

THE TOME CELESTIAL

From their volcanic strongholds, the warlike duardin of the Vostarg march to battles uncounted. Their Runefather Bael-Grimnir sits upon the ruby-encrusted Fyrethrone, deciding where his warriors' axes shall fall in pursuit of gold and glory. For the Vostarg, war is life, a sacred calling that brings them closer to their fallen god.



THE VOSTARG LODGE

By Jordan Green and Louis Aguilar

The Vostarg are Fyreslayers, worshippers of the slain warrior-god Grimnir. A mercenary civilisation, Fyreslayers will fight for any cause, provided the price is right. Most of all they desire ur-gold, magical fragments of Grimnir that were scattered following his titanic battle with the godbeast Vulcatrux. The Fyreslayers' Zharrgrim priests enact ancient rites to harness the ur-gold's divine properties, fashioning the material into runes to implant into the flesh of their warriors. These rites both amplify the Fyreslayers' strength and release portions of Grimnir's trapped essence from within the ur-gold. Fyreslayer society is built on patriarchal social units known as 'lodges', collections of family groups that can be thousands of duardin strong. Each lodge is headed by a royal family consisting of a Runefather and his sons.

The Vostarg have accumulated more ur-gold than any other lodge and are feared for their relentless aggression. Their fyrds – armies of berserkers accompanied by mighty heroes and great flame-born beasts known as Magmadroths – surge



across the battlefield at a startling pace. No respite is offered until their foes have been hacked apart. The Vostarg have won prestige by plying their mercenary trade far and wide – they have even fought alongside the followers of the Dark Gods, though only for the most lucrative payments. Yet war alone does not define the Vostarg; to many Fyreslayers, they are known as the ‘All-fathers’. As is typical of duardin, there is a literal aspect to this term. As well as being the largest lodge, many Vostarg Runesons have been dispatched to found their own war-cults across Aqshy and beyond. This network of influence often sees the Vostarg bear the mantle of leadership when several lodges are acting in coalition. As a result, they have become the most famed of the Fyreslayers inhabiting the realms.

Despite this honourable legacy, an ashen pall obscures the lodge’s early history. Though they present an image of unrivalled unity and power, the modern Vostarg’s origins lie in partition and strife. The Vostarg proclaim their strength openly, yet they keep their secrets well.

THE VOSGUARD

Hearthguard Berzerkers are amongst the most formidable of the Fyreslayers. Each is an elite duardin, forged in the deadly Trials of Grimfyre and bound by an oath to protect the royal family of a lodge with their life. So numerous are the Vostarg that many Hearthguard brotherhoods can be found among their number.

The most renowned Hearthguard formation within the lodge is the Vosguard. This is the personal guard of Bael-Grimnir, composed of those lesser sons he considers talented warriors but unsuited to leadership. Though perhaps shaming, this is also a chance for a young and aspirant Runeson to prove himself to the patriarch. Many of Bael’s offspring who demonstrated their skill in the Vosguard have gone on to found lodges of their own.



Though Vostargi Mont is a safe haven of the Fyreslayers, its lowest levels have often been infiltrated by Gloomspite Gitz and other even less desirable creatures.



BORN IN FIRE

Originating in the Age of Myth, the Vostarg was one of the primogenitor lodges known as the 'first-forged'. However, it was the loss of its magmahold, the Vosforge, that shaped the Vostarg's future most drastically.

Nestled within the Salamander's Spine – a vast mountain range that was home to the first Fyreslayers – the Vosforge was the largest of the original magmaholds and the last to fall during the Age of Chaos. Staving off uncounted assaults, it was internal strife that eventually sealed the Vosforge's doom. More ur-gold was gathered under the stewardship of its last Runefather, Thorgar-Grimnir, than any other in recorded history. However, when he succumbed to his wounds after slaying a fearsome Bloodthirster, Thorgar left no named successor.

Each of Thorgar's twelve sons believed himself the rightful heir. As battle lines between supporters were drawn, the armies of Chaos massed for another great assault on the magmahold. Desperate to save his lodge's legacy, the Runemaster split the ur-gold hoard between the sons and bade each go his own way. As the duardin's exodus began, the Vosforge finally fell; the brave few who stayed behind to buy time for their kin to escape were soon slaughtered by the ruinous hordes.

Of Thorgar's sons, only Zhafor retained the Vostarg name. Honoured as the 'father of

ANCIENT POWER

Many Fyreslayer lodges employ different techniques to harness ur-gold. The Vostarg recite sonorous chants taught to the first-forged and passed down through generations. Relics of their ancient heritage, these dirges not only unlock the potential within the ur-gold but also feed the Vostarg Fyreslayers' natural aggression, fuelling their legendary endurance.



victories', Zhafor remains a mysterious figure. Some legends claim he learnt his craft alongside Grimnir, yet the Fyreslayers' god fell long before the Age of Chaos. It is said that for many years he and his lodge wandered Aqshy, giving battle to the daemonic legions and their mortal worshippers while tracking down sparse fragments of ur-gold.

It was uniquely fortunate for the itinerant Vostarg that they discovered the Cynder Peaks. All Fyreslayers have a sense for ur-gold, and the sheer volume of the substance revealed when the peaks' volcanoes vent their fury would bolster the fortunes of even the largest lodge. Through these resources, the Vostarg were raised from ragged wanderers to one of the wealthiest and most formidable forces surviving under the dominion of Chaos. There, Runefather Urgom-Grimnir – a descendant of Zhafor – founded the new magmahold of Furios Peak, a bulwark against those who harried the duardin.

Their new home provided the Vostarg with the strength to strike back at their foes, and they soon forged new alliances in their resurgent war against Chaos; at the Bladewood Gate, the warriors of the Vostarg and the Ironbark Sylvaneth glade united to crush a marauding Khornate warhorde. Such aggressive actions undeniably saved the lodge from ignoble obliteration or life as nomadic wanderers. How they learnt of the Cynder Peaks' riches, and what became of Zhafor, is knowledge the Vostarg do not share.

THE TWELVE SONS OF THORGAR-GRIMNIR

The battlesmith chroniclers of the Vostarg hotly debate the fates of Zhafor's eleven brothers. It is known that the eldest, Bromhulf, stubbornly swore to defend the Vosforge and was cut down during the fall of the magmahold. Many – though the exact number is much contested by those claiming to descend from the Vostarg – founded their own lodges, such as the Baeldrag, and went on to win great renown. Others took the oath of the grimnyn or even the Doomseeker, wandering the realms until new purpose or a worthy death claimed them.

Only one attempted to reclaim the Vosforge. Of the fate of Darz, Thorgar's youngest son, less is known even than that of Zhafor. This silence would imply he did not succeed. Yet those who brave the dangers of the Salamander's Spine in search of the first-forged's treasures occasionally chance upon strange metal obelisks and isolated, leering battleforges. These totems emanate a fell power, glowing with an unwholesome inner light. Upon their flanks are carved duardin runes that offer praise to the 'father of darkness' and his first unnamed prophet.



DOMAINS OF THE VOSTARG

Though they possess dozens of holds across the realms, the primary lands of the Vostarg lie within the Cynder Peaks. One of the most volcanically active regions of Aqshy, the hidden bounty of this mountain range has rendered it of indescribable value to the Fyreslayers.

Deep below the Cynder Peaks can be found troves of ur-gold and Magmadroth eggs. The violent tectonic trauma dredges up these concealed treasures as if the volcanoes themselves offer tribute to the children of Grimnir. The craters left in an eruption's aftermath contain a king's ransom for those who claim them. Many lodges now inhabit the Cynder Peaks, but the Vostarg hold dominion over them owing to their status as first amongst equals. Such is not always respected by their fellow duardin. However, the Vostarg remain ready to answer any challenge with fyresteel.

VASSAL LODGES

The Vostarg have scattered their sons extensively, and many lodges bear relation to them. The Gelvagd and Baeldrag are two famous offshoots, and there are those such as the Austarg who serve as vassals in exchange for alliance and a portion of their ur-gold reserves. Many are the lodges that serve in this fashion, and some – like the Dostev – have even fought to the death for their liege lords.

Upon the tallest mountain stands Furios Peak, magmahold of the Vostarg. A monumental feat of stonework, Furios Peak is a many-levelled structure whose furthestmost bowels reach deep below Aqshy's crust. Furios Peak has been expanded upon by successive generations of Runefathers; under Bael-Grimnir a new series of lava gates and hidden mechanisms have been constructed. With the pull of a lever, the Vostarg can alter the layout of their domain, disorientating their enemies and making themselves masters of the terrain.

Vostargi Mont is another territory ruled by the Vostarg, a vital stronghold that rises from the Flamescar Plateau. Formed from the debris that settled after Grimnir's battle with Vulcatrix, it not only contains rich seams of ur-gold but also priceless Vostargi obsidian. Open to all lodges, it is the Vostarg who administer the region and hear the petitions of the many emissaries that make their way to the mont.



LIVERY OF FLAME AND ASH

The bright orange hair of the Vostarg has, for many, become synonymous with Fyreslayer culture. This dates back to the Age of Myth; the Vostarg honour their ancestors by bearing their colours to war.

The Vostarg's colours – a mixture of orange, red, and black – evoke the magmic cycles found throughout Aqshy: orange to represent the magma churning through the crust below, red as it claws its way to the surface, and grim black as it hardens to rock as unyielding as the Vostarg themselves.

The Vostarg differentiate between fyrds and warbands through various means. Tattoos, crests, and loincloth colours can all mark a duardin's allegiance within the lodge.

RUNIC MIGHT

As Vostarg Fyreslayers fight together, they often choose to have similar ur-gold sigils worked into their flesh. This defines each warband's goal in battle. The Zharrgrim priests awaken those runes that will aid the entire fyrd most – duardin who favour runes of endurance may be sent to hold a key objective, for instance, whilst those branded with sigils of vengeance will be commanded to hunt down and slay enemy champions.



BAEL-GRIMNIR

Bael-Grimnir, Runefather of the Vostarg, is a living legend. He has ruled his lodge for centuries and, in that time, has sired well over fifty sons. He has seen the coming of Sigmar's Tempest and the rise of the free cities of Order. His flesh is scarred and leathery, and notches from hundreds of enemy blows that failed to slay him mark the throne mounted upon his Magmadroth, Flamespitter. Even the most vociferous of Bael's rivals grudgingly acknowledge his proven prowess.

When his father, Brakholf-Grimnir, was – in an echo of the darkly fated Thorgar-Grimnir – slain by a monstrous Bloodthirster, it was Bael who took up the storied grandaxe Hrathling and banished the daemon. Through this act he earned his place as lord of the Vostarg. Bael did not miss the parallel between his father's fate and that of his ancestor Thorgar; in that moment, a defiant fire was lit within him, a burning desire to erase the few shames that still blighted the Vostarg.

His beard now lined with streaks of silver, Bael-Grimnir is both loved and feared by his many Runesons. Each strives endlessly to excel in his

'Hear me, my scions, and I will tell ye the same as I heard from my own forebear. Only one can bear the lodge's grandaxe. I shall name as heir he whose deeds prove best – he who fells the mightiest foes and brings before the proud name of Vostarg the greatest tribute to Grimnir. May the blaze of battle burn bright within you all.'

- Bael-Grimnir

father's eyes and make a name for himself. None have yet impressed the Runefather enough to be pronounced his successor. To Bael, nothing could be worse than picking an unsuitable heir; once before did issues of succession almost doom the Vostarg, and the honour of his lodge is too important to gamble on a rash decision.

Even so, as the days grow darker, the knowledge that he is only the second most successful Runefather in Vostarg history weighs upon the Runefather's mind. Bael knows that there is only one way to surpass the deeds of Thorgar-Grimnir: he must lead an expedition to the Salamander's Spine and reclaim the ancestral halls of the Vosforge. Such a notion would once have been considered madness, for the Spine has long been saturated in the energies of Chaos. Darkling things lurk in the cold and silent halls of the Vosforge, slumbering until foolish interlopers rouse their ire. Yet messengers now travel between the magmaholds of the Vostarg's vassals with increased urgency, and hushed rumours suggest that Bael may be planning just such a campaign. Should he succeed, he shall undoubtedly become the greatest Runefather of all time.

LORDS OF FURIOS PEAK

At Bael-Grimnir's side stand experienced counsellors, warriors, and priests ready to carry out his will. Each a centuries-old veteran of countless battles, it is they along with the Runefather who strive hardest to keep the spoils of victory flowing into the Vostarg's coffers.

Below this inner circle are Bael-Grimnir's many sons. There are several tiers to the hierarchy of Runesons at any one time, and this can swiftly alter based upon merit and recent endeavours. The most favoured ride into battle at their father's side upon Magmadroth mounts, each competing to prove most worthy to lead.

AURIC RUNEMASTER VAEGOR

Though it has won them glory, the Vostarg's bellicose nature often sees them expend vast quantities of ur-gold in battle. Curbing this recklessness is the duty of the lodge's Runemaster. The incumbent, Vaegor, has dedicated his long existence to studying the nature of ur-gold. Vaegor has travelled extensively in search of ancient duardin lore and has collected many curios and artefacts. The Vostarg claim that the scaled cloak hanging from his broad shoulders is fashioned from ur-salamander hide,

perhaps an offspring of Vulcatrix herself. Vaegor is surprisingly gregarious for a Zharrgrim priest and was the first to share a flask of magmalt ale with Bandus Skybound of the Heavenhost chamber. Yet, privately, the venerable Runemaster has grown concerned that Nurgle's geldpox curse still lingers within many untapped deposits of ur-gold, and as the Vostarg accumulate the treasure, they risk not only the dreaded glimmerlust but also infection with the pox.

Deeds of Legend: When the skaven ransacked the Fyreheart forge-temple of Furios Peak, Vaegor marched at the forefront of his kin to seek retribution. He also counselled Bael-Grimnir after encountering the Stormcast Eternals, identifying the ur-gold within their Azyrite coin and helping forge what would become a potent alliance.

ARNGARD THE FEARLESS

The personal champion of Bael-Grimnir, the Grimwrath Berzerker Arngard is known as 'the Fearless' amongst his lodge. When Bael needs a foe crushed without restraint, he sends for Arngard; the Grimwrath has even been entrusted with carrying the legendary Vosaxe on occasion. Arngard is an indomitable fighter, but his actions



The Vostarg are often called upon by the people of Aqshy to fight the fell creatures of the Great Parch, including the debased Flesh-eaters of the Isle of Ghouls.

during the siege of Bloodkeep trouble him still. Infected with Khorne's killing rage, the Grimwrath cut down several Stormcasts before a bolt of celestial lightning summoned by Lord-Relictor Thunos Blackheart recovered his senses. In true duardin fashion, Arngard does not brood overlong on this shame; instead, he violently metes out his anger upon his hapless foes.

Deeds of Legend: Confronted by Skarbrand within Bloodkeep, it seemed certain that Lord-Celestant Sargassus would fall to the daemon's axes. However, Arngard and Bael-Grimnir did not hesitate to fight at the Stormcast's side, despite the odds, and together they held off the Bloodthirster long enough for many of their followers to retreat and fight another day.

AURIC RUNESMITER DHURGAN

Wherever the masters of Furios Peak make war, Runesmiter Dhurgan will be close at hand. A personal favourite of Bael-Grimnir and Vaegor, it is widely expected that he will one day take up the Runemaster's mantle. Like all Vostarg, Dhurgan seeks to honour his lineage, sometimes struggling to balance his own war-hunger with the mindfulness required as heir apparent of the

lodge's priesthood. He often fights alongside the Vosguard, elevating their already formidable skills with runic empowerment. Dhurgan prefers to take to battle atop his surly Magmadroth, Skarung the Glowerwurm; despite the creature's considerable age, together they are capable of keeping pace with the hot-blooded champions of the Vostarg.

Deeds of Legend: When the Vostarg and Heavenhost arrived at Bloodkeep, he spearheaded the delving of magmic tunnels into the ancient dungeons beneath. The mountain upon which Bloodkeep stood was warped by the angry touch of Khorne, yet Dhurgan did not flinch, boring through the rock with relentless vigour and allowing duardin and Stormcasts to catch the Khornate defenders unaware.

FJUL-GRIMNIR AND THE OATH OF SHADESPIRE

Though mercenary by nature, like all duardin the Fyreslayers treat oaths with the utmost seriousness. No lodge adheres to this closer than the Vostarg; they are the last of the first-forged, so they say, and must always strive to exemplify Grimnir's tenets. Since the discovery of the Cynder Peaks and the establishment of a new magmahold, one failure still nags at the lodge.



When the Katophranes of the Shyishan city of Shadespire sought to conquer death, they underestimated the Lord of Death's rage. In his anger, Nagash performed a grand ritual to trap the soul of Shadespire and its people in a mirror reality between Hysh and Ulgu. Those who enter the ruins of Shadespire are drawn through to the twisted Mirrored City, whereupon they are at the mercy of the strange and sinister properties of the sub-realm.

Shadespire lay under the Vostarg's protection through ancient contracts. Its sundering is an unbearable stain on their pride. Though they know that even they could not expect to truly slay Nagash in vengeance, every century the lodge dispatches a new fyrd to the Mirrored City in the hope of undoing the curse.

Fjul-Grimnir is the only Runefather ever to undertake this quest. Unwilling to send others to make right his own bloodline's failure, Fjul set aside Hrathling and forged himself a new grandaxe. Naming his son – Bael-Grimnir's grandfather – master of the Vostarg, Fjul-Grimnir and his followers set off for the city. None have heard from him since. His martyrdom has made him a hero amongst the Vostarg, an exemplar of honour all aspire to emulate.

In Shadespire, Fjul and three of his warband, known as the Chosen Axes, have survived. Amidst perpetual battle, these four heroes fight as a single force, so well accustomed to one another's movements that they strike almost as one. Still they hope to reverse the city's doom and, in so doing, erase their ancient shame.

THE GLIMMERLUST

Ur-gold's power is finite. As it is expended in battle, Fyreslayers must have new runes struck into their bodies to replenish it. Some grow addicted to this divine strength, succumbing to the so-called 'glimmerlust' and going to any lengths to hold onto their runic power if it begins to ebb. Tales abound of rogue Doomseekers, or even entire lodges, slaughtering fellow Fyreslayers to claim their ur-gold. Furthermore, during the Age of Chaos, Nurgle concocted a disease that clung to gold. This geldpox drove those afflicted to greedy distraction; with their vast ur-gold stores and propensity for the glimmerlust, the Fyreslayers proved particularly susceptible.

The Vostarg harness more ur-gold than any other lodge, believing this the only way to properly honour Grimnir. Their primacy amongst lodges has seen them lead coalitions against those who have been overcome by gold-greed – it was just such a campaign against the Fyrdhand lodge that earned them their respected position. Yet as the Soul Wars force the lodge to harness great quantities of ur-gold in desperate conflict, the fires of temptation burn stronger than ever. In recent years, Runemaster Vaegor has focused his efforts on researching and mitigating the glimmerlust's pull, striving to impart wisdom and restraint onto the Vostarg's pugnacious warriors.



Once the Runefather of Vostarg Lodge, Fjul-Grimnir and his Chosen Axes now fight to free the city of Shadespire from the shackles of Nagash's tyranny.





OATHS OF GOLD

The Vostarg have fought the enemies of Grimnir for centuries. Throughout their rise, fall, and rise again, the lodge's duardin have faced each challenge with grim determination and furious energy. Even throughout the dark years of the Age of Chaos, their fearsome reputation preceded them, and many were the hosts of the Ruinous Powers that threw themselves against the defences of Furios Peak in an effort to claim the lodge's treasures. Now each passing day sees Bael-Grimnir dispatch fyrds across the realms in pursuit of ur-gold, the bottomless wellspring of dynamism that fuels the Vostarg showing no sign of running dry.

THE AGE OF MYTH

THE DOOM OF GRIMNIR

Grimnir and Vulcatrix are mutually slain in battle. Fragments of the deity are flung across the Mortal Realms, alloying with the godbeast's remains to form ur-gold and Magmadroth eggs. To Grimnir's duardin followers, it is a time of mourning.

FIRST-FORGED

The lodge communities that revere Grimnir establish themselves in the Salamander's Spine of Aqshy. There they discover the true nature of ur-gold, becoming Fyreslayers proper and embarking on a zealous quest to recover the remnants of their god. The Vostarg are amongst the greatest of these first-forged lodges, collecting a prodigious degree of ur-gold and storing it within the colossal magmahold known as the Vosforge.

SHADESPIRE'S LAMENT

The rulers of Shadespire offend Nagash with their plans to cheat everlasting death. The Great Necromancer imprisons the souls of the city in a sinister mirror-dimension and, in so doing, draws the ire of the Vostarg who have sworn to its protection. Fyrds are sent each century to attempt to recover the city. Other Vostarg take the Doomseeker's oath, burying their shame by hurling themselves into battle with Nagash's servants.

THE AGE OF CHAOS

FALL OF THE VOSFORGE

The legions of Chaos spilling across Aqshy lay siege to the Vosforge. Runefather Thorgar-Grimnir is wounded unto death in felling a Bloodthirster. Unable to resolve the succession crisis, his twelve sons each take a portion of the lodge's ur-gold and go their separate ways before the Vosforge is overwhelmed. Only Zhafor carries forth the Vostarg name.

DISCOVERY OF CYNDER PEAKS

After an unknown time wandering Aqshy, the Vostarg discover the Cynder Peaks. It proves their salvation, for here can be found ur-gold and Magmadroth eggs in abundance. Urgom-Grimnir founds Furios Peak, which henceforth serves as the holdfast of the Vostarg. The practice of dispatching Runesons to found offshoot lodges begins anew.

MADNESS OF THE GLIMMERLUST

The Fyrdhand lodge are the first to succumb en masse to the glimmerlust. Maddened by greed, they launch a series of raids against fellow Fyreslayers, even desecrating forge-temples in their desire for ur-gold. Strengthened by the resources of the Cynder Peaks, the Vostarg lead an alliance of twelve lodges against the Fyrdhand. After a great battle the renegades are defeated, their Runefather buried alive under molten



slag for dishonouring Grimnir. Their leadership in a time of crisis solidifies the Vostarg's growing reputation as the 'All-fathers'.

THE AGE OF SIGMAR

SIEGE OF FURIOS PEAK

Many foes attempt to lay low Furios Peak, but few are as deadly as the warhorde of Agtor Bruul. Forced onto the defensive, Runefather Bael-Grimnir lures the bloodthirsty Khornate warriors into the many chokepoints and hidden traps of his magmahold. Agtor is finally slain when Bael and his chosen sons bait him into an ambush deep within the hold, the Lord of Khorne cut down by elite Hearthguard emerging from all sides.

FIRE IN THE BURROWS

Still reeling from Agtor Bruul's attack, the Vostarg are unprepared when the skaven of Clan Rictus burrow upwards through their fortifications. The ratmen proceed to ransack ancestral tombs and even the Fyreheart forge-temple, abducting the Runefather's favoured son in the process. Thousands of skaven are slaughtered as the Vostarg give chase, but the duardin are unable to recover the captured Runeson.

BLOODKEEP

Further pursuit of the skaven is halted by the arrival of the Hammers of Sigmar. The Heavenhost chamber offer a princely sum in exchange for the Vostarg's aid; they seek to infiltrate Bloodkeep deep within the mountains of the Greatiron Tor and steal the Brass Chain that holds the power to bind the Bloodthirster Skarbrand. Though initially distrustful of the celestial champions, Bael-Grimnir accepts the contract. The journey is treacherous, culminating in a battle against Skarbrand himself and a legion of Khorne's daemons. During the furious fighting that follows, a deep respect is forged between the Vostarg and Stormcasts. Nevertheless, they fail to claim the Brass Chain. Bael-Grimnir refuses payment, stating that the daemon still walks free and thus his oath remains unfulfilled.

TO RECLAIM THE VOSFORGE

The Vostarg fight hundreds of battles during the Realmgate Wars, including the closure of the Brimfire Gate that leads to the Eightpoints. They remain stalwart allies of Order as years pass and Sigmar's cities rise across Aqshy, though the lodge's masters still demand a hefty fee for their services. As the Shyish necroquake shakes the realms, Bael-Grimnir finds his thoughts turn to the lost Vosforge and the glory to be won in its recapture from the clutches of Chaos. The Vostarg begin preparation to avenge their oldest grudge.



WARSCROLLS

This section of The Tome Celestial includes four new warscroll battalions for Vostarg Lodge Fyreslayers and a warscroll for Runefather Bael-Grimnir for use in your games of Warhammer Age of Sigmar. You'll also find a new battleplan – Eruption of War – in which an army of Fyreslayers lays siege to an enemy fortress.

WARSCROLL BATTALION

THE GRAND FYRD OF FURIOS PEAK



When the warriors of the Vostarg gather in great number, the air hums with tectonic fury. Heat crackles against the skin as the Fyreslayers tear through the enemy with shocking fury. From atop a roaring Magmadroth, Runefather Bael-Grimnir exhorts his warriors to greater depths of valour, his sons and counsellors forming the crushing fist of this most-vaunted of lodges.

ORGANISATION

A Grand Fyrd of Furios Peak consists of the following battalions:

- 1 Lords of Vostarg
- 2 Vostarg Warrior Kinbands
- 1 Vostarg Forge Brethren
- 1 Grimwrath Berzerker (Arngard)
- 0-1 Doomseekers

ABILITIES

Ancestral Fury: *The Vostarg strike down their enemies with blazing fury, aspiring to honour the deeds of their ancestors. None are so loathed as the servants of Chaos, who cast the lodge from the Vosforge long ago.*

You can add 1 to hit rolls for attacks made with melee weapons by units from this battalion. In addition, if the target is a **CHAOS** unit, you can re-roll wound rolls of 1 for melee attacks.



WARSCROLL BATTALION LORDS OF VOSTARG

ORGANISATION

A Lords of the Vostarg battalion consists of the following units:

- 1 Bael-Grimnir on Flamespitter
- 1 Vostarg Auric Runemaster (Vaegor)
- 1 Vostarg Battlesmith
- 1 unit of Vostarg Hearthguard Berzerkers

ABILITIES

Strength in Tradition: *The masters of the Vostarg are veterans of countless wars, their fiery demeanours concealing deep wisdom. Each has learned well the lessons of their lodge's history and understands a single opportune moment can assure victory if aggressively seized.*

Once per battle round, a **HERO** from this battalion can use a command ability without a command point being spent.

WARSCROLL BATTALION VOSTARG WARRIOR KINBAND

ORGANISATION

A Vostarg Warrior Kinband consists of the following units:

- 1 Vostarg Auric Runeson
- 3 units of Vulkite Berzerkers

ABILITIES

Mighty Deeds and Blazing Oaths: *Every Vostarg Runeson constantly strives to impress their notoriously stern father. Many will lead a band of warriors that takes heart from the Runeson's daring feats, their fellow Berzerkers inspired to achieve greater glory.*

Add 1 to the Attacks characteristic of melee weapons used by **VULKITE BERSERKERS** units from this battalion while they are wholly within 12" of this battalion's **AURIC RUNESON**.

WARSCROLL BATTALION VOSTARG FORGE BRETHERN

ORGANISATION

A Vostarg Forge Brethren battalion consists of the following units:

- 1 Auric Runesmiter (Dhurgan)
- 3 units of Auric Hearthguard

ABILITIES

Heir of the Fyreheart Temple: *Amongst the Vostarg, Runesmiter Dhurgan is commonly expected to one day claim the Runemaster's mantle. His furious battle-lust resonates in the ur-gold runes of his Hearthguard brethren, unlocking the deepest reserves of their power.*

If a friendly unit of **AURIC HEARTHGUARD** from this battalion is wholly within 12" of Dhurgan when he uses his Magmic Prayer of Runic Empowerment ability, the prayer is answered on a 2+ instead of 3+.

• WARSCROLL •

BAEL-GRIMNIR

ON FLAMESPITTER



Bael-Grimnir is the undisputed lord of the Vostarg, a stern patriarch who has ruled his lodge for centuries. Mounted atop his loyal Magmadroth, Flamespitter, the Runefather's stubborn defiance and battle prowess is an inspiration to those of his kin who fight beside him.



MISSILE WEAPONS	Range	Attacks	To Hit	To Wound	Rend	Damage
Fyresteel Throwing Axe	8"	1	5+	5+	-	1
Roaring Fyrestream	12"	See below		See below		
MELEE WEAPONS	Range	Attacks	To Hit	To Wound	Rend	Damage
Claws and Horns	1"	✱	4+	3+	-1	2
Blazing Maw	1"	1	4+	2+	-2	D3
Hrathling	3"	4	3+	3+	-1	3

DAMAGE TABLE			
Wounds Suffered	Move	Roaring Fyrestream	Claws and Horns
0-3	12"	D6	6
4-6	10"	D6	5
7-9	8"	2D6	4
10-12	7"	2D6	3
13+	6"	3D6	2

DESCRIPTION

Bael-Grimnir on Flamespitter is a single model armed with Hrathling and Fyresteel Throwing Axes.

MOUNT: Flamespitter attacks with its Claws and Horns, Blazing Maw and a Roaring Fyrestream.

ABILITIES

Furious Endurance: Bael-Grimnir's refusal to submit to injury burns with the same white-hot intensity as the sacred runes that adorn his skin.

Roll a dice each time you allocate a wound or mortal wound to this model. On a 6 that wound or mortal wound is negated.

Roaring Fyrestream: Throwing back its head, a Magmadroth can spew a wave of flaming bile that sears through armour as though it were wax.

Do not use the attack sequence for an attack made with a Roaring Fyrestream. Instead, make the dice roll shown on the damage table above. If the roll is equal to or less than the number of models in the target unit, that unit suffers D3 mortal wounds. If the roll is equal to or less than the number of models in the target unit, and the target unit is within 6" of this model, the target unit suffers D6 mortal wounds instead.

Lashing Tail: Magmadroths can use their muscular spiked tails to pulverise scores of lesser prey with a single swipe.

At the end of the combat phase, roll a dice for each enemy unit within 3" of this model. If the roll is less than the number of models in that unit, it suffers D3 mortal wounds.

Volcanic Blood: Magmadroths pulse with the throbbing heat of the volcanic caverns where they make their fyrenests.

Roll a dice each time a wound is allocated to this model that was inflicted by a melee weapon. On a 4+ the attacking unit suffers 1 mortal wound.

Stare Down: Bael-Grimnir's stern gaze can bring doubt to the mind of the most stalwart warrior.

In your hero phase, pick an enemy unit within 3" of this model. Subtract D3 from that unit's Bravery characteristic until the start of your next hero phase.

Hrathling: The traditional weapon of the Vostarg's master, Hrathling's fearsome sharpness and intricate design sees it sunder enemy weapons with frightful ease.

At the end of the combat phase, pick an enemy **HERO** within 3" of this model and roll a dice. On a 5+, pick one of the melee weapons that model is armed with; the weapon cannot be one used by the model's mount (if it has one). Subtract 1 from hit rolls for attacks made with that weapon for the rest of the battle. You cannot pick the same weapon to be affected by this ability more than once per battle.

Flamespitter's Fury: This legendary Magmadroth can incinerate foes at a distance its brethren cannot hope to rival.

Add 6" to the Range characteristic of this model's Roaring Fyrestream if this model did not move in the movement phase of the same turn.

COMMAND ABILITIES

Runefather's Favour: Champions of the Vostarg who catch Bael-Grimnir's eye fight all the harder, each seeking to excel and lay low the mightiest of foes to earn a nod of approval from the legendary Runefather.

You can use this command ability at the start of your hero phase. If you do so, pick 1 friendly **VOSTARG HERO** within 12" of this model, other than this model, and roll a dice. On a 4+ that **HERO** can immediately pile-in and attack with all of the melee weapons it is armed with. You cannot pick the same **HERO** to benefit from this ability more than once per hero phase.

KEYWORDS

ORDER, DUARDIN, MAGMADROTH, FYRESLAYERS, VOSTARG, MONSTER, HERO, AURIC RUNEFATHER



FYRESLAYERS	POINTS
WARSCROLL	
The Grand Fyrd of Furius Peak	90 pts
Lords of Vostarg	120 pts
Vostarg Warrior Kinband	110 pts
Vostarg Forge Brethren	110 pts
Bael-Grimnir on Flamespitter	300 pts



BATTLEPLAN ERUPTION OF WAR

Patience, caution, circumspection - such is not the way of the Vostarg lodge. The lords of Furios Peak are renowned for their hot-blooded temperament, and in battle their massed berzerker warbands surge forth with the speed of a raging pyroclastic flow. Even the most formidable strongholds cannot resist the wrath of the All-fathers. With ur-gold runes shining bright, the lodge's warriors smash through the walls and slaughter those within at a blistering pace.

Whether seeking an ur-gold hoard or fulfilling a mercenary contract, the Vostarg have arrived at an outpost nestled within Aqshy's smouldering wildlands. Their relentless advance has seen the fyrd strike while much of the enemy is still on campaign. Now they must seize their target, before the rest of the defenders can return to relieve the garrison.

REALM OF BATTLE: AQSHY

This battle is fought in Aqshy, the Realm of Fire and uses the Realm of Battle rules in the *Warhammer Age of Sigmar Core Book*.

Do not roll on the Realmscape Feature table for this battle. Instead, use the Clouds of Smoke and Steam rule.

SIEGE WARFARE

Use the Siege Warfare rules from pages 294-295 of the *Warhammer Age of Sigmar Core Book*.

THE ARMIES

Each player picks an army as described in the core rules and the Siege Warfare rules. The Attacker is the Fyreslayers player and their opponent is the Defender.

Each army has a unique command ability, as follows.

ATTACKER'S COMMAND ABILITY

Incinerate these Trespassers!:

The molten fury of the Vostarg is a force to be reckoned with. While the lodge's champions draw breath, your warbands will let nothing stand between them and the fulfilment of their warrior oaths.

You can use this command ability in your hero phase. If you do so, pick 1

friendly unit wholly within 12" of a friendly **HERO**. If the unmodified hit roll for an attack made by that unit is 6, that attack scores 2 hits on the target instead of 1. Make a wound and save roll for each hit.

DEFENDER'S COMMAND ABILITY

Avenge this Insult!: *These avaricious mercenaries have long been a thorn in your side. That they have managed to steal a march upon you is the final straw - strike down the duardin before they have a chance to respond!*

You can use this command ability after setting up a Riposte unit that is wholly within 12" of a friendly **HERO** (see The Riposte). If you do so, that unit can make a normal move.

SET-UP

The territories for both armies are shown on the map below. The players then set up scenery as described in The Stronghold section of the Siege Warfare rules.

Next, pick four different terrain features in the defender's territory to be the attacker's siege targets.





The attacker picks the first and third terrain features; the defender picks the second and fourth terrain features.

The armies can now be set up. The defender must set up their army first. The defending army is split into two contingents: the Garrison and the Riposte. There must be at least one unit in the Riposte for each unit that is included in the Garrison (the army general can be in either contingent).

The defending player can only set up units from the Garrison at the start of the battle – the Riposte will arrive during the battle as described below. Defending units can be set up anywhere wholly within their territory. The attacking army sets up second. Attacking units must be set up wholly within their territory, more than 6" from the defender's territory.

FIRST TURN

The attacking army must take the first turn in the first battle round.

THE RIPOSTE

Roll a dice at the start of each of the defender's turns to see if the Riposte arrive. On a 4-5, up to three units arrive, on a 6 the entire contingent arrives.

Then roll a dice. On a 1-2 those units arrive on the narrow table edge to the right of the defender's territory; on a 3-4 those units arrive on the table edge to the left of the defender's territory (see map). On a 5-6 the defender can choose which table edge (any) the Riposte arrive on.

Units from the Riposte can enter play in their player's movement phase. All of the models in the unit must be set up wholly within 6" of the table edge they arrive on, and

more than 9" from any enemy units. This counts as their move for that movement phase.

SIEGE TARGETS

The siege targets in the defender's territory are controlled by the last player to have any models within 1" of the terrain feature. If both players have models in or on a siege target, it is controlled by the defender.

GLORIOUS VICTORY

The game ends at the end of fifth battle round. The attacker wins a **major victory** if they have captured all four siege targets, and the defender wins a **major victory** if the attacker has control of one or none of the siege targets. If the attacker controls two or three siege targets, the battle is a draw.

COLOURS OF THE VOSTARG

You've just read the Tome Celestial about the Vostarg Lodge, but how do you go about painting an army of them? We've come up with some tips for getting your Fyreslayers painted and ready for the battlefield using Contrast paints to great effect.



Fyreslayers of the Vostarg Lodge are bold, colourful warriors with flaming orange hair and glowing ur-gold runes stamped into their flesh. An army of them can look very striking, whether they're on display in a cabinet or crushing their foes on the battlefield.

This painting guide is designed to help you get your Vostarg Lodge Fyreslayers painted from bare plastic right up to the final highlight. For those of you who want to get your models painted quickly so they're ready for battle, the stages presented on these two pages will help you do just that – your model

will be ready for war in no time. If you want to spend a little longer on your Vostarg Lodge Fyreslayers so that they look just like the one to the left, simply turn the page and carry on following the additional stages provided!

The recesses of the defined musculature of Fyreslayers' skin lends itself to being painted with Contrast paints. Our resident painter James Perry shows you what some Contrast paints look like over different basecoats – you can see the results below. We also tried out the Contrast paints on a Magmadroth – turn the page to have a look at it.

CHOOSE YOUR BASECOAT

Contrast paints are designed to be applied over a light-coloured basecoat. There are two basecoat sprays designed to be used with Contrast paints: Wraithbone and Grey Seer. The basecoat you choose will give a slightly different tone to the Contrast paints when they're applied over them. Wraithbone will provide quite a warm tone, whereas Grey Seer is a little cooler. To the right, you can see what each of the Contrast paint flesh tones looks like over two different basecoat colours. We even painted the Berzerker's crest with a Contrast paint.

For the Fyreslayer in this article, James chose to use the Guilliman Flesh Contrast Paint over a Wraithbone basecoat.

WRAITHBONE



GREY SEER



BATTLE READY

You've chosen your basecoat and skin tone. Now you've got to get the rest of your Fyreslayer painted. The following four stages and basing tips should help you get your model battle ready in no time.

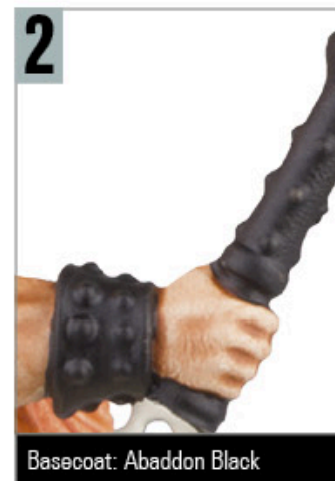
With the skin and hair of your Fyreslayer painted, now's the time to start blocking in the other colours on the model. First, James painted the drake-scale loincloth worn by the Berzerker with Mephiston Red (1). It's easiest to paint this area first and follow with the gold and silver areas around it rather than paint the metals then sneak your brush in between them to paint the red bits.

Next, James painted all the leather and wooden areas with Abaddon Black (2) – in this case the Vulkite Berzerker's vambraces, belt, and the hafts of his axes. The third stage was painting all the functional metal areas with Leadbelcher (3), including the axe heads, the Berzerker's helmet, and the chains hanging from his belt. James then painted all the gold areas with Retributor Armour (4). These areas include the crest of his helm, the trinkets on his belt, and all his ur-gold runes.

Lastly, James washed the silver weapons and chains with Nuln Oil (5) and the gold details with Reikland Fleshshade (6).



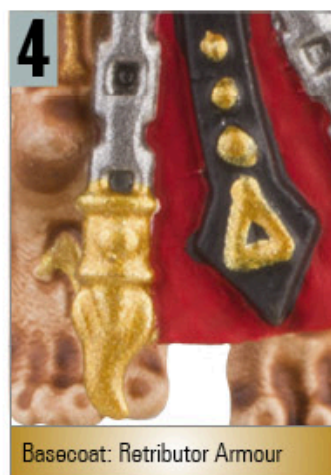
Basecoat: Mephiston Red



Basecoat: Abaddon Black



Basecoat: Leadbelcher



Basecoat: Retributor Armour



Wash: Nuln Oil



Wash: Reikland Fleshshade

BASING YOUR FYRESLAYER



Apply a layer of Troll Slayer Orange.



Cover the base in a layer of PVA glue.



Paint the rock on the base with Abaddon Black.



Apply a thick coat of Mordant Earth.



Let the paint dry thoroughly, and it will crack.



Paint the base rim with Abaddon Black.

Once you've applied all your basecoat colours, you can take a look at basing your model. Like all aspects of painting a miniature, you can put a lot of time and effort into a model's base or just a little – the choice is yours.

While the effect on this lava base may look a little difficult to achieve, it's actually very simple. The Mordant Earth paint cracks as it dries, so if you apply a suitably bright colour to the base first, it will show through between the cracks. We could have used any colour for the lava – pink, blue, green – but orange suits the fiery tone of the rest of the model perfectly.

Top tip: Apply a layer of PVA glue to the base before applying the Mordant Earth – it will make the cracks bigger!

THE NEXT STEP

Once you've applied all your basecoat colours, your Fyreslayers are ready for battle. But surely you don't want to stop painting just yet. Below you'll find the next stages for painting your sons of Grimnir.

With all the base colours and shading applied to the Fyreslayer, James set about applying the highlights. Because James used the Guilliman Flesh Contrast paint, the model's skin tone is actually quite light, so he used pale skin tones for the highlights. Had he used one of the darker Contrast paints, he would have picked darker highlights, too, such as Kislev Flesh. James then painted the next largest area of the model – the bright orange

crest. As we mentioned before with the loincloth, it's much easier to paint the hair before painting the gold helmet details that sit on top of it.

With the skin and hair painted, James highlighted all the little details such as the ur-gold runes, the leather vambraces, and the Vulkite Berzerker's loincloth. The last stage was a quick drybrush of the lava base. Done!

TOP PAINTING TIPS

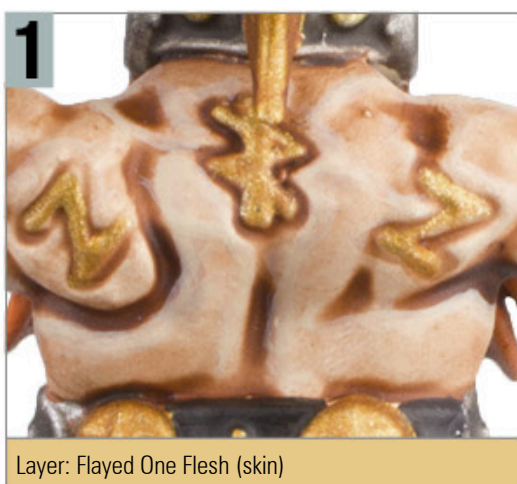
When highlighting the Fyreslayer's skin (1-2), you don't need to go around every muscle with a thick highlight. Try watering your paint down a little and applying the highlights to just the top edges of the muscles. You'll find the water makes the layer paint more translucent, helping it blend better with the skin tone beneath.

While James applied layers of paint to the hair (3-4), you can, if you wish, drybrush it with the Kindleflame Dry paint. The result is just as impressive.

Use an XS Artificer Layer Brush for the small gold and silver details (5-7). Once you've finished using your metallic paints, clean your brush thoroughly and rinse out your water pot. You don't want your metallic paint water tainting your other colours.

Use an XS Artificer Layer brush for the highlights on the leather and loincloth (8-11). If your edge highlights aren't too neat, don't worry – you can always use the previous colour to tidy up if you make a mistake.

When drybrushing the base (12), make sure there is virtually no paint left on your brush. Otherwise you'll leave grey streaks all through the orange lava. Use an S Dry Brush so as not to get paint on the Fyreslayer.



Layer: Flayed One Flesh (skin)



Layer: Pallid Wych Flesh (skin)



Layer: Fire Dragon Bright (hair)



Layer: Screaming Skull (hair)



Layer: Liberator Gold (gold details)



Layer: Stormhost Silver (fyresteel)



Layer: Stormhost Silver (gold details)



Layer: Dark Reaper (leather)



Layer: Thunderhawk Blue (leather)



Layer: Evil Sunz Scarlet (loincloth)



Layer: Fire Dragon Bright (loincloth)



Drybrush: Administratum Grey (base)

USING CONTRAST PAINTS ON A MAGMADROTH

The stages shown on the previous three pages are perfect for painting a Vostarg Lodge Fyreslayer. But how do you go about painting a Magmadroth? We gave it a go using the new Contrast paints.

Contrast paints really shine on details like scales, so we took advantage of these special properties to paint the mighty Magmadroth. Initially we weren't sure what colours to use, but the kit comes with a few spare parts that we were able to practice our colour scheme on first. We wanted the model to look similar to the one on the Magmadroth box cover – deep red with fiery fins and a glowing chest and tongue.

First, we basecoated the model with Wraithbone spray – the same colour we used on the Vulkite Berzerker to the left. Once the basecoat was dry, we painted the lighter-coloured fins and the glowing effect on the model's chest. Because we wanted to achieve a gradient effect, we layered several Contrast paints over each other, applying the lighter colours first then painting progressively darker colours over the top of them.



TOP PAINTING TIPS
Unlike washes, Contrast paints can be applied pretty thickly and they won't run all over the place. We loaded up an M Base Brush to paint the model's chest and scales. We then mixed a second Contrast paint with Contrast Medium to make the paint more translucent. This helps with colour transition, such as on the fins and chest (2-3). We did the same thing with a third colour to paint the tips of the fins red (4).

We wanted a deep, desaturated red for our Magmadroth, so we applied Gore-grunta Fur first (5-6) to darken the scales. We then applied Flesh Tearers Red straight over the top (7-8).

We used Contrast Medium again to thin the consistency of Black Templar for a smooth transition between the horns (9) and fins (10) of the model.

With all the Contrast paints applied, we applied a layer of Stormshield matte varnish to the model to protect the paint before drybrushing. We then drybrushed all the scales and horns with Screaming Skull (11).

With most of the model painted, all we need to do now is paint in the details such as the saddle, the teeth, and all the ur-gold runes (12).

REIGNITION



In an uncertain time, the hot-blooded Runefather Bael-Grimnir welcomes the familiarity of combat. But battle reveals change is inevitable in this story by Jordan Green.

This could be the one, Bael.'

Behind his thick beard, Bael-Grimnir – Runefather of the Vostarg lodge – suppressed a smile. Around him, the braziers that lined the basalt walls of his private sanctum crackled softly.

'How often have I heard those words over the years?' said Bael, dark eyes focused on the fire flickering in the carved stone hearth. The pleasant warmth prickled his skin, and in the dancing firelight the bright ur-gold runes stamped into the Runefather's flesh glittered. Many words could describe Bael, often muttered by those Runesons who had displeased him – disapproving, obstinate, impossible to please. All were true, when necessity demanded it. Only one who knew him would detect the wry amusement now colouring his demeanour.

'Enough to scowl at them like you always do,' said Grunhilda from her propped-up position in their stately bed. Bael smiled. His Hearthwife knew him well, and vice-versa. He knew when she was teasing him and when she was being sincere. She was doing both now, patting her swollen belly gently.

'I mean it, Bael. This could be the one. Your true heir.' Around them, the lodge's most skilled matrons endeavoured to increase their lady's comfort. The Runefather gently prised a thick fleece from one. She nodded gratefully, leaving Bael to warm it by the fire. As he did so, Bael's gaze returned to Grunhilda, and in his mind's eye, the child within her. It wouldn't be long before his newest son was born. He could not share her hope that this heir would prove a worthy successor. Noticing his hesitancy, Grunhilda added, 'I had a dream. Grimnir told me as much.'

'Did he now?' the Runefather chuckled. With the fleece sufficiently warmed, Bael headed to his pregnant wife's side, slipping it behind her back. 'Well, I cannot argue with that. Though I doubt even Grimnir can see all ends.'

'That's bitterness speaking,' Grunhilda chided. Her strong hand reached out to grasp Bael's wrist, ur-gold runes worked into her flesh catching the light. 'You could not have predicted the Uzkull-Krunken,' she added, her voice softening.

'That is no excuse,' Bael grunted. The necroquake had rocked the realms to their cores. All were still counting the cost, the Vostarg included. 'And what of Sigmar's cities? What of the endless politicking, the lordlings who purchase our strength to intimidate petty rivals? At least in the Age of Chaos, we knew who our foes were.'

'You do not mean that,' Grunhilda insisted. Her grip remained strong. In his heart, Bael knew she was right. With an apologetic grunt he pulled away.

'I must go. There are contracts to consider.'

'Of course there are,' Grunhilda nodded. 'You shouldered that burden when you took up the lodge's grandaxe.'



The clash of arms filled the throne hall. The chamber's heart was dominated by a ring lined with carmine Aqshian fyesalts. A murmured magmic invocation from an attending Zharrgrim priest saw those salts catch ablaze, forming a circle of flame that trapped the fighters until one yielded.

At the end of the hall, atop a dais of tiered steps, stood the Fyrethrone. Its ruby-encrusted flanks shone crimson in the light cast from flaming braziers hung from the vaulted ceiling. It was only right that the Vostarg's seat of power overlooked a place of conflict. They alone bore the name of one of the legendary first-forged lodges. That legacy carried expectation.

Bael brooded as his councillors read him the day's litany of proposed mercenary contracts. Many he accepted. Others he declined, for reasons of honour or insufficient payment. Always, he wondered what those seeking his warriors' services were not telling him.

Within the flaming arena fought two of his many sons, Broki and Lonholf. A crowd watched them, each duardin bellowing support for their favourite. Bael observed, his expression stern. Broki let out a shout as he lunged forward, swinging his axe

two-handed. Ur-gold runes glowed as he drew upon their might. The blow was powerful but lacked consideration for the smaller and lighter foe. Lonholf dodged back; Broki's over-committal had left an opening in his guard, and for a moment Bael wondered whether Lonholf would take it. Instead, he continued edging around his brother warily. Too cautious. Neither would be named Bael's heir at this rate.

Bael briefly entertained the notion of knocking them both flat on their backsides with his grandaxe. Perhaps instead he would fight them bare handed – maybe that would provide an honest challenge to wipe away his doubts about this new era.

One petition caught his attention. Bael raised a silencing hand.

'The wizard? Again?'

'Magister Maerilla is persistent, Runefather,' said Targaz, the Vostarg's master of oaths. 'This is her fifty-second request to study the runic—'

'No,' Bael growled, slamming a clenched fist against the Fyrethrone's armrest. 'No, no, a thousand times no! Vulcatix's blood, we are warriors, Targaz! Not relics for the manlings to gawp a—'

'Father!'

The stench of cinder faded as another Runeson, Frollof, approached at haste.

'Word from the Brynhold, sire! Orruk clans have been sighted on the move. In a week's time, the Brynholda will be beset by a horde of urk!'

'What?' Bael asked, suddenly intrigued. Brynhold was one of the many vassal-outposts of the Vostarg across Aqshy. The lodge could not afford its loss, but beyond that, such was just what Bael craved – a good, straightforward war. The Runefather's finger unconsciously tapped one of his many ur-gold runes in anticipation.

'Brynhold is not far from the Onyx Gate,' Battle-lust, smothered under the weight of responsibility, kindled in Bael's breast once more. 'We can make it. It will be tight, be we can make it.'

'Lord,' Targaz grimaced as he detected Bael's growing impetuosity. 'I am not suggesting—'

'Ash blind you, I have spent decades playing the cautious patriarch,' Bael snarled, rising from his throne. 'Constantly am I reminded of the fine line I must walk to safeguard this lodge. But I am Vostarg, and my blood runs hot!' A cheer went up

from those nearby. There was no way Bael could back down now.

Good.

Bael's thoughts strayed momentarily to Grunhilda. As he hefted his grandaxe the Runefather suppressed his guilt at leaving her; his Hearthwife had given him many children before. His being there for one more birth would change little.

'To war, as Grímnir intended!'



The march to Brynhold had been punishing, but if any could endure it, then it was the dauntless warriors of the Vostarg. Passing through one of the Realmgates surrounding Furios Peak, Bael-Grímnir had led his fyrd across the Great Parch. Battle had already been joined outside the Brynhold, Fyreslayers and savage orruks clashing in the caldera below as the royal fyrd massed atop a rocky vantage point.

From astride his loyal mount, Flamespitter, Bael watched the conflict. 'Quite the scrap down there, eh Frollof?'

'Grant me the honour of leading the attack, father,' the Runeson answered from atop his own Magmadroth. 'I will shatter them with a single charge!'

Frollof's bravado was dented as Bael leant over, clipping his ear.



'Didn't you hear me before, boy? I won't be denied the first honest battle we have fought since the great death-quake!' The Runefather's hand soon came to rest on his son's shoulder. 'Our kin look to me as Grimnir's heir, lad. I must always strive to prove worthy of that. Give me one chance to feel like a warrior again ... away from Targaz's nagging.'

Frollof grinned, brief acrimony forgotten. Bael turned to the rest of his retinue. 'How strike the runes, Dhurgan?'

'Same as before, lord,' the Runesmiter replied from behind his fyresteel mask. 'Something has dogged our steps these last few days. Another army, more orruks, I know not, but it will be on us soon.'

Bael swiftly dispatched a band of runners to investigate. If these pursuers sought to trap the Vostarg, they would soon realise their mistake.

'Grimnir's blessing upon he who claims the most heads!' the Runefather cried, raising his ancient grandaxe, Hrathling. 'Vostargi garaz!'

'Vostargi garaz!' The Vostarg swept forth like a burning avalanche, a tide of tough duardin flesh and bright orange hair. To Bael's delight, the orruks responded in kind, turning to face this new attack with a bass roar of 'Waaagh!'

Bael spearheaded the charge, ur-gold runes responding to the sonorous chants of the Zharrgrim. The Runefather revelled in the divine strength filling every sinew. Flamespitter's charge impacted the enemy like a battering ram. Lava shot from the Magmadroth's maw, incinerating a mob of boar-riding orruks.

A barbarous greenskin ran forwards brandishing a flint axe, hurling himself at the Magmadroth. Flamespitter's claw caught the Bonesplitter in midair. With a dismissive growl the creature tightened the vice-like grip, shredding the orruk in a shower of gore.

Bael fought no less ferociously. Hrathling swung with blistering speed, lopping off limbs and shattering rib cages as more orruks closed in. Crude arrows glanced from Flamespitter's scaled hide. One thudded into the Runefather's bicep; he grunted, snapping the missile in twain before discarding it.

From the mass of orruks charged a Bonesplitter champion, covered in tattoos and carrying a colossal stone axe. Each swing of the weapon bisected another Fyreslayer who attempted to bar the orruk's path. Soon the warleader had fought to Flamesplitter's side, axe slamming into the Magmadroth. Scalding blood covered the orruk as recompense; the stench of burning green flesh reached Bael's nostrils as the Bonesplitter howled in furious pain. As the orruk blindly launched another attack, Bael lashed out with Hrathling. His first blow intercepted the crude axe, shattering it with a savage twist. The second saw the orruk boss's head struck cleanly off.

One moment a triumphant cry was on Bael's lips. The next, he and Flamesplitter were blasted backwards by an explosion of green light. The duardin patriarch grunted, recovering his weapon and using it to painfully rise from where he had landed. As his vision cleared, the Runefather saw his Magmadroth lying stricken a short distance away. Briefly he feared the worst, but soon Flamesplitter began to rise, set upon by a mob of hooting orruks clad in scale-hide loincloths.

Bael knew that Flamespitter could take care of itself; it was the orruks who were in trouble. A grunting snarl distracted the Runefather. Through the melee came a loping simian shape, clutching a staff topped with a corvid skull. Manic green light overflowed from behind its wooden mask. The gibbering shaman danced from foot to foot, swinging its stave in erratic circles. Green magic seeped from the staff, forming a viscous cloud around the shaman.

Underfoot, the ground shifted violently, undulating with primal anger. Bael's eyes widened as the green cloud solidified into a pair of titanic jaws.



They snapped furiously as they grew in size and frenzy, streaking closer to the Runefather. A malignant sentience clung to the apparition, and Bael knew that it represented some new, deadly form of magic.

Internally, Bael raged. Not even the orruks could give him an honest fight. Perhaps such had always been a foolish dream. Perhaps there was simply no place for the old ways.

Yet even as Bael braced himself before the magical jaws that sought to devour him, death's grasping talons lost their grip on the Runefather. With a frustrated howl, the ravenous spell's energies dissipated seconds before they could consume the duardin. Bael paused in wary confusion, but none were more bemused than the shaman. Howling in frustration and violently shaking its staff, the shaman did not notice the incoming fireball that sailed in over Bael's head until it struck the orruk's chest. The shaman's burnt body was hurled unceremoniously out of sight.

'When I heard the orruks were marching I thought I'd find you here, honoured Runefather,' came a wry female voice from over Bael's shoulder. 'Though I wish you'd taken some rest on the way. We've been on your trail for days now.'

Still clutching H Rathling, Bael turned. Before him stood a human female clad in bright robes. Crimson flame-tattoos snaked across her dark face and arms. Behind her came an entire Freeguild battalion. Their crack of black-powder shot saw ranks of Bonesplitters crumple, while wedges of Demigryphs ridden by gallant knights trampled the orruks. Vostarg and Free People fought together in tacit alliance, hacking down the foe with renewed strength.

'It was you that Dhurgan's runes spoke of,' Bael deduced, his tone guarded. 'It seems that I am in your debt—'

'Maerilla. Magister-Supreme of Vandium. At your service.' The human mage gave a small bow. As Flamesplitter burst from the press of orruks that had mobbed it, battered and bleeding but roaring defiantly, the Runefather nodded.

'You assisted me,' Bael said, 'against that ... thing.'

'A phantasm of the Arcanum Optimar,' Maerilla explained. Though she attempted to hide it, the mage leant heavily against her staff. Undoing the orruk's spell had drained her, Bael realised, the resultant magical backlash proving potent. Yet she had come to his aid anyway. 'But it was your charge that broke the horde's back, my lord. Without your warriors' efforts, Brynhold would have fallen already.'

The Runefather considered her words, and her deeds. Maybe the isolationist tenets of his people had blinded him. Heroism could still be found, even in this dark era. Maerilla seemed to detect the Runefather's thoughtfulness. She smiled impishly.

'So,' she said, 'does this mean you'll reconsider my request to study the runes used by your warriors?' In response, Bael grinned.

'Don't push it, lass.'



That night, bawdy Freeguild war-songs mixed with ancestral duardin chants while the bodies of the orruks immolated on great smoking pyres. In recognition of the humans' contribution – duardin stubbornness would never accept 'assistance' – Vostarg warriors were dispatched to defend Vandium for a steady influx of gold. Mercenary business never ceased, but perhaps there was something to be said for selling their strength to the deserving. It provided the Runefather plenty to consider on the return journey, at least.

Furios Peak, however, provided one last surprise.

Bael ran almost the entire length of the Magmahold to his chambers, barely slowing as the gold-encrusted doors of his private chambers loomed up to meet him. A single heavy shove slammed them both open.

The matrons who were crowded around the bed swiftly pulled back. Amidst the crumpled sheets and stacked pillows, Grunhilda smiled, exhausted. In her arms she rocked a swaddled lump.

'Your latest heir, my Runefather,' she offered, holding out the bundle. Bael hesitated before stepping closer and taking it in his own strong arms. The Runefather reached up, moving the fabric from the face of the tiny figure within.

Within the swaddling cloth the infant slept soundly. Soft skin covered a moon-shaped face.

Not a son. A daughter.

Bael's look of shock was soon replaced by a smile, a bone-deep certainty about the child's destiny filling him. The Runefather's coarse fingertips brushed over the sleeping girl's cheek.

The Mortal Realms had changed. Perhaps it was only right that he, and his lodge, change with them.

