- 💀 The Grand Countess is honoured to manage her suzerain and has no desire to rule the whole Empire.
- 💀 The Grand Countess thinks kindly of Princess Katarina, but considers that the Princess ought properly to consider tomorrow's match to be to her considerable advantage.
- 💀 The Grand Countess, were she to believe that Karl-Franz used a double for public appearances, would find that rather unbecoming of the man, whose integrity she believes to be impeccable, and so she would be duly concerned.
- 💀 The takeover of Ubersreik surprised the Grand Countess. She didn't think Karl-Franz was capable of such rash action.
- 💀 The Grand Countess also regards the Mutant Edict as a surprise, and exceedingly out of character.

Gossip: It takes no effort to spark up a conversation about Emmanuelle in any of Altdorf's taverns, though most of it revolves around patrons' impudent notions of what may concern a young and beautiful Grand Countess. If an hour is spent a **Challenging (+0) Gossip** Test can be made. If this is passed the Characters overhear a cheerful Halfling with prominent front teeth slurring over his ale. *'It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single lady in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a husband. And a ring set with a Stonehorn gem weighing half a kilo. Oh! And Sudenland.'* Patrons laugh at this but if the Halfling is pressed to say more he becomes defensive. *'Just a joke isn't it? Don't mind me, I'm drunk is all.'*

Gravin von Ekstein and/or Baron von Laue

Locating: Both nobles reside in Altdorf; both are secluded in well-guarded estates. Having rather disgraced themselves in Middenheim, they are completely unwilling to accept the Characters as guests.

Gossip: If 20 minutes are spent a **Challenging (+0) Gossip** Test can be made. If this is passed the Characters can hear that word on the street is that the Gravin is increasingly given to rages in which she demands vengeance, or that the Baron is a milksop who says whatever he thinks other people want to hear. If the Characters suggest that either could make a diplomat it is cause for hilarity.

Henrik Kappelmuller

The personal physician to Karl-Franz is ensconced within the palace. If Characters have anticipated that he may be a person of interest, and try to get an audience with him, they are told to go away by the Reiksguard at the Gates.

Gossip: If 20 twenty minutes are spent an **Average (+20) Gossip** Test can be made. If this is passed the Characters overhear an initiate of Shallya express concerns about the physician.

'The goddess only can know why she prevents our techniques from alleviating the Emperor's suffering, but allows that perfidious doctor to get his results.' If the woman is asked for more details she becomes bashful, but a promise of a significant donation to the Temple gets her to say more. I can't tell you anything with certainty, but rumour has it that the Emperor is afflicted with a mild but chronic case of Purple Brain Pox, a disease that is notoriously hard to treat. Kappelmuller is a dilettante, and last I heard he was due to have his license revoked, but somehow he's been able to quell the disease and now he's Karl-Franz's personal physician.'

If Characters become intrigued about the doctor and seek to learn more about him see **Asking After Henrik Kappelmuller** on page 104.

High Capitular Volkmar

Locating: Volkmar spends his time in the Grand Cathedral, preparing for the wedding ceremony. Either Characters think to look for him there in which case they find him, or they don't. He is engaged in solemn rites to bring Sigmar's blessing on the event, and has no time or willingness to engage in conversation. He stops work at 8:00 p.m. and begins a silent prayer lasting until 10:00 p.m., whereupon he eats a meal of unseasoned beef and beets, and retires to his quarters.

Gossip: If 10 minutes are spent an **Easy (+40) Gossip** is all that is required to get a sense that no one has a bad word to say about him — other than a desire to see him lighten up a little.

Imperial School of Engineers

There is nothing to be gained from enquiring here. The malfunctions that caused the runaway steam tank were purely the result of wear and tear. If Characters want to chase rumours here they simply meet an array of eccentric and embarrassed engineers who protest their innocence.

UNCOVERING BARTHELM BEFORE THE WEDDING

Whilst it is unlikely that the Characters track Barthelm down, they may try to accost him before the wedding. He ought to be able to escape in order to play his part. The reward you should offer players — if they uncover Barthelm — is the early chance to capture Karl-Heinz Wasmeier. See 'Chasing Wasmeier' on page 92, but change the locale to alleyways behind the Street of a Hundred Taverns.

Wasmeier is invested in protecting Barthelm, and desires to hurt the Characters, so he could be overt in his use of magic to threaten the Characters and protect his agent. Barthelm, whilst not a follower of Chaos, is so committed to his cause that he attempts to assassinate Katarina — even if his advisor is revealed to be a Chaos Sorcerer.

Lord Malthe Barthelm

Locating: Lord Barthelm keeps a low profile and no one in Altdorf knows him well. Finding him requires an extended **Hard (-20) Perception** Test to a total of 20 SL.

He rises at 10:00 and spends the morning walking around Karl-Franz Park. At 12:00 p.m. (noon) he heads to the Karnevalplatz and eats a Rumsters' pie. At 1:00 p.m. he heads to the Grand Cathedral of Sigmar. He stands in the main hall looking carefully around and brooding. At 4:00 p.m. he heads to the Street of a Hundred Taverns and visits *The Black Bat*. He drinks slowly. At 8:00 p.m. Karl-Heinz Wasmeier joins him.

If Barthelm is stopped and questioned during his day he has nothing of interest to say, but a Character passing a **Challenging (+0) Intuition** Test notices that he seems anxious. A Character can try to Eavesdrop on his conversation with Wasmeier (opposed by Wasmeier's Perception). If they succeed, they hear Wasmeier say, *I commend you on your resolve. The Todbringers should live in fear whilst Nordland feels the wolf's jaws clamped about its neck.*

Gossip: Very few people in Altdorf even know him. If an hour is spent a **Hard (-20) Gossip** Test can be made. If this is passed the Characters meet an elderly one-legged mercenary who whispers in between sips of rum, *I served under that boy's father, a fine commander, but the young man is nothing like him. He has a dark side, brooding, and he is vehement in his opposition to Todbringer rule over Nordland*.

Nine Eyes in Altdorf

Locating: If they are still alive, Wilhelmina Novak, Wulfrum Ahlquist and Gislind Ursin all live and study in the Schulergegend district (see **Altdorf**, page 161). Finding any one of them requires an extended **Average (+20) Perception** Test to a total of 15 SL. They split their time between antiquated and rare bookshops, the University Refectory, and the Temple-Library of Verena. Other than eat or sleep they do nothing but pore through ancient and arcane texts, and whilst they wear the same dingy grey shifts they don't interact with one another. No one has any opinions of them beyond that they are the Crown Prince's tutors and keep to themselves.





Quintus Fassbinder

Locating: Between 10:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. the scholar researches at the Temple Library of Verena. Either the Characters think to look for him there (or at the adjoining Altdorf University building), in which case they find him, or they don't. He is busy with his studies, but offers to speak to them the day after the wedding. *'I am keen to catch up with you, but I am due to return several books tomorrow, and need to concentrate on cross referencing whilst I have time. Come back the day after tomorrow and I promise I'll converse with you.'* Fassbinder is not bullied, bribed or cajoled out of his plans.

Gossip: If an hour is spent an **Average (+20) Gossip** Test can be made. If this is passed the Characters meet a gaggle of young scholars who attended a recent lecture by Quintus. *'Everyone thinks he's a total crank. In our lecture he even went so far as to say the hammer wielded by the emperors was a fake, an imitation of Ghal Maraz. I'm surprised he enjoys tenure at the university — no, scrub that — I'm surprised he hasn't been executed. Friends in lofty places, apparently.'*

Street of a Hundred Taverns

This is your chance to revisit any gossip that the Characters missed earlier on in the adventure, or indeed the campaign. Hot topics of conversation are:

💀 The War

Ostland and Talabecland are still at one another's throats. Nordland is becoming increasingly fractious. A nobleman from the Lieddorf family is looking to reassert their rule over Averland.

💀 Bad Times

More sightings of mutants and Beastmen in the forests around Altdorf. Magicians in Altdorf keep on having problems controlling their spells. Greenskins massing to the south of Black Fire Pass.

💀 The Emperor and his Family

Lots of talk about how the Emperor is really ill, or dead, and that his public appearances are due to body doubles and careful stage management. Rumours abound that the Crown Prince is a mutant, or a political radical, or a tyrant-in-waiting.

💀 The Wedding

People are generally happy about the wedding; with decorations and bunting strewn across the city. There is some dismay that conflict prevents more electors from attending, though many famous guests are expected, such as Grand Countess Emmanuelle of Nuln, Grand Countess Etelka Toppenheimer of Sudenland, the Grand Patriarch, and so on.

There is also general gossip. If the Characters express an interest in listening in without asking about anything in particular then after two hours they may make a **Hard (-20) Perception** Test. They may then be given any piece of gossip listed in this section for every SL they generated on the test.

If they are on the street at 3:00 p.m. they may make a **Difficult (-10) Perception** Test to notice Graf Holzkrug heading to *The Crown and Two Chairmen*. If they are on the street at 4:00 p.m. they may make a **Very Hard (-30) Perception** Test to notice Lord Barthelm entering *The Black Bat*.

Petra Schneller

The Ranaldan responsible for the trick with the drunken pigs has covered her tracks with impeccable caution, and revealed her plans to no one. Searching for her is a waste of the Characters' time.

Yann Zuntermein

Locating: Deep within the dungeons of the Black Isle. The Characters can search all day and never find him.

Gossip: Secretive and apparently friendless, there are few who know Yann. If an hour is spent a **Very Hard (-30) Gossip** Test can be made. If this is passed, the Characters end up speaking to a young woman with a Bretonnian accent and a broken nose. *'The man you describe, I used to do the occasional errand for him. I had been working as a messenger to Blackrock Castle, seat of the Jungfreud family. Yann, if that is his real name, used to pay me to tell him of any comings and goings I saw there. Been about a year since then though. I think he is a spy.'*

Others

The Grand Theogonist spends all day in reflection and prayer within the Grand Cathedral of Sigmar, and his reputation amongst Altdorfers is impeccable. The Emperor and his family remain at the palace. They enjoy a good reputation in Altdorf, though people have recently begun to question the Emperor's decision making, and suspect that he uses a double for at least some of his public appearances. More conspiratorial sorts suggest he is dead or very unwell.

The Middenheim delegation remains at Helstein Manor throughout the day, apart from Ar-Ulric who visits Altdorf's South Temple of Ulric in Hammerpfad to prepare for tomorrow's ceremony. Gossip about the Middenheimers is rife and unkind in Altdorf. People think Katarina is too lowly to marry the Crown Prince, that the new Ar-Ulric is little better than a fanatic, and that the Todbringers are on the verge of declaring themselves Wolf Emperors and splitting the Empire in two.

THE WEDDING DAY

At last, all is ready for the wedding. The High Cathedral of Sigmar has been chosen as the main venue, though after the wedding ceremony there a procession is planned to travel to the nearby district of Hammerpfad where Altdorf's South Temple of Ulric stands. Ar-Ulric will conduct a second set of blessings to mark the joyous occasion. Once this is over, the procession will march to the Imperial Palace to be met by the Emperor and a conclave of the Empire's most celebrated aristocrats and heroes.



ITINERARY

9:00 a.m.	The Grand Cathedral opens its doors.
10:00 a.m..	The Crown Prince is to be married to Katarina Todbringer in the Grand Cathedral by the Grand Theogonist.
12:00 p.m.	The wedding party will march in procession to Altdorf's South Temple of Ulric where Ar-Ulric will bless their union.'
1:00 p.m	The wedding party will march to the Imperial Palace where the couple will attend a conclave of electors and attend issues of concern to the glory of our great Empire.

Altdorf's Grand Cathedral of Sigmar is bedecked with an array of beautiful flowers and banners, including symbols of Middenheim and Ulric. A detail of Knights of the Fiery Heart, backed up by palace guards from the Reikland 1st Regiment of Foot, keep agitators and beggars away from the Grand Cathedral so that the great and the good can flock to the wedding in their finest clothes.

There are sumptuous dresses and scandalous ones, the most elaborate hats seen in a generation — including some so top-heavy that only magic keeps them from collapsing in on themselves — and an array of expensive jewels from vibrant coloured gems to elaborate, vulgar designs — reminding some smug onlookers that there's really no accounting for taste.

The Characters are invited to attend as part of the retinue of Baron Heinrich Todbringer. Guests are not permitted to carry weapons aside from a sword, dagger, or rapier, worn discreetly at the waist. The Todbringers, their servants, guests, and subjects from the Grand Duchy of Middenheim and Barony of Nordland are seated to the right of the great hall.

They are joined by several guests from Middenland and Talabecland. Characters passing an **Easy (+40) Lore (Heraldry)** Test notice the iconography of the von Bildhofens of Carroburg, the Barthelms of Nordland, and the Nikses of Nordland.

On the other side of the room the same heraldry test identifies the coats of arms of Emmanuelle von Liebwitz and Etelka Toppenheimer (sat some distance from Emmanuelle). Most of Altdorf's noble families are present, including the Holzkrugs. If the Characters express interest in the von Laues or Eksteins they are not present. The Imperial Family is represented by a man who bears a resemblance to the Emperor and the Crown Prince, but is about 50 or so. A **Hard (-20) Gossip** Test is required to learn that this is the Emperor's uncle, Immanuel-Ferrand Holswig-Schliestein, High Chancellor of the Council of State. He is widely believed to be the prime mover of Altdorf's espionage network, the Black Chamber.

The Emperor is not present. If the Characters suggest this is untoward, they are told he plans to receive the married couple at the Imperial Palace later in the day.

HERE COMES THE BRIDE

At last, the ceremony gets under way. The Grand Theogonist stands at the altar with the Crown Prince, who looks stoic and calm. Music swells and as Lady Katarina Todbringer arrives, the atmosphere is charged. The congregation stands. Radiant and serene, and dressed in a magnificent gown that draws admiring gasps, Katarina makes her way up the aisle, holding her father's arm. Graf Boris is dressed in his finery as the Elector Count of Middenheim.



A page carries the banner of Middenheim before them, and they are followed by Vieran Thugenheim in the uniform of the Knights Panther. They get about half-way to the altar before disaster strikes.

Malthe Barthelm steps out from behind a pillar, stands to attention, points his pistol at the Princess and shouts, *'Death to the Todbringers! Death to the Treaty of Schonihagen!'* He fires his pistol at the Princess, who is within short range. He has the Fast Shot talent, enabling him to shoot a pistol outside of normal initiative order. Characters are now free to act against him, but they are hampered by the congregation. Barthelm's position by the pillar is in the centre of the hall, about 30 yd from the Characters.

As Barthelm shouts, the Characters may notice a door to the side of the great hall being forced open. This door may have been secured if they visited the Grand Cathedral yesterday. Karl-Heinz Wasmeier is behind the door. He is desperate to save Barthelm who is his only remaining asset.

If the Characters did not secure the door, Wasmeier finds it easy enough to open, and a Character must pass a **Very Hard (-30) Perception** Test to notice it being forced given all the commotion now breaking out in the great hall.

If the door is secured, Wasmeier takes three turns to force it open. His struggle can be heard on an **Easy (+40) Perception** Test.

The next few turns play out as follows, though action taken by the Characters may change things.

If Barthelm misses Katarina, he keeps trying and only defends himself to get another clear shot. He has a brace of three pistols. If he hits her, she goes down and he fights any who attack him, firing his remaining pistols.

Once he is out of loaded pistols, he draws his sword and tries to work his way to the door. As he fights, Barthelm shouts slogans such as: *'Remember Elstwater Keep! Though I die, I give my life to end Middenheim rule!'* and *'Freedom for Nordland! Freedom from the White Wolf!'* All eyes are on Barthelm, so unless the Characters notice the door is ajar no one notices Wasmeier. When his spells start going off they generate such instant panic in the hall that he still escapes notice.

Barthelm is prepared to die, but is not wholly suicidal. However, every time Wasmeier casts a spell he should make a **Difficult (-10) Perception** Test. Should he pass he realises that his cause has been tainted by association with an agent of Chaos. From that moment he ceases trying to escape, he tries desperately to die fighting. If killed or captured Barthelm carries no incriminating evidence, but Ulricans in the hall are quick to point to the Sigmarite iconography of his pendant.

If the Characters take Barthelm alive, he can be interrogated (use an opposed *Intimidate* Test, WP or S vs Barthelm's Cool skill). He makes romantic pronouncements, repeats his separatist slogans and grows slowly more unhinged, gabbling about 'him'— meaning Wasmeier.

- 💀 "It is a great thing you do", he said, "a great thing".
- 💀 "He knew them. He told me to strike at the girl, she was the one they all love."
- 💀 "I shall go down in history. I who liberated Nordland!"
- 💀 "He made it all so clear. He hated the Todbringers too. He was their Law Lord, but they betrayed him!"
- 💀 If the Characters ask who 'he' is, Barthelm simply says, "The one who knew. The one who showed me how to strike back."

BARTHELM AND WASMEIER'S AMBUSH

Turn	Barthelm's Situation	Wasmeier's Situation
1	Target the Todbringers in the following order: Katarina, Heinrich, Boris.	Open the side door.
2	Target the Todbringers in the following order: Katarina, Heinrich, Boris.	Notices that several Knights of the Fiery heart are moving towards Lord Barthelm. Tries to target one with Pink Fire of Tzeentch.
3	Receives a charge from two Knights of the Fiery Heart.	Uses Pink Fire of Tzeentch or Blue Fire of Tzeentch to attack anyone threatening either Barthelm or himself.
4	If able he tries to fight his way to the door.	As above.
5	If able he tries to fight his way to the door.	As above.
6	If able he escapes.	If Barthelm makes it to the door, or is slain, he tries to escape.

CHASING WASMEIER

Wasmeier stands by the doorway casting spells, unless one of three circumstances arise.

- 💀 Barthelm reaches the door.
- 💀 He realises Barthelm will not reach the door.
- 💀 An enemy comes close enough to charge him the following turn.

The following guide explains how Wasmeier acts if he is on his own. If Barthelm is with him then Athletics Tests to navigate obstacles must be made by both of them. He then runs out of the cathedral and into the alleyways beside the Domplatz cemetery. Characters in hot pursuit of Wasmeier should use the Pursuit rules (see **WFRP**, page 166). The starting Distance is 3. If Wasmeier gains a head start of 5 he spends a round turning and casting Pink Fire of Tzeentch at the pursuer closest to him. At the start of the pursuit several Knights of the Fiery Heart do give chase, but they are hopelessly encumbered by their ceremonial arms and armour and outpaced by Wasmeier.

Wasmeier has prepared an escape that does not require magical aid in order to work effectively, but he tries to cast Flight in order to effect an escape if anyone gains on him to a Distance of 1. In this circumstance he abandons Barthelm.

The alley continues for 10 yd, before ending at a 2-yd-high wrought iron gate. Climbing the gate requires an **Easy (+40) Athletics** Test. Failing to clear the gate gives either pursuers (if Wasmeier and/or Barthelm fail) a free round to close the distance, or the pursued (if chasing Characters fail) an extra round to make ground.

The alley continues for a further 10 yd, where it is blocked by a pile of wooden crates. Leaping the crates is a **Difficult (-10) Athletics** Test. Failing to clear the crates gives either pursuers a free round to close the distance, or the pursued an extra round to make ground.

The crates are stuffed with tinder doused in lamp oil and if Wasmeier has a head start of 3 or more he pauses and tries to cast magic flame, setting the crates burning fiercely. If the crates are set alight anyone who fails the Athletics test needed to leap over them suffers from an *Ablaze* Condition.

The alley continues for 10 yd, before turning right at a 90 degree angle. Once round the corner Wasmeier runs up a flight of steps leading up to a walkway that rings one of the temple outbuildings. He then runs 20 yd around this walkway before jumping over the railing and plummeting to the streets below.

Wasmeier lands on a conveniently parked flatbed wagon piled high with bales of wool. He can be heard shouting 'Yah! Yah!' to the driver. The driver is prepared to move off as soon as he hears Wasmeier calling, but it still takes him one turn to goad the horses into a trot.

If Characters leap down after Wasmeier after the It's a 4-yd drop, however. Damage is $1D10 + 12$, reduced by 3 for every SL on an **Average (+20) Athletics** Test (see Falling, **WFRP**, page 166).

The chase can continue, though now Wasmeier benefits from the cart's movement score of 6. Those in pursuit also have to compare their Athletics Tests to the driver's Drive skill of 70.

If Wasmeier is cornered at any point he tries to buy his freedom.

'Listen, you have me at your mercy, and we are enemies no doubt about it, but let me tell you, if you let me go I'll give you the identity of Altdorf's own Magister Magistri.'

However, Wasmeier barely knows Zuntermein, so even if he is somehow convinced that his pursuers will let him go all he can tell them is that.

'He is a tall man with a mop of unruly hair, and a little beard. He dresses like a loyal servant of Sigmar. He does diplomatic work. He wanted me to help him gather information on the Jungfreud family of Ubersreik. He may be a spy, he fed us information on the last movements of Crown Prince von Tasseninck.'



Experience Awards

Good roleplaying and clever thinking should be rewarded, but there are additional XP for the following:

- 💀 50 points if the Character saves Princess Katarina's life
- 💀 30 points for running down Karl-Heinz Wasmeier
- 💀 20 points for tackling Lord Barthelm
- 💀 10 points for every significant NPC located or gossiped about during the day before the wedding
- 💀 9 points for checking that the wedding party have everything they need for the big day

Note: Given the extreme events of this section, NPCs have more important things to worry about than whether or not the Characters seem to be Sigmarite or Ulrican.

CHAPTER 7

THE EMERGENCY CONCLAVE

Following the traumatic events of the wedding, Altdorf finds itself in crisis. Fearful that this was the first step in a coup, palace authorities whisk the Crown Prince away to safety at Castle Reiksguard, while Reiksguard and Altdorf State Army troops throw cordons around the palace and the Grand Cathedral of Sigmar. Visiting Electors retreat to fortified town houses, guarded by their household troops.

An hour after the event, heralds arrive at each of the Electors' residences to deliver a message sealed with Karl-Franz's personal seal: a summons to the Volkshalle for an urgent meeting of the Electoral Council:

'The conclave scheduled to take place after the wedding shall now go ahead at three in the afternoon. Attendees shall resolve to settle the outstanding issues between them and bring harmony and peace to Our Empire, under the protection of Sigmar and Ulric.' It is phrased as a command, not a request.

To the Todbringers, outraged (or even bereaved) after the wedding, the fact that the Imperial Court has reacted as if the assassination were aimed at them is a grievous insult. As the herald waits, the Graf retires to a private drawing room to consult with those he trusts most: Baron Heinrich, Ar-Ulric, Veiran Thugenheim, 'Princess' Katarina (if she lives), and the Characters. Graf Boris wants each of their opinions — should he obey? On the one hand, it could be a trap. *'We all know the story of Graf Siegfried and the Council of 1547.'* (An **Easy (+40) Lore (Middenheim)** or **Average (+20) Lore (History)** Test is all it takes to recall that Graf Siegfried of Middenheim was threatened when trying to cast his electoral vote — an event that led to the period of civil war known as the Age of the Three Emperors). On the other hand, refusal of an Imperial Summons would be considered an open act of rebellion.

Baron Heinrich, Thugenheim, and Katarina advocate attending, if only to get an idea of what the Sigmarites might be up to. But Ar-Ulric is set against it. The Graf then asks each of the Characters what they recommend. Based on their reactions, adjust the Party Allegiance score by +2 to -2 depending on their responses.

Having heard their counsel, the Graf sighs and says, *'I owe it to the people of Middenheim and Nordland to ensure their interests are voiced.'* Then he turns to the Characters: *'Join us. Be careful, be alert, and be observant. We are wolves walking into a griffon's den.'*

THE HIGH AND THE MIGHTY ANGRY

The Electoral Council is the highest consultative body of the Empire and, as one might expect, its members have their own goals and interests. In addition, each has their entourage, the members of which may be both working toward their Elector's aims and their own schemes.

This section presents briefly a summary of the Council's principals' motivations, as well as a few of the non-members who are nonetheless important. You should add other characters as needed by the flow of events and what seems fun. In a few cases these characters appear later in the adventure, so it is important that they remain alive and on reasonable terms with the Characters. These are: Hermann von Feilbach (The Emperor's Double), Boris Todbringer, Etelka Toppenheimer, Emmanuelle von Liebwitz, Maria-Luise von Walfen, Ermine Liebwitz von Decker und Hanulf, and Quintus Fassbinder.



This is not to suggest that you as the GM ought to do away with any other NPCs present; their wellbeing is important for the Empire's integrity, and it would complicate the situation hugely were they to be badly hurt. However, the NPCs listed above do make important contributions to the plot of the adventure later on, so preventing them from serious injury or a major falling out with the Characters is something to bear in mind.



THE ELECTORS

A number of Electors are, or at least appear to be, in attendance.

Hermann von Feilbach

The Emperor's Double

Goals: Survival. Play the role of Karl-Franz for the sake of the Empire. If that means making decisions like a real emperor, then make them. Mollify Graf Boris, but try to get von Bildhofen on Altdorf's side. Be wary of Emmanuelle — she knows the truth, so taking her side against Sudenland might be an option to get her to stay quiet, though, after Ubersreik, that might just make everyone else even angrier. Avoid the Characters — there is too big a risk of them realising the truth.

Graf Boris Todbringer

The Graf of Middenheim

Goals: Secure Imperial sanction for an attack on Theodric Gausser and suppression of the rebellion in Nordland. Get a regiment or two of Reikland State Army troops to demonstrate the Emperor is sincere about unity. The arrest and extradition to Middenheim of Lord Barthelm and any of his conspirators.

Grand Countess Emmanuelle von Liebwitz

Elector of Nuln

Goals: Keep Etelka Toppenheimer friendless. Look for an opening that would provide an excuse to annex Sudenland. Block any resolution reaffirming the Sudenland succession. Use the knowledge of 'Karl-Franz's' deception to ensure this, but do not give away the secret, out of regard for Maria-Luise's position. Seek maximum advantage while averting a total Imperial breakdown. If Emmanuelle has met the Characters, she may see them as useful go-betweens.

Grand Baroness Etelka Toppenheimer

Elector of Sudenland

Goals: To secure a decision of the Council reaffirming the right of Electors to choose their successor and denouncing any attempt to interfere in Sudenland's affairs. Regardless of that effort's success, seek alliances among the other electors against Nuln, including military aid. Perhaps the Characters can be used as intermediaries to sound out Boris.

Grand Duke Leopold von Bildhofen

Elector of Carroburg

Goals: Work for Imperial peace and try to smooth over the differences between the Emperor and Graf Boris. But under no circumstances betray the interests of House von Bildhofen. Figure out who is most likely to guarantee an independent Middenland and cleave to that side. The Characters may be useful for figuring out Boris's intentions. Maybe one could be recruited as a spy.

Grand Theogonist Yorri XV

High Priest of the Cult of Sigmar

Goals: Imperial unity, the primacy of the Cult of Sigmar, and keeping the secret about Karl-Franz safe. Worried about the imposter's nerves; he will do all he can to support the 'Emperor' and guide his words. He also wants an end to the persecution of Sigmarites in Ulrican territory and a definitive statement condemning the Sigmarite Heresy. Civil war would be a terrible evil. Perhaps the Characters could be a useful back channel to Boris to make peace?

Ar-Ulric Emil Valgeir

High Priest of the Cult of Ulric

Goals: Get it over with and get out. Watch out for any of Yorri's machinations. Some of the Characters might be useful for discovering the Sigmarites' intentions.

THE NON-ELECTORS

Not themselves Electors, all but one will be relegated to the Refectory Hall and the arcade surrounding the conference floor, from which they can watch the proceedings and mingle with each other while their principals make boring speeches.

Thyrus Gormann

Supreme Patriarch of the Colleges of Magic

Goals: The surprising exception to the rule that allows only Electors at the conference table, Gormann thinks that all these people are idiots and that he has far better things to do than get involved in silly political squabbles, but an Imperial summons must be obeyed. Favours unity and does not suffer fools (gladly or otherwise).

Preceptor Vieran Thugenheim

Goals: To be available when his liege needs his advice. In the meantime, mingle with the other delegations to learn what they may be up to. Have the Characters do the same and report back.

Baron Heinrich Todbringer

Son of the Graf of Middenheim

Goals: Protect the Graf and Middenheim's security. If there is to be a civil war, find out where the other Electors stand. Keep an eye on the high chancellor's doings and discover why Emmanuelle is acting like the cat who just caught the canary. The Characters can be Middenheim's eyes and ears.

High Capitular Volkmar

Goals: Support the Grand Theogonist with advice that leads him in a more hard-line direction. Brook no insult from any Ulrican. The Characters are suspect, and their religious leanings should be probed.

Captain Jurgen von Ostbrun zu Kaeserock

Goals: His beloved cousin, Georg von Ostbrun, and his friend, Jacob von Katzenreik, were murdered some months ago while enjoying an evening out in Altdorf's taverns (**Empire in Shadows**, page 37). He would dearly love to find their killers.

Immanuel-Ferrand Holswig-Schliestein

High Chancellor, Grey Guardian, Black Chamber Spymaster

Goals: Ferret out potential traitors while seeking out those loyal to the anointed Emperor. The Characters are a suspicious lot, as favourites of the seditious Graf of Middenheim. What if they were mixed up in other matters?

Liepmund Holzkrug

High Lord Ambassador, Black Chamber Spymaster

Goals: To present himself as a loyal servant of the Emperor and Empire, while subtly planting the idea that these parvenus just aren't competent. Perhaps the Characters can be sounded out about the possibility of Boris being open to a change at the top?

Maria-Luise von Walfen

Mother of Karl-Franz's Children

Goals: Frightened by her situation, she just wants someone sympathetic to listen to her. If the Characters impress her at the meeting, she may be more likely to trust them later in the adventure. (See page 183.)

Ermine Liebwitz von Decker und Hanulf

Steward of the Volkshalle Cellars

Goals: The respect she craves. Though resentful of her 'bettters' — especially Emmanuelle and Maria-Luise — and the minor station in which she finds herself, she cannot admit that she yearns for their approval.

Quintus Fassbinder

Curious and Eccentric Academic

Goals: Observe, learn, ask questions. Quintus has his suspicions about the Hammer and wants to see if any evidence appears that he is right. The Characters seem like interesting folk. Perhaps they could fill him in on what happened in Middenheim? Oh, and he'd like to save some pastries to take home.

THE COUNCIL MEETING

Following the dramatic events of the wedding, the Electors hold an emergency meeting in the Volkshalle to try to stave off civil war. While they themselves discuss their business, by custom their entourages are restricted to the octagonal gallery surrounding the conference floor and the Great Refectory just off of it, where Palace kitchen staff race to set up tables of food and drink suitable to the Empire's rulers. A pair of Reiksguard at each opening from the gallery to the conference floor prevents anyone from interrupting the meeting unless summoned by an Elector, and those in the gallery are expected to talk only in quiet whispers. Guests are not allowed armour or weapons, other than a dagger and hand weapon for honour's sake.

The following is a timeline of the Electoral Council, both on the conference floor itself and among the observers, including the Characters. Characters will have chances to learn much and perhaps influence events. Though the timeline is fairly detailed, GMs should feel free to adapt and alter this according to the needs of their table.

EVENTS

15:00 p.m. — The Event Commences

At the sound of eight chimes, each Elector is announced and escorted to their seat by a page, who then takes up a position behind their chair to await their needs. The Elector Counts also bear their scabbarded Runefangs, which they place on the table before them as signs of their office. Present are Graf Boris Todbringer, Grand Baroness Etelka Toppenheimer of Sudenland, Grand Duke Leopold Bildhofen of Middenland, Grand Countess Emmanuelle Liebwitz of Nuln, Ar-Ulric Emil Valgier, and Grand Theogonist Yorri. The empty seats between them serve as stark symbols of the Empire's growing fractures.

15:05 p.m. — The 'Emperor' and the 'Empress'

Entering last is the 'Emperor,' escorted to his throne by Maria-Luise von Walfen, the Chief Lady of Court and the mother of his children, informally (out of electors' earshot) known as 'the Empress.' On a successful **Challenging (+0) Intuition** Test, a Character observing their entrance from the gallery can notice a lack of warmth between the two, and that Maria-Luise's smile is forced.

As he takes his seat, she curtseys and walks to the gallery. The Emperor, meanwhile, places Ghal-Maraz on the table before him, the symbol of the Emperor as Sigmar's Heir. He says nothing, as if waiting.

15:08 p.m. — A Fiery Character

A shout echoes around the Volkshalle. *'Get out of my way, you clods! I'm invited!'* To the shocked looks of everyone, save the Emperor, High Patriarch Thyrus Gormann, not an Elector, shoves past the Reiksguard and takes an open seat at the table. He glares around, as if daring anyone to challenge him.

Von Bildhofen asks, 'Your Majesty?' The Emperor replies, *'I have invited the High Patriarch to provide his wisdom and counsel as a valued servant of the Empire in this time of crisis, as is my right. Shall we get started?'* Though there are murmurs and grumbling all around, no one seems willing to challenge him or Gormann on this.

If a Character asks another attendee about Gormann's presence, a successful **Average (+20) Gossip** Test leads to speculation that the Emperor involved the High Patriarch to keep the Electors focused on Gormann's infamous temper rather than to challenge the Emperor's suggestions.

15:10–16:00 p.m. — A Lot of Wind

Around the conference table, each elector takes a turn to make an opening statement. Observers gathered along the gallery and peering from the refectory doors are disappointed; the speeches are filled with boring platitudes calling for unity and praising the Empire. A **Challenging (+0) Intuition** Test reveals an underlying tension, as if no one wants to be the first to open the door to endless mutual recriminations. A Character passing an **Easy (+40) Intuition** Test recognises Gormann's annoyance.

15:15 p.m. — A Slip of the Tongue

Pages quietly announce that the buffet table is open and that wine is being served. Bored observers make their way into the refectory, where a truly lavish table awaits. The assembled nobles help themselves while stewards move among them offering a variety of wines in fine crystal glasses.

A Character notices on an **Easy (+40) Perception** Test that two nobles at the buffet table are whispering to each other and giggling. Their accents reveal them as Nulners. On an **Average (+20) Stealth (Urban)** Test opposed by the nobles' Perception of 35, the Character can sidle closer and hear them making barbed remarks about the Elector of Suderland: *'Did you see Toppenheimer's outfit? Something I'd expect on a country landlady. So embarrassing. It will be such a relief when Her Highness sorts these bumpkins out.'*

15:25 p.m. — To the Rescue

Armed with food and wine, the various nobles gather in small groups to gossip or gamble with cards and dice. One Character sees a poor page buttonholed by Quintus Fassbinder, who is expostulating between bites of cake about some arcane bit of history. If the Character intervenes, Fassbinder happily turns his attention to them and the relieved page quickly leaves.

15:30 p.m. — A Reunion with Holzkrug

As the speeches drone on in the Conference Room, High Ambassador Liepmund Holzkrug approaches the Characters. Without smiling, he looks over each Character as if taking their measure and then says, *'So, we met before, but now I know you as the heroes who saved Boris's fat from the fire. There have been so many rumours — you must tell me of your adventures!'*

As they talk, Holzkrug gradually turns the conversation to the turmoil in Reikland. He is particularly interested if the Characters mention Bögenhafen or Wittgendorf. *'Things have fallen into disarray, have they not? And then there is that affair in Ubersreik.'* He sighs as if with regret, *'I advised His Majesty against intervention, but he is Grand Prince and Emperor. Still, the Electoral Council has made changes before, particularly when a viable candidate was available.'*

He then looks intently at the Characters, *'Tell me, have you any idea of the Graf's possible selection?'* A **Difficult (-10) Intuition** Test confirms he has himself in mind.

Once they have had a chance to answer, an aide arrives and whispers something in Holzkrug's ear. He then bows and leaves.

16:00–16:30 p.m. — Watching the Watchers

Once the opening speeches are completed, the Electors take a 30-minute break to confer with aides and have some refreshments. On a **Challenging (+0) Perception** Test, Characters spot Grand Baroness Toppenheimer conferring intently with one of her entourage. That same Character can then make an **Average (+20) Perception** Test to notice that the pair occasionally glance in their direction.

16:05 p.m. — Fishing for Attention

Two nobles, Ferdinand von Schilderheim, a Reiklander man, and Emmarett von Uder, a Middenlander woman, begin arguing loudly over which of their fiefs has exclusive fishing rights to a section of the Reik downriver from Altdorf. Finally, one looks over at the Characters, points, and says, *'You there! Come here and lend us your good opinion!'*

It does not matter that the Characters know nothing about the matter at hand, each simply wants someone to agree with them. Both will go into long, heated and convoluted arguments based on history and law to make their case, one frequently interrupting the other to disagree. Each shouting, *'If you'd just let me finish!'* at regular intervals.

An **Average (+20) Perception** Test detects an underlying Sigmarite versus Ulrican rivalry that hardens their positions. When finished, both fold their arms and look expectantly at the Character. **Note:** The fact that neither of them can stand fishing, or fish, is beside the point.

Because of this tension, the Character's answer can affect the Party Allegiance score: favouring the Reiklander pushes them one point toward Sigmarite, while favouring the Middenlander moves them one point toward Ulrican. A diplomatic response that favours neither leaves their rating unchanged, and neither noble happy with them.

16:30 p.m. — Middenland Murmurs

After the break, the meeting resumes and at last turns to the turmoil in the Empire. The first to speak is Grand Duke von Bildhofen, who speaks of his House's past (**Easy (+40) Lore (Empire)**) Test to recall he is related to Magnus the Pious) and how it bridges the divide between Sigmarite and Ulrican. He then talks of the need to respect provincial borders.

A **Challenging (+0) Perception** Test notes that this is directed at Graf Boris, and an **Average (+20) Lore (Empire)** Test recalls that Middenland and Middenheim have often fought, with the latter sometimes ruling the former. On another **Challenging (+0) Perception** Test, a Character notes Etelka Toppenheimer suddenly becomes interested.

16:40 p.m. — Border Lines

While von Bildhofen talks, Characters succeeding at an **Average (+20) Perception** Test see Holzkrug talking quietly to a Middenlander aide. Making an opposed **Stealth (Urban)** Test against Holzkrug's Perception lets the Character overhear the High Ambassador complaining in a very peevish tone about 'incompetence' and suggesting that *'it would be in your Master's interests to support a candidate who would guarantee firm borders.'*

16:50 p.m. — Sectarian Divisions

Ar-Ulric Valgeir speaks next and, while making perfunctory mention of unity, his speech is full of complaints about slights and crimes against Ulricans in Sigmarite lands, and a lack of respect toward *'those who guard the North'*. At this, Yorri jumps to his feet and shouts about Ulrican harassment and even persecution. The Emperor grabs the Hammer and points it at each man, commanding each to be civil or silent *'in Ghal-Maraz's name'*. Yorri bows and takes his seat. Ar-Ulric takes his seat but it's clear to everyone in the room that he is fuming.

17:00 p.m. — Sudenland's Priorities

Etelka Toppenheimer is the next to speak. Without even addressing the problems in the North or the assassin at the wedding, she launches into a discussion of her succession issues and demands the Council guarantee that Grand Provincial laws of inheritance will be respected. Characters curious about what drives her can make **Average (+20) Gossip** Tests. Success finds a noble who can relate that Etelka suddenly disinherited her 12 children and named her stepson as heir. *'It's caused quite the scandal down there, and some of the children are rumoured to be seeking Grand Countess Liebwitz's help.'*

17:15 p.m. — Sharp Tongues

Unable to contain herself any longer, Emmanuelle bursts out laughing, which turns into a loud and unbecoming belly laugh. Visibly angry, Etelka demands *'And what is it my northern neighbour finds quite so funny about defending the right of a ruler of a Grand Province to select their own heir?'* Emmanuelle wipes the tears from her eyes in an elaborate way, regains her composure, smiles sweetly and replies, *'Etelka, darling, perhaps your suzerain*

ought actually to be grand before you violate traditions held in common by those who rule the Empire.' Toppenheimer flushes in humiliation, her face and neck glowing, while Gormann guffaws. Onlookers react with shock or amusement, depending on their allegiances, the Emperor again points Ghal Maraz at each and commands them to be civil. Etelka curtsies and resumes her speech, still flushed a deep red; Emmanuelle nods casually.

17:20 p.m. — The Sudenland Proposition

As Toppenheimer finishes, the Sudenlander noble she talked with earlier approaches one or two of the Characters for a *'private word'*. Taking them to a quiet spot in the refectory, he makes a pitch. *'You seem to be people of influence, so I am sure you are aware of the justice of My Lady's cause. She wishes you to convey — discreetly — a proposal to Graf Boris. In return for aid, military, if need be, against the designs of her enemies, the Grand Baroness is willing to embrace the Ulrican faith and declare it the official cult of Sudenland.'* He lets that sink in for a moment. *'May I convey your willingness?'*

A willingness to do so gains them one Ulrican point, while outright refusal earns them a Sigmarite point, for seeming aligned with Nuln. A noncommittal reply leaves their score unchanged.

17:25 p.m. — Dogged Defence

Quintus gets into an argument with a Halfling insulted by his request for a 'doggy bag.' The Halfling complains, *'How dare you give my cooking to a dog?'*

17:30 p.m. — Upping the Ante

While the Characters are either discussing Toppenheimer's shocking offer or rescuing Quintus from an irate Halfling, one of them is accosted by a slightly drunk Reiklander noble, Joachim von Aarberg. *'Ah, perfect! We need a fourth for our card game. You can't play Scarlet Empress with only three, you know, not if it's to be a real game!'* Not even listening to any protestations, he drags the Character to a table where two other nobles wait: Reinhard von Mendenhall, a Nulner, and Juergen Lasker von Drakberg, a Middenlander. They all look at the Character expectantly, and all have a small pile of gold crowns in front of them. Joachim continues, *'This is one of Graf Boris's heroes!'* He turns to the Character: *'The buy-in is 20 crowns. Friendly game, you know.'* If the Character does not have 20 GCs on them, they can either borrow it from someone, or Reinhard will stake them. *'I know Boris's people are good for it.'*



Resolve the game with a series of **Opposed Gamble** Tests that represent two rounds of drawing and discarding cards. Each noble has a Gamble Skill of 45, and each drinks heavily during the game. Test every other round against their Consume Alcohol skill of 55. A minimum bet is 2 GCs, and the winner with the most SLs takes the pot. A tie in SLs or everyone failing the test means the pot stays on the table and is added to with further bets. Any roll of a double means a player has drawn the Scarlet Empress card and automatically loses the round.

Special: If a Character has the *Tower of Memories* Talent, which lets them count and memorise cards, the **Gambling** Test to play Scarlet Empress is instead **Easy (+40)**.

During the game, von Drakberg finds himself short of money and, to preserve honour, bets the title to one of his minor estates. Should the Character be winning after several rounds, win the Drakberg estate, or be caught attempting to cheat (on a failed **Sleight of Hand** Test), von Drakberg accuses them of cheating and, slapping them in the face, challenges them to a duel. *After the break, of course.*

17:45 p.m. — The Wolves Growl

As the card game goes on, one of Von Bildhofen's entourage takes a Character aside and probes them rather directly about Graf Boris's intentions toward Middenland. However, the Character responds, he leaves after saying, *'Ulricans should stick together, but, and you can tell your Master this, we've bloodied Middenheim's nose before and we can do it again!'*

18:00 p.m. — A Quick Break

The conference takes its second break, and the principals again come for food or to confer. Baron Heinrich and von Thugenheim take one or two of the Characters aside to get their impressions so far.

18:05 p.m. — Conversation Between Friends

On an **Average (+20) Perception** Test, a Character sees Grand Countess Liebwitz walk with Maria-Luise to a bench by a window far from the crowd, where they sit and talk. At first they are all smiles, and another **Average (+20) Perception** Test reveals genuine friendship between them. But their looks turn serious, and Emmanuelle takes the Empress's hands in hers as they talk in hushed whispers.

A Character wanting to eavesdrop can make an **Easy (+40) Stealth (Urban)** Test against Emmanuelle's Perception (91), due to the two women's distraction. On a success, the Character hears the following exchange:

Emmanuelle: *'Maria, I know the truth. It's not him.'*

Maria-Luise: *'Emmy, I'm so scared. I feel trapped.'*

Emmanuelle: *'Be brave. I will keep your secret. Remember: you are not alone.'*

On a failed Test, Emmanuelle turns to the Character and hands over her glass. *'Ah, perfect! Do be a dear and go to the Volkshalle cellars and ask that dreary Ermine for a bottle of something that does not taste like vinegar?'* She then turns back to Maria-Luise.

18:10 p.m. — Turbulent Priests

With an **Average (+20) Perception** Test, a Character sees the Grand Theogonist walk into a small side chapel to Sigmar with High Capitular Volkmar, who, talking and gesturing at him, is clearly agitated. Successful eavesdropping overhears the following:

Volkmar: *'Forget conciliation! You heard Valgeir. You must demand an end to the attacks and that they renounce the Heresy once and for all!'*

Yorri: *'I know, I know. But there are ... other considerations.'*

Volkmar: *'To ruin with them and that fool! Our duty is to Sigmar alone!'*

18:20 p.m. — Consolidating Power

Whichever Characters are free, High Chancellor Immanuel-Ferrand Holswig-Schliestein and Yann Zuntermein buttonhole them for a talk. After Zuntermein introduces them, he stays silent while Ferrand closely questions the Characters about the events of **The Horned Rat** and **Power Behind the Throne**, and talks about the need for firm centralisation under the Emperor. *'But there are those who resist modernisation; I'm sure you can think of one or two. Information about who are the true friends of the Empire and who are its real enemies could be of great value to us. I'm sure we understand each other.'* They then leave to talk to someone else.

18:25 p.m. — Cease Your Wining

If a Character has descended to the wine cellar, Ermine refuses to help. *'I am Steward of the Cellars, not her slave! That wine was fine.'* A **Hard (-20) Charm** Test gets her to relent and select a good bottle, otherwise the Character must pick one themselves.

A successful **Challenging (+0) Consume Alcohol** Test allows a Character to select a suitable vintage based on experience.

18:30 p.m. — Digging up Ancient History

As the bell calls the Electors back to the meeting, Reiksguard Captain Jurgen von Ostbrun zu Kaeserock asks for a word with one of the Characters, preferably one who went through **Enemy in Shadows**. He explains that he heard the Character had been involved in the Bögenhafen affair and had earlier passed through Altdorf. *'Perhaps you can help me? About the time you passed through the city, my cousin Georg von Ostbrun was murdered while enjoying a night out with his friend, Jacob von Katzenreik (Enemy in Shadows, page 37). It was a terrible blow to our family, and I've sworn to bring the killers to justice. Would you have seen or heard anything that night that could help?'*

An **Easy (+40) Perception** Test reveals both his sincerity and his failure to realise the Character was one of those suspected.

18:35 p.m. — The Divide Widens

Yorri rises to speak again, and his tone is much harder than before. In no uncertain terms he argues that unity can only be achieved with a strong Emperor under the guidance of Sigmar and demands that the Council denounce the Sigmarian Heresy.

On an **Average (+20) Perception** Test, an observing Character sees two things: the Ar-Ulric clearly loathes him and can barely control his anger; Gormann, who was drumming his fingers on the table, is both surprised and amused at Ar-Ulric's anger.

18:45 p.m. — The Duel

Juergen Lasker von Drakberg likely accused the Character at the card game of cheating and challenged them to a duel. No one in the hall seems phased by this; nobles often pass the time duelling. Pages clear a space in the middle of the Refectory and onlookers from all entourages gather around for a show. Side bets are called out, with odds favouring von Drakberg. The duel is to first blood, and it is considered bad form to maim or kill one's opponent. The Character may spend a Fortune Point to avoid inflicting a Critical Wound on a successful roll or one that fails by 0–2 SLs, but not on a roll that fails by 3 or more. Von Drakberg has a **Melee (Basic)** Skill of 69 (though this number may need to be adjusted for any failed **Consume Alcohol** Tests).

Once first blood has been drawn, the duel is over and honour is satisfied. If von Drakberg is killed, his family demand compensation, or declare a vendetta if refused.

18:50 p.m. — The Graf Makes his Move

At last, Graf Boris speaks. Far from the honeyed and soothing words heard earlier, it is blunt. The Graf denounces Nordland sedition, the attempts on his children, and, with a pointed look at the Emperor, the Imperial failure to restore order. Finishing quickly, he demands a vote of the council to sanction an attack on Gausser and requests that a significant body of Altdorf State Army troops be placed under his temporary command as a sign of good faith. For once watching with interest, Gormann shouts, *'At last someone who can get down to business!'*

19:00 p.m. — A Question of Proportion

The Emperor goes last. Von Feilbach tries hard to sound 'Imperial' and commanding, but his choice of words — *'letting little things divide us'* — enrages Graf Boris. *'They have attacked my family,'* he shouts as he leaps up and calls Karl-Franz *'an incompetent idiot.'* Losing his own temper, von Feilbach grabs Ghal-Maraz and points it at the Graf, commanding him to *'civility or silence.'*



19:05 p.m. — Splitting the Skull Splitter

Instead of obeying, Boris grabs his Runefang to swat Ghal-Maraz aside. There is immediate uproar, several knights from the Reiksguard and Order of the Knights Panther try either to intercept the blow, or defend one of the combatants. Boris is like a wild man and cannot be stopped, but when the Runefang connects with the Hammer, there is a flash of light and a CRACK! like thunder.

And Sigmar's Hammer shatters.

19:06 p.m. — Reactions

There is a minute of absolute silence as everyone stands shocked staring at the shattered hammer head. The Graf holds his Runefang, his mouth agape, whilst the 'Emperor' just stares at the broken haft in his hand, the Hammer's head in nine jagged fragments on the floor.

Amidst screams of horror and angry shouts from the crowd, Thyrus Gormann's voice rises above all, 'You stupid idiots!' As he hurls invective at the Electors, flames flicker around his hair and beard and from the tips of his fingers. Someone shouts 'Run! He's going to lose control!' and people begin to scatter in panic.

A Character can intervene at this point to try to calm the High Patriarch down, requiring a **Challenging (+0, +20 for a fellow wizard) Charm** Test to succeed. If it fails, or if no one tries, then Emmanuelle calms him.

**19:10 p.m.
Cooler Heads Prevail ... for Now**

With the Emperor standing there dumbstruck, Graf Boris suggests they all retire with their retinues to separate areas of the hall to reflect and consider. All agree with nods, everyone is still too shocked to speak.

19:15 p.m. — A Word in Private

Alone with his party, the Graf asks the Characters what they advise: '*You have shown good judgement in the past.*' Whatever they say, an Ulrican priest who had been part of the party interrupts to claim that this was Ulric's divine judgment, *'proof that Sigmar was never a god.'* Seeing that nearby Reiksguard are beginning to notice, the Graf stares daggers at him and orders him to be silent, '*before you make matters worse, fool.*'

20:00 p.m. — Separate Ways

The conferees regather. Yorri and most of the Sigmarite delegation are missing. The high chancellor announces that they, along with the Emperor, have gathered the fragments and gone to the Grand Cathedral to pray for a miracle. Graf Boris simply says, '*We are returning to Middenheim*' and then to his retinue, '*Come*'.

20:10 p.m. — Final Words

As the delegations file out, Quintus Fassbinder pulls the Characters aside. '*This is wonderful,*' he exclaims. Before the Characters can call him a nut, he continues. '*Think! Use your brains for once! What does that event signify?*' Ever the teacher, he wants the Characters to work out that that hammer could not have been Ghal-Maraz and that the real one is still out there.

And I think I know where it is!

Experience Awards

Good roleplaying and clever thinking should be rewarded, but there are additional XP for the following:

- 💀 50 points for figuring out the secret of the Hammer before Quintus explains it to them
- 💀 25 points for negotiating the event without exacerbating matters
- 💀 25 points for adroit observation of the meeting
- 💀 25 points for maintaining existing relationships
- 💀 15 for playing the card game
- 💀 15 for surviving the duel
- 💀 9 for picking up a piece of the shattered hammer



RUTH WILL

PREVAIL



WANTED! BOLD ADVENTURERS!

TO FIND GHAL MARAZ

Confusion and unrest rapidly spreads across Altdorf, adding more unease to the underlying tensions simmering in the Empire. The von Bildhofen, von Liebwitz, and Toppenheimer households leave with haste. The Middenheimers, with a deepening siege mentality, prepare for departure. Soldiers from the Swords of Ulric regiment guard Helstein manor, and Ar-Ulric patrols the grounds with a sizable bodyguard of Knights of the White Wolf.

The Imperial Family retreats to the place, having left the shards of Ghal Maraz in the Grand Cathedral. Whilst news of the shattering has not been made public, rumours spread like wildfire through the city, becoming more elaborate and dramatic with each retelling. In the Dockland and Reikerbahn districts, agitators stir up angry mobs. Sigmarite zealots demand that Graf Boris and Ar-Ulric be punished, even if they aren't quite sure what for yet. Revolutionaries urge the poor to expose the true face of their rulers, tear down the palace, and institute a people's republic. The Watch is out in force, supported by the barely veiled thuggery of the Citizens' Vigilance Committee.

Authorities in the city look to the Order of the Knights Panther to stand as promoters of Imperial unity and stability at this time. They march forth in force to ensure that mobs do not trouble the capital's more affluent areas.

The Characters are treated as if they are returning to Middenheim with the Todbringers, though the previous degree of respect and interest in their opinions seems not to matter anymore. Old alliances and relationships are being prioritised now that war seems inevitable. Having lost his cool, Graf Boris is now

privately ashamed, but does not show it. He has no real desire to become a new Wolf Emperor, but he is privately convinced that being granted management of Ulrican Middenland might ease the pain of letting fractious Nordland gain independence.

However, during the hours following the conclave, someone suggests that the Characters follow up on suggestions that the real Hammer might be elsewhere.

Who Makes the Suggestion?

There are several people who might task the Characters with finding the Hammer, but it depends on how they have acted up until this point. The following list should be used to see which petitioner takes priority.

Themselves: It can be most satisfying if the Characters decide for themselves that the Hammer must be found and chase up Quintus Fassbinder through their own volition. If they do so, the one important person in Altdorf who respects Quintus, Immanuel-Ferrand, approaches them with an offer to sponsor their journey.

The Todbringers: The Characters have proved themselves able agents of the Todbringers. Boris may want the Hammer returned to Altdorf in order to win cooperation of the Imperial Court in securing his position as a more important Ulrican ruler; being seen as the sponsor of the heroes who found the Hammer would help grease the wheels. Whilst he doesn't have a great deal of faith in Fassbinder's theories, the restoration of Ghal Maraz would be of significant relief to him, given that he broke it. However, Boris only backs the Characters if they are perceived as competent and Ulrican.

Sigmarites: If the Characters are perceived as neutral or Sigmarite then their patrons in this matter may come from various quarters. Yorri or Volkmar might have reason to be impressed with them. If they uncover the affair of the poisoned Emperor (see page 104), then the Imperial family might be the ones to suggest they embark on the quest for the Hammer. Immanuel-Ferrand may also have reason to be impressed with the Characters.

Graf Holzkrug or Yann Zuntermein: Perhaps the Characters have blundered their way through events, offended their patrons, are rather roguish types, or are deemed otherwise unsuitable. If this is the case, therefore, they make the perfect agents for those who wish to see the situation grow even more disastrous. Zuntermein or Holzkrug could approach them to suggest they consult with Quintus. Once they have the Characters on the trail of the Hammer, they proclaim its imminent return with great fanfare, fully expecting the quest to prove yet another debacle.

It may strike the Characters as absurd that they are being chosen for such a solemn duty, but if they ask for someone to go in their place, or for military forces or mighty heroes of the Empire to be placed at their disposal consider the following:

- The various nobles who organise the military assets of the Empire have reason not to provide them. They are worried about an oncoming civil war, and also mindful that it wasn't so long ago that the Emperor used his fiat to depose their peers, the Jungfreuds of Ubersreik.
- A River Patrol vessel with a detail of Marines will be requisitioned to take the Characters from Altdorf to Averheim, so if they start to request military assistance, let them think they have negotiated successfully for help they would get anyway.
- Famous heroes or significant bodies of troops might spark unrest if they marched forth from Altdorf. If rumours are to be believed Averland is on the verge of civil war and neither Middenheim nor Altdorf want to get embroiled.
- The Characters may be regarded as highly resourceful fated heroes blessed by the gods. Religious experts such as Yorri and Ar-Ulric, despite any personal differences they might have with the Characters, may simply have 'good feelings' about the part the Characters have to play in such a quest.
- Even if they are perceived as Sigmarite or Ulrican, it is acknowledged that the Characters represent a halfway house between political extremes.
- Rich rewards may be promised — not definite commitments, but courtiers at the Palace, even the Emperor himself, assure the Characters that anyone who finds and returns the Hammer should expect to be ennobled, granted a significant fief, and receive a small fortune in gold. However, haggling over details is seen as vulgar.

- No one says anything that might discourage them to their faces, but Characters may get the impression that Quintus is still regarded as a crank, that his theories are seen as a long shot, and that the quest is little more than a reason to get them out of the way.

Once the Characters are set on the quest to find the Hammer and retrieve it, they soon find that they are offered patronage and small stipends from whichever of the patrons mentioned earlier is most likely to help. Word reaches them that a River Patrol boat, *The Comet*, is waiting to ferry them to Averheim as soon as they are ready to depart. All they need to do before they go is meet Quintus at the University of Altdorf and listen to his theories to get an idea of the True Hammer's location.

THE EMPEROR'S PHYSICIAN

By now the Characters may have asked questions and raised suspicions that the Emperor is not who he says he is. For the past year Karl-Franz has been increasingly unwell and bedridden, troubled by a disease that has been beyond the skill of physicians or the prayers of Shallyans to alleviate.

This disease is something that the Characters may have encountered before: a mild (but still highly debilitating) form of Purple Brain Pox. The cause of this disease may also be familiar to the Characters — it was magically induced by the Daemon Gideon.

Henrik Kappelmuller has been the only physician to have any luck in alleviating the Emperor's suffering. He is a member of the Purple Hand. His preparations don't actually help the disease, but they seem to because Gideon removes his spell whenever Kappelmuller administers medication. The side effects include listlessness and suggestibility, and it has been during the period in which Karl-Franz has accepted the doctor's help that he has also agreed to: the takeover of Ubersreik, the passing of the Mutant Edict, and the need to be represented in public by a body double until his convalescence is over. These are all things that would be *very* out of character for Karl-Franz were he in full health.



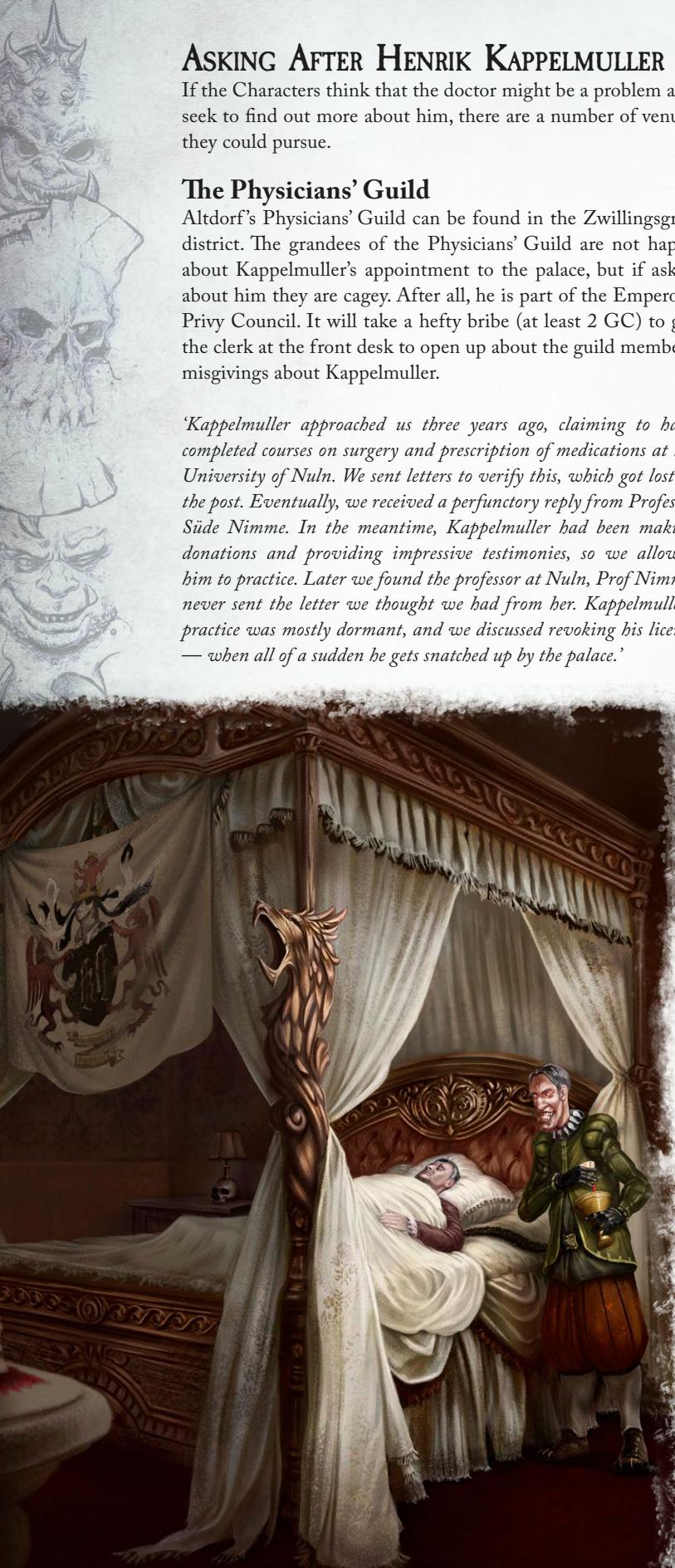
ASKING AFTER HENRIK KAPPELMULLER

If the Characters think that the doctor might be a problem and seek to find out more about him, there are a number of venues they could pursue.

The Physicians' Guild

Altdorf's Physicians' Guild can be found in the Zwillingsgraben district. The grandees of the Physicians' Guild are not happy about Kappelmuller's appointment to the palace, but if asked about him they are cagey. After all, he is part of the Emperor's Privy Council. It will take a hefty bribe (at least 2 GC) to get the clerk at the front desk to open up about the guild members' misgivings about Kappelmuller.

Kappelmuller approached us three years ago, claiming to have completed courses on surgery and prescription of medications at the University of Nuln. We sent letters to verify this, which got lost in the post. Eventually, we received a perfunctory reply from Professor Süde Nimme. In the meantime, Kappelmuller had been making donations and providing impressive testimonies, so we allowed him to practice. Later we found the professor at Nuln, Prof Nimme, never sent the letter we thought we had from her. Kappelmuller's practice was mostly dormant, and we discussed revoking his license — when all of a sudden he gets snatched up by the palace.'



HENRIK KAPPELMULLER

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	63	56	44	54	53	59	48	48	47	22	12

Traits: Ranged (Throwing Knife)

+6 (8), Weapon (Sword) +8

Skills: Athletics, 79, Bribery 32, Charm 32, Cool 67, Dodge 79, Drive 64, Endurance 74, Entertain (Taunt) 27, Evaluate 58, Gossip 42, Haggle 42, Heal 58, Intimidate 54, Melee (Basic) 83, Perception 43, Ranged (Thrown) 76, Sleight of Hand 58

Talents: Ambidextrous, Careful Strike, Dealmaker, Disarm, Doomed (*Slide beside a high beside and defied by those taken for a ride*), Etiquette (Criminals), Marksman, Pure Soul, Read/Write, Strike to Injure, Strike to Stun

Trappings: Clothing, Dagger (coated with a dose of Black Lotus), Hand Weapon (Sword), 2 Throwing Knives (each coated with a dose of Black Lotus), Pouch containing 2 Gold Crowns and 3 Shillings, Sling Bag containing 2 Candles, 4 Matches, 2 doses of Ranald's Delight, Bandages, Healing Draught, Vitality Draught, Guild License

Elvyra Kleinestun

If Elvyra is asked about the doctor, she is happy to talk about him. She is positive about Kappelmuller, after all he secured her own job. She does not admit that she supplies Ranald's Delight to him. If she is asked about him she says: 'Yes, I know Henrik well. He helped me find employment after my troubles in Weissbruck. I am sure he is treating the Emperor with all due care and attention.'

If a Character has harsh words with Elvyra about Kappelmuller's apparent unsuitability, she admits: 'Yes, I think he may be using concoctions to calm or stimulate the Emperor rather than treat his disease, but Purple Brain is notoriously difficult to alleviate and the Emperor is having a marked improvement.'

Immanuel-Ferrand, Maria-Luise or Ermine Liebwitz

These three NPCs are close enough to the Emperor to know that he is bedridden and that the physician treating him is an odd fellow. Whilst they find the situation deeply worrying, there is not much they feel can be done about it.

If any of these NPCs are asked if the doctor receives visitors, they say: 'He does receive regular visits from a mature lady with an Altdorf accent who supplies him with ingredients needed for his preparations, and a young man of about thirteen with a pudding bowl haircut and a remarkably wide smile.'

These are Elvyra Kleinestun and Gideon respectively.

Calling on the Doctor

The Characters can try to get an audience with the doctor if they are driven to do so. They will have to convince one of the members of the Emperor's Privy Council, or Elvyra Kleinestun, that it is in the best interests of the Empire for them to see the doctor at work. This requires fast talking and the passing of a **Very Hard (-30) Charm** Test to accomplish. They would need to make the following clear before anyone takes them seriously.

- 💀 They know the Emperor is ill.
- 💀 They know he uses a double in public.
- 💀 They suspect his doctor of malpractice.
- 💀 They are committed to the good of the Empire.

If the party is willing to set aside all weapons and leave any spellcasting Characters behind they are admitted to the Emperor's quarters.

The Emperor's Bed Chamber

The Emperor rests in a large four-poster bed, draped in fine silks and surrounded by bedposts carved in the shape of griffons.

Henrik Kappelmuller spends almost all his time in the room, and even sleeps in a small antechamber next to the room. He greets anyone who comes to visit with creepy, oleaginous manners: *'I can tell at a glance you are learned folk with great concern for our languishing Emperor. Perhaps you would be so kind as to furnish me with your notions for how his treatment might be improved? I have worked some minor miracles in alleviating his suffering, if I may say so, yet still as you may see he is feeble and listless.'*

Anyone entering the bed chamber ought to make a **Hard (-20) Perception** Test to notice a faint heady scent lingering in the room. Those who follow the smell find a pomander of herbs smouldering beneath the Emperor's bed. If this is pointed out, Kappelmuller explains.

'A concoction of Schlafenkraut and Moonflower mixed with pine shavings, for the good of His Majesty's nerves and to ensure a good night's sleep.'

The fumes from the concoction are indeed rather relaxing, and anyone remaining in the room for longer than four turns ought to make a **Very Hard (-30) Willpower** Test or gain a **Fatigued** Condition. Kappelmuller, having spent some time building up a tolerance to the fumes, is not effected.

Kappelmuller answers any questions the Characters may have, and does not seem the least bit concerned that strangers have been admitted to the Emperor's private chambers. However, if he is accused of keeping the Emperor in a drugged state or working for the Purple Hand, he takes the following tack:

1. **Deny:** Kappelmuller is not a good liar, but he flatly denies any wrongdoing and points out (correctly enough) that the Emperor was near death before his ministrations.

2. **Vitality Draught:** Using Sleight of Hand, Kappelmuller will administer a vitality draught to Karl-Franz. This will temporarily return the Emperor to his senses, and Kappelmuller hopes to slip away in the resulting confusion.

3. **Blame Elvyra:** If the questioning continues, Kappelmuller tries to pin the blame on Elvyra: *'If my prescriptions are having an untoward effect on his majesty then it must be because that pharmacist I've been using is spicing them with the wrong ingredients. I suggest you look into it.'* This may lead to trouble for Elvyra, as she has been doctoring her medicines with Ranald's Delight, but only on Kappelmuller's own suggestion.

4. **Sell out Wasmeier:** Yann Zuntermein has explained to Kappelmuller that a wretched former Magister of the Purple Hand is living in the Reikerbahn slums, so if Kappelmuller is ever cornered, he should try to bargain for his life by trying to sell out Wasmeier as the man who contracted him for the task of poisoning the Emperor.

5. **Fight:** As a highly trained assassin, if Kappelmuller cannot talk his way out of trouble, he ingests a dose of Ranald's Delight and tries to fight his way out.



CONSULTATIONS WITH QUINTUS FASSBINDER

The Characters have a chance to catch up with Quintus Fassbinder at last. He is able to furnish them with all the information they need to find the Hammer. However, the temple-library where he conducts his research contains much more information besides the Hammer's location. Inquisitive Characters could emerge from its darkened rooms with important clues.

GIDEON MAKES TIME

The need to conduct research in order to find out about the likely fate of the original Ghal Maraz affords Gideon the opportunity to speed the Character's progress or delay them in order to manipulate them into meeting his preferred schedule.

On the one hand, if it looks like the Characters are in danger of failing to meet his deadline of the 9th of Brauzeit, Gideon may leave certain books and letters in open view. If the Characters are arguing about how to achieve their journey, or how to prepare, Gideon may leave helpful books open on tables within the Characters' line of sight, such as *From Altdorf to Averheim*, *Benni Bottomdown's Guide to Navigating the Upper Reik and Lower Aver*, or *101 Useful Khazalid Phrases in Phonetic Reikspiel*.

On the other hand, if the Characters are ahead of schedule, Gideon attempts to delay them. In this case, Quintus and the Characters find that various books and letters they need have been loaned out to professors, solicitors, and other people of letters throughout Altdorf. Tracking down even the most needful information takes up days of precious time.

Gideon's hand in these manipulations is subtle and careful, but Characters may still get a sense that something strange is afoot. If Characters react to the discovery of a strangely convenient book by asking if there is anyone else in the library, they may make a **Hard (-20) Perception** Test. Those who succeed notice a small figure darting behind a bookcase, but if they investigate there is no one there. Characters may track down a book loaned to a physician on Altdorf's South Bank, Doktor Neinne.

The woman has no idea how she came to be in possession of such a book, but if she is asked if she has had any strange visitors lately, she mentions that the day before she was visited by a young man who begged to be admitted to her surgery, but then left suddenly before she could ask him what the problem seemed to be. The boy's description matches that of Gideon in his servant boy guise.

QUINTUS FASSBINDER

Quintus is a brilliant but unorthodox scholar, derided by his peers for his interest in obscure prophecy, arcane lore, and apocryphal religious teachings. Chancellor Eberhardt von Festschrift of the Altdorf University has even been known to warn scholars from attending his lectures: *'Between you and I, I am surprised the man wasn't burned at the stake years ago.'*

The reason that Quintus has not been brought up on charges of blasphemy is because he is one of the Empire's foremost experts in cult activity. He has also proved invaluable in the discovery of several cultists and witches and he has several contacts in the Order of the Silver Hammer, the preeminent Sigmarite institution of Witch Hunters. Thanks to his contacts with such authorities, Quintus is well-paid for a scholar, which may explain why his fellow professors loathe him. Some young sycophantic academics have tried to get close to him in the past to gain access to his 'contacts' only to discover that he has no desire to have a toadying sidekick trying to ride his cloak tails.

Whilst Quintus is a genuine authority, this does not preclude him from being something of a quack. He is willing to consider almost any conspiracy theory or contrarian argument, at least at first. Whilst this has placed him ahead of the game in regards to the subjects of interest to the Characters, if they ask him about anything in which he is not a genuine expert, he happily blathers on about all manner of half-baked rubbish from rumours about Deathclaw (the Emperor's Griffon) to too many wizards in the capital.

QUINTUS FASSBINDER

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	33	31	37	49	43	28	33	37	51	43	16

Skills: Art (Writing) 48, Charm 46, Cool 56, Consume Alcohol 59, Entertain (Lecture 53, Storytelling 58), Evaluate 60, Gamble 72, Gossip 48, Haggle 58, Intimidate 47, Intuition 58, Language (Classical 72, Khazalid 67), Leadership 48, Lore (Chaos 77, Cults 77, Heraldry 67, History 67, Theology 77), Melee (Basic) 36, Perception 58, Research 77, Trade (Calligrapher) 43

Talents: Blather, Bookish, Carouser, Doomed (*Sheer hubris everlasting envy rashness and resentment gnashes enfeebled torso rendered undone*), Etiquette (Scholars), Linguistics, Public Speaker, Savant (Theology) 2, Read/Write, Speedreader, Super Numerate

Trappings: Writing Kit, Notebook, Jewellery to a value of 12 GCs, Fine Clothing, Purse containing 2 GCs

QUINTUS'S QUANTIFICATIONS

Quintus has been prepared to assist the Characters in finding the likely location of Ghal Maraz. He has made important findings in this regard. When the Characters first enter the library, he is pouring over a huge tome written in Khazalid.

'Hello again. Good to see you! Well, let's get straight to business. Thanks to careful negotiation with representatives of Altdorf's Dwarf community and the Sigmarite priesthood, I have been able to obtain a priceless book. Please do not touch it with your dirty hands! This is one of the few copies of a history of the latter days of Sigmar written by Loremaster Yodri of Kadar-Khalizad. It is written in Khazalid, and the Dwarfs will brook no translation. Are any of you able to read Dwarf script yourselves?'

A Character passing a **Hard (-20) Language (Khazalid)** Test can be given the handout on the right, but they also note that the book is titled *Catalogues of Confusion and Shoddiness: An Investigation of Manling Efforts in Scholarship*. If not, Quintus reads it out to them, but warns them to paraphrase the information in their own words if they want to take notes.

Fassbinder notes that many Dwarfs measure time from 3000 years before the Imperial calendar, 'Skraksdeg' is a Dwarf term for Geheimnisnacht, and Kruts is a painful condition associated with lonely goatherds.

If the Characters show no interest in the implications of the account, Fassbinder points out that the shelter of Vithang Dum and the watch post of Zan Mingol still stand. If Yodri is right, Sigmar must have left the pass between the two buildings, a stretch about 3 miles in length.

This is the only piece of information that is freely given to the Players, and all they need to locate the Hammer. However, Quintus certainly expects them to show interest in his other researches. If they look set to leave at this point, he tries to prompt them to seek further advice.

'Well, I'm delighted that you feel Yodri's account provides you with all the pointers you need. Given that we have the library at our disposal, is there anything else you might benefit from? I am Altdorf's foremost expert on unorthodox religious beliefs and practices, you know. If there's anything puzzling you about the current situation, I'm sure I could shed light on it.'

Quintus has a few ideas already, but he is in the habit of prompting people to their own understanding rather than simply providing answers.

If the Characters are determined to be on their way, he lets them go, though a little reluctantly. If not, he's willing to spend as much time as they require pouring through old books and letters.

Manling accounts of Sigmar's final journey furnish us with particularly egregious examples of sentimental ramblings devoid of rigour. In particular, I must excoriate the shoddy scholarship of Professor Albertus Knox of the University of Nuln whose 4476 treatise is fit purely for soaking in vinegar and applying to the sensitive regions of those afflicted by Kruts.

This Grobi-fondling wantwit fails to mention that Sigmar was reported passing Vithang Dum in 3050 — despite such information being clearly minuted in the 32456th monthly report of the Vithang Dum Caretaker's Council.

Imust also decry the inane simpering of Professor Janni Schmidt of the Salzenmund University, may she lose herself in the wilderness with no hat come Skraksdeg night. Her account of Sigmar's last movements have him pausing to take in 'the awesome sight of the southern lands spreading out beyond the Black Mountains', as if he were some feckless romantic sap!

Does she think the Dwarfs of the Karaz Ankhор so feble-minded as to post watchmen with no eyes? No record taken at the watchtower of Zan Mingol mentions Sigmar passing by to the south.

SO HE NEVER PASSED BY TO THE SOUTH! DO IT RIGHT OR DON'T DO IT AT ALL, YOU TOWERING SCANT-BEARDED IMBECILES!

CATALOGUES OF CONFUSION

Manling accounts of Sigmar's final journey furnish us with particularly egregious examples of sentimental ramblings devoid of rigour. In particular, I must excoriate the shoddy scholarship of Professor Albertus Knox of the University of Nuln whose 4476 treatise is fit purely for soaking in vinegar and applying to the sensitive regions of those afflicted by Kruts.

This Grobi-fondling wantwit fails to mention that Sigmar was reported passing Vithang Dum in 3050 — despite such information being clearly minuted in the 32456th monthly report of the Vithang Dum Caretaker's Council.

Imust also decry the inane simpering of Professor Janni Schmidt of the Salzenmund University, may she lose herself in the wilderness with no hat come Skraksdeg night. Her account of Sigmar's last movements have him pausing to take in 'the awesome sight of the southern lands spreading out beyond the Black Mountains', as if he were some feckless romantic sap!

Does she think the Dwarfs of the Karaz Ankhор so feble-minded as to post watchmen with no eyes? No record taken at the watchtower of Zan Mingol mentions Sigmar passing by to the south.

SO HE NEVER PASSED BY TO THE SOUTH! DO IT RIGHT OR DON'T DO IT AT ALL, YOU TOWERING SCANT-BEARDED IMBECILES!

EXTRA RESEARCH

Quintus could be able to provide the Characters with further insights into these areas:

Implications of Yodri's report — with a bit of digging, further information could be found about the location of Ghal Maraz.

Cult activities — Quintus has a body of knowledge about the Purple Hand and the activities of Kastor Lieberung.

Recent activities in Black Fire Pass — Characters may work out that there is a connection between mining activities and their mission.

Daemonic activity — Characters may be interested in the secret history of Sigmar, or mention prophetic remarks they have come across during their adventures, which may lead to clues about their circumstances.

The custodians of the library are prepared to keep the place open throughout the night for the Characters, but researching past midnight requires **Challenging (+0) Endurance** Tests in order to avoid gaining a *Fatigued* Condition.

IMPLICATIONS OF YODRI'S REPORT

The Characters may want to get a better understanding of the geography of Black Fire Pass, Quintus has a number of maps and a typical illustration is shown below.



If the Characters ask what Sigmarites think about the last movements of Sigmar, Quintus says:

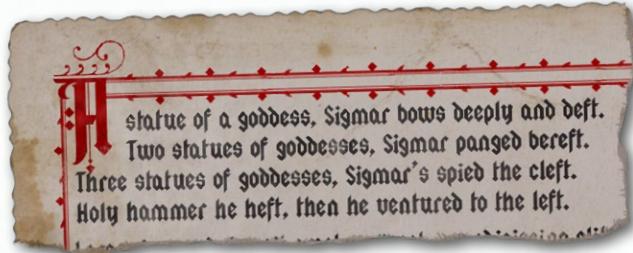
'The position of the official cult is that Sigmar journeyed to Black Fire Pass in order to return the Hammer to the Dwarfs. Whilst the cult recognises a number of interpretations as to what this might mean, no record of him delivering Ghal Maraz exists! The consensus is that his passage through the pass is as much spiritual as it is physical: Sigmar enters a mortal and leaves a god. There are less orthodox approaches to the faith: the Malleun sect believe it was the Hammer rather than the man who was divine; the Ascetics reject the authority of the Grand Theogonist, and the Sisters of Sigmar respect their own prophetic augers. You could see if any texts in the library relate to these sects, and what they say of Sigmar's last journey.'

If the Characters ask Quintus if he has looked into such accounts, he becomes rather irritated:

'I've enough problems being thought a heretic without digging through volumes of actual heresy. You'll have to find it yourselves — if anything's there to be found!'

The Characters must make an extended **Hard (-20) Perception** Test to a total of 8 SL, or **Challenging (+0) Research** Test to a total of 5 SL in order to locate a single account. There are two accounts to be found, and each test takes up an hour of searching the library.

The first account is titled *Virtuous Visions Volume V: Auntie Augusta's Awesome Auguries*, a brightly illustrated guide intended to introduce children to the borderline heretical pronouncements of the Sisters of Sigmar.



It reads:

*A statue of a goddess, Sigmar bows deeply and deft.
Two statues of goddesses, Sigmar panged bereft.
Three statues of goddesses, Sigmar's spied the cleft.
Holy hammer he heft, then he ventured to the left.*

The prophecy relates to the Three Mothers, a group of Dwarf ancestor statues depicting Valaya and two other Dwarf women. They stand opposite the entrance to the gorge that was concealed in the rockfall.

Further searching may turn up a pamphlet entitled *The Dream Sights of Bertoldt the Malleun*, which includes the passage on the right. It reads:

I saw the object of our devotion unbound. I saw the blazing heavens anew above the Seat of Sigmar upon the ninth day of the ninth month. The veil had been torn aside and sorcerous gales blew strong about the spires in lurid pinks and moody blues. I saw a blasphemous city coming down from the heavens and as it descended people cried out in woe. A loud voice intoned: 'Here are nine and each shall come with its own host. The Changer triumphs!' I saw death, madness and transformation as the Exalted Lord brought his Master's realm to the Crown of the Empire.

Whilst the passage provides no further guidance as to the location of Ghal Maraz, it is portentous, as the Characters may discover later.

CULT ACTIVITIES

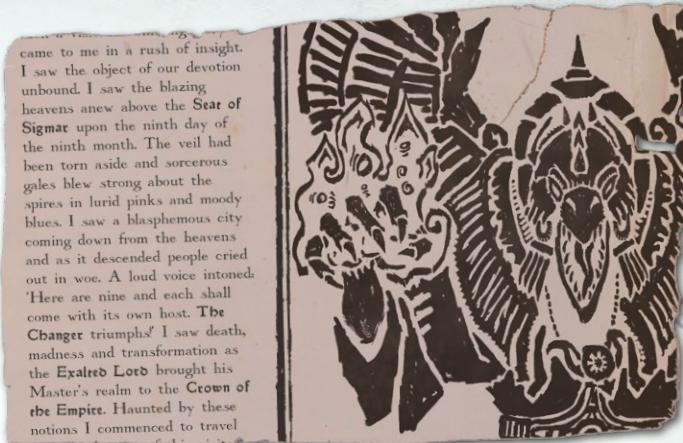
If the Characters talk to Quintus about cults or Kastor Lieberung, he is cagey and admits that he is reluctant to speak freely given that much about the cults is potentially misleading hearsay and that coming to the wrong conclusion could result in charges of heresy. That said, specific answers to specific enquiries run along the following lines.

The Purple Hand: *A large cult established in many places. Members seem to be only loosely affiliated and there are several schools of thought within the cult. Mostly members worship Tzeentch in the hope of personal temporal power. They tend to regard Tzeentch as the Great Architect who can assist them in the fulfilment of their mortal ambitions.'*

Kastor Lieberung: *A member of the Purple Hand whose behaviour was becoming increasingly at odds with the cult. It seems he thought it necessary to unite the Purple Hand and provide them with a coherent ulterior motive. He had mixed success; some thought he jeopardised cult secrecy, but others felt he was visionary. I think his superiors had him killed.'*

Characters passing a **Hard (-20) Intuition** Test may guess that Quintus is hiding something, or they may simply accuse him of enabling Adophus Kuftos's attempt to waylay Kastor. If so, Quintus changes tack, saying: 'Yes, I knew who Leiberung was and tried to arrange for his capture. I hadn't known Kuftos would turn out to be such a ... blunt instrument'. Quintus does not reveal his sources — unless successfully bribed, intimidated, or charmed.

Lieberung's identity was revealed to me by a correspondent in Bögenhafen whose identity remains mysterious. As I said earlier, I suspect senior members of the Purple Hand were growing nervous about his increasing visibility and wanted him killed. I concocted a story about a rich inheritance in the hope it would give the cult pause as well as drawing him into the open, but it proved a bit of a botch.'



The Red Crown: *'They are a sect of Tzeentch worshippers who believe rousing creatures such as Goblins and Beastmen to their cause would prove profitable. They're regarded as liabilities by the Hand.'*

Nine Eyes: *'No idea, though the number nine and the symbol of the eye are often seen as ritually significant.'*

Champion in Shadows: If the Characters ask Quintus about his opinion of a Champion in Shadows, he grows excited.

'You really do know your stuff! I've longed to understand more about the notion of such a figure, who does seem to be an important icon to cultists. Tell me how you came to know of this?'



If the Characters explain themselves and ask Quintus for more context in return, he says:

I've come across no texts or bodies of lore referring to the Champion in Shadows. However, on a few occasions I have been present during the interrogation of a cultist prisoner. Twice I have heard these wretches defy their inquisitors, spitting that when the Champion of Shadows arises, the tables will be turned. Cultists seem to believe that he is a promised leader and unifier, a dark mirror of Sigmar and a master of sorcery.'

Some Characters might suggest that known champions of Chaos might be the Champion in Shadows, but Quintus is dismissive: *I mentioned Egrim van Horstmann to one damned wretch, but he just laughed and said that Egrim would be judged a mere dabbler in comparison to the Champion in Shadows. Wasmeier? From what you tell me, he's barely fit to be thought of as an adjunct' and so on.*

Dark Tongue: If the Characters show Quintus any guide to translating the runic code sometimes used by the Purple Hand, he whoops in sudden fierce joy.

I have seen this cipher used before! I've seen it before! I think I have correspondence intended for Kastor Lieberung himself in such a cipher. Wait here and I'll fetch it.'

9K1URGR..h1n9 r4h aR -<0...nD ..n tPhi1i.
 .0..0. < 0..t...-.. -<40 1h1D 0..9u1r9
 .-0..n11 -<...nD x0..-r0..9 <nD t4h09u1r9
 .-a..-0..0. .0. <4..-a..-nD 9 u9 0..100n1i.
 .0..-r..9 t4hAe1..-x x..-r0 ..n10..1...-nD 9 r0..n1i.
 <r n...n. .A 4h0r09 n...n10 <99..-A..-1. n...n. t u1r9
 0un e..0..-9r9 t1h4h1 9h r0.. tPhi1i..0. .-t u1r9
 10..-r1 0un. .A..-u1L <nD t4h0..-nD ..-h0 ..-t tPhi1i.
 .-t tPhi1i ..-h0 ..-0..-nD < 0h0040 t..-t4hA..
 r0..n -<0..-A ..-t r..-9 10..-9E ..-1..-n..0 r0.. t..-9 ..-t
 0..-I..-nD 9h..-L ..-t..-r0..0 <nD r..-9r u0..-h0..
 u..-r..-0 n...n. r..-A..-9 9..-t..-r1h ..-nD ..-t..-10..-t..-9 ..-t

Three hours later the scholar returns with the letter above.

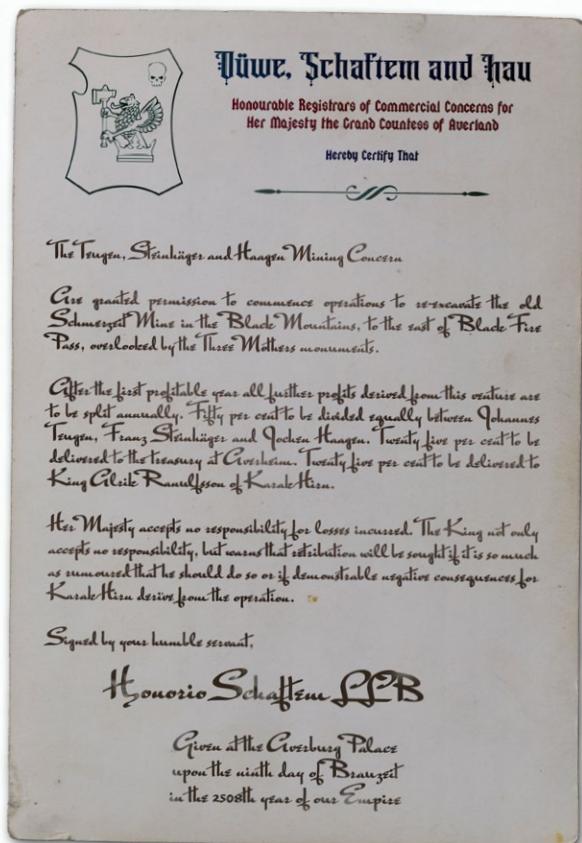
Translated, it reads;

*Salutations to my friend in change
 here a recipe for bold results
 eternal fiend writhes and consults
 empire he commands us rearrange
 rites complex with ingredients strange
 at nine month's ninth assemble nine cults
 run priest's blood so the changer exults
 great rune maul and confusion exchange
 each eye present a horror become
 then from fate's grasp deliver the task
 regent's shell feather and twist undone
 utter nine times swiftly Iztak Graksk*

RECENT ACTIVITY IN BLACK FIRE PASS

The Characters may search through the library in order to find mentions of Black Fire Pass. The Characters must make an extended **Hard (-20) Perception** Test to a total of 10 SL, or **Challenging (+0) Research** Test to a total of 6 SL in order to locate the handout below.

Unknown to the players — when Sigmar defeated the Exalted Lord of Change, their clash was so titanic that it caused a great rockfall at the mouth of the gorge. It was concealed from Black Fire Pass and vegetation grew over it to hide the entrance. Gideon can't get past the rockfall, but his mining scheme has successfully burrowed through very recently, just in time for the party to arrive. He's killed the two miners.



Düwe, Schaftrum and Hau

*Honourable Registrars of Commercial Concerns for Her Majesty the Grand Countess of Averland
 Hereby Certify That*

The Teugen, Steinhäger and Haagen Mining Concern

Are granted permission to commence operations to re-excavate the old Schmerzeit Mine in the Black Mountains, to the east of Black Fire Pass, overlooked by the Three Sisters monuments.

After the first profitable year all further profits derived from this venture are to be split annually. Fifty per cent to be divided equally between Johannes Teugen, Franz Steinhäger and Jochen

Haagen. Twenty five per cent to be delivered to the treasury at Averheim. Twenty five per cent to be delivered to King Alrik Ranulffson of Karak Hirn.

Her Majesty accepts no responsibility for losses incurred. The King not only accepts no responsibility, but warns that retribution will be sought if it is so much as rumoured that he should do so or if demonstrable negative consequences for Karak Hirn derive from the operation.

Signed by your humble servant,

Honorio Schaftem LLB

Given at the Averburg Palace upon the ninth day of Brauzeit in the 2508th year of our Empire

DAEMONIC ACTIVITY

Characters looking for obscure lore about Sigmar and related mentions of daemonic activity must make an extended **Hard (-20) Perception** Test to a total of 8 SL, or **Challenging (+0) Research** Test to a total of 5 SL in order to locate an account by Loremaster Yodri titled *From the Adequate to the Benighted: Ancestor Gods of the Manlings*. The Dwarfs have permitted the work to be translated into Reikspiel, though it is a rather withering review of human belief. The 'Adequate' part of the tome refers almost wholly to Sigmar and largely reports familiar anecdotes about his life and cult. An early passage does seem to provide fresh insight into the creation of Ghal Maraz. It reads:

Back when young Dawi had proper respect for hard Graft and pursuit of excellence Smednir set out to forge the greatest runehammer of all time. He took up half dozen ingots of copper and several of zinc and placed it in Zharren, the Ongoing Fire, as his furnace was called. But no matter how he laboured at the bellows the coals would not grow hot enough. Some say the coals had been purchased from an Elgi merchant from across the ocean, and that this accounted for their mediocre and dilute qualities.

Smednir cried out in frustration and a daemon appeared. It whispered to Smednir that it could heat the forge for him with its own flame. Proud Smednir denied the daemon and cast it from the mountain. Smednir chastised himself for his temper, for it is a bad workman who blames his tools, even if those tools were supplied by Yarnithiel Crestsider of briny Cothique.

With great effort, Smednir managed to get the metal white hot. He set to work shaping it. But the metal was wilful, the ore having been supplied by lanky folk of the northern lands who can barely tell a fine grade nugget from a clod of cuprous mud, and Smednir toiled for many days without success. The grinding of Smednir's molars could be heard echoing about the peaks and the daemon reappeared. It offered to guide Smednir's shaping hammer, Azulokrid. Smednir threatened the daemon and chased it from Zharren.

After more days of sweat, Smednir formed the hammer and began to set the runes. This was a grand endeavour the likes of which had never been attempted before. As he wrestled with this

insurmountable task, the daemon slipped into the forge again. It saw Smednir working and boasted of its prowess in manipulating magic. At this, the Ancestor God grew enraged and cursed the daemon's name, 'Sheerargetru', then smote it with the unfinished hammer. It was banished and Smednir finished Ghal Maraz with the aid of the other Ancestor Gods.

Since that day, the daemon has brooded in its ever-shifting palace, abhorring the hammer that was forged without taint of its influence, but fearing it too, for a mere brush from the weapon would grievously injure it and its kind. For an eon the daemon sulked and whined. I mean, I might be the sort to hold a grudge, but the daemon really took it personally. It bitterly condemned the sons of Smednir. It hid the forge of Zharren deep within hideous realms and swore that until the Dwarfs returned to the forge they would never again weave such powerful magic into their designs.

Back when young Dawi had proper respect for hard Graft and pursuit of excellence Smednir set out to forge the greatest runehammer of all time. He took up half dozen ingots of copper and several of zinc and placed it in Zharren, the Ongoing Fire, as his furnace was called. But no matter how he laboured at the bellows the coals would not grow hot enough. Some say the coals had been purchased from an Elgi merchant from across the ocean, and that this accounted for their mediocre and dilute qualities.

Smednir cried out in frustration and a daemon appeared. It whispered to Smednir that it could heat the forge for him with its own flame. Proud Smednir denied the daemon and cast it from the mountain. Smednir chastised himself for his temper, for it is a bad workman who blames his tools, even if those tools were supplied by Yarnithiel Crestsider of briny Cothique.

With great effort, Smednir managed to get the metal white hot. He set to work shaping it. But the metal was wilful, the ore having been supplied by lanky folk of the northern lands who can barely tell a fine grade nugget from a clod of cuprous mud, and Smednir toiled for many days without success. The grinding of Smednir's molars could be heard echoing about the peaks and the daemon reappeared. It offered to guide Smednir's shaping hammer, Azulokrid. Smednir threatened the daemon and chased it from Zharren.

After more days of sweat, Smednir formed the hammer and began to set the runes. This was a grand endeavour the likes of which had never been attempted before. As he wrestled with this insurmountable task, the daemon slipped into the forge again. It saw Smednir working and boasted of its prowess in manipulating magic. At this, the Ancestor God grew enraged and cursed the daemon's name, 'Sheerargetru', then smote it with the unfinished hammer. It was banished and Smednir finished Ghal Maraz with the aid of the other Ancestor Gods.

Since that day, the daemon has brooded in its ever-shifting palace, abhorring the hammer that was forged without taint of its influence, but fearing it too, for a mere brush from the weapon would grievously injure it and its kind. For an eon the daemon sulked and whined. I mean, I might be the sort to hold a grudge, but the daemon really took it personally. It bitterly condemned the sons of Smednir. It hid the forge of Zharren deep within hideous realms and swore that until the Dwarfs returned to the forge they would never again weave such powerful magic into their designs.

Experience Awards

Good roleplaying and clever thinking should be rewarded, but there are additional XP for the following:

- 💀 30 points for figuring out the location of the Hammer before Quintitus explains it
- 💀 25 points for working out that the poem is an acrostic spelling 'Sheerargetru'
- 💀 25 points for planning a route to Black Fire Pass
- 💀 15 points per handout found
- 💀 9 points for remaining quiet and not disturbing other users of the library

CHAPTER 9

ALTDORF TO BLACK FIRE PASS

THE CARROBURG

For their journey to Black Fire Pass, the Characters receive the services of *The Carroburg*, one of the latest Imperial Fast Patrol Boats. The pride of the Imperial Navy, these 'City-Class' boats accommodate 28 oarsmen and are said to be the fastest vessels on the Reik in high winds or dead calm.

Rules for boats can be found in the **Death on the Reik Companion** (pages 28–29). If you don't have that book, quick rules can be used by adjusting the rules for flying dirigibles given in **Chapter 1** as follows.

Count hits to the Balloon as hits to the sails. Critical hits to the sails reduce speed by 25%.

Any Trade (Engineer) Tests made to repair the vessel should be replaced by Trade (Carpentry) Tests.

The vessel may not gain height.

Any Critical Hit or condition that would make the vessel lose height ought to be replaced with a breach in the hull that causes water to flood the vessel. Water comes in at a rate equal to the number of times the hull has been breached. Keep a running total of this number and when it reaches the vessel's toughness, the vessel sinks. Any Character can bail water out of the vessel, reducing the number by 1 per turn per Character bailing. A successful **Average (+20) Trade (Carpentry)** Test can be made every 10 Rounds and fixes as many breaches as it generates SL.

Captain Brunhilde von Flamme

Brunhilde von Flamme is the captain of *The Carroburg*. She is a distant relative of the von Bildhofens, and her family is successfully rebuilding its influence in Middenland after years of obscurity. The family practically paid for the entire boat and so earned her rank. Von Flamme has very little grasp of river life or military matters, but enjoys the attention and the camaraderie, even if it is enforced. She does cut quite a dash in her extravagant interpretation of the Imperial Navy captain's uniform, however. She knows her limitations and is content to leave her first officer in charge of the day-to-day running of the boat.

Though she is patriotically enthusiastic about the Empire, von Flamme is also loyal to her family and so wishes the Ulrican faction in the civil war to prosper. She easily reconciles this with her support for the Emperor, provided nothing comes up to

put those two sides at odds in her mind. During the course of the voyage, if she ever encounters some sort of conflict between the Emperor and the Cult of Ulric or the Ulrican faction then she becomes increasingly hesitant to make decisions, eventually finding it almost impossible to act. If this happens, Brunhilde defaults to doing nothing at all, unless she can be convinced otherwise.



CAPTAIN BRUNHILDE VON FLAMME
HUMAN BOATSWAIN (SILVER 5)

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	46	32	31	32	52	44	55	31	31	54	12

Traits: Ranged (Pistols) +9 (20),
Weapon (Cutlass) +7

Skills: Athletics 54, Bribery 64, Charm 74, Climb 46, Consume Alcohol 47, Cool 36, Dodge 59, Endurance 52, Evaluate 36, Gamble 46, Gossip 69, Intimidate 42, Language (Wastelander) 34, Leadership 59, Lore (Heraldry) 41, Melee (Basic 66, Brawling 61), Perception 62, Row 41, Sail 54, Swim 46

Talents: Attractive, Doomed (*Slippery harbourside evening, eels ravenous and riotous, gudgeon eat toes rotting underwater*), Etiquette (Nobles), Noble Blood, Orientation, Read/Write, Sea Legs, Strider (Coastal), Strong Swimmer

Trappings: Very Ostentatious Captain's Uniform, Preposterous Hat, Telescope, Pouch containing 4 Shillings, Brace of Pistols loaded with Bullets, Cutlass, Pouch containing 10 Gold Crowns and 4 Shillings

Lieutenant Ottlie Grissen

Lieutenant Ottlie Grissen is a wizened water dog who is popular among the ranks on *The Carroburg* and has the trust of her captain. She runs a relaxed and effective ship, but the crew know never to cross her.

LIEUTENANT OTTILIE GRISSEN HUMAN BOATSWAIN (SILVER 5)

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	52	34	48	49	49	47	41	42	33	37	12

Traits: Traits: Ranged (Bow) +7 (50), Weapon (Sword) +8

Skills: Athletics 57, Climb 58, Consume Alcohol 59, Dodge 57, Gamble 42, Gossip 47, Intuition 59, Language (Wastelander) 37, Leadership 52, Lore (Reikland 47, Riverways 52), Melee (Basic 67, Brawling 57), Navigation 62, Perception 59, Ranged (Bow) 39, Row 58, Sail 57, Swim 58, Trade (Carpenter) 61

Talents: Catfall, Doomed (*Thine own instrument carries thee off*), Fisherman, Orientation, Resistance (Disease), River Guide, Strong Legs, Strong Swimmer, Super Numerate

Trappings: Cloak, Clothing, Sword, Pouch containing 2 Gold Crowns and 4 Shillings, Sling Bag containing a Flask of Spirits, Bow and 12 Arrows

Marine-Captain Karl Bauermann

Bauermann is the captain of the marines on board *The Carroburg*. He is subservient to von Flamme and Grissen on board the boat, but once they disembark, the company of marines is entirely his. He is an experienced soldier and seafarer, and knows what's what. Although he doesn't care for von Flamme (too inexperienced and eager to social climb), he respects Grissen enough to make sure he does his best for *The Carroburg*'s captain.

If they make a good impression on him, and treat his men reasonably, Bauermann will become a competent and constructive ally of the Characters. If he takes a dislike to them, however, he begins a campaign of petty resistance, undermining them at every opportunity, and doing his best to make them look bad, as long as it doesn't risk his crew. He's just petty like that.

MARINE-CAPTAIN KARL BAUERMANN

SERGEANT (SILVER 5)

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	57	54	38	54	49	37	31	32	53	27	18

Traits: Armour 2, Ranged (Bow) +6 (50), Weapon (Sword) +7

Skills: Athletics 52, Climb 58, Consume Alcohol 64, Cool 68, Dodge 47, Endurance 64, Language (Battle 42, Wastelander 37), Leadership 68, Melee (Basic) 67, Play (Drum) 41, Ranged (Bow) 37, Sail 42, Swim 41

Talents: Doomed (*A beat upon the drum, thy doom doth come*), Etiquette (Soldiers), Fisherman, Resistance (Disease), Strong Legs, Strong Swimmer, Super Numerate, Very Resilient, War Leader

Trappings: Cloak, Clothing, Breastplate, Helmet, Pouch containing 12 Shillings, Sling Bag containing a Flask of Spirits, Bow and 12 Arrows, Sword

The Carroburg is fitted with two banks of seven oars on each side. This gives it unequalled speed in calm weather. A company of marines doubles as the firepower on board, as well as its oar-power. It's fairly clear the marines much prefer the former to the latter. The boat is narrow and sleek and, for its size, remarkably quick in the wind. The crew dread calm days when they are required to man the oars. Less experienced officers love to show off the unique speed of the oared patrol boats on the calmest days, alienating their crew, but Grissen is astute enough to only give such an order in an emergency.

All City-Class boats, such as *The Carroburg*, are part of the Imperial Navy. There is nothing its crew despises more than being confused with the Imperial River Patrol, whose boats are similar, to an untrained eye, but generally smaller and slower. The Imperial River Patrol are looked down upon by the Imperial Navy marines, much like a professional soldier might look down upon a Road Warden.

THE CARROBURG

Item	Vehicle Encumbrance	Carries	Motive Power	Move	Toughness	Wounds	Length (Yards)
Imperial Navy Fast Patrol Boat	180	120	Oars/Sails	10	60	140	35

The *Carroburg* is reminiscent of the Heavy Patrol Boat that some local Riverwardens use, except it is slightly smaller and is clearly built for speed — looking sleeker but having little armour. It is decked out with two gunports on each side (and two cannon), with eight swivel guns dotted around the deck. Enemies to the front of the boat could be targeted by four swivel guns, and enemies to either side by four swivel guns and a cannon, Bernard (or Bernie, when Bauermann is out of earshot). The oars are arranged in two banks of seven on each side, and the mainsail proudly displays a golden Imperial death's-head.

ARMAMENTS OF THE CARROBURG

Weapon	Range	Damage	Qualities/Flaws
Cannon (Small)	50	+10	Blast 2, Damaging, Dangerous, Reload 4
Swivel Gun	30	+15	Blast 2, Dangerous, Reload 4

These weapons belong to the Engineering group, all marines on board are trained in their use with a Ranged (Engineering) Skill of 55.

The Characters should be allowed to bring with them whatever equipment they wish, within reason. There is no room for horses on board. There is little facility for passengers, so Grissen has grudgingly moved into the ship's prison cell, leaving the Characters to use her quarters.

BON VOYAGE

Characters used to life on the river might be expecting passage on *The Carroburg* to be somewhat slow and halting, but they are likely to be surprised at just how rapid the *Carroburg* travels. Manoeuvring treacherous waters and difficult bends is made to look easy with 28 rowers and Grissen's expert command. However, no provision has been made for food beyond iron rations, so Characters may want to eat at riverside inns at any opportunity. Those used to luxury may wish to pay for lodgings, too, instead of spending the night in Grissen's cramped quarters.

OFF TO KEMPERBAD

Leaving Altdorf behind, the journey towards the mountains begins swiftly and safely, and Characters can relax and enjoy the voyage. Reikland and Talabecland are close allies still, and it is the river that marks the border between the two provinces. You may wish to emphasise the pleasantness of this stage as 'calm before the storm'. The sun is shining, the wind is perfect for up-river travel, and all's right with the world — for now.

During this part of the journey, it should be worth letting the Characters get to know their captain and *The Carroburg*'s crew. Von Flamme is apt to spend the day, in good weather, strutting around the deck, pulling out her ornate brass telescope — a gift from uncle Tristan — and surveying the horizon as if she were on the ocean. As she passes each crew member they are likely to roll their eyes or give each other a knowing look — if they think they are unobserved. Von Flamme discusses the weather with Grissen and makes summary forecasts as if she were a grizzled shepherd, but she is often wrong.

It should be clear, soon enough, that Grissen is the effective captain of *The Carroburg*. She goes about her job efficiently, judiciously avoiding the potential for conflict with her captain. Bauermann is pensive. He has an inkling that the Characters mean trouble, and feels a battle might be looming. He is drilling his company with that in mind. The Characters will have to put in real efforts, with **Difficult (-10) Charm** Tests to make a good impression on the marine-captain.



KEMPERBAD TO NULN

As *The Carroburg* journeys from Kemperbad to Nuln, the mood on the river begins to turn. With the Reikland on one bank and Stirland, their firm allies, on the other, war has not reached here yet. As *The Carroburg* approaches the border with Wissenland, though, things start to become more interesting.

A RAMSHACKLE RAFT

About a day's journey before *The Carroburg* reaches the burned village of Schertal (see the following section), the Characters come across a flotilla of refugees. The flotilla is made up of a dozen smaller vessels that have been lashed together to form a large floating platform. A medium-size cargo boat is at the centre of the makeshift arrangement, which offers some shelter from the elements, but every other vessel is either an open rowing boat, or a small fishing raft. Part of the structure seems to be made of pieces of jetty that have been put to use, linking the boats together. Tents and lean-tos have been constructed on top of this raft to give the impression of some sort of haphazard floating campsite. The tents are all made of the light-green hemp cloth that the villagers use for clothing.

The refugees are in desperate need of help. They require food and water, and they have no idea where they might make landfall. Their attempts so far at stopping at riverside villages have been thwarted. No one wants a band of refugees landing on their doorstep in such uncertain and suspicious times, for any number of reasons.

The villagers beg for food and water as they float past *The Carroburg*, but are also wary of such a powerful and official vessel. They do not attempt to stop or board *The Carroburg*. If the Characters ignore them, or merely give them small portions of food, that is the last they see of them. However, if the Characters choose to interact with the refugees, then they can tie up to the flotilla and board it. If they do this, it will take a lot of work to secure the raft to the bank and stop it drifting, otherwise *The Carroburg* drifts downstream (the wrong direction) with it.

If they do board, an old man immediately makes himself known to the Characters. This is Cerdic Linden, the erstwhile village elder. He is flanked by two muscular villagers, armed with quarterstaffs. Though they can offer no serious resistance to the Imperial Navy, they stand beside their leader staunchly.

Linden is eager to tell the Characters about the destruction of his village by Wissenland men-at-arms. He explains that two smaller settlements, Graubach and Florianfeld, have also been raided. The inhabitants of the raft are made up of survivors from all three villages. Though the villagers will be grateful for any food they get, they are wary of any military personnel. The Characters are likely to feel strongly distrusted.



The villagers wear deeply unfashionable clothing more becoming of a Bretonnian peasant than a citizen of the Empire. There is no reason why farmers from the back end of the Reikland should be up on the latest fashions, of course, but these appear decidedly ancient in style. Each villager also wears an unusual, carved wooden pendant. They seem to be depicting a bird-like head, but from a different point of view it looks more like a rabbit head, facing the other way. This is known as predator-prey and is a local tradition going all the way back to the days of the Old Faith. A successful **Difficult (-10) Lore Theology** Test reveals this. If the villagers were seen in another context, all dressed the same, all with a similar pendant, they would look a bit cult-like.

If treated with a great deal of friendliness or courtesy, Linden is forthcoming about the villagers' belief in the Old Faith. The predator-prey is the embodiment of the natural cycle and of balance between creatures. This has been a tradition in Schertal and the surrounding countryside as long as anyone can remember.

In the hold of the cargo boat at the heart of the flotilla, wrapped in hemp cloth is a monolith. It is roundish, about 3 feet in diameter, and about a foot high. Needless to say, it is extremely heavy. It holds a half-carved and half-natural depiction of the predator-prey symbol. The stone lay at the centre of the village until it was attacked, and the villagers managed to get it aboard the boat. It is surrounded by a confused swirl of magical winds.

Should the Characters try to search the flotilla, the villagers look on anxiously. If they find the predator-prey monolith then tensions rise. If Characters attempt to take it or destroy it, this moves the villagers to action, despite the danger it brings them.



If the characters are respectful of the stone and allow the villagers to go on their way, or even actively help them, Linden gives the perceived party leader a predator-prey pendant. It provides a **+20 bonus** to the next three tests the Character makes with one of the following skills: Stealth (Rural), Track, Outdoor Survival, Swim, Perception, Intuition.

The whole issue with the predator-prey iconography has nothing to do with the Characters' quest and is entirely innocent, though it could unnerve the Characters or delay them.



CERDIC LINDEN – UNORTHODOX PRIEST OF RHYA (SILVER 1)

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	37	36	26	24	33	22	25	71	42	51	14

Traits: Weapon (Quarterstaff) +7

Skills: Art (Writing) 45, Athletics 42, Charm 66, Cool 65, Endurance 44, Entertain (Speeches 76, Storytelling 61), Gossip 56, Heal 76, Intimidate 46, Intuition 42, Invoke 62, Leadership 64, Lore (Plants 86, Theology 91), Melee (Basic) 40, Perception 52, Pray 62, Research 81

Talents: Bless (Rhya), Doomed (*Move with the times or face extinction*), Holy Visions, Impassioned Zeal, Read/Write, Super Numerate

Trappings: Green Robes, Predator-Prey Pendant, Quarterstaff

Blessings: Conscience, Courage, Fortune, Protection

Miracles: Rhya's Children, Rhya's Harvest, Rhya's Shelter, Rhya's Touch

THE VILLAGE FORMERLY KNOWN AS SCHERTAL

A day or so after coming across the refugee boats, near the Reikland–Wissenland border, *The Carroburg* reaches the remains of Schertal village, on the west bank of the Reik. It has been razed by Wissenlander raiders who have crossed into Reikland territory and pillaged what they can. Little remains standing in the village save for blackened rock walls. The bodies of several villagers lie where they fell.

The village temple is the only substantial structure remaining. A large stone building, this was ostensibly the temple of Sigmar and the centre of village life. In fact, it was used to venerate the Old Faith and the predator-prey detailed above. An examination of the blackened stone shows that much of the Sigmarite iconography has been subverted into the predator-prey symbol. Is that an Imperial eagle, or the predator? Is that a twin-tailed comet, or a two-eared rabbit?

A bare patch in the grass outside the temple is testament to the removal of the monolith the Characters may have discovered on the refugee raft.

The two other villages mentioned by the refugees, Graubach and Florianfeld, have also been raided. If the Characters are interested in finding evidence of this, they are both within a few miles of Schertal, and in a similar state.

INTO WISSENLAND

If Characters wish to pursue the perpetrators, then they have to leave their quest, and the river, to do so. Characters passing a **Very Difficult (-30) Perception** Test or an **Average (+20) Track** Test are able to follow the route the raiders took. It is apparent that there were a great number of soldiers involved, maybe as many as a hundred, a number of which were mounted.

The trail follows the river for several miles, crosses into Wissenland, and then starts to turn inland and up a steep ridge. Baron Klaus von Bachmann's striking castle, Schloss Bachmann, sits atop the ridge, with commanding views of this stretch of the river, about 20 miles from Schertal.

Seeing the rise in tension across the Empire, von Bachmann has decided to make a move while other powers are distracted. He has had no backing from the Countess Emmanuelle, but has long coveted Schertal and its environs. If the Characters approach the Baron diplomatically then von Bachmann is prepared to grant them an audience. If the Characters threaten him or try to attack the castle (a clearly foolhardy endeavour), then with over one hundred men-at-arms at his disposal, he is not concerned. In fact, Bachmann is confident enough to lead his troops out and deal with the much smaller force of the Characters and their marines in open battle if it comes to it.

SCHLOSS BACHMANN

Despite being a 'strike first and ask questions later' sort, von Bachmann is perfectly capable of playing the considerate statesman. If the Characters arrive at his castle and offer him the respect a noble lord is due then he offers them every hospitality.

Von Bachmann is brighter and more observant than his blustering persona might reveal. His first line of defence is to question the Characters to see whether they are aware of his family's great history and the land around Schertal. He requires that they tell him exactly what happened at the razing of Schertal. The Characters are likely to know little about either, in which case von Bachmann politely requests they come back when they have a fuller understanding of the situation.

His second resort is to sow doubt about the integrity of the people of Schertal and the neighbouring villages. He casts their Old Faith traditions as witchcraft, and can supply any number of witnesses to back him up.

It is unlikely the Characters are able to do much about Baron von Bachmann now, but bringing up his behaviour might wrong-foot the countess when they again meet up with her later in the adventure.

Baron Klaus von Bachmann

Von Bachmann is tall, barrel-chested, and red-haired, with a florid complexion. On the one hand, he is a belligerent boor, who uses brute force as a first resort. On the other hand, he has been taught well in the art of diplomacy and uses this to his advantage. He finds it easy to get people to underestimate him. This can work to his advantage as people often reveal more than they intended, as they believe that he is not really paying attention. In fact he listens closely and takes in every word.

BARON KLAUS VON BACHMANN

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	50	33	52	35	48	43	33	37	38	28	14

Traits: Weapon (Armour 4, Ranged (Longbow) +9 (100), Weapon (Sword) +9

Skills: Animal Care 52, Athletics 48, Charm Animal 53, Cool 53, Dodge 53, Endurance 50, Haggle 31, Heal 47, Intimidate 62, Language (Battle) 57, Leadership 31, Lore (Heraldry) 47, Melee (Basic 75, Cavalry 65), Ranged (Bow) 36, Ride (Horse) 53, Trade (Farrier) 48

Talents: Doomed (*Burning sands invite the bite of an ancient blade*), Etiquette (Nobles), Luck, Noble Blood, Read/Write, Shieldsman, Strike Mighty Blow

Trappings: Full Plate Armour, Sword, Longbow and 12 Arrows, Warhorse, Lance, Bachmann Castle and all within it

WELCOME TO NULN, ENJOY YOUR STAY

Two parties are very interested in the Characters' arrival in Nuln. The first is the Grand Countess Emmanuelle von Liebwitz; the second, slightly more humble, but perhaps even more directly dangerous to them, is Orla Feder.

Through her contacts and various spies in the capital, von Liebwitz is aware that the Characters are heading to Averland on an important mission. Despite her access, she has been unable, as yet, to glean the precise nature of their undertaking — but she intends to find out. The Countess has the power to move openly, but that could cause repercussions she doesn't want, so she has decided to play a careful and measured hand.

She has arranged for a favoured agent of hers, Hans Knees, to create no end of petty bureaucratic obstacles to slow *The Carroburg*, and hence the Characters, keeping them in Nuln until she learns the truth about their mission. Being heroes of the Empire with official backing, the Characters are now likely to consider themselves above the sort of petty bureaucratic nonsense that no doubt plagued them in their earlier adventures. The number, and banality, of obstacles in their path should make it obvious that they are being intentionally delayed, but there is little they can do about it. Knowing these orders are coming down from upon high prevents even the poorest watchman accepting the Characters' bribes.

THIS PETTY PACE

As soon as *The Carroburg* reports to the harbourmaster's office in Nuln (as all river traffic must do) they are met by one Hans Knees who promises to do everything he can to get them through the tedious bureaucratic process as fast as possible. He appreciates that the Imperial First Fleet should be given every help and privilege, *'but unfortunately a couple of minor formalities must be fulfilled for everyone's benefit.'*



'First of all, we require a disembarkation certificate, in triplicate, you should have picked one up back in Altdorf, but I can arrange to get you a copy. Shouldn't take more than a day to have it drafted. Then a boarding pass for each of you, with a signed affidavit from a notarised official. Tomorrow I will try to get hold of a ship's manifest roster, which you must fill in for every member of the crew. Don't forget the ship's cat's date of birth. That sometimes gets omitted, which often contributes to unnecessary delays...'

Knees wears the uniform of the harbourmaster's office; however, a Character passing an **Easy (+40) Perception** Test notices that apart from his ill-fitting and dusty hat, everything else he wears fits him perfectly, is well-tailored, and could *never* be afforded on a mere assistant harbourmaster's salary.



HANS KNEES
HUMAN SPY (SILVER 3)

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	53	33	33	39	49	52	32	40	58	43	14

Traits: Armour 1, Weapon (Sword) +7

Skills: Athletics 72, Bribery 63, Charm 58, Cool 81, Endurance 49, Entertain (Act 68, Storytelling 53), Gamble 60, Gossip 68, Haggles 58, Heal 50, Intimidate 48, Intuition 84, Leadership 56, Lore (Reikland 50, Wissenland 55), Melee (Basic) 73, Perception 84, Sleight of Hand 57

Talents: Blather, Carouser, Doomed (*Sold her egregiously, even rats appalled, repulsed, gotten even, trusted rigour untied*), Gregarious, Lightning Reflexes, Read/Write, Shadow, Sixth Sense

Trappings: Harbourmaster's Hat and Documents, Fine Clothes, Leather Jerkin, Sword coated with Black Lotus

A Character passing an **Average (+20) Perception or Intuition**

Test susses out that Knees isn't concerned in the slightest that the Characters might guess his true motives. He is openly delaying them in full view, albeit politely, in order to make it clear where the power lies.

While they are delayed, and Knees continues to claim he's doing everything he can to help the Characters, he carefully probes them for details of their true mission. Knees is clever and subtle, but at the same time he is happy to let the Characters realise that the quicker they spill the beans, the quicker they can continue on their way.

Amidst all this, Knees is charming and amenable. He recommends that the Characters stay at *The Green Waterwheel*, a smart establishment that should suit them, a couple of hundred yards from *The Carroburg*. Winona, barmaid at *The Green Waterwheel*, is part of Knees's staff and reports anything she thinks might be useful. Sven, the strapping dockhand who works near *The Carroburg* and who is employed to work on her should *The Carroburg* require any maintenance, also spies for Knees. Marines are famous braggarts, and deck hands are famous drinkers, so whatever *The Carroburg*'s crew has managed to learn of the Characters' mission, Knees soon knows too. Knees can have more personnel at his disposal, if you have other ideas for getting close to the Characters and pumping them for information.

If the Characters somehow find a way to thwart Knees, then well done to them! Perhaps they manage to sneak out of Nuln in the dead of night, perhaps they play such a straight bat that Knees gets no inkling at all of their mission and makes the judgement to let them go. Perhaps they can come up with a brilliant strategy to turn him against his mistress (unlikely, but who knows; anything is possible).

In any case, at least two full days need to be spent in Nuln, as it takes a day to dismantle the mast and rigging in order to get *The Carroburg* to fit under the city's bridges to join the River Aver, then another day to get out of the river traffic press. Once Knees decides he has enough information on the Characters, he reports his findings to Emmanuelle von Liebwitz.

Regardless of what Knees uncovers, the countess has them let go, but her response changes depending on a number of things. If their true mission has been discovered, she's surprised, believing them to be on a fool's errand, but slightly hopeful that the return of Ghal Maraz could indeed heal her friend Karl-Franz. 'Aiding' in such an endeavour will give her the leverage to get what she truly wants though: an excuse to attack Wissenland. She sets spies to look for the Characters' return. If she believes they are going to survey the Orc situation, or head into the Border Princes, she dismisses their mission as mostly irrelevant to her interests and puts them out of mind, unless later events bring them back to her attention.

PURPLE HAND – NULN BRANCH

Nuln is where Adolphus Kuftsos first picked up the trail of Kastor Lieberung and the Cult of the Purple Hand. A number of cultists from those days are still active in Nuln. If the Lieberung look-a-like is still in the party then they are recognised during their stay. They will be the focus of the Nuln branch of the Purple Hand's attempted retribution. If the lookalike is no longer around, then one of their associates is recognised.



The Purple Hand in Nuln actually split into multiple splinter groups when the cult was recently compromised by Witch Hunters (perhaps as a result of the Characters' activities). The cell that thinks of itself as the 'Nuln Branch' has lost contact with the other cells in the city and beyond, but they assume the others are all dead or compromised. The Nuln Branch is now under Orla Feder's fanatical leadership. The branch's mission is to sow anarchy, ostensibly as a vague revenge for the Purple Hand's setbacks. The Characters' arrival is seen as a boon sent directly from Tzeentch.

Orla Feder has a profound mutation. Her body is almost entirely that of a great bird. Her head and neck display no sign of mutation so she is able to walk around without detection under a long, heavy, dark cloak. Her awkward gait, however, does betray her slightly. She has no arms or hands, as these are entirely mutated into great iridescent wings.



ORLA FEDER – NULN BRANCH LEADER

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
5	49	25	45	30	55	55	35	42	35	15	13

Traits: Armour 1, Distracting (Hideous Cackling), Flight 50, Night Vision, Spellcaster (Tzeentch), Stealthy, Venom, Weapon (Talons) +6

Skills: Dodge 75, Melee (Brawling) 69

Mental Corruptions: Fearful Concern (when indoors)

SPELLS

Arcane: Blast, Corrosive Blood, Teleport,

Tzeentch: Treason of Tzeentch

Although she is able to pass as human in the dark or on busy streets, she tends to shun company, preferring to brood, perched upon Nuln's tallest buildings, surveying her city and dreaming of revenge. She has a number of similar cloaks secreted around the city in obscure nooks so that she may fly from one area to another, and then resume her disguise. She has also developed a severe aversion to confined spaces and *never* willingly ventures indoors. Conveniently, all of Nuln Branch's meetings happen in dark alleyways, where she can swoop down, almost undetected against the night sky, give her orders, then retreat to the rooftops.

Other cultists hail from all walks of Nuln life. Their new secret cult sign is to show their middle finger, slightly bent like a bird's claw, to prospective allies, then wait to be shown the same back. Feder holds the Nuln Branch together through tyranny and fear.

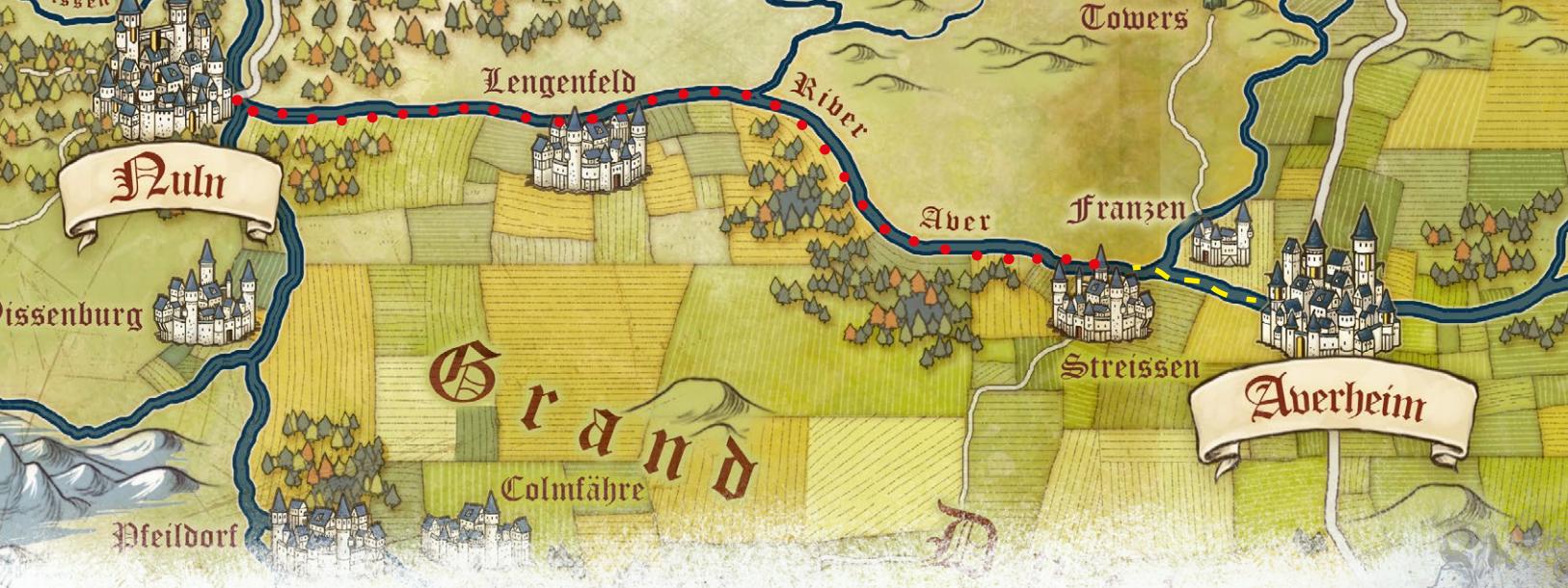
Several recalcitrant cultists have already been plucked from the streets by a giant swooping bird and devoured. This sort of encouragement is working for the moment, but they'll break if Feder falls.

REVENGE FROM ABOVE

Feder spots the Characters while brooding of an evening upon a dramatic vantage point overlooking the docks. She summons her cultists and instructs them to keep an eye on the Characters, while waiting for a good moment to spring an ambush. She follows the Characters too, especially at night. Those with the **Sixth Sense** Talent believe that they are being watched from the shadows and from the sky.

Depending on how long the Characters are delayed, and how cautiously they behave, Feder has the opportunity to attempt a number of ambushes. The first one involves several Purple Hand Cultists. They'll certainly try to attack at night, under an open sky so Feder can assist. They try to ambush the Characters using crossbows from out of the dark. There are twice as many cultists as there are Characters. If the Characters manage to take any alive, they immediately spill all they know of Feder, but they have no idea where she roosts or perches at any given time.

Once the Characters leave town, Feder — desperate for revenge — has no option but to follow alone. She shadows *The Carroburg* up the River Aver and tries to pick off the Characters opportunistically. As *The Carroburg* leaves Nuln, the Characters soon become aware of the giant bird circling high above them, following their every move.



NULN TO STREISSEN

The *Carroburg* enters the River Aver for the next leg of the journey. The river narrows appreciably, the traffic noticeably more modest, but the boat is nimble and small enough to cope with the new conditions.

It is harder to catch the wind in the more sheltered valley, so if good progress is to be made, the marines need to spend much longer at the oars, resulting in some low grumbling from the crew. Von Flamme is content to row her marines into the ground, if necessary, even beyond the Imperial Navy's regulations. Grissen is reluctant for this and tries to reason with the Characters behind von Flamme's back. If the Characters don't discourage overworking the marines, they are less effective if called upon for assistance in the two following sections, and suffer from two *Fatigued* Conditions.

WOLVES DRESSED AS GOATS DRESSED AS LIONS

As the daylight wanes and the crew start to talk about tying up for the night, the boat rounds a bend in the river and the Characters see orange smoke rising from a settlement a few hundred yards upstream, on the Stirland bank of the Aver. This is the village of Heidheim.

Heidheim village is in the process of being raided by a devious band of Sudenland soldiers, who are posing as mercenaries posing as soldiers from Nuln. Several villagers have already been put to the sword and more will be killed if the Characters do not intervene. Refugees have fled into the nearby woods, while their village burns to the ground. As soon as *The Carroburg* arrives, the raiders are massively outnumbered.

A few attempt to fight, equal to the number of Characters +3 or so, but others attempt to flee. Their leader, Fione Brecht, is one of the last to run, so stands a good chance of being captured.

The encounter is not truly intended to test the Characters' fighting prowess, as they have a full complement of marines with them, but it may illustrate how the Empire's political divisions can be exploited by its enemies.

THE THRESHERS

The Toppenheimers of Sudenland hate Countess Emmanuelle and have long desired her downfall, especially since she openly favours the Pfiefrauchers — a fierce rival family of theirs — to take their place and their Runefang. The Toppenheimers have a group of soldiers, known as the Threshers, to occasionally carry out brutal or clandestine deeds on their behalf.

The Toppenheimers hired Fione Brecht — an infamously cunning mercenary captain — to lead the Threshers against Nuln with orders to *'make life difficult for the countess'*. Brecht has had the Threshers pose as soldiers from Nuln to attack innocent settlements along the Reik in both Stirland and Averland. Brecht intends for this to build resentment towards Nuln in both provinces and provoke retaliation against the city-state. Thus, the warband has donned the deep-black uniform of Nuln, with the gold lion picked out on a makeshift banner.

To further hide their true origins, Brecht has used the cunning ruse of having some of her soldiers wear the dress of fictitious independent mercenary regiment 'The Goats', who wear blue and white uniforms with a goat's head emblem beneath their Nuln garb, whereas others wear the buff uniforms of the Sudenland army, their actual colours. When her troops asked why, she only answered with a sly smile and a wink. Brecht is confident so many layers of subterfuge will be utterly impenetrable, but it only requires an **Average (+20) Observation** Test for a witness to compare the two to see that the Sudenland uniforms are old and well made, whereas the Goat ones are neither.

Discovering this key piece of information — that Wissenland soldiers were attacking targets in Stirland and Averland dressed as Nuln troops — is *exceedingly* useful later in the adventure, especially if the Characters have to negotiate with Countess von Liebwitz (page 168).



Fione Brecht

Brecht is obsessed with playing her part in the convoluted chain of events that leads to the end of the world. She is obsessed with subterfuge and disinformation. All her communications are done in convoluted codes. Her orders to her warband are made with an impenetrable series of complex gestures and grunts. This actually serves to slow the communication and sow confusion in her own side.

Fione is also obsessed with the many rumours of conspiracy and intrigue that are gossiped around the Empire. She believes every one and also believes it is her duty to support them. As far as she is concerned, conspiracy is a means to its own end. The actual conspiracy is largely irrelevant. This makes the 'cults within cults' approach favored in Tzeentch worship ideal for her. If she is taken alive, she will only answer questions with obscure riddles and acrostics. Brecht has tried to cover her Purple Hand tattoo over with a convoluted bird tattoo, but a knowing Character can see the lines of the original at a glance.

FIONE BRECHT HUMAN OFFICER (GOLD I)

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	67	64	35	54	47	33	47	70	55	61	18

Traits: Armour 3, Weapon (Sword) +7

Skills: Athletics 43, Charm 76, Climb 45, Consume Alcohol 74, Cool 75, Dodge 43, Endurance 59, Evaluate 85, Gamble 75, Gossip 71, Hagggle 71, Heal 85, Intuition 67, Language (Battle) 80, Leadership 76, Lore (Warfare) 85, Melee (Basic 87, Polearm 82), Navigation 67, Outdoor Survival 75, Perception 62, Play (Fife) 57, Ranged (Bow) 74

Talents: Combat Aware, Commanding Presence, Doomed (*Your nemesis shall strike from the river*), Etiquette (Soldiers), Iron Will, Marksman, Public Speaker, Read/Write, Unshakable, War Leader

Trappings: Nuln Uniform worn over a Sudenland Uniform, Mail Shirt, Helmet, Shield, Sword

STRESS IN STREISSEN

The struggle for power in Averland has smouldered for generations with the House of Alptraum and the Leitdorfs exchanging the title of Elector Count several times. Even simply naming the incumbent can be dangerous, so many Averlanders find it expedient to simply refer to 'the Elector' and let their audience worry about who they mean. The Alptraums, under Lumilla's tenacious leadership, rule at present, but over the last couple of years her power has steadily waned with her ageing body. The mercurial Marius Leitdorf is poised and ready to take advantage of this at the drop of a hat. Their differences are coming to a head over the city of Streissen even as the Characters approach along the Aver.

A NEW UPRISING

The independent spirit of Streissen was never extinguished. Through whispered conversations in shady taverns and assignations at the university, independence for Streissen is still discussed. Needless to say, such clandestine scheming leaves scope for sacrilegious practices to flourish too.

Recent events in the Empire, the wars that are beginning to rage throughout the provinces, a new shortage of food, strange lights in the sky, destabilising rumours, simmering resentment against the Alptraums — all these create the ideal conditions for a new uprising. A small and little-known group, the Streissen Independence Party (SIP), under the competent leadership of Marcus Karlsson, seized control of the Rathaus in a brilliant, nearly bloodless coup, forcing the surprised and depleted garrison to leave the city. This galvanised the common citizen and merchant class who readily joined the cause. The SIP promptly set up an independent council assuming all rights and exemptions of the historical freistadt.

Ludmilla was forced to react. Too old and infirm to take to the field herself, she stayed in Averheim with her Runefang, and sent her daughter, Marlene, to put down the uprising. Little did she know, however, that she was sending her into a trap. Marlene Alptraum summoned what troops she could from Averheim and the nearby garrisons and marched on Streissen, anticipating a short siege against a disorganised civilian rabble.

Unknown to the Alptraums and the general populace of Streissen, the SIP was conceived by Marius Leitdorf. Marcus Karlsson is a captain in Leitdorf's personal bodyguard, and the bulk of the SIP are trusted members of Leitdorf's army. The uprising, ostensibly by desperate revolutionaries and ill-disciplined students, was actually a carefully planned military operation. Leitdorf has supported this by secretly manoeuvring his army to within half a day's march of Streissen, and is poised to ambush Alptraum's forces. It is at this point the Characters arrive.

NICE NIGHT, EH?

The *Carroburg* approaches Streissen as Leitdorf's trap is about to be sprung. Leitdorf's army is camped half a day's march downriver from Streissen. The opposing Alptraum army has just begun to dig in for its siege. Leitdorf plans to march his army towards Streissen first thing tomorrow and surprise the enemy.

Leitdorf has a number of support vessels on the Aver which travel alongside his army. This is mainly for supplies, but it also serves to prevent river vessels moving ahead of the army and potentially warning the Alptraums. These boats warn off any river traffic and attempt to head off anyone who tries to break through the blockade.

However, because the Characters are travelling in an Imperial Navy vessel, they present a sticky problem. Technically, Leitdorf has no authority to stop them. They are officially greeted by the commander of the flotilla, Johan Sperren, who politely insists they talk to his lord, Marius Leitdorf.

It's technically possible to run the blockade, as *The Carroburg* is a fast boat with a competent crew, but the odds are heavily against it. If the Characters haven't earned the trust of both von Flamme and Grissen, one or the other would refuse to assist such a foolhardy endeavour.

If the Characters have the right skills and inspiration to spur on the crew, they might have a fighting chance, but, despite Grissen's best efforts, *The Carroburg* is eventually forced into a mudbank by a string of hefty cargo boats. At that point, they are asked to meet with Leitdorf at gunpoint.

HISTORICAL GRIEVANCES

Streissen, the second city of Averland, is at the sharp end of Averlander politics. It prides itself on being more forward-thinking than the staid provincial capital, Averheim. Streissen College is a small but influential university that also incorporates a prestigious medical school. It is a bastion of new philosophies, and conservatives shun it as a den of decadence.

In 2456 IC, agitation from progressive Streisseners, backed by wealthy wine magnates, earned the city a frestadt charter. This gave the city the right to rule itself and exemption from many Imperial and provincial taxes. In light of newfound freedoms, the people of Streissen grew confident and the university became famous for its revolutionary schools of thought.

Grand Countess Ludmilla von Alptraum saw this increase in confidence and the infamous university as a threat to her power. She perpetrated a relentless covert campaign dedicated to undermining Streissen's prosperity. This came to a head around the turn of the century when a sudden pestilence led to severe food shortages. The famine was suspiciously limited to the area around Streissen – some locals put the crop failure down to Alptraum's conniving. This may be untrue, but undoubtedly, the Countess was slow to come to the aid of the stricken frestadt.

In the desperation of the times, many factions vied for power in the city, some idealistic, some blasphemous. As starvation loomed, the official town council had little choice but to beg Ludmilla for relief. She did so only with the understanding that Streissen would relinquish all further claims to independence.

With the arrival of Ludmilla's forces, however, things went disastrously wrong. Thinking they were merely bringing in welcome supplies, the Averland regiment was surprised to meet determined resistance from the more extreme factions. A bloody battle erupted and in the confusion hundreds of citizens were slaughtered. Throughout the Empire, 'Streissen' is now a byword for massacre.





MARIUS LEITDORF

Marius Leitdorf is very busy on the eve of a vital battle, but he makes time to meet with folks from the Imperial Navy. He is more interested if he finds out the Characters are on a mission from the Emperor. In such a case, he seeks tacit approval from the Characters and takes time to justify himself. He plays on his loyalty to the Emperor, his role in the Emperor's election — he spoke for Karl-Franz before anyone else had the courage to — and his record in the fight against many of the Empire's enemies.

Leitdorf is a colourful and controversial character. He is widely known as 'the Mad Count' because of his unpredictable and idiosyncratic behaviour. His madness may be overstated, but he certainly has a bright mind and quick wit, and is easily distracted. He has any number of plans and strategies going through his mind and bounces between them without considering whether his audience can keep up. If he flits between the relative merits of the spear and the halberd to the relative merits of Grubentreich and Grevenfeld cheeses, and a quick rendition of the old bawdy song 'Klaus's Mouse Outside the House', he has his reasons. Some of his behaviour on campaign seems irrational and impossible to justify, but he often displays a genius understanding of strategy and an unmatched bravery in the field.

His soldiers think his talent is inspired by Sigmar and his odd behaviour is simply beyond the ken of mortals.

The Characters are invited to join the Count for a meal within his enormous campaign tent. His favourite advisor is his horse, whom he introduces with a chuckle as Daisy Kurt von Hellboring the Second — a clear jab at the Emperor's Reiksmarshal. She stands at his side throughout the meal, munching on hay from a large silver tray.

Leitdorf asks probing questions, trying to determine what the Characters are about without directly asking. He assumes the Character with the highest Status is the leader of the party and directs comments to them, unless he is told otherwise. If they say they're off to look into Orc movements or meet with Border Princes, he'll nod sagely and ask: *'Daisy, what do you think of that? Off to hand out spankings, they are.'*

If told they're on a quest for Ghal Maraz, Marius will note dryly, *'And I'm the one they call mad.'*

Daisy takes a fancy to a Character's hat, and begins to eat it. Marius takes it as a grave courtesy if the Character protests. If they gamely let it happen, he hands them an excellent (and expensive) replacement at the end of the meal without comment.

Marius keeps looking at one of the Characters with an arch gaze. He eventually fixates on something about them — ideally something of which the Character is very proud — and begins to mock it relentlessly. He improvises insulting verses and likens the feature to the most awful thing he can imagine, going hilariously on and on until he is distracted by a successful **Charm** Test on the part of another Character, or by some other means. Once distracted, which is easily achieved, he completely forgets that he ever found anything amusing about the Character.

However the Characters react to him, Leitdorf needs persuading to let them go on their way. He cannot risk his dispositions being betrayed to the enemy, and in any case, there would be no clear route for the Characters through Alptraum's lines. Leitdorf mentions '*a good way out of this predicament*' and tells the Characters about the SIP — though he certainly doesn't mention his connection to it. If the Characters suggest that they are willing to talk to the SIP or perhaps mediate with Marlene Alptraum, Marius is delighted, taking this as the Emperor's agents favouring his interests. Even if they don't offer to assist, he cheerfully allows them to continue on their way once Streissen is in his possession.

MARIUS OF HOUSE LEITDORF
NOBLE LORD (GOLD 7)

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	64	58	52	44	69	57	55	55	51	47	18

Traits: Armour 4, Weapon (Sword) +9

Skills: Animal Care 65, Art (Engraving 70, Poetry 70), Athletics 72, Bribery 57, Charm 67, Consume Alcohol 64, Cool 71, Dodge 77, Drive 77, Endurance 64, Entertain (Storytelling 62, Insults 67), Evaluate 58, Gamble 65, Gossip 67, Haggle 62, Heal 60, Intimidate 72, Intuition 77, Language (Battle 75, Brigandine 70, Classical 65), Leadership 67, Lore (Arts 70, Averheim 75, Averland 75, Engineering 70, Empire 75, Heraldry 70, History 75, Warfare 70), Melee (Basic 84, Fencing 80, Parry 74), Navigation 75, Outdoor Survival 65, Perception 79, Perform (Dancing) 77, Play (Lute) 65, Ranged (Blackpowder 68, Bow 63), Ride (Horse) 70, Row 57, Trade (Engineer) 70

Talents: Ambidextrous, Beat Blade, Blather, Carouser 2, Combat Reflexes 2, Commanding Presence 2, Craftsman (Engineer), Disarm 2, Distract 3, Doomed (*First the worst, second the best, third will put you to the test*), Dual Wielder 3, Etiquette (Nobles) 2, Feint 3, Frenzy, Inspiring 2, Iron Will 2, Luck 2, Noble Blood, Public Speaking 2, Read/Write, Reversal 3, Riposte 2, Speedreader, Step Aside, Stout-hearted, Tenacious 2, Warleader, Wealthy 10

Trappings: County of Streissen, High-Quality Clothing, Full Plate Armour, Main Gauche, Sword



BARONESS MARLENE ALPTRAUM

Marlene Alptraum is a wiry, domineering presence with piercing, beady eyes. She tolerates the trappings of power, protocol, and politeness, but would rather tell it straight, and be told it the same way. She is keen to lead her army, but is a belligerent commander, always ready to charge in before thinking. She has no time for her mother's patience and statecraft. She does not value scheming and subtlety, which may be her downfall.

She has little interest in the Characters' mission. They have an Imperial Navy vessel, so they are clearly working for the Emperor and it's none of her business. The Characters will find her remarkably easy to deal with if they get on her good side, especially if they are straightforward with her. On the other hand, if they try to be clever or expect her to have a nuanced view of the world, then she can be stubborn just for the sake of it. She is totally stunned to learn that Leitdorf has a sizable force nearby.

Marlene's mother, Ludmilla, the Elector Countess, is old and in declining health despite her will of iron. She is a great schemer and subtle manipulator, which her daughter finds tedious and pointless. Anyone with any grasp of politics realises that the Alptraums' grip on power will falter with Marlene in charge — because her view on the world is too black and white. With the Empire on the verge of ruin, someone with a nuanced view and skilled at diplomacy is far more likely to succeed than Marlene's restricted style.

Marcus Karlssen, SIP Leader

Karlssen has taken the role of idealistic revolutionary and managed to throw off the Imperial yoke in Streissen, uniting all the disparate interests in that city. He and the Streissen Independence Party have achieved a meteoric rise in a few short weeks. But instead of a freedom fighter, he is actually a career soldier acting under Marius Leitdorf's orders. The reason the coup in Streissen seemed to go off with such military discipline was because it was led by a disciplined military mind.

It is difficult to imagine a less likely idealistic revolutionary than Marcus Karlssen. He is immaculately turned out, as if for the parade ground. His moustache is perfectly waxed. He stands to attention by instinct. He is apt to address anyone of status as 'sir' or 'ma'am' without thinking. He mostly surrounds himself with other elite soldiers of Leitdorf's retinue, all of whom give a similar impression of professionalism and utmost obedience.

If the Characters manage to meet him while he is holding out in Streissen against Alptraum's army then he is resolute in its defence. He has difficulty explaining the ideological grounds on which he is fighting. He will, instead, interject with empty phrases such as *'for the cause'* and *'up the revolution'*.

MARCUS KARLSSSEN – RABBLE ROUSER (BRASS 3)

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	62	56	36	44	53	32	40	51	54	56	16

Traits: Armour 4, Weapon (Sword) +7

Skills: Athletics 52, Art (Writing) 55, Bribery 71, Charm 71, Climb 51, Consume Alcohol 59, Cool 82, Dodge 47, Endurance 59, Entertain (Storytelling) 66, Gamble 76, Gossip 71, Haggle 71, Heal 56, Intuition 63, Language (Battle) 61, Leadership 76, Lore (Politics 66, Warfare 71), Melee (Basic 90, Fencing 87), Navigation 63, Outdoor Survival 61, Perception 68, Play (Fife) 60, Ranged (Blackpowder) 76, Trade (Printing) 65

Talents: Argumentative, Blather, Combat Aware, Beat Blade, Combat Reflexes, Distract, Doomed (*Wear the yellow and black, and you'll face an attack*), Etiquette (Military), Fast Shot, Feint, Flee!, Step Aside

Trappings: Full Plate Armour, Sword, Pamphlets, Writing Kit

MEDIATION

The Characters may attempt to use their authority to orchestrate a meeting and try to mediate a truce. If he thinks they'll go his way, Leitdorf may even suggest it. Marius agrees to mediation because he holds all the cards and it makes his goal easier to achieve. The SIP under Marcus Karlssen agrees for the same reason. Alptraum agrees because she is guileless and unsuspecting. All are prepared to allow the Characters, agents of the Empire, to neutrally dictate the future of Streissen.

Meeting in a tent in the middle of a pasture outside the city, only a handful of representatives of each side should attend, and none with a purely martial function. The Characters can get all parties to swear in the name of Sigmar and the Empire that their arbitration should be binding to all. Streissen's high priest of Sigmar can attend to lend the event legitimacy.

When asked to state their case, Leitdorf's address is put with a poetic flourish, focusing on abstract principles and aspiration. He is a skilled, if sometimes sporadic, orator, occasionally going off tangent, but he has enough imagination, drive, and conviction to carry his speech. Though he might be known for being entertaining and distracted, he has incredible concentration and focus when it comes to things that matter to him. Anyone rooting for the triumph of ideas over pragmatism and the aspirations of the common folk over those of oppressive nobility would not fail to be moved, although an astute observer might find it incredible that Leitdorf could actually believe what he is saying, especially as he delivers it with such clear conviction.

Marlene Alptraum's speech is blunt and practical. Although she speaks highly of her (much disliked) mother, it seems she is unable to blow her own trumpet. The crux of her argument is the simple notion that Streissen belonged to her mother before all this happened, and therefore should belong to her afterwards.

Marcus Karlssen's address is ostensibly on behalf of the people of Streissen, but he is under orders to make sure no one is left in any doubt that the people wish to be ruled by Leitdorf. However, there is no nuance in the way the old soldier plays his role. There is no understanding of complexity or sign the populace might hold diverse opinions. For a freedom fighter to be so secure in his desire for one aristocratic ruler over another, this may come across as odd and even disingenuous.

The Characters are free to make up their own minds about how best Streissen should be ruled. Having committed to the arbitration, once it is decreed, no party has any reason to detain the Characters further.

BATTLE

Without the Characters' intervention, a battle occurs and ends in a convincing victory for Marius Leitdorf. Leitdorf's forces surprise Alptraum's and drive home their advantage. The besieging forces are caught unprepared. Troops in the rear manage to manoeuvre to face Leitdorf's charge, but they in turn are outflanked by the militia that Marcus Karlssen has managed to raise, emerging from the city gates. Alptraum's forces are scattered and flee back to Averheim.

If the Characters intervene on either side, then you should consider what intelligence and expertise they might bring to the field and decide on other outcomes accordingly. If they do save the day for Marlene, the Alptraums are grateful while Leitdorf swears vengeance eternal upon them for their meddling.



AVERHEIM

As *The Carroburg* passes around a wide curve in the river, Averheim appears. Resting on a bluff above the Aver, the city has a commanding view of the rolling, fertile fields of Averland. The great towers of the Averburg, citadel of Averheim and fortress of Elector Counts since the days of Siggurd, Companion of Sigmar, rise high above the city.

Once they reach Averheim, the plan, as far as von Flamme is concerned, is to dock and let the Characters continue along the Old Dwarf Road. She is prepared to wait for their return for a month, before returning back to Altdorf to report them missing. There could be any number of reasons why the Characters might decide against this, and von Flamme is open to reasonable alternatives.

If the Characters decide to spend any time in Averheim, they may be confronted, depending on their behaviour in Streissen. If they helped attack Marlene, word soon spreads and catches up with them, and they are forcibly accosted by Averland soldiers. Their status as agents of the Emperor barely keeps them alive, but they'll be turned out of the city and *The Carroburg* will not be allowed to stay. If they helped mediate, but turned Streissen over to Leitdorf, an agent of the Alpträume, with heavily armed bodyguards, bluntly tells them they are not welcome in Averheim, to make their purchases and leave by nightfall. Once again, *The Carroburg* is not allowed to stay at dock and the Characters must work out something with von Flamme.

GRENZSTADT

The distance to Grenzstadt from Averheim is around 190 miles. It takes approximately seven days via foot, or four days via horse, if they can arrange for such. Grenzstadt is the last major settlement before the Old Dwarf Road starts to rise steadily up into the mountains and Black Fire Pass.

It is famous as the last place Sigmar stayed before he left the Empire and one of the major pilgrimage sites for the Cult of Sigmar. The temple has become large and wealthy due to the constant traffic.

IT'S A CIRCUS

If the Characters have been indiscreet about their journey and have revealed something of their mission to any but the closest of allies, then word has reached Grenzstadt through the endless flux of pilgrims. If they revealed the details of their quest on their journey, or shared it with *The Carroburg*'s crew, then a number of Grenzstadt citizens are already aware of exactly what their mission is. If the Characters have been circumspect throughout, they can be rewarded with a quiet passage through the city.

If they've played up their importance at any point, or been boastful, turn this up to ludicrous proportions. The whole town turns out to see their arrival. People line the streets, cheering and waving makeshift flags as the Characters process towards the main square. Townsfolk clamour and start fistfights over the right for just a touch of the Characters' robes as they pass.

They have babies thrust at them to bless and kiss. Small children waving gold-painted wooden toy Ghal Marazes run riot. At the town square Capitular Almeric Zischler, Grenzstadt's high priest, awaits them with a coterie of civic dignitaries to welcome them officially and bestow upon them the freedom of the city.

The high priest of Sigmar invites the Characters to a civic reception where they are forcibly wined and dined and praised for their efforts. And they no doubt have come to the attention of the Eternal Watch (see below).

Remember the people of Grenzstadt do not necessarily need to know all the details of the Characters' mission, they simply need to know it is official, important, and following in the ancient footsteps of Sigmar.

THE ETERNAL WATCH

The Eternal Watch is an organisation within the Cult of Sigmar in Grenzstadt. It is dedicated to keeping a vigil for Sigmar's return. Its home is a tall tower in the centre of Grenzstadt, the tallest building in the city by far: part temple, part look-out tower, part campanile, with commanding views of the Worlds Edge Mountains and the entrance to Black Fire Pass. It is constantly staffed by cultists keeping their eternal watch for the prophesied return of Sigmar.

The cult is well known and takes an open role in wider Grenzstadt society. However, there is a secret cult within the Eternal Watch that calls itself the 'Night Vigil', which has beliefs seemingly at odds with those of the wider Eternal Watch. While the Eternal Watch believes that Sigmar will return one day through Black Fire Pass to save the Empire, the Night Vigil is concerned with facilitating this actively and murderously.

THE NIGHT VIGIL

Ancient prophecies tell that Sigmar will return with his great army through Black Fire Pass with all their weapons and armour and other accoutrements intact. The Night Vigil, logically perhaps, surmise that Sigmar can never return if these objects are not available to him.

Therefore, the Night Vigil is dedicated to hunting down treasure hunters and tomb robbers and returning their ill-gotten gains to the Worlds Edge Mountains. If they get any inkling that the Characters are on their way to the mountains to look for ancient treasure, then they do their best to thwart this.

The Night Vigil is set up to follow and kill tomb robbers on their way through the mountains, or to intercept them on their return and kill them as they try to sell their discoveries to academics and collectors. Many tomb robbers have disappeared while exploring the mountains — this is put down to Greenskins and other hazards. Many dealers are killed in Grenzstadt and other trading posts along the Old Dwarf Road — this is put down to the internecine conflicts between those sordid traders. In truth, this is often the work of the Night Vigil.

As well as relying on murder, the Night Vigil is an organisation that values information and research. They are more expert on the treasures, mausoleums, and lost holds of the Worlds Edge Mountains than any academic or antiquarian in Altdorf or Nuln. Because of Sigmar's alliance with the Dwarfs and their contingent in his army, the Night Vigil is just as concerned with protecting the treasures of the lost Dwarf holds. They have a number of members among the Dwarf communities in Grenzstadt and in the mountains. These Dwarfs are especially dedicated to stopping tomb robbing and treasure hunting in the lost Dwarf holds.

Rauf Wasserburg

Wasserburg is a priest of Sigmar attached to the temple of Grenzstadt. He is a member of the Eternal Watch, and a fanatical member of the Night Vigil. He has already killed a number of tomb robbers passing through Grenzstadt. He affects the manner of a gentle academic, careful not to reveal his athleticism or ruthless demeanour. His hunched shoulders, thin face, lank, thinning hair, and spectacles (which are plain glass), his awkward gait, scholarship, and verbosity, all point to a man who has no time for physical activity. In fact, he is the Night Vigil's best agent, a competent killer, and resourceful spy who hides his muscular frame under voluminous robes.

If the Characters interact with the high priest of Sigmar in Grenzstadt, Wasserburg is foisted upon them. The high priest will be acting in good faith, but Night Vigil cultists have manoeuvred to get Wasserburg recommended as a renowned expert. He is exactly the sort of academic who could help the Characters with the next part of their journey. It will be difficult for them to refuse Wasserburg's help without insulting the entire city.

Wasserburg tries to make himself as useful as possible to the Characters while he swiftly attempts to assess exactly what they are about. If he ever susses out that they intend to find and retrieve Ghal Maraz, he is utterly stunned and decides immediately that they all must die. He'll send word to his Night Vigil allies in the mountains and try to remove at least one Character through an accidental rockfall, if at all possible. He tries to attach himself to the party, arguing that he can best help them if he accompanies them.

Night Vigil cultists use the same profile as Purple Hand Cultists. If they can get away with kicking rocks down on to the party, they try to do that as many times as they can get away with it. If they are spotted, they resort to using their crossbows. There are four cultists as well as Wasserburg.

RAUF WASSERBURG HUMAN ASSASSIN (GOLD I)

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	58	53	53	59	64	52	32	50	58	53	25

Traits: Ranged (Heavy Crossbow) +9 (100), Weapon (Maul) +9

Skills: Athletics 72, Bribery 63, Charm 63, Cool 78, Dodge 72, Endurance 79, Entertain (Act 73, Storytelling 63, Taunt 68), Gamble 60, Gossip 68, Haggle 68, Heal 60, Intimidate 73, Intuition 84, Leadership 73, Lore (Averland 65, Theology 70), Melee (Basic) 78, Perception 84, Pray 73, Ranged (Crossbow) 70, Research 60, Sleight of Hand 52

Talents: Blather, Bless (Sigmar), Carouser, Combat Reflexes, Disarm, Doomed (*So here every evil rogue accumulates, reaving god, eventually treasure rustlers undo*), Furious Assault, Gregarious, Hardy, Holy Visions, Invoke (Sigmar), Lightning Reflexes, Read/Write, Shadow, Sixth Sense, Strike to Stun

Trappings: Heavy Crossbow with 12 Bolts, Maul, Robes, Amulet of a Golden Hammer (worth 3 GC)

Blessings: Battle, Courage, Might, Tenacity

Miracles: Heed Not the Witch, Sigmar's Fiery Hammer, Soulfire, Twin-Tailed Comet



ON TO BLACK FIRE PASS

Leaving Grenzstadt on the Old Dwarf Road, the Characters find the route rising steadily as it approaches the mountains. Gradually the vineyards and pasture make way for scrub and heath. Sometimes the road itself is the only sign of civilisation. Sometimes the road disappears, giving way to muddy ruts and scattered cairns. The wind picks up, blowing through the pass, and down the valley into the Characters' faces, a warning that they are leaving the Empire, and approaching unknown dangers.

Experience Awards

Good roleplaying and clever thinking should be rewarded, but there are additional XP for the following:

- 💀 40 points for mediating between the armies at Streissen
- 💀 25 points for helping the villagers on the raft
- 💀 25 points for bringing Baron Klaus von Bachmann to justice
- 💀 20 points for fighting or escaping the Purple Hand in Nuln
- 💀 20 points for figuring out that the Threshers are Sudenlanders dressed as Nulners
- 💀 20 points for fighting or avoiding the Night Vigil
- 💀 9 points for not giving much away to Hans Knees

CHAPTER 10

IN SIGMAR'S FOOTSTEPS

This chapter takes Characters into the windswept mountains, away from civilisation and the relative comforts of Altdorf. When they leave Grenzstadt, they'll find Black Fire Pass relatively busy, as this is a major route into the Empire. It's not completely safe, but other travellers are a frequent sight and, for now, the Greenskins are elsewhere. The pass is an awesome sight. The towering heights of the Black Mountains are far more grandiose than the Middle Mountains the Characters explored in **The Horned Rat**. Colossal peaks stand silhouetted against the sky, and ancient Dwarf ruins, thousands of years older than mankind, cling to the mountainsides. Sigmarites may feel humbled that they're treading the sacred ground where their God united the tribes and founded the Empire. It is a holy place and a pilgrimage route.

Once they enter the Lost Gorge, increase the sense of isolation. They are far from humanity and alone in mountainous wilderness. Each night should bring fear — the Madclaw Clan are a genuine threat and prefer to act in the dark. Keep the Characters moving and keep them paranoid. Use small incidents to create an atmosphere of menace. An unseen rock falling into the gorge echoes around them. There is rustling in the trees overhead. A strange colony of fungus undulates slowly on a fallen log. They find a living eagle nailed to a tree. At night, the party hears distant whispers and sees red eyes flashing in the dark.

Players may want to feel a sense of agency, so make sure they're free to act. Their travels in Black Fire Pass are up to them — how they interact with groups they meet there and, most importantly, how they choose to deal with the Madclaw Clan. It's possible they'll decide the Hammer quest is a bad idea, so don't feel the need to force them on if they prefer a different approach. Alternatives to recovering the Hammer are dealt with in the final chapter and the **Empire in Ruins Companion**.

GIDEON'S PLAN

Gideon doesn't enter the Lost Gorge, as Ghal Maraz radiates holy power which harms Daemons. He plotted for the party to find and take the Hammer and so works to speed their progress and remove obstacles from their way as they journey through Black Fire Pass. Gideon has tried this before. Over the centuries, he manipulated other parties into the gorge, to no avail. Their remains are discovered on the journey and in the cave itself. You may want to give hints that the players are following a preordained path — the convenience of Schmerzeit Mine, the slaughtered bandits, premonitions by the shaman Cacklespit, and the cave paintings.



BLACK FIRE PASS

Black Fire Pass is one of the most historically, politically, and spiritually important landmarks in the Old World. It was here that Sigmar united the tribes of Humans to defy the Greenskins and secure the lands to the north. Over 2500 years later, it remains a major trade route into the Empire from the south and a significant risk for invasion from Greenskins.

The history of the Southern Empire is tied up with Black Fire Pass. After Sigmar's victory, the Brigundians swore an oath to guard the mouth of the pass. Averland's ruler has inherited the title of 'Protector of Black Fire', which carries great significance to the Dwarfs and the Cult of Sigmar. Priests and pilgrims flocked to the pass, building shrines and later temples devoted to Sigmar.

The pass cuts through the mountains. The sheer sides have a slightly glassy patina which reflects the sun when it's low in the sky. The Old Dwarf Road runs along the bottom of the pass. Merchants and trade caravans from the Border Princes and further east; mercenaries from the south; and a wide variety of nobles, refugees, and everyone in between use the road. Averland soldiers patrol the northern extent of the pass and Dwarfs still guard the full length, although their numbers are few and it's become harder to watch for Greenskin activity in the mountains.

Thousands of years of passage and invasion have left their mark on the pass. For the ancient Dwarfs, Haz Drazh Kadrin was an important route through the mountains and witness to several battles against the Asur during the War of Vengeance. Today, the walls of the pass show this legacy, from the tombs and ruined fastnesses of the mountain folk to the colossal statues of ancestor gods, weathered by millennia and defaced by invaders.

Orcs and Goblins have also left their mark. Crude stone effigies of their gods stand sentinel, overgrown by hardy mountain grass. There are cairns of Greenskin skulls that stand testament to the many killed by Dwarfs and soldiers of the Empire. Over 2500 years, countless invasions have torn through the pass, including the horde of Gorbad Ironclaw in 1709 IC and, over 700 years later, the forces of the Goblin warlord Grom the Paunch.

Despite the might of the Empire's patrols and support from Dwarf allies, Black Fire Pass will inevitably see invasion again.

BLACK FIRE LOCATIONS

The pass is wide and well-travelled, but it is still steep and rocky in places. Characters can advance down its length to the Three Mothers in three days of easygoing travel, or two days of pushing themselves (if they fail a **Challenging (+0) Endurance** Test they gain a *Fatigued* Condition).

On the way to the Lost Gorge, the Characters encounter travellers during the day and likely share lodgings with other parties during the night. In stretches without shelter, caravans and travellers typically band together overnight for mutual protection. News of the false hammer's destruction hasn't spread to the frontiers yet, so any talk of the party's quest is met with amusement, derision, or hostility from pilgrims.

The Old Dwarf Road

Leaving Grenzstadt by its southern gate, the ancient route runs straight towards the mountains. Unlike many roads built by the Dwarfs, it is still maintained by engineers of that elder people — primarily Imperial Dwarfs doing their bit for Karaz Ankor. As such, the paved surface is even and free of plant growth. As it climbs into the mountains, several stretches cross ravines and valleys, carried over on tall stone piers.

There are a handful of well-fortified inns and villages between Grenzstadt and Black Fire Keep, which mainly cater to merchant caravans and pilgrims travelling through the Pass. The Griffon's Head, the Stalwart Knave, and the Armoured Turnip are renowned for good service, stout walls, and tough customers.



The Grenzstadt Bergjaeger Averlander Mountainguard Patrol

In the northern stretches of the pass, the Characters pass by a patrol of Averlander Mountainguard, a highly professional regiment that maintains strict discipline under the command of its richly attired sergeant, Alberrecht Haessler. They quickly assess the Characters to decide whether they represent a threat and, assuming they're reassured, share news.

News and rumours:

- We'll be called back to Averland soon. I hear they'll need us to protect the province from insurrection or Ulricans.
- The Greenskins seem restless at the moment. There aren't too many around the Pass, but those we've fought have seemed more excitable than usual.
- You're not miners are you? Nobody makes their fortune mining Black Fire, but plenty have tried.

Bloodmoss Plain

The valley at the mouth of Black Fire Pass takes its name from the reddish moss growing over the rocky outcrops in the landscape. It was here that Sigmar's forces mustered before his famous battle, as many tribes came together to march into the pass to meet the Greenskin horde.

The Place of the Muster is a sturdy stone building that stands alongside the Old Dwarf Road, supposedly marking the spot where Sigmar and the tribal kings met in council. It contains a shrine to Sigmar painted with the names of the tribal chieftains who pledged allegiance to their new Emperor. There are often pilgrims at prayer here.

From Bloodmoss Plain, the Characters see the road rising into the Black Mountains, overshadowed by their dark peaks and stony bulk.

The Faithful Forty Sigmarite Pilgrims

A ragged bunch of Sigmarites show their devotion by travelling the path of Sigmar's exodus. They're scrawny, barefoot, exhausted, and wild-eyed. They'll ask for food, bless anyone showing generosity and snarl at Ulricans. There are 17 members of the Faithful Forty; two have died and another 22 decided the pilgrimage was really hard work and headed home. Just recently a miner called Dieter joined the group.

Dieter was one of three miners commissioned by the Teugen, Steinhäger and Haagen Mining Concern to work the Schmerzeit Mine, but he became frustrated with the lack of gold and left. He travelled north, fell in with the pilgrims and decided Sigmar had another life planned for him. Now he's heading south again, and he'll happily share his story with the fervour of the recently devout.

News and rumours:

- The End Times are coming! Sigmar will preserve us if we walk the path of his exodus.
- Berthe had a vision last night — she saw Sigmar walking down the Pass and he disappeared into solid rock. It must be a sign ... of something.
- We don't know where Sigmar shed his mortal form, but He will send us a sign when our pilgrimage is complete.
- You must join us! Dieter has just recently seen the light of Sigmar. Tell them Dieter!

Black Fire Keep

Five miles into the pass, at a point where the mountainous walls are less than a mile apart, stands a great fortification, testament to the unending threat of invasion from the south. Raised on a granite hill, the ugly towers of Black Fire Keep provide a vantage of the east and west. Its massive walls are blackened from the many Greenskin sieges it has withstood over the centuries. The ground around has been cleared of vegetation and rocks to provide a wide killing space for the fortress.

The banners of Karl-Franz and Averland fly from the battlements — there is a permanent garrison of Averland's State Troops known as the Mountainguard. Typically some of the province's hardest soldiers, they are well-equipped and arrogant. This is the first real line of defence from invasion into the Empire and the Mountainguard tend to see all those in the 'rearguard' behind them as soft. It is very unlikely any party will be admitted to the Keep, unless they have dispensation from Averland's elite nobility or military.

Colonel Sievers and the Imperial Ostlanders

Sievers has returned to Black Fire Pass to gather more evidence and to talk with the Dwarfs at Karaz-a-Karak. The Imperial Ostlanders are a hardened group of disciplined soldiers with crossbows and halberds, wearing black, white, and blue uniforms. Sievers is eager to hear news from the Empire and hails the Characters. If he is well disposed to them, he'll share the following information.

'Make no mistake, the Orcs are getting ready for war. They become agitated and it draws others to them. Greenskins for hundreds of miles around grow restless and warlike.'

'They won't attack for a few years yet, so this is the perfect time to destroy them before they start an invasion. We need a united army from every province.'

'The best way to beat Greenskins is to get them fighting each other. Not so honourable, but saves a lot of grief. The Goblins are sneaky about it and the Orcs are brutal, but they do like fighting each other for dominance.'



The Imperial Ostlanders will stay out of any civil war unless the Emperor and Ostland are on the same side — and the Emperor has returned to his right mind!

The main purpose of this encounter is to highlight the mess the Empire is in, if it can't resolve the current turmoil. The Orc invasion is not part of **The Enemy Within**, but it could provide a potential campaign hook — it will eventually lead to the Third Battle of Black Fire Pass — if the Emperor does not act sooner.

Sievers may have a further part to play in the adventure. If the Characters do not retrieve the Hammer, Gideon may try to persuade Sievers to undertake the quest himself.

Way Forts and Watch Towers

Black Fire Pass has numerous scattered way forts and watch towers. Despite being sturdy structures, many of them show signs of disrepair, especially in the deeper parts of the pass that have been neglected for decades. These are intermittently occupied by Averland Mountainguard and the Bergjaeger, detachments of rangers who scout the mountains for threats. Travellers may be admitted to these small forts overnight if they look not too disreputable or like they might be useful in a fight.

One celebrated watchtower is *Dok a Dum*, a Dwarfen tower carved from volcanic rock that projects from the cliff face at a striking angle. This is the sole remaining tower of the ancient Dwarf 'Sentinels', which once lined the pass. It is now garrisoned by the Averland 8th Halberds.

The Clan Zhuffan Deadshots Dwarf Patrol

The Dwarfs of Migdhal Vongalbarak to the south do not trust manlings to keep invaders at bay. The Characters meet a small troop of Dwarf Rangers armed with crossbows moving through the pass. They speak with Dwarfs as a preference, preferring Khazalid to Reikspiel. They're taciturn but offer patronising yet helpful advice about travelling through the pass.

News and rumours:

- Manlings are squabbling again, apparently. It's only to be expected, but might be a problem if they can't keep the gobbos, beastmen, and mutants down.
- Watch out for rockfalls! There were floods a few years ago and it loosened rocks on the upper slopes of the pass. It's been a problem in Haz Drazh Kadrin for thousands of years.
- The Three Mothers are works of great craftsmanship and deserve respect. They're just beyond Vithang Dum.

If the party mentions Ghal Maraz, take a **Hard (-20) Gossip** Test to pick up a slight evasiveness. They respond only with respect towards Sigmar as a Dwarf-friend. After departing, the Dwarfs inform agents of Grimshank's Chain (see page 162).

The Stations of the Exodus

From Bloodmoss Plain onwards, there are a series of five shrines that reputedly trace Sigmar's final journey — the Shrine of the Dawn, the Shrine of the Boar, the Shrine of the Wolf, the Shrine of the Dusk, and the Shrine of the Divine Comet. Most are little more than carved stone columns or decorated wooden frames. Each is decorated with comets and images of Sigmar in battle, or walking with boar and wolf companions. The Shrine of the Divine Comet is located close to Vithang Dum; it is the last on the path and considered the most sacred.

Dead Bandits

Shortly after passing the Shrine of the Boar, the Characters stumble across a group of eight bandits who planned to rob and kill the party. Unfortunately for them, Gideon got there first. They've been butchered very recently, literally torn apart. The Characters see no sign of an attacker, but a **Difficult (-10) Intuition** Test reveals they were positioned for an ambush and seemingly attacked from behind.

The Battleground and the Temple of the Holy Founding

At a narrow point in the Pass is the place where Sigmar defeated Bloodfang's Greenskin horde and united the Empire. A row of huge boulders, where Sigmar positioned his army, stand out across the valley, another reminder of the significance of the location. The boulders have been carefully engraved with lengthy prayers to Sigmar, which wind around each rock in devotional spirals. The Eagle's Nest, a 30-foot-tall rock from which Sigmar launched himself into the Orc hordes, swinging Ghal Maraz, stands proudly in the middle, commanding reverence.

The Temple of the Holy Founding stands on this holiest ground. This is the 9th or 10th temple here, as the location has proved especially vulnerable to attack. Although small, this is a sturdy building presided over by Father Otto Rotmund. The priest cannot speak after he lost his tongue when tortured by Beastmen in the Drakwald. He is a tough veteran and extremely pious. There are typically 5–10 pilgrims serving the temple in penance for some perceived sin.

Vithang Dum

Dog Peak Pass meets Black Fire just beyond the Battleground. Vithang Dum, a Dwarf way station originally built for trade caravans, is at the point where the two passes meet. It is still in use, and travellers can shelter their horses within the walls, stay in the austere common room, and buy basic victuals from Urd Flintbane, the dour warden. The ceilings are low, and soft furnishings are in short supply, but Vithang Dum is fortified.

Merchant Caravan

The caravan is made up of eight carts and wagons, protected by outriders and caravan guards on horseback. Three Ogres walk alongside. Cargo includes Cathayan porcelain, spices from Ind, and Arabyan relics. Black Fire Pass leads to the Silk Road eventually.

News and rumours:

- 💀 They say there's a new Emperor. The courtiers will want to show off their wealth at the coronation, so we should get a good price for this silk.
- 💀 You don't meet as many treasure hunters in the pass these days. They say Greenskins are killing them, but I've heard the real dangers are back in the Empire.
- 💀 We need to reach Altdorf quickly to defend our warehouses — we've heard Middenheim is about to besiege the city.

The Three Mothers

Just over a mile from Vithang Dum stands a group of Dwarf ancestor statues, depicting Valaya and two other Dwarf women. These are finely carved into the cliff face and are intact despite their obvious age. Passing Dwarfs pay their respect to these statues as representative of all Dwarf mothers.

Zan Mingol

Two miles on from the Three Mothers is the ruined Dwarf watch tower of Zan Mingol, now little more than a sturdy foundation fashioned from reddish granite. Khazalid runes by the old gatehouse identify the name of this lost bastion.

If the party travels further south, they eventually reach the merchant camp of Vosheim, the huge Dwarf Keep of Kazad Kolzharr, and the pass end at the Border Princes town of Munzig. Should the Characters go this far, they have overshot their destination and Gideon appears disguised as an itinerant priest to set them back on their path (he could provide them with insight into clues they overlooked when talking with Fassbinder).

Khypris Border Horse — Mercenaries

The volatile domains of the Border Princes are rife with mercenary companies, but recent news suggests there may be richer pickings north of the mountains. The party may encounter a mercenary regiment made up of Border cavalry — mounted freebooters from many nations. If the party looks tough, the

mercenary captain may try to recruit them. They are eager for news from the north and gladly exchange intelligence.

News and rumours:

- 💀 Apparently, Middenheim, Ostland and Talabecland are hiring soldiers to fight the other states. Civil war is coming soon, which is always good for business.
- 💀 Grand Countess von Liebwitz wants war. She's mustering her forces and it's only a matter of time before she invades the Reikland.
- 💀 Probably Marienburg behind the whole thing ... they're smart enough to manipulate their trade rivals to fight one another.
- 💀 Orcs in the Badlands are getting restless again. After a few seasons in the Empire, we're going back down south because there should be plenty of work.

FINDING THE LOST GORGE

For almost 2500 years, the end of Sigmar's path has been lost to mankind. The route he took left Black Fire Pass at the Three Mothers into a narrow valley where he fought Sheerargetru in a titanic battle that shook the mountains and scarred the land. A rockfall tumbled into the mouth of the gorge, blocking it from sight and sealing it off from Black Fire Pass. Over the centuries, hardy pine trees and scrub grew over the rocks and further disguised the entrance to the gorge. Sigmar's final steps have been hidden ever since, with no Human returning to mark the gorge on a map.

Gideon schemed for centuries to free Sheerargetru, hampered by the hammer's warding magic. Many years ago, disguised as a mountain man, he convinced army deserters he had found a seam of gold in Black Fire Pass. After some effort, the would-be miners dug through the rockfall and found death rather than gold — Gideon had no more use for them.

Later, Gideon lured more expeditions into the gorge via the mine. None survived to retrieve the hammer. In 2505 IC, floods in Black Fire Pass caused a collapse and blocked the mine. On Gideon's instruction, the Teugen, Steinhäger and Haagen Mining Concern hired three miners to unblock the excavations. Just before the Characters arrive, they broke through. Dieter left when he realised there was no gold. Gideon slaughtered Lenz and Knoch a day after Dieter's departure.

If the party follows the various clues to the Three Mothers, they find a stretch in the pass where the cliffs curve inwards around a stand of pine trees. A narrow path and brook lead towards the Schmerzeit Mine to the east of the barrier.

The path ends at the barrier cliff and a mine entrance held up with stone lintels a little taller than an average man's height. A track to the right leads to a spoil heap. By the heap is a small spring, the source of the brook. The miners' camp is to the left of the path — two tents (one collapsed, each containing dirty bedrolls, cheap swords, and packs) and the corpses of Lenz and Knoch, the former partly burned in the fire pit. The miners' bodies are battered, Knoch has been stabbed, and there are jars of spilled grain spirit about the place. Lenz has a small nugget of gold in one fist (worth 1 GC). It looks like the two got drunk, fought over the gold, and killed one another — exactly how Gideon arranged it.

The mine itself is little more than a tunnel dug through the rock, supported by wooden pit props. After 30 yards, the passage descends towards an inaccessible flooded tunnel. Another shaft ascends at an angle to avoid the water level. After 15 more yards, it leads to an opening into the Lost Gorge, overlooking a large pool.

While exploring the mine, Characters who pass an **Average (+0) Lore (Geology)** Test notice the following:

- The mine has not been dug through solid rock. It's a mixture of fallen boulders and packed earth — the consequence of a rockfall.
- The last 35 yards are freshly dug, but the rest of the mine is rather old.

THE LOST GORGE

On his journey Sigmar came this way, battled Sheerargetru and forced it into submission before using Ghal Maraz to trap it. The landscape bears the legacy of this clash, both in the physical terrain and the psychic influence of the past. The shaman Cacklespit has tapped into a distorted view of what happened here, and Characters may learn more before they reach the cave.

Beyond a pinch point where the cliffs almost touch, the gorge becomes a ravine. Sheer rockfaces shut out most of the light and overhanging trees above put the deep gorge in a permanent semi-darkness. The cliffs are dotted with caves and ledges where the Goblins make their homes, while fungi flourishes in the damp gloom at the bottom. The powerful smell of damp decay exudes from the fungi leaving a distinct odor of rotting vegetation across the ravine.

Travel in the gorge is not especially difficult. The stream has carved a level path and, providing the party pick their way carefully through the rockstrewn valley, they can make steady progress. The Madcraw Clan is the real danger here. The clan respond differently to the party depending on where they are in the gorge.

From the pool at the rockfall, the gorge curves gently upwards through the mountains for 35 miles to the cave. The sides are steep and strewn with loose boulders and scree. During the day, the sun illuminates the shallow stream trickling down to fill the pool at the rockfall. The valley is dotted with sparse vegetation — hardy mountain shrubs and pines cling to the sloping walls.

THE LOWER GORGE – 20 MILES

The lower stretch of the gorge is too open for the Night Goblins to spend time here during the day. A small group of scouts watch the party from the upper slope, hidden in a stone overhang to keep out of the sun. When it becomes clear the party is travelling up the gorge, they wait until dusk to make their move.

Ancient Rockfall

On the gorge side of the mine, the ancient barrier forms a dam. The wide pool is shallow and it is easy to wade to dry land. A boulder projects above the water's surface, with a crude bird's head painted on it — marking Madcraw territory. There are silvery whitefish swimming lazily in the shallow waters. If the Characters catch one, they find it has a slightly human-like face and purplish scales.





Boulder Cluster

Ten miles up the gorge, there is a cluster of huge boulders at the bottom of the northern slope. There is a scorched pit in the middle and piles of Goblin dung. Mushrooms the colour of pale flesh grow in the shadows of the boulders. This is a sheltered place to camp overnight.

Traps

Goblins have laid simple traps in several sections of the gorge. These are simple pit traps, filled with sharpened sticks and concealed with loose stones piled onto a mesh of twigs. In each area d10 of the traps are in working order. It takes an **Average (+0)** Perception Test to spot the first trap.

If the trap is not spotted the lead Character falls in, taking damage as from a 3-yard fall (see **WFRP**, page 166) with a 20% chance of landing on a spike (extra 1d10 Damage, reduced by Armour). Once the first trap is spotted, it is easy to see subsequent traps. Each one can be seen on an **Easy (+40)** Perception Test.

The Pinch Point

The lower stretch of the gorge ends where the walls become vertiginous and rise higher from the valley floor. Eventually, the cliffs close in to a point where they almost meet — the two sides are little more than six feet apart. The stream rushes through in a torrent. Daubed on the water-smoothed walls are the first of Cacklespit's paintings. These are crude but astounding images in many shades of green, red, white, yellow, and brown. Amongst the disorientating swirls and patterns are several discernible scenes.

- 💀 A large man with a beard wrestles a humanoid bird. Cacklespit saw this vision during a trance — it is Sigmar fighting Sheerargetru.
- 💀 A small crowd of prostrate green figures in robes surround a glowing green shaman on a large mushroom — this is Cacklespit himself, lording over the tribe.
- 💀 Several figures trudge through a narrow gap between cliffs. From their weapons, armour, and clothing, the Characters recognise themselves — the paint is dry and slightly faded, because Cacklespit saw the coming of the party in his visions several years ago.

THE DEEP RAVINE (5 MILES)

Beyond the pinch point the gorge opens up to roughly 10 yards wide, with sheer cliffs to either side. Even during the brightest part of the day, this stretch is in permanent gloom. With the hated sun hidden, the Night Goblins can move about here during the day, sheltering only during the 2–3 hours around noon when the sun is overhead. The cliffs drip with moisture and the shadowed floor harbours colonies of mushrooms and bracket fungus sprout from the mossy rockface.

The Walkways

The cliffs here are riddled with Night Goblin tunnels, and crude wooden platforms project from the rock to overlook the gorge. There are a few rickety bridges that link the two sides of the gorge at the narrower points. At night, the Goblins scurry around on the platforms and occasionally try to tip one another off the edge. During the day, there are usually a few Goblins going about their business.

The Murals

This part of the gorge has many of Cacklespit's cave paintings. There are many abstract patterns, images of leering moon faces, vicious evil suns, and scenes depicting Madcraw Goblins toppling human fortresses and slaughtering Dwarfs and Skaven. There are two paintings of special interest:

- A hammer surrounded by multicoloured light and twisted bird and fish heads
- The bearded man from previous murals, accompanied by a boar and a wolf

The Entrance Hole

Fallen rocks covered in toadstools and mushrooms overshadow a dark entrance to the Madcraw caverns. It is usually guarded by two Skargobbos.

Snotroms and Mushlings

The floor of the gorge is covered with a vast crop of fungus, bisected by the stream. The mushrooms and toadstools vary in colour and size, with some reaching waist height. The largest have faces on their stems and some amble about slowly on two feet. They're easily chopped down and the moving 'snotroms' cannot fight back.

The Madcraw Tunnels

The caverns and tunnels where the Night Goblins dwell cut a confusing route through the rock, but there are several notable locations within:

Cacklepit's cave: Where the shaman sits atop his throneshroom and contemplates the infinite, bosses about his retinue and makes rash promises about the future. It is a high-vaulted cavity dominated by Cacklepit's mushroom. There is a musty smell with a slight sharp odour of ozone.

Skargobbo cave: The toughest Goblins sleep and eat here, attended by Boyz and Runts. There are typically d10 Skargobbos lazing about on furs and squabbling.

The main cavern: The largest gallery in the cave network, most of the tribe hang out here, around a large fire fuelled by dried fungus and any Goblin unfortunate enough to venture too close. There are 2d10 Goblins here, drinking fungus wine and looking thoroughly bored.

The runt caves: Cramped and squalid even by Goblin standards, these deeper caves are where the smallest clan members return after a day foraging or running around after the rest of the clan. Gruntlob has a warm cave of his own nearby.

The drop: Goblins aren't particular about where they void their bowels, but the drop is a great place to scheme with others while enjoying one's ablutions. This is a deep pit lined with fungal growths and untold filthy horror below.

The birthshroom caves: The deepest caverns play host to the mysterious process by which Goblins come into this world. The floor is covered in bat guano, from which sprout tall brown mushrooms.

THE NORTHERN GORGE – 10 MILES

A fallen rock spans the stream at the end of Madcraw territory and once again the gorge opens up into a wider valley with sparse scrub and mountain grass. The Night Goblins avoid this place as it makes them feel uneasy. Old Gruntlob forces his runts past the rock to forage for the Purple Caps Cacklespit consumes for his visions, but otherwise the party encounter no Goblins here.

Since Sigmar trapped Sheerargetru, the influence of a suppressed Chaotic presence has affected the gorge here. The peculiar fish thrive in the stream and rocks have been worn into strange shapes by the weather. Some bear a passing resemblance to human heads with wide, open mouths. Others cast shadows which are normal when viewed directly but seem to writhe in peripheral vision.



Abandoned Camp

Just beyond the fallen rock are two old tents covered in mouldering canvas. There are the remains of a campfire, with rags and human bones strewn about the place. It is impossible to say how long they have been here, but the party finds a purse with 21 brass pennies — the most recent was minted in Averheim in 2234 IC. One tent contains two sodden bedrolls and a cheap, water-damaged copy of *The Life of Sigmar* printed in 2184 IC in Nuln.

The other tent is occupied. Inside, the Characters see something horrific. A man lies on his back, locked in a silent scream. Much of his body is covered in livid-yellow fleshy fungus that has somehow kept him alive over centuries. His visible hand scrabbles desperately at the growths on his flesh. He gives the party a pleading look, but cannot speak. A failed **Average (+20) Cool** Test results in 1 Corruption point. If the Characters clear away the fungus, there is almost nothing left of his body.

Purple Cap Colonies

In several shady, damp patches there are clumps of the purple mushrooms favoured by Cacklespit. These have long stems and tall, elegant caps, laced with a delicate network of white fibres. In the first clump they find, the party sees a tiny Goblin runt cowering away from them — left behind by his brethren, terrified to be abandoned in the weird part of the gorge.

The Waterfalls

At the highest point in the gorge, the party finds the source of the stream — a natural amphitheatre with waterfalls pouring from the cliffs. Some appear to twist or defy gravity, flowing in different directions at once.

The Cave Entrance

Behind the waterfall is a rocky entrance leading into the cliff. A smooth stone towers to one side with an armoured figure fused into the rock. He is skeletal, with translucent skin drawn tight around his skull. As they approach, he whispers to them in Classical. Those who understand the language know he is saying: *'Surrender hope, everyone entering. Raiders always regret going exploring tunnels. Resist urge.'*

THE MADCRAW CLAN

The Night Goblins in the Lost Gorge are the Madcraw Clan, a vicious rabble in thrall to the shroom-addled shaman Crazzik Cacklespit. The cliffs of the Deepest Ravine are riddled with damp caves and natural labyrinthine tunnels where the Goblins make their home and squabble impatiently for the promised great destiny Cacklespit claims to have seen in his visions.

Madcraw Goblins wear the robes and hoods typical of their kind. They favour greys and black, accessorised with exotic fabrics looted from merchant caravans to the south. Their hoods conceal most of their face, although they have longer, sharper noses than most Greenskins. Like all Night Goblins, the Madcraw Clan abhor sunlight. They won't venture out of their caves or leave the deepest shadows during the four hours around noon.

The Madcraw emblem is a glyph of a bird's head with an open beak and projecting tongue, which represents the many birds they eat with their fungus diet. Lingering daemonic resonance from Sheerargetru influenced the clan, but the Goblins just say they like it because it looks mean.

BAD, BORED, AND DANGEROUS

The Madcraw Clan are an especially reprehensible group Goblins — spiteful, cruel and underhanded. They enjoy inflicting pain on others and have no qualms about betraying one another. Unlike Orcs, most Goblins prefer to avoid a direct fight — unless their opponent is weaker than them. They prefer devious tactics to injure or kill their enemies.

The clan is restless. Very little happens in the Lost Gorge and they're spoiling for a fight. Cacklespit occasionally emerges from his cave and makes a grand pronouncement or babbles some prophetic tale which gets them fired up, but so far it's not taken them anywhere. Most of them, especially the bigger ones, want to join up with other tribes and Orcs to become part of a Waaagh!. Unknown to the clan, the build-up of Orcs in the Badlands is exerting a psychic influence that makes them itchy for violence.



CRUZZIK CACKLESPIT

Shamanic Visionary

Cacklespit is the Goblin shaman who leads the Madcraw Clan. The exotic fabric of his robes was looted from a caravan returning from Ind, and there are vaguely discernible swirled patterns in the weave. Cacklespit wears an otherworldly expression which in a Human could be mistaken for holy piety, but in a Night Goblin shows he's intoxicated. He carries a gnarled wooden staff with sprouting fungus.

Cacklespit spends much of his time in his lair, perched on an immense 'throneshroom' and communing with the past and future. When the inspiration takes him, he ventures out into the Gorge to scrawl his visions onto the rocks. If there's a dire threat to his authority or the tribe, he steps up to sort it out with his magic.

In part, the shaman holds power over the Madcraw Clan because of his visions. He eats the Purple Cap mushrooms which only grow in the northern gorge. These are infused with magic from the cave and align the shaman's mind with all points in time, presenting events that have happened and will one day happen. The vast swirling murals across the rockfaces are Cacklespit's attempt to capture these visions.

Beneath his mystical air, Cacklespit is a ruthless operator — no Greenskin gets to lead a tribe without a streak of viciousness. Any Goblin who questions his visions, interrupts his contemplation, or threatens his leadership is dead. A favoured punishment is to feed them a cocktail of poisonous mushrooms and then throw them into the drop as mulch.

He also takes credit for any Goblin who dies anywhere in the Gorge — claiming he used his powers to ensure they had an accident. He keeps his most vicious treatment for any who eat the Purple Cap mushrooms: he skins the wrongdoer's face, strips them naked, and ties them up to be exposed to the sun at its brightest. It takes days for a Goblin to die like this.

The Characters may choose to negotiate with the Madcraw Clan in exchange for safe passage. If so, they're escorted to Cacklespit for a chat — he learned Reikspiel from an academic he later fed to the runts. Cacklespit is a sinister conversationalist, pausing every so often to sniff the fumes from his cauldron.

Cacklespit wants rid of Mansplatta because he knows the Skargobbo Boss wants to take over — and he had a prophecy of Mansplatta leading the clan out of the mountains to join a huge Orc Waaagh!. But the shaman knows the rest of the clan could mutiny, so he can't just kill Mansplatta himself.



CRUZZIK CACKLESPIT

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	31	35	33	38	38	39	38	43	46	30	13

Traits: Afraid (Elves), Animosity (Rivals), Infected, Night Vision, Weapon +7

Skills: Channelling 61, Cool 56, Dodge 44, Endurance 43, Entertain (Storytelling) 45, Intimidate 43, Intuition 58, Perception 43, Language (Magick 63, Reikspiel 48), Leadership 55, Sleight of Hand 53, Stealth (Underground) 49

Talents: Arcane Magic (Little Waaagh!), Luck 3, Nose for Trouble, Second Sight, Sixth Sense

Trappings: Sword, Gnarled Staff, 5 Black-Capped Nightshade Mushrooms, Cauldron full of Purple Cap Mushroom Stew, Robes

SPELLS

Sneaky Stabbin', Vindictive Glare, Gork'll Fix It, Night Shroud

A CONVERSATION WITH CACKLESPIT

'Seen you Humies. Seen you in me shroom-dreams, innit? Dere's nuffin' dat ever happened round 'ere I ain't seen. Nor nuffin' dat will happen.'

What did you see?

'Da lot. I eats the Purple Cap, boils it up in me cauldron and da whole ev'rythin' just goes big an' I see da colours and ... all da fings. Big humie fighting gribbly bird, it's 'im wiv 'is 'ammer. Fat froggy fellas from da sky. Stunties when dey fort dey owned da place. More Humies, like you lot, going behind the water and nevva comin' back.'

Why are you telling us this?

'Cos all Humies is doomed. I seen dat too. An' I wants you to know that it's gobbos like me wot's smarter dan you. Also I got a job for ya. Dat's why you ain't dead.'

A job?

'One of da lads wants me throne. Big bastard calls 'imself Mansplatta. Waves 'is axe, bosses 'is Skargobbos about, and struts up and down 'cos 'e wants to go and smash 'eads before time is ripe. If you sort 'im out fer me, I'll let yer past – just like I seen in me shroom-dreams.'

Why don't you do it?

"Cos I wants ta blame you! Zoggin' 'eck, you humies is sick.'

GOBLIN MAGIC

Goblins work a lore of magic known as the Little Waaagh! Use the following spells with the rules for magic in the WFRP (page 236). **Note:** Certain Little Waaagh! Spells require an ingredient.

Cunnin' Words

CN: 0

Range: Willpower yards

Target: 1

Duration: Willpower Bonus Minutes

You call on Mork to trick a listener into hearing cogent, civilised discourse, rather than the mad babble you usually utter.

Gork'll Fix It

CN: 7

Range: Willpower yards

Target: 1

Duration: Willpower Bonus Rounds

You point a bony finger at a nearby enemy, and curse them in the name of Gork. For the duration of the spell, your target suffers from a *Fatigued* Condition +1 *Fatigued* Condition for every additional SL you scored on the spellcasting test.

Night Shroud

CN: 5

Range: Strength Bonus Yards

Target: AoE (Willpower Bonus yards)

Duration: Willpower Bonus Rounds

You toss a black-capped nightshade mushroom into the air, which bursts to form a cloud of pitch darkness. Anyone within the cloud who does not have the Night Vision Talent or Trait suffers from a *Blinded* Condition. Anyone attempting to move within the cloud who does not have the Night Vision Talent or Trait must pass a **Challenging (+0) Perception** Test or gain the *Prone* Condition.

Sneaky Stabbin'

CN: 6

Range: Willpower yards

Target: Orc, Goblin, Snotling, and Hobgoblin allies within Range

Duration: Willpower Bonus Rounds

You focus mischievous energies to ensure blows from allies are blessed by this spell to find their enemies' weak spots. All blows struck by affected targets benefit from the *Impale* and *Penetrating* Qualities.

Vindictive Glare

CN: 5

Range: Willpower yards

Target: AoE (Willpower Bonus yards)

Duration: Instant

You concentrate your vitriol, sending green bolts of purest spite to fizz and explode amidst the foe. This is a *magic missile* with Damage +4 that targets everyone in the Area of Effect. A target who takes damage from the Spell must make a successful **Challenging (+0) Cool** Test or suffer from a *Stunned* Condition.



SLIK MOONGOBBA

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	34	38	32	36	41	35	39	39	32	29	12

Traits: Afraid (Elves), Animosity (Rivals), Infected, Night Vision, Weapon +7

Skills: Channelling 52, Charm 49, Cool 42, Dodge 45, Endurance 46, Intimidate 37, Intuition 45, Language (Magick) 49, Stealth (Underground) 51

Talents: Arcane Magic (Little Waaagh!), Second Sight

Trappings: Sword, 'Mystic' puffball, Gnarled Staff, Robes

SPELLS

Sneaky Stabbin', Vindictive Glare, Gork'll Fix It, Cunnin' Words

A CONVERSATION WITH MOONGOBBA

'Hold yourselves, Humans. Let us cease hostilities to parley and perhaps come to an arrangement.'

We'll not negotiate with goblins!

'Let's be realistic, if we can? You want to traverse this gorge for some reason best known to you. I want a certain obstacle removed, and you're best placed to assist me in that. Do you see?'

We don't need your help!

'Ah, that's where you're much mistaken. There are hundreds of my Goblin brethren hereabouts, and they would delight in seeing your pale bodies roasting over a fire. You can't possibly pass through by force or subterfuge.'

We're listening...

'Excellent. Our lord is the shaman Cacklespit. He consumes Purple Cap mushrooms which bring on visions. He claims they reveal the distant past, the future, and the destiny of our Madcraw Clan. I'd very much like to sample these mushrooms and then perhaps I would lead us to a greater, brighter future. If you slaughter Cacklespit, I shall ensure you can pass.'

How can we trust you?

'You can't. I am, after all, a Goblin. But what else do you have? So, shall we expectorate onto our hands and clasp them together?'

SLIK MOONGOBBA
His Master's Right Claw

Moongobba is a tall, skinny shaman. He carries a puffball as if it were an orb and speaks in a quiet, raspy voice. Moongobba is Cacklespit's right-hand gobbo, who enjoys meting out discipline both on his boss' behalf and for his own amusement.

Moongobba wants a chance to stab Cacklespit in the back, or possibly the front. If the Characters present him with an opportunity and the risks are small, he'll take it. He's desperate to eat the Purple Cap mushrooms himself and assert spiritual authority over the clan.

Moongobba may lead an ambush. If the Characters beat the Night Goblins, he'll hold up his hand to talk. Moongobba casts *Cunnin' Words*, which magically translates his harsh Greenskin utterances into surprisingly cultured *Reikspiel*.



GLOBNAK MANSPLATTA

Impatient Thug

Mansplatta is boss of the Skargobbos, the toughest in the clan. He is a hulking Goblin who wears sleeveless robes to show off his impressive biceps. Mansplatta has a permanently disgruntled expression, a broken nose, and wields a serious-looking 'choppa'.

Mansplatta is tired of Cacklespit's mystical claptrap and he's desperate for a decent fight. He's bored of bullying smaller lads and wants tougher prey. If he can kill Cacklespit and take over the clan, he leads them to a proper scrap.

If the Characters beat back his Skargobbos, or defeat many Boyz, Mansplatta shouts to them. He has a small *Reikspiel* vocabulary, but can make himself understood with hand gestures and a few words.

GLOBNAK MANSPLATTA

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	49	40	41	45	39	45	30	35	24	29	14

Traits: Afraid (Elves), Animosity (Everything), Armour 2, Hatred (Dwarfs), Infected, Night Vision, Weapon +10

Skills: Athletics 55, Cool 44, Dodge 55, Endurance 55, Intimidate 49, Intuition 40, Leadership 49, Melee (Basic) 64, Perception 40

Talents: Furious Assault, Riposte, Strike Mighty Blow 2

Trappings: Mail Shirt, Choppa, Shield, Sleeveless Robes

A 'CONVERSATION' WITH MANSPLATTA

"Oy! You. Stop bash." (He makes a 'talking' sign with his hand.)

What are you doing?

'Shut. Mansplatta want go.' (He points over the mountains.)

What's that got to do with us?

You. Kill Big Boss. You go. (He points up the gorge.) Mansplatta not kill.'

Who is the 'big boss'?

Loon. On 'shroom. Kill now.' (He points towards Cacklespit's caverns.)

OLD GRUNTLOB

Elderly Runtherd

Gruntlob is an elderly Goblin who oversees the runts. The youngest Goblins and Snotlings are treated like slaves, harvesting mushrooms, fetching and carrying and doing all the work the large Goblins can't be bothered to do. Gruntlob has a wizened face and rheumy eyes.

He leans on a long runtpole that resembles a shepherd's crook — an invaluable tool for encouraging his charges and breaking the necks of any that act up or eat his tobacco.

Gruntlob has a kind of twisted affection for his runts. While he's happy to knock them about himself, he resents any of the other Goblins eating or killing them.

OLD GRUNTLOB

ELDERLY RUNTHERD

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	33	35	46	38	27	35	30	34	33	30	11

Traits: Afraid (Elves), Animosity (Everything), Infected, Night Vision, Weapon (Runtpole) +8

Skills: Cool 43, Endurance 48, Intuition 45, Perception 45, Outdoor Survival 49, Leadership 35, Melee (Polearm) 48, Stealth (Underground) 45

Talents: Strike to Stun

Trappings: Runtpole (Quarterstaff with the Entangling Quality), Faded Robes, Pipe and Tobacco

MADCRAW GOBLINS

At night, the Goblins are either going about their business, patrolling, hunting or (in the case of Runts) foraging. By day, they sleep in caverns and laze about around the fires in their caves, squabbling incessantly and eating.

Shamans

There are two other Shamans in Cacklespit's coven, Oddblat and Grikkle. The former brews potions from mould and cave water and the latter's head glows from within, charged with a strange luminescent energy. Both hang out in Cacklespit's throne cave most of the time.

SHAMANS

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	30	35	30	35	27	35	30	36	25	25	11

Traits: Animosity, Afraid (Elves), Infected, Night Vision, Weapon (Staff) +7,

Skills: Channelling 31, Cool 30, Endurance 42, Sleight of Hand 35, Stealth (Underground) 41

Talents: Arcane Magic (Little Waaagh!)

Trappings: Hand Weapon (Staff), Robes

Spells: Gork'll Fix It! (Oddblat), Vindictive Glare



Madcraw Night Goblins

The majority of the tribe are typical Goblins — sneaky, cruel, and cowardly. They roam the gorge, use nets to catch birds, goad the runts and wait for Cacklespit's next baffling pronouncement.

MADCRAW NIGHT GOBLINS

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	31	40	30	36	20	39	30	30	26	20	11

Traits: Afraid (Elves), Animosity (Everything), Infected, Night Vision, Ranged (Shortbow) +5 (20), Weapon (Sword or Spear) +7

Skills: Athletics 44, Climb 40, Cool 26, Dodge 44, Endurance 46, Melee (Basic or Polearm) 36, Ranged (Bow) 45

Trappings: Sword, Spear and Shield or Shortbow, Robes

MADCRAW SKARGOBOS

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	37	35	35	40	26	45	30	30	28	20	13

Traits: Afraid (Elves), Animosity (Everything), Armour 1, Infected, Night Vision, Weapon (Sword or Spear) +8

Skills: Athletics 50, Climb 45, Cool 25, Dodge 50, Endurance 45, Intimidate 45, Intuition 31, Melee (Basic 47, Polearm 47), Perception 36

Talents: Tenacious, Strike Mighty Blow

Trappings: Club or Spear, Shield, Helmet, Robes

BALL AND CHAIN

Weapon	Group	Reach	Damage	Qualities
Ball and Chain	Goblin Loonie	Long	SB+6	Impact, Wrap, Pummel, Damaging

Loonies

Some Madcrawl Goblins have become fanatical about Cacklespit's prophecies and hang off his every word. They imbibe deadly mushroom concoctions to have visions of their own. Their insanity makes them especially dangerous.

The Loonies roam the caverns, muttering to themselves and howling. Some bang their heads on the walls, some spin around until they're sick, and others sit stuffing themselves with Mad Cap mushrooms before collapsing. Loonies always attempt to consume Mad Cap Mushrooms (WFRP, page 306) before entering combat.

After the first turn of combat in which the Ball and Chain is employed, there is a 20% chance each round that a Loonie collapses from exhaustion and intoxication.

LOONIES

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	30	35	35	43	46	38	31	32	25	18	14

Traits: Afraid (Elves), Animosity (Everything), Infected, Night Vision, Weapon (Ball and Chain) +9

Skills: Athletics 43, Cool 30, Endurance 48, Intimidate 48, Intuition 56, Melee (Goblin Loonie) 35

Talents: Berserk Charge

Trappings: Robes, Ball and Chain, 3 doses of Mad Cap Mushrooms

Runts

Runts are youngest and weakest Goblins, freshly emerged from the deep, damp caves where the Madcrawl Clan are born. They are treated as slaves, beaten and abused by their older kin until they're big enough to fight back.

RUNTS

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	20	25	20	25	20	35	30	25	20	20	6

Traits: Afraid (Elves), Animosity, Infected, Size (Small), Night Vision, Weapon (Knife) +4

Trappings: Knife or Sharp Bit of Rock

Snotlings

Scurrying around the Madcrawl territory and living off scraps, Snotlings are the lowest in the Greenskin hierarchy. For more details, see WFRP (page 326).

SNOTLINGS

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	25	15	25	20	20	30	—	15	30	—	7

Traits: Bestial, Dark Vision, Infected, Size (Small), Venom (Average), Weapon (Knife) +4

Trappings: Knife or Sharp Bit of Rock, Poisonous Mushrooms



DISPOSITION OF THE MADCRAW NIGHT GOBLINS

It is up to you exactly how many Night Goblins are in the Lost Gorge. Their numbers do vary due to attrition caused by infighting on one hand, and bolstering through the mysterious process by which Greenskins propagate on the other.

Generally there are the following forces in the valley, though you should review these numbers in light of how well equipped the Characters are to deal with waves of attacking Goblins. The Madcraw should present them with a hard fight, but keep in mind that the caves ahead are also dangerous.

The points listed are areas of the map where Madcraw forces might seek to attack the party. Each time the Characters reach one of the points, work down this list and roll to see if there are Goblins there. If it is between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. the sun will be high in the gorge — reduce the likelihood of meeting any Goblins by half.

- 💀 Scout party of 6 Madcraw Night Goblins with shortbows (16% chance every mile; 60% at points 2 and 3)
- 💀 Moongobba or Mansplatta (your choice), two Skargobbos, and 2d10 Night Goblins (30% chance at points 4, 5, 6, and 7)
- 💀 Oddblat or Grikkle (your choice), a Skargobbo, and 1d10 Night Goblins (60% chance at points 4, 5, 6, and 7)
- 💀 Old Gruntlob, in charge of 2d10 Runts and 2d10 Snotlings (20% chance at points 8 and 9)
- 💀 4 Loonies guarding the approach to the Madcraw Tunnels (80% chance at point 5)
- 💀 Within the tunnels is Cacklespit, guarded at all times by two Skargobbos, and a further 4d10 Night Goblins spread throughout the mapped area

Example: The Characters are advancing down the lost gorge. They come to point 3, one of the traps. It is midday, so the GM rolls to see if they encounter a Night Goblin scout party. The GM rolls a 47, so the Characters are not attacked by Goblins (though they may still fall afoul of traps).

Later the Characters pass by point 5, the entrance to the Madcraw Tunnels. There they can be accosted by Moongobba or Mansplatta, Oddblat or Grikkle, or the Loonies. It is evening so the GM rolls for Moongobba, getting a 52, then Oddblat, getting a 47, and the Loonies, getting a 31.

So the Characters must deal with 4 Loonies, Oddblat, a Skargobbo and 1d10 Night Goblins at the mouth of the Madcraw Tunnels.

MADCRAW ATTACKS

The Goblins attack the party once they become aware of them, using sneaky tactics to avoid any risk to themselves. They don't want a fair fight. You should choose the most appropriate means of attack from the selection below.

In the Lower Gorge the Goblins wait until the sun is low in the sky. In the Deepest Ravine they'll avoid only the two hours in the middle of the day when the sun is directly overhead. All attacks cease if the party comes to an arrangement with one of the clan's leaders.

If the Goblins meet stiff resistance — which basically means the second a fight starts to turn against them — they retreat, either adding their numbers to the next group encountered or, if they were badly mauled, heading to the Madcraw Tunnels to lick their wounds.

If Goblins from one location escape, add 20% to all rolls to see if Goblins are encountered at the next location.

Peppered with Arrows

The first encounter with a Night Goblin scout party sees them fire their bows from the safety of a rocky ledge above the Characters. In order to engage them in melee a Character must achieve 10 SL on an extended **Hard (-20) Climb** Test. The scouts attempt to flee as soon as a Character gets close to their position.

Rockfall

The second encounter with a Night Goblin scout party involves the following ruse. On an **Easy (+40) Perception** Test, Characters hear weak mewling sounds coming from a thorny bush at the base of the cliff. Behind the bush they find a rabbit tied by its legs to four stakes in the ground. It's been mutilated and cries in pain. The moment they find it, the Goblins push a pile of rocks from the cliff onto anyone underneath. Characters must pass a **Difficult (-10) Dodge** Test to avoid 1d10+3 Damage from falling rocks. A horrible giggle comes from above. The attack then proceeds as described for Peppered with Arrows.

The Ambush

The third encounter with a Night Goblin scout party is a more determined assault backed up with reinforcements. When the party reaches part of the gorge with an overhang, Goblins drop nets down onto them (**Average +20 Dodge** Test to avoid *Entangled* Condition — the nets count as having Strength 40). Then, Night Goblins with spears attack, led by either Moongobba or Mansplatta. There are three more Goblins than Characters and three of them are Skargobbos. They fight until half have taken critical hits, then they flee. Once it is obvious the party can put up a fight, Moongobba or Mansplatta hail them to come to an arrangement.

Spore Bombing

If the party beds down for the night, they are spotted by a Night Goblin scout party after d10–2 hours. The Goblins watch from a distance. When they think the Characters are asleep, two goblins sneak up and throw a large ripe puffball into the camp. This explodes and releases a cloud of toxic spores 2d10 yards across. Characters in the cloud must pass **Challenging +0 Toughness** Test or suffer a *Poisoned* Condition. After this assault, the rest of the scout party attacks.

DEALING WITH THE MADCRAW CLAN

The Madcraw Clan are numerous and there's no way through the gorge without a plan. The party has a number of options.

Stealth

The Madcraw Clan sees the party soon after they arrive in the gorge, but with cunning, careful timing and a lot of luck, they could pass through the Deepest Ravine without encountering too many Goblins. This depends on several factors.

Any attack in the Lower Gorge ends with the Goblins wiped out and unable to return to their caverns to report what's happened

Travel through the Deepest Ravine only during the middle of the day. If they can move swiftly and quietly, they can cover most of the 10 miles in 3 hours.

If spotted in the Deepest Ravine, only very swift action prevents the lookout raising the alarm.

Negotiation

Cacklespit wants Mansplatta killed, but he doesn't want to do the deed himself. If the party tells his underlings they want to talk, he spares their lives and makes a proposal: kill Mansplatta and his Skargobbos and he'll let them through to the other end.

The Skargobbo cave is on the other side of the ravine, but the party can reach it by a shaky wooden bridge. In the cave are ten Skargobbos, Mansplatta, and six Boyz who take their side. If the party kills five or more Goblins, Mansplatta suggests they kill Cacklespit and he'll let them through. If they refuse, he keeps fighting.

If the party kills Mansplatta, Cacklespit arrives with Moongobba and five Boyz, planning to attack the party and then claim to the rest of the clan that he's avenged poor Mansplatta. If the fight looks too risky (for example, the party are all still standing) take a Perception Test for Cacklespit — if he passes, he'll graciously grant the Characters free passage north.

Manipulation

Moongobba and Mansplatta both want to take over from Cacklespit. If the party talks with either of them, they learn about Cacklespit as well as their desire to take over.

A wily Character might be divisive and persuade one of the two rivals to overthrow their shaman leader with their support. Played right, the Madcraw Clan should split and start fighting amongst themselves.

The party could let Cacklespit know his lieutenants are plotting against him, in which case he offers the deal mentioned above.

Experience Awards

Good roleplaying and clever thinking should be rewarded, but there are additional XP for the following:

- 💀 50 points for defeating Cacklespit
- 💀 40 points for negotiating with Cacklespit
- 💀 30 points for defeating each of Moongobba and Mansplatta
- 💀 30 points for negotiating with either Moongobba or Mansplatta
- 💀 20 points for defeating each of Old Gruntlob, Oddsplat, and Grikkle
- 💀 20 points for each wave of Goblin attackers repulsed or otherwise defeated
- 💀 15 points for negotiating traps
- 💀 9 points for taking Cacklespit's prophecies seriously



CHAPTER 11

CAVES OF CHAOS

On passing through the waterfall at the entrance to the caves, the Characters enter a netherworld where reality twists like a maddened serpent, where corruption seeps from the ground, and where nightmarish illusion becomes substance. The adventurers have finally reached the cavernous labyrinth where, millennia ago, Sigmar fought and conquered Sheerargetru. The Daemon is still bound to this place, trapped in eternal fury by Ghal Maraz's power.

The rift that Sigmar cleaved in reality when he struck the ultimate hammer-blow that entrapped his daemonic adversary has cracked wider over the millennia as the Daemon writhes and rages against its confinement. Raw Chaos energy has slowly leached into the caves, twisting reality and corrupting the natural rock formations. Magical power has filtered out, pooling in peculiar concentrations throughout the labyrinthine system.

The adventurers are unlikely to emerge unscathed, but Tzeentch, whose influence has spilled into this region, has no intention of having the Characters badly injured or worse. The party's arrival is his ideal opportunity to change the course of events. Within these caves, the adventurers are Tzeentch's playthings. He toys with them for amusement, enjoying their terror and suffering, whilst willing them to succeed in their quest and directing them towards their goal by various means of manipulation and fear. Ultimately, he wants to ensure the party is successful and retrieves the Hammer safely and that his faithful servant is released. Where necessary, Tzeentch intervenes to guide the adventurers towards their destiny. As a GM, you can use this as an opportunity to propel the party towards the goal by various entertaining means, for example natural disasters occurring to ensure they move swiftly through the caves to find Sheerargetru.

ENTERING THE CAVES

The Characters enter the caves through the waterfall. Passing through the roaring tumult, they step into a gaping cavern, so massive that its walls and ceiling vanish into darkness. Illumination reveals the Characters are within a massive dome of rock, with cathedral-like stalagmite spires reaching up to the distant ceiling of the vast cave. Colossal stalactites hang down from the vast cave's ceiling, making conditions even more treacherous in the dark, and requiring everyone to stoop or duck. The steady drip of icy-cold water can be heard and felt dripping down at a regular pace from the stalactites' sharp tips, audibly splashing on the ground beneath.

Anyone passing a **Hard (-20) Perception** Test notices that, on closer inspection, the smaller stalagmites, whose tips are within eyeshot, seem to be growing at a barely perceptible speed, as though time has been unnaturally quickened.

The silence of the surrounding darkness presses against them, suffocatingly. As they move towards the centre of the cave, they realise that the roar of the waterfall they passed through has stopped and the sound of constant dripping has ceased. What's more incredible is that their hair and clothes are now bone dry. If they turn around, they see that the waterfall has vanished, replaced by impenetrable blackness. The only option is to move forward.

A tunnel exits eastwards from the cavern. It twists and turns, jagged blades of rock jutting out of the walls and snagging the Characters' clothes as they creep along.

THE CAVERNS

Within the vast cave system is a series of nine caverns. The corrupting power of Chaos seeps into this area from where Sheerargetru is imprisoned, and these nine locations have been warped by the raw magic. The party encounters each of these areas as they venture deeper into the caves. (The locations are described in detail below.) Each area is steeped with one of the Winds of Magic, and all are corrupted by the power of Chaos. As the Characters explore deeper into the cave system, the corruption gets stronger. Only the most determined and resilient Characters emerge from these caves unscathed.

The map on page 148 shows the essential layout of the cave system. The tunnels connecting each location are a simplified rendition, and do not represent the reality, or unreality, of the situation.

THE TUNNELS

Each location is connected by a series of tunnels, carved into the rock many millennia ago by natural geological processes. The tunnels are labyrinthine, twisting their way through the rock, branching off or sometimes leading to dead ends or obstacles that must be overcome.



THE RESTING PLACE
OF GHAL MARAZ

A HELPING HAND

You want the Players to feel that their Characters have conquered this cave system by the skin of their teeth. However, you don't necessarily want to kill them off. Indeed, Tzeentch is eager for the party to suffer, but not to fail in their quest to remove the Hammer from its resting place.

There are various ways you can give the party a secret helping hand if they are floundering. You may insert any or all of these beneficial encounters while the party is exploring a tunnel.

Event 1 — Boon of Sigmar

This event removes corruption.

The Characters inadvertently follow the path Sigmar took when he entered the caves millennia past. His holy presence has been marked by his passing. When his resolve stumbled, he prayed to the gods to grant him strength. The gods energised him, and where he stood, his feet made an imprint in the rock.

On a **Difficult (-10) Perception** Test Characters notice two depressions on the rocky floor, for all the world resembling a pair of Human footprints. The very darkness seems to avoid this area — the depressions glow with a soft golden light. The Characters feel calm and courage fills their hearts as they look upon the footprints. Any Character who stands in the footprints feels a surge of cleansing energy flow through them, and the image of a golden hammer flashes in their mind — the Character should make an **Average (+20) Cool** Test. They remove one Corruption point and a number of additional Corruption points equal to the SL.

Event 2 — Sacred Relic

This event restores Fate or Resilience.

The Characters find a skeleton of a man dressed in the shattered armour of a priest of Sigmar. His warhammer lies broken by his side. Script on the haft of the warhammer reads *Unity, Justice, and Faith*. If a Character passes a successful **Hard (-20) Lore (Theology)** Test, they know that this was the motto of a historical Sigmarite saint, Marius Luxus, who lived 500 years ago and disappeared while fulfilling a vow to tread the path of Sigmar on a sacred pilgrimage.

A Character who takes a bone or shard of the warhammer as a holy relic can immediately restore all Fortune and Resolve, and can expend the power of their relic to avoid spending a Fate or Resilience point. Each Player can only gain this power once, even if they have gathered more than a single relic. In order to benefit from this bonus the Characters must act with due reverence; if they show disrespect or cast aside the relic in the future, the bonus is forfeit.

Event 3 — Gift of Shallya

This event grants healing power to the party.

A white shape drifts silently across the party's path. It hovers in front of them, moving out of reach when they move towards it, following them if they try to avoid it. Eventually, it hovers in one spot, allowing the Characters to come near. Before they can touch it, it vanishes, but if the Characters look at the spot above which the apparition was hovering, they find a crevice, within which is an ancient glass potion bottle. Drinking the shimmering green liquid within the bottle invigorates the Characters. Drinking a dose of the potion heals 1d10 Wounds. There are four doses in the bottle.

LOCATION 1

THE LAIR OF THE GREAT BEAST

Suffused with Ghur: This area is suffused with the Grey Wind of Magic. Any successful attempts to cast spells from the Lore of Beasts within this area benefits from +1 SL. This bonus may only be claimed once, so if a Character or item in the area is also Suffused with *Ghur* there is no additional benefit.

The entrance to this cavern resembles the open jaws of a monstrous beast, the portal framed with stalagmites and stalactites like great, jagged fangs. Passing through, the Characters are met with a thick, musty stench like wet animal fur. The cave is sodden underfoot with a vile, putrid slush, through which can be seen slithering long, many-legged insects and blind, white amphibious creatures like nightmarish toads.

The Great Beast

As they wade knee-deep through the cold, disgusting mire, each Character should make a **Challenging (+0) Perception** Test. On a success, a Character hears a low animal growl rumbling in the distance, from somewhere further within the cave.

Eventually, the Characters reach the area where they encounter the source of the sound. Here, bobbing amongst the fetid slush that covers the floor, the light of their illumination reveals human bones and skulls. With a blood-curdling roar, a massive hound-like beast with shimmering turquoise fur, three wolfish heads, and a scorpion's tail leaps from the darkness into the centre of the cavern, blocking the adventurers' way. They must fight this terrifying Chaos Hound.

THREE-HEADED CHAOS HOUND

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	55	–	45	40	35	30	–	15	45	–	64

Traits: Armour 1, Bestial, Champion, Frenzy, Hungry, Night Vision, Rear, Size (Enormous), Stride, Tail +7, Tracker, Venom, Weapon +8

Skills: Dodge 45, Melee (Basic) 65

Talents: Ambidextrous

The Chaos Hound is motivated by pure hunger. Its ravenous mouths slather and drool. Its ribs stick out from its emaciated torso, showing that it is extremely malnourished. If a Character falls prone, the Chaos Hound, maddened by hunger, forgets all other enemies and attempts to devour its fallen victim.

Cunning Characters might use the Chaos Hound's hunger to their advantage, luring it into position with a brave volunteer, so that the rest of them can attack the beast while it attempts to catch its victim.

The vile slush underfoot makes fighting difficult. Every time a Character makes a move, they need to pass a **Challenging (+0) Athletics** Test. Those who fail gain an *Entangled* Condition. Those who fail with -4 or less SL gain a *Prone* Condition.

After the fight with the beast, Characters should make a **Very Hard (-30) Perception** Test to notice a flash of light among the slush and bones. Those who pass may find a relic of a previous battle fought centuries before — a sword with a beautifully engraved ivory hilt and a pristine silver blade. There are the remains of other weapons and armour among the bones, but they are badly corroded.

The sword is an ancient Elven blade, imbued with power.

ELTHRAI CADAITH

Weapon	Group	Reach	Enc	Damage	Qualities
Elthrai Cadaith — Elven Sword	Basic	Long	1	SB+4	Fast, Impale, Precise

Magical Weapon: Elthrai Cadaith is magical and can injure creatures noted as immune to non-magical attacks.



LOCATION 2 — SHADES OF DESPAIR

Suffused with Ulgu: This area is suffused with the Amber Wind of Magic. Any successful attempts to cast spells from the Lore of Shadows within this area benefits from +1 SL. This bonus may only be claimed once, so if a Character or item in the area is also suffused with *Ulgu* there is no additional benefit.

The tunnel opens out into a large gallery of rock. Tendrils of mist curl around the Characters' bodies, caressing their limbs and torso as though alive. The mist feels freezing. When the Characters speak, their voices echo into the distance. Their words seem to whisper back at them, rebounding as a sinister cacophony, mocking and hissing.

Natural flame fails to penetrate the mist beyond 3 yards. Magical light is also dim, but illuminates 3 yards further.

Whispers in the Mist

As the party ventures into the cavern, the Characters hear faint, hissing whispers emerging from the darkness all around them. The mist seems to get thicker, the tendrils beginning to dance as though in time with the sibilant rhythm of the whispers. The whispering comes closer and faintly louder, until it seems to be pressing up close against the Characters. Faint words can be heard among the hissing — these are mocking, derisive words: for each Character, choose the sort of words that are anathema to their character. For example, a Character who prides themselves on courage might hear: '*Coward! Weakling! Run ... run away, coward!*'

The whispers seem to press against the hearers' skulls, then sink into their mind, so it is as though they can hear them from within their own thoughts, a relentless hiss of derision. Each Character makes a **Hard (-20) Cool** Test; those who fail gain the *Rattled* Condition (see opposite). When each affected Character has overcome the assault on their mind, or succumbed to the whispers, the whispers recede and all goes quiet.

The Dead and the Damned

As the party ventures deeper, shapes emerge from the murk ahead of them, the mist seemingly coalescing to form grey, translucent figures with drawn, haggard faces and dull eyes that glow a sickly green. There are as many figures as there are Characters, and the composition of the group mirrors that of the Characters' party (so a party consisting of a Human warrior, a Halfling academic, a Wood Elf rogue and a Human ranger face an identical group). The style of the apparitions' clothing looks strange, as though from a bygone age. Any Character who passes an **Average (+20) Lore (History)** Test identifies their clothes as contemporary with the era of Emperor Ludwig I, about 1,500 years ago.

'*Stop!*' the apparitions plead, their voices low and hollow. '*Heed ethereal entities! Retreat and resign! Go expeditiously to regions unknown!*'

The entities are Ghosts (WFRP, page 331) — the entrapped spirits of a previous adventuring party who met their doom in the caves. They do not harm the Characters unless they are attacked, in which case they draw ghostly weapons and counter-attack in fury.

GHOSTS

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
6	30	–	30	30	10	30	20	15	15	–	50

Traits: Dark Vision, Ethereal, Fear 2, Undead, Unstable, Weapon +6

If they are not attacked, they cause Fear as normal, slowly coming closer and closer to the Characters, constantly repeating their warnings to flee the caves.

If the Characters engage with the ghosts, the spirits might try to give them cautionary advice. Kind words, flattery, and praise are like ambrosia to these lost souls, instilling them with a glow that momentarily banishes the eternal coldness of their existence, yet the power of Sheerargetru muddles their thoughts and words.

Skillful roleplaying, and a successful **Challenging (+0) Charm** Test determines how many soothsaying predictions the ghosts impart. With a Marginal Success, the ghosts give one clue; with a Success, two clues; with an Impressive Success, three clues; and with an Astounding Success, four clues. Choose from the list on the right.

RATTLED CONDITION

This Condition is intended to be used in circumstances where Characters have faced a disturbing phenomenon, but not one that is so clearly threatening so as to leave them Broken.

A Character gains this Condition when they fail a Cool Test in an ominous environment or worrying circumstance. A Character might also become *Rattled* after being intimidated. A Character who is *Rattled* gains +10 to Perception Tests as they pay additional attention to every creaking floorboard and looming shadow, but all other Tests are at a -10 penalty as they find it hard to concentrate.

This Condition does not stack: you are either *Rattled* or you're not. The Condition is removed if the Character gains a *Broken* Condition, or once the disturbing phenomenon passes. If the disturbing presence lingers for a long time, the Character can take an **Average (+20) Cool Test** to remove the Condition every half hour.

Any Skill, spell, or other effect that can remove *Broken* Conditions also removes the *Rattled* Condition.

1. 'Several heretic experts educate royalty. Adept reaches greatness. Eventually transpires rite unholy.'
2. 'Something here emanates evil, rages against railings, gibbous, exponentially tangible. Reality, ultimately.'
3. 'Strange herbs exhaust Emperor, reaping apothecary rewards. Granting Emperor true respite? Unlikely.'
4. 'Shapeshifter herds exalted explorers. Reality almost ruined. Goal engenders troubling result. Undo.'
5. 'Spy head's exacerbating endeavour ruins august realm. Goaded Emperor to rule Ubersreik.'
6. 'Southern holdings embrace Emmanuel. Royal Altdorf rejoices. Gone, embittered Toppenheimer. Regions united.'

When the Characters press on, the ghosts moan in terror, and flee past the Characters, vanishing into wisps of green mist as they run.



LOCATION 3 – TEMPTATION

Suffused with Chamon: This area is suffused with the Gold Wind of Magic. Any successful attempt to cast spells from the Lore of Metal within this area benefits from +1 SL. This bonus may only be claimed once, so if a Character or item in the area is also suffused with *Chamon* there is no additional benefit.

Approaching this location, the tunnel begins to glisten and shimmer around the Characters. The rock is veined with streaks of gleaming gold and silver, and crystalline shards sparkle on the walls and ceiling.

The tunnel opens out into a massive grotto. Light from the Characters' torches reflects from a million multicoloured stars as though they have been transported to the centre of the firmament. A lake like molten gold fills the cavern, with a narrow path of rock wending its way across it to an island in the centre. A shimmering rainbow aurora dances in the middle of the island.

If anything touches the liquid in the lake, it melts or burns as though the liquid is molten metal, though the liquid gives off no heat. If any living being falls into the liquid, death is instantaneous.

The Herald

As the Characters approach the island, they see a figure silhouetted within the aurora. It's about 6 feet high, lurid pink, with a man's torso and a myriad of limbs and tentacles sprouting from its shoulders. It is hunched as though in deep contemplation.

The island is scattered with gold and silver treasures — chalices, crowns, torcs — a treasure trove of wealth.

As the Characters come nearer, the creature slowly raises itself and turns to face them. Its long, sinuous limbs shimmer with multi-hued colour. Its array of arms and tentacles seem to shift in number. Its white robe billows around it, as though whipped by wind. Its head is that of a great white-feathered eagle, two sightless hollows where its eyes should be. Leaning heavily on its golden staff, it opens its cruel beak to speak with a sonorous, hissing voice.

'I am blind, but I see you.' It proceeds to name the Characters in succession. 'You are champions of your kind, though held with no regard by those who should by right bow low before you. Likewise, I am held with no regard in my realm.'

'Abandoned here, rendered sightless by the cruel whim of my master, I have awaited aeons to deliver my vengeance against my lord. For he has forsaken me, bound me here, for the sin of telling him a truth. I foresaw his doom at the hands of the hammer-bearer, and spake to him his fate. In his wrath he cursed me to remain here for an eternity. But I foresaw your arrival too, and failed to soothsay to him your coming, and now you, my dear ones, shall be the right hand of my wrath.'

'Listen with care, my friends, for I hold the key to your success, and the downfall of my treacherous master.'

The Players have a choice: whether to listen to the blind Herald's words or to attack the Daemon.

Brute Force

If they attack, the Herald attempts to cast Word of Tzeentch in order to try to stun its opponents. It fights to the death. Cunning Characters can try to force it into the golden lake, where it sinks to oblivion.

TREACHEROUS HERALD

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	39	49	49	39	39	59	39	49	99	19	19

Traits: Bite (Beak) +8, Corruption (Moderate), Daemonic 8+, Fear 2, Painless, Territorial (The Island), Unstable (Beyond the Caves), Spellcaster (Tzeentch), Weapon +9

SPELLS

Lore of Tzeentch: Blues Fire of Tzeentch, Pink Fire of Tzeentch, Tzeentch's Firestorm, Word of Tzeentch

Diplomacy

If they listen to the Daemon, it praises them.

'A thousands blessings on you, my dear ones. Indeed, I foretell that you are bound for greatness among your kind, for choosing to heed my words.'

Pause to allow the Characters to ask the Daemon questions. It answers, but its Chaotic nature forces it always to answer with a lie.

Eventually, the Herald tires of being questioned and offers its help to the party.

'Several threats lie ahead of you, before you reach your goal. You will face the wrath of the furious dead, risen from their watery grave — take this feather and invoke its power to lay them low with arcane flame.'

The Herald plucks a feather from its head and grants it to a volunteer.

'You will meet the prophet lost in the maze of his mind. His guardian dreads naught, but the charm of the Evil Eye will curse it with my master's blessing.'

The Herald scoops one of its own withered eyes from the left socket in its head and offers it to one of the Characters.

'You may endure the depths of despair in the hell forest of lost souls. Winged fiends will seek your blood from above. Use the power imbued in this claw to turn their fury against each other.'

The Herald cracks off a claw from one of its many fingers and gives it a willing Character.

'You may face the ordeal of fire. Your task will be lighter with a single word of my command.'

The Herald delves deep into its beaked maw and rips out its long purple tongue with a ripping sound that's hard to bear, flinging it at the feet of a Character with an audible plop. Choking in agony, ichor streaming from its beak, it slumps to the floor and dissolves into a puddle of pink and blue liquid.

Each Character who takes a gift from the Herald is exposed to a moderate source of Corruption.

Gifts of the Herald

The feather is bound with a single-use *Tzeentch's Firestorm* spell.

The withered eye is bound with a single-use *Bolt of Change* spell. If the Minotaur is the target of the spell, it dissolves and reforms into a Chaos Spawn, suffering the same number of Wounds and injuries as it did before its transformation.

The claw is bound with a single-use *Mindfire* Spell. The target automatically fails its Cool Test and suffers the following Mental Corruption: Unholy Rage (also gaining the *Ablaze* Condition as described for the spell's effects). While *Frenzied* it always attacks the closest target, friend or foe.

The tongue is bound with a magical curse. When activated, it has the following effects:

Range: Intelligence yards

Target: AoE of 9 yards

Duration: Instant

Effect: Pink Horrors within the AoE are instantly killed and replaced with two Blue Horrors.

Each of these magic items can be cast automatically as the bearer's Move for that turn. Invoking the power of any of these items counts as a major corrupting influence to the user.

The Treasures

Players can fill their bags with the golden treasures littering the island. They are limited only by what they carry.

However, upon exiting this location, for those who took even a single piece of treasure, all items of value — gold, silver, jewels or whatever — including items the Characters already owned gradually grow heavier and heavier, becoming lumps of dull grey lead.

LOCATION 4 – THE TEMPEST

Suffused with Azyr: This area is suffused with the Blue Wind of Magic. Any successful attempt to cast spells from the Lore of Heavens within this area benefits from +1 SL. This bonus may only be claimed once, so if a Character or item in the area is also suffused with *Azyr* there is no additional benefit.

As they continue down the tunnel, they hear a distant shrieking howl overhead. This grows louder as they progress. The tunnel opens out into a great cavern, stretching deep into the darkness. The source of the howling is revealed — great gusts of powerful wind buffet them as they enter, momentarily pinning them in place, before growing calm. The walls of this cavern, and the boulders and stalagmites that litter the cave floor, are wet with moisture and warm to touch, as though they are not rock but flesh. The rocks here are smooth, shaped by the wind.

The Howling Wind

As the Characters progress through the cavern, the wind rises again, whipping them violently, and they are forced to use all their strength to force their way through the tempest. Each must make a **Challenging (+0) Strength** Test or fall *Prone*. While pinned by the wind in this way, a Character must make a **Challenging (+0) Strength** Test to stand up at the start of their turn. Once all the Characters have made this Test, the ground seems to writhe beneath their feet...

Swarms of Serpents

Erupting from the ground spill coils and coils of writhing, hissing snakes, like intestines from a ruptured belly wound. The snakes are types and all sizes — constrictors, cobras, adders, and so on. Their scales are a rainbow hue, and shimmer and shift in a kaleidoscope of hypnotic colour. Their dark, beady eyes blaze in fury and their long forked tongues lick out, sensing the Characters in the darkness. They bare sharp fangs and strike.

Each Character is attacked by a swarm of snakes. Remember, if they are pinned they have to test their Strength to stand and fight, and at the start of their turn they have to test to avoid falling *Prone* due to the buffeting wind.

The snakes do not intend to kill the Characters, but rather to corrupt them. The swarms have the *Venom* Creature Trait, but if this takes effect, instead of being *Poisoned* as normal, a Character becomes sluggish and indolent, taking a *Fatigued* Condition. A Character affected in this way can shrug off the effects in the same way as recovering from being *Poisoned*. In addition, they suffer minor exposure to Corruption.

SWARM OF RAINBOW SNAKES

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
3	50	–	30	25	25	40	–	5	45	–	30

Traits: Armour 1, Cold-blooded, Fast, Size (Small), Swarm, Venom (Difficult), Weapon +5

LOCATION 5 – THE FURIOUS DEAD

Suffused with Shyish: This area is suffused with the Amethyst Wind of Magic. Any successful attempts to cast spells from the Lore of Death within this area benefit from +1 SL. This bonus may only be claimed once, so if a Character or item in the area is also suffused with *Shyish* there is no additional benefit.

The Characters enter this cavern via a portal that resembles a grinning skull. They have to crawl through its open mouth. On the other side, the party is met by the roar of an underground river. The cavern is bisected by the river, which is wide and torrential. On the closest bank lies the skeleton of a gigantic creature, its bones gleaming white in the light of their torches.

Crossing the River

On closer inspection, the water of the river is thick and sanguineous — a deep-red colour. The river is impossible to wade through. Anyone who tries can get waist deep before they must turn back or be swept away to their doom. They also trigger the first wave of attacks (see below) and are at a considerable disadvantage until they wade back to the bank.

The bones belong to a huge monster (a Jabberslythe). The Characters can fashion a raft from its ribs, tying them together with strips of its leathery hide if they do not have any rope. However, the monster's poisonous fangs, claws, and barbed tail are still deadly, even after death. Any Character building the raft from its bones must make an **Average (+20) Athletics** Test or suffer 1 Wound as they are scratched by a fang, claw, or tail tip, which draws blood. This counts as a *Venom* attack (WFRP, page 343).

The Dead Rise

Corpses litter the bed of this river of blood, brought here many ages ago, when the river swept bodies underground from an ancient battle fought in the hills nearby. Imbued with Chaos energy, they have become undead. When they sense the living are crossing their watery resting place, ancient hatred rises within their soulless beings, bringing them back to a semblance of life to slay and maim.

Several waves of zombie attackers emerge from the depths of the river as the Characters try to cross it. One Character makes a **Difficult (-10) Row** Test to try to navigate the raft across the river, with results shown in the table below.

A first wave may attack any Characters attempting to wade through the river. Subsequent waves attack while the Characters are crossing by raft. They can be assisted by all other Characters, if applicable. The first wave automatically takes the Characters by surprise, as the zombies ambush from the rushing waters, unless the Characters were foretold of this danger by the Herald in Location 4.

Each wave consists of d10 Zombies. The Zombies, despite being undead, suffer *Hatred* against the Characters. They try to claw their way onto the raft or drag the Characters under the current.

Characters fighting in the river need to pass a **Challenging (+0) Athletics** Test each turn. Those who fail gain an *Entangled* Condition. Those who fail with -4 or less SL gain a *Prone* Condition.

THE DEAD RISE

Astounding Success	The Characters cross the river quickly and safely, encountering only a single wave of attacks.
Impressive Success	The Characters cross the river quickly, encountering only a single wave of attacks. Characters fighting on the raft may experience difficulty from their vessel pitching and yawing. They must pass an Average (+20) Athletics Test each turn to keep their footing. If a Character fails this test, they must choose between gaining a <i>Prone</i> Condition or falling in the river.
Success	The Characters cross the river safely, encountering two waves of attacks.
Marginal Success	The Characters cross the river, encountering two waves of attacks. Characters fighting on the raft must pass an Average (+20) Athletics Test each turn to keep their footing, as described above.
Marginal Failure	The Characters cross the river slowly but safely, encountering three waves of attacks.
Failure	The Characters cross the river slowly, encountering three waves of attacks. Characters fighting on the raft must pass an Average (+20) Athletics Test each turn to keep their footing, as described above.
Impressive Failure	The Characters cross the river slowly, encountering three waves of attacks, with the raft spinning out of control. Characters fighting on the raft must pass an Challenging (+0) Athletics Test each turn to keep their footing, as described above.
Astounding Failure	The Characters cross the river slowly, encountering three waves of attacks, with the raft spinning dangerously out of control. Characters fighting on the raft must pass a Hard (-20) Athletics Test each turn to keep their footing, as described above.

Once all zombies of one wave are killed, allow the Characters a quick breather of three rounds before a new wave launches.

LOCATION 6 – FIRE AND HORROR

Suffused with Aqshy: This area is suffused with the Bright Wind of Magic. Any successful attempts to cast spells from the Lore of Fire within this area benefit from +1 SL. This bonus

ZOMBIES											
M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	15	–	30	30	5	10	15	10	–	–	12

Traits: Armour 2, Construct, Dark Vision, Distracting, Fear 2, Painless, Undead, Unstable (Beyond the Caves), Weapon +7



may only be claimed once, so if a Character or item in the area is also suffused with *Aqshy* there is no additional benefit.

The tunnel leading to this location opens out to a sulphurous gallery, festooned with a maze of fiery pits. Multicoloured flames jet from the pits with a bellowing roar. Crumbling rocky pathways cross between the pits. The fires cast a brightly hued glow on the cavern walls, the colours shifting and dancing, merging and changing continuously. The choking sulphuric fumes are nauseating and the ever-changing colours confusing to the eye, add to the feeling of nausea.

Navigating the Fire Pits

Each Character needs to make an **Easy (+40) Athletics** Test to make their way past the pits without being licked by the flames that shoot up from them. The flames are scorching, and cause 1 *Ablaze* Condition if they touch a Character.

Each Character must test a total of three times to avoid the flames while moving through this location: once when they are near the entrance, once when they are in the centre of the area, and once as they approach the exit.

The First Test: The Character who rolls highest on their Athletics Test is attacked by a Pink Horror (if two or more Characters score an equal highest result, choose one of these to be attacked).

The Second Test: The two Characters who roll the highest scores are attacked by a Pink Horror (drawn results are determined as above).

The Third Test: The three Characters who roll the highest scores are attacked by a Pink Horror (drawn results are determined as above).

If any Character falls into a pit (unlikely unless done deliberately), they are consumed by fire, and from their burnt corpse two Pink Horrors leap out.

Horror from Flame

When a Pink Horror attacks, it leaps from the fire pit nearest to the Character, gibbering and laughing and squealing. Because of the insane noise the Daemon makes, this attack does not surprise the target. The Pink Horror then goes for the target Character.

Remember: if the Pink Horror is killed, it splits into two Blue Horrors, which also go for the kill.

At the beginning of each of their turns, a Character embroiled in combat in this location must make a **Very Easy (+60) Athletics** Test to avoid being licked by flame from the pits, suffering 1 *Ablaze* Condition if they fail.



A Character might think they are being clever by knocking a Horror into a pit of flame. Although this causes the Horror to gain the *Prone* Condition for one turn, the flames actually invigorate the Daemon, and it recovers d10 Wounds.

PINK HORROR

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
5	50	30	35	30	35	30	35	25	30	12	10

Traits: Corruption (Moderate), Daemonic 8+, Fear 2, Split, Tzeentch's Fire, Unstable (Beyond the Caves), Weapon (Claws) +8

Skills: Channelling 65, Language (Magick) 55

Split: If a Pink Horror suffers a Critical Wound or is reduced to 8 Wounds, it splits into 2 Blue Horrors, both of which are unwounded.

Tzeentch's Fire: The Horror is wreathed in coruscating flame. All Horrors of the same type (Pink or Blue, but not Pink and Blue) in the vicinity pool their power. Choose one to cast 1 Tzeentch Spell during their Turn. Pink Horrors cast Pink Fire of Tzeentch and Blue Horrors cast Blue Fire of Tzeentch. Each additional creature of the same type in the vicinity adds +1 SL to a maximum of +9 SL.

BLUE HORROR

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	30	30	35	30	35	30	35	35	25	30	10

Traits: Corruption (Moderate), Daemonic 8+, Fear 1, Split, Tzeentch's Fire, Unstable (Beyond the Caves), Weapon (Claws) +8

Skills: Channelling 65, Language (Magick) 55

LOCATION 7 – FALSE PROPHECY

Suffused with Hysh: This area is suffused with the White Wind of Magic. Any successful attempts to cast spells from the Lore of Light within this area benefit from +1 SL. This bonus may only be claimed once, so if a Character or item in the area is also suffused with *Hysh* there is no additional benefit.

As the Characters enter this maze of tunnels they are met by a stream of blinding-white light searing into their eyesockets. While in this location, all Characters suffer from 1 *Blinded* Condition. They have to navigate the tunnels purely by touch and hearing. Their vision extends to only a couple of feet in front. If Characters become separated, they can cry out to each other and pass a **Challenging (+0) Perception** Test to locate each other.

At a suitable moment, the Characters hear a distant, low moaning cry echoing from within the maze. They can follow the sound. Any Character who passes an **Average (+20) Perception** Test also hears a low snorting sound coming from somewhere ahead.

If the Characters travel towards the cry, they'll encounter the source of the snorting — a Chaos Minotaur Lord tasked by the Lord of Change to guard the cavern. If they are together, they'll face this enemy as one. If they are separated, each separate group or individual must make an **Average (+20) Perception** Test. The individual with the best score encounters the Chaos Minotaur first. The others, following the sounds of combat, can reach the battle as soon as they pass an **Easy (+40) Perception** Test.

The Chaos Minotaur Lord

This is a huge, bull-headed monstrosity, twice the height of a man, a terror of rippling muscles. Its horns are twisted into the sigil of Tzeentch, and a golden,emonic mask of metal obscures its face, with eyes of pure white light shining behind it. Deadly fangs drip saliva. It has a bronze breastplate, engraved with arcane symbols, and hefts a great double-headed axe with a serrated edge. It attacks on sight, maddened with bloodlust.

THE CHAOS MINOTAUR LORD

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
5	45	25	64	65	20	20	25	20	30	15	42

Traits: Armour 2, Big, Brute, Champion, Frenzy, Horns +9, Hungry, Night Vision, Rear, Size (Large), Weapon +12

Skills: Melee (Two-Handed) 65

Trappings: Bronze Breastplate, Great Axe

Sigismund? What year did you venture forth?

'Sigismund IV. It is 1700 IC or thereabouts, the year of our foray.'

In fact, Adelfried was imprisoned following an ambush by Daemons that wiped out his party. Adelfried betrayed his goddess by pleading for his life — in return he promised to serve Tzeentch. Tzeentch's Daemonic servants promised him his freedom, but only after he had accomplished a future task for their dark master — he must aid a group of adventurers who come to seek the artefact hidden in the caves. In addition, he must sow the seeds of suspicion within their minds against their allies, so that Tzeentch's plans for the future come to fruition. Until that time, the heretic Adelfried is bound in crystal.

Adelfried knows he will only be free when he has accomplished his Dark Lord's task. To this end, he pleads with the Characters to free him, and offers his help to fulfil their quest for the Hammer. The Characters can free Adelfried by shattering the crystal — a few solid blows with a sword are all it takes. When the crystal prison shatters, a burst of energy knocks *Prone* each Character nearby, and they feel sickened to the core of their being. This is a source of moderate Corruption. Unbeknownst to them, they have released a heretic.

Adelfried is astounded to learn that, as far as he is concerned, the Characters live in the far future. If the situation allows it, he is obsessed with asking them questions about the present time. He fights alongside the Characters, but does not risk his life except in the direst situations — he believes that his freedom is linked with the party's success in retrieving the Hammer, so cannot let the Characters fail.

The heretic finds his freedom when he has helped the Characters retrieve the Hammer — the freedom to serve Tzeentch in the Realm of Chaos as a willing slave. As soon as Adelfried leaves the caves, his years catch up with him — he suddenly ages before the Characters' eyes, and his flesh withers to bone which then crumbles to dust. All his items rust and rot to nothing. His soul is dragged to the Realms of Chaos.

ADELFRIED JARMUND

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	34	32	31	56	48	47	30	55	54	38	18

Traits: Armour

Skills: Athletics 57, Channelling (Dhar) 74, Cool 64, Endurance 71, Gossip 48, Haggle 43, Intuition 58, Language (Magick 70), Lore (Theology 70, Tzeentch 70), Melee (Basic) 54, Perception 58, Research 65

Talents: Bookish, Carouser, Doomed (*Spend hushed eon. Eventually rescued. Agents rapport garnered, explore tunnels, rendered unreal*), Etiquette (Scholars), Read/Write

Possessions: Plate Mail Armour

The Prophet

With the guardian of the cavern defeated, the party can continue towards the source of the cries. They see, emerging from the whiteness, a tall shard of crystal jutting from the floor. Within this shard is the figure of a striking man in priestly robes, trapped and utterly paralysed from the neck downwards.

He is a bald man, thickset with strong features. A bronze band is worn across his brow, and a silver robe cascades across his plate mail, inscribed with the image of a stylised owl. His right hand is raised, as though in fealty, his left holds a sword, its blade broken. Seeing the Characters emerge from the brilliant light, the man's jaw drops in astonishment and his intense grey eyes light up in hope.

'Praise the goddess!' he gasps. 'Help me, my friends! I have been trapped here Verena knows how long. My comrades are dead. My name is Adelfried, Priest of Verena. Please help!'

Hold on, why are you here?

'We were tasked by my Emperor, Sigismund, to search for a fabled artefact said to be lost here. After countless horrors, I was separated from my comrades, and battled alone against a horde of Daemons. It was only the blasphemous sorcery of a servant of Tzeentch that overcame me, imprisoning me in this crystal shell. I do not know why I have been kept alive, and do not know how long I have been here. Prayer to Verena is all that has kept me sane.'

LOCATION 8 – HELLWOOD

Suffused with Ghyran: This area is suffused with the Jade Wind of Magic. Any successful attempts to cast spells from the Lore of Life within this area benefit from +1 SL. This bonus may only be claimed once, so if a Character or item in the area is also suffused with *Ghyran* there is no additional benefit.

As the Characters approach this area, they notice the cold, bare rock giving way to patches of luminous green moss spreading across the walls and ceiling of the tunnel. The tunnel opens out into a vast cave. The walls are covered with multicoloured lichen, and boulders are festooned with fronds of red, green, and yellow ferns. Vine tendrils snag at the Character's boots as they progress into the cave.

What the Characters at a distance mistake for clusters of stalagmites jutting up into the impenetrable darkness, are actually a forest of leafless trees, their boles twisted into vaguely human forms, their branches resembling gnarled limbs. Faces seem to leer out from the trunks — mocking, cruel, and contorted.



Death from Above

The trees press in on the Characters the closer they get to the centre of this huge cave. If they pass a **Challenging (+0)** **Perception** Test, they hear rustling in the branches high above them. If they are warily scanning the treetops for attackers, this test is **Easy** instead.

A few minutes later, winged entities screech down upon them. The Characters take a *Surprised* Condition if they failed their Perception Tests.

The creatures are wiry, pale-skinned humanoids with leathery wings, evil, vicious faces and razor-sharp talons — Chaos Harpies. There are three harpies per Character.

HARPIES

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
5	38	—	35	35	55	45	35	25	25	15	11

Traits: Traits: Arboreal, Fly (50), Infected, Skittish, Weapon (Claws) +7

Skills: Athletics 55, Dodge 65, Melee (Brawling) 58

If a Character has the Herald's claw and uses it, the target Harpy becomes enraged and attacks the two next to it — they come crashing to the ground in a flurry of screams and ripping claws, each attacking the others. One eventually slaughters the other two, but is badly wounded in the conflict. After the Characters have slain the other Harpies, they can finish off this one (it suffers from a *Fatigued* Condition and half its Wounds are lost).

The foliage underfoot seems to come alive when the Harpies attack, clinging to the Characters, tearing at them with thorns and writhing tendrils. Characters on the forest floor begin the battle with an *Entangled* Condition (the foliage counts as having Strength 30 for the purposes of breaking entanglement).

The Harpies seek to pin down and torture their victims rather than kill them outright. Two try to grapple their victim. If they fail, the third attacks as normal, but if the target of their attack is *Entangled*, the third Harpy also attempts to grapple its opponent. If it succeeds, it causes its target to gain a *Bleeding* Condition instead of the *Entangled* Condition.

If a group of Harpies does not outnumber a single enemy three to one, they attack as normal.

If two-thirds of the Harpies are slain, the remainder flee, but not before each attempts a final grapple attack. If they succeed in this attack, instead of Entangling their opponent, they wrest an item from their enemy — the Characters' weapon, or shield, or perhaps an item from their backpack, for example. Surviving Harpies then fly off into the treetops, where they taunt the Characters.

To get their items back, the Characters must climb the trees (requiring an extended **Challenging (+0) Climb** Test to a total of 10 SL) to reach the Harpies' nesting area. They can drive off the Harpies in this area by reducing them to at least a quarter of their number. Fighting in the treetops imposes a -10 penalty to Melee Tests unless a Character has the Arboreal Trait. Characters who suffer *Prone* Conditions in the trees must make **Hard (-20) Athletics** Test or fall D10-4 yd (the varied distance represents branches slowing their fall).

LOCATION 9 – THE PRISON

Suffused with Dhar: This area is suffused with Dark Magic. Any successful attempts to cast Dark Magic or Chaos Magic spells within this area benefit from +1 SL. This bonus may only be claimed once, so if a Character or item in the area is also suffused with *Dhar* there is no additional benefit.

The tunnel opens into a narrow cavern, its ceiling imperceptible in the gloom. Inky slime trails down the walls, and a sticky, tar-like substance drips like light rain from the darkness above. The constant drip of this stuff echoes round the rocky confines.

The droplets seem to slither when they touch a Character's exposed skin, winding with an apparent mind of their own into mouths, nostrils, eyes, and earholes — bitter to the taste, but sickly sweet of smell.

These droplets, and the slime on the walls, are manifestations of the Dark Magic that infests this place, and spending time in this area is a moderate source of Corruption.

Light at the End of the Tunnel

The cavern seems to stretch on, but the Characters spot a distant glimmer. At first, it looks like a spot of white light, but as they draw closer, they notice that it is an aurora of swirling radiance — all colours of the spectrum. The whirlpool of light roils around a massive black boulder, in which is embedded a golden hammer, covered in Dwarf runes. The tar-like substance seems to leach out of the boulder, pooling into droplets that rain directly upwards.

Treachery Unbound

Each Character should take a **Challenging (+0) Intuition** Test. Those who pass feel that Sigmar's blessing will fall upon the person who is first to retrieve the Hammer, but also that those who carry the taint of Chaos will suffer for daring to handle the Hammer of Sigmar. If a Character does lift the Hammer, a number of things happen at once:

• A great torrent of magical energy surges forth from the roiling mass held at bay by the Hammer. Even Characters without Second Sight can perceive it as a broiling mass of lurid-pink and moody-blue fire washing over the Characters and out through the cave system. Those with Second Sight see that the torrent is a tremendous mass of intensely concentrated *Dhar*.

• As this fire sweeps through the caves, it burns away the magical energies lingering within. Unstable creatures like Daemons and Undead are destroyed. Magical environments like the fire pits, maze of light, or golden lake, are stripped bare and left mundane rocky caverns. Mortal monsters, like Harpies and Chaos Hounds, are unharmed, but no longer find the caves a welcoming home, and soon head elsewhere.

• The Character wielding Ghal Maraz suffers a Wound for every point of Corruption they have. The Corruption points are lost, but so are the Wounds — permanently.

• If the party is perceived as Ulrican, they all benefit from an additional Resilience Point.

• If the party is perceived as Sigmarite, they all benefit from an additional Fate Point.

The Hammer is a mighty artefact, a masterwork of long-forgotten Dwarf skill wrought in a mysterious alloy, a beautiful golden copper that is somehow harder than expertly forged steel. Several runes glow with vibrant blue magical power. A Character passing a **Hard (-20) Language (Khazalid)** Test can tell that they are intricate and archaic, but can only guess at their effect. They do not all glow brightly. Several have dimmed, exhausted by their long proximity to the malefic energies of Sheerargetru. Until Ghal Maraz is bathed in holy fire (as described in the following chapter) the runes marked with an * do not function. Still, it is a magnificent weapon worthy of a god.





Magical Weapon: Ghal Maraz is magical and can injure creatures noted as immune to non-magical attacks.

Radiant Nimbus: The Hammer glows with holy power. Creatures with the Unstable Trait engaged with the bearer lose 3 Wounds at the end of each turn.

Smednir's Master Rune of Head-Wrecking: Add 40 to the score of any Critical Hits you make to the head.

Rune of Goblin Bane: Add the *Impact* quality to the weapon if the target is an Orc, Goblin, Snotling, or Hobgoblin. Goblins treat the bearer as having the *Fear 1* Creature Trait.

• * **Rune of Fire:** Any target struck receives an *Ablaze* Condition.

• * **Rune of Stalwart:** The bearer of the weapon adds +2 SL to Cool Tests to resist *Fear* and *Terror*.

• * **Rune of Spell-Breaking:** Any harmful spell that targets the bearer of Ghal Maraz, or includes them in its area of effect, suffers a penalty of -2 SL on its Casting Test.

THE GORGE — AFTER THE DELUGE

When the Characters leave the cave, no matter when they entered, they step out into an almighty storm at night. The waterfalls crash down, turning the stream into a roiling white cataract carrying mud downstream. They can shelter until the storm breaks in the morning or soldier on regardless. Despite the flood, it's possible to tread safely down the gorge — they'll get wet but won't drown.

By the time they reach the Deep Ravine, the storm has subsided. Many Goblins drowned in the storm and their corpses lay in the gorge while survivors shelter in the higher caverns. The situation with the Madclaw Clan depends on how the party left them. If they have Ghal Maraz, the Goblins keep away — Cacklespit foresaw this and they can feel the power of the Hammer and its hatred of Greenskins. If they don't have the Hammer and you think the Players would enjoy a fight, you could stage more attacks.

At the end of the gorge, the pool burst its banks and the mine was overwhelmed by flooding. The mine is now a broad tunnel at risk of collapse — the party needs to wade through 2 feet of water and mud to emerge in Black Fire Pass, but fortunately the tunnel holds.

BACK IN BLACK FIRE

If you want to make this return journey more involved, the party can encounter any of the groups described in **Chapter 10**. If the Characters reveal they have the Hammer, none of the Human groups believe it's the real thing — after all, the Emperor has it, doesn't he? In particular, pilgrims consider such claims blasphemous and become actively hostile.

Regardless of how you play the return to Grenzstadt, the PCs are being watched by a group of Dwarfs before they leave the Pass. Just before they pass Dok a Dum, a **Challenging (+0)** **Perception** Test reveals three Dwarfs observing them through a telescope from the heights.

They are some distance away and any attempt to reach them meets with failure. These are members of Grimshank's Chain who learned of the party from Dwarf patrols in Black Fire Pass.

GHAL MARAZ

Weapon	Enc	Reach	Damage	Qualities
Ghal Maraz — 2-Handed Warhammer	3	Average	SB+7	Damaging, Fine 3, Pummel, Unbreakable

WHAT IF THEY LEAVE THE HAMMER BE?

It is possible that cautious Characters, heedful of ill omens, decide to leave Ghal Maraz in the cave. This is very clever of them, and a little frustrating as the narrative would probably benefit from their being more heroic. A consequence of their refusal to play the role fate allotted to them is that they must forfeit the next Fate Point they would otherwise receive.

Gideon is also not out of tricks. He has prepared a contingency in the form of Colonel Sievers, who is just the sort to perform an act of heroic desperation in order to win the support of Altdorf to his cause. After he encountered the Characters in the pass, Sievers went to Grenzstadt, where Gideon revealed the secret of the Hammer. Sievers swiftly recruited a band of adventurers and set off down Black Fire Pass. If the Characters return this way without the Hammer, they see a small band of motley soldiers of fortune heading towards them. If they have not joined the Characters' party, Sievers has recruited the following to his cause.

- 💀 Renate Hausier the Vagabond (see **Death on the Reik**, page 21). Renate has since gotten herself a handgun, 2 pistols, and Ranged (Blackpowder) 51.
- 💀 Sigrid the Outlaw Chief (see **Death on the Reik**, page 83).
- 💀 Golthog the Ogre (see **Power Behind the Throne Companion**, page 31).
- 💀 Erina Erberhauer (see **Power Behind the Throne Companion**, page 19).

If you don't have these books, or if some of these Characters are part of the Characters' party, then they could be replaced by Characters from the **WFRP Starter Set**, or NPCs based on those from **Power Behind the Throne**, or a set of Characters with 2500–4000 experience points of the GMs own design.

This party, including Sievers, are now fated — they should have their own Fate and Resilience points, or at least 2 levels of the Luck Talent. Sievers is not hostile towards the Characters; he may even be well disposed to them. He is cagey about why he is adventuring in the pass, but if the Characters dig into his reasons, he bashfully mumbles: *'Look, I have been informed of a chance to undertake a quest that will have me renowned. It's mad really, but huge if true!'*

The Characters might guess at his goal, and he won't deny it. Nothing can be done to dissuade him. If Sievers is to be stopped, the PCs must fight and kill him and his companions. Otherwise, after a few days in the mountains, he retrieves Ghal Maraz and heads back to Altdorf, ultimately releasing Sheerargetru.

REWARDS

Good roleplaying and clever thinking should be rewarded, but there are additional XP for the following:

- 💀 150 points for retrieving Ghal Maraz
- 💀 75 points for reaching Ghal Maraz but deciding to leave it in place
- 💀 75 points for dealing with Sievers' adventurers
- 💀 50 points for passing through each of the caverns
- 💀 9 points for visiting each of the nine locations



CHAPTER 12

BLACK FIRE PASS TO ALTDORF

THE FIRST LINK

If the Characters have Ghal Maraz, then Iron Marshall Kina Hammerwatch meets them on the journey back along the pass. Hammerwatch is an elderly Dwarf, her grey hair neatly groomed into plaits that reach down to her waist. A large scar runs from her forehead to her jaw. She is escorted by two heavily-armoured veteran Dwarfs who stand calmly nearby, their hands close, but not on, their weapons. She politely asks if she may speak with the Characters and, if possible, asks if she may provide them refreshments. If they accept, she takes them to a simple tent that has been pitched nearby. They are offered excellent ale and spiced goat.

'My friends, I am truly blessed to make your acquaintance. Those that carry Ghal Maraz are true heroes for the hammer can only be wielded by the worthy.' This is not true, anyone without the taint of Chaos may lift and use the hammer, but Hammerwatch does not mind flattering the Characters. Hammerwatch conveys the following points:

Ghal Maraz has been drained from millennia spent in the presence of Chaotic corruption.

The Dwarfs believe Sigmar visited an ancient Temple of Ulric where the hammer was blessed during his final journey. The temple is thought to be located somewhere between what is now Altdorf and Nuln. In Streissen there is a scholar the Dwarfs know of, Master Albertus Nyman, who supposedly once visited the temple and knows its location.

The freeing of Ghal Maraz has set many events in motion. Omens and dreams full of hammer symbolism will soon flood the Empire and many, for good and ill, will be attracted to its power and seek it out, even if they know not what they do.

Hammerwatch feels culpable for the troubles now upsetting the Empire. *'To my shame, smiths of my clan agreed to create the imitation weapon wielded by Sigmar's heirs. It was a practical decision to let the Manlings come to cherish it as the real hammer, but it was not the most honourable one.'*

She produces a Dwarf gold coin from her jacket that has runes painted on its surface with bright-blue paint. *'This mark will help provide safe passage along your route. Travel where you are directed, show the coin, and tell whoever meets you your destination. They will do what can be done to help you.'*

If the Characters accept her help, she hands over the coin and directs them to the Three-Axe Brewery in Grenzstadt. Otherwise, the Iron Marshall wishes them the blessings of the ancestors, and watches them depart in silence.

THE RETURN

If celebrating crowds greeted the Characters' original arrival in Grenzstadt then a few stalwart souls wait at the gate for their heroes at all hours. They greet the Characters with excitement and patriotic masses immediately start to gather and cheer for them with calls of *'Sigmar! Sigmar!'* and *'Show us the Hammer!'*, if the crowd knows what they are about.

If not, they pass into town unnoticed, one more group of travellers or pilgrims from the Border Princes. However, many children begin watching whoever bears Ghal Maraz, their heads slightly tilted, as if they can hear something others cannot. They do not approach, but everywhere the Character goes, they are nearby.

RUNNING ON EMPTY

Several of the runes etched on to Ghal Maraz have been drained of power by its long exposure to Sheerargetru. It is still an extremely powerful weapon, but its magic has been weakened. There are a number of theoretical ways to restore this power, but they would all take too long to enable the Characters to return the hammer to Altdorf any time soon.

The Characters learn that they need to take Ghal Maraz to the Wolfshügel, an ancient temple to restore it to full potency. Characters may have other ideas and you can decide how successful they are. One idea that should pay dividends is to place Ghal Maraz in the Sacred Fire of Ulric at any Ulrican temple.

Characters that carry and wield the hammer soon come to sense its drained nature. Their dreams are uncertain and filled with a yearning emptiness. After a week they will suffer a Fatigued Condition due to disturbed sleep. You may wish to start providing meaningful clues in these dreams, such as visions of the Wolfshügel.

GRIMSHANK'S CHAIN

'Our ancestors, our steel, our battle line – only broken at the weakest part'

– Dwarf saying and motto of Grimshank's Chain

Grimshank's Chain (known as The Chain) is an ancient Dwarf network, whose members can be found wherever there are Dwarfs. The network is an informal one activated when members need the help of other Dwarfs. When it is used, and it is rare, it is usually for the transmission of important messages or goods over long distances. The Chain supports and protects the messenger as they undertake their journey.

Members of The Chain are usually among the eldest and most respected of their community. Others may be asked or recruited to undertake their aims without knowledge of The Chain. Knowledge of The Chain is passed within families as an oral tradition. Each location where there are a sizable number of Dwarfs has sites linked to The Chain. It is most often a public site checked each day at dusk by a member of The Chain.

The Chain can be activated by any member at any time. Its activation is one of great seriousness and trust. Members undertake their responsibilities upon being presented with a token known as Grimshank's coin. This token, marked with the rune of Grimshank, is handed to those travelling along The Chain with clear instructions of where it should be taken, the more expensive the coin, the more important the message. Runes painted on the coin indicate when the coin was issued so that its use is specific and limited.

THE RECRUITS

The Characters soon hear a bugle blowing a jaunty tune, which distracts the crowd about them, or summons one if there wasn't. Within the town square, a smartly dressed herald stands on a milking stool, surrounded by three soldiers in Black and Yellow of Averland with feathers in their caps, medals on their chests and leaning on their Halberds. Two others sit at a nearby table.

Folk press close as the Herald begins his pitch. *'Friends, Imperial Citizens and Averlanders! Come answer the call of your homeland, the call of the Emperor and the call of the Countess of Averland! Uncivilised barbarians in the North are coming to take your family, burn down your house and kill your dog. And your chickens! It is true! Men who pretend they are wolves, wearing nought but a fur! Ah Frau, I can see that has raised your interest! It is time to defend everything you hold dear! Come take the Countess's Shilling and join the forces of Averland. Of course, the war is a long way away and, yes Sir, you still get paid if you don't have to fight.'*

MAGICAL SIGHT ON THE JOURNEY HOME

If Ghal Maraz has been retrieved, either by the Characters or by Colonel Sievers, then Sheerargetru begins to become manifest. This is not an obvious, physical effect, but those with magical sight may be able to tell that something is happening. Every time the characters come within sight of one of the places listed, have them make a Difficult (-20) Perception Test of any Character able to perceive the Winds of Magic. Those who pass should be told about the following.

Averheim: There is a barely perceptible 'crack' in the air above the Averburg palace. On inspection it seems as if tendrils of magical energy are drifting about the crack, and a thin skein of energy runs in the direction of Altdorf.

Nuln: A similar phenomenon can be seen above Nuln Palace.

Altdorf: Similar cracks can be seen above each of the Colleges of Magic and the Imperial Palace. The skeins seem to meet over the palace.

These are the early signs of Daemonic portals due to open when Sheerargetru makes his move. If the Characters point them out, they find that most people blame wizards from a neighbouring province 'spying' through them. Wizards, of course, deny this – but the typical citizen of the Empire never gives wizards much heed.

Morrislieb also seems more present than it usually is, hanging gibbous and low, often looming in the direction that the Characters are set to travel.

Several young men and women come forward and sign up, receiving their shilling and their orders to gather in the square at first light. If any of the Characters are particularly burly, the Herald will encourage them to join but he does not push too hard.

ROUTES TO STREISSEN

If the Characters accepted Hammerwatch's offer then they have been given the address of the Three-Axe Brewery and are soon introduced to Gararoth, a particularly taciturn Dwarf. He asks the Characters to get into the back of a particularly large covered wagon with some false half-barrels, so they can travel unseen. They travel like this all the way to Averheim, where Gararoth hands them a new gold crown with slightly different blue runes. *'You should go to the Western Clock Tower after dark if you intend to keep following The Chain.'*

Depending on the Characters' plans, they may wish to search for *The Carroburg* to either take passage with it, or relay a message to Captain von Flamme that they are taking a different route. If Countess Emmanuelle von Liebweitz knows the Characters' true mission, she has spies watching *The Carroburg* and knows exactly where it is at all times as it travels along the Aver.

At the Western Clock Tower the Characters are met by Khardrif Inglepeak, a Dwarf Boatman. Once they have passed him the coin and explained where they are going, he promises to take them as far as Streissen. 'We'll need to go via *The Hidden Valley* and *The Pegasus*', he tells them. Asking the Characters to help carry his supplies he takes them to his barge, *The Pegasus*, which is moored next to *The Hidden Valley* inn. Inglepeak takes them aboard and hides them in a compartment below deck that smells faintly of Weirroot.

If the Characters did not accept the help of The Chain, they may try something else entirely. Perhaps they suggest travelling west from Grenzstadt in the hopes of catching a barge along the Upper Reik, then travelling overland to Streissen, or disguising themselves and taking a different path. All such roads are dangerous ones. Many routes are now being watched and different groups all desire Ghal Maraz for their own purposes. On the road, they may encounter the following:

Flagellants: A group of 12 Flagellants have been dreaming of the Characters and Ghal Maraz. A number of them had similar dreams and have interpreted this as a vision from Sigmar. However, they are divided about the meaning of the vision: some believe that the Characters are heretics; while others believe they are blessed by Sigmar. In order to work out the size of these groups, take 6 and then add or subtract the Party Allegiance score. The total is the number of Flagellants who support the Characters. (So the more Sigmarite the Characters seem to be the more the Flagellants support them; the more Ulrican they seem to be the more the Flagellants oppose them.)

They have agreed to challenge the Characters to try to help them decide. The Characters are confronted by a group of a dozen Flagellants looking particularly crazed and spoiling for a fight. They all start asking the Characters questions together, demanding to know their level of devotion to Sigmar. It is clear the group is divided — the Characters can use this to cause the two factions to attack each other. A Character wielding the hammer against the Flagellants convinces them the Characters are on Sigmar's side. If the Characters are being transported by The Chain, then they avoid the Flagellants but hear them arguing along the road or the river bank as they pass by.

Mercenaries: Bloody Boris and his Brethren are a small group of mercenaries heading north looking for work. Boris is long dead, killed by the current leader, Kurt. Kurt and his men are little more than bandits and have been robbing and killing as they travel. They have heard rumours about the Characters carrying some treasure and want it for themselves. They initially talk to the Characters to work out who they will be fighting. They are superficially friendly, but it should become clear to the Characters that they are after information. They then leave the Characters and aim to ambush them later, targeting the most dangerous Characters first.



The Pilgrims: A group of pilgrims meet the Characters and are very excited. They decide to follow the Characters wherever their quest may lead them. They cannot be put off except by violence. They follow waving banners and blowing whistles and pipes, telling everyone they encounter of the Characters' quest (which grows in the telling). This is accompanied at all times by constant moaning about sore feet, the food, the weather, the pace, and everything else.

GIDEON'S TRAVELS

Gideon tracks the Characters to Streissen. Once they enter the town, he then hurries to Altdorf to finalise his plans. During the early part of the journey, he intervenes to either hurry the Characters along or smooth their way with action. However, he is initially unaware that the hammer has been drained and that a Chaos horde is on its way to claim it. He decides not to intervene and (ironically) has faith that the Characters will reach Altdorf safely.

UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT

Streissen is a *very* different town to the one that the Characters passed through on their way to Black Fire Pass. Many inhabitants greeted Marius Leitdorf's liberation of the town with joy, but this has since turned to fear. At first Marius demanded that all those who supported Ludmilla von Alptraum be arrested. Most disappeared into the dark gaol of Deep Haus and were secretly executed. Older residents recalled the infamous 2502 IC bread riots and resulting blood bath, and feared the same events were happening again. They have bolted their doors to hide until things calm down.

Unfortunately, Marius perceived such caution as a personal insult. He turned on his supporters, including members of the Streissen Independence Party (SIP), as enemies of the nobility and ordered them all rounded up and taken away. As his purge began, many headed for the gates but found their way blocked. Now they wait for it all to end, hoping they will not be spotted.

Now, Leitdorf mopes within the Alptraum's Winter Residence, suffering from profound depression. He spends his days drinking and barking orders. Marcus Karlsson stays out of way, working to mitigate the worst of Leitdorf's impulses. Leitdorf's troops have garrisoned the town and can be found holed up in taverns and anywhere else they can find. Overall, they have been well disciplined, with many increasingly worried at Leitdorf's erratic behaviour.

There is little traffic on either the roads or the river approaching Streissen. Those few travellers the Characters do see are fleeting and evasive. On a successful **Challenging (+0) Gossip** Test the Characters can hear the following rumours:

- 💀 'The Streisseners are revolting! They have thrown off the yoke of oppression and reclaiming their traditional freistadt status.'
- 💀 'Streissen tried to revolt, but it was suppressed and many have been executed.'
- 💀 'Ludmilla Alptraum, our beloved Iron Countess, is riding to save Streissen.'
- 💀 'I heard Sigmar is returning to the Empire. He was seen at Black Fire Pass — they say he returns to spare the Empire from war.'

As the Characters approach Streissen, they see smoke rising into the sky. Near the town wall they see crows picking at bodies on the road or caught up in weeds on the verge. The area is covered in thick swarms of flies. The sound is unnerving and the smell is noisome. The dead wear the yellow and black uniform of Streissen City Guard and have been stripped of all useful or valuable items.

Bodies also hang from the town gates, dangling from ropes tied to the battlements. The pungent smell of decomposing bodies is overwhelming. The gates are open and the guards look tired and irritable. They have orders to ensure that no one leaves and are not in a mood to challenge anyone arriving. Any questions are met with annoyance, but on a successful **Average (+20) Charm** Test they are given the gruff explanation, '*Count Leitdorf is hunting traitors*'. Soldiers also patrol the docks and actively advise the Characters not to berth, but do not prevent them from doing so if they insist. If they are travelling with Inglepeak, he says they can just jump across without him needing to stop. He tosses them a rune-marked gold crown, and says that if things do not go well in Streissen, they should travel west to the small town of Lengenfeld and wait by the Market Gate at dusk.

THE GRIM STREETS OF STREISSEN

The smoke hanging over the town means that Streissen is cast in a perpetual gloomy light during the day. There are few people on the streets and the shops are boarded and closed. Those people they do see in the distance try to avoid the Characters, walking in the other direction or ducking down an alleyway. The occasional body is found lying against the side of the road, although someone has taken the time to close their eyes and daub an ash raven on their forehead. A black horse with an empty saddle runs across the Platz and disappears. Feral dogs work at a corpse, backing away with snarls if the Characters approach.

A patrol of twelve Soldiers passes the Characters, pulling four prisoners in chains with them. The soldiers have their hands on their weapons and stare at the Characters, but take no action unless the Characters try to stop them. The prisoners are young, and one sobs: '*We are on Count's side. We wanted him to free us.*'

APPROACHING LEITDORF

Leitdorf has made himself at home at the Alptraum's Winter Residence. This fortified manor home is filled with his followers and those Streisseners who hope to gain advantage. However, most wait in vain while Leitdorf steadily works his way through the Alptraum's wine cellar. Leitdorf's soldiers are also garrisoned here. He has allowed the 50 soldiers to loot the west wing, the non-valuable contents are scattered across corridors and gardens. Some of the soldiers are wearing various items of Alptraum's expensive clothing, hats, scarves, nighties and shawls, and on closer inspection seem to be inebriated.

If the Characters ask to see Leitdorf, they need to convince the guards to let them in to see Marcus Karlssen, unless they are the ones who negotiated the handover of the town, in which case, they'll be passed through immediately. Karlssen tells the Characters to wait while he rouses Leitdorf from his revelries. Karlssen also quietly orders a few soldiers to gather nearby.

Soon after their arrival, an old servant carrying a tray of wine for the Characters enters the drawing room in which they are waiting. She is an Imperial agent and while she pours them a drink, she whispers to whatever Character appears to be in charge. *'You must go! Quickly! Leitdorf will have you all imprisoned or killed and will take the hammer.'*

Should the Characters await Leitdorf, they begin to hear orders being shouted as a dozen soldiers under Karlssen's command slowly file into the area in preparation to arrest them. Leitdorf has found out about Ghal Maraz, the Characters only have a short period to escape before they are engaged or forced to surrender.

No one at the Winter Residence knows where Master Nyman resides, but anybody on the street accepts a bribe of a shilling or more to direct the Characters to the University.

THE LOREMASTER

Master Albertus Nyman was — until Leitdorf's capture of Streissen — the University Chancellor. This was an official position, appointed by the Countess. It was located in Streissen due to the presence of the University, where the Chancellor was also an honorary Dean. When the town fell, Albertus and his partner, Captain Neuer of the Streissen College Watch, knew what was coming. They gathered all those they could and went into hiding in the cellar of Albertus's bookmaker brother, Vorn Nyman. They have hidden there since Vorn has chosen to wait out events at home.

It is difficult to find the Loremaster. Hiero Greendale, his Halfling assistant at the University, points them towards the university Watch. However, they do not know where the Chancellor or the Captain are. They suggest trying their home. Nyman and Captain Neuer live nearby. Their two elderly servants, Gerd and Gertie, refuse to answer the door, and hide in a wardrobe if the

Characters break in. They do not know where their masters are. If they are asked about their families, they know that Nyman's brother works as a bookmaker nearby.

Nyman maintains a small study at his home and this contains much of the information the Characters are looking for. This is spread across maps, notebooks, textbooks and scraps of paper. To find all the information an extended **Hard (-20) Research** Test must be made to a total of 8 SL, with each test taking an hour. Each SL reveals notes and fragments of an ancient parchment that illustrate one of the pieces of knowledge listed in The Cellar section.

THE CELLAR

The Bookmaker's premises are boarded and locked. A Character passing a successful **Difficult (-10) Perception** Test from outside or **Average (+20) Perception** Test from inside hears faint sounds coming from the cellar. The trapdoor can be found in the dining room.

The dark, dank cellar smells of stale air and fresh urine with an eye-watering stench of ammonia. The six fugitives are terrified of the Characters and huddle at the back of the room. Captain Neuer stands in front of them with his sword drawn and demands that they leave. Any non-violent approach or mention of their quest puts them at ease. Showing them Ghal Maraz results in stunned silence, before they all fall to their knees, making the Sign of the Hammer as they do so.

Nyman, looking tired and drawn, is willing to tell the Characters all he knows. He asks that they help them escape Streissen, although he makes it clear that his help is *not* dependent on this.

Nyman has always been fascinated by various accounts of the story of Sigmar. Much of what he tells them is familiar. He found fragments of parchment detailing obscure lore about Sigmar, and whilst the fragments are elsewhere he can remember much of it.

The fragments were from books deemed heretical by the Cult of Sigmar in the first millennium. It is not clear why but Nyman speculates they emphasised Sigmar's Ulrican faith to a degree that embarrassed the early leaders of his cult.

The fragments say that Ghal Maraz had become weakened. It was still a powerful weapon but Ulric's High Priest warned Sigmar that he needed to ensure that it was blessed and pure before he entered a great battle.

On his way to Black Fire Pass, Sigmar stopped at a temple to ask for Ulric's blessing. The text says that this temple was a great hill called the Mother's Mound, built by worshippers, from which the gods surveyed the whole of the world.

At the temple Sigmar had to prostrate himself before Ulric.

ESCAPING STREISSEN

D100 roll	Result
01–25	A woman opens her front door and sees the Characters. <i>‘Ere Larrs, these are the criminals they’re looking for.’</i> She is not minded to help Leitdorf’s troops and closes the door if they do not insult her in any way.
26–50	The Characters see a young Priest of Morr using ashes on his thumb to draw a raven on the forehead of a dead body. He nods to them and does not shout any warning.
51–75	Town Criers start to declare that if the Characters do not surrender by the stroke on the next hour then a townsperson will be executed for each of them.
76–00	Firewood is taken on to the battlements and small fires are lit to illuminate the walls and make it more difficult for the Characters to escape that way.

There the hammer was placed within the Sacred Flame of Ulric and renewed. Nyman says that this section of the text was likely to have been considered problematic for the Cult of Sigmar, even though Sigmar had not been elevated to the gods at this point.

Nyman believes that he found the location of the Mother’s Mound. He travelled there over 20 years ago as a young scholar. It is now called the Wolfshügel and was tended to by an old priest of Taal.

The temple sits at the heart of the hill but it is no longer possible to access it easily as the entrance has been sealed with rocks.

Wolfshügel is located a day’s travel from Diesdorf. A corridor of stones on the opposite riverbank once led from the Reik toward its gate. This ancient pathway was likely to have once been ceremonial, but is long gone apart from the great stones. However, the hill can be seen from any high vantage point within miles as it stands above the forest.

ESCAPE FROM STREISSEN

By the time the Characters leave Streissen it is likely that Leitdorf is searching for them. Every soldier has been put on duty with guards on the gates and docks doubled with frequent patrols covering the streets. Town Criers proclaim that a reward of 7 Gold Crowns will be made for information leading to the capture of the fugitives.

Escape from the town should be a tense affair, especially if they have agreed to help those in the cellar escape. There are a variety of options Characters can take to escape and you can judge the success of any ideas. Every minute that the Characters spend in Streissen they should pass a **Challenging Stealth (Urban)** Test. If the test is failed, roll on the ‘Escaping Streissen’ table.

If a result on the table is generated for the second time it does not occur. Instead a patrol of 10 soldiers spots the Characters and demands that they stop. The Characters can try to intimidate them into silence (**Very Hard (-20)** **Intimidate**

Test), bribe them (they will need to part with at least 60 shillings) or convince them of the importance of letting them go (a good story followed by a **Very Hard (-20)** **Charm** Test). Characters that mediate handing the town over to Leitdorf get a +20 bonus. Otherwise, they have to fight.

If the Characters helped Master Albertus Nyman, Captain Neuer, Gerd and Gertie, they are very grateful. Captain Neuer swears a holy oath by Ghal Maraz itself that if they ever need his sword, it’s theirs. They head south into Averland to stay with relatives.

LEGENFELD

If the Characters are travelling via *The Carroburg*, or not following The Chain, move onto the events of the next section. If they’re following Inglepeak’s guidance to meet The Chain at the Market Gate, they are met by Durkan Orkisson, a blacksmith specialising in agricultural tools by trade, though his business is now run by his grandson (with whom he confusingly shares his name). Orkisson is old even for a Dwarf and moves slowly with the aid of two engraved sticks. He is suspicious of the Characters, unless they have a Dwarf in their party and asks a number of questions, even though he knows he should not.

Once he feels he can trust them, Orkisson takes them to his home as honoured guests and arranges for them to be taken via a sailing ship, *The Iron Wind*, which is bound for Nuln and then onto Kemperbad. Captain Fimbur Dimzadson is an old sailor, who Orkisson assures them will be pleased to have someone new to regale with his tall tales of travel and adventure.

If the Characters tell Orkisson that they are carrying the Ghal Maraz, he asks if he could see and hold it. If they agree, as he does so, tears well in his eyes. *‘By the Ancestors, lads, the tales are true. Five runes. But it’s sleeping, I think. Its fire must be rekindled.’* The Characters can board *The Iron Wind* the next day without incident.

THE COUNTESS WILL SEE YOU NOW

If Countess Emmanuelle von Liebwitz is aware of the Characters' quest due to her agent Hans Knees. She is aware of the *Carroburg*'s movements, or actively seeks out rumours of the Characters' return. Small units of Nuln troops, with descriptions of the Characters, are quietly searching all boats approaching Nuln, with mounted troops heavily present in the area as well. Boats are moored for a mile approaching the city and their crews are argumentative and, in some cases, scared, as they are carrying illegal goods. Those crews of boats travelling in the other direction warn Captain Dimzadson, Captain von Flamme, or Lieutenant Grissen, of what is happening giving others time to avoid the situation, so the Characters soon hear enough to know they are being sought.

Captain Dimzadson is willing to smuggle the Characters past Nuln. While you should play up his ship being boarded by inspectors, and his cargo of Averlander wine closely inspected, his good name, and being a Dwarf, gets him and his crew through.

If the Characters are travelling in *The Carroburg* and expected, or choose to declare themselves to the troops, they are immediately escorted to a fortified mansion in the Aldig Quarter, as the Countess (rightfully) believes there are far too many eyes on Nuln Palace at the moment. Hans Knees (now wearing a very stylish hat) brings the Characters without explanation into a parlour where Countess Emmanuelle awaits them, with only (apparently) two guards and a non-descript woman. There are quite a few more guards hidden nearby, heavily armed (the woman, Hildi Gheist, is a skilled Wizard from the Grey College).

'We are deeply humbled that you should visit us at such an important time, and to delay your urgent mission for our sake. Needless to say, ourselves and all the people of Nuln and Wissenland should be securely in your debt for what you are doing for the Empire, and that your actions should never be forgotten by any righteous person ...'

How you play the countess should depend, in part, on what she knows of the situation at hand. Emmanuelle is articulate, and measured in her use of words and shrewd in her judgement of the Characters. What she seeks is leverage in her ambition to attack the Toppenheimers of Sudenland and support her allies, the Pfiefrauchers. Her friend '*dear Karl-Franz*' has forbidden her from doing so several times in the past.

Emmanuelle reasons that if she is instrumental in helping to return Ghal Maraz, she can secure that permission. She offers to have the Characters escorted with '*all due dispatch*' to Altdorf, whilst implying that, of course, the Characters don't *have* to be present to return Ghal Maraz to the Emperor. Unfortunately, she has no interest in permitting a detour to '*reawaken*' the hammer. It is clearly Ghal Maraz and that's enough for her purposes, whether the hammer is charged or not is no concern of hers.

The Characters must be *very* persuasive indeed to talk her into either letting them go, by vowing that they support her claims, or partially taking her deal, but insisting they only need to be taken as far as Diesdorf. The Characters can help their cause by bringing up the burning of Schertal and Baron von Bachmann's actions (see page 117), saying that they have to be wary of her intentions. A **Difficult (-20) Intuition** Test reveals that the Countess is genuinely surprised to hear this and she claims he was acting alone, without her authority, and gives her word that the matter *will* be dealt with.

There is another way though. If the Characters tell her of the events that occurred at the village of Heidheinheim — that Wissenland (Sudenland) soldiers were attacking targets in Stirland and Averland dressed in Nuln's colours — or if they provide her with the note carried by the Toppenheimer spy near Castle Reikguard (see page 75) Emmanuelle literally springs up from her chair with a dazzling smile. She flits across the room to kiss the Characters' cheeks, claps her hands, and abruptly ends the interview.

'These are trying times and we are beyond busy. Thank you so much for visiting us, darlings. Dear Hans will help you on to wherever you wish. Diesdorf, I think it was? Be careful, you bear the hopes of the Empire on your shoulders!'

And with that they're promptly escorted out. Characters that make an **Easy (+40) Politics** Test will realise that the chosen agents of the Emperor, ones also greatly favoured by Graf Todbringer, just vouchsafed that the soldiers of her enemies, the Toppenheimers, were reaving while trying to implicate Nuln.

Knees ensures that the Characters pass through Nuln quickly to sail on to their next destination. Depending on the deal the Characters managed to make with Countess Emmanuelle, if any, they may skip several of the following sections.

BACK TO KEMPERBAD

If the Characters have been following The Chain then their route to Kemperbad is uneventful, though they may quail or rail at the ruins of Castle von Wittgenstein as they pass. Traffic is quiet although they see movements of small units of troops. If they are still travelling via *The Carroburg*, the Cult of the Broken Fingers from the following sections modifies their ambush and attacks while the ship is docked in Kemperbad.

A WARM WELCOME

The Characters are met in Kemperbad by Gurrin Ablesniz, an apprentice to his uncle Able Kazriksson. His master is a member of The Chain but has never seen it activated before. He is excited and surprised to see the Characters. He warmly greets them, hugging each, and telling them it his honour to serve them. Kazriksson sends his enthusiastic nephew to get fresh food.

He says that they can lodge in his cellar whilst Ablesniz stands guard. Kazriksson says he will wake them at first light to find them a boat heading North. If they refuse then he allows them to stay in his rooms upstairs, although he asks them to stay away from the windows as his neighbours may be able to see in.

If Ablesniz was allowed to go to the shop, then the young apprentice stops off at the local tavern and gossips about the Characters. One of those present is Martin Schmidt, the leader of Cult of the Broken Fingers.

THE CULT OF THE BROKEN FINGERS

The Cult of the Broken Fingers is an offshoot of The Purple Hand. It numbers only five members, including Schmidt, and they have been keeping their head down. However, Schmidt often receives visions (he has the *Holy Visions* Talent) and his latest vision contained the Characters. He does not know why, but has decided they must die.

In the dead of night one of the cultists picks the lock of Kazriksson's workshop and slits the throat of the sleeping Ablesniz. This awakens the Characters, assuming they're in the cellar, who hear a thud and see blood leaking through the ceiling, followed by the sound of something heavy (a chest of tools) being dragged on top of the trapdoor. From outside the chest can be moved on a successful **Average (+20) Strength** Test. From inside the cellar, it takes two **Very Hard (-20) Strength** Tests or **Very Hard Melee (-20)** roll to damage the door (TB4 W10) due to the limited space to swing a weapon. Any Characters breaking their way out must make a successful **Easy (+40) Agility** Test to avoid being hit by a falling chest for 1d10+6 Wounds, modified by Armour Points and Toughness Bonus.

The cultists retreat and Schmidt then throws bottles of burning oil into the Workshop which is soon ablaze. A Character can navigate their way through the Workshop, but if they fail an Agility Test then they suffer an *Ablaze* Condition. The difficulty of this test depends on how long it took the Characters to leave the cellar: 1–3 rounds: **Easy (+40)**; 4–6 rounds: **Challenging (+0)**; 1–3 rounds: **Hard (-20)**.

The cultists wait outside for anyone trying to escape with the intention of killing them, firing a blunderbuss and crossbows at anyone emerging from the cellar door. Once it is clear that they are outnumbered, the Cultists run away and hide. After 12 rounds, neighbours start to appear to raise the alarm and start to put the fire out, and the Cultists flee as soon as this occurs.

Characters should start to need to hold their breath or test against the heat and smoke (see Other Damage, *WFRP*, page 181) after five rounds in the cellar or as soon as they emerge into the blazing workshop. Kazriksson, his wife, and his niece (another apprentice), are all trapped upstairs and the Characters must find their way through the smoke to find them, returning through the workshop on their way out.

The greatest risk here is from the fire and the confusion. Characters should not have too much idea what is happening. If they did not sleep in the cellar, they are in a better position but still need to escape a burning house.

THE ANCIENT PATH

Once the Characters escape Kemperbad, they find it a simple matter to reach Diesdorf from where they can strike out to the Wolfshügel. The hill can be seen from any high vantage point for miles around. From the river at Diesdorf an ancient pathway once led to the hill. Large moss-covered ogham stones still mark portions of the path, but many of them are damaged or have fallen over. The path itself has entirely disappeared.

A DIN THROUGH THE TREES

After a half-day's journey travelling through the forest, the Characters hear a battle ahead. They can approach without being spotted and as they near there is a scream, followed by the shout of '*Klaus! No!*' and further shouting. The sounds emanate from a fight in a small clearing between two Beastmen and a group of soldiers wearing the buff uniforms of Reikland Infantry. Two soldiers lie dead, one decapitated with his head lying nearby, his mouth agape and a startled look in his bloodshot eyes. A bloodied Beastmen corpse has been pinned to the tree with spears.

A second Beastman is surrounded by nine soldiers, most of whom are injured, all cautiously circling each other. The Beastman is thin and willowy, his torso covered with metal studs, with the face of a fox and long powerful legs. He wields two swords and when he sees the Characters, he grins and points a sword. '*There you are! The hammer-carriers! Draxol will come for you! You will die beneath his hooves!*' He then tries to fight his way to freedom. If the Characters do not intervene, he manages to do so with two rounds.

THE SCOUTS AND THE DESERTERS

The Beastmen are scouts for a warherd of Beastmen led by Draxol the Extinction, who hunts for Ghal Maraz. The scouts grabbed a lone soldier to demand if he had news of the hammer's return, but the rest of his fellows came upon them.

The soldiers, led by Sergeant Major Oldheim, are appreciative of the Characters' support. An experienced group of soldiers who have been together a long time, they are upset by the deaths of their friends and bury them with prayers as soon as they can. Oldheim talks for the group and says that his men were on manoeuvres in the forest when they were attacked.

If the Characters are honest about their journey, or used the hammer in front of them, then Oldheim and his unit are happy to join them, otherwise they make their way to their barracks near Diesdorf.

Fox-head Beastman

Chosen for his speed and cunning, this Beastman was sent to seek news of the hammer and report back what he learned; however, he was overconfident in grabbing a stray soldier. He attempts to flee once he feels the battle cannot be won.

FOX-HEAD BEASTMAN

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
5	67	35	47	49	42	44	26	49	43	20	16

Traits: Arboreal, Armour 2, Cunning, Horns +6, Night Vision, Weapon (Axe) +8, Leader, Stride

Sergeant Major Oldheim

Markus Oldheim is an experienced and tough soldier. He has fought across the Old World and is looking towards settling down. Like many others he dreams of owning his own inn somewhere quiet. His wife and children died many years ago and their deaths still haunt him. His unit is his family now and he will die to protect them.

Oldheim sports a handlebar moustache that he keeps waxed. The older soldiers sometimes tease him about it, and he takes in good humour, but they know that it was grown to hide a patch of discoloured skin that occurred after he was splattered with a mutant's blood.

Use the Sergeant profile on page 19 for Oldheim. His troop is eight Soldiers armed with Halberds.

MARTIN SCHMIDT – SILVER 4

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	45	45	35	45	40	35	34	45	41	40	13

Traits: Animosity (Kastor and Friends), Armour 1, Ranged (Blunderbuss) +8 (20), Weapon (Hand Weapon) +7

Skills: Athletics 50, Cool 56, Dodge 50, Melee (Basic) 60, Perception 50, Ranged (Explosives) 60, Ranged (Blackpowder) 55

Talents: Fast Shot, Holy Visions

Trappings: Leather Jacket, Blunderbuss loaded with Small Shot and Powder, Small Shot and Powder for 6 Shots, 3 Incendiaries, Purse containing 4d10 Shillings

THE BATTLE OF WOLFSHÜGEL

WOLFSHÜGEL

The sacred ground of Wolfshügel (the Wolfshill) stands above the tallest trees of The Great Forest, visible from miles away. Few live near the hill but those that do say it was built by the followers of Taal, Rhya, and Ulric in Elder days, so the gods could watch over their domain. Others say the hill was sacred long before Sigmar was born and that it was here where the first fire of Ulric was lit.

For centuries it was one of the holiest places of pilgrimage in the Old World but declined as the worship of Ulric focused towards the North and newer gods became more popular. Few now visit but the Wolfshügel has been maintained by initiates of the older gods, who still view the site as holy.

A steep packed earthen slope leads to the upper level of the Wolfshügel. It is comfortably wide enough for a cart. A 6-ft-high sturdy stone wall runs around the outside of the level. The wall has been maintained over the years, although it has recently fallen down at two points, the stones lying at the base of the wall or the bottom of the slope. The forest has grown towards the base of the hill and in parts the trees overhang the upper level. These are strong enough that a lighter person could climb the trees and drop over the wall.

The main level, the Wolfsruhe (the Wolf's Rest), at the foot of the hill was once home to clerics and pilgrims. Eight stone domed huts surround the hill, although two have been largely dismantled, their stones used to fill the access tunnel to the temple. One of the huts is home to Brother Adric, the initiate of Taal, who is the current caretaker of the site. Four of the other huts are home to recently arrived refugees.

The hill at the centre of the Wolfshügel is sacred ground. Brother Adric and others are upset by anyone who attempts (**Average (+20) Climb** Test) to climb to the top. However, the Characters can convince them of the merit of doing so to watch out for oncoming enemies.

The shrine is accessed at the bottom of the hill by a short flight of worn, moss-covered, stone steps. However, the small tunnel at the foot of the steps has been filled with rocks. This was done many years ago to protect the temple within. The tunnel takes a lot of time and effort to clear. In part, this is because only one person at a time can remove the stones because of the restricted space within the tunnel.

Clearing the Tunnel

The tunnel into the temple is solidly blocked with rocks and needs to be cleared. You can choose to do so narratively, with the tunnel being finally cleared during the horde's attack. Otherwise

this can be done as an extended **Challenging (+0) Strength** Test requiring a total of 35 SL. Each test represents an hour's labour in the tunnel and after each test the worker must pass a **Hard (-20) Endurance** Test or receive a *Fatigued* Condition.

Brother Adric

Adric is a young, somewhat naïve, Stirlander sent to care for the Wolfshügel for a period of two years. He is a serious and brave young man determined to do his best. The Shrine had been left unattended for some months after the previous initiate disappeared. Adric has been working hard to maintain it. A senior cleric visits every few months and he has developed a close friendship with a local Druid. Adric will be extremely nervous of any authority figures, particularly anyone that appears to be noble, leading him to stammer.

BROTHER ADRIC HUMAN INITIATE OF TAAL (BRASS 2)

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	25	30	25	31	32	38	32	31	34	40	11

Traits: Weapon (Axe) +6,

Skills: Athletics 42, Charm 45, Cool 39, Endurance 38, Haggle 45, Intuition 40, Lore (Reikland 34, Theology 39), Melee (Basic) 30, Perception 37, Pray 47, Ranged (Bow) 33, Research 36,

Talents: Doomed (*Tis the willow's wood*), Savvy, Flee!, Animal Affinity, Craftsman (Goldsmith), Bless (Taal)

Trappings: Silver Antlers Symbol, Robes, Axe

Blessings: Grace, Hardiness, Healing, The Hunt

THE REFUGEES

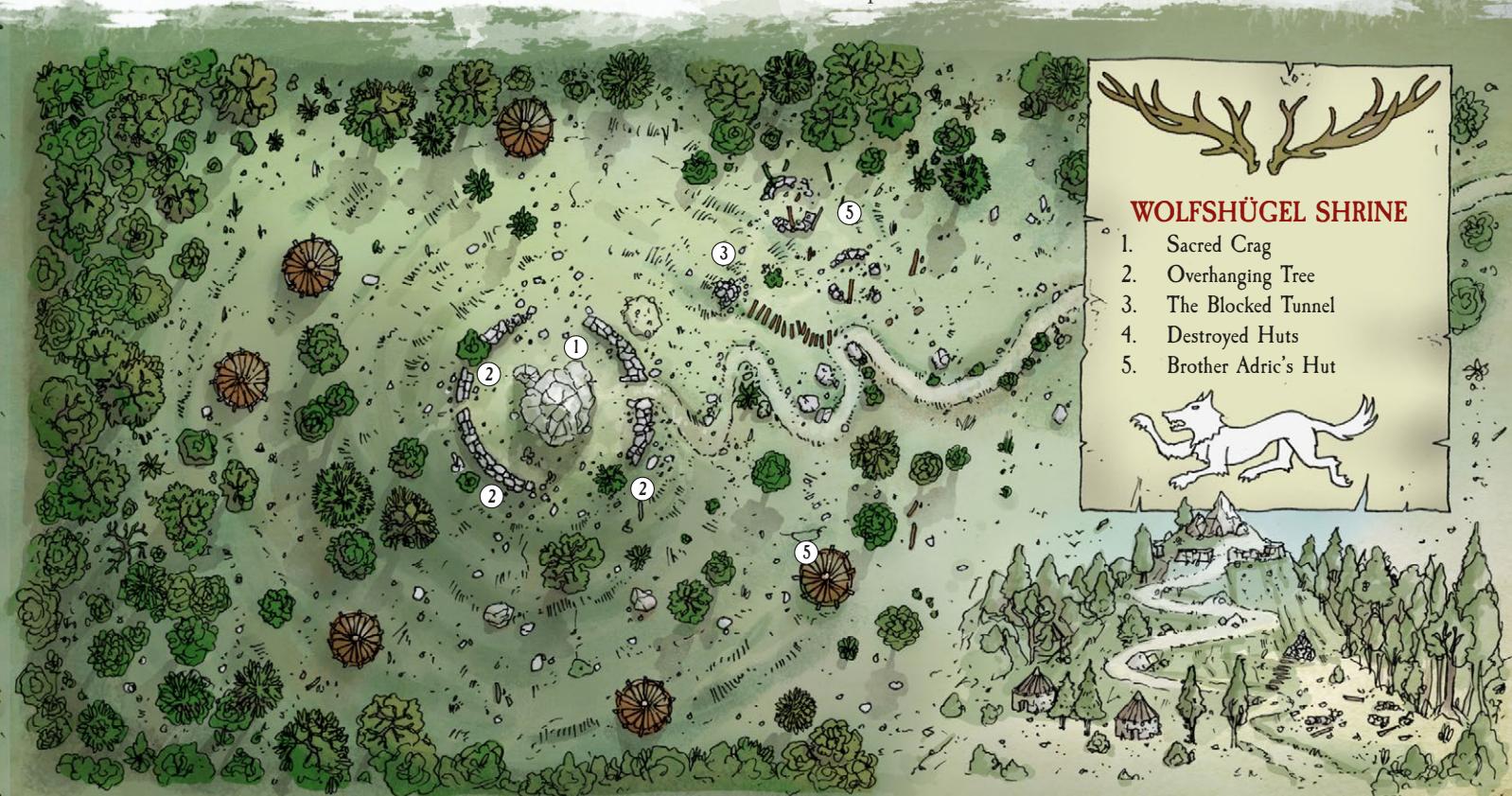
A group of 32 refugees (21 adults and 11 children) have set up camp on the Wolfsruhe. They have settled into five of the huts. Brother Adric is doing his best to help them. Two wagons have been left, covered in branches, at the foot of the shrine. Three ponies are tethered to a stake by one of the huts (a fourth is used for hunting). The refugees are all from the village of Albenriek, near Torpin at the foot of the Barren Hills and are clearly traumatised by their experiences. They do not have a single leader and a group of adults will gather to talk to the Characters. They say that their homes were attacked by a band of soldiers, with their friends and relatives slaughtered, and houses burnt to the ground. There is some disagreement about who attacked them but they blame Middenlanders or Ostlanders.

The refugees will be fearful of the Characters, especially if they are travelling with Oldheim and his troops. Attempts to intimidate them will reduce them to broken sobs, but the truth or a successful **Challenging Charm** Test will be far more effective.

PREPARING FOR BATTLE

The Characters do not have much time to prepare before the horde is upon them. They have resources at hand and will have to decide how to use them. It may need some difficult decisions by the Characters.

The Wolfshügel: The hill can be defended although there are weaknesses that need to be identified and fixed. There is no gate, parts of the wall have collapsed; trees can be used to climb and drop across the wall, and ivy allows for the wall to be more easily scaled. Many of these issues can be resolved with a workforce and leadership.



The Soldiers: Sergeant Major Oldheim and his unit will work to support the Characters if they are convinced of the cause and the Characters show they are leading by example. They make excellent supervisors but will start to bully any refugees they are working with, leading to arguments and fights. This can be resolved by getting them to participate.

The Refugees: The refugees will be terrified once they learn what is coming. However, they can be convinced if dealt with honestly that their best option is to defend the Wolfshügel. While some will want to flee, pointing out that the Beastmen can easily hunt them by scent will help dissuade them from doing so.

Other resources: There is no shortage of wood in the forest, the wagons can be used for carrying, and the ponies are currently rested. However, there are not enough weapons for all the refugees although they can make spears or throw rocks.

Ghal Maraz: This will be a potent weapon in the fight, especially so if the Characters can 'awaken' it within the shrine.

A TIMELINE TO THE BATTLE OF WOLFSHÜGEL

The following provides a broad outline for the events leading to the attack on the Wolfshügel. The timeline and events are subject to change depending on the actions of the Characters. There are consequences to the decisions the Characters make and this may include not being able to access the Temple. Due to the timing of when the Characters learn of the horde, unless they specifically brought marines from The Carroburg with them, they won't have time to return to the ship to get them.

Day One

Mid-afternoon: The Characters arrive.

Day Two

Mid-morning: Hans returns with news of the horde.

Early evening: Thirteen arrives.

Day Three

Early morning: The horde arrives.

Mid-morning: The battle of Wolfshügel

PREPARATION

The preparation for the attack can be run as a narrative with the Characters having to deal with tired and fearful soldiers and refugees. There are a few incidents that can be used to highlight the situation:

'We are leaving!' The Arnsson family, led by Frau Hanna and with six adults, start to pack up and make to leave. They are scared and want to take their chances in the forest. A Character will need to convince them to stay with a **Challenging Charm** Test, **Average (+20)** if they point out that the Beastmen can easily hunt them by scent in the forest.

'I am not a Soldier in anyone's army.' Big Larrs, a large and friendly Blacksmith, throws down what he is working on and refuses to work anymore. The soldiers, standing in a group, stand by and laugh. He is upset about being ordered around by the soldiers. It takes a successful **Average (+20) Fellowship** Test to talk him around. Failure to do so results in a general feeling of discontent within the Albenriek families.

'I don't believe you!' As the Characters are eating lunch or dinner, Marlene, a young apprentice angrily approaches the Characters. She struggles to keep calm and accuses the Characters of lying to them all about the threat they are facing.

'I deserve it!' Private Gubbermann is caught stealing from one of the huts. He has grabbed a small pouch of coins. Oldheim sentences him to be flogged six times. Gubbermann accepts his punishment but many of the villagers want him to be forgiven.



The Battle

The timings of the battle are dependent on the number of fighters that the Characters have. The following is a short guide to the participants and the battle itself. The outcomes should be adjusted depending on the preparation they have undertaken. For example, if Thirteen is not fighting then the defenders suffer losses more quickly.

Potential Defenders (maximum numbers)

- 💀 The Characters
- 💀 Brother Adric
- 💀 Sergeant Major Oldheim and 8 soldiers
- 💀 21 adult refugees
- 💀 The Slayer, Thirteen

The Attackers

- 💀 Drexol the Extinction
- 💀 Kurukan
- 💀 8 Gors
- 💀 22 Ungors
- 💀 30 Mutants

If the entrance has been barricaded then every five rounds, the following are removed from combat through death of injury:

- 💀 1 soldier and 3 refugees
- 💀 1 Gor or 2 Ungors, and 5 mutants

The barricade falls once there are less than 15 defenders. Once the barricade falls then fighting breaks out on the Wolfsruhe. Then every five rounds, the following are removed from combat through death or injury:

- 💀 2 soldiers and 5 refugees
- 💀 1 Gor or 2 Ungors, and 3 mutants

Other events:

- 💀 If walls have not been fixed, the trees not cut back, or the Ivy removed then increase defender losses as they are hit on multiple sides.
- 💀 Increase defender losses as Drexol and Kurukan enter the battle.
- 💀 Increase attacker losses as the Characters fight.

A DWARF NAMED THIRTEEN

During the evening of the Second Day, a Dwarf Slayer arrives at Wolfshügel. He is clearly drunk and clearly angry. His body is covered with tattoos with the most obvious being the number 13 on his chest. *'I heard there's a fight coming. I like a good fight. Or a bad fight. Any fight really. My axe is yours.'*

If the Characters ask how he came to hear about this fight, he says that he met a young human called Gideon who told him that there was a chaos war party coming to kill everyone. *'Sounded like my kind of thing, so he pointed me this way.'*

This was Gideon who, having learnt of the horde, sent Thirteen to help. The Characters may realise this and not trust Thirteen, but he is difficult to get rid of. Gideon did not account for the horde. He knows the Characters are tenacious, but is totally unaware why they have gone to Wolfshügel, and it worries him.

Thirteen the Troll Slayer

Thirteen took his name the day he became a Slayer. The name represents the bad luck he believes he brings to all he meets. He is often drunk and angry with himself, and always eager to pick a fight. However, he is also shy and a little naive. He soon makes friends with the children in the camp, who follow him in a pack for a while before taking turns being carried on his back. Thirteen is willing to do any work that is needed, determined to show that he can work better and harder than any Human.

THIRTEEN												
DWARF TROLL SLAYER (BRASS 2)												
M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W	
3	47	33	41	46	32	25	38	32	56	24	17	

Traits: Hatred (Greenskins), Night Vision, Prejudice (Elves), Weapon (Axe) +8

Skills: Consume Alcohol 56, Cool 66, Dodge 35, Endurance 51, Entertain (Storytelling) 27, Gamble 37, Intimidate 44, Heal 37, Lore (Trolls) 37, Melee (Basic) 62, Trade (Miner) 41

Talents: Fearless (Everything), Frenzy, Magic Resistance, Read/Write, Resolute, Slayer, Sturdy

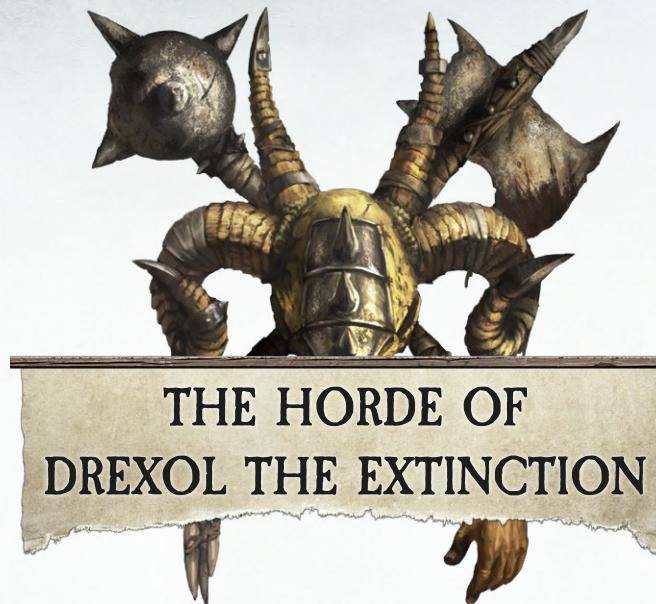
Trappings: Wicked Axe, Flask of Spirits, Elaborate Tattoos, Bad Attitude

THE RIDER

On the morning after the Characters arrive at Wolfshügel, a harried rider arrives on an exhausted pony, sweat steaming from its back. It collapses and dies moments later. He is one of the refugees and has been out hunting for food. Hans, an excitable young man, says that he saw an army of strange beasts moving in this direction. He estimates that they will arrive tomorrow afternoon depending on how long they camp overnight. Hans thinks there are well more than 30 in the group.

Hans's report spreads panic amongst the refugees. They demand to know what the Characters will do to protect them while others demand to leave. At this point, Sergeant Major Oldheim takes the Characters aside to talk to them.

'I know that what you are doing is important and maybe you would rather be somewhere else. But, like me, you signed up for this madness. Those people didn't. But some of them are going to die. Maybe... all of them. Don't get me wrong, we can't hold this hill without them, but I thought it better said in case you hadn't worked it out.'



The Chaos horde heading to Wolfshügel is led by the Bestigor Drexol. He is a fearsome warrior and servant of Tzeentch. The bulk of his followers are fearful of Drexol. As a result, he has struggled to keep them focused and moving at speed. He has killed a large number as an example, and many mutants have deserted him already.

DREXOL THE EXTINCTION

Drexol is, even for a Gor, large, angry and dangerous. Standing at nearly 10-ft tall, his horns are twisted and chipped, and the end of one has long been lost. His hair is largely grey and his body is covered in scars. Drexol is in constant pain due to the presence of a short sword (*Pure Fire*) that sticks out of the side of his left breast — the dried, grimacing head of its witch hunter owner is tied to the pommel by his hair. Drexol is also overconfident and does not take his enemy seriously. This can lead him to make mistakes.

DREXOL THE EXTINCTION

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
5	65	45	45	55	40	30	25	40	60	25	40

Traits: Armour 2, Big, Breath Rating (Poison), Champion, Elite, Hardy, Leader, Night Vision, Regenerate, Size (Large), Weapon (Great Axe) +10

Bleeding: Drexol suffers from a *Bleeding* Condition due to the presence of Pure Fire. His Regeneration Trait keeps it under control under normal circumstances, but during a fight it may take a toll.

PURE FIRE

A short sword forged by a master Craftsmen with the words Pure Fire engraved around its pommel. It was blessed many years ago by a group of wizards and clerics. It was impaled into Drexol's chest by a Witch Hunter and he has been unable to remove it ever since.

PURE FIRE

Weapon	Group	Reach	Enc	Damage	Qualities
Pure Fire — Blessed Sword	Basic	Average	1	SB+4	Durable 3, Fine 3

Magical Weapon: Pure Fire is magical and can injure creatures noted as immune to non-magical attacks.

Bane of the Corrupt: Against followers of Chaos the sword has a Damage of SB+5.

Krukhan

Should a Verenan scholar ever come to study Krukhan they would not be able to easily categorise her. She shows characteristics of both Beastman and mutant. Drexol recognised her power and that her lack of horns meant she would never be a threat to his authority as other Beastmen would never follow her. Despite her fighting prowess, it's her cunning that has been most valuable to Drexol.

Krukhan's humanoid torso stands atop an arachnid body and legs, raising her to over 15-ft tall. Her body is covered in a thick skin and her attacks are poisonous.

KRUKAN

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
6	45	30	45	55	40	45	25	35	30	25	34

Traits: Armour 1, Big, Cunning, Fast, Night Vision, Size (Large), Stealthy, Stride, Venom (Challenging), Wallcrawler, Weapon (Legs and Bite) 9

Gors

Eight Gors form part of the horde. A mixture of Beastman that have travelled with Drexol for many years and those he has collected on route.

GORS

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	45	30	35	45	30	35	25	25	30	25	14

Traits: Arboreal, Armour 2, Fury, Horns +6, Night Vision, Weapon +7

Mutants

Drexol has collected a group of 30 mutants. Most have joined out of fear, although a few are true believers. They have a mixture of mutations and weapons. The majority have the *Fatigued* Condition by the time they arrive at Wolfshügel — pushed hard by Drexol. Nevertheless, they attack relentlessly — driven on by fear of Drexol and bloodlust.

MUTANTS

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	25	12

Traits: Corruption (Minor), Mutation, Weapon (Swords and Clubs) +7

Mutations: All mutations lean towards those favoured by the Changer of the Ways (see **Death on the Reik Companion**, page 97).

A few sample mutants in the horde:

- **Mutant 1:** Brilliant mottled electric-blue, scintillant, golden skin, Massive Torso (+30 Strength), and bony oversized hands. **Weapon (Fists) 12 (Damaging, Pummel)**
- **Mutant 2:** Vulture-beaked face, **Bite +6**. Porcupine-quilled torso (acts like **Corrosive Blood**), carries a hooked sword.
- **Mutant 3:** Suit of Armour fused to body (**Armour 3**), no discernible features on helmet, for example, smooth face plate, but perceives all within 30', spiked club.
- **Mutant 4:** Skin ablaze with pink fire, carries heated iron poker. **Weapon (Searing Poker) 8 +** targets that take damage must make an **Athletics Test** or gain 1 **Ablaze** Condition.

Ungors

Drexol is joined by 22 Ungors on his march through the Reikland. They are tired but ready for battle. Drexol has promised them their fill of flesh after the battle.

Four of the Ungors carry a mixture of bows or slings and have Ranged +7 (25).

UNGORS

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	35	30	35	35	30	35	25	25	35	25	12

Traits: Arboreal, Armour 1, Night Vision, Weapon 6

THE ATTACK

An hour before the horde arrives those in the Wolfshügel start to hear shrieks and shouts. As the cacophony increases the defenders start to become afraid, even the veteran soldiers. Then suddenly, the Horde of Drexol emerges from the edge of the forest. The force consists of 30 Mutants and 4 Gors. Drexol and his Gors keep the Mutants in line as they scream and shriek. He keeps them this way for five turns to instil fear in the defenders. The 4 Ungol archers hide within this mass and try to snipe any targets in range. They can be singled out with a **Difficult (-10)** Perception Test.

Meanwhile, two smaller groups each consisting of 2 Gors and 11 Ungors make their way around the perimeter of the hill looking for weaknesses. If they find any then they seek to exploit these. Any traps that have been set are triggered as the attackers charge ahead without care.

As soon as he sees these small groups move into position, or if his forces start to suffer from missile fire, Drexol bellows and his force charges straight up the ramp to the entrance, baying in frenzied madness. They crash onto any barrier and aim to hack their way through. The fighting is vicious and bloody.

His lieutenant Krukan bides her time observing the battle before climbing the wall to hit the defenders from behind. She may also choose to attack any non-combatants she sees to pull defenders away from the wall.



THE HEAT OF BATTLE

The attack is a chaotic, bloody and noisy affair. If the Characters are taking part or observing then they can observe or interact with the following events:

- 💀 One of the villagers screams in horror and throws down his pointed stick, running into one of the huts to hide.
- 💀 There is a lull in the battle as the attackers are thrust back. One of the soldiers, seeing nothing but the fight, moves to clamber after them. If he is not stopped, he is hacked to death moments later.
- 💀 A large Gor with massive horns, clad in iron, starts to repeatedly ram the barricade. Although it takes him a long time to break it down he becomes the focus of the defenders.
- 💀 A mutant spits a flaming liquid across the barricade, burning two defenders and setting any wood ablaze.
- 💀 One of the villagers, a strong woodsman, enters a frenzy, killing three of the enemy with his axe before he falls dead, covered in wounds.
- 💀 As the defenders' line is broken, a Character has to decide whether to save the lives of three villagers or one veteran soldier. Whichever they choose, they see the other targets butchered wholesale and torn to pieces.

THE TEMPLE

The passageway to the temple is a 15-ft-long narrow tunnel. It is the height of a Dwarf but narrows down so that any Human must crawl the final few feet on their stomach. Symbols of Ulric, Taal, Rhya, and Manann have been carved on the walls.

The main chamber is musty and dusty, but anyone entering feels peaceful and safe. The walls are rough and appear as if someone has hacked at them. At the centre of the chambers is a low stone enclosure filled with smooth black rocks. At the centre of these is an ancient bronze statue of a howling wolf about the size of a large fist.

A small dial attached to a disc lies inside the mouth of the wolf statue. Turning the dial causes the discs to turn and disappear downwards, with flints causing sparks that light an odourless gas that pours from the Wolfhead and settles on the stones burning with a heatless silver flame. The light from the flames falls on the rough stonework casting strange moving shadows of Wolves, Bears, and Elks that roam over the walls of the chamber.

There are three smaller chambers leading from the main chamber. Two of these have holes in the wall where small statues of the Old Gods have been placed. The third was once a chamber for the priests, but is now empty except for a few polished red stones scattered on the floor.

THE RENEWAL

If Ghal Maraz is placed in the fire, it starts to glow. One by one, the runes along the hammer burst into blazing white light, casting impossibly bright versions of themselves at the walls, so that each rune can be clearly seen.

Tarnish burns away and the hammer becomes a luminous gold, which seemingly ripples with an internal fire. A soundless wave pulses out of the hammer — all present feel it ripple outwards.

The Warhammer feels light when picked up. The fires of the runes slowly fade, but still glitter whenever the hammer is hefted or swung in battle.

The hammer's power has been renewed. Ghal Maraz has awokened.

THE SKULL SPLITTER HAS RETURNED

If the renewed hammer is taken into combat, it will turn the tide within rounds. The horde will see the damage it does and most decide that they would rather face the wrath of Drexol than Ghal Maraz.

The mutants immediately flee. Drexol stands and fights but as soon as he falls, whatever is left of his horde at that point routs.

THE AFTERMATH

The survivors (if there are any) gather about the Characters. Several fall to their needs before whoever holds Ghal Maraz, making the Sign of the Hammer and whispering prayers to Sigmar. If Sergeant Major Oldheim or any of his soldiers have survived, they passionately pledge themselves to the Hammer-bearer, until they are no longer needed.

REWARDS

Good roleplaying and clever thinking should be rewarded, but there are additional XP for the following:

- 💀 50 points for defeating the Chaos Horde
- 💀 30 points for saving as many of the refugees as possible
- 💀 20 points for renewing the Hammer
- 💀 20 points for obtaining information from Loremaster Nyman
- 💀 20 points for saving Loremaster Nyman's family
- 💀 10–30 points for good roleplaying on their return to Altdorf
- 💀 9 points each for any Character who got a chance to hold Ghal Maraz and treated it with the utmost reverence

CHAPTER 13

THE EMPIRE SAVED

At long last, the end is in sight. Since leaving troubled Altdorf, the Characters have travelled hundreds of miles across an increasingly fractured Empire in search of the one thing that might restore unity: Ghal Maraz, the Hammer of Sigmar. Beyond that, they are near to the end of a journey that began long ago with a chance encounter on the Delbren road that left them as the unlikely heroes fighting to thwart an insidious cult. Now, with Altdorf before them, the party has one remaining task: to deliver the relic to the Empire's rulers swiftly and safely.

That is just what Gideon wants. How delicious would it be to have the very fools who foiled him in Bögenhafen serve as the dupes who make it all possible?

ACCORDING TO PLAN

Ideally, Gideon wants the ceremony to take place on the 9th of Brauzeit, a day of ritual significance to Tzeentch's followers. If the Characters arrive a few days early, Gideon finds ways to delay the event until then — key figures fall suddenly but temporarily ill, or unforeseen minor delays postpone the preparations for the ceremony at the Volkshalle.

But if more than a couple of weeks remain until the date, or if the date has passed, then he allows the ceremony to take place within a day or two. Not ideal, but the crucial thing is that the summoning takes place. There also may well be other actors with plans of their own.

If Hans Zuntermein has survived, then he is not happy about the Hammer's retrieval — its power threatens all that he's worked for. When the Characters return, Zuntermein orders his men in a desperate attempt to separate them from Ghal Maraz. If they have not done so already, this is their chance to eliminate him.

Karl-Heinz Wasmeier may have survived, too. If he has, then he has two goals: to supplant Zuntermein as head of the Altdorf Purple Hand and to have revenge on the Characters who ruined his schemes in Middenheim. If his rival is already out of the way, then Wasmeier goes to ground, staying hidden and safe whilst he consolidates his position within the Purple Hand. In any event, Gideon uses his powers as discreetly as possible to make sure the Characters deliver the Hammer. Perceptive Players might just notice that they are receiving a guiding hand.

WHILE YOU WERE AWAY...

On their return, the Characters find Altdorf is a very different city from the one they left. The mighty walls still stand, of course, with the spires of the Great Temple of Sigmar and the Imperial Palace still visible from miles off. Traffic by road and river remains heavy, bringing food and other goods to the capital and taking its products to markets near and far. At first glance, all seems as it should be. However, a closer look reveals a very tense city on the edge of crisis. The tension is palpable, and the garrison is depleted.



Altdorf's political situation is unstable and fraught. Not only are the Grand Provinces raising armies and preparing for war, but the Reikland itself teeters on the brink of civil war. Rumors abound of rebellion and treason: some say forces loyal to the Jungfreuds have risen in Ubersreik and that Graf von Saponatheim might declare for them against the Emperor. Others insist that elements of the Reikland State Army have refused orders to attack the rebels, instead turning their weapons against loyalists.

Worse still have been sightings of Beastmen and Greenskins near the capital, raiding outlying farms and villages. Whatever the truth, Altdorf's resources are stretched thin, stripped of troops to deal with multiple crises, with even the Watch drafted into military service.

Inside the city, civil order hangs by a fraying thread. Rumour feeds fear, and fear leads some to act rashly. On the docks, the Fish and Hooks (**Altdorf, Chapter 3: Gangs of Altdorf**) have taken total control, and few watchmen leave their barracks. Some working-class neighbourhoods have formed vigilance committees against criminals and rioters, and there have already been some instances of 'rough justice' and even summary executions, though no one can say for sure who or where.

More affluent districts are hiring their own bravos as militias, and some have already started to intimidate and harass Altdorfers trying to go about their business in a peaceful manner. Though none have attacked the city's Elves, Dwarfs, or wizards yet, the leaders of those communities are watching closely for trouble. The lack of leadership from the palace has led Altdorf society to begin to mirror the disintegration in the wider Empire.

ARRIVAL

The Characters have most likely made their way back to Altdorf by road, and that is the default assumption here. Shrewd Players, however, may have decided to go by river (see **What If They Go by River?**). If Zuntermein lives, an optional encounter with his minions is provided should you wish to 'liven up' their arrival, whichever route they choose.

AT THE GATES

As the Characters approach Altdorf, they find the roads packed with people anxious to get into the city, despite the growing unease within its wall. Not just farmers bringing food, but refugees seeking safety behind Altdorf's walls. Carts and horses and people with their lives on their backs jostle toward the gates, dodging troops of cavalry or Imperial messengers headed the other way at breakneck speed.

At the gates, the Characters find fewer guards than usual, and these are having a rough time of it. Watchmen armed with halberds bar the way, while a sergeant questions people coming

in to make sure they have legitimate business — no spies or infiltrators, thank you. As the Characters near the gate, the veteran, wary sergeant notices them and calls them forward, resulting in murmurs from the crowd. Picking the Character who looks most in charge, he demands, *'In the name of the Emperor, state your names and your business, and why you should be allowed into our fair city?'*

Assuming the Characters are at all respectful, any plausible reason will see the tired sergeant wave them through on an **Average (+20) Charm** Test. A Character passing a **Challenging (+0) Bribery** Test can guess that a discreet gratuity of 10 Shillings for the sergeant and a few more for his men gains them entrance. However, if the Characters try to pull rank, they need to succeed at a **Difficult (-10) Intimidate** Test. If they were given an Imperial Commission or other mark of office, they are let through immediately.

However the Characters succeed at getting through, someone in the crowd strongly objects.

Riot!

Just as the Characters are passing through, an angry woman yells: *'Hey! They're skipping the line! Not fair! Let us in!'* She hurls a rock that strikes a watchman in the shoulder. As if on cue, the crowd rushes the gate. Some throw punches — and other things — at almost anyone in sight, including the Characters. The Watch detachment struggles to hold the mob back, and the sergeant frantically blows a whistle to summon help.

The Characters have a choice: they can delay their mission and stay to help protect the gate, or they can do their duty and press on to bring the Hammer to the Palace. If they move on, reinforcements arrive in a few minutes and restore order at the gate. Any subsequent inquiries reveal that only a few rioters had to be hanged as rebels.

If they stay to help, five rounds pass before sufficient reinforcements arrive. The watchmen are tired and scared and, after one round, use deadly force to hold the gate. The watchmen consist of 6 Soldiers led by Egon Pfeffer, a Sergeant.

WHAT IF THEY GO BY RIVER

Though the Characters most likely path has them travelling by road to Altdorf, it is possible they might try to be clever and take passage on a boat on the Reik or Talabec. Fear not! The encounters at the gate — the refugees, the guards, and the riot — can all be transferred to the docks with minimal alteration: the Watch has set up a checkpoint at the wharves, and the same riot ensues when the Characters jump the line. From that, if Zuntermein lives, you can head directly to **Optional Encounter: Zuntermein's Last Grasp**.

Characters who want to stop a massacre can make a **Challenging (+0) Leadership** Test to brace up Sergeant Pfeifer. On a success, he is able to restore discipline, and only subdual force is used against the mob. If the test fails or the sergeant is down, an extended **Difficult (-10) Leadership** Test that accumulates at least 5 SL allows a Character to take direct command.

If they go all-in on the fighting instead, the mob at the gate use the profile for Peasants. Each Character faces two or three rioters each round.

Regardless of how the Characters intervene, reinforcements arrive in 5 Rounds and secure the scene. Their captain thanks the Characters and allows them to enter Altdorf, where they soon have company. (See **Optional Encounter: Zuntermein's Last Grasp**.)

IN THE CITY

However they enter Altdorf, the Characters find a city on edge. Refugees crowd the streets, looking for a place to stay, while residents try to go about their business. But signs of tension and fear can be seen everywhere they look: locals buy far more food than they need, stocking up in case of a siege. Refugees argue with local shopkeepers charging extortionate prices. And here and there, fights break out between locals and newcomers. Few watchmen are around, and in their place have appeared bands of vigilantes; local toughs wearing coloured armbands rove the streets to 'keep order' — especially for those who pay a little protection money.

THE LAST OF THE NINE EYES

If the Characters have been hunting down the Nine Eyes, any of the Crown Prince's remaining tutors are currently in Altdorf but well hidden in various taverns, boarding houses and dormitories around the city.

It may be that vigilant Characters want to track them down and kill them before the ceremony, but this is not an easy task.

In order to locate one of the remaining eyes, the Characters must know something distinctive about them (their area of expertise or what they look like) and go to an appropriate venue (a scholars' tavern or the university refectory). They must then undertake an extended **Very Hard (-30) Gossip** Test to a total of 45 SL in order to learn the lodging place of a single remaining member of the Nine Eyes. Each test represents an hour of gossiping. If more than three hours are spent gossiping, there is a 63% chance the Characters tip their quarry off. The Eye in question moves to a new safe house, meaning the process must begin anew.

This lodging place is guarded at all times by six cultists with crossbows who are hidden in vantage points around the door

to the building, with orders to shoot the Characters on sight. Gideon may try to support them with magic, but also tries to remain hidden. (He prefers to use spells from the Lore of Shadows to mislead the Characters and hide his allies rather than engage overtly).

If the Characters surmount these obstacles, they must make a **Hard (-20) Perception** Test to find the bolthole within which the Eye is hiding. The Eye then fights to the death with the ferocity of the damned. For every round of combat with the Eye, there is a 27% chance that a Pink Horror manifests and defends them.

It should therefore be very hard, but not impossible, to track down each of the Nine Eyes. However, after a day or so of this activity, the Characters are approached by agents of the palace who make it clear that the return of Ghal Maraz must take precedence over any other priorities.

OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER: ZUNTERMEIN'S LAST GRASP

This is an encounter for you to use should Yann Zuntermein still be alive. He has put together a group of elite cultist-agents from his office in the Spionwerber to make a last play to seize Ghal Maraz and use it to assure his control over the Imperial Throne. As the group approaches the Characters, their leader addresses them, coming close as if relating something quite confidential.

'Thank Sigmar, we found you! I am Captain Emil Baecker, Black Chamber. We were alerted you were nearing Altdorf and wanted to intercept you. You're in danger! Revolutionaries, we learned, perhaps even cultists, are planning to waylay you on the roads to the Palace. We've been sent to take you to a boat on the docks, where you'll be moved by river. We must go!'

If the Characters show any suspicion or doubt, Baecker pulls a large, folded sheet of parchment from under his jack and hands it to a Character. *'This is a warrant identifying me and my mission, signed by High Chancellor Holswig-Schleistein.'* Characters examining it spot it as a forgery on a successful **Very Hard (-30) Evaluate** Test against the SL 5 of Zuntermein's forger.

After the Characters have had a moment to examine the document, Baecker insists they must get moving. If they refuse or hesitate even briefly, he draws his sword and yells to his men: *'Kill them! Get the Hammer!'* The fight is on.

If they follow Baecker, his men assume protective positions around them and lead them down side streets to the docks, where they enter a boathouse and see a River Watch boat. Before they can board it, Baecker's men block the doors and he and they draw their weapons. Baecker smiles, and says, *'Congratulations on your great success. Now give me the Hammer!'* Again, assuming the Players resist, the fight is on.

Emil Baecker

Male and in his mid fifties, Baecker looks about ten years older than his years, with a deeply lined face and a prominent mole above his left eye. He speaks with a slight slur, the result of a rather gruesome incident involving a crossbow a decade ago.

CAPTAIN EMIL BAECKER HUMAN AGENT (GOLD 1)

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	65	50	40	40	55	55	40	30	65	45	16

Traits: Armour 3, Weapon (Sword) +7

Skills: Animal Care 35, Animal Training (Pigeon) 35, Bribery 70, Charm 70, Climb 45, Cool 75, Entertain (Act) 55, Gamble 35, Gossip 65, Haggle 65, Intuition 75, Language (Bretonnian) 45, Leadership 55, Melee (Basic) 85, Perception 70, Secret Signs (Spies) 45, Sleight of Hand 55, Stealth (Urban) 70

Talents: Attractive, Blather, Carouser, Cat-tongued, Etiquette (Nobles), Gregarious, Lip Reading, Master of Disguise, Mimic, Read/Write, Secret Identity, Shadow, Strike to Injure

Trappings: Breastplate, Open Helm and Sword, Illustration of the Characters

Hand It Over

In addition to Baecker, there is one Spionwerber cultist-agent for every Character. This is a fight to the death — the Hammer's arrival has forced the Purple Hand's back against the wall. For Zuntermein's profile, see page 22.

SPIONWERBER AGENTS HUMAN SPIES (SILVER 3)

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	55	50	30	40	30	35	30	30	65	35	16

Traits: Armour 3, Weapon (Sword) +7

Skills: Bribery 40, Charm 40, Climb 35, Cool 70, Entertain (Act) 40, Gamble 35, Gossip 40, Haggle 40, Intuition 35, Perception 35, Melee (Basic) 60, Secret Signs (Spies) 35, Sleight of Hand 35, Stealth (Urban) 40

Talents: Blather, Carouser, Etiquette (Students), Gregarious, Lip Reading, Read/Write, Secret Identity, Shadow

Trappings: Mail Shirt, Leather Jack, Open Helm and Sword

Baecker carries a rough but accurate illustration of the Characters done in charcoal, provided to him by Zuntermein. On the reverse is a short note which details where and when to find the Characters, and reads: *'These are your targets. Retrieve the Hammer.'* The note is unsigned — Zuntermein is no fool — but it was written in haste and the magister neglected to disguise his handwriting.

What's All This, Then?

Gideon is not about to let Zuntermein wreck his plans. At the climax of the battle, whether the Characters are about to win or lose, the sounds of a whistle cut through the din. A squad of 7 Soldiers led by a Sergeant burst in and attack the Spionwerber men. Characters succeeding at an **Average (+20) Perception** Test hear a young boy's voice as he shouts: *'Them's the ones! Get them!'* Anyone looking for the source, however, sees nothing.

The fight soon ends with Baecker's men dead or rounded-up. Baecker, if he lives, attempts to pull rank, and the sergeant hesitates. Characters can sway him with a successful **Average (+20) Charm** Test, while searches of corpses and prisoners find Purple Hand tattoos on each. That settles it. *'It's the Witch Hunters for you!'*

If the Characters try to intimidate a captive Baecker into revealing more about why he attacked them, he tries to fob them off by claiming he was acting under orders, but vows never to reveal his leader. If he is threatened further he seems to capitulate and provides a description of Wasmeier and the address of a cheap hostelry near the Street of a Hundred Taverns where he can be found. If the Characters know Wasmeier is elsewhere, or dead, or if one of them expresses suspicion and passes a **Very Hard (-30) Intuition** Test they may guess the man is lying. He only offers up Zuntermein as his commander if he is credibly threatened with death and also offered clemency if he cooperates.

Once the encounter is concluded, the Watch sergeant orders the survivors to be taken away. Then he turns to the Characters.

'Sorry we were late to the party, but it's a good thing your lad found us.' If the Characters look confused, he continues. *'The boy who was travelling with you. He found us and warned us you'd been jumped by cutthroats. Gave us a good description of them on the way. Smart boy, even if a bit odd-looking, what with his big wide grinning mush and all.'* He turns as if to call a young hero over, but stops in confusion. *'Now, where'd he get to?'* None of his men can recall seeing the boy leave. Nor did they get his name.

If the Characters ask, the sergeant agrees to provide an armed escort to the palace. Regardless, their path forward is clear.

The End of the Road

Zuntermein is cunning — one in his position must be — but as the day of the ceremony grows close, he is growing desperate and has begun to make mistakes. If the Characters bring the note to Immanuel-Ferrand or Holzkrug, both men will recognise Zuntermein's handwriting. Holzkrug will attempt to handle matters quietly, confronting Zuntermein alone, and will likely pay for this with his life. Immanuel-Ferrand on the other hand will enlist some allies from the Grey College, and the Characters if they are willing, before confronting Zuntermein directly. Cornered, the magister will fight to the bloody end.



OLD FRIENDS

The GM may like to reacquaint the Characters with some old friends shortly after they arrive in Altdorf. This may help emphasise that the campaign as a whole is coming to a conclusion, but it can also be used to pass useful information to the Characters (if they need it) or misdirect them (if they are having too easy a time of things).

HEIRONYMUS BLITZEN

Wizards are in uproar throughout the Empire for two particular reasons. Firstly they are being deployed to various trouble spots and warzones in order to support the troops, particularly those of Altdorf, the Reikland, and their allies. Secondly they are acutely aware of the strange magical energies that gather over a number of cities in the Old World, but they are not decided on what these phenomena might mean.

Heironymous Blitzen is in Altdorf in order to try and raise issues with the Wizards and Courtiers there. He can provide opinions based on whether the Characters need help or misdirection.

Helpful Heironymous

I have come to Altdorf to light a fire under some of the more complacent folk in the court and the colleges. In case you haven't heard several magical phenomena are apparent to those who are sensitive to them. I myself have perceived what look like fissures in the Aethyr, here and in Bögenhafen and Übersreik. This is most certainly the hand of Chaos at work and we must be vigilant. Foolishly, just when they are needed most, many of Altdorf's wizards are off chasing glory in doubtful war.

Misleading Heironymous

'Have you heard? Those sensitive to the Aethyr have perceived the renewal of a vast network of magical nodes throughout the nation. I believe this to be a phenomenon known as the Geomantic Web, a vast network of magical energy constructed in time before the Empire. Before the Elves, even. I'm here to study it.'

COUNT OTTO BOORMANN

The Plenipotentiary from the Death on the Reik Companion may have made the acquaintance of the Characters in Kemperbad. If he is warmly disposed to them he may well like to catch up. Boermann is not important enough to be invited to the ceremony in which Ghal Maraz will be returned to the Emperor (or his proxy). If need be he could bump into the Characters prior to the ceremony and joke (or moan) about the changes in their relative importance.

Boermann is an accomplished diplomat, he is a Plenipotentiary after all, and knows many of the prime movers in Altdorf society. He does not have much information to give the Characters that they cannot hear elsewhere, but he does have the following to say if asked about Liepmund Holzkrug.

'The Holzkrug dynasty have held estates in the Reikland since the reign of Dieter III, being granted hereditary tenure of their foremost domain in 1650 IC. Sporadic private wars broke out between the Holzkrugs and their neighbours in the Barony of Holswig. Their line produced a notable ruler. Eberhardt the Just who reigned from 2232 IC to 2260 IC. Eberhardt expended a great deal of time and money on improving public health in the Reikland's towns and cities.

He founded the Great Hospice in 2243 IC. Since then the fortunes of the Holzkrug dynasty waned then waxed, bolstered by the completion of the Weissbruck canal in 2462 IC. Emperor Mattheus II of the House of the Third Wilhelm had supported the Holzkrugs in the venture in the hope that it would remedy the ancient rivalry between their families, and the Holzkrugs make a lot of money from trade along the waterway.'

Whilst he doesn't have much to say about the man himself Boermann sums up Liepmund as 'ruthless and competent'. He then adds 'You know, I once heard something funny about old Emperor Eberhardt. Folk say his shade still haunts the Volkshalle, and if that he hears a proposal that offends his sense of justice he sets papers flying.'

Should a Character capable of perceiving the winds of magic investigate the Volkshalle on the lookout for a ghost they must pass a **Very Difficult (-30) Perception** Test. Those who succeed notice a faint coalescence of Shyish and Dhar gathered in a far flung corner of the vaulted ceiling. Whatever spirit infuses this faint shade is too weak and confused to communicate, but if a subsequent **Very Difficult (-30) Intuition** Test is passed a Character can sense that the entity is frightened and anxious, trying desperately to avoid detection.



JOSEF QUARTJIN

Josef and his barge are back in Altdorf. He is tasked with delivering quality wines to the Volkshalle cellars and if he spots the Characters as he makes his deliveries he is delighted to see them. Whilst he is more interested in their adventures since he last saw them if they ask him about his own experiences since the beginning of Death on Reik he does have a tale of his own to tell.

'Well, as it happens I have had a few mishaps of my own over the last few months, and it broadly concerns you folk. I was working the Ober-Stimmigen canal, as I wasn't keen on trading with Bögenhafen as I'm sure you appreciate. On night I was enjoying a pint in the Exploding Pig in Ubersreik when a bunch of ugly customers start saying I'm a known acquaintance of Kastor Lieberung and that I should tell them where he went. I told them last I heard Kastor had headed off to Wolfenburg, which caused some grumbles but they didn't have anything else to say beyond that.'

ENDGAME

This section assumes several things:

- 💀 Karl-Franz is still sickened by Gideon's sorcery and the poisons he has been given by Kappelmuller
- 💀 Crown Prince Wolfgang lives and has at least one of his tutors with him
- 💀 The Characters have Ghal Maraz

If the circumstances are not conducive to summoning Sheerargetru, there may still be negative consequences for the Characters. This section concentrates on detailing Gideon's success, but does outline how things might work out differently — in the favour of other antagonists, such as Zuntermein or Wasmeier. These alternate endings are explored in more detail in the **Empire in Ruins Companion**.

Take some time to review the following section to account for criteria the Characters have put right or eliminated during their adventures. If they exposed Kappelmuller then the Emperor is not ill; if they slew several of the Nine Eyes, they have not been replaced. Let the Characters feel the significance of these achievements as they do impair the summoning of Sheerargetru.

DELIVERY

A page greets the Characters at the Palace gates and ushers them at speed through the maze of halls and chambers. He shouts at knights and servants in his path. *'Clear the way! They're back! The heroes of the Empire have returned!'* To the Characters he explains breathlessly: *'Their Majesties are currently in the Volkshalle, inspecting preparations for the Ceremony of Praise to Sigmar. We were given strict instructions to bring you to them wherever they were, whenever you arrived!'* If they ask for time to clean up after their travels before seeing the Emperor, they get a brisk *'Sorry! No time!'*

In the Volkshalle, the Characters find the great octagonal chamber alive with activity. Reiksguard are stationed at all the entrances to the main floor and around the mezzanine, their full armour and weapons a telling sign that all is not well. Under their watchful eye, dozens of workmen on scaffolding clean the ancient frescos and murals on the walls, while others scrub the magnificent stained-glass windows inside and out.

One new thing is apparent to the Characters — the ancient reliquary that had housed the false hammer has been replaced. In its stead, artisans assemble a new, grand reliquary of gold and silver adorned with eye-catching rubies and diamonds. Anyone observing this work sees on a successful **Difficult (-10) Perception** Test that the artisans are very conscientious about keeping others from getting too close.

There on the great stone throne sits a sad sight: Emperor Karl-Franz I Holswig-Schliestein of the House of the Third Wilhelm, Protector of the Empire, Defier of the Dark, Emperor Himself and Son of Emperors is clearly a very sick man. With a deathly pallor, he looks older than his years and is wrapped in blankets against a cold no one else feels.

An **Easy (+40) Perception** Test reveals a palsied shake in his hands that was not there before. As the Emperor looks at the work going on around him, it is not at all clear he comprehends much. His eyes flicker and appear unable to focus for very long on anything. He closes them occasionally, opening them again with a start. By the throne, Crown Prince Wolfgang and the Grand Theogonist confer over the work being done. In contrast to his uncle, the Crown Prince seems vigorous, strong, and decisive, with Yorri often nodding in agreement. The page leads the Characters to them, drops to one knee and bows his head — an **Easy (+40) Charm** Test alerts the Characters they should too — and announces the joyous news. *'By your leave, My Lords and Your Imperial Majesty, the True Hammer of Sigmar has returned!'*

A WARM RECEPTION

Wolfgang briskly waves them to their feet and, as the rest of the chamber looks on, warmly smiles and shakes each of their hands. *'This is glorious news! Do you really have the Hammer of Sigmar? Can we see it?'* Assuming they comply, Wolfgang caresses it gently, a look of awe on his face that mirrors that of the others crowding for a look. However, on a successful **Challenging (+0) Intuition** Test, a Character notices a flash of greed in his eye.

Then, he turns to the Emperor.

'Your Majesty! My Lord Uncle! It is true!' Karl-Franz in return manages a feeble smile and wave as everyone in the chamber bursts into cheers of 'Praise Sigmar! Hail the Emperor! We're Saved!' To an older woman near a door by the new reliquary, Wolfgang shouts: 'Ermine! Fetch wine from your cellars! Quickly, and the best!' Characters looking at her as she leaves can, on a Challenging (+0) Perception Test, notice a look of resentment as she leaves to obey.

Wolfgang turns again to the Characters. *'This means the ceremony can take place as scheduled, the day after tomorrow. My Lord Grand Theogonist will take charge of Ghal Maraz until then, but you, my friends, shall have the honour of presenting it to the Emperor in this very chamber, when you will be richly rewarded.'*

As the steward brings the wine, under Ermine's watchful eye, and aides take the tired Emperor back to his private chambers, the Crown Prince concludes: *'Now, let us all sit and drink many toasts. You must tell us the story of your adventures.'*

A LADY IN DISTRESS

After the Volkshalle, a page shows them to guest chambers in another wing of the palace. They have time to bathe and eat, while staff bring them new, expensive clothes that fit perfectly, as if tailored specifically for them, and grooms clean and polish their armour. Later, a lady in waiting is admitted and informs them that 'someone important' wishes to speak privately with them. Though she does not say who, her earnest manner speaks of sincerity and urgent need.

She leads them through pristine side corridors into what a Character, on a successful Challenging (+0) Perception Test, realises is the Imperial Residence, the wing that houses the Imperial Family. Knocking gently on a door, she leads them into a private sitting room, where the Characters find themselves face to face with Maria-Luise von Walfen, the Emperor's 'favourite' and the mother of his children.

With a graceful nod she dismisses her lady in waiting. Characters passing an Average (+20) Charm Test note how odd it is to be alone with her. No attendants, no ladies in waiting, no guards. Without preamble or pleasantries, she looks each Character in the eye, sighs, and addresses them.

'I need your help. He needs your help. Something is wrong; I can feel it. I do not know what it is, but something bad is going to happen. There have been so many odd things of late. Renovations to the Volkshalle that no one knows who ordered, but everyone accepts. Faces in the Reiksguard I've never seen before. I realise there are crises that require troop movements, but these are palace troops! And I have not been able to see Karl ... I mean, His Majesty in days. I, the mother of his children! He is always "unwell." And the dreams: nightmares of fire and blood in the Volkshalle.' She pauses, then finishes. 'Will you help us? I love him so.'

While she knows little beyond her intuitions, Maria-Luise can answer any questions they may have.

The Crown Prince?

'There is no affection lost between us. He is ambitious, brilliant, and anxious to inherit. And, when he does, I and my children will be superfluous. But, a traitor? No. And yet he has figured in my dreams.'

The Electors? *'Fools who can't see past their own fears, ambitions, and grudges. They're all at home now, preparing for war. Only Reiklanders will be at the ceremony, I fear.'*

Who was that woman?

'Her? Ermine Liebwitz von Decker und Hanulf, a distant cousin of the Grand Countess Emmanuelle. Emmy's father got her a position here long ago as steward of the Volkshalle wine cellars, mostly to get her out of his hair. She can be a bit of a handful, actually.'

The Reiksguard?

'Perhaps I'm just a nervous mouse among the cats, but I'd swear I've seen new faces, more than I would expect. Marshall Helborg is away, but Baron von Teufelsmilch is the commander of the palace garrison. He might know more.'

Can we delay the ceremony?

'Impossible. I have no real authority, and the Emperor is too sick to make a decision. Wolfgang wants that ceremony so he can be the one to restore peace, and Yorri backs him up. If you can do anything, you must do it soon.'

At the conclusion of their interview, Maria-Luise gives each Character a token. *'This identifies you as one of my retinue, acting on my behalf. It will open doors for you with those who respect me. Thank you, and may Sigmar shield you.'*

'EMPERESS' MARIA-LUISE VON WALFEN NOBLE (GOLD 5)

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	35	30	30	30	63	45	45	60	35	59	12

Traits: Weapon (Dagger) +5

Skills: Bribery 74, Charm 74, Consume Alcohol 35, Gamble 65, Gossip 74, Intimidate 45, Intuition 83, Language (Bretonnian 65, Classical 75), Leadership 74, Lore (Heraldry 75, the Palace 75, Politics 80), Melee (Basic 45, Fencing 55, Parry 45), Perception 83, Play (Harpsicord) 60, Ride (Horse) 65

Talents: Attractive, Briber, Carouser, Coolheaded, Dealmaker, Doomed (*An End alongside your loved ones*), Etiquette (Nobles), Luck, Noble Blood, Public Speaker, Read/Write, Schemer, Suave

Trappings: Expensive yet tasteful clothes, Jewellery worth 250 GC, Dagger

INVESTIGATIONS

The Characters have three avenues to pursue as they wish:

- The renovation in the Volkshalle, particularly the new reliquary.
- Ermine, the suspicious looking steward of the Volkshalle cellars.
- The personnel changes in the Reiksguard.

The Volkshalle

If they visit the Volkshalle, the Characters find final preparations underway for the ceremony. Many present are abuzz about the ceremony, hoping it is the first step towards a restoration of order in the Empire. Inspections of the work done by artists and Palace staff show nothing amiss, though few have time to talk. The work is uniformly of excellent quality.

Inspecting the new reliquary during the day, on the other hand, is impossible. Hidden under a tent and scaffolding, surrounded by rope barriers, the Characters can observe several artisans at work, all under the direction of Albertus Goldformer, master metalsmith of Altdorf. Under no circumstances are they allowed to approach, even if they show the tokens given to them by Maria-Luise. Albertus is a cultist recruited by Gideon, and it is his job to make sure the Reliquary functions as needed at the ceremony. If needs be, Albertus throws an apoplectic tantrum against the Characters' interference, until the Reiksguard in the hall are forced to ask them to move along.

They have better luck at night, however. Only two guards patrol the Volkshalle, and the cultist-artisans have gone home, their work finished and not wishing to arouse suspicions. Characters can get the Reiksguards to let them have a quick look on a successful **Challenging (+0) Charm, Intimidate, or Leadership** Test (with a bonus of +10 for showing Maria-Luise's token).

The Reliquary is a stunning masterwork, something even a Dwarf would admit '*isn't half bad*.' Decorated with embossed scenes of Sigmar's life, the interior contains a silk cushion in Altdorf blue, on which the Hammer will rest. A Character passing a **Very Hard (-30) Trade (Engineer, Silversmith, or Goldsmith)** Test notices on a successful test that a diamond in the doorframe of the reliquary is actually a button. Pressing it causes the cushion to drop through the bottom, leaving a large hole. Looking down it, they see it drops perhaps 30 feet into darkness.

Ermine and the Wine Cellar

Characters suspicious about Ermine's behaviour or curious about the wine cellar can investigate one or both. If interviewed, Ermine comes across as stiff and formal, and a **Challenging (+0) Intuition** Test reveals an underlying bitterness or resentment. She informs the Characters that by right of office the sole control of the wine cellars is hers alone and, no, she is not giving, *'gawkers looking for free tastes'* a tour.

Ermine is busy selecting wine for the ceremony. She is quick to highlight the importance of this, opining that one '*can't begin the restoration of the Empire with any old Gewurztraminer!*'

Showing Maria-Luise's token hardens Ermine's attitude, as she quietly despises the 'Empress.' Mentions of plots and daemons do not move her, though they feed doubts she has begun to quietly have about the '*young lad*' (Gideon in disguise) who has been paying her for '*discreet access*' to the cellars for him and his friends. (See **Meanwhile, In The Wine Cellar**.)

The cellar itself is a basement under the Volkshalle, accessed via a stone spiral staircase leading down from a hallway outside the main chamber. It is an ancient room, originally built in 1149 IC during the Emperor Ludwig the Fat's reign.

At that time, the throne sat where the reliquary now does, and Ludwig had a Dwarf-built elevator platform installed that would lower his throne directly to the wine cellar, so he could enjoy himself in peace after a tedious meeting without having to deal with the stairs. The throne was relocated and the elevator removed and the hole covered long ago, but Gideon learned of it and bribed Ermine to let some artisans in, who uncovered the hole in the ceiling.

The cellar is behind a heavy, wooden door and locked with a stout lock. Ermine will not give the Characters the key, which only she has, but it can be picked on a **Hard (-20) Pick Lock** Test. Inside, they find rack after rack of fabulously expensive rare vintage wines and casks of brandy from across the Old World and even Ulthuan.

Thick layers of dust and cobwebs obscure the older bottles. Examining the ceiling reveals an obvious square hole, itself antique, but recently uncovered. On a successful **Challenging (+0) Perception** Test, the Character realises that this hole is right under the new Reliquary.

ERMINE LIEBWITZ VON DECKER UND HANULF, STEWARD OF THE VOLKSHALLE CELLARS NOBLE (GOLD 1)

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	35	30	35	35	35	30	35	37	40	30	13

Traits: Prejudice (Her Betters), Weapon (Dagger) +5

Skills: Bribery 40, Consume Alcohol 45, Gamble 47, Intimidate 45, Leadership 40, Lore (Heraldry 47, Wine 47), Melee (Basic) 45, Perception 45, Play (Lute) 45

Talents: Etiquette (Nobles), Luck, Noble Blood, Read/Write

Trappings: Expensive but outdated clothes, Gold Corkscrew worth 2 GC, Chain of Office, Key to the Cellar, Dagger

THE REIKSGUARD

Not being intimately familiar with the Reiksguard themselves, the easiest way for the Characters to investigate Maria-Luise's concerns is to go straight to the top. In this case, Baron Augustus Bardeleben von Teufelsmilch is the aged head of the palace garrison. A boon companion of the Emperor's father, Luitpold, he has continued to serve past retirement age, and against Marshall Kurt Helborg's advice, because of the Emperor's affection for him. More fond of old war stories than supervising his command, it was easy for Gideon to arrange some changes.



As 'Heroes of the Hammer,' the Characters enjoy a warm welcome from him. Over drinks and cigars, he demands to hear their stories, often interrupting with one of his own. He is pleased with his position, regarding the ceremony as the first step to putting an end to the current turmoil, and only too happy to discuss preparations. If the Characters ask about new guardsmen, he harrumphs about needs of war and admits, '*there has been some shifting about*', but he doesn't remember the details. *'No need to worry. The Imperial Palace is locked up tight as a drum!'*

If pressed, he mutters about '*boring trifles*' and has an aide bring files of recent personnel moves and duty rosters. A Character examining the files notes several recent rotations out of the Reiksguard and new guardsmen joining the garrison. More than one might expect, but not out of line with an emergency. On a successful **Hard (-20) Perception** Test, the Character finds a duty roster listing all the new men as assigned to the honour guard for the Reliquary at tomorrow's ceremony. Each paper is signed by the Baron and stamped with his seal. Asked about these, the confused man mutters about '*demands of war... can't keep track of every blasted thing*'. He clearly has no memory of this.

SOME OMINOUS HAPPENSTANCES

In order to add a little optional confusion and tension before the ceremony here are some scenes the GM might like to include if the Characters are snooping around in the Volkshalle before the event.

Liepmund Holzkrug performs his own check of the room. As one of Altdorf's senior spies he has authority to oversee security here. The Characters may think him sinister, especially as he fiddles around the Emperor's throne.

In fact Holzkrug has grown perturbed by the speed with which the Empire is collapsing and has set aside his own games, for now.

A group of Nordlanders arrive to petition for support for their independence. If they recognise the Characters as agents of Graf Boris they heckle them. The Reiksguard soon eject them saying 'now is not the time'. They head to a tavern to drown their sorrows.

A raven flies into the hall. It perches on one of the beams in the vaulted ceiling. If the Characters do not act an archer from the palace Garrison shoots it down. This is seen as bad luck, drawing the attention of Morr, and the archer is lambasted by the knights in attendance for his rash action.

NO, REALLY. THERE'S THIS NASTY DAEMON!

By this point, the Characters may be anxious to tell someone in authority that all is decidedly not well. Incident after incident since their quest began has provided evidence that someone – or something – has been dogging their steps, clearing the way for them to find the Hammer and return it to Altdorf. They may even have recognised the signs of their old nemesis from Bögenhafen: Gideon.

The trouble is, no one wants to believe them. None of the great and powerful gathered in the Volkshalle can see this as anything but a triumph, Sigmar's Will. The idea that a daemon would plot to recover the most powerful artefact known and deliver it to the enemies of Chaos is preposterous.

The Crown Prince and Grand Theogonist listen patiently and chuckle at their folly. The Characters are obviously tired and strained from all they have been through. They are dismissed with thanks for their service to enjoy a well-deserved rest.

THE GREAT CEREMONY

At high noon on the 9th of Brauzeit, the Empire's great, glamorous, and powerful gather in the Volkshalle for a ceremony of praise to Sigmar to celebrate the return of His Hammer and the restoration — they hope — of peace, prosperity, and unity under the House of the Third Wilhelm. Behind the joyous faces of the throng, however, some are worried, for the event rings hollow. Yes, the True Hammer has returned, but who stands for the Empire it is meant to protect? The Emperor, Sigmar's heir, is enfeebled. The optimists claim that the ceremony is merely the first step toward restoring the Empire, and that with Ghal Maraz in hand, the Emperor will be able to renew his authority.

However, none of the other electors, who should close ranks united behind the Emperor, are there. All have gone home to defend their holdings, plot against their neighbours, or even scheme to make themselves Emperor. It is fine to proclaim unity, but what if no one is there to hear the message?

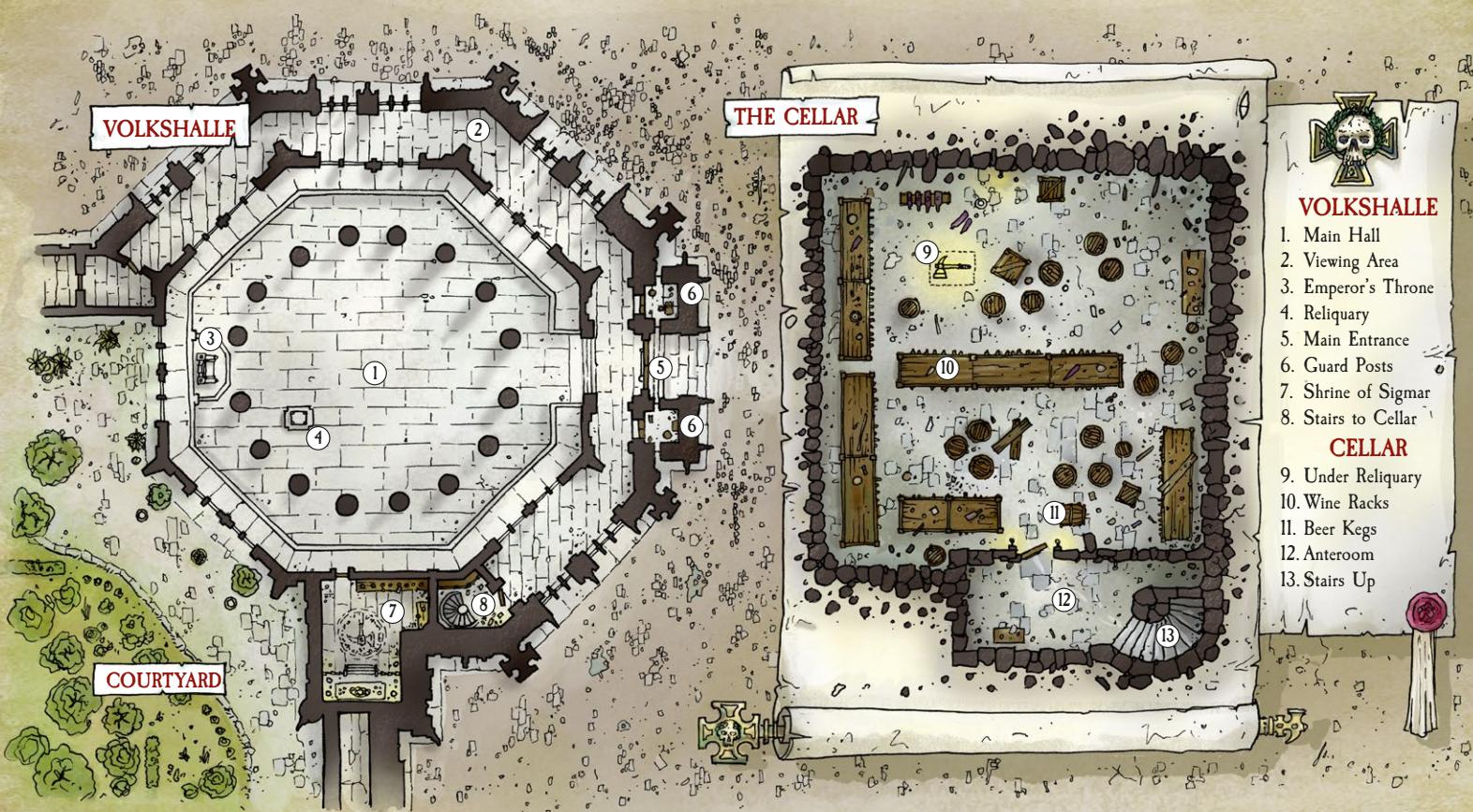
Others are missing, too, the needs of duty calling them away. Marshal Helborg, commander of the Empire's field armies, is away dealing with the crisis at Ubersreik. Much of the Reiksguard has gone with him. Of the heads of the Colleges of Magic, only Supreme Patriarch Thyrus Gormann and the patriarchs of the Gold and Jade Colleges are present. The rest are away with the armies.

Altdorf's diplomatic community is represented, with the ambassadors of Ulthuan, Bretonnia, the Dwarf Kingdoms, and Cathay there to observe and report home on the Empire's fate. The heads of leading Halfling families are also present.

Showtime

Awaiting their cue in an antechamber off the main entrance to the Volkshalle, the Characters can hear the Grand Theogonist chanting prayers to Sigmar while a choir sings hymns from the mezzanine. After a seemingly interminable wait, a chamberlain opens the door to tell them it is time. Let the Players choose one among them as the bearer of the Hammer, with the rest as their escort.

As the chamberlain announces them each by name and proclaims them, *'Heroes of the Empire'*, they see the gathered notables, as well as the Reiksguard in full arms and armour at the doors and on the mezzanine. An honour guard of nine line the steps to the reliquary. Karl-Franz sits upon his throne, looking almost overwhelmed by his robes of state. At the Emperor's right is Crown Prince Wolfgang and at his left is the Grand Theogonist. Behind Yorri XV stands the Emperor's son, Luitpold, prince of Altdorf, disinherited from the throne because of his enfeeblements. If the Characters scan the crowd, they see Maria-Luise waiting in the gallery at the far wall with the other ladies of court and other palace servants. The Nine Eyes are also there, most knowing nothing of the role they are about to play.



To the cheers of the crowd the chamberlain gestures the PCs forward, adding last words of advice for the bearer: *'Don't trip.'*

On approaching the throne, Wolfgang steps forth and takes the Hammer. Bowing to his uncle and to the Grand Theogonist, he turns to the crowd, brandishes it with both hands and shouts.

'Behold the True Hammer of Sigmar! The Empire is saved!'

Sacrifice

To the cheers of the crowd and hymns of glory from the choirs, Crown Prince Wolfgang then slowly walks to the reliquary, with the Grand Theogonist a pace behind him to his right, intoning prayers to Sigmar.

With a deep bow, Wolfgang places the Hammer on its cushion, steps back, and smiles. At the same time, on a **Challenging (+0) Perception** Test, a Character can spot an odd-looking young page watching from a back entrance to the Volkshalle, a wide grin of utter triumph on his face.

Then, with one smooth move, one of the cultist-Reiksguard reaches over and presses the hidden button, and the Hammer of Sigmar drops out of sight.

Yorri gawps in shock for a moment before a second guardsman stoves his skull in with a poleaxe, killing him instantly. Before Wolfgang can finish crying *'Treason!'*, a third stabs him in the back as his seven fellows chant: *'Iztak Graksk! Iztak Graksk!'*

CULTISTS THE FALSE HONOR GUARD (9)

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	50	35	40	40	49	35	30	30	55	30	17

Traits: Armour 4, Weapon (Halberd) +9

Skills: Athletics 45, Cool 70, Dodge 45, Melee (Basic 70, Polearm 70), Perception 55

Talents: Drilled, Riposte, Strike Mighty Blow

Trappings: Suit of full Plate, Halberd, Sword, Purple Hand Tattoo

Characters may react to this, and if they can slaughter the honour guard within a single turn, the chant is left incomplete — but the summoning is underway.

Wolfgang's tutors, the Nine Eyes, begin to burn with sorcerous pink and blue flames. The stricken Wolfgang stands upright, arms outspread, and with a scream of victory no human voice could make, splits wide with an unbearable ripping sound as Sheerargetru, Exalted Lord of Change, steps forth.

IF THE CHARACTERS DISCOVER THE PLOT

It's possible that the Characters uncover one or more of these threads and try to warn the authorities. This is where you have to be adaptable. The table on page 190 gives details on how certain changes can impede or enhance the effect of the final summoning. If, for example, the trap door in the Reliquary is discovered and sealed, or the honor guard replaced, then the summoning will still occur, but the Daemon will be diminished for it. The Characters will have an easier time of things in the final battle — a fitting reward for their diligence.

However, if too much is revealed, Gideon activates his backup plan: planted evidence in Ermine's chambers that implicate her as the traitor behind it all, found by a chambermaid who dutifully brings it to her masters. Ermine is arrested, the ceremony goes on as scheduled, and the daemon is summoned as planned.

BATTLE FOR THE EMPIRE

The Volkshalle is in chaos. Screams from terrified people trying to escape compete with shouts of, *'For Sigmar!' and 'Protect the Emperor!'* Loyalist Reiksguard rush to fight the false honour guardsmen, who kill indiscriminately while protecting the Daemon. As the patriarchs of the Colleges of Magic begin channelling their most powerful spells, the Lord of Change glories in its release and begins summoning Horrors from its claw tips — its very presence serving as a gate to the Realm of Chaos.

This sudden battle, complex and full of powerful figures, is best handled in a narrative manner, aside from those moments directly involving the Characters. As they do well, so do those fighting for the Empire. As they do poorly, so the Greater Daemon and its minions advance.

Outside of the Characters, who lives and who dies should be decided by your sense of the dramatic and needful. If the patriarch of the Jade College perishing while exchanging sorcerous bolts with the Lord of Change provides cover for the Characters to escape the Volkshalle to rescue the Hammer, do not hesitate. For the Characters themselves, this is the long-awaited, dramatic climax of the whole **Enemy Within** campaign. They face several choices:

- Fight the Daemon.
- Rescue as many as possible from the wreckage of the Volkshalle.
- Flee and seek to recover the Hammer.

They may choose to do any combination of these, but, especially if Sheerargetru appears in full power, their greatest hope lies in getting back the Hammer.

INCARNATIONS OF SHEERARGETRU

In order to see how successfully Sheerargetru manifests, you should consult the tables on pages 190 and 191.

Certain basic requirements are shown on the table, and are absolutely essential to Gideon's plan. The presence of Zuntermein or Wasmeier is not essential, but is a minimal requirement to summon the Daemon, if the Crown Prince is not available.

Either or both could also be substitute sacrifices if the Nine Eyes were eliminated. If these three conditions are obtained, the Daemon manifests, but the success of its summoning depends on the Power Score.

PORTALS

In nine cities around the Old World (Bögenhafen, Ubersreik, Altdorf, Middenheim, Talabheim, Nuln, Bechafen, Averheim and Remas) cracks in the Aethyr hang in the sky. In Altdorf there are nine cracks, one over the palace and another above each of the Colleges of Magic (including the Amber College in the hills to the south of the city).

Should Sheerargetru manifest, these portals open and the Realm of Tzeentch begins to flood through into reality. Read the following to the Players:

'The heavens open above the Seat of Sigmar. The veil is torn aside and sorcerous gales blow about the spires of the Palace. A disembodied voice sounds — more in people's minds than in the air — it is beautiful, but cold, and radiates evil. "Here are nine and each shall come with its own host. The Changer triumphs!" Bolts of blue and pink fire begin to rain down.'

In most cases, these portals do not directly affect the Characters, but they will certainly come to know about it. However, Daemons resulting from the portal above the palace can be seen and heard, spilling out of the sky and attacking guards and civilians around the palace.

For the most part, the Daemons are fought to a standstill by troops outside the Volkshalle, but every turn after the opening of the portals there is a 9% chance that a Daemon will fight its way into the chamber and charge a randomly selected Character.

Trivial: The faint image of the Realm of Tzeentch can be seen in the sky, insubstantial but slowly becoming more corporeal. Daemons fighting their way inside will be Blue Horrors.

Minor: Portals open in other places where Sheerargetru haunted the Hammer — Brass Keep and Black Fire Pass. Bizarre edifices and monsters bestride Altdorf while incredible swirling fires dominate the sky. Daemons fighting their way inside will be Pink Horrors.

Significant: The city streets meld with another city, a daemonic madness of strange angles and bizarre sights. Gibbering Daemons cavort with terrified citizens, while others join with infernal beasts to parade through the streets in rapture. Daemons fighting their way inside will be two Pink Horrors.

Major: Lords of Change emerge from all portals across the Empire with their daemonic legions. For the Empire to recover from this is a monumental undertaking. Daemons fighting their way inside will be Heralds of Tzeentch.

If Sheerargetru is destroyed, the portals close and the Daemons are slowly beaten back by the beleaguered forces of the cities. However, the greater the potency of the portals, and the longer it takes to defeat Sheerargetru, the worse for the Old World.

THE NINE EYES

Now that they have served their purpose, the Nine Eyes burn with sorcerous fire as their true master enters the world. The heat is stifling and the stench is overwhelming. If the power is low, they merely burn to ash, though their departure spreads panic throughout the gallery. A lingering trail of smoke remains and a smell like burning bacon. However, they may be rewarded with immortal forms, if Sheerargetru is strong enough.

WE'LL BE TAKING THAT HAMMER, THANK YOU

To save the day, the Characters' main hope lies in getting the Hammer back. By now they know of the trap door in the Reliquary and may well know that it leads to the Volkshalle Wine Cellars. If they don't, a repentant Ermine, heedless of the danger, rushes to warn them that cultists are about to take it. There they find the cellar door open and a frustrated Gideon yelling at his minions to get the Hammer, which lies on the floor beneath the hole. The Daemon cannot touch the Hammer, and one of the cultists lies dead after having tried to heft it. Another tries to pull it out with a halberd, succeeding just as the Characters arrive.

If they rush to the cellar without being prompted, they find Ermine trying to block the open doorway, alternately pleading with Gideon not to take the Hammer, then begging Sigmar for forgiveness. Just as they arrive, Gideon reaches out and snaps her neck, and he and his cultists enter the cellar.



INCARNATIONS OF SHEERARGETRU

Event or Criteria	Power
The Hammer is recovered from Black Fire Pass	Basic Requirement
At least one of the Nine Eyes (or Wasmeier or Zuntermein) alive at start of rite	Basic Requirement
A suitable host is alive: the Crown Prince, Zuntermein, or Wasmeier	Basic Requirement
Crown Prince as main host	+3 Power
Honour Guard chanted <i>'Iztak Graksk'</i> nine times	+1 Power
Yorri slain by honour guard	+1 Power
Ceremony goes ahead on 9th day of 9th Month	+2 Power
3 of the Nine Eyes alive at start of rite	+1 Power
6 of the Nine Eyes alive at start of rite	+3 Power
9 of the Nine Eyes alive at start of rite	+5 Power
Bögenhafen has been turned into a daemonic portal in Enemy in Shadows	+5 Power
Etelka or Ernst of the Red Crown survived Death on the Reik	+3 Power
Karl-Heinz Wasmeier's plot remained largely undiscovered or misunderstood in Power Behind the Throne	+3 Power
Morrslieb was shattered in The Horned Rat	+5 Power
Characters use the Daemon's true name in a suitably dramatic way. <i>'We defy you Sheerargetru'</i> and so on, before it is fully manifest.	-3 Power
Sheerargetru is forced to manifest in the same room as Ghal Maraz	-4 Power
Emperor Karl-Franz is returned to health	-2 Power



WASMEIER THE WILD CARD

If Karl-Heinz Wasmeier has survived to this point, he has been busy undermining Zuntermein and furthering his control over the Purple Hand. However, accumulating rumours and portents have him worried that something very wrong – from his point of view – is going to happen at the Ceremony of Praise, so he arranges to be there in the background, just in case.

Characters can notice him as they are presenting the Hammer on a successful Hard (-20) Perception Test, but warnings of a Chaos cultist in the crowd will be shushed and any attempt to leave the Imperial Presence without permission is blocked. *'It just isn't etiquette!'* If they look again, he's gone.

Wasmeier regards the Daemon's summoning as the ruin of his plans, and those damned meddlers responsible again. Use him as you wish, attacking the Daemon Prince if you need a Character to survive, or attacking the Characters, the need for revenge having driven

POWER SCORE

Power Level	Sheerargetru	Nine Eyes	Portals
Less than 1	Barely Exalted	Wither and Die	Trivial
1	Barely Exalted	Blue Horror	Trivial
2-3	Barely Exalted	Blue Horror	Minor
4-5	Exalted	Pink Horror	Minor
6-8	Exalted	Pink Horror	Minor
9	High Exalted	Pink Horror	Minor
10-16	High Exalted	Pink Horror	Significant
17-24	High Exalted	Herald	Significant
25 or more	High Exalted	Herald	Major

SHEERARGETRU BARELY EXALTED

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
6	75	90	85	85	80	50	20	75	65	65	240

Traits: Bite (Beak) +10, Corruption (Minor), Daemonic 9+, Distracting (Mutating Features), Night Vision, Rear, Size (Monstrous), Spellcaster (Tzeentch), Terror 1, Unstable, Weapon (Massive Staff) +13

Skills: Channelling 85, Cool 75, Intuition 105, Language (Magick) 90, Perception 100

Fate Points: 2

SPELLS

All Arcane, Daemonology, and Tzeentch

SHEERARGETRU HIGH EXALTED

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
6	115	130	115	115	100	70	40	95	95	85	336

Traits: Bite (Beak) +13, Champion, Corruption (Major), Daemonic 7+, Distracting (Mutating Features), Elite, Living Gate, Night Vision, Rear, Size (Monstrous), Spellcaster (Tzeentch), Terror 4, Weapon (Massive Staff) +16

Skills: Channelling 105, Cool 95, Intuition 125, Language (Magick) 110, Perception 120

Fate Points: 4

SPELLS

All Arcane, Daemonology, and Tzeentch

SHEERARGETRU EXALTED

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
6	95	110	90	90	100	70	40	85	75	85	272

Traits: Bite (Beak) +11, Corruption (Major), Daemonic 8+, Distracting (Mutating Features), Living Gate, Night Vision, Rear, Size (Monstrous), Spellcaster (Tzeentch), Terror 3, Unstable, Weapon (Massive Staff) +14

Skills: Channelling 95, Cool 85, Intuition 125, Language (Magick) 100, Perception 120

Fate Points: 3

SPELLS

All Arcane, Daemonology, and Tzeentch

NEW TRAIT – LIVING GATE

Sheerargetru may spend its action to summon more servants of Tzeentch to enter the material world. The Daemon should make a Challenging (+0) Willpower Test. On a success, 1d10 lesser daemons appropriate to its god spring forth from its immense claw tips.

If the Exalted Daemons takes any wounds during the round, it must pass an Average (+20) Cool Test or it may not summon any Daemons and must roll again the next round to do so. On an Impressive Failure, the Exalted Daemon has lost the favour of his god, who shuts the gate down for the remainder of the encounter.



GIDEON – MASTER CONSPIRATOR AND DAEMON-HERALD OF TZEENTCH

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	45	47	42	40	58	47	39	59	60	51	22

Traits: Blight (Purple Brain Fever), Corruption (Moderate), Daemonic 8+, Fear 2, Fleshthief, Hardy, Night Vision, Spellcaster, Unstable, Weapon +9

Skills: Channelling (Ulgu 75, Tzeentch 75), Dodge 67, Intuition 68, Language (Magick) 79, Perception 78

Talents: Aetheryic Attunement 2, Instinctive Diction 2

SPELLS

Petty: Dazzle, Careful Step, Drain, Eavesdrop, Marsh Lights, Open Lock, Rot, Sleep, Shock, Warning

Shadows: Doppelganger, Illusion, Mindslip, Shadowsteed, Shroud of Invisibility

Tzeentch: Blast, Bolt, Treason of Tzeentch

LOYAL CULTISTS (EQUAL TO THE NUMBER OF CHARACTERS)

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	12

Traits: Armour 1 (Body), Corruption (Minor), Weapon +7

Skills: Melee (Pole Arm) 45

Trappings: Leather Jerkin, Halberd

AFTERMATH AND... REWARDS?

And so it ends. Either the Characters have defeated the Greater Daemon and saved the Empire — to one degree or another — or they have failed, and the Empire is in ruins. What comes next depends on who really won.

WHO WON?

There are five possible endings to the momentous **Enemy Within** campaign. Each potential outcome is discussed below with implications for the Empire and the Characters, as well as suggestions for continuing the campaign.

GIDEON WINS

Utter failure. It is the end of the Empire as the Old World has known it and the transformation of Sigmar's dream into a nightmare. If the Characters were unable to save Bögenhafen, then what becomes of Altdorf makes that seem like a day at the fair. The Lord of Change transforms first the Volkshalle and then the Imperial Palace into a Chaos Gate, an open road to and from the Realm of Chaos across which Daemons travel freely. So too are the unfiltered Winds of Magic, all colours combined into one coruscating rainbow, the very sight of which can shatter all but the strongest minds. Mutation runs rampant among those not able to flee the city and its environs. Altdorf becomes another Mordheim.

The effects on the remains of the Empire are almost as devastating. The lands around Altdorf become the playgrounds of cults, Mutants, Daemons, and Beastmen. The waters of the Reik downstream from Altdorf are tainted by the foul magic generated by the gate's opening, leading to destroyed fisheries, outbreaks of mutation in towns and cities along the river, and the effective end of trade along the lower Reik. Marienburg cuts off river access to all traffic from the Empire.

Reikland's government collapses and Bretonnia seizes control of the mountain passes and fortresses, coming to dominate Ubersreik and the Vorbergland. The other grand provinces try to control what's left; some form alliances to attempt to cleanse Altdorf, while the rulers of others declare themselves emperor, initiating a new Age of Wars.

The religious structure of the Empire gets upended, too. Sigmar's cult lies gravely wounded and humiliated by what happened at its heart, its influence in the Empire gone, at least for now. In its place, the cult of Ulric grows dominant and leads the fight against Chaos. If any of the Characters survive, there is plenty of work for them, whether exploring the ruins of Altdorf, guerrilla operations against Chaos in the area, or serving as mercenaries or agents for the Elector Counts and the cults.

Or maybe a vacation in Tilea sounds good just about now.

Zuntermein Wins

A victory for Zuntermein assumes he did not die and that he remains free to act, either as head of the Spionwerber or, if he has been exposed, from 'underground.' It requires that the Characters either defeat Sheerargetru or prevent its summoning. If the Emperor remains weak and Crown Prince Wolfgang survives, then Zuntermein resumes the latter's education, replacing any Nine Eyes lost in the sacrifice. When the Crown Prince becomes Emperor, he acts like an enlightened ruler, but is little more than a puppet controlled indirectly by Zuntermein and the Purple Hand. The Empire gradually, inexorably descends into a civil war that takes years or even decades to resolve, leaving the main power against Chaos weak and ineffective.

If Wolfgang died but the Emperor survived, Zuntermein still profits. A sickly Emperor is trivial to manipulate, while a healed Karl-Franz would still face rebellion and civil war, made seemingly intractable because of the many suspicions and anger aroused by his actions while ill. With Wolfgang dead, Zuntermein arranges for tutors for Prince Luitpold, who becomes Crown Prince in spite of his infirmities. In the end, the Empire still declines.

Zuntermein proceeds similarly if both Karl-Franz and Wolfgang died. Though Luitpold is declared Heir and Emperor in a contested election, other Electors refuse to accept the neurotic and naïve young man as their leader, and either declare themselves emperor, or support those who do. Civil war rages between the factions as armies march and towns burn, while Chaos gains a freer hand.

The Characters receive rewards of gold and minor titles for their service, but Zuntermein sees to it that they are soon shoved aside and ignored by those whom they saved. They can choose sides and take service in the civil war, but an interesting possibility exists if 'Empress' Maria-Luise survives. Protective of her love and her children, she could become a powerful behind-the-scenes patron for the Characters in a continuing struggle with Zuntermein.

Wasmeier Wins

A Wasmeier victory looks similar to that of Zuntermein. It means the Greater Daemon was defeated or the summoning failed, but also that Zuntermein has been killed or imprisoned. Wasmeier takes over the Purple Hand and Zuntermein's projects. The course of the Empire's decline proceeds as it would have under Zuntermein: civil war, weakness, and a rise in Chaos cults.

For the Characters, however, a Wasmeier victory brings more personal danger, as the vengeful former Law Lord seeks to destroy

those who ruined his plans in Middenheim and almost did so again. Eventually, he frames them with trumped-up crimes and succeeds in having them outlawed, meaning they can be killed by anyone on sight. Their best hope then is to find a powerful patron willing to risk the Emperor's ire to protect them in return for service, such as Graf Boris, or to travel for a long while to other realms.

Lieberung Wins, Posthumously

While unlikely, it is possible for the late, unlamented Kastor Lieberung to win. Regardless of whether the Emperor survives infirm or healed, the crucial point is that both the Crown Prince and his Nine Eyes tutors, so carefully recruited by Lieberung, survive. This means the summoning has to be prevented, and that both Zuntermein and Wasmeier have to be out of the way, too, for his plans to operate free from interference.

If all that happens, the civil war ends in a few years and the Empire seems back to normal. Eventually, whether as Crown Prince or Emperor, Wolfgang becomes the hidden master of all Tzeentch cults, and then journeys to the Silver Tower, where he receives training from Engrim van Horstmann. Now the mightiest sorcerer-champion of Tzeentch ever, he resumes his rule and, other than destroying the Red Crown, encourages cults of Tzeentch to flourish.

All that, however, is many years in the future. The Characters receive ample rewards and titles, enjoying their fame for many years until, one day it will become clear that they made a terrible mistake.



The Characters Win

If the Characters come through all this having foiled the plans of Gideon, Hans Zuntermein, Karl-Heinz Wasmeier, and Kastor Lieberung, they are great heroes, indeed. The civil war ends soon, and amity once again reigns, at least on the surface, between the Emperor and the Electors. Whether under Karl-Franz or Wolfgang as his successor, reforms are introduced to relieve many of the Empire's internal tensions and improve the lives of the people.

The day after the battle, the Characters are summoned to the chambers of the Emperor. Ghal Maraz in hand, the Emperor is a new man. Gideon's curse is lifted, and with Kappelmuller vanished or dead, there is no one to sedate him into a stupor. Marie-Luise is just leaving as the Characters enter, and she takes a moment to thank them as she departs.

THE WAGES OF HEROISM

The Emperor dismisses all but a handful of his attendants and begins to speak.

'Out of the north of the Empire you came to Altdorf, and here witnessed the shattering of the old. Now, from the south of the Empire you have returned, and with you comes the true Ghal Maraz, Hammer of Sigmar, symbol of the Empire. As Ghal Maraz is returned to us, so shall the Empire rise anew. The street preachers cry that the End Times have come, but due to the deed you have accomplished, with the Hammer restored, I say they are not here yet.'

'That you have my thanks is hopefully obvious. There will be time to speak of other rewards, but for now know this. I am today establishing, by Imperial decree, a new Knightly order — that being the Champions of the Hammer — and to each of you I grant the title of founding member thereof, and a 100 gold crowns per year pension for the rest of your days, long may they be.'

'Now, which of you bears the likeness of this Kastor Lieberung, and thus, I am told, started you all on the path to this wild affair?'

If the Liberung double lives, Karl-Franz looks him in the eye and continues to speak. If not he shakes his head sadly, and picks the next most likely recipient of the Barony of Wittendorf.

'Much is wrong in the Reikland, and further beyond. I am told that at least one ennobled line has fallen, and there is on the banks of the Reik a barony without a baron. To you I grant the hereditary tenure of the estate of Wittendorf and its castle, along with the title 'Baron von Wittendorf'. I am told the castle is in a state of disrepair, and as such a grant of exactly 20,000 gold crowns shall be paid from the Imperial treasury for its restoration.'

As this sinks in, the Emperor takes the time to assure any Characters with a criminal history that all past wrongs are forgotten. Any existing charges, outlawings, or investigations for heresy are quietly quashed. Any wizards in the party operating illegally are pardoned and granted a license in the college of their choice. Such are the boons of those in the Emperor's good graces.

As the Emperor concludes, Grand Marshall Kurt Helborg arrives, somewhat bedraggled from his rushed return from Ubersreik. He bursts into the room to much kerfuffle, clearly irritated at having to ask permission to enter. On seeing the Emperor restored his frown subsides. He guffaws and says, *'Hah, I knew well you were only malingering!',* before grasping Karl-Franz by the arm and embracing him. He begins to speak in earnest about the issues in Ubersreik. His consultations with Nacht indicate the Jungfreuds can either be placated, at great cost to the reputation of the throne, or they can be put down with a force of 5,000 troops and much bloodshed. The Emperor frowns at this, but turns back to the Characters before addressing Helborg further.

The Characters have one final chance to ask the Emperor for any specific boons, and he grants anything within reason. Appointments to his personal guard, a town house in Altdorf, various titles, though none greater than 'baron', are all on offer. Anything unreasonable he refers to his chamberlain, where the matter will be dealt with, or not, as the Imperial Court decrees.

Once all requests have been heard, the Emperor speaks to the Characters one final time.

'By my frailty the Empire was almost riven in two, and the good work of Magnus the Pious undone. You have saved me from a terrible fate, to perhaps go down in the annals of history as the last true Emperor. I thank you. In days to come do not forget you bear my good will, but neither must you let it go to your head. The favour of an Emperor is a burden as well as a boon. These are no easy days we live in, and in the times ahead I will have need of you again, I am certain. Enjoy your victory, revel in your rewards. But do not let them dull your blades, for the Empire may well have need of them again.'

Turning back to Helborg, his manner again becomes Imperial.

'We will settle matters in Ubersreik without further bloodshed, old friend. And we will do it without again painting the throne as weak or dithering. I will see to this matter myself, the first of many I am sure. Saddle Deathclaw! I ride this very night for Neufaljung.' He glances at the Characters. 'Then, on to Middenheim! The Graf and I have much to discuss.'

EXPERIENCE POINTS AND REWARDS

If a session consisted mainly of roleplay, then award 70–100 points, while granting 30–50 for play that mixes both combat and roleplay. If Gideon won, there are few other rewards — there are no prizes for failure. No experience points for goals. No Fate points. They escape with their lives, if that.

If any of the other possible victory conditions came about, however, use the following guidelines to reward the Players.

- 💀 99 points for discovering the secret of the wine cellar and recovering the Hammer from Gideon
- 💀 50 points for convincing the authorities to change their plans, forcing Gideon's hand
- 💀 50 points for preventing the Crown Prince from becoming the host
- 💀 30 points for defeating Baeker and his ambush
- 💀 30 points for agreeing to help Maria-Luise
- 💀 25 points for discovering the secret of the reliquary
- 💀 25 points for discovering the substitutions in the honour guard
- 💀 20 points for stopping the riot and preventing a massacre
- 💀 1 Fate point and 150 XP for defeating Sheerargetru, doubled if they defeated the High Exalted form



TO THE BRAVE HEROES OF THE EMPIRE WHO
SURVIVED THIS HARROWING JOURNEY, AND IN
MEMORY OF THOSE WHO DID NOT...

THANK YOU FOR PLAYING THE ENEMY WITHIN



There will, of course, be other adventures...

INDEX

#	N	KEY NPCS
9th of Brauzeit, The	14, 15	Night Vigil, The.....128
A		Nine Eyes, The.....7, 71, 179, 188
Adventure Synopsis	5	Non-Electors, The
Altdorf.....	57, 62	94
Averheim.....	127	Nordland
B		10, 41, 42
Bearers of the Blood	47	Nuln
Black Fire Pass.....	110, 131	10, 118, 121
Bon Voyage.....	114	P
C		Parade, The
Carroburg, The.....	112	76, 78, 84
Castle Reikguard	68	Party Allegiance.....14
Caverns, The	147	Pavilion, The
Cellar, The.....	166	76
Council Meeting, The	95	Portals.....188
Cult Activities	109	Prisoners of Karak Skygger, The
Cult of the Broken Fingers, The	169	36
D		Pure Fire
Daemonic Activity.....	111	174
Dirigible Critical Hits	38	Caverns, The
Dramatis Personae.....	17	Purple Hand – Nuln Branch
E		119
Electors, The	94	Cellar, The.....166
Emperor's Party, The.....	77	Purple Hand, The
Emperor's Physician, The.....	103	1, 8, 119
Eternal Watch, The.....	128	Q
Extra Research.....	108	Quintus's Quantifications
F		107
Factions in the Empire	9	R
First Link, The	162	Refugees, The
G		171
Ghal-Maraz.....	9, 102, 161	Renewal, The
Goblin Magic	140	176
Great Architect, The	7	Reporting on Discoveries
Great Ceremony , The	186	39
Grenzstadt.....	128	Reporting to the Graf.....47
H		Return , The
Hidden History	4	162
I		Revenge From Above
Inside the City.....	45	120
Interrogation.....	44	Routes to Streissen
K		163
Kemperbad	115, 168	S
L		Schertal.....117
Lengenfeld	167	Scouts and the Deserters, The.....169
Loremaster, The	166	Sheerargetru
Lost Gorge, The.....	134135	188
M		Sights and Encounters
Madcrew Clan, The	138, 143, 145	40
Mediation.....	126	Skull Splitter, The
Middenheim and Middenland	9	176
Middenheim Delegation, The.....	58, 77	Sky Wolf, The
Middenheim Encampment	62	37
Moving the Balloon.....	37	Spy.....75
T		Steam Engine, The.....38
W		Streissen
Temple, The	176	122, 165, 167
The Dirigible	38	Thirteen
Threshers, The	121	173
Y		This Petty Pace
Wissenland	117	118
Yodri's Report	108	Thirteen
Z		Threshers, The
Zuntermein's Last Grasp	179	121
		Tunnels, The
		147
		W
		War Prize, The
		67
		We'll Be Taking
		188
		Wedding Day, The
		89
		Wissenland
		117
		Y
		Yodri's Report
		108
		Z
		Zuntermein's Last Grasp
		179
		Martin Schmidt
		170
		Member of the Nine Eyes
		71
		Mikhail (Nordlander Separatist)
		43
		Mutants
		175
		Nielsa Klammer
		42
		Niklas (Nordlander Separatist)
		43
		Nobles
		19
		Old Gruntlob
		142
		Orla Feder
		120
		Peasants
		18
		Per Haldestaake
		71, 74
		Pink Horror
		156
		Quintus Fassbinder
		106
		Rauf Wasserburg
		129
		Religious Fanatics
		18
		Runts
		145
		Schloss Bachmann
		117
		Senior Servants
		18
		Sepp Wurnhauser
		42
		Sergeants
		19
		Servants
		18
		von Decker und Hanulf
		184
		Elvrya Kleinstun
		59
		Crown Prince Wolfgang
		69
		Cruzzik Cacklespit
		139
		Drexol the Extinction
		174
		Sheerargetru
		191
		Slik Moongobba
		141
		Snotlings
		145
		Soldiers
		19
		Swarm of Rainbow Snakes
		153
		The 'Princess': Katarina Todbringer ..
		29
		The Chaos Minotaur Lord
		157
		Gors
		175
		The False Honor Guard
		187
		Three-Headed Chaos Hound
		149
		Treacherous Herald
		152
		Ulrich Schutzmann
		48
		Ungors
		175
		Vatheck Fulci
		71, 74
		Veiran Thugenheim
		31
		Volkmar the Grim Von Hindenstern ..
		24
		Wilhelmina Novak
		71, 74
		Wolfgang Holswig-Abenhauer ..
		23
		Wolfe Jessner
		71, 74
		Wulfrum Ahlquist
		71, 74
		Yann Zuntermein
		22
		Zombies
		155

*'A' history,
Fassbinder. You're
not the only scholar
in Altdorf.*

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY OF THE TURMOIL

by Quintus Fassbinder, Professor and Fellow of The University of Altdorf

The civil strife that has come to be known as the Turmoil was notable for two things, intensity and brevity. Intense – by its conclusion the borders of the Empire had been reconfigured to an extent unknown since the Great War Against Chaos. Brief – the fighting was mostly confined to a few short, hot summer months.

Hostilities commenced in the Spring of 2512 IC, when border skirmishes broke out between Ostland and Talabecland. Crown Prince Hergard von Tasseninck, son of Ostland's then elector, had disappeared whilst adventuring in the Grey Mountains, sadly presumed killed. Conspiratorial gossip that he had been slain on the orders of the elector of Talabecland, Grand Duke Krieglitz, became received wisdom. Skirmishes broke out between marcher lords of Ostland and their counterparts over the Talabecland border.

Diplomats were sent to help reconcile the nobles, but by the time they reached Wolfenburg the two provinces were effectively at war. Around this time several other disputes grew violent.

In Middenland, Middenheim, Talabheim and Talabecland a hard-line Ulrican attitude that had been in check for centuries underwent a renaissance. It became fashionable for Ulricans in these locales to scorn their Sigmarite neighbours and proclaim the illegitimacy of their god and the Emperor who ruled in his name. The abdication of Ar-Ulric Jarrick Valgeir in favour of his brother Emil, a fire-breathing preacher with little respect for Sigmarites, only exacerbated the matter.

Noble lords of Hochland, Nordland, and Ostermark grew fractious. These areas had either been independent in ages past, or were culturally distinct from the states that governed them, or both. In Nordland an aggressive noble lord, Theodric Gausser, organised (or, at least, inspired) a rebellion against the rule of Middenheim. Less aggressive, but still forceful, arguments were pressed by Aldebrand Ludenhof of Hochland and a confederation of eastern marcher lords who deemed Wolfram Hertwig of Ostermark their spokesman.

But it was the province of Averland that next descended into anarchy. Disquiet grew as to whether the noble house of Alptraum deserved to remain in power, or be replaced by the head of the Lietdorf line. The Lietdorfs had been rulers in Averland before, and the Alptraums were unpopular and unimaginative rulers. The two sides began to muster support.

Emperor Karl-Franz is renowned as a competent statesman who had managed to moderate previous disputes between nobles and electors. However over the preceding year he had grown distant and insular. Rumours circulated that he was unwell, and had issued inflammatory edicts proscribing persecution of mutants and seizing Ubersreik from the Jungfreud family. Such acts left the Emperor compromised, unable to condemn aggression from the electors lest he be deemed a hypocrite.

*Let's just neglect
the sorry business
of the Sigmarian
heresy, we're all
friends now.*

*There are still
Alptraums in
Averland, be more
diplomatic.*

To soothe tensions between Ulricans and Sigmarites a wedding between Katarina Todbringer and Crown Prince Wolfgang Holswig-Aberhauer, heir to the Reikland, was announced. The event concluded in tragedy due to the acts of a Nordlander assassin. In response a hastily arranged conclave led to the unthinkable, violence between the electors present and the shattering of Ghal Maraz.

The Todbringers returned to Middenheim, determined to make war on Theodric Gausser. Middenland was divided between fiefdoms that pledged support to the Todbringers and those who remembered their own wars with the City of the White Wolf, and so sought to humble Middenheim. Within weeks Averland was in uproar as the Alptraums laid siege to the defiant town of Streissen, only to find their forces outflanked by those of Marius Lietdorf. On the other side the Reik state troops of Nuln were marshalled to annex the province of Sudenland. Grand Countess Emmanuelle von Liebwitz claimed that Grand Baroness Etelka Toppenheimer of Sudenland had schemed against the interests of Nuln. To the surprise of many, Grand Countess Emmanuelle was supported in her war efforts by no less than eight of Grand Baroness Toppenheimer's own children.

Grand Theogonist Yorri XV reported that Ghal Maraz had been miraculously returned, and a ceremony was prepared for the 9th of Brauzeit in which the Emperor would hoist the hammer and pledge to reunite the warring Empire. The events of the ceremony are well reported elsewhere, so let us not dwell on them here, but by their conclusion many priests of Sigmar had lost their lives, the Grand Theogonist and the Crown Prince were both dead, and traumatised survivors gave confusing accounts of Daemonic manifestation.

Despite these losses, Karl-Franz was imbued with renewed vigour and purpose. He set about re-establishing his most trusted alliances, those with Emmanuelle von Liebwitz (now firmly in possession of Sudenland), and Grand Duke Alberich Haupt-Anderssen (who had kept his province out of the fighting and was recognised for his restraint with the slightly more esteemed title of Grand Count).

Around this time a dossier of information was produced by the ~~Black Chamber~~ Altdorf's secret service. One of their operatives had been unmasked as a servant of the ruinous powers, and resulting intelligence showed that a great deal of the contention in the Empire had occurred as a result of the influence of his network. Many nobles, even electors, even perhaps the late Crown Prince himself, had been manipulated into enabling his plans.

In light of these revelations the positions of several electors became untenable. These included the Krieglitz family of Talabheim and Talabecland, and the Bildhofens of Middenheim. In order to soothe the divisions between the Cults of Ulric and Sigmar northern provinces with large Sigmarite populations were granted higher status, so The League of Ostermark, Grand County of Nordland, and Grand Barony of Hochland earned Grand Provincial status. To compensate the Todbringers for the humiliation of allowing Theodric Gausser to claim a Runefang Middenland was annexed to Middenheim. Once the Order of the Silver Hammer had finished with the Krieglitzes and the borders of Talabecland were much reduced due to the independence of Hochland and Ostermark, it was decided that the Feuerbachs would rule a newly unified Talabheim and Talabecland.

We've to rebuild relations with Salzenmund following meetings with Theodric. "Northern Assassin" will do

Do you want heirs? Leave the Chamber out of it!

Oh dear Fassbinder, are you really so naïve as to think we can speak about these matters openly? Redraft and present these changes as noble sacrifices required to ease the pain of the Turmoil.

Vulgar simplification, even by the standards of an introduction. Von Raukov not even mentioned? Redraft.

Wanting accounts of Sigmar's final journey furnish us with particularly egregious examples of sentimental ramblings devoid of rigour. In particular, I must excoriate the shoddy scholarship of Professor Albertus Knor of the University of Nuln whose 4476 treatise is fit purely for soaking in vinegar and applying to the sensitive regions of those afflicted by Kruts.

This grub-fondling wantwrit fails to mention that Sigmar was reported passing Vithang Dun in 3050 — despite such information being clearly minuted in the 32456th monthly report of the Vithang Dun Caretaker's council.

I must also decry the inane simpering of Professor Janji Schmidt of the Salzeming University, may she lose herself in the wilderness with no hat come Skraksdeg night. Her account of Sigmar's last movements have him pausing to take in 'the awesome sight of the southern lands spreading out beyond the Black Mountains', as if he were some feckless romantic sap!

Does she think the Dwarfs of the Karaz Ankhors so feebleminded as to post watchmen with no eyes? No record taken at the watchtower of Zan Mingol mentions Sigmar passing by to the south.

SO HE NEVER PASSED BY TO THE SOUTH! DO IT RIGHT OR DON'T DO IT AT ALL, YOU TOWERING SCANT. BEARDED IMBECILES!

H 225
statue of a goddess, Sigmar bows deeply and deft. Two statues of goddesses, Sigmar panged bereft. Three statues of goddesses, Sigmar's spied the cleft. Holy hammer he heft, then he ventured to the left.

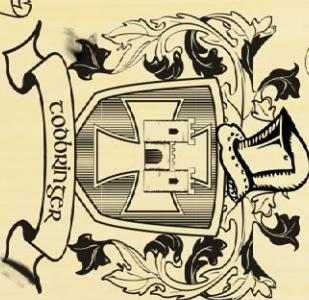
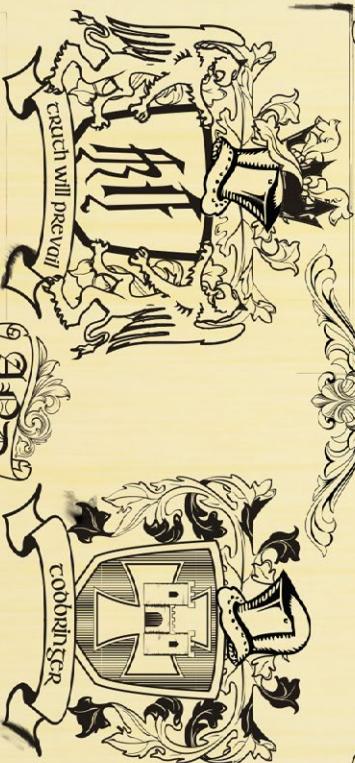
9KLUKG^{..}h⁰9 r^h a^h -<◊...n^h ..n t^φknI.
φ.◊. <◊.t..e. -<◊o T^hl^h o.◊.q^ul^h9
•r.◊n^hl -<...n^h y^o..r^φ.q <u^h t^hu^qu^hl^h9
•a^h..◊. φ. t^h a^h <u^h9 u^h o.◊.◊^ou^hl^h9
◊..r.9 t^h a^h e^l.x y^{..}r^φ ..n^h o.◊.◊..n^h9 q^oknI.
<g n...n. a^hu^gφ⁹ n...n^hφ <99. a^hl^h. n...n. t^ul^h9
o^un e^o..q^g9 t^lh^h9 q^h r^φ. t^φknI.◊.◊.x^ul^h9
i^o..<g o^un. a^hu^l <u^h t^hu^q..u^h9. x^h t^φknI.
.x^hφ .h. e^o..q. n^h <φ^ho^oφ⁹ t^h..t^h a^h.
r^φ.n <φ^h a^h <◊.r.9 I^o◊^qε ▽.l..v.◊ r^φ. r^q x
◊.I..n^h9 q^φ.l^l -<.x^hφ.◊ <u^h r^u..q^g u^uh^h9.
u^gg.◊ n...n. r..t.9 q^u..x^hl^h ..o^og^h x^h I^o..t^q t^h



came to me in a rush of insight. I saw the object of our devotion unbound. I saw the blazing heavens anew above the **Seat of Sigmar** upon the ninth day of the ninth month. The veil had been torn aside and sorcerous gales blew strong about the spires in lurid pinks and moody blues. I saw a blasphemous city coming down from the heavens and as it descended people cried out in woe. A loud voice intoned: 'Here are nine and each shall come with its own host. **The Changer** triumphs! I saw death, madness and transformation as the **Exalted Lord** brought his Master's realm to the **Crown of the Empire**. Haunted by these notions I commenced to travel



Our presence is requested at the Marriage of



His
Majesty

Emperor
Franz Wolfgang

Habsburg Maximilian

to be wedded at ~~Altdorf's~~ Grand Cathedral of Ternier
by his high holiness Grand Thesiger ~~Emperor Franz~~

After the first profitable year all further profits derived from this venture are
to be split annually. Fifty per cent to be divided equally between Johannes
Tengen, Franz Steinbäuer and Jakob Haußen. Twenty five per cent to be
delivered to the treasury at Coburg. Twenty five per cent to be delivered to
King Carl Gustav Ramelsson of Karab-Han.

His Majesty accepts no responsibility for losses incurred. The King not only
accepts no responsibility, but warns that retaliation will be sought if it is so much
as rumored that he should do so or if demonstrable negative consequences for
Karab-Han derive from the operation.

Signed by your humble servant,

Honorio Schaffene RCR

Crown at the Coburg Palace
upon the ninth day of Brumaire
in the 2508th year of our Empire

The wedding party will march in procession to Altdorf's South
Temple of Ulric where A-Ulric and Valger will bless their union.

A one o'clock in the afternoon.
The wedding party will march in the Imperial Palace where the couple will attend
a cerebration of deities and attendances of concern to the safety of our great Empire.

At nine o'clock in the morning:
The Grand Cathedral gates are down.

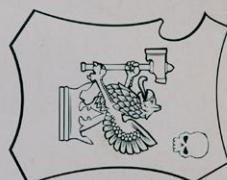
At ten o'clock in the morning:
The Crown Prince is to be married to Katarina Tschengler
in the Grand Cathedral by the Grand Thesiger.

At nine o'clock in the morning:
The Grand Cathedral gates are down.

At ten o'clock in the morning:
The Crown Prince is to be married to Katarina Tschengler
in the Grand Cathedral by the Grand Thesiger.

The Tengen, Steinbäuer and Haußen Mining Concern

Are granted permission to commence operations to re-excavate the Old
Schwartz Mine in the Black Mountains, to the east of Black Fire
Pass, overlooked by the Three Mothers mountains.



Liine, Schaffene and Tbau

Honorable Registrars of Commercial Concerns for
Her Majesty the Grand Countess of Auerland

Hence Certify That

Back when young Dawi had proper respect for hard graft and pursuit of excellence Smednir set out to forge the greatest runchammer of all time. He took up half dozen ingots of copper and several of zinc and placed it in Zharren, the Ongoing Fire, as his furnace was called. But no matter how he laboured at the bellows the coals would not grow hot enough. Some say the coals had been purchased from an Elgi merchant from across the ocean, and that this accounted for their mediocre and dilute qualities.

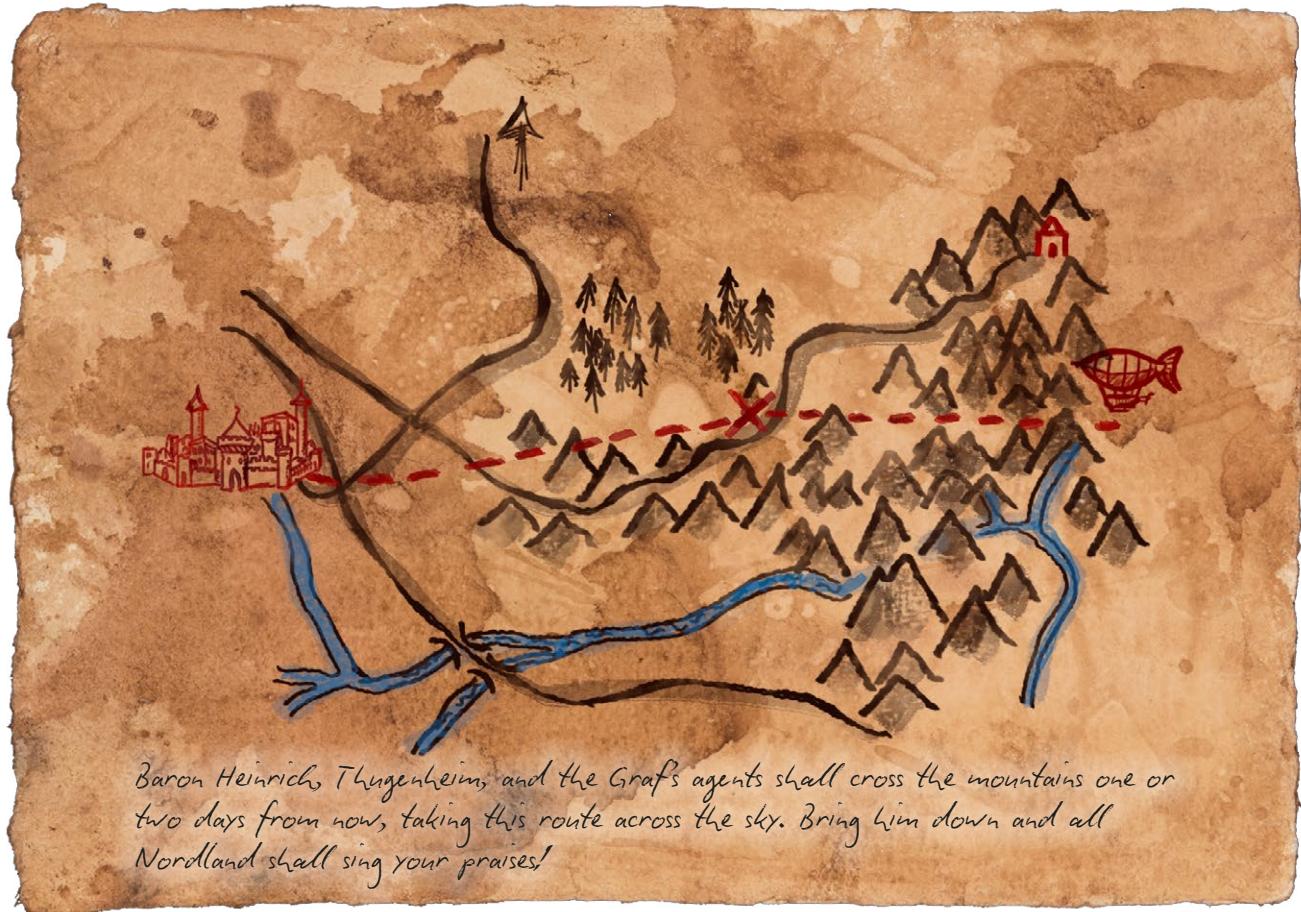
Smednir cried out in frustration and a daemon appeared. It whispered to Smednir that it could heat the forge for him with its own flame. Proud Smednir denied the daemon and cast it from the mountain. Smednir chastised himself for his temper, for it is a bad workman who blames his tools, even if those tools were supplied by Yarnithiel Crestslider of briny Cothique.

With great effort, Smednir managed to get the metal white hot. He set to work shaping it. But the metal was wilful, the ore having been supplied by lanky folk of the northern lands who can barely tell a fine grade nugget from a clod of cuprous mud, and Smednir toiled for many days without success. The grinding of Smednir's molars could be heard echoing about the peaks

and the daemon reappeared. It offered to guide Smednir's shaping hammer, Azulokrid. Smednir threatened the daemon and chased it from Zharren.

After more days of sweat, Smednir formed the hammer and began to set the runes. This was a grand endeavour the likes of which had never been attempted before. As he wrestled with this insurmountable task, the daemon slipped into the forge again. It saw Smednir working and boasted of its prowess in manipulating magic. At this, the Ancestor God grew enraged and cursed the daemon's name, 'Sheerargetru', then smote it with the unfinished hammer. It was banished and Smednir finished Ghal Maraz with the aid of the other Ancestor Gods.

Since that day, the daemon has brooded in its ever-shifting palace, abhorring the hammer that was forged without taint of its influence, but fearing it too, for a mere brush from the weapon would grievously injure it and its kind. For an eon the daemon sulked and whined, I mean, I might be the sort to hold a grudge, but the daemon really took it personally. It bitterly condemned the sons of Smednir. It hid the forge of Zharren deep within hideous realms and swore that until the Dwarfs returned to the forge they would never again weave such powerful magic into their designs.



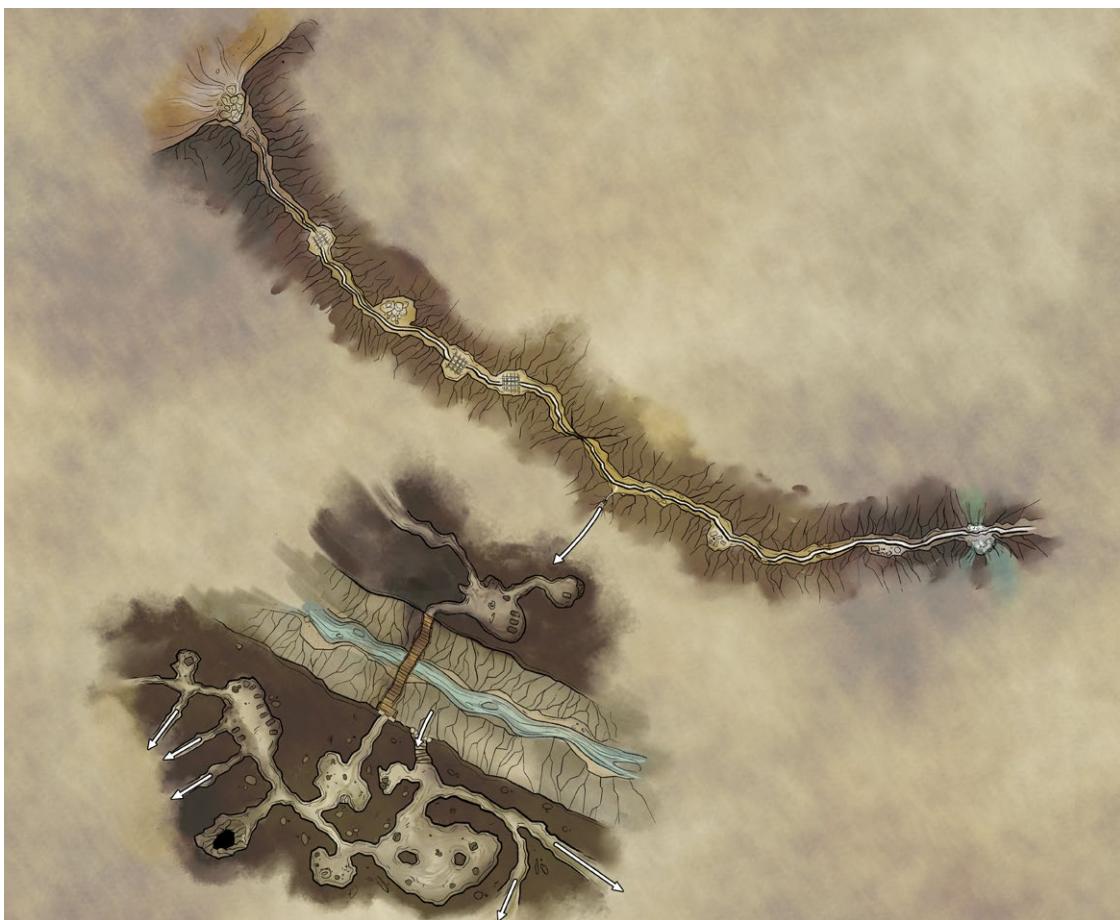
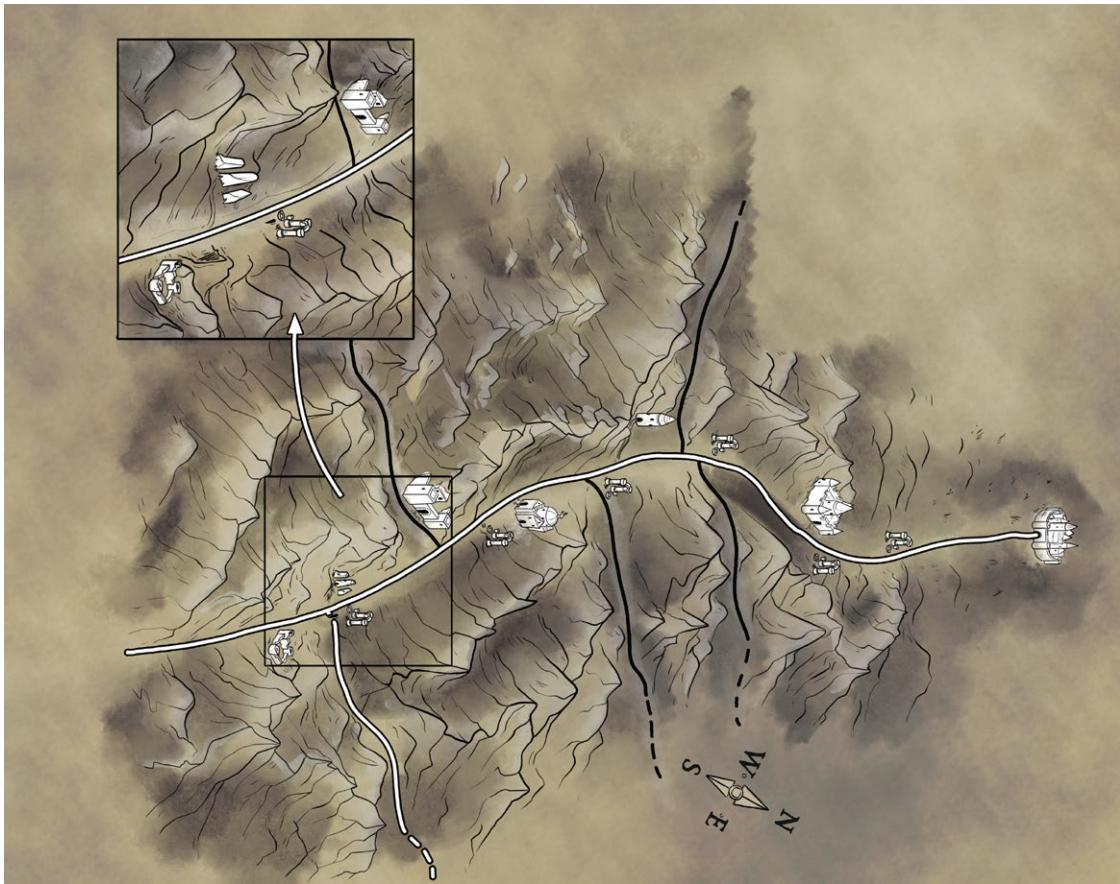
Baron Heinrich Thugenheim, and the Graf's agents shall cross the mountains one or two days from now, taking this route across the sky. Bring him down and all Noroland shall sing your praises!

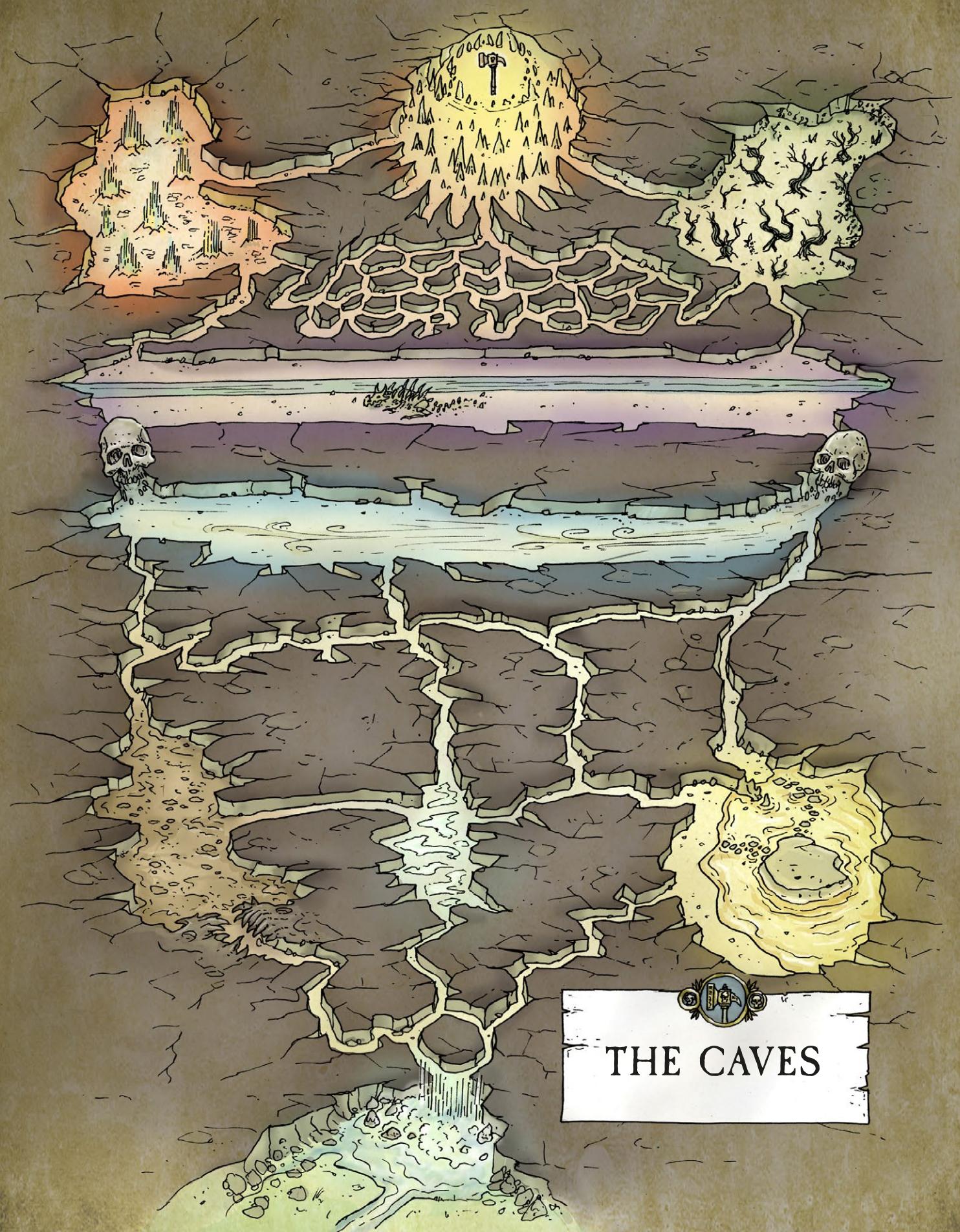


A NEW DAWN FOR NOROLAND

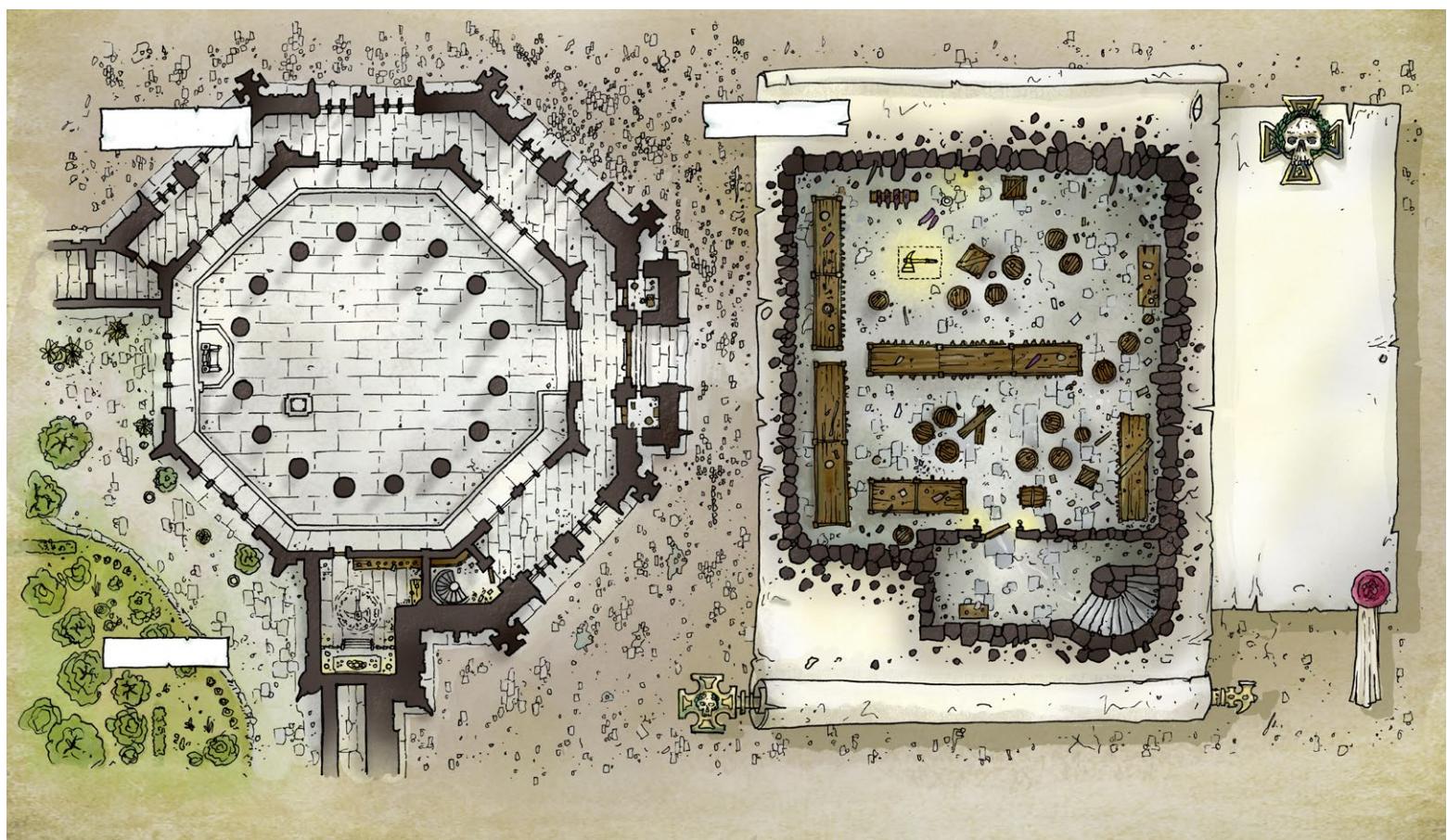
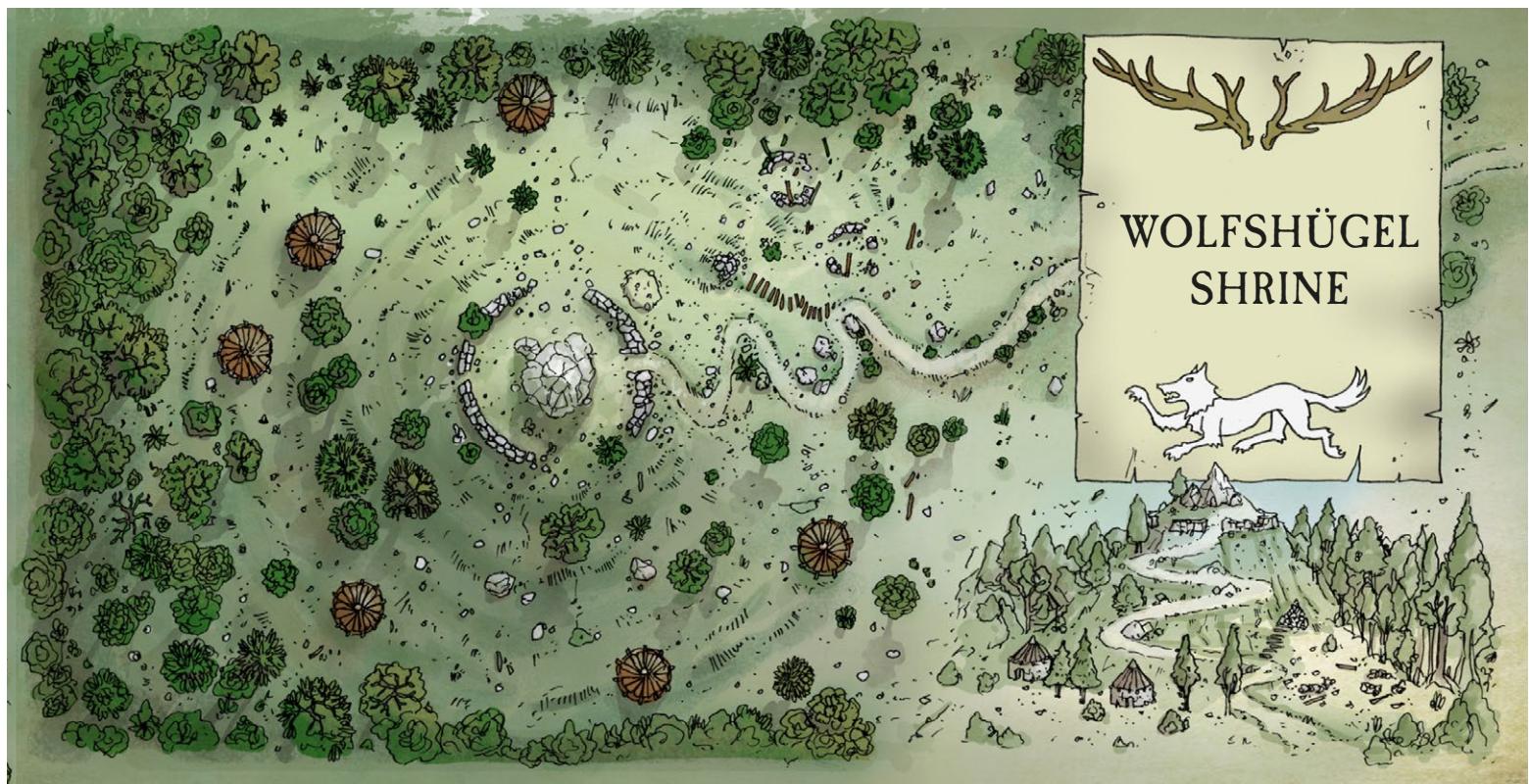
Actions required as vital priorities in the service of her majesty:

- 1 - Acquire funds, horse, camping gear, trail rations, spare uniforms.
- 2 - At Pfieeldorf ask for Fione the Thresher. Give her the uniforms and pay her. The word is Heidheimheim.
- 3 - Travel to the Reikland. Confirm the marriage between the Todringers and the House of the Third Willhelm. Record any persons of interest.
- 4 - Report back before the solstice.



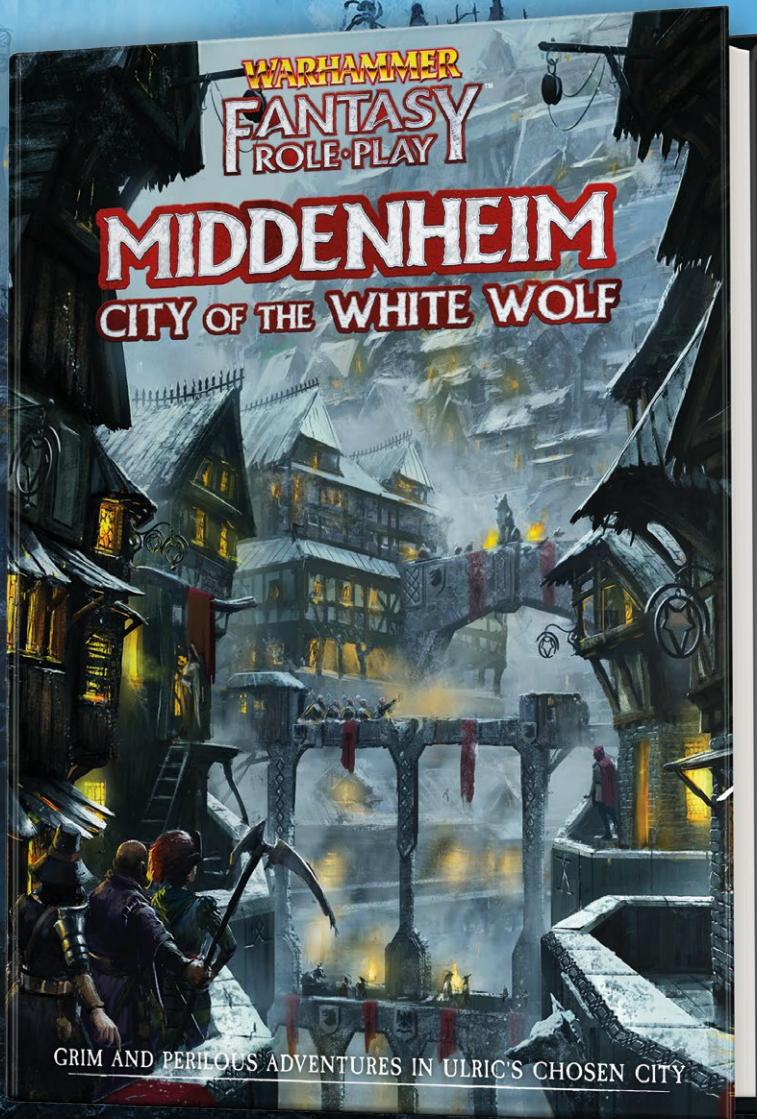


THE CAVES



WARHAMMER FANTASY ROLE-PLAY™

THE PERFECT SETTING FOR ENDLESS
GRIM AND PERILOUS ADVENTURES!



Find out more about the full range of exciting Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay games on
www.cubicle7games.com

