

WARHAMMER
FANTASY ROLEPLAY

TM

SHADES OF EMPIRE



ORGANISATIONS OF THE OLD WORLD

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Writing and Design: *Eric Cagle, David Chart, Steve Darlington,
Andrew Law, Jody Macgregor, and Chris Pramas*

Development: *Chris Pramas* Editing: *Evan Sass*

Graphic Design and Art Direction: *Hal Mangold*

Proofreading: *Scott Neese & Darron Bowley*

Cover Art: *Pat Loboyko* Interior Art: *Andy Law, Eric Lofgren, John Wigley*

Cartography: *Andy Law*

Senior WFRP Developer: *Jay Little*

Managing Developer: *Michael Hurley*

Publisher: *Christian T. Petersen*



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1975 West County Road B2
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USA

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— TABLE OF CONTENTS —

| | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|----|----------------------------------|----|------------------------------|----|----------------------------------|-----|
| INTRODUCTION | 2 | Symbols and Signs..... | 33 | The Grey Order | 68 | Enemies..... | 94 |
| CHAPTER I: | | Membership..... | 33 | Sample Mentor: | | Sample Mentor | 94 |
| ALTDORF DOCKERS | 3 | Recruitment..... | 34 | Markus Fischer..... | 68 | Sample Location: | |
| Player's Section | 3 | Member Benefits | | Sample Location: | | The Golden Eagle Inn | 95 |
| Purpose | 4 | and Responsibilities..... | 35 | The Hut in the Hedge..... | 69 | Using the Organisation..... | 97 |
| History | 5 | GM's Section..... | 36 | Using the Hedgefolk..... | 71 | Plot Hooks | 98 |
| Structure | 8 | Secrets of the Dreamwalkers..... | 36 | Plot Hooks | 71 | CHAPTER VIII: THE | |
| Goals and Motives | 8 | Allies..... | 37 | CHAPTER VI: | | QUINSBERRY LODGE..... | 99 |
| Symbols and Signs..... | 9 | Enemies..... | 38 | THE IMPERIAL NAVY | 72 | Player's Section | 99 |
| Membership..... | 9 | Sample Mentor | 38 | Dark Tidings..... | 72 | Purpose | 99 |
| Recruitment..... | 9 | Sample Location: | | Player's Section | 73 | History..... | 100 |
| Member Benefits | | Bertholdt's Inn | 39 | Purpose | 73 | Structure | 102 |
| and Responsibilities..... | 10 | Using the Dreamwalkers..... | 40 | History..... | 73 | Goals and Motives | 103 |
| GM's Section | 10 | Plot Hooks | 40 | Structure | 76 | Symbols and Signs..... | 103 |
| Allies..... | 10 | CHAPTER IV: THE | | Goals and Motives | 80 | Membership..... | 104 |
| Enemies..... | 11 | GLORIOUS REVOLUTION OF | | Symbols and Signs..... | 81 | Recruitment | 104 |
| Sample Mentors | 11 | THE PEOPLE (REFORMED) . | 41 | Membership..... | 81 | Member Benefits | |
| Sample Location: | | Player's Section | 41 | Recruitment..... | 82 | and Responsibilities..... | 105 |
| The Floating Bloat | 14 | Purpose | 42 | Member Benefits | | GM's Section | 106 |
| Using the Altdorf Dockers..... | 15 | History..... | 42 | and Responsibilities..... | 82 | Secrets of the Organisation..... | 106 |
| Plot Hooks | 15 | Structure..... | 45 | GM's Section | 82 | Allies..... | 107 |
| CHAPTER II: | | Goals and Motives | 46 | Secrets of the Navy | 82 | Enemies..... | 108 |
| BROTHERS OF HANDRICH . | 16 | Symbols and Signs..... | 47 | Imperial Sea Lords | 82 | Sample Mentor: | |
| Player's Section | 17 | Membership..... | 47 | Marienburg | 83 | Sir Bullywick Applebag..... | 108 |
| Purpose | 17 | Recruitment..... | 48 | Allies..... | 84 | Sample Location: Altdorf's | |
| History..... | 17 | Member Benefits | | Enemies..... | 84 | Quinsberry Lodge | 109 |
| Structure..... | 18 | and Responsibilities..... | 48 | Sample Mentor | 84 | Using the Organisation..... | 111 |
| Goals and Motives | 19 | GM's Section..... | 49 | Sample Location: | | Plot Hooks | 112 |
| Symbols and Signs..... | 19 | Secrets of the GRP..... | 49 | The Stone Frigate..... | 85 | CHAPTER IX: | |
| Membership..... | 20 | Allies and Enemies..... | 50 | Using the Organisation..... | 87 | ROADWARDENS | 113 |
| Recruitment..... | 20 | Sample Mentors..... | 51 | Plot Hooks | 87 | Player's Section | 114 |
| Member Benefits | | Sample Location: The | | CHAPTER VII: THE | | Purpose | 114 |
| and Responsibilities..... | 21 | Penderson Brewery | | KNIGHTS OF MAGRITTA... 88 | | History..... | 114 |
| GM's Section..... | 21 | Printing House | 52 | Estalians Unite!..... | 88 | Structure..... | 116 |
| Secrets of the Brothers..... | 21 | Using the GRP..... | 54 | Player's Section | 89 | Goals and Motives | 117 |
| Allies..... | 22 | Plot Hooks | 54 | Purpose | 89 | Symbols and Signs..... | 117 |
| Enemies..... | 22 | CHAPTER V: HEDGEFOLK ... 55 | | History..... | 89 | Membership..... | 117 |
| Sample Mentor | 23 | Player's Section | 56 | Structure..... | 90 | Recruitment | 118 |
| Sample Location: | | Purpose | 56 | Goals and Motives | 90 | Member Benefits | |
| Jacob's Imports | 25 | History..... | 56 | Symbols and Signs..... | 90 | and Responsibilities..... | 118 |
| Using the Brothers | | Structure..... | 58 | Membership..... | 91 | GM's Section | 120 |
| of Handrich..... | 27 | Goals and Motives | 60 | Recruitment..... | 91 | Secrets of the Roadwardens..... | 120 |
| Plot Hooks | 27 | Symbols and Signs..... | 60 | Member Benefits | | Allies..... | 121 |
| CHAPTER III: | | Membership..... | 61 | and Responsibilities..... | 92 | Enemies..... | 121 |
| DREAMWALKERS..... | 28 | Recruitment..... | 61 | GM's Section..... | 92 | Sample Mentor | 122 |
| Player's Section | 29 | Member Benefits | | Secrets of the Knights..... | 92 | Sample Location: | |
| Purpose | 29 | and Responsibilities..... | 62 | The Luccini Academy..... | 93 | Far Riders' Keep | 123 |
| History..... | 29 | GM's Section..... | 66 | The Carcassonne Academy..... | 93 | Using the Organisation..... | 124 |
| Structure..... | 31 | Secrets of the Hedgefolk..... | 66 | The Nuln Academy..... | 93 | Plot Hooks | 125 |
| Goals and Motives | 31 | Allies..... | 66 | Allies..... | 94 | | |
| | | Enemies..... | 67 | | | | |

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Shades of Empire*. This book attempts to illuminate various aspects of life in the Empire by looking at some of the organisations that call it home. They range from street level gangs like the Altdorf Dockers to Imperial institutions like the Roadwardens. Adding one, some, or all of these organisations to your campaign can add depth and complexity to your game. They can serve as allies or enemies to the PCs, and provide the sparks for many adventures.

Shades of Empire is divided into nine chapters, each of which details an organisation. Inside each chapter a Player's Section provides information that is safe for players to know. Player

Characters can join any of the organisations and many offer new careers. There are benefits and drawbacks to joining an organisation, as one would expect. The GM's Section of the chapter details the secrets that players should not know. Such revelations are better left for discovery in play. GM information includes sample mentors for PCs, adventure hooks, secret histories, and example locations.

Both players and Game Masters should find *Shades of Empire* a useful resource. Just one of the organisations contained herein can provide a framework for an entire campaign. You may also find yourself inspired to make up new organisations of your own. There's always more room in the shadows.

CHAPTER I: ALTDORF DOCKERS

ALTDORF, 2051 I.C.

Altdorf was not a pleasant-smelling place at the best of times. Even its own inhabitants had taken to calling the city on the river Reik “The Great Reek,” which said something about the typical Altdorfer’s sense of civic pride. Sergeant Lang, who had recovered from civic pride the same way other people recovered from the Galloping Trots, was a connoisseur of Altdorf’s various odours. He knew the fish and eel smells of Marketplatz, the smell of burning traitors from Crackle Hill, and the smells of booze, desperation and, oddly, cheese that permeated the Street of Many Taverns. Today the city was teaching him a new smell: a mixture of river mud and death.

Refugees had been cramming themselves into the city for weeks and Sergeant Lang was one of the Watchmen given the impossible task of finding places for all of them to stay. The Temples and hospices of Shallya filled quickly and nobody wanted them in the Palast District so they’d had to be squeezed into tenements behind the docks. Whilst Sergeant Lang was convincing families of ten to bunk down in rooms made for two, he’d heard the stories of what they were running from. Soon, everyone in Altdorf had. They were running from the dead.

Count Vlad von Carstein, the unkillable despot rumoured to be a Vampire, was leading an army of corpses and headed their way. When the city’s panic subsided enough for reason to return, preparations began. Archers lined the walls day and night—especially night. The gates were locked. A moat was dug and the Reik was diverted to fill it.

When the channels that divided the city dried up, every piece of garbage at their bottom was revealed. Among that junk were bodies. This was why Sergeant Lang was wading through river mud followed by Officer Carlstadt, who was writing down the details of the dead in his sketchy handwriting and slinging their carcasses into the cart so they could be dispatched to the Temple mortuary. This area of riverbed, just off the Beloved of Manaan dock, was as crowded with corpses as were the nearby tenements with the living. The refugees had brought old feuds and old allegiances with them and the same fights continued with new names. The ones calling themselves the Fish had obviously been dumping the evidence in this patch of the river. Several unsolved cases were about to be tidied up and a few new ones discovered.

Sergeant Lang kicked at a rotting heap in the mud. “So that’s what happened to Willi the Hook.”

“How can you tell who it is, Sergeant?” asked Carlstadt.

Lang prodded at an arm bone that ended not in a hand, but in a large, rusted docker’s hook, crudely attached.

“Write him down and chuck him in, Carlstadt. And Theo the Trivet here, too.”

“What’s a trivet, Sarge?”

Lang prodded with his muddy boot at another arm without a hand. “One of those,” he said. “Anyone can gut you with a hook. Using a trivet—that showed Theo had class. Class lasts, but these Hooks and Fish won’t. It’ll all blow over inside of a year, you mark my words.”

— PLAYER’S SECTION —

The legendary strength of Altdorf’s high, white walls—15-foot thick in places—has attracted citizens in times of war and desperation going back 2000 years. Each new influx of citizens to the city has had to start from the bottom, and in Altdorf the bottom goes a long way down. The city’s guilds and colleges control the best work and require fees, and the nobility isn’t something you can just sign on for. Getting your name recognised on the Civic List of Altdorf isn’t easy either, as those who have lived there half their lives without managing it can tell you. On the docks though, almost anyone is welcome. Strong arms or loose morals will find you work where the streets are paved with ordure.

The Altdorf waterfront stretches from the spot where the channels of the Reik and Talabec enter the city walls to where they leave them, including many lesser channels that branch away between the islands the city is built on. However, when local people talk about the docks of Altdorf, they are usually referring to one of three main areas.

The Reiksport is a deep-water harbour built outside the walls to the north of the city. Here ocean-going vessels too large for the narrow river channels and low trade bridges of the city can dock safely. The Greatships of the Imperial Navy start and end their journeys here, as do explorers, the larger merchant ships, and those trying to avoid the city taxes. The official dockworkers of the Guild of Stevedores,



nicknamed the Wharf Rats, control most of the docks of the Reiksport as well as the shanty-town that has grown up around it to service the needs of sailors on shore leave.

The Old Docks were the original port back when the city was just a town that still remembered being a village that went by the name of Reikdorf. Now, the Old Docks are largely abandoned in favour of the newer, larger, and better-maintained harbour area, and the slums of the Reikerbahn stretching behind them are a run-down maze of note only to smugglers and rogues. The dock gang known as the Fish are the only ones who bother working the wharfs of this area.

The Docklands is a district behind the Altdorf Pool, which stretches upstream from Three Toll Bridge. This is the deepest harbour point between the river gates, where most river barges and some ocean-going vessels dock. The Docklands is where most of the city's dockers live, a ghetto close enough to the Street of a Thousand Taverns to cause frequent trouble. The entire enclave is controlled by the dockers' gangs—the Hooks and the Fish mainly—and is separate enough to have its own regiment of the City Watch and its own by-laws. The Docklands is a ghetto, but a crowded and thriving one unlike the hopeless expanse of the Reikerbahn.

In the Docklands new arrivals to the city can find cheap accommodation in crowded tenements that would be fire-traps if fewer of them collapsed before they had a chance to catch fire, and they can also find work with the dock gangs. The gangs offer these immigrants something else as well: identity and purpose.

PURPOSE

The docks bring into proximity a combination of poverty and a breed of strong-armed, hard-working, and hard-drinking men that leads to the formation of gangs as if by some arcane law of nature. The dockworkers are often immigrants who have left behind their families to find work and safety in the city, though they usually only find one or the other rather than both.

The work gangs offer a replacement for the familial ties left behind, bonds of brotherhood that allow the dockers to redefine themselves and find a place in the city. Vital to a sense of belonging is exclusion—a club isn't a proper club until you've decided who isn't allowed in it. The rivalry between gangs is essential to their existence; a Hook hates the Fish because it makes him who he is as much as which Snotball team he favours or which tavern he drinks in.

*A good punching 2 gc
Both eyes blackt, punching no extra 3 gc
Nos and jaw broke 4 gc
Blackjackt out 5 gc
Ear chood off 10 gc
Stabt in the leg 12 gc
Stabt elswere pon the body 15 gc
Sent for a swim 20 gc*

—PRICE GUIDE FOR SERVICES FOUND ON
HALBERD HAROLDT OF THE FISH UPON HIS ARREST

HISTORY

When Altdorf was still young the word “gang” was just what the work crews of the docks were called and there was no pejorative sense attached to the word. That changed as the settlement grew and the bickering between work gangs over who worked which wharf and who charged the fairer amount to unload a ship grew into brawls that spilled into the streets.

The aldermen saw a simple solution to a problem that threatened their growing trade industry. By offering the largest of these gangs, a crew called the Wharf Rats, the backing of the council and their own official status as a guild, they brought the docks back under control. You either signed on for an apprenticeship with the Wharf Rats or you didn't work. The Guild of Stevedores grew to be a vital part of the city's economy and coincidentally they were much easier to tax than the disparate gangs.

This state of peace on the docks continued until 2051, when Altdorf was flooded with refugees from the provinces that were threatened by the advancements of the army of Vlad von Carstein. The city groaned and loosened its belt, admitting hundreds of impoverished and frightened folk from miles around. These new additions to the city were mostly housed in the Docklands. It was not nearly large enough for all of them and in the overcrowded tenements starvation and disease soon became common. Old provincial feuds returned and fresh ones started as the citizens fought for food and space and work. The Guild of Stevedores refused to take on the new labourers who flooded the docklands and so the workers were forced to organise themselves. Gangs flourished again, at first divided along familial and geographic lines, then simply in opposition to each other.

As the final ships bearing emergency supplies unloaded their precious cargo in Altdorf, unscrupulous traders and smugglers also unloaded their wares, planning to sell basic produce at highly inflated prices. The Guild of Stevedores refused such work and so it fell to the independent dockers, willing to work for whatever meagre pay they could get, to unload these illicit cargos. Fights broke out between rival work crews and factional lines solidified.

Some of these dockers took to wielding the hooks they used to unload cargo as weapons; they became a feared gang known afterwards as the Hooks. Other crews, who worked together to pilfer cargo as they unloaded it—often with allies waiting in the water to salvage whatever they “accidentally” dropped overboard—became known as the Fish. Other, smaller gangs emerged and subsided, but the Hooks and Fish were dominant even then. While the army of Vlad von Carstein went to war with the city, the gangs of the docks were at war with each other.

The fighting did not stop when the siege was lifted. The Guild of Stevedores refused to change its requirements that

THE NIGHT OF THE BLACK WALTZ

During the period in which the Colleges of Magic were being founded in Altdorf, many unexplained events are rumoured to have taken place. In an effort to keep the population calm and prevent them from attempting to lynch the Magisters who now walked among them, these events were covered up. What resulted was a rich tapestry of myths, including many stories of events that almost certainly did not occur. Whether there is truth to stories of entire streets shifting from one side of the city to the other of their own accord, or whether the Docklands really danced a black waltz, will probably never be known for certain.

The story goes that as the fog rose from the river on a night when Morrslieb, the Chaos Moon, was full, many of the citizens of the Docklands took to the streets as one, gliding through a complicated series of occult dance steps, swapping partners and avoiding gawping bystanders with a grace they had never known before. Unable to stop, they danced faster and faster to wild pipes only they could hear, on through the night. Those who tried to stop them or pull them free were ignored or trampled underfoot as the dancers filled the streets until, shortly before sunrise, they collapsed in exhaustion.

From out of the thick pre-dawn fog, Priests of Morr appeared alongside armed men dressed in black. They moved through the crowds in search of those who had died during the night's events, whether they were stamped to death in the frenetic, swirling dancing or their hearts gave out from the strain. The bodies were pinned to the grounds with stakes, blessed, and decapitated before being taken away on plague carts. They were never seen again.

The official story in the city's broadsheets was that drunken revelry and rioting had broken out in the Docklands, but the legend of the night of the black waltz persisted. Whatever it was that resulted in the deaths and disappearances that night, it took the heart out of the Altdorf mob at a convenient time.

members be officially listed on the Great Civic List of Altdorf, serve an apprenticeship, and pay their way into being an official Wharf Rat so the Hooks and Fish became alternative and unofficial guilds of their own. They took a small portion of their members' wages and guaranteed them a certain amount of work, sometimes competing with the Wharf Rats for jobs and sometimes sending crews to do the kind of work the Guild refused. The waterfront slowly became split along hidden seams. The regular traders learned which wharf was owned by the Hooks now and could save you paying the full excise if you chose to dock with them, and that the Old Docks were the place to go if you didn't want your cargo of Bretonnian brandy examined too closely.

INDEPENDENT DOCKERS

Some of the trade houses doing business in Altdorf try to save money by employing their own private dockers rather than relying on the gangs and guild for labour. This typically results in a quick and violent visit from dockers who specialise in demonstrating that the skills of their organisation go much further than just loading and unloading cargo. In spite of this risk, the combination of greed and unemployment in the city means they carry on. It's an open secret that there are certain taverns along the waterfront—especially the wharves on the lesser river channels away from the deeper harbour point of the Altdorf Pool—where labourers who aren't gang members drink their days away, waiting for a freelance foreman to blow his whistle to summon them to a brief burst of work. These dockers, though typically unskilled, work fast. Knowing that they risk a beating or worse if caught, they finish quickly, collect their paltry pay, and return to drinking their lives away with cheap gin.

Over the years the new gangs once again became an accepted and integrated part of Altdorf. The Fish dipped their fins into all of Altdorf's smuggling business and from there into the fencing and brokering of exotic and illegal goods. The Hooks snagged corrupt watchmen in their schemes with bribery and blackmail and were snagged in turn, lending their muscle as a favour and collecting that debt with interest, solidifying their position as one of the city's premier organisations of thugs and heavy men. When Mannfred von Carstein besieged the city in 2132 in a grim mirror of his forebear's attack, the influx of refugees again went to the Docklands and again flooded the ranks of the Hooks and Fish.

Other gangs of Altdorf, like the overland smuggling ring run by coachmen of the Ratchett line who called themselves the Whips, and the beggar kingdom of window-fishers and junk traders who were known as the Rods, briefly came into conflict with the dock gangs over territory and business before being put in their place, which was usually at the bottom of the Reik.

An unlikely and short-lived alliance between the Hooks and the Fish finished off the Whips, who had discovered a sewer entrance leading to the waterfront that allowed them easy access for their raids. A skilfully organised surprise flood sent most of the Whips to the underground river that Altdorf's sewers and drains lead into, their bodies surfacing downstream where it joins the Reik. In an attempt to cement the alliance, the daughter of a Hook war chief and the son of a prominent Fish were allowed to marry and consummate their dock-crossed love. Things soured when the daughter returned to her family bearing bruises, and violence between the two gangs erupted on the wharfs once more.

In 2304 Magnus the Pious's announcement that the Orders of Magic were to be housed in Altdorf caused a city-wide panic. The city's famous mob reacted as it often does by starting a riot known afterwards as the Altdorf Indignation. Various political factions tried to take advantage of the martial law that followed and the dock gangs were among them, organising the slum-dwellers into militias and attempting to spread their domain out of the docklands. This consolidation of power was undermined by an event rarely spoken of that has passed into the mythology of the city as "the night of the black waltz."

When Marienburg seceded from the Empire in 2429 the guilds and trading companies of Altdorf reacted with economic sanctions. The war chiefs of the Fish reacted more pragmatically, sending envoys to the newly independent city and seeding a franchise.

The Marienburg Stevedores and Teamsters Guild maintains such a complete stranglehold on that city's docks that they were unable to set themselves up in the dockworking business, but the Marienburg Fish did succeed in opening up links between the city's smugglers and their Altdorf brethren, ensuring that while legal trade between the cities became limited, illicit trade carried on more smoothly than ever.

By the end of the 25th century tensions between the Hooks and the Fish were at their peak. A simple brawl on the Street of a Hundred Taverns escalated into what the broadsheets dubbed "the Waterfront War." The usual drunken fisticuffs turned into a campaign of battles that terrorised the citizens of the Docklands for five years. When the war chiefs of both the Hooks and the Fish vanished mysteriously, the Waterfront War suddenly reduced in severity, but never truly ended. The vendettas and battles continue on a smaller scale to this day.

During the Waterfront War the Fish found allies in some of the city's revolutionist organisations, in particular the Kislevite Underground, composed of exiles from the Realm of the Ice Queen, and the Artisan's Guild, which had been outlawed for its attempts to unite the craft guilds into a power bloc that would have been far too powerful for the city aldermen to allow. When the city's agitators find a new cause to rally around, the Fish are often there to lend muscle to the arguments.

The Conclave of Light in 2522 brought another influx of new people to the city—not only diplomats and mercenaries, but nobles and gadabouts eager to take part in the social event of the year, firebrand preachers looking to rouse the citizenry to acts of devotion, and ordinary folk looking for a way to make a quick Crown from the other visitors. When Imperial recruiters scoured the docks looking for able-bodied men eager to join the fight against the Storm of Chaos, they found plenty willing to sign up. Members of the Wharf Rats, the Fish, and the Hooks all found themselves side by side in the Free Companies of

thugs and adventurers that were gathered together and sent north to do battle. The bonds forged in war between members of the gangs reduced the enmity between them and might have had a greater effect on the war their brothers were still conducting back home, had more than a handful of the badly trained and barely armed cannon fodder survived to return home. Instead, their uncaring commanders threw their lives away in sacrificial gambits.

THE ALTDORF DOCKERS TODAY

With Emperor Karl Franz kept busy by the war and its aftermath, as well as by his frequent hunting trips, a Marshal has been appointed to fill in for him in the role of Grand Prince of the city. As expected, Marshal Mornan Braun has made all the right noises about cleaning up the docks and getting rid of the gangs, but little progress has been made so far. The *Altdorf Spieler* reports strange events along the wharfs, but as usual there are few in the city's officialdom or the corrupt Dock Watch who care. As usual, only the dockers look out for the dockers, their families, or the other poor citizens who live alongside them on the waterfront. The gangs endure because they serve a purpose and fill a need that has not diminished over the years.

STRUCTURE

The Hooks and the Fish share similar structures because both are based on the standard work gang. Each crew has their own wharf and is made up of approximately half a dozen dockers, supervised by a foreman. The foremen of the largest crews are elevated to the rank of war chief; of these there are only ever a handful. The war chiefs usually defer to the chief with the strongest crew if there is ever a need for a single leader to make a decision that affects all of them, but fights among crews are not unheard of.

As an official city guild the Wharf Rats have a standard guild structure. The Guild Master is at the top with a board of masters to advise him, the journeymen make up the ranks of the members' assembly, and the apprentices are at the very bottom. Their crews are of the same size as those of the gangs.

GOALS AND MOTIVES

Each of the dock gangs works for the betterment of their slice of society, maintaining a small empire of their own. Though they may seem altruistic at times, using their funds to look after the families of their members and improve the living conditions of everyone in their neighbourhoods, it's essentially greed that motivates them. A bigger portion of

the pie for their members and affiliates necessarily means a smaller slice for someone else and each of the gangs is ruthless in pursuing that end.

The Wharf Rats have long wanted to drive the Hooks and Fish out of the city, but so far have only succeeded in keeping most of them out of the Reiksport. Their legal status as a guild hampers the Wharf Rats, preventing them from openly breaking the law in their attempts to push the gang-affiliated dockers back, while making them a target for the city's other guilds.

The Hooks see themselves as upholders of justice, though of course not upholders of the law. With a deluded romanticism they fight for the betterment of their downtrodden people, using either their fists or the cargo hooks they take their name from. When one of the segments of Altdorf needs to be blamed for the latest tax increase or other outrage, real or perceived, the Hooks are among the first to take to the streets against them.

Whether persecuting the city's foreigners, non-humans, or other undesirables, the Hooks are eager vigilantes. The Dock Watch secretly see them as serving a useful purpose, as undesirables who can be turned against the city's other undesirables without making the Watch look bad.

Money motivates the Fish above all else, even more than their love of violence. Unlike the Hooks, they prefer not to deliver a bashing if someone somewhere along the line can't be convinced to pay them for the service. The real masterminds of the underworld are happy to pay the Fish for their work and don't see their slowly expanding criminal empire as much of a threat, at least not yet.

SYMBOLS AND SIGNS

In Altdorf coloured fabric is much more readily available, even to the poor, than it is in other parts of the Empire, so each dock gang favours announcing their membership with a distinctive set of colours. The warm cloth hats called watch caps are the most common item of clothing to be so coloured, but ostentatious dockers sometimes spread the gang colours to their entire outfits.

The Hooks mix slate and blue, the Fish green and yellow (confusingly, the same colours as the robes worn by servants of the Grand Theogonist), and the Wharf Rats brown and red or a blood-and-mud blend of the two. Cloth patches in the colours or bearing the emblems of hooks, fish, or rats are also common. Visitors to the city who unwittingly dress in the wrong colours sometimes meet with violence, whether drowned or cut or simply pummelled into unconsciousness for their dubious fashion sense.

*"I'll sing you a song, a good song of the river,
The rolling, clear river called Reik,
Of a ferry-girl and the man she took with her,
The trouble she had with his pike!"*

—OPENING VERSE OF *THE PIKE OF THE REIK*,
A BAWDY SONG OF THE DOCKS



Tattoos also mark the dockers out, a tradition borrowed from the sailors they come into contact with. The Fish especially enjoy marking themselves this way and have tattooed fish on their bodies, usually somewhere likely to be visible such as their arms. Their war chiefs are also adorned with ink representations of their aquatic namesake across their faces. These permanent declarations of membership prevent members from leaving the gangs, especially to join their opponents. Once a docker, always a docker, as the saying goes.

To mark their territory, wharfs belonging to specific gangs are graffitied with simple pictures of their gang's symbol, just like the patches they wear. The hook-shape is also used as a hand symbol among the Hooks, a statement of solidarity that can be flashed across a crowded bar or used in greeting. Dockers in the Fish often learn the basics of the thieves' secret signs to communicate with each other while working so that they aren't overheard by the cargo's owners, who would only be needlessly distraught to overhear that some of their stock is about to go overboard. Such risks are accepted because of the competitive rates of the Fish.

Another way dockers have of recognising each other is the bawdy songs they sing while working. Simple rhythms, often borrowed from sea shanties, set the speed they work to. The subject matter of these songs can be used to narrow down precisely where a docker works. A careful listener could learn not only which gang someone belongs to, but at which wharf their crew works, by which version of the chorus to *The Woodcutter's Daughter* they sing.

MEMBERSHIP

Dockers are almost universally male. Though there is nothing forbidding a female from joining, it's assumed that most of the women working the docks do so in another capacity. A woman would have to be exceptionally strong and hard-working to prove herself to the proudly masculine dockers. Non-humans are unwelcome, especially among the purist Hooks who frown on foreigners even though they are made up of members of all the Empire's provinces. There are a handful of Dwarfs and Halflings working the docks, mostly in the Guild of Stevedores, but the Dwarf quarter and the Kleinmoot of Altdorf are home to enough of their own gangs that they have no need to join docker gangs. Elves are unsafe even walking the streets of the docklands, let alone attempting to join their gangs.

The typical docker, then, is a young Imperial male, usually from a family that can be traced outside the city, whether from the Reikland countryside or a poorer province. Physical fitness is a must, both for the hard work they endure and the after-hours duties they perform.

RECRUITMENT

Because the Guild of Stevedores is a labour rather than a craft guild, their system of recruitment and apprenticeship is necessarily informal, though not nearly as informal as that practised by the dockland gangs. Four times a year the guild is sent potential apprentices, usually still in their teens,

SOME OTHER NOTABLE GANGS OF ALTDORF

The Cockroach Company

The Cockroach Company are scavengers and bone pickers who collect the waste Altdorf throws out and then find buyers for it—even the excrement can be sold on to tanners. All of the cities of the Old World have junk traders, but Altdorf's are unusual in that they have banded together into a gang to protect their members and drive out competition. They maintain a rubbish-heap headquarters that is well-defended, though the smell, overpowering even compared to the background stench of the city, is enough to keep most at bay.

The Elm Street Mob

The Elm Street Mob contains the docklands' premier brawlers and has connections as far as the Kleinmoot. They are easy to spot, thanks to the mysterious arcane squiggles they draw on the back of their leather jerkins in an attempt to intimidate people.

The Grudge

The Grudge are a Dwarf gang who specialise in pursuing revenge on those who slight the city's Dwarfish population, vandalising businesses who refuse to serve them, protecting the Dwarf quarter, and attacking Elves on sight.

The Inkies

The Inkies are some of Altdorf University's less-privileged students who actually have to study to earn their degrees. They are called Inkies because of the ink stains that invariably adorn their hard-working fingers. The name was given to them as an insult by the League of Karl Franz (see below), but was later adopted as a mark of pride when the Inkies formed a fraternity of their own, which blitzes the League each year in the University debates.

The League of Karl Franz

The League of Karl Franz is Altdorf's oldest student fraternity and has been renamed with each new Emperor for centuries. The League only admits the sons of nobility, who earn their leaguer's jacket by passing a series of secret trials like the Screaming Daisy Exercise and the Nine Pints Test. The stories of their binges, such as their yearly Imminence of Winter wine-drinking contest and the parties they throw in the Dwarf-built tunnels under the city, are legendary.

The Jack-a-Blade Society

The Jack-a-Blade Society are a group of exquisitely dressed rakehells and libertines, young sons of some of Altdorf's richest families who spend their nights slumming it in the city's taverns and spilling blood—blue or otherwise, they aren't choosy.

The Nightfall Boys

The Nightfall Boys are notorious young burglars who favour the merchant's quarter in the city's northeast. Disavowing gang colours, they dress in dark colours that suit their trade.

The Push

The Push are footpads who haunt the waterfront, known for their colourful shoes. Unusually, many of the members are female. The women lure sailors, drunks, and other foolish men into alleyways where they can be beaten and robbed by the rest of the gang.

The Shambles

The Shambles are workers in the slaughterhouse that is one of the few places of legal employment in the Reikerbahn slum. Named after the inn they frequent, they favour using ash from the slaughterhouse fires to blind their opponents. When their slaughterhouse work doesn't pay them enough, they are known to dump buckets of ash from windows and rob those unfortunates they hit.

The Widder Men

The Widder Men are Norse immigrants who fulfil the typical Imperial stereotype of their people as drunken and rapacious berserkers. Their leader is a superstitious man who confronts several seers before making any decision and so the Widder Men have become informal protectors of those who work on the Street of Fortune Tellers.

from families who proudly have their names in the Civic List though they are poor. Many are the sons of existing stevedores and are virtually guaranteed entry. Though this is not an especially prestigious guild, there are still plenty of able-bodied young men for whom a guild apprenticeship is a ticket to a life that doesn't involve being sent to fight foreigners or Beastmen, and the master foremen have plenty of fit and eager workers to examine. They choose the strongest to be their apprentices and teach them the secrets of stopper knots and marlinspikes, and how to steeve a hold that looks like it's already as full as it can get.

The Hooks and the Fish find new recruits by trawling the currents of the Street of a Thousand Taverns, an activity that brings the gangs into constant conflict, which they relish. The crews don't always set out to find new recruits; they set out to have a good night, drink some drinks, and bust some heads, and if anyone they find manages to keep up, they're worthy of joining. A prospective member will impress the crew in a drinking game or a tavern brawl and be dragged along as they find others to harangue or fight, whether rival gangs or slumming rakes or, by the end of the night, inanimate objects that look at them funny. Waking up in the morning with a splitting headache and possibly some new tattoos, the potential recruit will be brought with the crew to the dock for a hard day's work. If he can load or unload a cargo in that state, he's in.

MEMBER BENEFITS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The most obvious benefit of joining the dockers is relatively steady work. The quays of Altdorf are usually busy, though the pay isn't high and there are inevitably gaps when the

river freezes over in winter. The pay is enough to live on, though not well. Membership fees always come off the top, further reducing the shillings in a docker's pocket at day's end and encouraging extra-curricular and extra-legal work to add that little extra.

The kinship between dockers is an important benefit to many; a docker always has drinking companions and fellow brawlers who will protect his back in a fight. Dockers look out for each other and avenge each other if they fall. That's a knife that cuts both ways and PCs who join the dockers will find themselves roped in to even the score whenever a Fish gets hung up on hooks, or a Hook gets weighted with rocks and drowned, or scabs are brought in to work cheaper than the guild rates.

Being the kind of work that stops and starts, it's expected that some dockers will seek work elsewhere part of the year and there's no penalty for travelling, making it perfect work for adventurers. It's usually there when needed and waiting for you when you get back. Though members of the Wharf Rats typically follow the Stevedore to Foreman Career progression (see *The WFRP Companion*), the Hooks and Fish are much less choosy about their members' skill sets. Some are certainly Dockers, but there are many Thugs, Protagonists, Racketeers, Thieves, and Vagabonds working the docks as well, among others.

Another obvious advantage to an adventurer are those six to twelve toughs in your crew who will be willing to throw down on your side when you decide to clean out a tenement infested with Mutants or take on the young lordling and his entourage who beat you up the night before. In situations that require more thoughtful solutions, however, they will be of little use.

— GM'S SECTION —

Many of Altdorf's less-guarded secrets can be found on the docks—the kinds of things that well-informed citizens are likely to know about, though nobody does anything about them. The ease with which a gang of thugs can be hired or an independent work crew put together—and they are often the same thing—is common knowledge to locals. The fact that the Citizens' Vigilance Committees put together by the Watch to encourage community members to deal with crime on their own are just a means of officially endorsing the Hooks delivering a beating to someone the Dock Watch has a dislike for is also a relatively open secret. There are darker and deeper secrets to be found on the waterfront, however.

“Every city of the Empire has shown her true face to me eventually. Waking up in a pool of my own blood on Altdorf's Docklands, having survived being beaten by a Hook who mistook me for a Fish, two Fish who thought I had been fraternising with the Hook, and several members of a small gang called the Scats who were merely following the trend, I saw Altdorf's face. It was not a pretty one.”

— HERBERT RAFFLES, TRAVELLING POET

Something about Altdorf, whether it's the presence of so many wizards or something about the culture of the city's inhabitants, makes it prone to the attacks of serial murderers dubbed “pattern-killers” by the broadsheets. These pattern-killers, each with a different and uniquely horrible manner of dealing with victims, favour the lawless slums like the docks to do their work. Currently, the waterfront is being terrorised by a killer dubbed “Herr Cross” for the X-shaped

slashes found on the victims' bodies, which are cut repeatedly and sometimes bereft of limbs when left to bleed out in back alleys. Current theories among tavern gossipers have it that Herr Cross is either a disgruntled Wharf Rat, a Witch Hunter twisted by

the very Chaos he fought, or a maddened trickster-Priest of Ranald with a grudge against the gangs.

ALLIES

The Hooks flourish due to their alliance with the Dock Watch, who will look the other way when a Fish is gutted or a drunk who wanders down the wrong alley is robbed. The other half of the deal is that the Hooks restrict their activities to the docks and perform necessary vigilante actions on behalf of the Watch. Whenever one of the city's ethnic ghettos or student gangs or coffee-house revolutionist cabals causes trouble, the Hooks are on hand to provide a righteous beating that cannot be traced back to anyone official. For their part, the Hooks are only too happy to help, both out of their warped sense of civic pride and an enjoyment of simple violence.

Those same revolutionist cabals often find themselves calling on their allies within the Fish for retribution. Groups like the exiles of the Kislevite Underground, the worker's rights activists of the Artisan's Guild, and the rebels and agitators of the Popular League Against the Nobility and Taxation and the Glorious Revolution of the People (Reformed) owe the Fish many favours that the dockers are happy to claim when it suits their purposes.

Beyond the Docklands lies the maze-like home of the city's gallows-scum called the Reikerbahn, secretly ruled by the self-styled "Emperor of the Altdorf underworld" known as Herr Klasst. Klasst's organisation is so efficient in its practices and accounting that it is sometimes mockingly called the Thieves' Guild, although the system of checks and balances Herr Klasst maintains and the harsh punishments for those who break the rules means the underworld is run to a higher standard than any actual guild of the city. The Fish are used as a source of thugs and general muscle when Klasst wants to send a message but does not want to deploy his personal assassins. In return, the fences of the Fish do much of their business through Klasst's black marketeers like the famously well-connected Mother Mandelbaum. Klasst's contacts are among the few clients they do not skim from.

The Wharf Rats are closely allied with the Teamsters' Guild, another source of the city's many thugs and bully-boys. Together they go on raids of their rival's territory, which are unofficially sanctioned by their Guild Master though they are explained away as isolated incidents caused by high spirits if the Altdorf Press ask questions. In more formal matters the Wharf Rats have the Merchants' Guild, as well as the city's aldermen, on their side.

ENEMIES

The dock gangs' main enemies are each other, but given the tangled nature of the web of influence spread among the cliques and cabals of Altdorf, every ally they gain in their struggles against each other brings with it a new enemy also.

The alliance between the Fish and the mysterious Herr Klasst who runs the Reikerbahn puts the gang in direct competition with the other smuggling rings and crime lords of the city, as well as with the smugglers of other cities they have to deal with. The Marienburg Fish are of course loyal to them, but the Huydermans gang of Nuln have been a thorn in their side they would happily see removed. Though they lack the canniness and business acumen to take over the criminal underworlds of the Empire, the Fish still wish to make their mark on them as large as possible.

Altdorf's guilds are a competitive group and in the past those who felt the need to take the Guild of Stevedores down a peg or two have manipulated the laws of the city, like the Stench Act, to hamper the Wharf Rats in their business. The Merchant's Guild, whose members are forbidden from employing workers who aren't official guild-approved stevedores, are their main ally against such manoeuvres.

Some of the trading houses who prefer to do business with the Guild of Stevedores, perhaps because they hope to curry favour with the Merchant's Guild, hire their own guards called "company watchmen" to protect them from the dock gangs. This often makes them more of a target for the gangs, who like a good challenge and will rough up a group of slick company watchmen just for the fun of it.

SAMPLE MENTORS

VALDRED HOCH

"You're walking on the same streets where Sigmar walked when he was young. He grew into an Emperor. You happy growing into a thug?"

—VALDRED HOCH

Valdred Hoch grew up on the docks and like many there he grew up hard. Eager to prove himself, he joined the Hooks as soon as he was able. As a boy he'd seen the story of Sigmar performed by the players of the Circle Theatre and had taken away a simple lesson: to be a hero, you have to be really good at hitting things. As a Hook, Valdred proved himself against the Fish and the Wharf Rats again and again, adding new tattoos to celebrate each victory.



This simple life of alcohol, thuggery, and ink changed when a recruiter came through the Docklands drumming up support for the war in the north. With visions of Sigmar, glory, and heroism swimming through his head, as well as a fair quantity of cheap gin, Valdred signed up to join the Street of a Thousand Taverns Free Company and Drinking Club.

This motley group of adventurers and bully-boys proud to serve their Empire marched northwards alongside Altdorf's army, though they were kept at the back alongside the flagellants and other camp followers where they wouldn't

disrupt the real soldiers. Camaraderie formed bonds among the men and Valdred found a shared sense of pride in marching alongside dockers he would have tried to beat to pulp in the previous weeks, joining them in minor petty skirmishes against bands of Mutants and Goblins as they marched.

Outside Untergard they saw their first real combat. Deployed as a human shield to protect the more valuable regiments, the brave men of the Street of a Thousand Taverns Free Company and Drinking Club absorbed a charge from a herd of viciously horned Beastmen and were crushed. Valdred was savagely gored in the leg and left for dead among his dying comrades.

A year after he left, Valdred returned to Altdorf a changed man with more than a slight limp and a new tattoo—a hammer intersecting the hook on his arm—to show for his experience. He returned to the docks, but not to the Hooks. He sees things differently now. Sigmar did more than just hit things with a hammer to become a hero. Sigmar was the great uniter, who brought together the squabbling tribes and formed an Empire out of them. He spends his days walking the Docklands with fire in his eyes, spreading the word of his better way to anyone who will listen. So far, only a few impressionable youths are with him, but their numbers are growing.

Personality

Valdred is a driven man, seeing a new and greater destiny for himself as the man who unites the bickering gangs into a force that can make the city and the Empire a better place, through force of arms if needs be. He still has a sense of humour and a taste for life the way the dockers live it, but when the passion takes hold of him he transforms into a driven ideologue.

Appearance

Valdred is a tough and scarred individual, with dark hair and fire in his eyes. As well as the hook and hammer tattoo on his right arm he has a skull of Altdorf on his chest, a rat on one leg, an anchor on the other, and a mermaid on his left arm who does something lewd when he flexes.

VALDRED HOCH

Male Altdorfer Human Agitator, ex-Thug, ex-Protagonist

| WS | BS | S | T | Ag | Int | WP | Fel |
|-----|-----|---------|---------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 42% | 30% | 43% (4) | 39% (3) | 46% | 32% | 42% | 38% |

Skills: Charm, Common Knowledge (the Empire), Consume Alcohol, Dodge Blow (+10), Gamble, Gossip, Haggle, Intimidate (+10), Ride, Secret Language (Thieves' Tongue), Speak Language (Reikspiel)

Talents: Disarm, Lightning Reflexes, Menacing, Public Speaking, Resistance to Disease, Resistance to Poison, Street Fighting, Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure, Strike to Stun, Super Numerate, Wrestling

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 13

Armour (Medium): Mail Shirt and Leather Jack (Arms 2, Body 3)

Weapons: Dagger (1d10+2), Hand Weapon (Warhammer) (1d10+5), Knuckle-dusters (1D10+2), Shield

Trappings

Valdred Hoch wears good but simple dockworker clothes under his armour, including black-and-white striped breeches. He wears a small hammer of Sigmar icon on a thong around his neck and he carries fliers advertising performances of Sigmarite plays, which he follows avidly. His shield is decorated with an overflowing ale tankard. He has a riding horse (named Milli), which he keeps stabled.

HIERONYMOUS JOHANSEN

"I'm not the sort who can look at a table of profits and growth and stay awake. I got where I am today by working harder than the other guy."

—HIERONYMOUS JOHANSEN

Hieronymous Johansen likes to tell people he's a self-made man from a poor Ostland family, though his background is actually pure middle-class Reiklander. He did work his way up from being a deal porter unloading timber on the docks to the head of the Guild of Stevedores through a combination of blustery charm and good humour (he says he lets the wife do his thinking for him), but what took him from his position as a popular foreman to the master of a guild was the backing of Marshal Mornan Braun and the Merchant's Guild.



Hieronymous doesn't know it, but the merchants see him as an easily manipulated dupe who will continue giving them easy deals and cheap labour without raising too much fuss. Hieronymous is the kind of man who thinks a firm handshake and the ability to look a man in the eye is the best way of telling if someone is trustworthy or not. This gullibility makes him an easy mark.

The Marshal, who has close ties to the Merchant's Guild, favours Hieronymous for the same reason, manipulating him into using his Wharf Rats against the Hooks and the Fish. Braun knows the Watch are too corrupt to ever effectively deal with the gangs and has plans to turn the Wharf Rats into his own secret police force.

Personality

Hieronymous has the respect of the stevedores and knows it, but he overrates his influence among the aldermen

and other guild masters; he's a pawn who thinks he's an Emperor.

A loud and jovial man, he is usually either laughing heartily and clapping his friends on the back, or storming and roaring at those who displease him. A firm believer in common sense rather than flowery words, he's a natural hater of the Lawyer's Guild and the city's broadsheets. He's had members of the Altdorf Press who look too closely into his background dealt with by his men for fear of being blackmailed. His extra-marital activities in particular would give anyone who discovered them useful leverage over him.

Appearance

Hieronymous is in his middle years but still has a full head of blond hair and a set of mutton-chops. His sturdy frame is beginning to be rounded by easy living.

HIERONYMOUS JOHANSEN

Male Altdorfer Human Guild Master, ex-Foreman, ex-Stevedore

| WS | BS | S | T | Ag | Int | WP | Fel |
|-----|-----|---------|---------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 47% | 35% | 53% (5) | 39% (3) | 43% | 36% | 54% | 70% |

Skills: Academic Knowledge (History), Charm, Common Knowledge (the Empire), Command, Consume Alcohol, Dodge Blow, Evaluate, Gamble, Gossip (+10%), Haggle, Perception, Performer (Singer), Secret Language (Guild Tongue), Speak Language (Kislevian, Reikspiel), Swim, Trade (Merchant, Shipwright)

Talents: Dealmaker, Etiquette, Linguistics, Public Speaking, Resistance to Poison, Sixth Sense, Streetwise, Sturdy, Very Strong

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 17

Armour (Light): Leather Jack (Arms 1, Body 1)

Weapons: Hand Weapon (Club) (1d10+5), Dagger (1d10+2)

Trappings

Hieronymous Johansen still wears his watch cap and the foreman's whistle around his neck, though his clothes are of a much higher quality than they were when he worked the wharf. A short scribe with ink-stained ears where he holds his quills follows the proudly illiterate Guild Master everywhere, carrying his paperwork and reading official documents for him.

ORMIL SCHWARZWASSER

"I don't send my enemies to sleep with the fishes, I send them to be butchered by the Fish."

—ORMIL SCHWARZWASSER

As a smuggler for the Fish, Ormil Schwarzwasser was constantly frustrated by the law and its agents. Every time he

thought he'd arranged a good deal on a shipment of powdered Southlands lotus the Watch would arrive out of nowhere and confiscate his goods, leaving him to make a living by peddling lesser wares. Of special frustration to him was the law banning nighttime river traffic within the city, which rendered any goods that were discovered being exchanged on the water after dark the property of Altdorf. That was, until he realised there was a loophole in the laws.



An exemption had been passed for floating taverns, old boats that have been repurposed to serve as drinkhouses on the water. The city's aldermen were only too happy to see taverns moving onto the river, as it meant less mess for the city to clean up in the wake of the Stench Act. Rowdy drunks drowning themselves was much neater than rowdy drunks getting into fights in the street and causing property damage because that lamp-post said something about their mother.

Schwarzwasser and some of his fellow Fish chose the *Floating Bloat* as their target, a tavern-boat that had made the mistake of weighing anchor off the Old Docks. Making sure that they were the only customers aboard, they upped the anchor and the boat drifted out past the city walls before the river-gates were closed for the night. After quietly weighting and dumping the bodies of the owner and his staff they sailed back into harbour the next day. Ever since then, the *Floating Bloat* has been the property of Ormil Schwarzwasser and the Fish.

With the *Bloat* as a base of operations, Ormil's operations run a lot more smoothly. Goods changing hands on the boat do so freely and he can afford the bribes to guarantee it. Ormil has been rewarded by being promoted through the ranks and he is now one of the gang's war chiefs.

Personality

Ormil is one of the greediest no-goods you're likely to meet and in Altdorf that's saying something. He'd get down on his knees and fight for scraps with one of the wild dog packs that roams the Docklands if he thought there was a percentage in it for him. When he doesn't get his way his frustration results in sullen rages. Nowadays, he has people to take revenge for him, which goes a way towards tempering that rage.

Appearance

Nearing 40 and balding, Ormil would be an unexceptional-looking Altdorfer if it weren't for the tattoos on his face. To mark him out as a war chief, each of his cheeks is tattooed with a fierce Reik pike, its mouth open to bite. They stand out even when his face reddens with anger, as it often does.

ORMIL SCHWARZWASSER

Male Altdorfer Human Crime Lord,
ex-Fence, ex-Smuggler

| WS | BS | S | T | Ag | Int | WP | Fel |
|-----|-----|---------|---------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 49% | 57% | 47% (4) | 42% (4) | 54% | 56% | 51% | 60% |

Skills: Charm, Command, Common Knowledge (the Empire), Dodge Blow, Drive, Evaluate (+20%), Gamble, Gossip, Haggle (+10%), Intimidate (+10%), Perception, Row, Search, Secret Language (Thieves' Tongue), Secret Signs (Thief), Silent Move, Sleight of Hand, Speak Language (Kislevian, Reikspiel), Swim, Torture

Talents: Ambidextrous, Dealmaker, Marksman, Menacing, Public Speaking, Resistance to Poison, Schemer, Sixth Sense, Specialist Weapon Group (Crossbow, Parrying), Streetwise, Strike to Stun, Super Numerate

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 17

Armour (Light): Leather Jack (Arms 1, Body 1)

Weapons: Crossbow pistol (1d10+2) with 10 bolts, Dagger (1d10 +1)

Trappings

Ormil Schwarzwasser wears a garishly green set of clothes of the best craftsmanship, proving himself to have come into money before style. He secrets an antitoxin kit on his

person at all times, just in case. Under his bed, he hides a strongbox with at least 100 *gc* in it.

SAMPLE LOCATION: THE FLOATING BLOAT

The *Floating Bloat's* traditional home is near the Ostlander Bridge, just off the Old Docks. A ferryman rows patrons to the barge for a handful of clank.

FEATURES AND DEFENCES

The *Floating Bloat* is a modified 20-yard keel barge built by the Spee boatyards with a single, square-rigged sail, which is furled and only occasionally used. Its original owner made some modifications to turn it into a river-tavern, but it's still capable of sailing.

KEY LOCATIONS

1. Bar Room

This is where the majority of the drinking and shady deal making goes on. The seats are individual barrels and the tables are made from four barrels strapped together. The floor is coated in straw to soak up the spilled drinks and vomit that are inevitable, especially from those who don't have their "river legs" yet.

2. Kitchen

The food produced in this smoky cave isn't of the highest quality, though the jellied eels are edible.

3. Cargo Hold

A hatch opens straight out onto the river so that small cargoes can be loaded and unloaded without the need for docking after a deal is struck upstairs at the bar.

4. Secret Cargo Hold

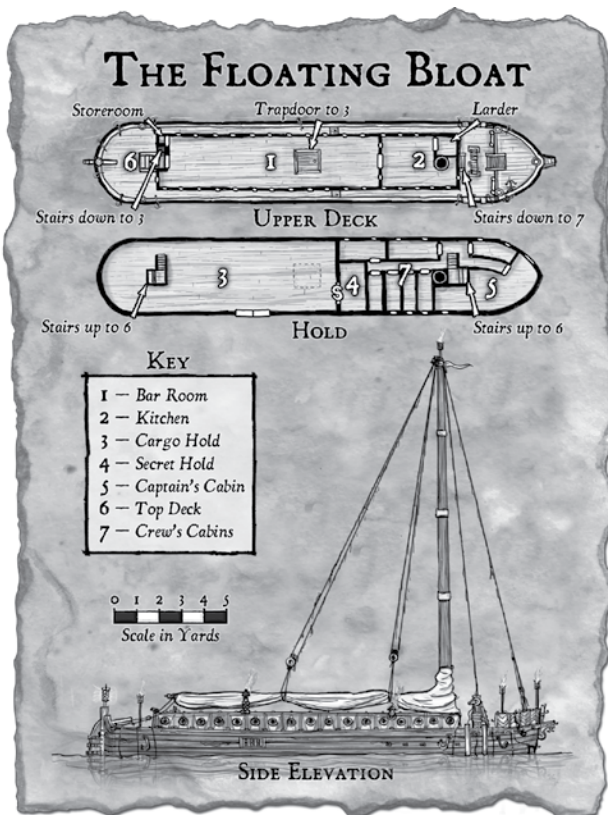
A **Hard (-20%) Search Test** is required to find this if you don't know which pile of barrels it is hidden behind.

5. Captain's Room

This is where Ormil resides. As is traditional, he keeps his money under the bed in a locked strongbox. There will be at least 100 Gold Crowns in here most of the time, more if he's planning to strike a large deal.

6. Top Deck

On busy nights the patrons drink and deal up here, although the fog and the smell can both be pretty thick. Ropes are strategically placed so that drinkers can be hauled back up after taking a tumble over the side while relieving themselves, which happens with such regularity that the crew take bets on it.



7. Crew's Quarters

The cook and the rest of the crew, all Fish, have their tiny rooms here.

OTHER LOCATIONS OF INTEREST

The Breasts of Myrmidia is a drinkhouse on the Street of a Thousand Taverns that used to belong to the Hooks until the Fish stole it from them in a raid. It's still a hotly contested location and many of the street's brawls start here. It's also an excellent spot to score illicit substances like dreamweed and powdered lotus.

An unquestioned and age-old tradition of the city has it that the punishment for members of the Dock Watch caught committing theft is to be hanged in chains from the pier of the **Fork Wharf** for a day and a night. Given the level of corruption, only those watchmen who are caught stealing from the Watch itself are ever punished. The Hooks keep a good eye on them, making sure that those who are being made an example of either get some food lowered to them or don't survive the night, depending on how much they stole and from who.

Like most of the city's guild halls, **The Guild of Stevedores** is located in the Palast districts, close to the city's administrative heart but far from the docks it supposedly represents.

Connected to the Old Docks by a single bridge, the **Isle of Eels** is one of the few wharfs along that section of the river still doing business. The Fish who live and work there keep to themselves and have formed an insular community, a village of their own in the middle of the city. The Popular League Against the Nobility and Taxation have convinced the islanders to declare independence from the city, which will most likely drive the dour Marshal Braun to make an example of them. The bridge is easily blocked and the Fish are prepared to pepper any official boats who approach with arrows, which would create a siege long enough for the city's agitators whip up the Altdorf mob in support.

The Mermaid is a tavern on the docks with prices generally cheaper than those on the Street of a Thousand Taverns. Members of the Elm Street Mob like to visit and start trouble with whichever dockers are drinking here on a given night.

USING THE ALTDORF DOCKERS

In Altdorf, the gangs are an unavoidable part of the scenery. Articles in the broadsheets and agitators in the 'platz denouncing them are common, whenever there is a riot

they will make up a large portion of the rioters (whether they understand the issue that triggered the riot or not), and the wars between them frequently spill out into random areas of the city.

Player Characters who stay in Altdorf are bound to have a run-in with the dock gangs eventually. Tough Characters with a taste for larcenous pursuits will find themselves attracted to the gangs; they spend a lot of time hanging around in taverns, getting into fights, and committing petty crimes in a way that is bound to appeal to adventurers. Joining the Hooks and Fish is much easier than passing the guild's examination and fits smoothly with the adventuring lifestyle.

If an opponent of the party hires a bunch of goons to rough them up in Altdorf, they are likely to come from the docks. If the PCs kill them and word gets out they will find out that the thugs of Altdorf aren't so faceless and will have made an enemy for life. If they fight but don't kill, they may earn the respect of their opponents and find an unusual source of allies who can be turned against whoever hired them for a handful of shiners. Loyalty is something the gangs only show to their members, after all.

PLOT HOOKS

These plot hooks are suggestions for incorporating Altdorf's dockers into your campaign.

AN UNEXPECTED VOYAGE

Our heroes are spending the night on the *Floating Bloat*, perhaps to meet with a contact of theirs and surreptitiously exchange some goods, or perhaps just to enjoy a noisy drink, when it comes loose from its moorings. The boat drifts out of the city, the guards having been bribed by the Hooks to open the river gates. Those same Hooks are on board and plan to gut every Fish they find and make the *Bloat* theirs in retaliation for the Fish taking the Breasts of Myrmidia tavern from them. Whichever side the adventurers take, they will be bound to make a new set of friends and enemies out of it.

TRICKSTER'S DAY

The Cult of Ranald in Altdorf frowns on the violent way the dock gangs go about their business and feel they bring a bad name to the proud traditions of smuggling and petty crime. One day out of the year, itinerant devotees of the trickster God come from miles around to have a bit of fun at the gangs' expense to show their displeasure. Whichever side the Player Characters are on, even if they just watch from the sidelines, a day of tarring-and-feathering, dosing with deleriants and diuretics, cobblestone slicking, river dumping, and dog-pack baiting is bound to provide some amusement.

CHAPTER II: BROTHERS OF HANDRICH

AN APPRAISAL OF BUSINESS MATTERS

Your Excellency,

The following document contains information pertaining to many of the vital business ventures that you have asked me to chronicle for you. As per our agreement, I'm utilizing the code that you taught me to keep these missives from being read by eyes that may be opposed to our mutual interests. If possible, please pay an extra coin to the messenger that I have employed to give you this letter. He is a capable young man that has caught my attention as a potential recruit into our organisation. Do not be off-put by his appearance; the scarring is the result of his time on the streets; a trait that I find admirable. I will be sure to repay the gesture with additional payment to your own messenger when the next letter is delivered.

Konigstag, 6 Sommerzeit: Spoke with the Darrin Hochtricht, the litigator that you recommended that I use to resolve that issue with the tariff increase for goods coming from Bretonnia. Hochtricht proved quite valuable and promised to make the problem disappear. His payment of 50 Kiarls was far smaller than expected. Would recommend for future legal matters.

Markttag, 27 Sommerzeit: With the onset of the holiday, several of the merchants have balked at the payment of their tax. You may have heard about the rash of fires in the Suddock. This method has proved helpful in getting the payments back on schedule. See attached note for a list of merchants who may need additional persuasion.

Bachertag, 3 Vorgeheim: Received the shipment from Jalabheim and delivered them to the buyer, as per your request. Several bottles were broken in transit and a few seemed to be missing. Subsequent interrogation of the caravan's guard captain revealed the thief, who accepted the loss of his hand for the transgression. I have sent additional coin and a bottle of aquavit from my own personal store as an apology to the buyer, who accepted. If it please you, I am willing to send four members from my own ring to accompany the next shipment to ensure that such losses do not occur again in the future.

Konigstag, 13 Vorgeheim: One of my men has successfully infiltrated the Dyers' Guild and has made inroads into getting the price increase that we discussed to go through. There is a particularly stubborn agitator slowing the process, but recent information has come to light that he has a brother in a local jail here in Marienburg, serving time for sowing political unrest. My contacts at the jail will deal with this matter in short order. See attached request for 20 Kiarls for assorted bribes required to assist this process.

Bachertag, 19 Vorgeheim: Paid my respects at the Temple this Markttag. A fellow Brother from the ring under the guidance of Priest Dunkel approached me, requesting a joint venture involving the eradication of the Banaldan cell that has been plaguing my business along the wharf. I will be calling upon several of our contacts among the Outer Ring to assist in this endeavor and will, of course, keep you abreast of the situation. Casualties are expected, but I have already made provisions for replacements.

Bezahlttag, 28 Vorgeheim: The recent death of the Pit Fighter known as "Iron Fang" proved a windfall for our collection of bets. I have submitted my ring's portion of the earnings to the local Temple. A note to the Temple using the phrase "seeking a recommendation for a barber-surgeon specializing in matters of the teeth" will initiate your portion to be sent via courier. Handrich be praised!

Yours in Faith,

High Brother Rudiger Modellson

— PLAYER'S SECTION —

Each Cult of the Empire has its own sects, knightly orders, and Templars to protect its interests and defend the righteous from harm. Relatively new, the Cult of Handrich does not yet have its own publicly sanctioned religious warriors. However, the Cult does have a semi-secret branch of dedicated individuals that are used to help enforce the decrees of the Cult and further its business. Average citizens call them thugs, enforcers, or “heavies.” The Cult refers to these trusted individuals as the Brothers of Handrich.

The Brothers of Handrich are people trusted by the Cult whose skills, contacts, position, and even physical stature are considered useful. In short, they are exactly what the average citizen thinks they are—muscle. Talented muscle, however. The Brothers of Handrich do the dirty work for the Cult, putting pressure on burghers and politicians, protecting precious shipments, and busting heads as needed. Because the business of the Cult extends into almost every type of commerce and all throughout the Empire, the Brothers of Handrich can find themselves travelling great distances and dealing with all types of people on behalf of the Cult—often making a profit on the side.

PURPOSE

The vast majority of the Brothers of Handrich are used as heavy enforcers of the Cult, doing the dirty work that helps maintain a respectable face for the public and to further the goals of the Cult. They intimidate rival businessmen or Cultists, break the legs of those who are late with payments, and, when absolutely required, kill people who, in the eyes of the Cult, need killing. Some Brothers are employed for their special skills, such as simple accounting, forgery, breaking and entering, and the like. Finally, the Brothers are also used as deterrents, with certain members being assigned as bodyguards to Priests. The high-pressure demands and cutthroat (sometimes literally) lifestyle of many Priests of the Cult put them in situations where the presence of some muscle helps ensure safety.

The Brothers strive to keep their ties to the rest of the Cult secret from the outside world. Acting under fronts as legitimate business ventures, trade guilds, or even straight out thieves' guilds, the Brothers do the work asked of them by the Cult. The Brothers take this oath of secrecy extremely seriously and it's a sure death sentence for any Brother who willingly divulges the presence or agendas of a ring of Brothers.

HISTORY

The Cult of Handrich itself is a relatively new Cult, without the millennia of history and conflict that belongs to the other faiths. The Brothers of Handrich can also be considered new, having formed rather organically as the Cult brought in outsiders to assist them with matters of violence. At first, there were no restrictions as to what kind of help a Cultist could

employ as muscle, but over time, as profits rose and agendas solidified, the Cult of Handrich realized that it must organise these disparate groups to bring them in line with the motives and methods of the Cult.

In 1987IC, the Priests of Handrich in Marienburg convened and set to the task of organising their membership. The Cult was divided up into two “rings,” the inner ring composed of the actual Priests and Cultists, and the outer ring, which was the term utilized to describe individuals and groups friendly to the Cult and its agendas, but otherwise not affiliated. During the meeting, known as the “Assembly of Brothers,” the Cult created the Middle Ring, composed of close companions and servants of the Cult who were not otherwise full Cultists or Priests. Thus the Brothers of Handrich were born.

Throughout the subsequent years, motions have been passed to both expand and reduce the influence and power of the Brothers of Handrich. Some Cultists feel that the Brothers represent the true, beating heart of the Cult, with its drive, competitive spirit, and first-hand knowledge of market forces. Others believe that the Brothers claim too much profit and opportunities best utilized by the rest of the Cult and think that the Brothers should be reined back or removed altogether. This constant back and forth ensures that membership in the Brothers of Handrich is dynamic and interesting, but definitely not for the faint of heart.

THE BROTHERS TODAY

The Brothers of Handrich is currently undergoing a boom in growth, power, and influence. As the burghers of the Empire grow and expand their reach, so do the Brothers, piggybacking on their success. The Cult is also expanding, setting up new Temples and establishing business ventures in increasingly far-flung portions of the Empire and even beyond. The Cult sends envoys to new locations in order to set up new Rings of Brothers, setting the stage for the eventual creation of a Temple of Handrich.

“The citizens of the Empire rightly view the Cult of Handrich as an honorable, charitable group with the best interests of the people at heart. This is why we employ the Brothers of Handrich—to keep distasteful things out of sight of the people and keep His name unsullied and pure.”

—GUSTAV STUTTOR, PRIEST OF HANDRICH



With the Cult of Handrich taking a more aggressive hold on trade and commerce in the Empire, the Brothers find themselves getting involved in bigger schemes all the time. Every new discovery of resources, technological advancement, or piece of land reclaimed from the Greenskins represents additional opportunities that the Brothers are more than willing to embrace.

The biggest threats that the Brothers encounter are the thieves' guilds who consider the Brothers to be nothing more than interlopers, the meddling of the Cult of Ranald, and conservative citizens of the Empire who consider the Cult of Handrich (and thus the Brothers) to be a backhanded assault on the traditional way of life that the Empire has engaged in for untold centuries. To help grease the wheels of commerce, the Brothers utilize the time-honoured method of carrot (money, influence, and favours) and stick (or hammer, axe, or firearm pressed into the stubborn person's face).

STRUCTURE

In order to understand the structure of the Brothers, one must first understand the structure of the Cult of Handrich. The Cult is divided up into three different tiers, or "rings." The Inner Ring includes the full Priests of the Cult and has further degrees of delineation that are not revealed to outsiders. The Outer Ring refers to friendly businessmen and those who owe favours to the Cult, but do not put themselves in harm's way for it. The Cult internally refers to the Brothers as the Middle Ring.

Every Brother of Handrich is tied to a particular Temple, which hires certain personnel depending on their particular needs at the time. Brothers either work in small crews, which have a degree of autonomy or are assigned to specific Priests to do their bidding. A Priest of Handrich strives to have control of his own rings of Brothers, and is ultimately responsible for their actions. A Ring that gets out of hand or endangers the activities of the Cult must answer to its Priest, who must in turn answer to the Inner Ring of the Cult. Punishment for poor performers can be extremely harsh and most Priests keep constant tabs on the Rings that they control and place serious pressure on the High Brothers responsible for their day-to-day operations.

Crews of Brothers vary in size, but usually comprise between four to eight members. The Brother who controls the crew and directly reports back to a specific Priest is typically known as the "High Brother." High Brothers control their crew tightly, constantly on the watch for signs of disloyalty or for Brothers who try to skim too much from the top.

To help maintain a line of deniability, the Brothers never refer to themselves as such with outsiders and maintain the front of some sort of other venture, such as a "normal" thieves' guild, a union of workers, or a regular business guild. Other Rings put up the front as political agitators or members of a completely different Cult to further muddy the waters and to get them into places otherwise denied by the Cult of Handrich. Communication between a ring of

Brothers and their handlers is done through messengers, clandestine meetings, and secret codes.

Once inducted into the Brothers of Handrich (see **Recruitment** on page 20 for more information on how to join), a Brother finds himself running errands, busting heads, and doing other things of a questionable nature. After a few years of proving himself as a solid earner for the Ring, the Brother is usually granted additional, highly lucrative jobs to bolster his earnings and further solidify his ties to the organisation. Each Brother strives to attain the role of High Brother, controlling his own band of Brothers and putting his own agendas and moneymaking ventures at the top of the list.

OUTSIDE THE EMPIRE

The Brothers travel far outside the borders of the Empire on the behest of the Cult. As business is conducted and agreements are reached, the Brothers also help establish additional Rings in the cities of foreign lands. The Brothers are particularly numerous in Tilea and the Border Princes, where they blend in seamlessly with the large population of criminal groups, guilds, and nebulous partnerships that thrive in those lands.

The Brothers are rare in Kislev, both due to Handrich's relative obscurity there and the insular manner of Kislevan criminals, making it difficult for outside groups to gain many inroads. Bretonnia hosts a fair number of Rings of Brothers, mostly in the larger cities and villages closer to the Empire. Couronne and Bordeaux boast anywhere between four and six Rings of the Brothers of Handrich, although these relatively new groups are struggling to stake their claim among the businesses and criminal organisations that are resentful to these foreign interlopers.

GOALS AND MOTIVES

The goals of the Brothers of Handrich work in tandem with the rest of the Cult—make a profit, expand business ventures, reduce (or remove) the competition, and keep business ventures safe from harm. Brothers join up to gain access to the Cult's influence, power, and coffers, and some do so with hopes of being admitted as a full-fledged member of the Cult. One thing is for certain, however: they are in it for the coin.

Every Brother strives to find the big score that will allow him to retire or, for the more devout, allow him to join the ranks of the Cult of Handrich as a member of the Inner Ring. Brothers watch and maintain the businesses that are under their control—extorting money where needed, protecting “clients” from the predations of criminals or opposing Cults (particularly those of Ranald), sending important missives, or protecting cargo. In doing so, they receive a cut of the action and are always on the search for more and more opportunities.

As most Brothers are not part of the Inner Ring, they are not considered Priests or even full-fledged Cultists (although many eventually become one). Because of this, the one job that Brothers are not tasked with is spreading the word of Handrich, which is left to Priests to administer. Most Brothers are relieved that they do not have to perform this chore.

SYMBOLS AND SIGNS

The Brothers utilize the same symbols and signs as the Priests they work for, most notably the gold coin and the sign of the crossed fingers. When hired on by the Cult, a Brother is given a special gold coin that represents Handrich—one side is blank, but the other is etched with subtle notches, whorls, and letters, each of which has its own meaning. When a Brother wishes to get his point across to a stubborn “client,” merely flashing this special coin is often more than enough to make the target realize what he's up against.

Each Temple has its own special symbols that are used on the backs of the holy coins, typically to show a Brother's rank in the organisation, special favours due to him when travelling to other Temples, and other special merits, as well as the Brother's own unique sigil. For example, the main Temple of Handrich in Marienburg carefully notches the edge of a Brother's coin like hours on a sundial, each indicating a notable favour the Brother has done on behalf of the Cult. The more notches on the back of the coin, the more likely that a Brother is to be inducted as a full Priest. Other etchings include a square, meaning the Brother is to be granted shelter and complete assistance if chased by the authorities. The extremely rare “V” etching indicates the Brother is part of the cadre tasked with serving and protecting the High Priest himself. A Brother that loses his coin is either released from service or severely punished for the infraction, including a high fine and a heavy tax on his pay until his patrons deem him ready to return to full service.

The coin also serves as a token for voting or as a literal bargaining chip—a Brother who gives his coin to another is showing the ultimate sign of trust or is indicating that should he fail in a given task, his life is forfeit. Many Brothers of Handrich also get tattoos of these symbols placed on their bodies—inner bicep being the most common location, as it is readily hidden, but also easily shown when the situation demands it. When the Brothers choose to leave some sort of sign behind as a warning to others or to show that someone is marked as an enemy of the Cult, a simple circle symbolizing the blank coin of Handrich is painted on doors (or carved on a body) left behind for others to find.

Like the rest of the Cult, the Brothers make extensive use of body language and hand signals that are used in their conversations, especially when they believe they are being overheard by the competition or authorities. Dozens of

secret handshakes exist that are used to show status, distress, or warnings, some of which are specific from temple to temple.

Some gestures, however, are universal. For example, crossing the ring and little finger on the left hand indicates the presence of a Cultist of Ranald nearby. During negotiations, smiling while rubbing one's chin with the back of the hand is a way of indicating to fellow Brothers that the other party is lying. A Brother who taps his fingers together, but not his thumbs, is signalling that he believes the conversation is being overheard and that discretion (or lies) should be employed. Lastly, when a Brother believes he is dealing with a Brother he doesn't know or a Cultist of Handrich, he uses the crossed-finger sign of the Cult, with the tips of his thumb and little finger on his right hand touching as a further cue that they are not full-fledged members of the Cult, but should still be accorded the respect they deserve.

MEMBERSHIP

To the outside observer, the Brothers of Handrich are made up of brutish thugs and cold-blooded killers. In essence, this is true, but unlike the thieves' guilds to which they are compared, the Brothers are picked as much for their ability to keep a low profile as for their willingness to break legs if needed. In order to be successful, Brothers must show business acumen and an understanding of the "big picture," with the understanding the short-term gains do not always translate to profit later on. The Cult prefers to work with Brothers with few outside ties or loyalties and is content to leave most Brothers to their own devices, calling upon them only when something requiring anonymity or a heavy hand is required.

The average Brother falls into one of four different categories. The most common is the enforcer. This Brother is hired on for his strength, prowess with weapons, intimidating manner, or preferably, all three. He's willing to engage in whatever type of violence is required, but the Brothers avoid bringing in truly sadistic people, as they usually prove too difficult to manage. Some of these Brothers specialize in hurting people, but not necessarily killing them, simply because of the belief that a dead man is a lost revenue stream, while a *scared* man pays as regular as clockwork.

The second type of Brother is someone directly involved in business. This includes burghers, dock foremen, guild leaders, and the like. These Brothers are obviously chosen for their business acumen, contacts, and ability to be discreet. They allow the Brothers to piggyback their own shipments with caravans, act as intermediaries between other groups, and start new entrepreneurial ventures on behalf of the Cult. They also launder money, set up false fronts and fake businesses, or fix prices as needed.

The third type of Brother is best known as "the specialist." This is a person with some specific skill in high demand by the Cult. This includes cat burglars, forgers, interrogators, litigators, and other occupations that require education, special training, or both. These Brothers are used sparingly and given the most leeway in their approach, as the Cult is aware of their scarcity and try to keep them in good graces. They are also rarely used for "general work" and, unless their given trade is dangerous by nature, is unlikely to be put in a position where violence is possible.

The last kind of Brother is the rare wizard or person with magical talent that is willing to work for the organisation. Unlike many other Cults, the Cult of Handrich (and thus the Brothers) has few objections to consorting with wizards, seeing it as just another client-patron relationship. The Cult is willing to overlook a wizard's eccentricities, even a few blasphemies, as long as the job they are involved in is completed to the Cult's satisfaction. Persons with magical ability are highly sought after by the Brothers and are well paid with both money and favours for their services.

RECRUITMENT

Considering the dangerous line of work that most Brothers find themselves in, turnover is high and temples are constantly on the search for new members to fill spots in their ranks. The leader of a crew keep an eye out for street youths that show potential as well as businessmen that are favourable towards the Cult. These potential individuals are then watched from afar, as the Brothers ask questions and do research into the mark's character, exploits, and personality. Particularly flashy individuals or those seeking the limelight are usually avoided for recruitment, unless they possess in-demand skills or have highly sought-after contacts.

Once a person has been marked as a possible inductee, he is approached by a High brother under the guise of a "regular" organisation, such as a thieves' guild or a burgher in need of some special assistance, and tasked with doing some property damage against a competitor or threatening a stubborn vendor who refuses to give payment. If he proves his worth, he's brought back in for a formal induction ceremony.

The inductee is brought before the rest of the Ring and made to get on his knees while the others surround him in a circle, representing the structure of the Cult. The Brothers pull out knives and point them at the inductee, who then recites his oath of loyalty. Each Brother then draws his knife along the arm of the inductee, drawing a little bit of blood. This blood is spilled into a bowl that contains the coin that he'll carry to show his membership into the ring (see Symbols and Signs above). He then rises as a full member of the Ring, taking the bloody coin as a sign of his inclusion. The Brother is then given a list of his particular turfs and territories for which he is responsible in generating income.

MEMBER BENEFITS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Once a person has been accepted into the Middle Ring of the Cult, becoming a Brother of Handrich, he can expect life to be both profitable and dangerous. As long as a Brother does his best to keep the Cult free from blame or inquiry, he is granted tremendous latitude to do what needs to be done, and most are allowed to conduct their daily lives as they see fit until called upon by the Brothers to perform some task.

The Cult of Handrich pays the Brothers well for their work, as well as granting particularly juicy contracts, business leads, and the removal of competitors. Although details vary, it's typical for a Brother to receive the equivalent of half a month's pay or more on top of their regular wage for whatever the Brother does on the side. If a Brother

does particularly well for the Ring and the rest of the Cult, they can expect additional windfalls. In the eyes of most Brothers, moving to the Inner Ring and becoming a full fledged Cultist, and hopefully a Priest, is the ultimate goal, gaining access to the Cult's tremendous power, wealth, and influence.

The main responsibility of the Brothers of Handrich is loyalty. A Brother must be willing to drop everything and do what is asked when called. Requests by the High brother or the Priest that manages it can also be dangerous, time-consuming, or even bizarre. For example, a Brother who specializes in forgery may be asked to first bluff or infiltrate their way into a Burgher's home in order to copy a given document and leave the fake behind. An enforcer might be asked to corner and persuade a minor official or kidnap the only heir of a business consortium. Other tasks might seem nonsensical at the time, such as standing at a street corner at noon carrying a red feather, or traveling to a distant city only to return immediately upon arriving there.

— GM'S SECTION —

The Brothers of Handrich are like many other secret societies in that they have many secrets and a great deal to hide—including to their own membership. The Priests of Handrich consider the Brothers to be a vital part of their Cult, but they also understand that business is business and pawns in the great chess game of life can be sacrificed as necessary. Some Brothers, however, truly understand their position within the Cult and take measures to ensure their own safety and status—this balance between loyalty and betrayal keeps the Cult vibrant and thriving.

SECRETS OF THE BROTHERS

Because the Brothers inhabit the Middle Ring of the Cult's hierarchy, they are privy to many of its plans, but are also shut out from the bulk of its secrets. The Cult looks at the Middle Ring (the Brothers) as both a breeding ground for potential full Cultists as well as a pool of expendable assets to be used and cast aside as needed. Also, because the Brothers work the alleyways and are on the "front line," they come in contact with criminals, strange events, and even blasphemous things on a daily basis. The Cult strives to keep themselves distant from the dirt and distasteful happenings of the underworld and the activities of the Brothers of Handrich.

EVERYONE IS EXPENDABLE

Considering the seedy background that many Brothers come from, few should be surprised to know that their ties to the Cult of Handrich could be severed at any moment

"They are useful tools, to be sure. However, like all tools, over time they can become damaged, untrustworthy, and even dangerous. Worn out things should be replaced from time to time."

—HIGH PRIEST GOUNDENKRUIN

and with little reason. The whole purpose of the Brothers is to provide a ready source of leg breakers, bodyguards, extortionists, and other unsavoury types for the Cult, all the while allowing the Cult to keep their own hands as publicly clean as possible. The Cult of Handrich also sees this as a way to winnow out the weakest members, leaving only the best for induction into the ranks as full Priests. In the Cult's eyes, a smart and loyal Brother should never find himself in a situation where he has to be cut off from the Cult or to be stupid enough to be caught in the first place. The Cult is powerful enough that disgruntled ex-Brothers find bringing revenge against their former comrades is nearly impossible—at worst, a Ring of Brothers could be exposed and brought to ruin, which is considered a small loss by the Cult as a whole.

RISE OF THE MIDDLE CLASS

The members of the Cult of Handrich are dedicated to giving praise to their God and making a tidy profit in the process. As a Cult focused on business affairs, its members consider the rise of all businessmen as paramount to the Cult's success. While this seems positive on the surface, there are those in the Empire that consider the increasing influence and power of the middle class to be a threat to the very existence of the land. Ancient laws, feudal arrangements, and a clear delineation between the ruling class and the masses of common folk beneath them serve as the glue that has bound the Empire together for millennia. The Cult of Handrich's active support of the middle class puts

coin in the pockets of common folk with the ambition, entrepreneurial spirit, and cutthroat instincts to survive. Many noblemen lay awake at night at the thought of the unwashed masses and lowborn upstarts chipping away at their fortunes and encroaching on old business pacts and business arrangements.

Although it is rarely spoken in the Inner Rings of the Cult of Handrich and never with outsiders, one of the goals of the Cult is to create a healthy and vibrant middle class with the wealth, status, and influence to dictate their own rules and to do away with outdated and antiquated laws and business practices that keep a Cultist of Handrich from doing his best and reaping vast sums of money. To some people, this smacks of heresy, as it basically means the complete overturning of the Empire and its method of governance.

Most of the Brothers are kept in the dark to this inner secret of the Cult, but those who look hard enough can see patterns in business dealings that indicate a slow, deliberate sea change occurring throughout the Empire. It may take centuries for such change to break through the calcified systems and thinking of the Empire, but the Cult is nothing if not patient.

MARK YOUR TERRITORY, KEEP YOUR CUT

Unlike many secret societies, the Brothers of Handrich are blatant about their purpose—to make money. Because every Brother has his livelihood dictated by the whims of the Cult, it's up to him to take advantage of every angle to make a profit. If he doesn't continue to make his cut to bump up the ladder, he'll find himself out of the Brothers and possibly laying in an alleyway with his throat cut. Every Brother has his own schemes, running extortions, rackets, and even legitimate business ventures, which he keeps secret from his comrades. Strangely, this is considered admirable by the Cult, since it both creates a steady stream of income and fosters the skills and sense of competition that Handrich considers important in his Cultists and servants. The reason Brothers keep these side ventures secret, however, is that once one of them is discovered by the Cult, it is considered fair game for a "tax"—partially to help fund the Cult and partially to punish a Brother for his sloppiness in allowing his sources of income to be found out. Most individuals accept this game of cat-and-mouse as part of the business of being a Brother of Handrich, but some grow weary and resentful of the subterfuge and hypocrisy.

CHANGING FORTUNE FIRST HAND

One of the reasons that the Cult of Handrich seeks out talented individuals with a bent for magic is to expand their own fledgling school of arcane knowledge. The Brothers often serve as a test bed for ways to bend the

rules in a way that Handrich finds pleasing. Knowingly or not, a few blessed Brothers are able to channel the power of their God to cast spells that shift fortune in their favour. High brothers are charged to keep an eye out for Brothers that seem luckier than average or who land deals that seem improbable, even impossible. The full Priests of the Cult usually watch these individuals with greater scrutiny and elevate them into the Inner Ring for additional training and insight into the mysteries of Handrich, sometimes without their consent. The Cult is particularly interested in magically talented Brothers with visions of prophecy—if the Cult can see into the future and get insight into how the winds of the market blow, they will make more money and further the Cult's agendas. Brothers with this gift often find themselves living life in a gilded cage: pampered and protected, but never allowed to leave the Cult—alive....

ALLIES

One of the main purposes behind the Brothers of Handrich is to serve as fronts for the activities of the rest of the Cult. Because of this, they have many contacts, both in the legitimate business world and among criminal groups. Depending on the Ring, a group of Brothers may have connections with street gangs, craft guilds, ship crews, officers of courts, or anyone in between. Some rings travel far and wide on behalf of the Cult and have contacts in cities and towns distant from their home base. These allies can be almost anyone, from Roadwardens receiving payment for their services to city guards and the like. Brothers are required and expected to make as many friendly contacts as possible for their rings, because it's never known when and where a favour must be called in.

Of course, as part of the secrecy that they take so seriously, the Brothers rarely if ever let their allies know the true nature of their relationship, so most individuals friendly to the Brothers do not know exactly with whom they are consorting. This secrecy also has the advantage of letting the Brothers keep any eye out for prospective new members without the mark being any the wiser.

This set of circumstances means that Brothers can find themselves in unusual alliances that may, on the surface, seem counter to the Cult's agendas. Business is business, as the Brothers say, and as long as the alliance works out and Cult secrets are not divulged, then it is allowed to form without any fuss.

ENEMIES

Not surprisingly, the Brothers of Handrich have continuous run-ins with regular, mundane thieves' guilds, many of which consider the Brothers to be nothing more than a rival criminal organisation. Indeed, much of the activity of the Brothers involves taking a direct approach to thwarting

these groups from subverting the agendas of the Cult of Handrich. The Cult sees the Brothers as perfect weapons by employing the “fight fire with fire” approach and allow the Brothers a tremendous amount of leeway in infiltrating and destroying thieves’ guilds that cut into the Cult of Handrich’s business.

Because the Brothers serve as a buffer between legitimate authorities and the Cult of Handrich, they are typically the first to come under the scrutiny of city watches, Imperial investigators, and Templars of other Cults who have suffered losses due to the Brothers’ activities. The Cult sees this antipathy as a natural part of doing business and make heavy use of bribes and threats to keep nosy (or greedy) magistrates, sheriffs, and constables out of the Brothers’ business. Part of the Brothers’ duties involves dissuading these individuals from getting interested in the darker side of the Cult of Handrich’s activities.

If the Brothers have anything close to a mortal enemy, it is the rival Cult of Ranald. Many of the business ventures of the Brothers overlap those of the Ranaldans and the two groups have had a simmering cold war for generations. Despite the similarity of their methods, the Brothers still consider themselves a legitimate arm of a legitimate Cult of Handrich and are extremely vocal in their desire to see the Ranaldans wiped out. The Priests of the Cult of Handrich do their best to keep things from getting out of hand and so far the rivalry between the Ranaldans and the Brothers remains at the level of gang warfare. However, the Cult has little compunction about allowing a ring of Brothers to expose or wipe out a cell of Ranaldans if doing so poses little or no threat to the Cult as a whole.

SAMPLE MENTOR

HIGH BROTHER DAAN TWO-FINGERS

“You do your job, you get paid. You keep your mouth shut, you get paid. You fail to do either one of these and its me that you’ll be paying, right lad?”

—HIGH BROTHER DAAN “TWO-FINGERS” OOMS

High Brother Daan “Two-Fingers” Ooms is a sample of a High brother for a crew of Brothers. Old, grizzled, and disfigured, Two-Fingers is also extremely smart and experienced, and is considered a model member of the Brothers by the rest of the Cult. He’s biding his time for when he can become a Priest of the Cult and begin learning its inner secrets, although he realizes that he’s currently too valuable in his current position to be promoted.



Although it’s assumed that Two-Fingers is based in Marienburg, he can be dropped into any large settlement

as a High brother for a crew of Brothers. Two-Fingers is capable enough to help out the PCs in a fight or to provide information to them from his wide net of informants.

Two-Fingers originally began life as Daan Ooms. Growing up along the coast of the Wasteland, he plied the briny marshlands with his father in search of fish. One day, pirates arrived by sea, destroyed his thorp, killed his family, and press-ganged him into service on their ship. After a few months at sea, the pirates made their way to Marienburg. With most of the crew on shore leave, Daan killed two of his captors and managed to get off of the ship, but not before losing two fingers from his left hand from a rusty cutlass.

He made his way into the dirty streets of Marienburg and, taking on the moniker of “Two-Fingers,” he managed to find work on one of the many fishing boats that anchor at the mighty city. Over time, Two-Fingers became captain of his own boat, then a small fleet of boats, and he gained the reputation of being a strict taskmaster but with an eye for finding talented individuals and placing them in positions where they can prosper on their own. Two-Fingers eventually left the day-to-day management of his fishing fleet to a lieutenant and focused more on the business side of things. After a particularly cunning bit of political manoeuvring, Two-Fingers caught the attention of the Brothers of Handrich and he readily accepted their offer to join a Ring and gain the benefits of membership. Two-Fingers proved quite capable, with a sharp business sense along with utter ruthlessness with competitors and he quickly rose to the level of High brother. Although Two-Fingers still works with his shipping fleet as his front organisation, he also takes on many duties for the Brothers.

Personality

Two-Fingers possesses the bearing and demeanour of a man who has seen and experienced much in his life—little of it pleasant. Two-Fingers is a consummate listener, speaking only when necessary. When he does speak, it’s with great gravitas and thought coupled with a deep, booming voice and a thick Wastelander accent that has diminished little over the years. Two-Fingers thinks in the long-term, making plans and giving orders to his Ring that seem strange, even contradictory to its benefit. Although he’s amassed a relatively large sum in his years of service to the Brothers of Handrich, he knows that it’s nothing compared to what he could make as a full Priest of the Cult. Everything that he does furthers the goals of the Cult in order to make his own ambitions a reality. Married with children of his own, Two-Fingers sees himself as a father figure for many of the younger Brothers under his care. He wants them to succeed and be profitable, but also knows that tough rules and stiffer enforcement are required and more than a few Brothers who have failed him met their end by their former mentor.

Appearance

Two-Fingers is short, squat, and built like a pitbull. His face is covered in scars and his ears are pierced in the custom of sailors and fishermen of the Wasteland. He wears simple but fine clothing, usually augmented with a large floppy hat that he uses to shade his face in order to intimidate people. Two-Fingers carries a simple hatchet, nicked and worn with age, that would not seem out of place on a ship—the only possession he kept from his time on the pirate ship that abducted him many, many years ago.

HIGH BROTHER DAAN “TWO-FINGERS” OOMS

Male Wastelander Human Racketeer,
Ex-Merchant, Ex-Fisherman

| WS | BS | S | T | Ag | Int | WP | Fel |
|-----|-----|---------|---------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 77% | 60% | 57% (5) | 58% (5) | 60% | 69% | 68% | 64% |

Skills: Charm (+10%), Command, Common Knowledge (Norsca), Common Knowledge (The Empire), Common Knowledge (Tilea), Common Knowledge (the Wasteland), Dodge Blow, Drive, Evaluate (+10%), Gossip (+20%), Haggle (+10%), Intimidate, Outdoor Survival, Perception (+10%), Read/Write Reikspiel, Row, Sail, Secret Language (Brothers' Tongue), Secret Language (Guild Tongue), Shadowing, Speak Language (Norse), Speak Language (Reikspiel), Swim, Trade (Merchant)

Talents: Hardy, Menacing, Resistance to Poison, Savvy, Street Fighting, Streetwise, Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Stun, Super Numerate

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 24

Armour (Light): Leather Jack (Arms 1, Body 1)

Weapons: Hand Weapon (Hand Axe) (1d10+5)

Trappings

Two-Fingers wears Best quality clothing in the style of a merchant or burgher. A wide-brimmed hat sits on top of his head. Two-Fingers carries a hand weapon (axe), an abacus, and a small bottle of quality spirits. He owns a well-appointed town house and a warehouse full of goods (some legal, some not).

MATHIAS DRAUWULF

“Our success in the courts and in the salons of noblemen’s manors is just as important as the action that you find in the alleyways.”

—BROTHER MATHIAS DRAUWULF

Mathias Drauwulf is a Brother in good standing with an Altdorf-based ring of the Brothers of Handrich. Unlike High Brother Daan “Two-Fingers” Ooms, described above, Mathias represents a different side of the Brothers—the high powered

mover and shaker who prowls the upper echelons of society. His access to the political machine of the Empire is of great importance to the Brothers and in turn, the Cult of Handrich.



Mathias Drauwulf began life as the youngest son of a well-respected nobleman in Altdorf. With nearly six brothers ahead of him, Mathias threw aside any thoughts of inheriting his family’s assets, which was finalised when an argument with his father found Mathias out on the streets. After his relatively easy life, Mathias found life on the streets to be extremely hard and had a first-hand taste of the difference between the haves and the have-nots. Mathias took his anger to the street corners and plazas, using his natural eloquence and passion to increase awareness of the power of the working and middle class. Although his relationship with his family was tarnished, their name helped him improve his standing. After street toughs roughed him up, the Brothers of Handrich approached Mathias and offered him protection, provided he make some slight changes in his speeches. He happily accepted and soon became a Brother for one of the most influential rings in Altdorf.

With the Brothers’ influence and favours, Mathias eventually rose to a full-fledged Politician, working on behalf of the working class, but secretly working behind the scenes to eliminate red tape and pass legislation favourable for the Brothers. Other members of his immediate ring include Litigators, Agitators, Burghers, and Crime Lords of all stripes. The Cult leaders see Mathias as very useful and have tasked him with bringing along younger Brothers who wield the pen rather than the knife to further the Cult’s goals.

Personality

Mathias is well-versed in matters of law and the inner workings of the upper class, but can just as easily talk the language of the street. He’s used to dealing with foul criminals and arrogant nobles alike and maintains an even, steady friendliness with all, allowing him to easily move between social strata. Mathias knows that he essentially sold out his abilities and any deeply-held morals to work for the Brothers, but he sees their actions as a means to an end, ultimately resulting in the levelling of society.

Mathias dresses in fine clothing and sups on gourmet meals, but he also has a taste for the crude and bawdy, mixing business with lower class individuals in the stands of illegal pit fights or the backrooms of gambling houses, where wine, women, and song help smooth the deals that he helps to craft.

Possessing the mind of a master chess player, Mathias is always thinking several moves ahead and always keeps two or three contingency plans in the back of his mind. He finds violence a distasteful but often necessary aspect of doing business. In instances in which strong-arm tactics are

required, he calls upon his own servants or fellow Brothers to do the task, rewarding them handsomely for their services.

Appearance

Mathias is a small, wiry man with lean muscles that came from his years living on the street. Despite his stature, Mathias has a booming, melodious voice that draws attention. Mathias spends a fortune on clothing from the finest tailors, with a particular preference for Breton fashions, making him something of a rake among his peers. A small scar on his cheek (a result of his run-in with the toughs that started his career with the Brothers) lends him a roguish appearance.

MATHIAS DRAUWULF

Male Altdorfer Human Politician, Ex-Agitator

| WS | BS | S | T | Ag | Int | WP | Fel |
|-----|-----|---------|---------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 45% | 45% | 36% (3) | 36% (3) | 37% | 63% | 37% | 68% |

Skills: Academic Knowledge (History) +10%, Academic Knowledge (Law) +10%, Blather, Charm, Command, Common Knowledge (the Empire) +10%, Concealment, Charm +10%, Evaluate, Gossip +10%, Haggle, Perception +10%, Performer (Actor), Read/Write (Breton), Read/Write (Reikspiel), Speak Language (Breton), Speak Language (Reikspiel)

Talents: Acute Hearing, Flee!, Fleet Footed, Master Orator, Public Speaking, Schemer, Street Fighting, Streetwise

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 5; **Wounds:** 17

Armour (Light): Best Craftsmanship Leather Jack (Arms 1, Body 1)

Weapons: Best Craftsmanship Hand Weapon (Sword) (1d10+3)

Trappings

Mathias wears Best Craftsmanship clothing, including a fine set of Leather Jack. Although capable with his sword, he wears it in a manner meant to show his status, rather than as a fighter. Mathias wears the coin given to him by the Brothers on a gold chain that he keeps hidden beneath his silk shirts and supple leather coat.

SAMPLE LOCATION: JACOB'S IMPORTS

Located on the bustling docks of Marienburg, Jacob's Imports is a large warehouse that appears in desperate need for repairs. Run by Jacob Tuddler, Jacob's Imports bustles night and day with stevedores loading and unloading ships, caravans arriving with cargo, and all manner of unsavoury figures arriving and leaving on mysterious business. Jacob's Imports also serves as the base of operations for the Schutzmann Crew, a ring of the Brothers of Handrich serving the Priest

Otto Undern. The Schutzmann Crew is named for its High brother, Dieter Schutzmann, a capable Brother with a penchant for violence and the ability to make a tidy profit for the Brothers and the Cult of Handrich as a whole.

The Cult of Handrich uses Jacob's Imports as a stopover for sensitive or extremely lucrative cargo, trusting Schutzmann and his men to keep it safe from harm. In addition, Schutzmann's Crew engages in their own extortion rackets, primarily among the merchants who are also based along the street that Jacob's Imports sits upon.

Although Jacob himself is a member of the Brothers, he distances himself from the various activities of the organisation and the Cult in general, maintaining a legitimate front for them to work under. By providing the Brothers with a safehouse, he gains access to the Cult's many blessings and lives a very fat and profitable life that he is unwilling to give up, even under the threat of death.

FEATURES AND DEFENCES

Jacob's Imports is an ancient warehouse that was built from the remains of an old fortification that had been destroyed hundreds of years before. The largest and oldest portion of the building, including the main warehouse facility, is situated on a jut of granite and built from solid stone. A newer portion (still at least 200 years old) is built on pilings out into the water, from which several docks jut out to accept ships for loading and unloading.

The granite shelf that the building sits on is riddled with catacombs, passageways, and large storage spaces that Schutzmann's Crew (and Jacob himself) use for their own purposes. Illicit cargo of all kinds make their way in and out of these tunnels, which are protected by a series of traps, false doors, and alarms, making it a highly-defensible location in the unlikely chance that they are assaulted.

In order to keep these tunnels secret, cargo is unloaded into the main, public portion of the warehouse up top and then brought down by Brothers using hand-cranked elevators cleverly disguised to blend into the floor above. There are two secret tunnels that lead to exits, one along the shore and the other into an abandoned building across the road from the main building (see the next page for more information).

At any given time, there are 2d10 members of Schutzmann's Crew in the facility, although this number increases by one die during times when valuable shipments arrive. Two Brothers man the Front Gate and another watches the Docks at all times. Each Brother on watch carries a special, very shrill whistle (an **Easy [+20%] Perception Test** to hear) that is blown when danger presents itself.

The warehouse is well lit, dry, and remarkably free of vermin. Belying the worn appearance of the exterior, many of the rooms inside are well-appointed and comfortable, complete with a kitchen and larder for the Brothers, and a well-stocked armoury.



KEY LOCATIONS

1. Front Gate

The Front Gate is part of the ancient fortification and can withstand a full assault by a dozen men with a battering ram if things get out of hand. The massive oak door has a smaller door that is used for day-to-day operations and has a stout iron peephole through which most business is conducted. Six hand weapons, two halberds, and two crossbows (plus 20 bolts) sit in cradles inside the main gate.

2. Antechamber

Long ago, the Antechamber used to be an inner courtyard of the fortification. It has long since been roofed over and is still quite defensible. The antechamber is the farthest that most outsiders get inside Jacob's Imports—mundane business is conducted here, where the Brothers know they are mostly safe. This room is sparsely furnished, with a simple table, a few chairs, and a bench.

3. Main Warehouse

The main warehouse is a huge, open room. Long ago, this used to be the fortification's courtyard, but has since been roofed over with massive beams and a thick ceiling. Covered oil lanterns are located at regular intervals around the walls, providing decent illumination. Depending on the season and shipments, the warehouse could be filled to the roof with crates, barrels, and bins of goods, or it could be nearly empty. A pulley system crisscrosses the ceiling,

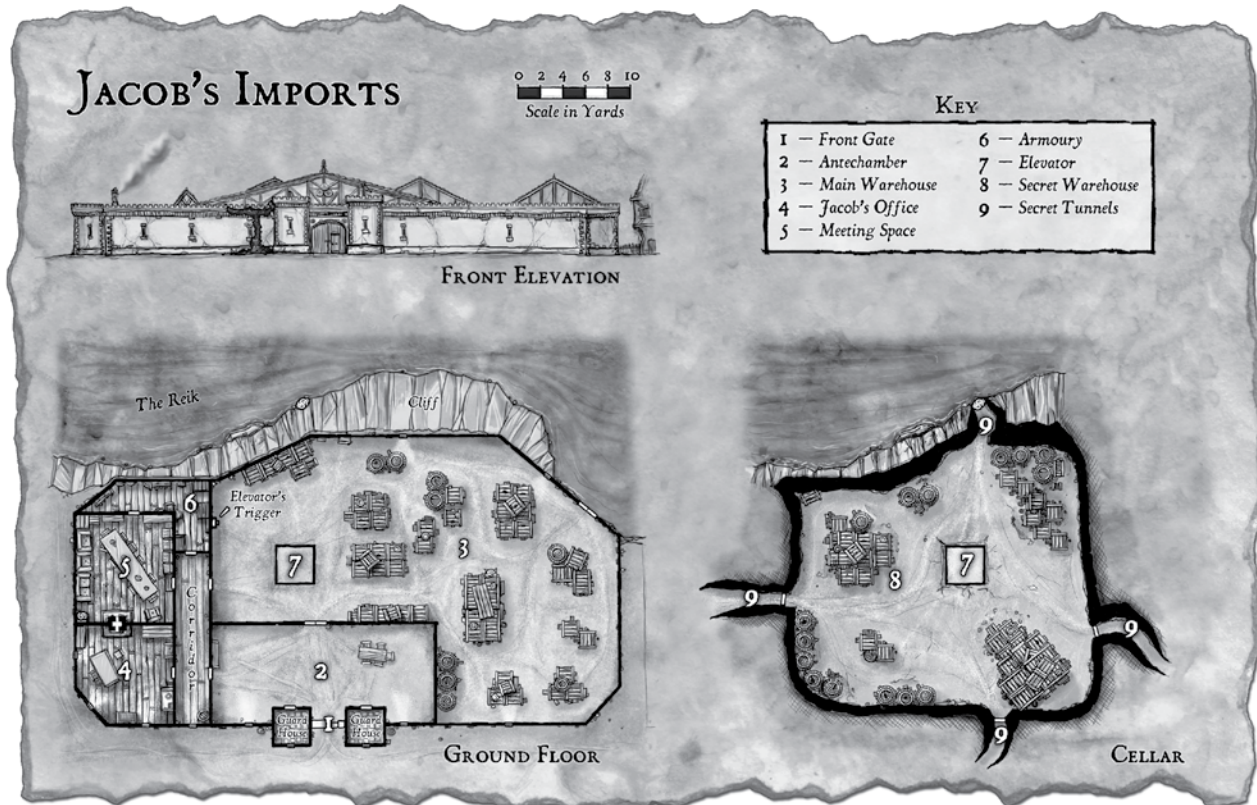
allowing heavy crates to be hoisted with relative ease. At any given time there are 1d10 warehouse crew (one of which is always a Brother) working inside the main warehouse.

4. Jacob's Office

This is the private office of Jacob Tuddler, the owner of the business (on paper, at least). The office is utilitarian and bland, full of shipping receipts, manifests, and other paperwork. Jacob is careful to keep any paperwork tied to the Brothers out of his office (see below). Jacob himself can be found in the warehouse during the afternoon, except Markttag, when he's at the local Temple of Handrich giving his offerings or on Festag, when he spends his day wenching. On these days, Schutzmann handles most of the deliveries in and out, coinciding with his crew's business.

5. Brothers' Meeting Space

This large room is where the Brothers meet, relax, and conduct their business. A large, long wooden table dominates the middle of the room with plenty of seating. Comfortable couches, benches, and chairs are scattered around the room, along with smaller tables. A keg of fine ale sits on one of the tables. Schutzmann keeps his own personal desk in one corner. A secret panel in the wall hides the incriminating paperwork of the Brothers' business ventures, along with choice illicit material, banned erotica, and other personal trinkets of Schutzmann. A **Hard (-20%) Perception Test** reveals the presence of this secret panel.



6. Armoury

Sitting adjacent to the Brother's Meeting Space, the armoury is stocked with over a dozen hand weapons, two halberds, three crossbows, two firearms (plus 100 rounds of ammunition), six helmets, four shields, and three breastplates.

7. Elevator

Used to shuttle crates and other goods to the Secret Warehouse located below it, the elevator is an ingeniously devised bit of engineering (the gift of a fellow Cultist of Handrich who owed the Brothers a favour). From the Main Warehouse, the elevator's surface sits so snugly into the floor that to notice it requires a **Hard (-20%) Perception Test**. Most of the time, the Brothers typically cover the elevator with crates and barrels to help hide the flooring, moving them aside only when the elevator needs to be used. When covered in this way, a **Very Hard (-30%) Perception Test** is needed to discern its presence. An old barrel sitting next to the wall serves as the lever to activate the elevator—it is tilted to the side to cause the elevator to raise or lower to or from the Secret Warehouse floor 30 feet below. It takes 4 rounds for the elevator to completely make a journey and it can hold up to 2,000 pounds of weight.

8. Secret Warehouse

The secret warehouse served as the basement for the fortification that once stood here. The ceiling is 20 feet high. Despite being so close to the water and in the relatively humid conditions of Marienburg, the room is amazingly dry. The Brothers keep all manner of rare, illegal, in demand cargo here. It is up to the GM to determine exactly what items are found here. The only way to access the secret warehouse is by using the elevator or through one of the secret tunnels (see below).

9. Secret Tunnels

These ancient tunnels have held up remarkably over time and bear the markings of Dwarf craftsmanship. One tunnel leads to the abandoned property across the street and the other opens up to a cleverly disguised doorway near the water's rise along the docks. From the outside, it requires a **Hard (-20%) Perception Test** to discern the secret doors that lead to these tunnels. The Brothers constantly patrol the outside of these doorways to keep them clear of intruders.

USING THE BROTHERS

The Brothers of Handrich are designed to be a criminal organisation that the PCs can get involved with, with a vague sense of religious purpose. The Brothers do most of the dirty work for the Cult of Handrich and find themselves dealing with criminals, politicians, the local constabulary, and businessmen out for a quick gold crown. Because the dictum of the Cult (and thus, the Brothers) is about business, the PCs who join or deal with the Brothers can find themselves travelling far from their homes to make contacts, move cargo, or do any number of tasks

required by the Cult. Their world is a dangerous one, full of backstabbing, shady deals, and people of questionable morality, which fits in perfectly with the life of any adventurer.

PLOT HOOKS

Here are some suggestions for including the Brothers of Handrich into your campaign.

AN OFFER YOU CAN'T REFUSE

The player characters have been watched from afar by members of a local crew of Brothers on the lookout for new members. As per usual operating procedure, they move in when the PCs engage in some kind of illegal behaviour that gets them in trouble with the local authorities, thieves' guild, or other powerful organisation. When the enemy group moves in for the arrest (or kill), the Brothers step out of the shadows and make a few cryptic remarks, causing the threatening group to move away without incident. With the menace removed, the Brothers (working under the guise of a "local business venture") make the PCs an offer to work with the Brothers, for a short while, of course, with the implicit threat that daring to not comply could result in the Brothers blackmailing the PCs, dumping them back into the hands of the enemy.

A BROTHER IN NEED...

If one of the PCs is a Merchant or involved in some sort of business venture, he finds himself entangled in some deep bureaucratic red tape that threatens to shut down his livelihood. An ally of the PC suggests that he talk to a local Litigator, Konrad Tauben, well-known for his pull with the courts and guilds. When the PC discusses the situation with Tauben (a Brother in good standing with eyes on full Priest status), the problems disappear with alarming speed, including an apology from some flustered clerk or minor bureaucrat. Tauben refuses any sort of monetary compensation, but does ask that the PC help him with a shipment of goods bound for Altdorf. If the PC and his allies get the shipment safely to the Brothers' safe house in Altdorf, they are offered additional work and eventual induction into the Brothers of Handrich.

MY ENEMY'S ENEMY IS MY FRIEND

The PCs are given a tip of a particularly valuable (and illicit, thus damning) delivery being made to a nobleman by a lone courier under disguise—anyone who can capture the prize can sell it or extort the nobleman for a handsome price. Upon robbing the courier, the PCs are set upon by a band of Ranaldan Cultists out for the same cargo. If and when they manage to drive off the Ranaldans, the nobleman discovers the attack and rewards the PCs for their "quick thinking and bravery." In reality, the nobleman is a member of the Brothers of Handrich who set up the robbery as a way to test the PCs capabilities and ruthlessness. If the PCs were successful and managed to do the job without much public ruckus, the Brothers offer them additional work.

CHAPTER III: DREAMWALKERS

Most Holy Shallya, I beg you to save my Reiner. It is only a
heal a broken leg, can't you?

Konigstag, 17 Pfl

I hate Shallya.

At Morr's Temple, there is a portal, and the Priests said that
We went into the Temple and came out again, so Reiner can e
that, my mother hit me. I hate her, too. I will get Reiner back

I have been looking in Father's library while he isn't here, t
Reiner back. Father has lots of books, and he hides some o
the pictures of fallen women easily, and one of the other book
in the same place. It was almost stuck shut, and there was a lot of dust in
The book is called "On the Return of the Dead"! Morr must be looking out for me.

Angestag, 26 Pflugzeit

Getting the dead to return looks quite difficult, but I suppose if it was easy, everyone
would be doing it. I don't know how to get some of the things the book says I need, but I
can't ask Father; he mustn't know that I found the book.

Markttag, 30 Pflugzeit

I went to the market today, to buy some of the easy ingredients, and look for the harder
ones. All of a sudden, a Priest of Morr, one I haven't seen before, addressed me most
respectfully, and said that he could provide the things I was seeking; he said that I should
bring 20 crowns and the book, and meet him at the Temple of Morr tomorrow, at noon.
How did he know there was a book?

Backertag, 31 Pflugzeit

What am I going to do? The Priest was there, and there were two other people with
him, one in black armour and the other in strange robes. He asked me to show him the book,
and when I gave it to him, he passed it to the woman in robes, who flicked through it and
nodded, without saying anything. Then she threw it on the brazier behind her! I would
have pulled it out, but the man in armour grabbed me. The Priest said I was a stupid
little girl, and should accept that the dead were better off peaceful in their tombs. I am not
a little girl! Or stupid. How am I going to get Reiner back now? And what if Father
notices that the book is missing?

B... 16 Pflugzeit

The dreams led us to Streissen, and one Katerlind
Duller. She had the necromantic text, and Hans
followed her for a few days. It appears that
she believed that the ritual would restore her
sweetheart to life. We took the book from her
and destroyed it; Rose confirms that neither the
girl nor her father have any magical talent, and
we believe that the book was already concealed in
the bookcase (see attached copy of Ms. Duller's
diary) when her father bought it (see attached copy
of the Duller family account book). Accordingly,
we believe this incident is now resolved.

Landfreund Godtgraf

— PLAYER'S SECTION —

The Dreamwalkers hunt Undead and Necromancers across the Old World. They are all servants of Morr, and believe that the God sends dreams to guide them to evils that must be crushed. Most bands of Dreamwalkers are formed around a Priest of Morr, and the Temples of that God support the group. In the Empire, the Amethyst Order also backs it, and more than a few Amethyst Wizards are found in its ranks.

Only people with a particular devotion to Morr are allowed to join the group, and only those willing to devote much of their time to rooting out and destroying the Undead want to. As a result, it is not a large organisation, but its members are very dedicated.

PURPOSE

The Dreamwalkers exist to fight the Undead, defeat Necromancers, and destroy Necromantic texts, to prevent the appearance of more Necromancers in the future. Greenskins and the Ruinous Powers are, as far as the Dreamwalkers are concerned, somebody else's problem, as are the sins and sufferings of the living.

HISTORY

Most members of the Dreamwalkers believe that its foundation is lost in the mists of history; this is because the group has never particularly bothered with recording its own history, and because of its fragmented structure, as described below. The handful of scholars with an interest in such things, and a considerable number of old Vampires, know that the first group of Dreamwalkers consisted of a Priest of Morr called Bartolf, an experienced mercenary called Hieronymus, and a woman, variously described as an actress, whore, and thief, called Philomelia von Hagendorf. They formed their group in 1681IC, and, even among those who know this much, most assume that this was in response to the Night of the Restless Dead.

In fact, the three met two weeks before that terrible night. All three of them had been suffering from terrible nightmares, in which they were pursued by hordes of Undead monsters, risen from their graves and set free to ravage the land. They also each dreamed of an isolated roadside tavern in Hochland, and of meeting the other two there. Bartolf was convinced that the dreams were a message from his God after they continued for a week, and so was the first of the three to arrive at the tavern. Philomelia was next, and the dour and practical Hieronymus the last, when he was finally unable to resist the urgings of the dreams.

There are no records of what they did before and during the Night of the Restless Dead. The tavern where they met was destroyed, and even its precise location was lost. Members of the Dreamwalkers speculate that the three could have prevented the mass rising of the Undead, but that they failed. Unless some lost document is uncovered, however, no one can now know for certain.

"We follow our dreams, and then crush the hideous mockery of life from the rotting corpses they animate."

—LANFRIED GODTGRAF, DREAMWALKER

What is well established is that the three split up after that dreadful night, each of them recruiting a small number of followers and travelling to a distant part of the Empire to continue their fight with the Undead. All three of them claimed to still receive guiding dreams from Morr, and, at least according to the surviving records, those dreams were surprisingly accurate.

The group sustained itself through the following centuries of chaos, and even spread into other lands of the Old World. Recruits were chosen for their dedication and competence, but every band was required to have at least one member who, in the opinion of at least two existing bands, was receiving prophetic dreams from Morr. On the whole, the Dreamwalkers were quite strict about this, although mistakes were inevitable.

The Wars of the Vampire Counts are remembered as the greatest failure in the group's history. Dreamwalker after Dreamwalker had dreams warning of the rise of Vampires, and the bands set off to defeat the menace. Almost all of them were destroyed, and a few were even turned by the Vampire Counts. Some tried to take their warnings to the authorities, but they were laughed at as madman, or burned as heretics; even the tiny handful who were heeded found that the authorities of that time lacked the power to do much.

Two figures from this time are remembered today, and held up as examples: Elisinda the Black, and Benedicta the Radiant.

Benedicta the Radiant was a former mercenary, who fought for years as Benedicta until she was the sole survivor of her company after it was thrown against a Necromancer. She found herself plagued by prophetic dreams, and followed them to destroy many Undead. She favoured fire as a weapon, which gave rise to her name. Before the Wars of the Vampire Counts formally began, her dreams led her into what would become Sylvania, where she disappeared.

Elisinda the Black was a young Priestess of Morr, serving in the Temple in Altdorf. She had spoken against the Dreamwalkers, accusing them of selfish delusions and possible heresy, but her influence was limited. In 2009, she



started having dreams of seductively powerful creatures coming from the East. She believed her own propaganda, and ignored the dreams for weeks, but as they repeated every night, she finally left the Temple, determined to find out what they meant.

She came out of Ostermark just ahead of the Vampire armies, carrying the head of Benedicta von Carstein, who had been Benedicta the Radiant, and seeking a member of the Dreamwalkers she had seen in her dreams. For the rest of her life, she was a tireless member of the group, finally dying at the Siege of Altdorf, in 2051.

Elisinda's influence became greater as she became older, and the present threat of the Vampire Counts lent weight to her arguments. At her urging, the Temples of Morr formally recognised the Dreamwalkers as a group chosen by Morr to fight the Undead. Her crucial argument was that the dreams, sent by Morr, set the Dreamwalkers apart from freelance Vampire hunters, and demonstrated the direct blessing of the God.

The Dreamwalkers remained on the fringes of history, taking little direct part in the Great War against Chaos. However, they did destroy a number of Necromancers who hoped to take advantage of the anarchy produced by the threat, and this valuable service did not go unnoticed; the group has been linked to the Amethyst College since Teclis founded it.

For members of the group, "history" is a set of stories of heroic battles against the Undead, featuring many different

bands of Dreamwalkers and not linked into any sort of general narrative. As the few scholars of the group's history have noted, this is quite possibly because, in the grand scheme of things, the group seems to have been largely ineffective, having failed to grasp its two opportunities to make a large difference to history. Better, then, to concentrate on the small victories, and maintain hope.

THE DREAMWALKERS TODAY

The Dreamwalkers are made up of a number of small groups, called bands, each of which operates independently most of the time. Each band forms around an individual who has prophetic dreams from Morr, and its activities are guided, in large part, by those dreams. The bands share information and resources with one another, and may pass on requests for help. Bands do not have the authority to give orders, but they are expected to monitor other bands, and raise concerns if a band does not seem to be paying enough attention to defeating the Undead.

The Dreamwalkers are an obscure organisation, not a secret one. Members rarely announce their membership, largely because hardly anyone has heard of them, and claiming membership in an obscure organisation that has a lot to do with the Undead is often bad for your health. Most Priests of Morr, and all Amethyst Magisters, are aware of them, and while personal attitudes vary widely, the Dreamwalkers are officially condoned, although not actively supported. Of course, even active support from the Temple of Morr and a College of Wizardry would be little help against Witch Hunters



with the backing of the Cult of Sigmar, which provides another reason for members of the group to be discreet.

New members often assume that it must be vital to preserve secrecy, to stop Vampires and Necromancers hunting them down. The (slightly dispiriting) truth is that hardly any Undead or Necromancers care enough about the group to put any effort into opposing them.

STRUCTURE

As described above, the Dreamwalkers are split into a number of bands, each of which is largely independent of the others.

Every band must include at least one person who receives prophetic dreams from Morr. Bands with two or more such people are encouraged by other bands to split into bands with one dreamer each, so that the organisation can cover more ground. This pressure, and the rarity of people with such useful dreams, means that bands with more than one dreamer are very rare.

Beyond that, the structure of a band is up to its members. The dreamer is usually the leader, but not always so, particularly if there is also an Amethyst Magister in the band. A band may consist solely of the dreamer, but most have a small number of associates. The largest band on record had twelve members, although anything over six counts as “large.” Bands that do not include at least one competent warrior tend to be very short-lived, or to dedicate themselves to gathering information and looking for a warrior. Sometimes, bands ally themselves with other adventuring types to get the necessary firepower, and this can work well, as long as the allies are sympathetic. Indeed, since bands are allowed to determine their own structure, the difference between a member of the band and an ally can be difficult to determine.

From the perspective of the rest of the organisation, the important difference between a member and an ally is that only a member should be in contact with other bands of Dreamwalkers. Allies should not know the identities of members outside the band with which they are allied. On the other hand, Dreamwalkers are encouraged to be in contact with several bands, and are required to be in frequent contact with at least three. Each band sends reports on its activities, and any useful information it has uncovered, to bands it is in contact with. Occasionally, other bands check on the accuracy of these reports, often because of a dream, and this is the group’s main way of finding corruption in the ranks. Bands have been found allied with the Ruinous Powers, blinded by the need for power to take the fight to the Undead, and even allied with one Undead monster or Necromancer against others. Very occasionally, a band is found simply taking it easy and making up its reports, but that is extremely rare.

Although there is no formal rank within the Dreamwalkers as a whole, informal respect is very important. Bands

guided by accurate dreams and which score victories over the Undead find their recommendations and requests taken very seriously by other bands, while those whose dreams are inaccurate may find themselves being investigated to make sure that they really do have a dreamer. Bands who fail in their battles with the Undead tend to be dead, at least briefly. Even successful bands find that other bands investigate them, to make sure that all their stories are true; most unmasked corrupt groups are discovered because their records looked very good, and suspicions were raised.

OUTSIDE THE EMPIRE

The Dreamwalkers are strongest within the Empire; that is where they were founded, and their alliance with the Amethyst College does not extend beyond its borders. However, individual bands are allowed to wander as their dreams lead them, which means that the group has a presence in all nations of the Old World. Bands are discouraged from wandering so far that they lose contact with all others, which has kept them confined to the Old World for now, but it is always possible that they might spread.

The group tends to be strong where the Cult of Morr is strong, which essentially means Tilea. Kislev and Bretonnia pay little reverence to the God of the Dead, and his Cult is not strong enough in Estalia to compensate for its distance from the Empire. No matter where they are, bands act in much the same way. Morr’s dreams might change their language to suit the area, but their message is the same.

GOALS AND MOTIVES

The Dreamwalkers want to see the Undead, and Necromancers, expunged from the world. If this has to be done one zombie at a time, so be it.

Of course, the Dreamwalkers know that there are more Undead than Dreamwalkers, and that the Undead have time on their side. They try not to let this get them down, however, and instead look for ways to be more efficient in their elimination of the menace. This has led a significant number of them to study modern weapons, as gunpowder can be very effective against the corporeal Undead.

However, most Dreamwalkers recognise that, if the menace is to be finally defeated, that can only be done by eliminating the ability to create Undead. Thus, they are particularly keen to eliminate Necromancers and necromantic texts. Destroy a zombie, and you’ve destroyed one zombie. Kill a Necromancer, and you’ve pre-emptively destroyed every zombie he would ever raise. Burn a necromantic book, and you’ve destroyed every zombie that would have been raised by every student of that book.

What is more, going around the Old World burning books does not make you many enemies. It’s almost normal behaviour, and the owner of the book is hardly going to be able to publicise the fact that he is angry because you

burned his necromantic tome. Books, even necromantic ones, also tend to be rather less dangerous than active Undead. For all these reasons, given a choice, most Dreamwalkers would spend their time hunting down books and burning them.

The dreams are the complicating factor. Almost all Dreamwalkers *believe* that Morr sends them dreams to tell them what to do, and these dreams often urge courses of action other than hunting books. Since Morr's guidance is what motivates most Dreamwalkers day to day, they do not ignore these dreams. In practice, other bands assume that a band spending too much time looking for books is either ignoring the dreams, or does not have a genuine dreamer, and so investigate. Thus, almost all bands spend a lot of their time confronting Undead and Necromancers directly.

Since Dreamwalkers do want to stop the rot at its source, they almost always follow up on the appearance of Undead, determining why the Undead appeared, whether there was a Necromancer involved, and, if so, where he is. The aim, always, is to kill the Necromancer and burn his books. This can be difficult if the Necromancer is influential in his community, or a powerful Vampire in his own right, and so some bands arrange for damning evidence to come into the hands of Witch Hunters or other groups with powerful backing.

This raises another problem for the group, and one that they must bear in mind at all times. Their official standing is a little unsteady; even the Cult of Morr only tolerates them. Thus, unlike Witch Hunters, they are granted no leeway by the authorities if they kill the wrong people.

There are few towns that get angry with people who kill lurching, rotten corpses, but if the Necromancer who animated them was popular, things could get ugly. Most bands do not let this deflect them from their duty, and still kill any Necromancers they find. However, Dreamwalkers tend to be very careful in deciding whether someone is a Necromancer. They simply cannot afford to kill everyone to avoid the risk of leaving a Necromancer alive, and thus may give a suspect the benefit of the doubt.

Those bands who have rarely been proven mistaken in this tend to see themselves as morally superior to the Witch Hunters, being more careful to avoid targeting the innocent. Those bands who have seen a number of people they allowed to live continue a Necromantic career, on the other hand, tend to envy the Witch Hunters their freedom to take no risks with the security of the community in the future. There is, as a result, a trickle of people leaving the Dreamwalkers and joining the Templars of Sigmar; the fact that most Dreamwalkers are genuinely devoted to Morr keeps this trickle small.

DREAMS

The dreams that come to a band's dreamer are the most immediate motivation for that band. Bands only stay together as long as they believe that the dreamer really is receiving messages from Morr, as who would ignore a message from their God? The vast majority of dreamers also believe that they are receiving divine instructions, and certainly the dreams seem to be more informative than pure chance would suggest.

Of course, the sceptical might suggest that, if someone spends his waking hours studying the Undead and searching for clues as to where they might be, his dreams will reflect that. When those dreams are interpreted in the light of such knowledge and research, it is, perhaps, not surprising that they lead to monsters more often than not. Most bands can, however, point to at least one occasion when the dreams revealed something new, something important that they could not have learned otherwise. They hold that people who dismiss this as pure luck show insufficient faith in the Gods.

If the dreams do come from Morr, his plans are deeper than mortals can comprehend, because they often send bands off in apparently random directions. While this is only to be expected, it does mean that explaining the activities of the Dreamwalkers in terms of their professed goals is often quite difficult. They often fail to follow obviously superior strategies, and waste time dealing with minor infestations of Undead. They do this, however, because their God has told them to.

THE VAMPIRE COUNTS

The Vampire Counts are, to the Dreamwalkers, an abomination upon the face of the earth that should be cleansed with fire at the first opportunity. In principle....



In practice, they find that their dreams lead them in other directions, so that they cannot concentrate on developing the strategies that would be needed to bring down such influential Undead. Further, those Dreamwalkers who are led to take on Vampires often repeat the experience of Benedicta the Radiant, and find themselves turned, or at least killed. The fact that most bands know this, and know that they would likely face the same fate, may, just possibly, subconsciously influence their interpretation of their dreams.

SYMBOLS AND SIGNS

The Dreamwalkers do not use secret signs as much as some other groups, and they do not have a formal badge. Members know other bands personally, and are personally introduced to further members as it becomes necessary, and the group is spread so thinly that it has never been necessary for members to recognise other members on first meeting.

Dreamwalkers do tend to follow two conventions in clothing, however. First, they usually wear black. This is sometimes explained as being a tribute to Elisinda the Black, but it is more likely that it is simply a reflection of the Morrian preference for the colour of mourning. While Dreamwalkers do not explicitly tell new recruits to wear black, it is normal to express disapproval of a new recruit's outfit until he moves to the appropriate colour. Most members are aware that black is, for some reason, the right colour to wear.

Morrian vestments are also black, but Dreamwalkers only wear priestly vestments if they are actually Priests. Otherwise, they wear black clothes in a different style, out of respect for the agents of the God.

The second convention is not even recognised by the membership. Almost all of them wear a visible symbol of Morr, because they are all devout followers of the God and wish to express that allegiance. Because wearing such a symbol is unusual in most countries, this makes them notable.

As a result, Dreamwalkers stand out in a crowd, particularly if a band has more than a couple of members, and a handful of very knowledgeable Necromancers have used this to avoid the group's attentions. More experienced bands know this, and make a determined effort to dress differently when trying to gather information, but even they are likely to revert to black when "off duty," and very few of them go so far as to hide the symbols of Morr.

MEMBERSHIP

The members of the Dreamwalkers are all Morrians who are dedicated to fighting the Undead menace. The group is overwhelmingly Human, because Morr is not a popular God with other races. Somewhat surprisingly, it is also

heavily middle class. In part, this reflects the popularity of different Gods within various social levels. However, dedication to destroying Undead requires a certain distance from the struggle to survive, which tends to exclude the lower class, and it is socially very difficult for Imperial nobles to distance themselves from the popular Cult of Sigmar. There are numerous exceptions, of course, but most members were raised in relative prosperity.

The dreamers are the skeleton of the organisation, holding together each band. They are also somewhat more diverse in background than other members, because Morr can send prophetic dreams to anyone. As noted below, a Priest of Morr must certify each dreamer as genuine, which means that prejudice has an effect. The group has never excluded women, though it has gone through periods of discouraging them; at present, however, women are treated fairly equally as candidates. Prejudice against the lower classes has been endemic, and prejudice against foreigners has helped to ensure the Dreamwalkers are mostly of Imperial stock. None of these facts represent formal requirements, however, so there have always been exceptions. A few dreamers from atypical backgrounds have spent quite some time, usually with the help of a contact in the Dreamwalkers, finding a Priest who was willing to approve them.

People who join up to accompany the dreamers fall into three broad classes. The largest is made up of those who have survived an encounter with the Undead. While these people can have any background, they often turn to martial careers in the interest of surviving future encounters.

The smallest group is made up of Amethyst Magisters. The College does not disapprove of its members joining the Dreamwalkers, and membership is no bar to advancement in the College. However, activities with the Dreamwalkers are also no help in the struggle for political power within the College; the magister could eventually become a Wizard Lord, but he would be isolated within the College. Obviously, Wizard Lords are extremely rare among Dreamwalkers.

Finally, there are many Priests of Morr in the bands. There is a higher proportion of miracle-working Priests than in the Order of the Shroud, because the miracles of Morr are very useful in fighting the Undead, so those Priests with access to them tend to survive. It is also not unusual for long-standing members of the group to feel the call of the God, and become Initiates or Templars, even if they do not progress to become Priests.

Membership in the Dreamwalkers is generally not consistent with continuing in a normal job, or having a family life. The dreams can take the band anywhere, at any time, so members must always be ready to leave. Many recruits lost their normal lives to the Undead in the event that drove them to join up; the others almost always lose them within a year or so through simple neglect.



THE RAVEN KNIGHTS

The Dreamwalkers and the Raven Knights are different organisations, despite their very similar purposes and shared devotion to Morr. The Raven Knights do not rely on dreams to guide them in their battles against the Undead, and they are generally sceptical of the claims of the Dreamwalkers. While, naturally, they concede that Morr does speak in dreams, they mock the idea that he acts like a militia captain, despatching orders to the sergeants to govern their daily activities.

The Dreamwalkers do not like being mocked, and suggest that the Raven Knights lack respect for the will of the God. They have suggested this to their contacts in the Cult of Morr, and are partly responsible for the Raven Knights' problems with the Order of the Shroud. Still, it should go without saying that if members of the two groups find themselves facing the

same Undead, they cooperate until the enemy is defeated—but generally no longer. For more details on the Raven Knights, be sure to check out *Night's Dark Masters*.

RECRUITMENT

The formal conditions on joining the group are very simple: any follower of Morr who wishes to fight the Undead may join. Informally, things are a little more complex.

Recruitment to a band is at the discretion of that band, except that the dreamer has the right of veto, as the dreamer has direct access to the will of Morr. It is normal for dreamers to reject candidates they do not like, because fighting Undead with someone you loathe is a recipe for disaster. Even if the dreamer does not object, almost all bands demand a probationary period, to test the candidate's mettle. This period is generally long enough to make it difficult for the candidate to go back to his old life, and since it is never over until there has been at least one battle with the Undead, it can be fatal.

In practice, there is very little difference between being a probationary member and being a full member, and quite a lot of bands use this as one of the tests. A recruit who does not mind not being a full member, because he still gets to battle the Undead, is very likely to be accepted, while one who complains about not being fully accepted is likely to be rejected, as being more interested in status than the mission.

Recruitment of a new dreamer is more involved, because anyone can *say* that Morr is sending them prophetic dreams. There is one easy case. There is a miracle known to the Cult of Morr, *Guiding Dream*, which grants prophetic dreams to the caster. Miracle-working Priests with access to that miracle are automatically accepted as dreamers.

There are other dreamers, however, as Morr does not restrict his guidance to his Priests. These cases are harder to verify, because dreams do not come with a certificate of authenticity. The Dreamwalkers' rule is that any candidate dreamer must be accepted as genuine by a Priest of Morr who is not a member of the group. Naturally, most Dreamwalkers who think they have found a new dreamer go to a friendly Priest to get that approval.

However, most Priests are cautious about authenticating a dreamer. Doing so means, in effect, declaring that someone is a prophet of Morr, albeit in a limited sense, and even if the formal meaning attached to such a declaration is quite limited, Priests still want to avoid being wrong. Thus, most Priests insist on a period of examination first.

They look at two aspects. First, the candidate's devotion to Morr, and to the destruction of the Undead, is scrutinised. The Priest may devise tests of faith, as well as watching daily behaviour very carefully. Second, the accuracy of the dreams is assessed. The Priest takes down records of the dreams as related by the dreamer, and then compares them

NEW TALENT: EXTRA SPELL (GUIDING DREAM)

Morr has rewarded your devotion with the ability to cast the spell *Guiding Dream*. You must have Divine Lore (Morr) to take this talent, but if you do, you may take it at any time.

Guiding Dream

Casting Number: 15

Casting Time: 1 minute

Duration: Instant

Range: You

Ingredient: A stick of incense (+2)

Description: You receive a dream concerning a particular course of action that Morr wishes you to undertake. The dream is always clear, but never complete. It never explains *why* Morr wants you to do something. The vision generally shows you performing a particular action, in a particular place, at a particular time, and you somehow know the name of the place, and where it is, and exactly what date is meant, even if those would not be obvious from the things seen in the dream. You have no control over the contents of the dream, and there is no guarantee that you will survive to carry out the actions you see.

Repeated castings almost always yield the same dream, at least until the Priest has done what was required, or the time during which he was supposed to perform the deed has passed. Failing to follow such a dream counts as violating the strictures of the Cult; if you have prayed for an illuminating dream, you should follow it.

This spell and talent first appeared in *Tome of Salvation*. Be sure to check that book out for more spell-casting possibilities for Priests of Morr.

to what actually occurs. There is always a large element of judgement involved in this, and no one expects *every* dream to be significant, but most Priests require at least a handful of obviously prophetic dreams before they will declare the dreamer to be authentic.

Obviously, assessing a potential dreamer is a substantial investment of time and effort, which means that the Priests doing so are all friendly to the Dreamwalkers. This means that they often err on the side of approving new dreamers.

MEMBER BENEFITS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Dreamwalkers do not have a wealthy or powerful patron, so the benefits of membership are mostly subtle, and many of them are the flip side of the responsibilities. Nevertheless, there are definite reasons for joining, beyond moral support.

First, members of the Dreamwalkers can claim accommodation in Temples of Morr, and stay free of charge for a “reasonable” length of time. The Priests are not required to feed the band, or to give them *good* accommodation, but it must be acceptable. If there is a known Undead problem in the area, the reception is normally very good, and a grudging welcome often improves once a Necromancer is unmasked.

Second, bands can call on other bands for help if they face a particularly difficult problem. It normally takes a little while for the help to arrive, so this is not an option in emergencies, but reinforcements of experienced Undead hunters are hard to come by for most other people.

Finally, bands receive the reports written by other bands. These reports form one of the primary responsibilities of the Dreamwalkers.

After every encounter with the Undead, a Necromancer, or even a Necromantic book, the band is required to write a report giving all relevant details, and send it to all of the bands they are in contact with. These bands, in turn, copy the report and send it on to the bands they are in contact with. Copying takes time, and so bands are encouraged to keep reports short and to the point; most are naturally inclined to do so in any case. In addition, most bands wait a while after receiving a report, to see if any of their other contacts will also send a copy, and thus minimise the number of copies they have to make. This means that the reports do not spread very quickly.

Each band is required to maintain a base where these reports can be sent. This is almost always a friendly Temple of Morr, although bands with Amethyst Magisters in their ranks sometimes use Colleges of Wizardry, and a few bands have reports sent to a friendly innkeeper, normally one who can handle himself if the Undead take too direct an interest.

NEW TALENT: MORRIAN DREAMS

You have prophetic dreams, generally about a single theme, such as the Undead, or Chaos, or Greenskins. These dreams warn you of threats to the Old World that you and your friends could confront. While the dreams are often lacking in detail, they contain enough information to get you to the right place at the right time; very occasionally, they may also be slightly helpful in dealing with the problem. However, this rarely goes beyond providing the first clue; most of the effort is down to you and your friends.

You do not have prophetic dreams all the time, and sometimes you dream about different topics. In any case, you have no control over the dreams at all; you cannot try to dream about a particular situation.

Any character may take this talent, by paying 100 xp for it in the usual way, at any time, regardless of current career. Humans regard those with this talent as touched by Morr, or possibly just touched.

The Dreamwalkers make no rules about what to do with the reports. Almost all bands read them, because there is often valuable information about their enemies contained within. Many then burn them, because they do not want to have a stock of texts about the Undead. Most burn at least some reports, although many bands keep the most useful-looking. A few even copy the most important points into a book, but that level of clerical effort is unusual. A handful keep everything, and there is said to be at least one Temple of Morr that has been the registered base of a band of Dreamwalkers almost since the beginning, which holds possibly the greatest repository of lore about the Undead in the Old World.

As mentioned earlier, some bands also check that the reports they receive are accurate. This is not a formal duty, but it is recognised as a reasonable thing for a band to do. In some cases, a band checks because the Undead were found close to their base, and they want to make sure that the threat has been completely removed. In other cases, however, they check because they have doubts about the accuracy of the report, or even suspect the reporting band of collaboration with the Undead, or with dark powers of some other kind. A few bands spend as much time checking up on their colleagues as they do hunting the Undead; this is particularly common among bands that have had an encounter with Witch Hunters.

New members of the Dreamwalkers are told that membership gives them no special privileges with respect to the law, or to Witch Hunters, and that the group cannot help them if they get in trouble. One effect of this, the group’s caution about getting the right people, was mentioned above. More

generally, bands are expected to be discreet, and to present evidence to the authorities to justify their actions, when possible. In most cases, this is enforced by self-preservation, but some bands take it upon themselves to make sure that none of their colleagues are engaged in activities that might bring the Witch Hunters down on the whole organisation. This informal enforcement is all that there is, however, so it is probably not completely effective.

The tradition of bands aiding one another has given rise to a secondary custom. Every so often, at the discretion of the dreamer, a band is expected to invite other bands to a dinner party. This party may be held in a Temple of Morr, but it is more common to rent a room in a tavern or inn.

Some of them are supposed to be simple dinner parties, an opportunity to talk shop and for everyone to become familiar with the local members. While no band is expected to be able to accept every invitation, a band that never went would draw suspicion.

In part, this is because the ordinary dinner parties are a cover for the real purpose of the gatherings. Sometimes the host band announces a major problem at the dinner party, and asks for help from the assembled Dreamwalkers. It is awkward to refuse at that point, and a band would need a really good reason to do so. Most, however, are eager to help; they live to fight Undead, and now they have the chance to do so alongside their closest allies in the battle.

— GM'S SECTION —

This section discusses the facts about the Dreamwalkers that are not known to all the members—the frequency of corruption, and the fact that they nearly always fail, for example. A general discussion of allies and enemies is followed by a description of a potential patron, and the base of a band, while the section concludes with some suggested plot hooks.

SECRETS OF THE DREAMWALKERS

The Dreamwalkers do not have a secret inner circle, or aspects of their past that are deliberately hidden; the structure of the group simply does not support such things. There are, however, a number of truths about the organisation that most of its members do not know, and this ignorance could cause them serious trouble.

CORRUPTION

Corrupt bands are much more common than the Dreamwalkers think. Even the members of corrupt bands do not realise how many of them there are—the corruption is not organised. Fighting Undead is difficult and dangerous, and bands are generally willing to accept any assistance that looks reasonable. When the problem is really serious, many bands are willing to accept assistance that is clearly dangerous, because of the importance of dealing with the problem. In the least serious cases, bands find themselves linked to organised crime. Bands that become small Cults of the Ruinous Powers, generally Tzeentch, Khorne, or Nurgle, are the most common example of corruption. A few even form alliances of convenience with individual Undead.

The main reason this widespread corruption goes unnoticed is that most corrupted bands remain discreet, and continue hunting Undead. In most cases, they continue to receive guiding dreams, although

the source of those dreams may have changed. In short, the bands do nothing to arouse suspicion, and so their evil remains unnoticed.

Even with the rampant corruption, there are essentially no bands that just pretend to hunt Undead. The privileges of membership are not attractive enough to draw frauds; the least active bands are simply those whose members have aged, and gone into semi-retirement.

INSANITY

A worryingly high proportion of Dreamwalkers are mad. Encounters with the Undead are not good for sanity, and the need for discretion keeps most members from seeking treatment, even if it would work. Add to this the fact that, “the voices in my head told me that there were zombies here,” is standard operating procedure for the group, and you have a perfect environment for raising lunatics.

The environment also directs the lunacy; most mad Dreamwalkers have Profane Persecutions or Venomous Thoughts, taking the specific form of believing in a conspiracy of Necromancers or Undead, or that everyone round the character is either Undead or in their power. Such characters can even continue in the Dreamwalkers for some time before anyone notices. Some fall victim to Body of Rot, believing that they are turning into an Undead monster; such characters do not normally continue as Dreamwalkers.

TERRIBLE FAILURES

The history of the Dreamwalkers is littered with bands that failed to prevent a major catastrophe. The original members did have a chance to prevent the Night of the Restless Dead, and several groups could have stopped the Vampire Counts before they were able to go to war. On a smaller scale, the history of the Empire is filled with Necromancers and Vampires the Dreamwalkers tried to stop, but couldn't. Members who learn too much about the history of

“Useful dupes, easily manipulated with simple magic.”

—MAIDA, VAMPIRE (DESTROYED)

the group might well conclude that it is a complete waste of time.

That may, however, be a mistake. If a band prevented a catastrophe, then, obviously, there would be no catastrophe. Not even the band in question might realise what would have happened if they had not intervened. Certainly, there would be no way to be sure from the reports and other remaining evidence. This, at any rate, is what the Dreamwalkers who know the truth tell themselves, to avoid giving in to despair.

ALLIES

The Dreamwalkers as a whole do not have any allies; the group has no central authority that could agree to alliances. Individual bands, however, very often do have allies, and those that don't are strongly encouraged, by other bands, to find some.

Some people are allied to the members of individual bands, but do not want to join the Dreamwalkers for various reasons. The most obvious reason is devotion to another God, or simple reluctance to get too close to Morr. This sort of relationship is completely acceptable to the organisation, and quite common. Non-members should not be allowed to read the reports, and are not invited to the dinner parties, but anyone who wants to help in the fight against the Undead is welcome to do so.

A significant number of bands have an alliance with a Witch Hunter, though with varying degrees of closeness and cordiality. The Witch Hunters are most interested in finding the works of Chaos, and are often pleased to have allies they can alert to problems with the Undead; they cannot ignore such abominations, but dealing with them would take time away from the hunt for the servants of the Ruinous Powers. The Dreamwalkers, in turn, get information, and some degree of cover for their own activities. Allied Witch Hunters, while they would naturally burn the Dreamwalkers were there evidence of corruption, actually require evidence; looking creepy, wearing black, and being seen in graveyards are not good enough evidence for an ally, although they might be for an enemy.

Most bands would like an alliance with the local authorities, and make some tentative overtures towards forming one. This is only occasionally successful, generally after the area has faced a serious threat from the Undead, which the Dreamwalkers faced down. That is, bands can generally form such alliances only after they would have been really useful. Still, when they can it gives them more leeway in their investigations, and backup from the watch or militia if they are facing an army of the restless dead.

For similar reasons, most bands try to cultivate alliances that can provide significant quantities of muscle on short notice. Those bands lucky enough to have plenty of funds pay court to mercenary captains, others, as mentioned above, make deals with the criminal underground. In these cases,

NEW TALENT: EXTRA SPELL (DECEIVING DREAM)

Through your further study of Necromancy, you have learned how to induce dreams of the Undead. A character must have Dark Lore (Necromancy) to take this talent, but any character who meets the prerequisite may do so.

Deceiving Dream

Casting Number: 15

Casting Time: 1 minute

Duration: Instant

Range: Five miles

Ingredient: A stick of incense (+2)

Description: The target of the spell, whom the caster must have seen at least once, dreams about the Undead the next time he sleeps. The caster may determine the broad content of the dream, but cannot fix the details. The target may be included in the dream, performing a particular action, and the caster may also choose to have the target associate a particular location and time with the dream. The spell can be used simply to give people nightmares, as dreams of the Undead are rarely pleasant, but it is most often used to mislead people with falsely prophetic dreams, hence the name.

the Dreamwalkers typically have little to offer, which makes building an alliance rather difficult.

Within this, alliances with groups of people who have found themselves pulled into adventures are the most common. As an added bonus, such groups often feel some sort of duty to defend wider society from terrible threats; the ones that are just in it for the money simply refuse to join an alliance.

THE CULT OF MORR

A lot of Priests of Morr have doubts about people who spend their efforts on hunting down Undead, *particularly* if they claim to be personally guided by the God. Thus, the Cult as a whole cannot really be counted as an ally of the Dreamwalkers. On the other hand, the Cult, at least in the Empire, officially does not disapprove of the Dreamwalkers, a contrast to its attitude to the Raven Knights, so that individual Priests and Temples are at liberty to have better relations without risk of any sort of official censure.

As a result, Priests and Temples of Morr are common allies for a band, and local units of the Black Guard sometimes help out. Away from the local Temple, however, Priests tend to provide the minimum hospitality, and stay out of the band's affairs as much as possible.

It is quite possible for a group of con artists to abuse the hospitality of the Temples, by claiming to be Dreamwalkers. Very few con artists even know that the group exists, however,

and most of those who do find out do not know enough to be convincing. As a result, there are very few people taking advantage, and even those who do get nothing more than a roof over their heads, so the Temples maintain the practice.

There is at least one genuine group of Dreamwalkers that started off as con artists. Their “dreamer” suddenly started having recurring nightmares about the Undead, and after the dreams came true all of them suddenly discovered a deep and profound faith in Morr. They have managed to embed themselves into the network, but if anyone ever looks too closely into the question of who, exactly, recruited them, they are going to have difficult questions to answer.

ENEMIES

The enemies of the Dreamwalkers are Undead and Necromancers. This is hardly surprising.

However, there are very few Necromancers working to destroy the whole organisation. In the first place, most Necromancers do not even know that they exist. The Dreamwalkers are much more discreet than the Witch Hunters, and Necromancers are not generally inclined to pass on warnings to others of their kind. Some do know, of course, and most intelligent Undead find out within a century or so, generally as a result of being attacked.

Of those who know, a few do want to destroy the whole group, but even then they are the exceptions, for three reasons.

First, the organisation of the Dreamwalkers makes it very hard to destroy them as a whole. You would have to destroy every band individually, and do it faster than the bands were recruiting. What’s more, you would have to cover the whole of the Old World to make sure you got them all.

Second, that same organisation makes them a minor threat. The Dreamwalkers are, essentially, a lot of small groups hunting Undead, and very few of those groups pose a danger to a powerful Necromancer or Vampire. Most of the Necromancers and Vampires who know about them *are* powerful, so they regard the Dreamwalkers as like cockroaches; if they come across them, they squash them, but trying to eliminate them entirely is a waste of time.

Finally, because the Dreamwalkers rely on dreams for guidance, it is very easy for wizards to manipulate them, using them against their enemies. Some Necromancers take advantage of that, and react badly to other Necromancers trying to destroy their unwitting agents.

THE RAVEN KNIGHTS

The Raven Knights are not exactly enemies of the Dreamwalkers, but they are hardly allies. Raven Knights tend to think that the Dreamwalkers’ methods are foolish, and resent the tacit approval that the other group enjoys from the Cult of Morr. Raven Knights would not fight Dreamwalkers, and they would work together to overcome

a Necromancer or Vampire, but politically they are opponents. Raven Knights speak against the Dreamwalkers to Priests of Morr who will listen, trying to undermine them. Unfortunately for the Knights, the Dreamwalkers are currently in a stronger position with the Cult, and they use that position to undermine the Knights.

This is, of course, blithering idiocy. The two groups should be working together, if not actually merged into a single organisation; if they were, the Vampire Counts might really have something to worry about. But pride and tradition mean that the Undead can sleep easily in their graves for a few more days.

SAMPLE MENTOR

CORVIN OF SCHEINFELD

“When you’ve had your leg chewed off by a ghou, then you can give me advice.”

—CORVIN OF SCHEINFELD

Corvin of Scheinfeld was a member of a band of Dreamwalkers for several years, until he had his leg chewed off by a Ghoul. He chose to retire to a Temple of Morr, where he is half-heartedly trying to become a Priest. He is very willing to talk to people who want to battle the Undead, giving them the benefit of his advice and experience, which is considerable.

If the characters approach his Temple looking for advice on such matters, they are referred to Corvin. If he thinks they are suitable, he can make the necessary introductions for them to join the Dreamwalkers.



BACKGROUND

Corvin was a hunter until the day he found Zombies instead of deer. He got away after bringing two of them down, and led his friends back to wipe out the infestation. The Necromancer who raised them had returned, however, and Corvin was the only survivor. He did, however, kill the Necromancer.

A combination of guilt and fear sent him wandering, and when he crossed paths with a dreamer by the name of Aver, he was easily convinced to join her band, and become a Dreamwalker. At first, he was a little sceptical of her dreams, but she was attractive, and he hoped to win her over. Within a year he was fully convinced of her dreams, and no longer trying to win her over.

On their last expedition, they had killed the Necromancer when his Ghoul servants swarmed them. They fought to get out, but Corvin and one of his companions did not. Corvin had to watch as the Ghouls ate his friend, keeping him alive so that the meat would be fresh. Then they started on him.

They had eaten his left leg by the time Aver came back with reinforcements and rescued him. A one-legged Vampire Hunter is not much use to the Dreamwalkers, so he retired to a Temple, but he is still in contact with Aver, and still very much interested in the doings of the Dreamwalkers.

PERSONALITY

Corvin believes that he has more experience of Undead than anyone he is talking to, and that there is no experience more horrific than having Ghouls chew your leg off while you are still alive. He has a point, and no one has yet been able to top his story. He is very willing to offer advice from his vast store, along with stories of his brave deeds, but bristles immediately if anyone offers advice to him. No one, after all, has the sort of experience that would allow them to do that.

APPEARANCE

In his late thirties, Corvin is battered by life, but the bits of him that are left are still in good shape. He dresses in black, wearing a short tunic and jacket so that his wooden leg and crutch are obvious; he wants people to ask, so that he can tell them exactly what happened to his leg, in great detail. Anyone who sits through the story to the end earns his respect, and an offer to hear the uncensored version anytime they want. His appearance is neat, as befits an Initiate of Morr, but his eyes still burn with fire, darting around the room.

CORVIN OF SCHEINFELD

Male Imperial Human Initiate, ex-Bounty Hunter, ex-Hunter, ex-Vampire Hunter

| WS | BS | S | T | Ag | Int | WP | Fel |
|-----|-----|---------|---------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 47% | 57% | 48% (4) | 62% (6) | 48% | 45% | 59% | 31% |

Skills: Academic Knowledge (History), Academic Knowledge (Necromancy), Academic Knowledge (Theology), Common Knowledge (the Empire)+10%, Concealment+10%, Dodge Blow, Follow Trail, Gossip, Intimidate, Outdoor Survival, Perception+20%, Scale Sheer Surface, Search+10%, Secret Signs (Ranger), Shadowing, Silent Move+10%, Set Trap, Speak Language (Classical), Speak Language (Reikspiel)

Talents: Hardy, Lightning Reflexes, Luck, Marksman, Mighty Shot, Rover, Rapid Reload, Sharpshooter, Sixth Sense, Specialist Weapon Group (Crossbow), Specialist Weapon Group (Entangling), Specialist Weapon Group (Longbow), Stout-hearted, Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure, Tunnel Rat, Very Resilient

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 2; **Wounds:** 16

Armour (None): 0

Weapons: Hand Weapon (Club) (1d10+4)

SAMPLE LOCATION: BERTHOLDT'S INN

Bertholdt's Inn is a fortified hostelry on the road between two towns. Anyone travelling that road would be wise to stop there, and Berthold doesn't even take too much advantage of his monopoly. His inn also serves as the official base for a band of Dreamwalkers.

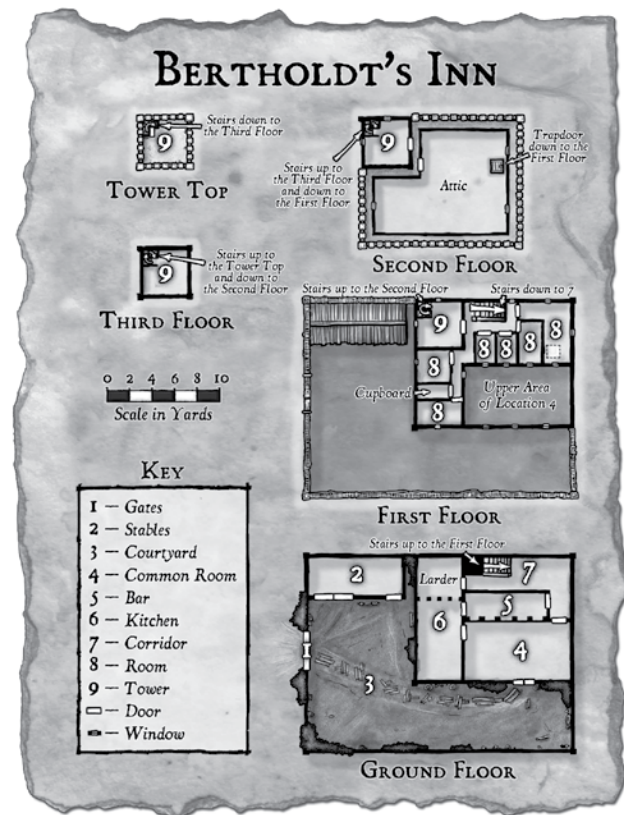
FEATURES AND DEFENCES

The inn is built almost entirely of stone, and even has stone walls in the interior. The building goes back before Bertholdt's time, and he reckons that the expense drove an earlier innkeeper into bankruptcy; the trade on the road plus a reasonable amount of price gouging just about covers maintenance. The main building has two floors, the tower three, and each floor is about ten feet high. The windows are all narrow, only a little wider than arrowslits, and a Human could not get through them. Furthermore, there are no windows on the ground floor. Bertholdt defends the inn by closing the doors and gates and using missile weapons to pick off attackers; anyone staying is expected to help, and this is usually enough.

KEY LOCATIONS

1. Gates

The gates to the inn yard are set into a fifteen foot high stone wall, and are just wide enough for a coach or cart



to enter, not that many wheeled vehicles can use the road. They are heavy, reinforced with iron, and can be closed with a large bar.

2. Stables

The only wooden structure, only used to provide accommodation for the horses.

3. Courtyard

The ground is not paved, and turns into a mudbath when it rains. A few wooden platforms allow people to pick their way from the gate to the door into the inn.

4. Common Room

The common room goes up the full height of the building, so the ceiling is twenty feet high. The walls on the inside of the inn have windows in them, from the bedrooms, from which defenders can fire into the room. The door is rather low and narrow; only one Human can pass through at a time, and must duck.

5. Bar

The bar is separated from the common room by a stone wall that reaches a bit above waist height, and is then topped with stone arches supporting the stone wall above. The arches can be blocked with large shutters, sealing the common room off.

6. Kitchen

A row of stone pillars runs across it, to support the tower above.

7. Corridor

Contains the stairs up.

8. Rooms

On the first floor, guest rooms and rooms for the innkeeper. The doors can be locked and bolted, and the windows allow firing into the common room.

9. Tower

The tower has a walkway on the roof, screened by a low parapet, and another walkway, similarly screened, runs round the roof of the inn proper. The band uses a tower room to store the reports they think are important, and the innkeeper stays out of it; he doesn't want to know what they know.

USING THE DREAMWALKERS

The Dreamwalkers have been designed to be very easy to incorporate into a campaign. A dream could lead a group of them to cross the player characters' path, no matter where they are, and any band could call on an adventuring group for help. If one of the player characters has access to

prophetic dreams, the adventurers could become a band of the Dreamwalkers. If they do not all want to join, that's also not a problem.

Once a character is having prophetic dreams, they can be used to point the players at your latest plot. Thus, you might want to give a character *Morrian Dreams* for free, if the player expresses an interest in the concept. Because the player has almost no control over the talent, it is not actually much use to the player, but it is very useful to you. You might also reduce the Casting Number of Guiding Dream, for the same reason.

PLOT HOOKS

These plot hooks are concrete suggestions for incorporating the Dreamwalkers into your campaign.

HERE COMES THE CAVALRY

The player characters are greatly out of their depth fighting Undead, when a band of Dreamwalkers arrive and tip the balance. The Dreamwalkers' agenda does not finish with this battle, however, and they want the characters to help them. How can they refuse the people who just saved their lives? And how will they get out of the Necromancer's lair if they do?

MORR NEEDS YOU!

One of the characters suddenly starts having terrifyingly vivid dreams of an Undead attack. They repeat over several nights, always much the same. If they try to find the place in the dreams, they stumble across a group of Undead, and a group of Dreamwalkers sent to the same place. If they talk to Priests of Morr, the specialists in dreams, they are directed to the same band of Dreamwalkers, who have had similar dreams. Morr has clearly chosen the character to join the Dreamwalkers, but membership discussions can wait until after the Undead are defeated.

MISGUIDED ZEAL

A Witch Hunter has decided that a band of Dreamwalkers is full of Chaos Cultists, and plans to burn them all at the stake. The adventurers have been aided by these Dreamwalkers before, and so want to prevent a miscarriage of justice. Of course, it might not *be* a miscarriage.

NOT UNDEAD YET

The characters are tracking down a Necromancer or Vampire, and getting close. Suddenly, they are attacked by Dreamwalkers, who seem to assume that they are Undead. If they can make it clear that they are not, they can stop the attack and talk to the Dreamwalkers, who were led to them by a dream. The band is being manipulated by the Necromancer, who was seriously spooked by the characters. The Dreamwalkers refuse to admit this, even to themselves; what are the characters going to do about it?

CHAPTER IV: THE GLORIOUS REVOLUTION OF THE PEOPLE (REFORMED)

“Leiber’s fanciful treatise about the ridiculous ratmen was declared heretical and all copies burnt—or so we thought. A few copies escaped our attention; within a year they were read by perhaps a dozen people in the city. And those people talked to others, and they talked to others, and those others told stories in the ale-houses and shouted on streets. Not long after, people began to see things in the streets. Panic spread like the por, and violence came with it. And the great city of Mulu paid the price, in riots, fire, and blood. Now, with the advent of this device, the same lunatic might reach a hundred people in a day, a thousand in a week. The Cult of Sigmar is strong and it is vast, but we cannot hope to destroy lies of this volume. Here then is a por that spreads as fast as the wind blows and knows no containment nor remedy, and a por far more deadly than any before, for it destroys the mind and the soul, not the flesh. And it will surely destroy everything it touches, and our cities will burn and our people suffer for it.

“This question, then, is not one of faith or morality but survival. Whatever we might wish, whatever scholarly interest we might find in such devices, whatever benefits they might grant to our great Temple (and the power to disseminate Sigmar’s word to thousands at the crank of a handle is no small benefit, we must admit), whatever we might believe to be the true progress of Science or the education and ascent of Man, all of that is become irrelevant. The issue of import here is nothing more or less than the safety and survival of Sigmar’s Empire. In the face of this mechanical creation, this Infernal Machine, of the danger it represents, of its ability to bring outright destruction at a rate we never imagined in our darkest nightmares, we can have only one response, because to respond otherwise is to damn our entire Empire to Chaos and certain doom. That response is one simple, unified edict: the total and complete destruction of this ‘printing-presser,’ the banning of all plans and diagrams of their construction, and the immediate execution by flame or axe of any person or persons attempting to, or knowing of an attempt to, construct, describe, or discuss such a device. So I have concluded, and so I would order Sigmar’s Holy Temple to make Writ. And may Sigmar save us all.”

—CONCLUSION TO THE SIGMARITE TREATISE *THIS INFERNAL MACHINE*, BY ARCH LECTOR KASMIR XI

— PLAYER’S SECTION —

Ten years ago, the great poet and champion of the people, Prince Kloszowski, led a revolution on the streets of Altdorf. But the revolution faltered, the people were slaughtered, and the Prince was forced to flee. Ten years later, the Prince has returned to the Empire, and he has learnt much in his absence, and from his previous failures. The people will not be saved by one violent action, no more than a single stab of a sword, no matter how deep it cuts the flesh, can win a war. Wars are won by attrition, by the slow, grinding establishment of an enemy presence, until the losers can’t remember what they were fighting for anymore. Wars are won by controlling

the hearts and minds of the whole nation, not just a small army. Wars are won by words, not steel.

Words are the stock and trade of the Glorious Revolution of the People. The revolutionaries have stopped trying to raise an army and instead have started recruiting a nation. At least, that’s the goal. Until recently, not many people bought the *Griffon’s Tail*, dismissing it as just another scandal-mongering broadsheet or fanciful tabloid. But the *Tail* is more than just that. It’s satirical, it’s clever, and it dares to mock the powers that be in a way that’s never been done before. The *Tail* is so exciting its words are appearing on the stage and the street

every day, and are read aloud in half the pubs in the city every night. It's an underground journal that's just gone public, and the public are amused. Now, the *Tail* doesn't need readers, it needs writers—by the wagonload.

PURPOSE

The mission of the GRP is to subvert the hearts and minds of the people of the Empire to their point of view. They want to teach the people that the concepts of monarchy and nobility are inherently flawed and evil, and lead only to oppression. They want to encourage people to see that the nobles are nothing but humans, and foolish and cruel humans to boot, and their position as rulers is an historical accident, not mandated by the Gods. That kings and princes only acquire power because the people let them have that power—and those same people can take that power away.

To the average Empire peasant, this is a very hard sell, but the Glorious Revolution is prepared to start small.

First of all, they are focusing on the growing (and increasingly more educated) middle classes of the great cities—Altdorf, Nuln, Middenheim, and Talabheim. And before they get to the idea of tearing down the nobility, they have begun with the simple idea of mocking and undermining it. And it is this—the focus on parody over preaching—that has caught the public eye. It also helps that they print a variety of satirical pictures and primitive cartoons, and that their plays and scripts are now appearing on the stages. Those who cannot afford the plays can see the skits played in the streets, or hear them read aloud by a literate friend over drinks at the pub. This has enabled even the commonest of men to enjoy the comedy of the *Griffon's Tail*, and they enjoy it very much. The revolution has begun, and it is spreading like wildfire.

In fact, the *Tail* has become so successful so quickly it can barely keep up with the demand. What it needs right now is people: writers, artists, reporters, jesters, printers, merchants, runners, messengers, delivery boys, demagogues, bodyguards, and thieves, to help keep up with the demand for issues all across the Empire. So desperate are they for staff they no longer care if all their members are as ardently political as the founders—and at the same time, the issues are now selling enough copies to attract talented staff who will adopt any political bent required of them in order to gain fame or fortune.

But to write for the *Tail* is to have a price on your head and a dramatically lowered life expectancy, as the paper is becoming a major threat. The nobility, the Temple, the military, and all the powers that be, have all been insulted by the *Tail*. Whether seeking personal revenge or because they realize the danger the *Tail* represents, the powers have

declared war. This has driven demand even higher, but has also made getting the *Tail* out each week harder and harder. Words are the steel of revolution, but they also need real steel—and those who can wield it—to get those words to their audience. The revolution needs people willing to get their hands dirty with more than ink. In secret, Kloszowski's war has begun.

HISTORY

Prince Vladimir Mikael Kloszowski is a real prince. His mother is the Dowager Princess of Inkodeyna, a small stronghold near the capital of the frozen northern land of Kislev. Fearing that her enemies would use her only male heir to oust her from her husband's throne, the Princess sent her son away to the Empire to be educated as soon as he could speak their guttural southern tongue. Kloszowski proved to be a good student, absorbing everything he saw around him. And what he saw made him angry.

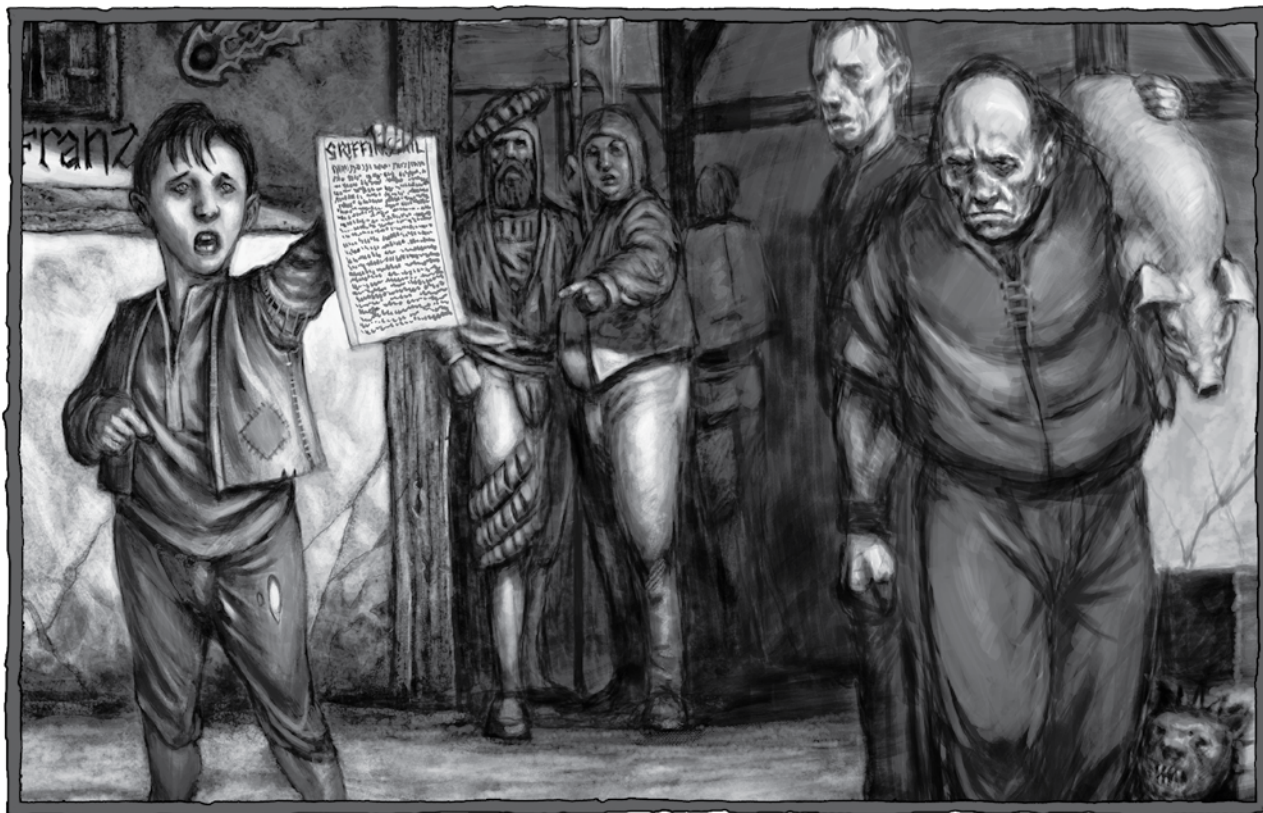
The moment he left his mother's palace he was struck by the difference between the poor and the rich, as the Kislev *muzhiks* slaved in the cold just a few feet from what had been his bedroom. The Empire, he was told as he traveled, was a land of opportunity, where power came from wealth as much as birth, and no man was slave to another. This, he discovered, was a hollow lie, and the poor slaved and died in just the same way they did in his homeland. Bitter and troubled, Kloszowski left his studies and traveled the Empire alone, trying to learn and understand the plight of the people. He wrote poems as he went, sending them back to his old university chums. He was as surprised to hear they had decided to publish them, and even moreso that they were popular. When he came back to Altdorf, he was widely welcomed as a returning hero. His poetry had created a revolution while he had been gone, and he was thrilled to be its champion.

There were other groups amassing at that time. Ulli von Tasseninck and Professor Brustellin had taught their students about the horrific abuses of the nobility. Another Kislevite, Yevgeny Yefimovich, screamed himself hoarse on the streets each day, and the poor believed his every word. When the pattern murders started, Kloszowski wrote a poem called "The Ashes of Shame" which implied what they all knew: that the murderer was a noble making sport with the common folk, a symptom of the sickness that entrapped them all. Two days later, Yefimovich printed the poem in a pamphlet that was soon being read in every tavern in the city. That night, the revolution began and Altdorf burned.

But in the chaos of the fires and the fog and the random violence of the Altdorf mobs, the revolution became nothing but another riot. The destruction went rampant, and in the subsequent investigation, it was the revolutionaries who were blamed, especially

"No, no, I never said that the Count had his entire staff executed to cover his tracks. The etching simply suggests—to an imaginative reader—that he might have done so, if he was the kind of person given to doing such things..."

—DOKTOR SIEGEL, SATIRICAL ETCHER



when Yefimovich was revealed to be a mutant with dark powers. Brustellin was murdered, Tasseninck beheaded, and Kloszowski fled to Tilea, turning his poetry to the more delicate art of seduction as a way to shake off his bitterness and disappointment.

But he could never stop his revolutionary heart. He returned to his scholarly ways, reading works from the libraries of Tilea and Estalia as he traveled those lands. As he observed the power of the Myrmidian Cult and read the examples of the wise Goddess herself, he saw how great words could unite people and win battles. Although still an atheist, he took the example of Myrmidia as a way in which he could bring true revolution to the people, through educating them. And he knew from his days as a poet the best way to educate people was without them knowing it—by hiding revolution behind comedy and tragedy.

He returned to the Empire with a new mission, and a reborn zeal. He would create a free press that published on a weekly basis. Once, his poems had brought a revolution overnight. If that kind of writing entered the culture of the Empire each week, every week, soon some people would not be able to think otherwise. And when enough people thought that, it wouldn't be a revolution anymore, because it would be the status quo.

There were others who quickly joined his cause. Although not in as many numbers, he was once again welcomed as a hero back to Altdorf. His poem about the slaughter during the Fog Riots, “The Blood of Innocents,” had become another underground classic in his absence, and a clutch

of hard-core fans and adherents remained. From them, he drew a group of writers, scribes, and etchers. With the fortune he had made in Estalia, he recruited a dwarfen printer and rented a tiny basement room near the docks. A month later, the first issue of the *Griffon's Tail* was printed.

THE GRP TODAY

For the first eight months the *Tail* gradually gained an audience on the streets of Altdorf, although not a very large or impressive one. Then something amazing happened. On a whim, Kloszowski penned a short play for an issue, in which Grand Marshall Kurt Helborg and Emperor Karl-Franz discussed how useful it was that the young warrior Valten had died during the Siege of Middenheim. A week later, the Angry Goblin Theatre Company performed the sketch on the stage in the run-down Arena Inn. The next night, the Inn was packed, and a week later, the Angry Goblin Theatre Company was performing it at the Sinner's Stage. A week after that, half the theatres in the city were running it between acts, and clamouring for the *Tail* to run new scripts. Older issues resurfaced, and Kloszowski's humorous poems and haranguing editorials were recited as well. In a month, Kloszowski—still writing under the pseudonym “The Tail Puller”—had become the toast of the town. He had always wanted to be a great dramatic poet, but had found fame as the satirist of his age.

By the time the nobility caught on, it was already too late. Noblemen and women were already going out (in poor disguises) to catch these scandalous plays or purchase the

pamphlets. When the militia raided the Hanged Man Theatre and arrested the entire cast, it only increased the popularity of the works. Whilst a dozen actors rot in Mundsden Keep, half a hundred now clamor for the chance to also suffer such a wonderfully romantic fate. Young sons and daughters are ordered never to sully their minds with such things, but their parents sneak out “only to see what all the fuss is about.” Priests and zealots decry the terrible sins of these heretical works that dare to mock the Gods themselves, whilst pastors hand copies around their choirs for a good laugh. The dam has burst, and only the extermination of the *Tail*'s writers and organisers can stop the flow.

Desperate to meet the rising demand but keen to protect the safety of his staff and himself, Kloszowski did not expand his tiny operation. Rather, he gave leave for others to set up their own basement publication houses. There are now three *Tails* in Altdorf: The *Griffon's Tail*, the original; *Tail of the University*, working the north side of the city; and *Tail of the Gods*, serving the area near the Grand Temple of Sigmar to the west. Each edition has its own staff of writers,

*And there is forever now a part of me
That lies there in darkness screaming
As bloody sin brought forth bloody tide
'Pon those streets of daemons' dreaming*

*From out th'Altdorf fog came Altdorf death
A blade in velvet-recluse hidden
T'was always the way in Altdorf life
What other death could we have bidden?*

—FROM “THE BLOOD OF INNOCENTS,
” BY PRINCE KLOSZOWSKI

etchers, and printers, its own content, and its own delivery routes, and some people love to collect all three and compare them. In a few pubs, discussions and minor brawls have broken out over which edition is the best. Meanwhile, Kloszowski has also sent his students out to Middenheim, Talabheim, and Nuln to repeat what he'd done in Altdorf.

Kloszowski initially wrote letters to keep in contact with the editors of each edition, but eventually instead published another, private, journal titled *The Rising Whisper*. This helps keep the groups in contact with each other and, more importantly, keeps them inspired. Each issue of the *Whisper* is filled with Kloszowski's inflammatory diatribes, encouraging editors and staff to keep up the fight and not lose hope. Truth be told, this often falls on deaf ears, for as many are drawn to the *Tail* for fame and fortune as they are due to political zeal. But it is dangerous, and increasingly so, to work for the *Tail*, so Kloszowski's urgings for security are always well heeded.

So far, the nobles and the Watch have been stymied in part by the fact that there are simply no existing laws against publishing. Individual works and books can be condemned as illegal or heretical but the *Tail* changes its content every week. In times past, there might have been only fifty copies of a book—heavy, vellum-bound things that few could hide—so burning them all was no great problem. But a thousand single pieces of paper cannot be controlled that way, so no laws exist to do so. Plays too can be banned, players charged, and playwrights executed, but the writers of the *Tail* remain anonymous and the directors can honestly say they have no idea who writes them.

Watchmen can typically only arrest actors and sellers for disturbing the peace or causing civil unrest, which results in a fine or a night in the cells. The stars of the Hanged Man got a year for Sedition and Treachery but as the popularity of the works grows, lawyers are finding it harder to make such charges stick. It is difficult to argue that lampooning the nobility is illegal when half the audience are nobles. Destruction is another solution: play sets can be broken up, stalls smashed, ink bottles and papers seized, and paper-sellers evicted, but the writers themselves manage to continue. That said, not all Watchmen need laws, and more than one patrol has been paid handsomely to beat *Tail*-sellers until their skulls caved in. Other nobles have payed assassins or street gangs to take revenge for the insults printed about them.

Recently, the Grand Theogonist declared the *Tail* “a clear and present threat against the sanctity and security of the

THE LITERATE AND OTHERWISE

Even the most optimistic estimates put the literacy rate of the city of Altdorf at less than 20%, and the number who can read is far greater than those who find any use in the activity beyond deciphering simple messages. So all the broadsheets of Altdorf are competing for a tiny market indeed. However, each of these broadsheets can also have a far greater audience than just its customers: It is common practice for anyone who can read to do so aloud with his friends when new information is at hand. Since printed news is still an amazing novelty, every issue tends to be read aloud many times. Some are even read on street corners by buskers, asking a few clanks to cover the cost of their purchase. What's set the *Tail* apart so greatly is the performances it has inspired and cartoons it includes, which have, for the first time, allowed a broadsheet's content to reach the common man without always requiring a literate intermediary. These new fans don't buy their own copies but do insist their friends buy the *Tail* every week without fail, and often pay the buskers or tavern readers handsomely to hear the latest content. It is this demand—along with all the theatre-houses, directors, and actors purchasing it—that has given the *Tail* its burst of financial success.

WRITERS AND THE LAW

GMs should remember that the Empire has not the slightest conception of the freedom of the press. Nor do they know about freedom of speech or the right to free assembly. Free citizens of Altdorf may move freely about its streets before curfew, assuming the Watch do not say otherwise, but this is the only right they have and it is not well defended or observed. Writers and reporters have no special privileges or access and can, in fact, be arrested for writing (and reading) itself. If it isn't actively disturbing the peace, it looks extremely suspicious, especially if they are writing down what another person is saying. If that person is of any rank, such an act would be clear evidence of spying or sedition. It could even be contrived as evidence of sorcery or witchcraft. Many cities require poets to register with a guild so they have a license to write in the streets, just as wizards, scribes, and students have demarcations to explain themselves; other cities just expect poets to act and dress the part, with flowing sleeves and a dramatic demeanour. Drawing attention to oneself like this, however, is extremely dangerous for a writer for the *Tail*. Writing, therefore, is almost always done in complete privacy, and never discussed with strangers, no matter how much a writer wishes to brag that the parody causing all the laughter is his work.

Holy Cult of Sigmar.” This stops short of labeling the journal heretical, but it has allowed zealots and knights to step in where the watch or militias have failed. Of course, many such types had already done so off their own bat, and community Temples and splinter groups continue to raise angry protest about the mockery of their sacred beliefs. When the Altdorf Watch seized a large stack of paper and ink but let the student carrying them go without a charge, Sigmarite justice moved swiftly to “correct” the mistake right there on the streets. A riot was prevented, and the student put in the cells for his own safety—but he was murdered the next day upon his release. The Watch failed to investigate. One less trouble-making writer is one less day's work for them.

Which is the real danger for the *Tail*: They have so far escaped the condemnation of the law, but they also get no protection from it whatsoever. They have no recourse when their members are beaten or murdered or their stock destroyed, except to find a new hiding place or a better disguise. What's more, although the paper is growing as a whole, the individual editions are small and fragile affairs. If two or three sellers get beaten in a week, it may take a month for a paper to find a replacement brave enough to walk the streets again. Which raises the other issue hanging over the head of the *Tail*: money.

Despite the popularity of the paper, selling it can still be a struggle, and distributed with the *Rising Whisper* are purses of funds from Kloszowski's personal fortune. Kloszowski has realized this can't last forever, though. He has also realized that capitalism is the key to the success of the *Tail* on one hand, and to the general freedom of the oppressed classes on the other. Through the fair and even hand of the market, that which the people decide is of the most value shall be given the greatest wealth—a truly perfect society. So Kloszowski stresses in the *Whisper* that the papers must strive to become self-supporting, and the issue of price is constantly debated. As they can now reach middle and

noble class people, they can charge sufficiently to meet their costs, but to do so will exclude their poorer readers, something every proletariat-championing editor is loath to do. In Altdorf, the price is listed as 10p a copy, but it is left up to individual editors (and indeed, sellers) how much is actually charged (and how much is skimmed off the top by the seller).

STRUCTURE

Without deliberately planning to, Kloszowski developed the *Tail* into a cunning cell-structure. In each publication house, only the editor is in contact with Kloszowski, and only then through the *Rising Whisper*. Some have not even met Kloszowski at all, and few know his real name. This is vital for maintaining security, although there are still vulnerabilities. Kloszowski employs horse messengers to send the *Rising Whisper* to his editors across the land and although he uses people he trusts and pays them fairly well, any of them could lead authorities straight back to the *Tail*'s editor in chief. And at this point, the organisation definitely could not survive without its founder: the loss of his inspirational words would be crippling to morale, and the loss of his financial support would leave the tiny presses stranded and vulnerable. Not to mention that Kloszowski's writings appear in at least every second issue and every edition would be hard-pressed to publish without him constantly filling their pages with his brilliant satire, and would find it harder to attract an audience as well.

Beneath Kloszowski are the editors. As long as they agree with him on the purpose of the journal and hire talented writers, Kloszowski leaves the running of the paper up to them. There are no written rules or practices for administration or operation. As such, editorial and organisational styles vary wildly across the different editions. Some are fair employers, others are egomaniacal tyrants, and still others treat their writers and staff as equal parts of a creative circle. Some love to whip up scandal, others prefer

to focus on content over reaction; some are parsimonious number-crunchers, others leave aside all concerns but the creative; some delegate such responsibilities as they cannot or will not do themselves, others are micromanagers who work themselves into a flurry over every stage of the operation.

How well the journal reads and how successfully it operates depends on both the editor and the staff that surrounds him. Due to the high risks of the occupation and the high-pressure nature of the work, the staff can change quite frequently—which produces another security vulnerability. Leaving ex-staff are sworn to the same secrecy as newly joining staff, but there are no checks upon their loyalty. However, not only do staff change regularly but so do locations and operations—there may be little an ex-staffer could tell. More than one edition has been compromised, however, after a writer whose stories were rejected tipped off the Watch, or an engraver decided he needed more than a weekly pittance for his work.

When an editor leaves, he either selects his successor or someone just steps into the role. The successors are usually whomever has the most time, talent, and passion for the project. Since the editor receives no more fame than his writers (often less) and has to fill each issue and run the whole organisation, it is a job only taken by gluttons for punishment, and is a position rarely challenged. Which is not to say that some editions are not riven with interpersonal politics and petty jealousies—sometimes it is the very smallest of honours that brings out the fiercest ambitions.

Getting a writing job with the *Griffon's Tail* involves impressing the editor with your skills. Given that Kloszowski is a genius and his early associates are practiced professionals, there is a high standard to reach, and competition for space is steep and furious. However, the *Tail* has a desperate need for staff to do almost everything else. This includes the most basic of tasks, such as standing look out on a street corner or answering the door above the press office in such a way as to not arouse suspicion. They need riders to help their issues get across the city and into the villages beyond it. They need bodyguards to keep their deliveries safe, and smugglers to help their supplies arrive, merchants to help them get good deals, rogues to make sure their secrets stay safe, barkers to sell their wares on the corner, and stooges at the tavern to encourage folk to go and buy them.

All who join are sworn to secrecy, but few of the editors know very much about criminal organisation. They may have run the odd “underground” journal at university but again, as the *Tail* has grown, it has become something on an all together different scale, beyond even Kloszowski's ability to organise and keep secret. Many editors have considered turning to organised crime for help and tutelage in this manner. Some editors already have.

GOALS AND MOTIVES

The overarching goal of the Glorious Revolution of the People (Reformed) is the complete destruction of the noble classes and all their lackeys. After this, a new rule must be formed in which the people are only governed by those deemed by the people as most fit to govern, although the details of how this would work remain as yet unspecified. This reform does not include destruction of the Cult of Sigmar, but in rebuilding a truly democratic people's republic, the Cult would not be permitted to play a role in politics, so its power must also be heavily curtailed. The Cult's crime is not in preaching its faith but in supporting the blood-sucking nobles and standing against the glorious movement to bring them to their knees.

As yet, the Glorious Revolution has no fixed timeline for these goals.

Their more short-term goal is the spreading of the idea of revolution through the propagation of *The Griffon's Tail*. The Revolution does not particularly mind in what form the destruction of the nobles comes: it may be in a sudden hammer-blow, but it may also be in the slow weathering of their hold over people's minds and beliefs. The greatest threat to the Revolution is not the guns, faith, and steel of the noble classes and their lapdog military, but the belief of the common man that they deserve to be ruled, that nobles are inherently better than they, that their feudal life is the natural order of things. Kloszowski and his revolutionaries believe that the more they can educate and inspire, the closer their revolution comes.

So far, they have focused on satire and mockery, but each edition of the *Tail* includes some items of direct polemic or rabble rousing. A lot of people skip those parts, but not everybody.

On an individual level, the goal of each edition of the *Tail* is to stay in operation and try and make money. Neither of these are very easy tasks, for countless reasons. Some editors are focused so much on these goals that the revolution has become something of a secondary concern. Other editors and writers have other goals, which interfere with the pursuit of revolution or profit: they want to become famous, or at least recognized or connected. A playwright seeking a contract with one of the major theatres or a poet seeking a patron could get noticed in the *Tail*. Others just enjoy the notoriety of it all, finding it a jolly good lark. Still others use the journal as a way of settling old grudges: For example, should a low-ranked noble be prevented from marrying his better's daughter, he can savage her father in anonymity on the pages of the *Tail*.

In short, the goals of the *Tail* are very specific, but the reasons that people join its cause are as varied as the people themselves.

SYMBOLS AND SIGNS

The symbol of the Glorious Revolution is a stylized eye, with a flame around and above it. The eye comes from an old symbol of Shallya, which was an eye crying a single tear. In this symbol, the teardrop becomes a flame, symbolizing that from the suffering poor will come the purifying fire of the Revolution. The eye in the flame also reflects illumination, the shining truth of the Revolution and the opening of people's eyes to the oppression upon them. Full members of the Revolution have this symbol tattooed on their breast and Kloszowski puts it on the front of every issue of the *Rising Whisper*.

The original symbol of the *Tail* was a comically-styled backside of a griffon, its tail flicking above a pile of manure. Upon the griffon rode a pompous and gaudy noble figure, only slightly reminiscent of the Emperor. This picture also featured two peasants with shovels, forced to deal with the muck left by the passing noble. This proved too busy for other etchers to copy and the printers could not make the symbol reliably into an inking key. It was instead simplified to a winding, spotted tail.

When members wish to identify each other or use code words, they typically take lines from *The Ashes of Shame* or *The Blood of Innocents* or another of Kloszowski's popular works. The greeter gives a line and the arrival must provide the subsequent one. Thus anyone who knows the works well could break their security, but so far it hasn't happened—that they know of.

When writing their articles, all writers and editors use pseudonyms or titles. Kloszowski generally writes as "The Tail Puller," but also sometimes uses "The Old Poet" and "Ulrike's Son" (Ulrike was a champion of the revolution ten years ago). Letters and codes are typically also signed with these pseudonyms, increasing security as many will only know each other by these names. Some authors have only met their editors briefly, dropping off work anonymously with only their monicker or symbol at the bottom. A writer known only as "The Dark Lady" has never revealed her face to anyone, appearing only once at the office in Nuln and then with her face covered in a scarf and hood.

MEMBERSHIP

Apart from the delivery boys and bodyguards, most of the *Tail's* staff must be able to read. Even the street-corner barkers need to know what's in each issue, and messengers need to know the codes and changing addresses. Inevitably, therefore, most staffmembers come from the growing middle-classes: those who were brought up with sufficient wealth to be able to learn to read, and sufficient indolence to pursue more than just a living. Surprisingly, many of the staff are also nobles themselves. Whether they are sympathetic to the plight of the lower classes or simply



enjoying the lark depends on the individual, and whomever they are trying to impress at the time.

The rest of the staff tend to be the children of merchants, craftsmen, and guild masters, or gifted students from the universities. Most of them have some kind of scholarly background, be it as a Student or Scribe, or having just acquired broad knowledge while learning their trade. For a student leaving university (and thus giving up on being a scholar), there are very few opportunities beyond returning to their father's business. Working for the *Tail* (or any other paper) is a great way for such types to postpone the inevitable. Apprentice wizards who have failed their exams also find their way into such places as a way of filling in time before they figure out what to do next, and the same goes for initiates who have lost their faith or failed to meet the standards of the cloth. Adopting a cause has always been a great solution for the lost.

However, there are more than just scholars working for the *Tail*. Just as any person with a cause they feel deeply enough will gravitate towards the soapboxes in the squares, so too do the passionate and/or insane gravitate towards the offices of the *Tail*, and they come in all kinds of guises. Passion finds its seeds in strife, and strife affects the young and the old equally, the rich and the poor, the Human and Dwarf, the Elf and the Halfling, the educated and the unlearned, the brilliant and the foolish. The *Tail* tries to steer away from the people ranting about the daemons controlling Bogenhafen and the like, but they can rarely afford to be very picky. They do however ask for people to focus on the

plight of the underclasses and the oppression by the nobles. A conspiracy theory about, or parody of, wizards or Elves is unlikely to get published.

The *Tail* is definitely biased towards Human concerns, partly because almost all of its members are Humans and partly because almost all nobles in the Empire are Humans. Kloszowski and his collaborators recognize that often nobles create scapegoats of the non-Human populations of cities, but this is just another example of the abuse of power rather than a terrible concern. This has displeased more than a few oppressed Dwarfs and Halflings (and has come to the notice of the Quinsberry Lodge) and will no doubt change as more of these folk join the writing staff.

This is the general approach of the *Tail*: those who want the content changed should write it themselves. As Kloszowski puts it, “we don’t take complaints, we take submissions.” Not only does this generally get rid of complainers, it very occasionally does lead to new members.

The criminal classes make up the final—and arguably most important—type of Revolutionary. Although Kloszowski knows a fair amount about raising an army from the streets, his skills in running a long-term criminal organisation are limited. Employing people who do know these things is useful, as is employing those who have previous experience with the kind of things the journal requires. A lookout is a lookout, regardless of whether he is protecting smugglers or authors. Bauds make excellent barkers, as they know exactly how to capture the eye of any passing gent. Street gangmembers tend to know very well how to put issues of the paper on the streets at night without running into the Watch. The pay tends to be much worse, but as an extra source of income (and one with less chance of having your legs cut off with a rusty bonesaw), it is attractive to many.

RECRUITMENT

Recruitment into the *Tail*'s staff is extremely poor. Few editions can afford to pay many of their workers more than a pittance; some cannot even afford that. Indeed, those who work the hardest—the actual writers and editors—are often paid the least, as all funds are needed to pay the less fanatical members doing the more dangerous jobs. Those who write for the *Tail* will do it out of passion, but lookouts, runners, message-carriers, suppliers, and toughs all require monetary compensation. Those who come to the *Tail* looking for a bit of fun or a bit of money leave quickly. Indeed, many who come with passion leave just as quickly when they realize they cannot make any kind of living from the work. Only the true believers or the independently wealthy remain working for the *Tail* for any length of time.

It is from these true believers that the Revolution itself recruits. Those who prove their passion by continuing to write, edit, or run the *Tail* will eventually be introduced to

Kloszowski if they weren’t chosen by him originally. He will tell them they have earned a place in the inner circle, and, if they are still unaware, informed officially of the goals of the journal and the organisation of the Glorious Revolution. They are also expected to get their tattoo (see **Symbols and Signs**) after this. The difficulty of working for the *Tail* thus provides a natural filter, ensuring that only those who really believe join the Revolution.

Recently, the *Tail* has tried to appeal to wandering adventurers, seeing this as a fertile recruiting ground. Adventurers tend to do jobs for very little money and unlike local criminals, don’t have a syndicate to send thugs around if there is a problem with payment. Adventurers can easily be inspired to do such work for less with tales of how they are helping defend the poor and making the world a better place. They also make excellent scapegoats and diversions, taking the heat away from the actual work of publishing. Finally, they also have a knack for falling into incredible adventures and dark conspiracies, both of which provide excellent fodder for the *Tail*'s writers. More than one *Tail* writer gets his scandalous stories about the nobility from his discussions with the adventurers originally hired to cover up those very scandals.

MEMBER BENEFITS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Recruitment into the *Tail* is poor because members get few benefits and have a vast amount of responsibilities, plus exposure to great risks as well. Staff are mostly volunteers or effectively so; as yet, only a few can live on the meagre returns the *Tail* makes from its sales. Like all volunteer associations, the volunteers define their own level of involvement, and the editors give preference to those who do the most work (even if their work is less artful than those of other, less industrious types). Any writer wishing to stay in his editor’s good graces (or become an editor himself) needs to produce a completed essay, script, or satirical comment once a week. The higher the quality of work or the more incisive, the more likely it will be printed.

Non-writers are expected to fulfill their duties sufficiently, although, “sufficiently” is a word whose definition many editors have to revise on a constant basis. There is no gain, for example, in firing a lazy printer if there is thence nobody around who can work the machine. Likewise, a messenger who drinks at every tavern between Altdorf and Middenheim must just be accepted because it is too dangerous and time-consuming to find a replacement. Not only is the *Tail* always short-staffed, but their staff are simply the best they could find at the time. Editors love to see itinerant adventurers with nothing to do, because, sadly, even these mendicants are typically an improvement on their usual staff.

Those who work for the *Tail* in a regular fashion can expect a salary of 1d10-1 shillings a week—about the same as a

country peasant makes, or a bit less than does a common Altdorf labourer. Editors make about double that, assuming that they do not also have to purchase new ink or new printing press parts that week. Apart from editors, most *Tail* staffers have another source of income or livelihood, whether that is a job, a wealthy background, or some criminal enterprise.

The *Tail* offers no other benefits. It can often not even protect its own members. A fleeing seller, for example, with

the Watch close on his heels, will just as often find himself turned away if he runs to any of his writing colleagues or a printing house for assistance, because supporting him would only threaten the rest of the group. Almost every edition has watched one of their staff be hauled away (or even burnt at the stake), unable to do anything. The survivors tell themselves that the sacrifice of their brave colleague was not in vain, and that the fallen would want nothing more than for the *Tail* to persevere. Those who survive capture and return to the streets are less likely to see things that way.

— GM'S SECTION —

Like all revolutionaries, those in the Glorious Revolution live a terribly dangerous existence. On the one hand, they must keep their operations desperately secret, but on the other, they depend entirely on their public face. They seek to expose the truth, yet secrets are their stock and trade. They seek to give power to all the people, yet can trust very few of them. The Revolution's increasing popularity is its greatest weapon and its greatest threat. And despite pulling towards its singular, unified goal, it is but a collection of individuals, each pulling in their own direction. The Revolution and the *Tail* exist constantly on the knife-edge, always one step away from doing real good, and one step away from self-destruction; an inch away from starting a new kind of war, and an inch away from being wiped out by their enemies.

SECRETS OF THE GRP

Although they are passionate in their belief that one day the Revolution will bring about real change, few of its members are foolish enough to believe this will come soon, or easily. Which is to say everyone is aware how weak and vulnerable the organisation is to attacks from without, and how divided and limited it is within. What most do not know (or try desperately to make themselves forget) is just how compromised they already are, and, despite the sudden success of the *Griffon's Tail*, how far they truly are from achieving their goals. While mocking the nobility is the new fad sweeping the nation, true revolution lags far behind, whereas death or capture or simply running out of money are never more than a heartbeat away.

Each editor deals with his own doubts in his own way, but perhaps the best kept secret is that even the great Kloszowski has his own doubts and those are large indeed. With each passing year Kloszowski grows more and more tired of waiting for the Revolution, and more and more enamoured of himself. Revolutions are for young men, whereas being a hero of the people has compensations that grow

sweeter with age. When he isn't writing, Kloszowski is using his reputation to bed the latest wide-eyed young adherent who swooned when she read his poetry. His willingness to brag about himself for the purposes of seduction could easily lead to the destruction of the Revolution. It offers little danger to his own person, however, because Kloszowski is a survivor first and a revolutionary second. He's also spent enough time in prison to decide he is never going back, and he will sell out every editor he knows to ensure that doesn't happen. After all, he thinks, while he lives free the movement will go on, so preserving his freedom is the most important thing of all. Naturally, Kloszowski keeps this fact very hidden—even from himself.

Unknown to everyone, including Kloszowski, is how compromised the *Tail* has become. The very recent parody of Grand Theogonists Esmer and Volkmar as naughty children in Kloszowski's *Cries from the Nursery* was so popular both on the stage and in print that it is now being parroted in alehouses and markets across the city every single day. This caused the Cult of Sigmar to declare the *Tail* a clear and present threat to the safety of the Empire. They also convinced many on the Council of State to agree with them, and the spymasters of both Cult and state have now put their sizeable resources to work. All three of Altdorf's editions of the *Griffon's Tail* now have spies in their midst (either willing or coerced), and the religious fanatics swelling in opposition to the *Tail* find themselves very well funded. Kloszowski himself is currently sleeping with one of the Empire's top spies. She is looking for a way to discredit the man because currently, his reputation is so strong that his death will only inflame his supporters.

Likewise, the authorities have not yet closed the net around the Glorious Revolution because they want to do it in such

a way as to catch all the vermin at once, and leave no traces of how it was done, so no new groups can follow in its wake. If they can destroy the Revolution from within, so much the better.

"To your friends and neighbours, you seem to live the life of an ordinary silk merchant and tailor. But at night it seems you go to certain meetings under the Pendersen Brewery, returning in the early hours with your fingers stained with ink. One of these lives has a future that doesn't involve a hot poker to the eyeballs."

—BENEDIKT KRIEGER, IMPERIAL SPY

OTHER ISSUES

The printing press may still be in its infancy, but the street-sellers of the Empire offer many broadsheets beyond just *The Griffon's Tail*. Some of these include:

The Altdorf Spieler is the oldest and most established broadsheet in the Old World, and often points out this fact. Its reviews of theatre, entertainments, and society events have a large effect on the noble and merchant classes, and these are its primary audience. In effect it is a gossip magazine for the social elite of the city, and, apart from a few hardy reporters fighting against the flow, rarely covers anything of any greater substance. Equivalent works in other cities include *The Middenheim Register*, *The Talabheim Confluence*, and Nuln's *City Whispers*.

The Truth claims to print "the stories behind the stories," and covers mostly violent crimes and murders on the streets of Altdorf. Although the details of the crimes are often accurate, the *Truth* invariably places the blame for such deeds on Dwarfs, Halflings, foreigners, immodest women, and the poor. It also goes to great lengths to discuss public scandals and the general moral decay of the modern age. It is, therefore, the most continually successful broadsheet in the Empire and also has offices in Nuln and Middenheim.

Bizarre! is an Altdorf monthly which reports "the most shocking tales from the far corners of our Empire." It mostly runs stories of mutant vegetables, sightings of Magnus the Pious, or Skaven abductions. A similar version in Nuln is called *The Nuln Proclaimer* and is run by a Skaven conspiracy theorist who blames absolutely everything on the workings of the Ratmen.

Hammerzungen and **The Wolf's Call** are two monthly pamphlets published in both Altdorf and Middenheim. They are nothing more than the propaganda of religious fanatics of Sigmar and Ulric respectively, and spend most of their text insulting or implicating their opposite. Sellers of each often come to blows with sellers of the other—and a full report of the valiant fight against the vicious oppressors will appear in the next issue.

Schlag! is a small Altdorf piece slowly becoming an institution among the middle classes. It publishes mostly fiction, in bi-monthly installments. These are always lurid tales of brave Empire soldiers fighting off horrible foreign spies, rescuing improbably large-breasted barmaids, and then celebrating their victories enthusiastically. The editors (Mesers Jacobus and Heinrich Gritt) have also just started publishing *Wunderkid*, collections of fiction for children.

The Reik Report began as a tide tracker and trade roster for the docks, allowing Altdorf merchants to see what their competitors were bringing in, and when, and how much of it. However, merchants soon realized it was important to keep such information secret and the Report is now entirely run on bribery, reporting in exacting detail all the transactions of those too poor to pay the writers to keep away. It also publishes glowing reviews of the dock's greatest guild masters and the like.

The other thing protecting the Revolution is that the spy sleeping with Kloszowski is in fact a member of the Lahmian Sisterhood, a group of female vampires who secretly control much of the politics of the Empire. The Lahmians are curious as to whether the Revolution can help their needs, if only by distracting the authorities, so are keeping the society alive for the moment. For much more on the Sisterhood, see *Night's Dark Masters*.

ALLIES AND ENEMIES

Although it cannot trust others, the Revolution has many allies. Many groups find themselves agreeing with the *Tail's* attacks on the powerful and the status quo, and as the *Tail* grows more successful, more and more groups are willing to share in that success. Of course, few if any of them would take any risks for their newfound friends.

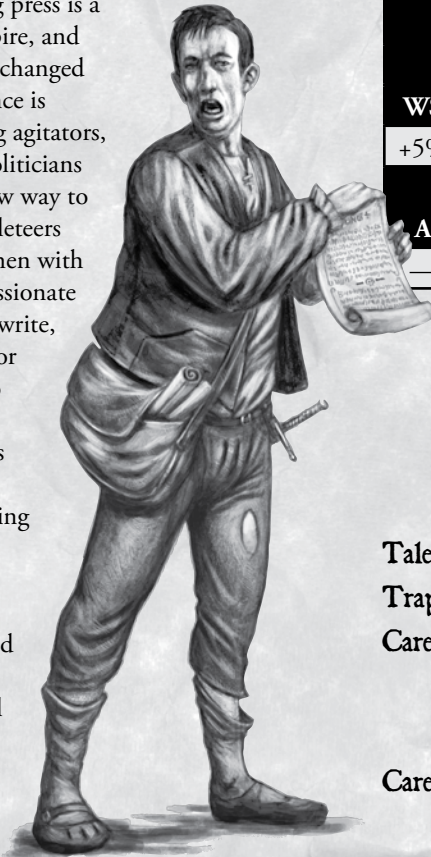
The most fervent supporters of the Revolution are other revolutionary groups. These include the exiles from the Kislev Underground, who spread their ideas of peasant freedom far from their homeland; the unionists from the Artisan's Guild who preach about the rights of the workers; and the Popular League Against Nobility and Taxation, a group of merchants who are annoyed that they will never rule the cities in which they own so much property and wealth. All of these groups disagree with the exact method of revolution, but they can be counted on to unite in any decisive actions and share in any great success.

Despite the efforts of the authorities of the Empire and the universities, professors and students alike continue to propagate revolutionary and counter-culture ideas. Many of these students are either working for the *Tail* already or actively looking to join. Others are in societies with similar aims, or working on their own articles or pamphlets, and these societies also overlap with similar societies run on the streets. Activism is manifold in Altdorf and the other big cities, and it is not uncommon for a market square now to contain half a dozen pamphleteers, each working for his own particular crusading society with its own unique noble goal. Of course, competition breeds rivalry, and these other societies are enemies of the *Tail* as well as allies, and on occasion a particularly competitive selling session can end in a punch-up.

The publishers and staff of the other broadsheets have a similar relationship to the *Tail* and its staff. Jealousy springs eternal and while they admire the *Tail's* success, the staff of the *Spieler* and the *Truth* and the like would really prefer those sales went to them. In the face of overwhelming odds, like an approaching gang of "concerned citizens" out to drive away the trouble-making paper sellers, it would likely be all journalists together. In safer times, however, *Tail* sellers may whip off for a call of nature and come back to find their issues have been "accidentally" thrown in the Reik. Should the stores only contain one last shipment of ink, no editor of any paper is

NEW ADVANCED CAREER: PAMPHLETEER

Description: The printing press is a new invention in the Empire, and as yet its presence has not changed much of society. Its presence is however keenly felt among agitators, demagogues, and street politicians who now have a whole new way to reach their public. Pamphleteers are more than just tradesmen with a paper-press: They are passionate individuals who research, write, sketch and print political or religious works in order to spread their message, then disseminate their materials across whole cities and provinces. Although printing itself is perfectly legal and increasingly respectable, many pamphleteers print material that is neither, and those who wish to stay in business have to be skillful at escaping the attention of the Watch or more powerful enemies.



—Pamphleteer Advance Scheme—

Primary Profile

| WS | BS | S | T | Ag | Int | WP | Fel |
|-----|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|------|
| +5% | +5% | +5% | +10% | +15% | +25% | +20% | +20% |

Secondary Profile

| A | W | SB | TB | M | Mag | IP | FB |
|---|----|----|----|---|-----|----|----|
| — | +4 | — | — | — | — | — | — |

Skills: Academic Knowledge (any one), Blather, Common Knowledge (Bretonnia, Kislev or Tilea), Common Knowledge (the Empire), Concealment, Gossip, Perception, Performer (Storyteller) or Trade (Artist), Read/Write, Speak Language (any one), Trade (Calligrapher or Merchant)

Talents: Artistic or Public Speaking, Streetwise

Trappings: Writing Kit, Printing Press

Career Entries: Agitator, Artisan, Burgher, Demagogue, Entertainer, Engineer, Messenger, Newsheet Vendor (see *Spires of Altdorf*), Scholar, Scribe, Student

Career Exits: Demagogue, Merchant, Politician, Scholar

beyond hiring extra shopping muscle to make sure his is the paper that remains in print.

Other allies of the Revolution are more dangerous. To keep itself in operation and with sufficient supplies, the Tail has made several deals with organised criminals. On the Docklands, they have turned to the gang known as the Fish, whom they pay handsomely for protection of their staff and to connect them with certain other criminals. Through the black marketeer Mother Mandelbaum they are able to get access to paper and ink supplies that aren't recorded on any ledgers. These new friends however now have a hold over the *Tail* and are the kind who will soon enough ask for favours in return. The *Tail's* staffers are loath to do this. Partly because most of them are smart enough to realize that crime lords are just another kind of noble, and partly because it only increases their likelihood of being targeted by the Watch, but mostly because they don't want to be thrown in the Reik with heavy weights on their feet, which seems to be the fate of far too many of the Fish's "friends." So although the Revolution counts among its enemies the nobility, the Temple, and the military of the Empire, it is all too often its closest allies that give editors the most trouble sleeping at night.

SAMPLE MENTORS

BLACKBERRY FUDGE

"So—just to be clear now—exactly how many pints of beer do you think you'd drunk before you accused the Lector of being in league with Chaos? I just need to get all the details."

—BLACKBERRY FUDGE

When Halflings get in trouble with Human authorities, they typically give their last name as Fudge, and Blackberry sounded like a much better first name than her own. Thus Pumpily Fatside became Blackberry Fudge when she began writing for the first edition of the *Tail*. Possessing a poetic soul, she had discovered Kloszowski's work at one of her poetry reading groups, and was instantly enchanted. She was one of the few who knew of his secret return to the city, and she pressed some of her poems into his hands on their first meeting. They were very good indeed, and Kloszowski gave her a job straight away. From hearing his words, she became so deeply passionate about exposing the hypocrisy and evil of the authorities that there was nobody more suited to opening the third edition of the *Griffon's Tail*.

Fudge operates the Gods edition, named for its publication area, near the Temple of Sigmar. Also working there regularly are Falstaff Hausenmunch, a foppish drunkard with delusions of being the next Kloszowski, and “Doktor Siegel,” an etcher who left the Engineers’ Guild to pursue his talent for caricature. *Gods* is most famous for its cartoons, which it publishes almost every week thanks to Siegel. Running the printing press is Siegel’s old colleague from his Guild days, Padreich Duffel. Duffel is a crazed reject from the Golden Order who is constantly trying to make the press bigger and more efficient.



Currently, the editor is finding the life of a revolutionary rather less glamorous and exciting than she imagined. It is certainly dangerous but as yet they have found no really dark truths to expose. She is keen to find some adventurers who have sniffed out a great scandal, so she can write it up for all the world to see. She could also make said adventurers into great heroes, if they like, or use fake names if they prefer. Of course, if she were to discover that any adventurers were part of some noble coverup or involved in their own selfish criminal enterprises, she would be exposing them instead in the next issue.

Pumpily Fatside was born in Bogenhafen, but always dreamed of journeying to the capital to experience the art and learning of the cultural centre. As soon as she could ride, she took a job as a messenger for local burghers to ensure she could spend as much time in Altdorf as possible. She spent all the money she earned visiting its art galleries, museums, and Temples of Verena. She taught herself to read and paid some scholars at the university to give her access to their libraries and classes. There she discovered Kloszowski, and her passion for learning became a passion for revolution.

Personality

Blackberry is a true believer. She isn’t totally naïve: she is aware that change comes very slowly, and that most people prefer things to be just as they were yesterday. She understands that there will always be graft and wickedness and the strong above the weak. But she is also convinced that there are battles that can be won and truths to be exposed and that she personally can and must be a part of that. She has a great personal stake in the success of the *Tail* and should it falter, there might be little left of her cheery personality. For the moment, however, she is much like her name: sweet, but sticky—sticking to her cause, her stories, and her associates like glue. She will follow anyone anywhere if she thinks it will get her to the truth, or the *Tail* to greater success, and neither her targets nor her staff have found a way to escape her tenacity. It is because of the way she never lets up and always sees things through that her edition has consistently done so well. She would never dream of it, but if Kloszowski fell, she would make an excellent replacement. To rise to such a position, though, she will need to learn to

micromanage less, and to ameliorate her youthful passion with a good dash of cynicism.

Appearance

Short even for a Halfling, with a round face encircled with bobbing black curls, Blackberry is often mistaken for a human child. Her boundless enthusiasm and constant activity complete the image, but she certainly has an adult vocabulary, swearing a blue streak at writers who are tardy with their work. She typically wears a simple printer’s apron, stained with ink from her quills, over hardy travelling clothes. She carries a sling pack with her everywhere, so she is always ready to write or travel, as her job requires.

BLACKBERRY FUDGE

Female Halfling Pamphleteer, Ex-Messenger

| WS | BS | S | T | Ag | Int | WP | Fel |
|-----|-----|---------|---------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 29% | 44% | 23% (2) | 34% (3) | 50% | 59% | 40% | 60% |

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Genealogy/Heraldry), Animal Care, Blather, Common Knowledge (the Emprie) (+10%), Common Knowledge (Halflings), Concealment, Gossip (+10%), Navigation, Outdoor Survival, Perception, Read/Write, Ride, Secret Signs (Scout), Speak Language (Halfling), Speak Language (Reikspiel), Swim, Trade (Cook)

Talents: Artistic, Night Vision, Orientation, Resistance to Chaos, Seasoned Traveller, Specialist Weapon Group (Sling), Streetwise, Strong-Minded

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 11

Armour (Light): Leather Jack (Arms 1, Body 1)

Weapons: Hand Weapon (Club) (1d10+2)

Trappings

Blackberry typically has an inked quill in one hand, and two more behind her ear. Dedicated to her art, the only thing she owns which isn’t a tool for writing or a book to do it in is her country pony, Nettle. She’s considering selling him, though, to keep the journal in print.

SAMPLE LOCATION:

THE PENDERSEN BREWERY PRINTING HOUSE

The Gods edition of *The Griffon’s Tail* is based out of a tiny basement under the Pendersen Brewery on Heidelstrasse. It is, however, little different from all the other secret hideouts of the other editions across the Empire. They are universally small, dingy, and underground, and with just enough room for a press, fresh paper, newly printed issues, and a handful of desks; the cheapest amount of space in the cheapest parts of town.

FEATURES AND DEFENCES

The Printing House's chief defence is the brewery above it. The brewing trade involves taking deliveries at all hours, and the boilers clank and steam all night, covering the sounds of the printing press. As a hideout, it is as well-camouflaged as they could hope for. If or when it is found, however, it is poorly defensible and their only plan is to abandon it. If there is trouble, Pendersen will call out, "Close the valves!" Whilst the rest of the staff throw candles on the stacks of paper and flee to the roof, Duffel will set the steam-powered printing press to overload and then flee as well. This plan isn't perfect. If they can't get off the roof as planned, the fire would kill them all, and anyone wounded would not be able to get up the lattice on the side of the building. Such an escape is a desperate strategy, and the staff prefer to concentrate on not getting caught instead.

KEY LOCATIONS

1. Courtyard

Iron railings surround this cobbled courtyard. It is level with the street and provides a place for wagons to unload supplies and load up barrels of beer for delivery. Day and night, wagons and horses come and go. Behind the two enormous double doors, the floor slopes down into the cellar. Wooden pallets on the floor are used to guide barrels up and down.

2. Warehouse

The warehouse contains several enormous barrels of ale, each the size of a small cottage. Also here are two enormous grain silos, storing the dry ingredients. For most of the day, this place is filled with labourers, carrying barrow loads up into the brewing room above.

3. Ramp

This ramp leads to the brewing area and factory proper. It is surprisingly steep, and it takes a strong and steady hand to get a wheelbarrow up it. Behind it is a wall, which had to be reinforced to hold the weight of the ramp. This produced a useless space behind what appears to be a completely solid wall. The original owner used it to hide his illegal wyrdroot beers. Herr Pendersen was more than happy to let it find a nobler purpose.

4. Hidden Door:

This corner of the warehouse holds empty barrels, waiting to be filled from the larger ones. The last three barrels by the wall contain paper and ink stores. Behind them is a small wooden door, flush with the woodwork and difficult to see.

5. The Press

Duffel refers to it as "the machine," and is almost always found bent over it, every inch of his body black with ink

THE PENDERSEN BREWERY PRINTING HOUSE



KEY

| | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1 - Courtyard | 6 - Meeting Area |
| 2 - Warehouse | 7 - Writing Area |
| 3 - Ramp | 8 - Fudge's Office |
| 4 - Hidden Door | 9 - Window |
| 5 - The Press | |

All arrows point
down slopes

0 2 4 6 8 10
Scale in Yards

and smoke. Due to his constant work, it is now the biggest in the city, and can produce a hundred handbills in an hour. The only way to enter the room is to squeeze past the belching steel beast, as it is as wide as the whole room. Duffel built it inside the room and is now frustrated that the tiny space makes it difficult to add more levers.

6. Meeting Area

Here, Fudge gives out assignments and discusses ideas for the upcoming issue.

7. Writing Area

Three desks fill this area, where the final copy is prepared for the press. Only Hausenmunch and Siegel use these desks, as they are the only permanent contributors on staff. Fudge would dearly like the third desk to be occupied.

8. Fudge's Office

A wide table and two chairs allow Fudge to have private conferences although to date she has never needed to do so. In fact, she only spends time here when writing her own poetry. Her few meagre possessions and precious books are piled on the floor.

9. Window

A tiny basement window can be climbed through to reach a gutter just below street level. From here, those in flight could go to the sewers, or climb the narrow ladder to the roof. The plan is that from the roof, there is another ladder into

the courtyard. There are coats stored on the roof bearing the livery of the brewery. In theory, while the Watch breaks into the flaming press room, the writers can reach the courtyard, mingle with the brewery staff, and vanish in plain sight.

USING THE GRP

The Glorious Revolution and its public organ are perfect groups to employ or recruit Player Characters. They can offer a vast variety of jobs, in all sorts of arenas, for characters of any kind of training or skills, and these are jobs that are fraught with high adventure and even higher risk. They are desperate enough to accept the unlikeliest of champions, and paranoid enough to abandon their newfound friends the moment things become too hot. Their secrecy will force the characters to act with discretion and apprehension, and outside the standard channels of the law, while their inspiring rhetoric will convince nervous heroes to take the risk and honest ones to break the rules. Entertainers and scholars can be convinced to help with the promises of fame, and questing warriors will be attracted to the Revolution's epic goals. That only leaves mercenary types, but Kloszowski's fortunes are still in good shape, and the criminal connections the Revolution can provide are priceless. In short, the rewards the Revolution can offer are just enough to offset the enormous risks, making it perfect for sparking adventures. The *Tail* also makes an excellent ally in fighting the good fight against corrupt nobles and indolent clerics, which is a great framework for an entire campaign.

Alternatively, if the adventurers prefer a criminal life or take to preserving the status quo, the *Tail* will mock them at every possible opportunity. There is nothing like mockery to build up hatred, and that hatred can make the *Tail* the most memorable villain the heroes will ever face.

PLOT HOOKS

ARE THEY TALKING ABOUT US?

The adventurers are hired by a noble to retrieve a valuable silver locket, his last memory of his dead wife. Tracking the thieves to the docks, the heroes bust into a low-class tavern and do a lot of damage. A week later, they overhear someone impersonating each of them. Down the road, street-players are acting out the *Tail*'s latest script: a parody of some nobleman's paid thugs beating up defenceless poor people for fun. If they want to set the record straight they'll first have to find the *Tail*, and then convince them that the story had another side to it. This will involve finding some sort of proof that the locket was stolen in the first place. That won't be easy because the nobleman doesn't want anyone to know the trinket actually belongs to his very alive mistress. If they get proof, the editor will listen to reason, but she'll want something in return for printing a correction—a favour that will test if these adventurers have what it takes to join the Glorious Revolution.

AN INSIDE PERSPECTIVE

When the workers at the Pendersen Brewery go on strike, the wealthy owner of the Ale and Wine Guild pays a friend in the army to lend him an organ gun. The resulting bloodbath ends the strike in seconds, and all those left alive are afraid to speak out, even the Cult of Verena, so famed for its love of justice. In response, the eccentric Doktor Siegel announces a plan for a great work. He wants all the city to know how justice has been undone, so it must be a picture, and for it to be truly incisive of the people involved with the crime, he wants to capture their faces as accurately as possible. He wishes to scare the people involved, show them that their faces are linked to the murders on the streets. But to get his picture right, he needs to sketch from life. He pays the adventurers a large sum of his own savings for an incredibly risky job: sneak him into both the Temple of Verena and the Guildhouse, give him time to get some sketches, and sneak him out again. This is made even more dangerous when the spy at the paper informs the authorities about this plan. Doktor Siegel is willing to die to decry this crime, but are the heroes?

GENEVIEVE RETURNS

Word of Kloszowski's Lahmian paramour has just reached the ears of Genevieve Dieudonne, an ex-member of the Sisterhood and an old friend of the writer from his time in Tilea. Regardless of her disdain for revolutions, she would not see Kloszowski destroyed—yet she is wary of acting directly against the Lahmians lest they finally try to destroy her. She is seeking reliable, discreet agents—the characters—to convince Kloszowski of the danger he is in, and destroy the spy in his bed. Since said spy is the woman he currently loves above all his other conquests, not to mention a powerful vampire, this will not be at all easy. If they succeed, they will gain the support of the whole Revolution, as well as the gratitude of Dieudonne, who will certainly call upon them again if they prove talented. On the other hand, the entire Imperial spy network may then be after the characters' heads.

OLD FLAMES REKINDLED

Herr Cross, the pattern killer of the docklands (see **Chapter 1**) is growing in notoriety and seems unstoppable. It seems every morning there is another body with a cross across its chest. The city is afraid. And then Blackberry Fudge re-publishes *The Ashes of Shame*, once again suggesting that the killer lurks within the noble houses of the city. This all seems too familiar to the city authorities. In order to prevent another riot, they decide Kloszowski must be totally discredited. He is drugged and kidnapped, awakening the next morning next to a dead girl with an X across her chest, with a bloodied sword in his hand. Desperate, he calls in the heroes to help him escape the law and prove his innocence, whilst the entire Watch hunts him down. But even if they succeed, the pattern killer is still out there, and the streets are once again primed to explode....

CHAPTER V: HEDGEFOLK

Lord Magister Fischer,

There is an issue with a Witch Hunter in the south of Wissenland I feel may interest you. I have taken the opportunity to include the communications I intercepted for your perusal.

Is there a link between this Krammond and your Master, Lord Magister Kurtis Krammonditch? If so, then it appears he may still be aiding and abetting Witches; hardly the actions of a loyal member of the Colleges of Magic.

Perhaps we should discuss this face-to-face.

Lord Magister Eugen Luft

Krammond.

I'm in trouble, and I don't know what to do.

Marrick Fried, one of my old apprentices, has recently been arrested, along with both of his apprentices. Now I hear Luella, his youngest apprentice, has just been found guilty of consorting with the Dark Gods. She's scheduled for burning this Festag. She's only a child, barely a witness to Malethia's Tears, and has naught but goodness in her heart.

I fear for my life. With the threat of death and damnation, one is certain to talk. What am I to do?

The Witch Hunter's name is Reiniger, a man in the employ of the Baron Hasper von Wustheim. Why the Baron should suddenly be concerned about witches, I know not, but Reiniger was prowling around two weeks ago asking questions. He tried pressing Jacob, the local miller, but I'd cured him of a bad case of scrofula last year, and saved his son from consumption two years before that, so he said nothing. The Hunter may be a fool, but he's reputedly brutal, so I'm not sure his new captures will be so closemouthed.

Thus, I'm making preparations to cross the hedge. I hope to hear from you soon, because once I'm gone I have no intention of returning. I'd rather take my chances in the forest than suffer the same fate as poor Luella.

In desperation,

Trauhaleth

Was/is KK Hedgefolk? - Communicate immediately via Mule

Luft embarrassingly direct; large issue - investigate his observatory complex in Braachland, ~~near~~

Investigate von Wustheim family of Dunstland - trace family line for potential Aetgic interference (use Magisters); secure copy of "The Fall of Solland": Wustheim line said to feature

Investigate Reiniger - hire private citizens with no connections - Either pay him off, bribe him, or pressure him

Baron

Yet again I prove the reality of your fears, for I have found more.

This morning I arrested another 3 Witches. Cunningly, they were working from a cottage hidden deep in the Sudhaut Forest, they thought their isolation would guarantee safety from Rytcheous Attenchun, for who would choose to travel beneath Beastman haunted Bowers without a road to guide their way. Luckily for your Good Folk, my lords, I had Sigmar in my hearts, and I sent my men to their door to make the arrest as soon as I uncovered their existence.

That brings my tally to 14 so far. Never in all my years have I encountered such an infestation.

I am taking the foul creatures to Dunstland Lake for intero interir interrogation. This time, I am sure I will uncover the root of this province's dark taint. Fear not, my Lords, soon I shall free your lands from their foul grasp.

Reiniger

Post Scriptum: I have included the bill for the 3 captures, all attend your estate ere the end of Sigmarzeit to receive your continued funding.

Master Trauhaleth,

Do not worry. I know of the Baron, and I know of his fears. One of his sons, Jasper, has been Blessed. The Baron recently found out and is looking for someone to blame. One of my apprentices is training young Jasper already, although the Baron knows nothing of this. I'm coming to you now to sort this ugliness out, but I fear I'll be too late for Luella.

RPR

— PLAYER'S SECTION —

Astride the boundary between civilisation and the trackless forests, smoky huts and creaking hovels hide practitioners of an ancient and secret art. This disparate group uses many names—such as Hedgefolk, Cunning Folk, or Wise Ones—and its traditions are so old Sigmar Himself is said to have benefitted from its skills. But the Hedgefolk have their enemies, and prolonged persecutions—especially from the Cult of Sigmar and the Colleges of Magic—have left them shattered, and diluted their once-respected title of “Hedge Wise.” Now, a Hedge Wizard is seen as nothing more than a dangerous and untrained magic-user, something Hedgefolk despise but are powerless to influence.

But, despite the best efforts of their opponents, Hedgefolk continue to operate, walking the fringes of the Empire, tending those who need their skills. They monitor their local communities, recruiting new members sympathetic to their goals, and seeking out the Blessed Few, those they believe are granted by the Gods the ability to fully master the old ways of Hedgecraft.

PURPOSE

Across the Empire, the Hedgefolk service their local communities by providing potions, lotions, tonics, and medicines to tackle ills of all kinds. Using skills passed from master to apprentice for uncounted generations, they can be found on the edges of villages and hamlets where the cults have little direct influence and their talents are needed.

Were this the extent of their activities, the Hedgefolk would not attract so much attention from Witch

Hunters and Magisters. Most Cunning Folk also sell an array of potions and talismans of a dubious kind, such as love philtres, lucky charms, protection pouches, and similar items, all of which are deemed to be the province of witchcraft by many overzealous Sigmarites. Worse, a minority—called the Blessed Few by the Hedgefolk—

channel magic. Although they believe their powers to be granted by the Gods, Imperial Law does not agree. As far as the authorities are concerned, the Blessed Few are Witches, and when found guilty, they are burned.

Because of this, the Hedgefolk are a solitary and secretive lot, keen to avoid contact with those who may report them as Witches, whether they have any real power or not. Despite this, they are often significant figures in their local communities. Regardless of what superstition may plague their clients, when a husband's eye begins to roam, or a daughter is bedridden with a fever, or a wife has complications during childbirth, most come to the Wise One's door looking for help. Because of this, the community often closes ranks when outsiders come knocking in turn.

HISTORY

Practitioners of Hedgecraft have wandered the Reik Basin for as long as Humans have lived there, and Hedgefolk from different parts of the Empire have developed many divergent origin stories. Where some Averlander Hedgefolk may claim ancestry from mythical Brigundian Priest-Kings from prehistoric times, most Nordlander and Ostlander Hedgefolk contest they are last remnants of an ancient cult

to Halétha, a Goddess they claim protects communities from the Forest of Shadows. By comparison, many Middenlander Hedgefolk believe they are blessed by Ranald, which is why they take the name “Cunning Folk,” and the average Wissenlander “Wise One” believes himself to be blessed with “Knowledge of the Hedge” by Verena. Whatever the local variances, all the

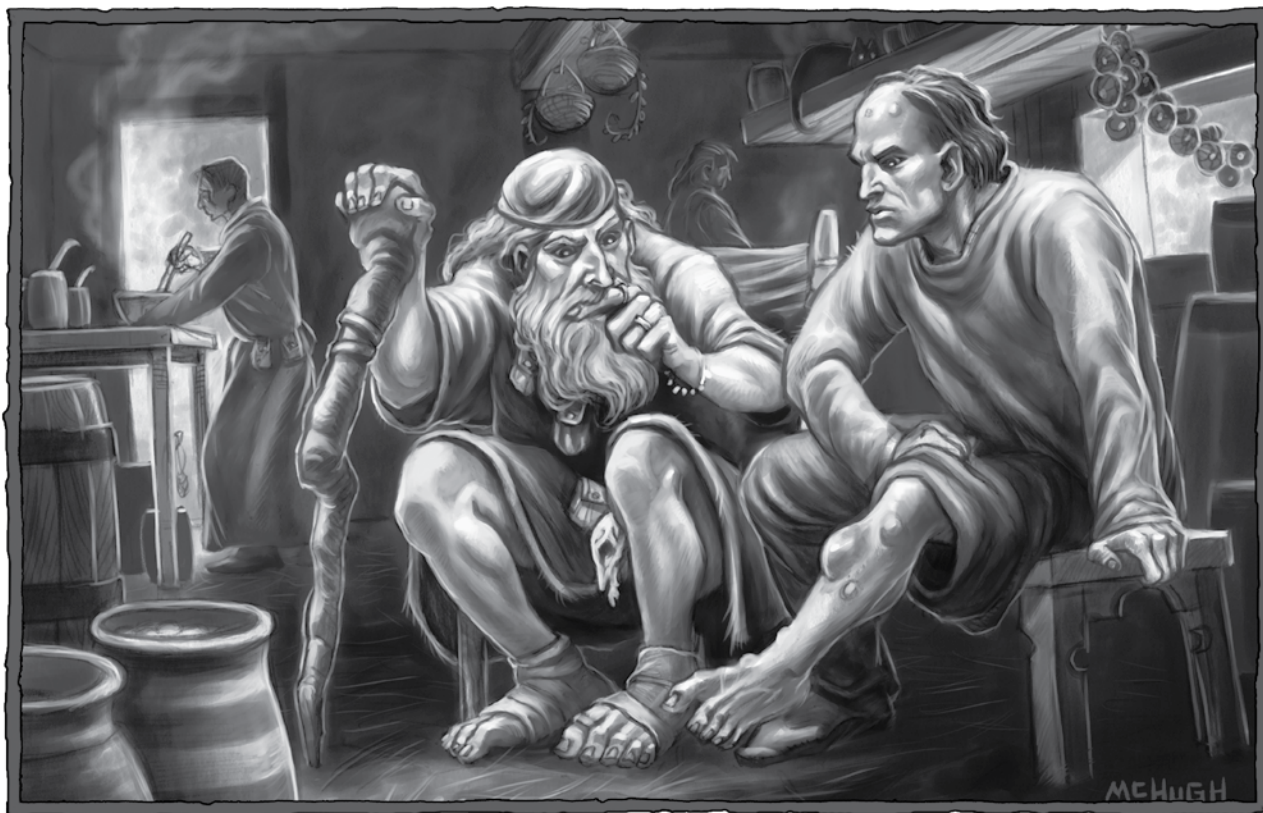
Hedgefolk seem to share one common belief: At a very early point in history, one of the Gods blessed a select few with the power to protect Humanity from evil. Because of this, the Hedgefolk have always considered themselves to be more akin to benevolent Priests than to reviled Witches.

“The Hedge be t' border 'tween t' village an' t' forest. Crossin' t' Hedge be dangerous, for Things do lie beyond; strange an' evil Things. But t' Hedge no jus' be blockin' thy body, it blocks thy head, also; a barrier 'tween wha's real an' wha's possible. A special few—us Cunnin' Folk—be gifted by t' Gods with t' ability t' walk t' Hedge, t' wander 'tween this world an' t' next. It be t' us others turn fer protection in dark times, fer who else can understand what lies beyond but us tha's been and lived there?”

—ALT ZAUNREITER, MIDDENLANDER CUNNING MAN

THE HEDGE

According to folklore, the hedge marks the boundary between civilisation and the wilderness. The Hedgefolk take this further, and claim the hedge also marks the dividing line between the material world and the spirit world. Thus, most Hedgefolk choose to live on the periphery of their communities, steeping themselves in the boundary between reality and dream to better understand the secrets of Hedgecraft.



In the earliest of times, Hedgefolk—often going by the title Hedge Wise, or Hedge Wizard—walked openly in the communities they tended. They peddled potions, charms, and amulets as required, and sometimes acted as advisors to local chieftans. As established figures of their communities, they were widely accepted, and as their powers were believed to be holy, few had any reason to speak out against them. Even the rise to prominence of the modern Cults did little to impact this, and the Hedgefolk lived alongside early Priests just as easily as they lived amongst ordinary folk, for their skills were needed. Nevertheless, some Cults were always suspicious of the Hedgefolk—notably, the Cults of Taal, Ulric, and Sigmar.

The Talutens of Talabecland aggressively exported worship of Taal, their patron, and styled him as the king of all nature; however, the Hedgefolk claimed the wild areas were full of dangers only they could tackle, so they two groups were often in conflict. Similarly, the Teutogens of Middenland worshipped honourable Ulric, and tried to emulate their God in all their actions; however, the Middenlander Hedgefolk openly admitted to tricking their enemies, and many revered the treacherous Prince of Cats, Ranald, a God openly despised by many Ulricans. Most antagonistic were the Unberogens of Reikland—their new patron, the Man-God Sigmar, stood for the Empire and defence of the community, directly competing with the Hedgefolk who claimed to defend their folk from the unknown dangers of the forests and open places. Unsurprisingly, all three cults were outspoken in their opposition to the Hedge Wizards.

By the Time of Three Emperors, the Hedgefolk, although not proscribed, were on the defensive. Where once they served most communities in the Empire, they had now been driven back to small villages and hamlets where the Cults held less sway and the old ways still were still observed. From Altdorf, successive Grand Theogonists called for their followers to hunt out Witches wherever they may lie, and they included the “Hedge Wizard” as a primary target. Similarly, from Middenheim, successive Ar’Ulrics called for a culling of the dishonourable, and included “Cunning Folk” as some of the worst examples of those without honour in their hearts. Only the Cult of Taal did not escalate its hatred of the Hedgefolk, instead concentrating its ire upon those who directly stood against it.

In the lead-up to the Great War Against Chaos, the Hedgefolk had managed to successfully hide themselves within isolated communities across the Empire. The constant warfare and political wrangling had distanced the common folk from their ruling classes, and the Hedgefolk were happy to hunker in the void this created, relying upon local loyalty for protection and employment. However, this all changed with the arrival of Magnus the Pious and his most controversial of creations: the Colleges of Magic.

The great call for the Hedge Wizards of the Empire to rally to Magnus’s banner to receive acceptance and tuition from the High Elf Mages Teclis, Finrier, and Yrtle did not go down well with the Hedgefolk. The call was seen as an insult to their profession, for the seers, illusionists, druids,

MUNDANE HEDGEFOLK

If you wish to create Hedgefolk without access to magic (which is the case for the majority of Hedgefolk), you can do so using the three careers presented here. In this single instance, those careers may be completed without increasing the Magic Characteristic. You can, if you wish, still purchase Arcane Language (Magick) and Magical Sense—showing your training in Hedgecraft, or your increased sensitivity to all things magical—but you may not purchase Channelling or any of the magical Talents.

elementalists, and other collected freaks answering the call were not, as far as the Hedgefolk were concerned, Hedge Wizards at all, but still used the title regardless. Because of this, and a multitude of other reasons, the Hedgefolk stayed away, and let the Colleges form without them.

Over two hundred years later, many Hedgefolk believe this may have been the greatest mistake they ever made, for now they are hunted like never before, not only by the Cults, but by the very institutions they spurned: the Colleges of Magic.

HEDGEFOLK TODAY

Centuries of persecution have left the Hedgefolk scattered and untrusting. Not only do they have Witch Hunters to contend with, wandering Magisters are a constant thorn in their sides, and customers who believe they have been cheated are quick to turn to the authorities with heartfelt accusations. Further, with the spread of the influence of educated groups such as Physicians' Guilds and Apothecary Guilds, it is not uncommon to find such bodies sponsoring witch hunts to clear out competition to their legitimate business interests. Indeed, so hunted are they, it seems almost miraculous the Hedgefolk still exist at all; but, exist they do, and in significant numbers.

STRUCTURE

The leaders of the Hedgefolk, called Hedgewises, typically use a mixture of respect and tradition to control the local Hedge Masters and Mistresses. Given most will have once been the Hedgewise's apprentice, the apprentice of his apprentice, or are part of his extended family, this is often easier than many outsiders expect.

Due to this fairly rigid hierarchy, trouble can occur when a Hedgewise dies and his Hedge Masters cannot agree who should replace him; traditionally, it should be the oldest Hedge Master, but sometimes this falls apart in practice, especially if there are rivalries concerned. Such situations are dangerous, as the antagonism amongst the Hedgefolk can attract attention

from their enemies. If an agreement cannot be arrived at quickly, the two groups typically splinter apart, with each claimant taking the title Hedgewise. Such splits can be highly acrimonious, and the division of the old Hedgewise's territory can be a difficult process, one that can sometimes take years, or even decades, to resolve.

Amongst the Hedge Folk, experience and lineage is everything. Thus, the older apprentice outranks the younger apprentice, and having a renowned master grants you a greater respect than having an unknown master. However, one thing outranks all: being one of the Blessed Few. Although all Hedgefolk are taught the rituals and rites of Hedgecraft, only the Blessed Few, those the Hedgefolk believe are directly blessed by the Gods, can empower them with magical puissance. So, it is possible for one of the Blessed Few to be taught his powers by a Hedge Master without any magical capabilities at all; indeed, this circumstance has significantly increased in recent centuries, as repeated witch hunts have greatly reduced the number of the Blessed Few with the skill to teach their talents to an apprentice.

Due to the importance of the Blessed Few, the Hedgefolk are always on the lookout for those demonstrating the first signs of "being blessed," which can manifest as any odd occurrence, such as flashing lights, sudden changes in character, unexplained deaths, or food spoiling for no reason. If one of the Hedgefolk spot such signs, the local Hedgewise should immediately be informed. Typically, he will move fast to determine the truth of the situation, and, if he finds one of the Blessed Few, he will take him on as a new apprentice. However, it is more common for the Hedgewise to find something else, such as Chaos taint or a passing Witch, and such situations will be handled by the Hedgewise as he feels appropriate.

Most apprentices are not selected in such a fashion, for most are the children of existing Hedgefolk. No matter how they are selected, each apprentice is expected to follow the lead of his master, and in return is trained in the ancient secrets of Hedgecraft. How long this takes varies from Hedge Master to Hedge Master. Some require years of service and expect absolute loyalty in all things. Others take a far looser approach. Be it years, months, or in some rare cases, just a few weeks, eventually the master will be happy with the apprentice, and he will be raised as a new Hedge Master, granted the right to take on his own apprentices after a year and a day of mastery have passed. However, this is not the end of his service, as his old master still, traditionally speaking, has authority over him.

NEW BASIC CAREER: HEDGE CRAFT APPRENTICE

Practitioners of Hedgecraft choose apprentices carefully. Most are family of existing Hedgefolk, but a significant minority are chosen for their natural talents, or because they are one of the Blessed Few: those blessed by the Gods with the power

to empower their Hedgecraft. The life of an apprentice is typically a harsh one, with most existing as little more than servants to their masters, running errands, chopping wood, mopping floors, and so forth. Eventually, the apprentice will be taught all the skills of a Hedge Master, and will be freed to make his own way in the world.

—Hedgecraft Apprentice Advance Scheme—

| Main Profile | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|----|-----|----|----|------|-----|------|
| WS | BS | S | T | Ag | Int | WP | Fel |
| — | — | +5% | — | — | +10% | +5% | +10% |
| Secondary Profile | | | | | | | |
| A | W | SB | TB | M | Mag | IP | FP |
| — | +2 | — | — | — | +1 | — | — |

Skills: Animal Care or Channelling, Charm Animal or Concealment, Consume Alcohol or Gossip, Haggle or Outdoor Survival, Heal, Magical Sense or Prepare Poisons, Perception, Read/Write or Speak Arcane Language (Magick), Set Trap or Silent Move, Trade (Apothecary or Herbalist)

Talents: Coolheaded or Fast Hands, Petty Magic (Hedge) or Rover

Trappings: Antitoxin Kit, Healing Draught, Healing Poultrice, Lucky Charm

Career Entries: Apothecary (SH), Peasant, Hedge Witch

Career Exits: Apothecary (SH), Apprentice Wizard, Barber-Surgeon, Charlatan, Hedge Wizard, Hedge Master, Initiate (Ranald, Taal & Rhya), Outlaw, Scribe, Zealot

NEW ADVANCED CAREER: HEDGE MASTER

Those fully initiated into the ancient mysteries of Hedgecraft are called Hedge Masters, although outsiders often know them as Wise Ones or Cunning Folk. Most live on the periphery of the communities they serve, and are known for their healing skills and the potions, tonics, and charms they sell. They lead private lives, keen to avoid those who may take offense at their trade and beliefs, and are generally welcomed by locals for the services they provide. A select few Hedge Masters work directly for their Hedgewise, seeking out and neutralising threats to the Hedgefolk. This is dangerous work, for it often involves direct contact with Witch Hunters and Imperial Magisters to better learn their movements and understand their motivations.

—Hedge Master Advance Scheme—

| Main Profile | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|----|-----|-----|-----|------|------|------|
| WS | BS | S | T | Ag | Int | WP | Fel |
| — | — | +5% | +5% | +5% | +20% | +20% | +20% |
| Secondary Profile | | | | | | | |
| A | W | SB | TB | M | Mag | IP | FP |
| — | +3 | — | — | — | +2 | — | — |

Skills: Animal Care or Channelling, Charm Animal or Concealment, Command, Evaluate or Navigation, Follow Trail or Consume Alcohol, Gossip or Intimidate, Haggle or Outdoor Survival, Heal, Magical Sense or Prepare Poison, Perception, Read/Write or Speak Arcane



HEDGE CRAFT APPRENTICE



HEDGE MASTER



HEDGEWISE



NEW TALENT: WITCH LORE

You have studied one of the established witching traditions of the Old World. Like Arcane Lore or Divine Lore, Witchery is not one talent but many. Such is the study and focus required, you can only ever know one Witch Lore Talent and can never also know an Arcane Lore, Dark Lore, or Divine Lore. Each Witch Lore is a separate magical proficiency with the speciality noted in parenthesis. For example: Witch Lore (Hedge) is a different talent than Witch Lore (Ice) (from *Realm of the Ice Queen*). If you know a Witch Lore, you may cast spells from that lore according to the rules presented later in this chapter.

Language (Magick), Set Trap or Silent Move, Trade (Apothecary or Herbalist)

Talents: Dealmaker or Fast Hands, Lesser Magic (any one) or Orientation, Lesser Magic (any one) or Fleet Footed, Luck or Witch Lore (Hedge), Meditation or Strong-minded

Trappings: Antitoxin Kit, Healing Poultice, Staff, Trade Tools (Apothecary or Herbalist), 1d5 Amulets and Charms, 1d5 Healing Draughts, 1d5 Potions

Career Entries: Hedgecraft Apprentice

Career Exits: Artisan, Hedgewise, Scholar, Spy, Witch (RoS, page 131)

NEW ADVANCED CAREER: HEDGEWISE

The Hedgewise are the oldest, most experienced Hedgefolk. They lead their brethren and are responsible for protecting them from all ills. A Hedgewise may need to tackle a multitude of different threats, ranging from itinerant Warrior-Priests keen to spread Sigmar's Word at the end of a hammer, to secretive Cults who could bring the wrath of the Witch Hunters down upon the local community. Indeed, many Hedgewise soon learn a deep hatred of the servants of the Ruinous Powers, for they bring unwanted attention to the Hedgefolk, and are anathema to their way of life. Because of this, it is not uncommon to find some Hedgewise crossing the Hedge to hunt real Witches with as much fervour, if not more, as the Magisters and the Cult of Sigmar.

—Hedgewise Advance Scheme—

Main Profile

| WS | BS | S | T | Ag | Int | WP | Fel |
|----|----|-----|------|------|------|------|------|
| — | — | +5% | +10% | +15% | +35% | +35% | +35% |

Secondary Profile

| A | W | SB | TB | M | Mag | IP | FP |
|---|----|----|----|---|-----|----|----|
| — | +5 | — | — | — | +3 | — | — |

Skills: Academic Knowledge (any two), Animal Care or Channelling, Charm Animal or Concealment, Command, Common Knowledge (the Empire), Evaluate, Follow Trail or Consume Alcohol,

Gossip, Haggle or Outdoor Survival, Heal, Intimidate, Magical Sense or Prepare Poison, Navigation, Perception, Read/Write or Speak Arcane Language (Magick), Set Trap or Silent Move, Trade (Apothecary or Herbalist)

Talents: Aethyric Attunement or Savvy, Excellent Vision or Hardy, Lesser Magic (any one) or Night Vision, Lesser Magic (any one) or Sixth Sense, Lesser Magic (any one) or Stout-hearted

Trappings: Antitoxin Kit, Staff, Trade Tools (Apothecary or Herbalist), 1d10 Amulets and Charms, 1d5 Healing Draughts, 1d5 Healing Poultices, 1d10 Potions

Career Entries: Hedge Master

Career Exits: Physician, Scout, Warlock (*Realms of Sorcery*, page 131)

GOALS AND MOTIVES

Although every branch of the Hedgefolk differs subtly in its beliefs and individual goals, all share one ultimate aim: to preserve their ancient traditions from destruction at the hands of the ignorant; however, doing so is no easy task. Where most Hedgefolk react to enemies as and when they arise, recently many have chosen to be more proactive. Hedgefolk can now be found infiltrating all levels of society seeking to learn the movements of their enemies and to influence those in power to act leniently to their brethren. Other Hedgefolk actively seek out those who many harm them, especially Chaos Cultists or untrained Witches, meaning some travel far and wide in pursuit of their enemies. But, as each Hedgewise has his own opinions on how to best protect the old ways, there is no consistent approach or universal plan.

So, while some groups of Hedgefolk are almost at war with those who would harm them, the majority live out their lives in peace in the quiet backwaters of the Empire.

SYMBOLS AND SIGNS

In the past, the Hedgefolk used a wide array of simple signs and verbal codes to introduce themselves to strangers

WANT TO JOIN?

So, you think you'd like your character to be one of the Hedgefolk? If so, your best option is to highlight your preference to your GM. You can discuss with him the best way for the Hedgefolk to notice and approach you. Perhaps you are one of the Blessed Few, and are showing the initial signs of being a magic user? Perhaps you have skills the Hedgefolk need access to? Perhaps you are a keen herbalist or apothecary, and are looking to develop your skills? Only Magisters, Witches (although not Hedge Wizards), and Priests will have difficulty joining the Hedgefolk, although even they could be approached in certain unique circumstances.

and confirm their position as practitioners of Hedgecraft. This ancient tradition lasted until three centuries ago when Feliks Rymut, an Ostlander Templar of Sigmar, tortured an unnamed Wise One from Ostermark, and is said to have learned his secrets. The resulting massacre of Hedgefolk across the Veldt was terrible to behold, but worse was yet to come.

The following spring, Sigmarites posing as Hedgefolk, using the signs learned from the Ostermarker Wise One, infiltrated several groups of Cunning Folk across Reikland, then exposed them. The Witch Burnings of 2231IC are still recalled in popular art, epic poems, and puppet shows to this day; it was an unprecedented event of such an enormous scale the sky was said to have darkened for over a month from all the smoke in the air. Unsurprisingly, word spread, and soon most Hedgefolk stopped using the signs and codes, fearful for their lives.

Today, the Hedgefolk rely upon personal introductions only, fearful to reveal their true nature to any not vouched for by a friend. Most Hedgefolk know the locations of nearby Hedgefolk, and often keep in close communication with each other, reporting the movements of Witch Hunters, known Magisters, and the like. This network allows travelling Hedgefolk to move from Hedgewise to Hedgewise, receiving personal introductions from one to the next in an unbroken line back to their own Hedgewise. At least, that is the theory; in truth, this rarely works, and most Hedgefolk pass by without knowing each other's true nature.

MEMBERSHIP

Until recently, most new Hedgefolk were drawn from the villages and hamlets they serviced, and were usually related to the local Hedgewise; after all, most groups of Hedgefolk

have lived in the same area for many centuries, and are well integrated into their communities.

However, of late, a minority of the Hedgefolk have moved back to the towns and cities in an attempt to uncover any potential threats before they move into the forests. So, although most Hedgefolk are still drawn from the backwaters of the Empire, a growing number are inducted from urban areas, for the Hedgefolk need people who understand such surroundings intimately.

RECRUITMENT

The Hedge Masters and Hedgewise handle recruitment, with each choosing their new apprentices according to individual requirements and personal whim. There is no hard and fast standard: where it is common in Reikland to train boys and girls just past their Dooming, Ostlander Hedgefolk prefer to teach apprentices more experienced in life; where many Talabeclanders will only apprentice members of their extended family, fearful of revealing their skills to outsiders, most Wissenlanders Wise Ones will only take on apprentices from without their family, keen to spread Hedgefolk acceptance through as many local family groups as possible.

Similarly, techniques for approaching and recruiting new Hedgefolk are as varied as the people doing the recruiting. Where almost all Hochlander Hedgefolk require long oaths of obedience, Ostermarkers typically conduct incense-choked religious rituals, and hardline Nordlander Hedgefolk use scarring and branding to forever mark their apprentices, most simply sit down with their new apprentice-to-be and explain how things are going to work in the future.

Whatever the unique circumstances of recruitment, they will have been handed down from master to apprentice for many centuries, and will be afforded a great deal of respect.

HEDGEFOLK AND REALMS OF SORCERY

Realms of Sorcery introduces several new magical practices to *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay*. For those using the book, characters with the Witch Lore (Hedge) Talent can bind familiars (pages 183-192) and create potions (pages 192-202). Indeed, most experienced Hedge Witches do both extensively.

NEW TALENT: EXTRA SPELL

Description: Your deeper studies into magic grant you the ability to cast a spell not on your Spell List. Extra Spell is unusual in that it is not one talent but many, and each must be acquired individually. Each Extra Spell Talent gives you access to a single spell, noted in parentheses, for example: Extra Spell (*sounds*). This spell must come from your magical lore or be a petty spell taught by your peers, so you must have Witch Lore (Hedge) or Petty Magic (Hedge) Talent before you can take Extra Spell. Taking this talent requires your GM's permission.

STACKING SPELLS

Multiple castings of any spell do not offer cumulative bonuses.

DURATION AND RANGE

To make referencing the spell descriptions easier, this book adds two lines to the spell entries: duration and range.

Duration

Instant: This spell has no duration and is resolved immediately.

Time: The spell lasts for number of days, hours, minutes, or rounds.

Time/Magic: The spell lasts for 1 day, hour, minute, or round per point of your Magic Characteristic.

Permanent: The spell lasts until the spellcaster chooses to end it, or *dispel* is successfully cast upon it.

Special: The spell has a special duration described in the spell entry.

Range

You: The spell targets yourself.

Touch: You must touch a target for the spell to take effect.

Touch (You): As Touch, but you may also target yourself.

X Yards: The spell has a range of X yards.

MEMBER BENEFITS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Being one of the Hedgefolk can be dangerous. Brewing potions, philtres, and the like may not normally be proscribed by law, but Witch Hunters often forget this when it suits them. Fortunately, the Hedgefolk are aware of this, and take measures to protect themselves. All Hedgefolk are supposed to provide help and asylum for other Hedgefolk when needed; however, whilst this will almost always be provided for friends and family, understandable suspicion means the

same is rarely the case for strangers. Most Hedgefolk maintain a collection of hideouts, called Hedgeholes, where they can secrete endangered compatriots from trouble. The majority of these are camouflaged huts in the surrounding wilderness, but some are hidden chambers in walls, cellars, or attics.

Beyond this, Hedgefolk train their apprentices to support each other whenever they can. Whether another needs access to a rare herb, knowledge regarding local trouble spots, use of potion-making tools, or simply a place to lay one's head for a night, the Hedgefolk have learned to help each other rather than turn to others and potentially expose their true nature. Normally, such services require some service in return, for the Hedgefolk may work together, but they are certainly not altruistic. What these services may be will vary, but most involve fetching an obscure potion ingredient, teaching some new skill, or concocting some brew or another; however, there is no standard.

Arguably the most important benefit and responsibility is the knowledge all Hedgefolk pass on from master to apprentice, and sometimes between themselves: Hedgecraft. This lore not only allows them to ply their trade, but it is the mainstay of their lives, it is the secret lore they so desperately wish to preserve for later generations. Passing on this knowledge is of primary importance, and all Hedgefolk are expected to take on at least one apprentice in their lifetime in order to preserve their way of life into the next generation. Indeed, some Hedgefolk, especially in the more-traditional Grand Provinces of Nordland and Middenland, make it a religious imperative to pass on their skills, so the Wise Ones and Cunning Folk of those areas are always on the lookout for new apprentices.

HEDGE CRAFT

Practitioners of Hedgecraft have served Human communities in the Old World for countless centuries, and during this time the Blessed Few have mastered many elaborate practices to manipulate magic in relative safety. However, the rituals, spells, and charms they employ to cheat Tzeentch, fell Chaos God of Magic, are complex and exact, and often require a significant amount of preparation.

Casting Spells

Hedgefolk cast spells in exactly the same way as any other spellcasters presented in *WFRP*. However, due to the unique nature of the rituals they use to control the Winds of Magic, the following additional rule is used when casting spells from Witch Lore (Hedge).

Ingredients

Hedgefolk use ingredients extensively, and require them to channel their spells in relative safety. If you do not have a spell's ingredient, you must roll an extra die per +1 bonus the associated ingredient provides. Any extra dice rolled do not contribute towards your Casting Number, but they do contribute towards Tzeentch's Curse.

THE GRIMOIRE

Shades of Empire introduces an array of new spells to *WFRP*. To include these to your game, use the career system as normal with the following additional rules:

- You may purchase extra Petty Magic spells for 50 xp each with the Extra Spell Talent.
- When you gain the Witch Lore (Hedge) Talent, you must choose an appropriate Spell List from Witch Lore (Hedge). The Spell Lists are found below.
- Additional Witch Lore (Hedge) Spells may be purchased for 100 xp each by using the Extra Spell Talent.

Petty Magic (Hedge) Spells

If you are trained in the old ways and learn Petty Magic (Hedge), you can attempt to cast spells from the Petty Magic (Hedge) Spell List found in the core rulebook.

Further, you may learn extra Petty Spells with the Extra Spell Talent, granting you access to the following from *WFRP*: *sounds*, *drop*, *marsh lights*, and *sleep*; and, if you have it, the following from *Realm of the Ice Queen*: *charmed* and *curse*.

Your GM may require you to perform some special deed for your master, find some new esoteric lore during play, or the like before allowing you to learn a new spell with the Extra Spell Talent.

The Lore of Hedgecraft

Hedgecraft has been practiced for uncounted centuries in the Old World. During this time, several distinct traditions have formed. Arguably the most famous are the so-called “Cunning Folk” or “Wise Ones,” practitioners of folk magic known for their skills at warding against any evil, be it disease, mischievous spirits, or even the influence of other witches. Other Hedgefolk are expert craftsmen, able to fashion elaborate charms and talismans for various purposes. Lastly, the relatively unknown Hedge Walkers are masters of the spirit world, known for their ability to “walk the hedge,” the boundary between the physical and the immaterial.

GMs should modify **Table 5–1: Lore of Hedgecraft Spell Lists** to suit their campaigns and are encouraged to create new lists and spells as needed.

DAGGER OF THE ART

Casting Number: 7

Casting Time: 2 full actions

Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)+

Range: You

Ingredient: A thorn cut when Mannslieb is new (+1)

Description: You carefully chant complex words of magic, forming a magical wooden blade. The weapon counts

FELLSTAVE TARGETS

Each casting of *fellstave* drives only one target race away. When you learn *fellstave*, you gain access to one of the following target races for the spell:

Beastmen (including Skaven, Minotaurs, Centigor, and the like), Daemons, Greenskins, Mutants, Ogres, Undead

You may learn more target races for 100xp each; however, your GM may require you learn the lore from another Hedgewise first. GMs are encouraged to add other races to this list to suit their individual campaigns.

as a magical dagger. Further, any spirit or chaostainted creature struck by the weapon suffers +1d10 damage. (Note: this extra +1d10 does not benefit from Ulric’s Fury.) You can retain the *dagger of the art* after the duration ends with a successful **Will Power Test** each round thereafter.

FELLSTAVE

Casting Number: 21

Casting Time: 3 full actions

Duration: 1 month/magic

Range: Touch (You)

Ingredient: A cup of blood drawn when Morrslieb was full (+3)

Description: You chant ancient words of power, demanding all foulness flee your righteous spell. Choose a race as directed under **Fellstave Targets**. At the start of each round, any of this race within 100 yards of *fellstave*’s target point must pass a **Will Power Test** or immediately spend a Move Action to move directly away from the target point. Those affected by the

TABLE 5–1:
LORE OF HEDGECAST SPELL LISTS

| Cunning Man | Craftsman | Hedge Walker |
|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>Fellstave</i> | <i>Dagger of the Art</i> | <i>Fellstave</i> |
| <i>Halétha’s Joy</i> | <i>Fellstave</i> | <i>Halétha’s Joy</i> |
| <i>Invigorate</i> | <i>Halétha’s Joy</i> | <i>Hedge Walk</i> |
| <i>Lovelock</i> | <i>Lovelock</i> | <i>Lovelock</i> |
| <i>Nostrum</i> | <i>Nepenthe</i> | <i>Myrkride</i> |
| <i>Sightstep</i> | <i>Nostrum</i> | <i>Nostrum</i> |
| <i>Silvertide</i> | <i>Protection Pouch</i> | <i>Part the Branches</i> |
| <i>Wyrd Ward</i> | <i>Purify</i> | <i>The Ousting</i> |

NEW TRAIT: ETHEREAL

You are insubstantial, weightless, and completely silent. You can pass through solid objects, but not see through them. When partly hidden in another object, you gain a bonus of +30% to Concealment Tests. You are immune to all normal damage, but can still be harmed by magical damage sources, such as spells, Daemons, spirits, or other ethereal creatures. You cannot affect the physical world at all, but may damage spirits or other ethereal creatures.

spell will move around obvious obstacles as the GM dictates, and can use any remaining actions on their Initiative as normal.

HALÉTHA'S JOY

Casting Number: 15

Casting Time: Half Action

Duration: 1 day/Magic

Range: Touch (You)

Ingredient: A rod of poplar polished with beeswax on Sonnstill (+2)

Description: You plead with the Gods of Fertility to bless the target as you unleash your spell. Assuming the target and any potential partner are fertile, *Halétha's joy* ensures a child will be conceived. The spell ends as soon as it is successfully used.

HEDGE WALK

Casting Number: 24

Casting Time: 3 full action

Duration: 1 hour/Magic

Range: You

Ingredient: A bone that has been buried beneath a hedgerow for 1 month (+3)

Description: Steadying your physical form, you cast your spell and send your spirit into the Hedge. Your spirit appears within 2 yards (1 square) of your body. You are completely invisible and silent to anyone on the physical plane. You are still constrained by physical boundaries, but are immune to all forms of non-magical damage, even though the objects will strike you (they will just not hurt). You may not interact with any object in the physical plane as your spirit form simply slips off it. The following entities are now visible to you, and can be interacted with: invisible creatures, spirits, ethereal creatures, and daemons. Your body is left behind when you cast *hedge walk*, and counts as helpless. The spell will end if you touch your body.

INVIGORATE

Casting Number: 5

Casting Time: Half action

Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)

Range: Touch

Ingredient: A live snail (+1)

Description: Your sly spell fools the body into feeling fresh and alert. The target gains a bonus of +5% to Agility and Intelligence, and +1 Movement. When the duration ends, the target must pass a **Toughness Test** or suffer a penalty of -10% Agility and Intelligence, and -1 Movement.

LOVELOCK

Casting Number: 23

Casting Time: 3 full actions

Duration: Special: until midnight

Range: Touch

Ingredient: A lock of hair from the target (+3)

Description: You whisper the secret words of Hedgecraft, and form enough sweet liquid to fill a small cup. If the target drinks the philtre, it will cause him to fall in love with the first person he sees of his race and of the sex he finds attractive. The GM dictates the exact extremes of what "in love" means.

MYRKRIDE

Casting Number: 20

Casting Time: 2 full action

Duration: 1 round/Magic

Range: You

Ingredient: The freshly boiled heart of a mouse (+3)

Description: You speak ancient words of magic and project yourself into the darkness of the hedge, the space between the material world and the immaterial world. You gain the Ethereal trait (see **New Trait: Ethereal**). You can extend the effects of *myrkride* after the duration ends with a successful **Will Power Test** each round thereafter. The GM determines what happens if the spell ends when you are partially through another object.

NEPENTHE

Casting Number: 16

Casting Time: 3 full actions

Duration: Permanent

Range: Touch

Ingredient: A fingernail from the individual the target wishes to forget (+2)

Description: You speak the twisting words of magic, and form enough smoky liquid to fill a small cup. If the target is willing, he will immediately forget one individual, and everything involved with that individual.

ARCANE LANGUAGE (MAGICK)

The Hedgefolk speak an ancient dialect of Magick, which allows them to understand Cult and collegiate use of the language with a successful **Challenging (-10%) Speak Language (Magick) Test**.

For more on Arcane Language (Magick), refer to *Tome of Salvation* page 214, and *Realms of Sorcery*, page 49.

NOSTRUM

Casting Number: 20

Casting Time: 3 full actions

Duration: Permanent

Range: Touch

Ingredient: A toe or finger from the target (+3)

Description: You speak powerful words of Hedgecraft, and a greenish liquid forms at your fingertips. If drunk by the target, the liquid will immediately cure one disease.

PART THE BRANCHES

Casting Number: 8

Casting Time: Full action

Duration: 1 hour/Magic

Range: You

Ingredient: The ash of a hawthorn branch that has been burnt at noon (+1)

Description: You chant your spell, and the branches of the hedge part before you. You can now see into the spirit world. What this means is largely left up to the GM, but, at a minimum, the following are now visible: invisible creatures, spirits, ethereal creatures, and Daemons.

PROTECTION POUCH

Casting Number: 10

Casting Time: 3 full actions

Duration: 1 week/Magic

Range: Touch

Ingredient: A small leather pouch made from the flesh of a bat (+2)

Description: You mutter complicated words of Hedgecraft and form small, purple herbs at your finger tips. Whoever carries all of the herbs gains a bonus of +10% to Will Power Tests to resist magic, and +10% to Toughness Tests to resist diseases and poisons.

PURIFY

Casting Number: 6

Casting Time: 2 full actions

Duration: Permanent

Range: 2 yards/1 square

Ingredient: A reed filled with fresh toad spit (+1)

Description: You pass your hands over a target receptacle (such as a flask, jar, stein, or skin), purifying the liquid within. The spell removes all non-magical impurities, including contaminants, poisons, and pollution, leaving the liquid drinkable.

SIGHTSTEP

Casting Number: 15

Casting Time: 3 full actions

Duration: Special

Range: You

Ingredient: The wings of a dragonfly that has been killed with a silver pin (+2)

Description: Your spell wraps you in the hedge, making you obscure to those relying on magic. The Detect Magic Skill detects nothing from you, and you gain a bonus of +30% to Concealment Tests to hide from Daemons, spirits, and ethereal creatures.



SILVERTIDE

Casting Number: 16

Casting Time: 2 full actions

Duration: 6 hours

Range: Touch

Ingredient: A lodestone dipped in honey (+2)

Description: Your enticing spell attracts wealth. Over the course of the duration, the target gains 1d10 s from coins he finds on the ground, at the bottom of deep pockets, behind ears, in the back of upholstered chairs, and so on. However, if the spell is not cast successfully, you immediately suffer Tzeentch's Curse; if you are already subjected to Tzeentch's Curse because of the Casting Roll, the curse is now one step worse.

THE OUSTING

Casting Number: 14

Casting Time: 2 full actions

Duration: 1d10 years/Magic

Range: 6 yards (3 squares)

Ingredient: A spherical stone buried for a month within a fresh stream (+2)

Description: You speak terrible words of banishment, demanding a creature from beyond the hedge return to its place of origin. One spirit or Daemon within range must pass a **Will Power Test** or immediately be banished to the aethyr.

WYRD WARD

Casting Number: 18

Casting Time: 4 full actions

Duration: 1 hour/Magic

Range: Touch (You)

Ingredient: A hair from the warded witch (+2)

Description: You chant this spell, wrapping your target in an indistinct curtain of magic. One Witch you specify at the point of casting (and you must have touched the witch's flesh) must pass a **Very Difficult** (–30%) **Will Power Test** to cast a spell upon the target. If failed, the Witch wastes his action this round.

— GM'S SECTION —

In this section you will find useful tools for including the Hedgefolk in your campaigns. Alongside sample story hooks, a pre-generated mentor, and general guidelines for using the Hedgefolk, there is also a short description of the Hedgefolk's allies and enemies, a sample Hedgewise's home, and an example of one way the Hedgefolk are fighting back.

"I may live in the Hedge, but I am not alone."

—BERTA LEHRER, AVERLANDER HEDGE MISTRESS

The very nature of their day-to-day life—providing potions, lotions, tonics, and philtres—brings the Hedgefolk into repeated contact with others in a positive way. Curing diseases, warding against dangers, easing pains, aiding births—all this and more

lend Wise Ones a great deal of good will, and most are seen as indispensable members of their communities. Indeed, so ingrained are they into some settlements, Witch Hunters have little to no chance of receiving help from locals in uncovering Hedgefolk activity, as most villagers are fully aware of what most outsiders think of their much-needed Wise One.

This good will is further strengthened because the Hedgefolk are often related to a significant proportion of their communities. Although most choose to live on the boundary of their settlements for traditional and religious reasons, they still integrate. Centuries of marriages between limited families with little outside influence result in most small communities in the Empire being closely inter-related, and this includes the Hedgefolk. So, another reason the Hedgefolk are so protected is because those who could turn on them are often family.

Indeed, having a son or daughter picked to be the next apprentice of the local Wise One is generally seen as something to celebrate, not fear. After all, the Hedgefolk are not Witches, they are blessed folk in the service of one of the Gods—typically Ranald or Halëtha, or so most small communities believe—and they hunt down Witches themselves. Really, what is there to fear?

SECRETS OF THE HEDGEFOLK

The Hedgefolk's greatest secret is their Blessed Few, those capable of empowering the old ways with real magic, and they work very hard to protect them. Because of this, they have gathered an impressive array of allies and enemies to their side, and, more significantly, have made an attempt to infiltrate the very establishment that stands as one of their biggest threats: the Colleges of Magic.

ALLIES

The Hedgefolk have few allies, but those they do have make a significant impact upon their continued existence.

THE COMMON FOLK

Although Hedgefolk only really trust other Hedgefolk, and sometimes not even them, over the centuries they have come to rely upon an extended network of family and friends for their continued survival.

Because of this close relationship, most Hedgefolk are aware of outsiders as soon as they arrive, for locals pass any relevant news to them as soon as they are able; however, the experienced Witch Hunter knows to look for such activity.

THE HAGS

The Hedgefolk do not believe themselves to be witches, and dislike being treated as such; in fact, the Hedgefolk are known for driving witches away from their communities to ensure no Witch Hunters are attracted to their activities. However, one group of Witches, the Kislevite Hags, do not attract their ire; indeed, the Ostermark and Ostlander Hedgefolk have a very close relationship with them.

The Hags—Kislevite spirit Witches—share much in common with the Hedgefolk. Because of this, during times of persecution, the Hedgefolk may find a safe haven amongst the Ungol Hags, and vice versa. However, the Hags believe men are incapable of safely wielding magic without eventually succumbing to the temptations of the Ruinous Powers, so they never help male Hedgefolk who are of the Blessed Few. Fortunately, most of the Hedgefolk in Ostermark and Ostland share this belief, and female Blessed Few dominate the area, so this is rarely much of an issue.

Those interested in knowing more about the Hags should refer to *Realm of the Ice Queen*.

ENEMIES

The Hedgefolk are a private people who tend to stick to themselves, so they do not have a great number of enemies—but those they do have are influential and powerful. Not only do they have the Cult of Sigmar, Witch Hunters, and the Colleges of Magic stacked up on one side of them, but on the other they have Witches, Warlocks, and the Cultists of the Dark Gods, and all seem to wish harm to the Hedgefolk in one fashion or another.

WITCH HUNTERS

Without compare, the greatest threat to the Hedgefolk way of life is the Witch Hunters. All it takes is the slightest hint of a Witch Hunter to send Wise Ones and Cunning Folk fleeing for Hedgeholes, fearful for their lives. Given Witch Hunters have the authority of the law or one of the established Cults behind them, there is little the Hedgefolk can do to counteract them beyond fostering good relationships with their local communities to ensure they are not handed over when one comes calling.

Of the two types of Witch Hunters found hunting the Hedgefolk—secular varieties working for a local noble, or clerical examples working for one of the Cults—it is the clerical Hunters who are feared the most. It is rare to find a secular Hunter investigating Witches if the local ruler

has no reason to believe they are there, but their religious equivalents are more proactive, and can be found scouring backwaters rooting around for the Witches they are so convinced rot away at the heart of all rural communities.

SIGMARITES

Of all the Cults, the Sigmarites stand against the Hedgefolk more than any other. As far as they are concerned, the Blessed Few, and any aiding them, have corruption laced through their souls, are likely to be worshippers of the Dark Gods, and are potential possessed by Daemons. Indeed, their hatred of Witches in all their forms is seemingly relentless, and entire orders of Witch Hunters exist for the sole purpose of rooting out Hedgefolk and their ilk.

The most famous of these orders, the Holy Order of Templars of Sigmar, are so synonymous with Witch Hunting most simply know them as the Witch Hunters. More about the Templars of Sigmar, and how they operate, can be found in *Realms of Sorcery*.

WITCHES

Across the Empire, there are all manner of ancient traditional magics performed beyond the watchful eyes of the Colleges of Magic. No matter what they call themselves, be it Seers, Wyrds, Necromancers, Diviners, Elementalists, or even Hedge Wizards, the Colleges view them as dangerous, for channelling the Winds of Magic without proper training can have disastrous consequences. Contrary to what many may expect, the Hedgefolk agree with this.

The Hedgefolk are aware that magic is dangerous, and they believe only careful training by the Hedgefolk, and perhaps the Colleges, can ensure safety. Therefore, other Witches are a problem, for not only do they attract the attention of Witch Hunters, but they are dangerous as well. They tempt the Dark Gods with their reckless use of powers beyond their ken.

Different Hedgewise deal with this problem in different ways. Some seek out such Witches and turn them over to the authorities, some do their best to urge Witches to stay away from their territories, and some turn to hunting them down; whatever the individual direction, what is clear is the Hedgefolk do not like rogue Witches.

CHAOS CULTS

Much like Witches, Cultists of the Dark Gods attract Witch Hunters in significant numbers. Because of this, and because the Hedgefolk are so opposed to the perversions of Chaos, it is common to find Hedgewise taking extreme measures to tackle those involved with the Ruinous Powers. Normally, the Hedgefolk are reticent to directly involve themselves with others; however, when it comes to followers of Chaos, poisons, curses, and even subtle knives in the dark are just a few of the many tactics used. Indeed, such

is the strength of opposition from the Hedgefolk, many Cults teach their acolytes to target healers, apothecaries, and herbalists first when attempting to corrupt new settlements.

THE COLLEGES OF MAGIC

The Colleges of Magic pose a unique threat to the Hedgefolk. Unlike their many other enemies, the Colleges are less concerned with destroying the Hedgefolk, and more concerned with recruiting them.

Because the Blessed Few, when properly trained, demonstrate remarkably little taint, the Orders see them as prime candidates for “proper” training. Assuring they are not too old and stuck in their ways, the Colleges are keen to capture such Hedge Wizards and press them into the service of the Empire. Of course, those who refuse this generous offer are dealt with like any other rogue Witch: typically by burning. This is enough of a threat to force most young Hedge Masters to reconsider their beliefs on a permanent basis.

THE GREY ORDER

The Grey Order prizes apprentices who have yet to be formed by the world around them. Such apprentices are more easily crafted into future Grey Magisters, and are less likely to betray their masters at a later date: Greys are, by their very natures, a suspicious lot. However, even the best-laid plans can fall apart in practice.

Kurtis Krammovitch was an Ostermarker Hedgewise with a grudge. When he was young, he watched his parents, both Hedgefolk, be burned as Witches by a passing Bright Magister. Krammovitch’s uncle, who was also Hedgefolk, thereafter raised him. On his eighth birthday he showed his first signs of being one of the Blessed Few when he healed a calf that should have died in childbirth by using nothing but his tear-stained hands. His powers developed quickly, and by the age of nineteen Krammovitch was tremendously skilled in Hedgecraft, uncannily so; further, he had a plan.

Later that year Krammovitch was captured by a young Grey Magister after the Shadowmancer spotted him fumbling a simple curse on a shopkeeper who had clearly fleeced him. As he had planned, Krammovitch had a new master.

Fifty years later, Krammovitch is now a Lord Magister of the Grey Order, and has trained many new apprentices, all Hedgefolk, all subtly allowed to maintain their rural beliefs instead of being fully indoctrinated into the Greys. From this position he works hard to support the Hedgefolk where he can, and to manoeuvre his apprentices into positions where they can do the same. However, he is beginning to believe all may not be as it seems; what if the Greys purposefully recruited him to do exactly as he is doing: to train the Hedgefolk in proper Collegiate magic?

SAMPLE MENTOR: MARKUS FISCHER

“Nothing is quite what it seems; isn’t that the way of Ulgu?”

—MARKUS FISCHER, LORD MAGISTER OF THE GREY ORDER

Markus Fischer makes for an atypical Hedgefolk mentor. Taken two decades ago by the Colleges of Magic, Fischer now works from within that institution, guiding Magisters and Hedgefolk alike in what he believes is the best for the Hedgefolk as a whole. However, he fears members of the Orders are aware of his activities, and Fischer knows what will happen to him if they decide to reveal his involvement, which puts him in a very difficult position. Because of this, Markus is looking for help, and perhaps the PCs are exactly what he is looking for....



GMs wishing to use Fischer as a mentor in their campaigns can use the character in several ways. At the simplest level, the character can train Hedgefolk PCs in simple Hedgecraft, introduce the PCs to a Hedgewise for advanced training in Hedge Lore (an example of such a character—Reyntsch Schneide—is given on page 71), or he can simply send the PCs on missions. However, for GMs wishing to use the character more extensively, there is an array of potential stories involving Hedgefolk infiltrating the Colleges, and the Grey Order counter-infiltrating the Hedgefolk, that can be explored here.

BACKGROUND

One of the Blessed Few, Fischer was apprenticed to an elderly Hedgewise at the tender age of ten. He was a quick student, and soon became a Hedge Master in his own right. By his seventeenth birthday, he was eking out a simple life on the lower Reik selling charms to superstitious bargees, and supporting the local network of Hedgefolk.

However, in the early 2500s, a Magister observed him plying his trade. The young Fischer, outwitted by a cunning Shadowmancer, was captured and taken to the Colleges. There, he was given the choice of death or training as a Magister, and wisely chose the latter. A decade later, Fischer left the Colleges as one of their most talented and powerful Grey Magisters, and was soon assigned to the Reikland State Army. There he served with distinction, and was eventually attached to the Imperial Guard, the Emperor’s own regimental bodyguard, before attaining the title of Lord Magister.

After twenty years of being a Grey Guardian, Markus still holds tight to his Hedgefolk beliefs. He may no longer practice Hedgecraft, but he still quietly supports

the Hedgefolk and maintains his religious convictions. However, lately he has come to believe his Order may be aware of his beliefs; indeed, he fears they may be using him to gain access to the Hedgefolk he once held so dear, especially since it appears his own master in the Grey Order, Lord Magister Krammovitch, the man who captured him, may once have been one of the Hedgefolk as well.

PERSONALITY

Fischer fosters a dry wit and takes any opportunity to drop sarcastic comments; indeed, he seemingly takes a perverse pleasure in carefully insulting his peers. However, beneath the bravado, Fischer is an intensely shy and frightened man. In particular, he is scared his fellows will uncover his true motivations as one of the Hedgefolk, so goes to extreme lengths to divert others from examining his true nature too closely; thus, the caustic wit and unlikable nature. Due to all his duplicity, the nervous Fischer has developed several unconscious ticks, such as cleaning his nails with his dagger when anxious, or smirking whenever he feels he has been outwitted.

APPEARANCE

Much like many in the Grey Order, Fischer does not dress like the Magister he is. He wears simple, plain clothing—typically white shirts, black trows, black boots, and grey, ribbed jerkins—eschewing his magisterial robes excepting when on official business. His one concession to the Grey Order is to wear a plain sword hung at his waist, the symbol of the Shadowmancers.

He has clipped, greying brown hair atop a plain face only made interesting by a small mole on his left cheek, which is partially hidden by a black goatee. Indeed, if it were not for his eyes—watery-blue and always watchful—he would be completely unremarkable.

MARKUS FISCHER

**Male Human Wizard Lord (ex-Soldier,
ex-Master Wizard, ex-Journeyman Wizard,
ex-Apprentice Wizard, ex-Hedge Master,
ex-Hedgecraft Apprentice)**

| WS | BS | S | T | Ag | Int | WP | Fel |
|-----|-----|---------|---------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 47% | 39% | 33% (3) | 51% (5) | 55% | 78% | 80% | 69% |

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Genealogy/Heraldry, History, Law +10%, Magic +20%, Theology +10%), Animal Care, Channelling +20%, Charm +20%, Charm Animal, Command, Common Knowledge (Bretonnia, the Empire +20%, the Wasteland +20%, Tilea), Concealment +10%, Consume Alcohol +10%, Dodge Blow, Evaluate, Follow Trail, Gamble, Gossip +20%, Haggle +10%, Heal +20%, Intimidate +20%, Magical

Sense +20%, Navigation, Outdoor Survival +10%, Perception +20%, Prepare Poisons +10%, Read/Write +20%, Ride +20%, Search, Set Trap, Silent Move +10%, Speak Arcane Language (Arcane Elf +10%, Magic +20%), Speak Language (Bretonnian +10%, Classical +20%, Estalian +10%, Kislevan, Reikspiel +20%, Tilean), Swim, Trade (Apothecary +10%, Herbalist +10%)

Talents: Aethyric Attunement, Arcane Lore (Grey), Coolheaded, Dealmaker, Disarm, Extra Spell (as required), Fast Hands, Fleet Footed, Lesser Magic (as required), Luck, Meditation, Mighty Missile, Mimic, Petty Magic (Arcane, Hedge), Quick Draw, Rover, Savvy, Sixth Sense, Strike to Injure, Strike to Stun, Strong-minded, Very Resilient

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 5; **Wounds:** 16; **Magic:** 3; **Insanity**

Points: 9

Armour: None

Weapons: Hand Weapon (Sword) (1d10+3)

Trappings

Antitoxin Kit, 2 Healing Draughts, Healing Poultrice, Lucky Charm, 3 Magic Items (as required)

SAMPLE LOCATION: THE HUT IN THE HEDGE

The Hut in the Hedge is an example residence of a Hedgewise. Although its given location is in Wissenland, it could be relocated to any part of the Empire without revision.

FEATURES AND DEFENCES

The hut is a thoroughly unremarkable, ramshackle, single-story building with a thatch roof and stone walls. It has no obvious defences, but is populated by a Hedgewise and three apprentices who all have strong ties and connections to the nearby villagers of Oberlachen, and very sharp eyes and ears.

Like most Hedgefolk buildings, the hut skulks on the periphery of a forest—the Untergrau Forest in northwestern Wissenland—out of sight behind tall beech trees and thick undergrowth. Less than a hundred yards away, the trees give way to the stone-clogged fields of Oberlachen, where the rough, wooden palisade of the village can be seen hunkering over the babbling waters of the Lachen River.

Untergrau Forest is a known staging point for Greenskins raiding down from the mountains, and Beastmen have also been spotted slipping through the undergrowth on multiple occasions; however, they all seem to avoid the hut, and often the village beyond as well.

KEY LOCATIONS

The following are the primary locations in and around the Hut in the Hedge.

1. Courtyard

Irregular flagstones quarried from the Grey Mountains pave the open area before the hut. Weeds grow through the stones, and piles of broken, clay pots and old, rusted tools litter the area. A crow-post—sporting nailed crows in various states of decay—stands in the centre of the courtyard. At its base, old bird bones lie undisturbed.

2. Herb Garden

The Hedgewise's three apprentices tend the herb garden, and they are often found there pulling weeds, or watering the plants during drier days. The small plots host a wide variety of herbs, spices, fruits, and vegetables, and the conflicting odours can be overpowering on hot days. A small shrine lies undisturbed in the northern corner of the garden; a featureless feminine statue of Halétha rises from the overgrown weeds there, its slender arms flung high above its head.

3. Shed

A ramshackle pile of poorly-sawn planks forms a sizeable makeshift shed that squats in one corner of the garden (**Area 2**). Within, the Hedgewise's three apprentices—Luka (19), Benisch (23), and Pecz (14)—have rudimentary

bedding of straw and coarse blankets squeezed between gardening tools, old pots, racks of old seeds, and the like. The thatch roofing is surprisingly good quality considering the rundown nature of the shed, but only because Luka's father is the local thatcher, and Luka learned a thing or two before becoming an apprentice of Hedgecraft.

4. Kitchen

The main room in the hut, called the kitchen by the Hedgewise, is dominated by a large cooking area surrounding a central fireplace. Dozens of old pots and pans line the walls, hanging alongside dried plants and cured animals of all kinds. The kitchen has two glassless windows with heavy, wooden shutters to block out the cold. Beside the eastern window, a large rocking chair sits beside a table piled high with worn recipe books and boxes of dried tabac. The Hedgewise—when not walking the forest, or grumbling at his apprentices, or visiting clients and friends—is most often found here, mulling over new combinations of ingredients for new, more potent potions and elixirs.

5. Bedroom

Less a room, and more a section of the kitchen (**Area 4**) cordoned off by hanging leather curtains, the bedroom is where the Hedgewise sleeps and keeps the majority of his books. A tall bookcase guards dozens of tomes brimming with fascinating lore on matters botanical, zoological, historical, and more. Yet more books lie in piles beside the Hedgewise's bed, most with folded page-corners or leafs used as bookmarks. Under a worn, woollen carpet beneath the bed, a loose floorboard hides the Hedgewise's sacred tools for preparing spell ingredients.

6. Attic

A ladder from the kitchen (**Area 4**) leads up into a dusty, crate-filled attic full of the junk of life. Once, the Hedgewise used to live there with his wife and three children, but after Greenskins killed them six years ago, the large space has been uninhabited. The apprentices no longer raise the possibility of moving into the attic from the shed (**Area 3**), for the Hedgewise's mood turns instantly foul at the slightest mention of the place, although they have no idea why.

7. Cellar

Under a warped hatch set against the wall of the hut in the courtyard (**Area 1**), a worn, stone staircase leads down to a damp cellar full of mould, insects, and potion ingredients requiring cold storage. Behind a cluster of old barrels filled with rainwater caught when Morrslieb was full, a loose stone can be removed granting access to a latch for a secret door leading to a Hedgehole (**Area 8**).

8. Hedgehole

As well as maintaining 3 Hedgeholes in the forest, the Hedgewise has a small room not more than four feet by six



hidden behind a secret door in the cellar (Area 7). Within, it is pokey and uncomfortable, with a chair, bedding, a cask of ale doubling as a table, and a cabinet filled with books and dried food. Although it has not been used in three years, the Hedgewise ensures it is dust-free and ready, just in case.

USING THE HEDGEFOLK

The Hedgefolk are very easy to incorporate into an existing campaign, even if none of your players are part of their society. Because of their secretive nature, you have an excuse for why players may not have spotted them in the past. Indeed, any herbalist, apothecary, or barber-surgeon could be one of the Hedgefolk, providing an opportunity for you to introduce them without having to create new NPCs.

As a group, they can make excellent support characters for any PC group, as they have many skills and talents an average party have need of, primarily healing and a wide array of contacts in rural areas. Equally, as antagonists, they can provide a challenge for any PCs for exactly the same reasons.

As far as stories go, the Hedgefolk present a group ripe with potential conflict, and thus ripe with potential plots for your PCs to mine. To help you along, the following plot hooks furnish you with three different ways you can introduce a new story centred on the Hedgefolk.

PLOT HOOKS

HAMMER OR ANVIL?

Brother Furchten is afraid. He recently arrived in Harnhugel after the previous Priest died of an unexpected heart attack. The small community was initially welcoming, and his Festag throngs were well attended; however, this was all to change. Three nights ago, Furchten spotted the village Bailiff slipping off into the forest. The priest called out, but apparently was not heard; so, Furchten rushed after him, concerned for the Bailiff's safety. What the Priest witnessed in the woods shocked him to his core: The Bailiff was a Witch, and was practicing dark arts. Panicking, Furchten fled, but tripped and scratched his face as he escaped. Next day, sporting a bandage, the villager's mood changed significantly.

Isolated and alone, Furchten is now fearful for his life. He's desperate for help, but will only trust outsiders, for it's clear the locals cannot be trusted.

DAEMON'S NIGHT

Elstyr Trynken is a Witch, and a dangerous one. There are signs and placards posted everywhere offering a significant bounty for her life. Witch Hunters are abroad, and even the Light Magisters have been called in.

HEDGEWISE REYNTSCH SCHNEIDE

Tired Hedgewise Schneide looks older than his forty years. He sports long grey hair from his balding head—which he typically covers with a cap; one of his few vanities—and has an unkempt brown-grey beard. The Wissenlander accent that drones from his thin lips is especially monotone, and his apprentices sometimes joke he could bore a tree to death.



Since the death of his family at the hands of Night Goblins six years ago, Schneide has largely given up on life, and whiles away most of his long days drinking chicory beverages mixed with an abrasive alcohol of his own concoction. The only subject that truly stirs him from his mourn-filled reveries is revenge upon Greenskins, a topic that never fails to enthuse him, something his apprentices are both aware of, and wary of.

If they choose to pursue her, the PCs will eventually find the Witch, and what she has to say is shocking. A Burgomeister from the local town is a worshipper of the Dark Gods, and is seeking to gain access to ancient places of power in the surrounding area. The Hedgefolk protected these, so the Burgomeister hired Witch Hunters, informed Sigmarites, and contacted the Colleges of Magic, all to do his work for him. This done, he now intends to complete a blasphemous ritual when Morrslieb is next full. Will the PCs believe a Witch and turn against the local authorities? Or will they collect the bounty and suffer the consequences of the ritual that night?

WHICH HUNTERS?

The Sammler family are in trouble. Racketeers are terrorising them for protection money, and they can no longer afford to pay. Rather than give the last of their hard-earned cash to extortionists, the Sammlers would prefer to hand the money to someone willing to help resolve their problem. Fortunately, they know where the racketeers will be striking next: the Streichs, family friends of the Sammlers unable to keep up with their payments. The villains will be striking tonight, and it is clear they intend to break bones and worse, unless the PCs help.

In truth, the extortionists are Witch Hunters planning to raid the Hedgefolk Streichs, and the Sammlers, also Hedgefolk, have recently uncovered this, and are keen to hire any help they can. Once the PCs leave, the Sammlers intend to vacate the local area before they are also uncovered.

CHAPTER VI: THE IMPERIAL NAVY

DARK TIDINGS

Staadtholder van Remerswijk,

The de Roelef report into the threats posed by the Imperial Navy is now complete. I have read its 68 pages on your behalf, and I believe you will be initially pleased, as the conclusion marries well with your desire for continued good relations with the Empire. However, before the report is presented to the Directorate, I must counsel some caution; for, as Verena is my witness, the report is flawed.

Contrary to its suggestion that the Reikland Fleet continues to be crippled by lack of funding, my contacts suggest the Reiksport is busier now than ever before, and has recently employed an array of new shipwrights from Bechafen and Tilea. Further, the 17 pages dedicated to the Nordland Fleet are woefully inaccurate. The Grand Barony does not boast a "smattering of poor quality vessels captained by illiterate, unwashed barbarians"; indeed, quite the opposite is the case.

Another significant omission is the state of the highest ranks in the Empire's navy. In particular, there is not just one Imperial Sea Lord — there are three. Altdorf's Sea Lord is joined by a recent equivalent in Carroburg — the ominously named Magnus von Bildhofen, son of the Duke of Carroburg — and another in Dietershafen — Ludolf Köhler, son of the Baron of Dietershafen. While Köhler's status had long been guessed at, there have been no rumours circulating of Bildhofen's naval aspirations, and the secrecy involved is concerning.

As we are aware of Emperor Karl-Franz's antagonistic position regarding Marienburg, it should be no surprise to note he ordered Reikland's most recent naval build-up. It seems likely he is looking to build upon his legacy for future generations, and is buoyed up by his victories in the recent incursions from the north. Further, Nordland is a clear threat, for if the reports from Dietershafen and Salzenmund are to be believed, Grand Baron Gausser may be planning nothing less than a full-scale invasion.

As to why the report is so inaccurate, I can only guess. Perhaps the report writers were bribed? Maybe their intelligence was faked? Possibly House de Roelef, as broadly rumoured, does indeed have secret plans for a return of the old nobility? I do not know, but I am sure of one thing: the report is clearly manipulated by someone to mislead the Directorate into thinking the Imperial Fleet is not a concern.

Herr Staadtholder, no matter what the report may suggest, it seems obvious that we have never been threatened as we are now. With the centenary of our independence impending, do you really believe the Empire will make no significant effort to reclaim old Westerland?

Yours by Manaas's Grace,

Pepijn Maijer

Steward of the Palace

— PLAYER'S SECTION —

The Imperial Navy is the largest, most powerful navy in the Old World, but it is seriously inhibited. To the north, a new fleet has arisen in Nordland and is well financed, well-trained, and well armed, but it is under constant threat from Norse marauders, pirates, and very dangerous waters. To the south, the old fleet of the Reikland may be far larger, but it is mostly a river-based force led by captains with little sea-faring experience, for their ships rarely pass Marienburg due to prohibitive treaties and extortionate tolls.

But no matter how curtailed it may be, the Imperial Navy is enormous. It employs countless men and women, and funds entire settlements. Not only this, but it provides real opportunities for both the rich and the poor. Indeed, it is one of the only institutions where nobles and commoners not only rub shoulders, but often mix. Whether you are a soldier or sailor, a craftsman or cook, a weaver or gunner, an engineer or armourer, the Imperial Navy needs you.

PURPOSE

The Imperial Navy is an essential part of the Empire's military. Not only is it responsible for defending the coasts and trade routes, but it also transports the state armies and local militias wherever they may be needed, acting as a force multiplier and allowing for rapid redeployment of the Empire's troops. Further, the navy is used to blockade enemy ports, escort merchant convoys, explore distant lands, transport important dignitaries, and for capturing foreign vessels, one of the most lucrative businesses in the Old World.

No matter an individual's skills or capabilities, there will be a place for him in the Navy, and it demands little in return other than hard work, an adventurous nature, and a penchant for grog.

HISTORY

The first military ships of the Empire were reputedly built over two thousand years ago in response to Norse raids in the north. The Norse tribesmen were expert shipbuilders, and frequently crossed the Sea of Claws to make forays along the Empire's coasts, looting, pillaging, and murdering. According to the Chronicles of the Venerable Ottokar, the local nobles were "powerless against the blasphemous Norse," for whenever they brought an army to bear against them, they

"fled to their vessels like the Godless cowards they were, then sailed down the coast to attack elsewhere."

Because the Empire had no method of its own to transport troops along the coastlines or across rivers, the Norse had the freedom of the Empire's coastlines. In an attempt to curtail this, the desperate nobles ordered

"great boats be built, so Westerland may be proud again in Sigmar's grace."

The order succeeded, for not long after

"there were boats from point to point with great men within, bone-cages wrapped in battle coats, arms bright with weapons of war."

So successful was this early ship-building, local Dukes and Counts demanded their coastal Barons "all build a ship for the transport of men" as part of their feudal obligations. It seems the added manoeuvrability this provided defence

militias was significant, for "they did smite the Norse like Sigmar to the unholy." However, given the next historical record, it appears this was not enough.

In 632IC, the Norse sacked Marienburg, capital of

Westerland. According to Sigmarite records, the Emperor himself demanded action be taken. After prolonged discussions with the Baron of Westerland, a new title was created:

"...and with Sigmar's wisdom, he did order the Keepers of the Coast be made truth in law."

It seems these new nobles were tasked with building ships and assembling men to crew them. Further, they were to

"establish coastal patrols and watch-fires, organise routes of escape, and build fortifications to defend when invasions are too large to bear."

It took time, but it seems by the mid 700sIC, the standing navy of the Empire had spread along the western and northern coasts. According to the dwarf Saga of Damrik Ulgriksson:

"They boasted of fourteen co-called 'Keepers of the Coast.' They claimed each stood vigil in the summer with their boats and militias. They said each recruited and trained during the winter. I do not believe it. I saw those 'boats.' They were no better than a pile of logs thrown to the ground by a troll."

No matter the opinion of the Ulgriksson, it appears the nascent fleet must have been made some form of difference, for in 765IC, The Baron of Westerland concluded treaties with representatives of the Norse Sarl, Skaeling, and Bjornling tribes at the Althing of Traktatsey, effectively ending hostilities.

"There are nobles and seamen in the Reikland fleet; but, the seamen are not very noble, and the nobles are certainly no seamen."

—LORD TYRKEL VON HARGELFELS,
ADMIRAL OF THE NORDLAND FLEET



It appears that within three generations, the Keepers of the Coast were largely ceremonial in nature. According to an 827IC chronicle by an unknown author held by the Temple of Verena in Middenheim:

“I am to be made a Keeper of the Coast. Mine wife is most pleased, though I have never seen the see, nor will waste mine life in voyaging there.”

Perhaps this was a mistake, for, in what would become a recurrent cycle, the Norse eventually took advantage of the Empire’s lowered defences and resumed raiding again, sacking Marienburg for a second time in 1109IC. If not for the Black Plague of 1111IC, it is possible the Norse would have kept the city.

Whatever may have been, for the next two centuries, civil issues in the heart of the Empire left the coastal provinces to fend for themselves. Although the navy never fully died during this time, it was far from fit for purpose. Many records show how Nordland was repeatedly raided and settled, and chronicles from Ostland and Westerland suggest they fared little better; however, the permanent arrival of the Norse did have one advantage. According to Sigmarite records now held in Salzenmund:

“Fyrthur knelt before the Father, and he saw the goodness that was Sigmar, and he said unto him: Yes, I have seen the truth, I will teach you how we build our dragons.”

However, as advances were being made in the north, civil war broke out in the south. By 1360IC there were two Emperors, by 1547IC there three.

During this time, the navies of Nordland, Ostland, Middenland, Reikland, and Westerland rose to prominence, especially those of Reikland and Westerland. Putting Norse shipbuilding skills to good use, quality ships were soon plying most of the rivers and coastlines, all brimful of soldiers, all ready to outflank enemies and blockade ports. Altdorf is said to have taken action by building several large bridges across the Reik and Talabec to limit the influence of the burgeoning fleets of Talabheim and Nuln, ensuring they could never pass the Reikland capital. Illustrations and tapestries from this time suggest simple catapults and bolt throwers were common on these early ships, and longbowmen were especially prized for their utility on the rivers and coastlines.

Most navies of the fractured Empire changed little for several hundred years. Ship design remained largely unchanged, with most vessels using square-rigged sails and oars, and clearly designed for river travel or short coastal journeys. However, one port did make some advances: Marienburg.

The Westerlander city-port was growing fast as merchants from across the Old World gathered there to gain access to the collected goods of the war-torn Empire. Of all the foreign visitors, the most advanced were the Tileans.

Firstly, the Tileans were skilled with blackpowder—a substance only known to the Empire through the Dwarfs, but that Elder Race guarded its secrets jealously; secondly, they had ship-building skills far in advance of any

IMPERIAL SHIPS

The Imperial Navy includes many different ships of varying shapes and sizes. Some are refitted merchantmen, some are re-outfitted prizes, and some are purpose-built. To help distinguish between the different ships, the Admiralty has assigned each a rating from 1 to 6, with 1 having the most guns, and 6 having the least. First rate ships have 100 or more cannon; second rate have 80+; third, 60+; fourth, 40+; fifth, 18+; and sixth, 4+.

However, there are some standardised designs. The most common ship in the Reiklander fleet is the so-called War Galley: third and fourth-rate vessels designed for river travel—although, quite sea worthy—with shallow drafts and a bank of oars. By comparison, the most common ship in the Nordlander fleet is the Wolfship: a large second- or third-rate ship designed for coastal cruising, sporting a massive ram and a large oar deck. The largest ship common to both fleets is the Great Ship: a first rate vessel of enormous size, typically decorated with elaborate carvings and colourful paintwork.

equivalent in the north of the Old World. The Temple of Verena in Marienburg recorded that:

“The Tileans claim they have sailed the world. They talk of trading with lands so distant that we folk of Sigmar’s Empire could not even contemplate their existence.”

Rather than be awed, it seems the Westerlanders took action. Although the exact details are unrecorded, it seems obvious some, or all, Tilean secrets were secured, for in comparatively little time Marienburg ships changed.

Westerlander art from the middle of the 16th century depicts ships sporting what appears to be small bow-chaser cannons rather than catapults or bolt-throwers. The cannons do not look well made, or even that safe, but they do look like cannons. Sigmarite chronicles in Altdorf show the Dwarfs were displeased:

“The ambassador was wroth that the Emperor would allow weapons of such poor quality to operate. Recognising the importance of the Dwarfs to the Empire, the Emperor wisely listened to our counsel and condemned Westerland’s use of their ‘cannons’.”

However, it appears Marienburg ignored the Electoral Emperor, perhaps by allying with the Ottilan Emperor or the Wolf Emperor, for the Baron of Westerland soon had free rein along the coasts of the north of the Empire. According to several angry entries in the Middenheim Histories, Westerlanders were sinking all vessels on the coast of Nordland and Ostland, and soon the trade routes to Kislev and Norsca were entirely under the control of Marienburg, furthering its influence.

By the end of the second millennium IC, the Empire finally fell apart. At this point, there were no fleets north of Marienburg, but the cities of Altdorf and Carroburg both had a significant number of ships plying the Reik. The Marienburg fleet outnumbered them both combined, and it needed to, for the city had been sacked again by the Norse in 1360IC and 1850IC, and the northern tribesmen were always looking for a weakness to exploit to take the riches of the Reik. Indeed, the Marienburg fleet was so advanced that it had followed Tilea’s example, and started to explore.

Resultantly, the Empire “discovered” Ulthuan in 2000IC, only to be driven back by the High Elves, and warned to stay of the open oceans on pain of death. Indeed, the High Elves made good on this promise, and until the Marienburg Treaty of 2150IC, they sank any vessel they encountered if it was not within sight of the Old World coast.

During the early third millennium, the Vampire Wars and ever-deepening civil issues rocked the Empire. Marienburg was largely left to its own devices during this time, and it continued to build its navy for defence and show, using its ships to keep Nordland and Ostland out of the maritime business. Altdorf’s fleet was tiny by comparison, but it grew slowly during this time; it was mostly used for ferrying troops and supporting attacks on river fortifications. Unfortunately for Middenland, the Carroburg fleet was sunk in its entirety by the fleet of Marienburg during an especially heated exchange between the Wolf Emperor of Middenheim and the Baron of Westerland in 2251IC.

By the time Magnus the Pious rose to reunite the Empire, Marienburg was a world power as far as its navy was concerned. It had sent ships across the Old World and beyond, and had carved out treaties with the High Elves, Tilea, Estalia, and Bretonnia, and was in negotiations with nations most Old Worlders had not even heard of.

However, the Baron of Westerland died in the Great War Against Chaos at the gates of Kislev City, and he left no heir. It fell to Magnus, the newly elected Emperor, to resolve the issue. Magnus was seemingly unwilling to let the power of Marienburg fall into the hands of a rival bloodline, so he instead decreed Westerland would self-govern under a council of wealthy Burgers, called the Directorate. In deference to the Cult of Sigmar, Magnus then renamed the aging Reikland navy the Imperial First Fleet, even though it was a collection of old war galleys and tired carracks, and hardly fit for service. Marienburg’s far superior navy was renamed the Imperial Second Fleet.

Over the course of the next hundred years, the Imperial Second Fleet was mostly used to harry pirate activities in the Manaanspoort Sea. By 2378IC, it had effectively

FLAG OFFICERS

Flag Officers are the highest rated commissioned officers in the Imperial Navy, and are so-called because they fly a heraldic flag to show they are aboard a particular vessel. Currently, the Imperial Navy has two ratings allowed to fly flags: Imperial Sea Lord and Admiral.

THE ADMIRALTY

For most of the Imperial Navy's history, a fleet's Imperial Sea Lord made all decisions regarding it. However, the Reikland fleet began to grow too large for one man to control effectively, so it set up the Admiralty in 2495IC to help codify maritime law and organise commissions. Comprising twelve Admirals appointed by the Sea Lord, the Reikland Admiralty is based in Admiral House in the Reiksport and is a very powerful body. By comparison, in Nordland, Imperial Sea Lord Köhler still deals with everything himself.

cleared the waters and taken many prizes in the process, bringing yet more money into Marienburg's coffers. Playing on this success, the Directorate offered to take over the maintenance of the Imperial Second Fleet. The financially strapped Emperor immediately agreed, and the Directorate sold the vessels to the highest bidders, handing the responsibility of the defence of Marienburg and the control of trade routes to the Merchants.

In 2429, rich, well defended, and confident, Marienburg effectively bought its independence from Emperor Dieter IV, who had cleaned out his coffers during an exhaustive campaign in the Borderlands. Dieter was deposed in the ensuing scandal, and Emperor Wilhem III of Altdorf was elected to replace him. Wilhelm immediately declared war on the Westerland traitors. However, Marienburg's coffers were deep, and a large mercenary force, supplemented by a significant naval fleet, High Elves, and the remnants of the old State Army of Westerland, proved too much for the new Emperor to tackle. The Battle of Grootscher Marsh, fought just outside Siert in the Autumn of 2429, was decisive, and the forces of the Empire were scattered. Rather than risk further conflict, Emperor Wilhem verbally recognised the renamed Wasteland's independence, but refused to ratify it with a treaty. Marienburg, having no desire to continue with a costly war, happily accepted the situation, and drew their new border at the township of Siert in the Grootscher Marsh.

The Empire was now without a significant seaport, so Altdorf took up the slack. Keen not to repeat the embarrassment of Grootscher Marsh, the Emperor ordered a new fleet be built to counteract the Marienburg rebels. The Reiksport, Altdorf's port to the north of the city, boomed, and soon shipwrights from across the Old World were found there. By the turn of the 26th century and the accession of Emperor Karl-Franz I, the Imperial First Fleet had swollen considerably, and boasted many ships of all shapes and sizes. Karl-Franz's father had signed begrudging treaties with Marienburg, so Empire vessels were once again sailing the oceans, but only after paying expensive tolls to the Marienburg Directorate.

After a decade of watching the Empire's money flow down the Reik to Marienburg from his coffers, Karl-Franz decided something had to be done. Late in 2512, he held discussions with Grand Baron Gausser of Nordland and Baron Köhler of Dietershafen, and they came to an agreement. Now, more than a decade later, Nordland has its own navy—the new Imperial Second Fleet, more commonly known as the Nordland or Northern Fleet—and it is growing fast.

THE NAVY TODAY

Today, the Imperial Navy is split in two.

To the north, a new, modern fleet, officially titled the Imperial Second Fleet, is operating out of Dietershafen in Nordland. It is not the largest fleet in the Old World, but it is well trained and experienced.

To the south, the hoary Imperial First Fleet operates from Altdorf's Reiksport. It is by far the larger of the two fleets, but the majority of its ships rarely see the sea, for Marienburg's tolls for war vessels are exorbitantly high.

The geographical and ideological differences between the two fleets could hardly be larger. The Nordlanders view the Reiklander fleet as a mess of foppish nobles playing at ships with drunken sailors on old, tatty vessels, and have no respect for them at all. In turn, the Reiklanders see the Nordlanders as barely civilised upstarts with little regard for tradition or sound, military tactics, and, equally, have no respect for them at all. To say they dislike each other would be to seriously understate the differences between them.

STRUCTURE

The Imperial Navy follows a strict structure, and everyone has his place. At the top are the commissioned officers: nobles granted the right to command by an Elector Count. Beneath these are the warrant officers: commoners whose experience and expertise demands special recognition. And lastly, at the bottom of the pile, are the seamen.

NEW ADVANCED CAREER: ADMIRAL

Description: Commanding a fleet of ships, Admirals are the true lords of the sea. While most are employed by one of the navies of the Old World, some Admirals are pirates commanding a flotilla of bloodthirsty marauders. Many Sea Captains envy their position, so Admirals must be quick-witted and charismatic to see off attacks; after all, once at sea, almost anything can happen, and only the survivors can tell the tale. Because of this, many Admirals are paranoid individuals who are jealous of their power, and most are quick to end any imagined mutiny with their loyal Marines or Pirates.



—Admiral Advance Scheme—

Main Profile

| WS | BS | S | T | Ag | Int | WP | Fel |
|------|------|------|------|------|-----|-----|-----|
| +25% | +20% | +15% | +15% | +15% | +30 | +30 | +35 |

Secondary Profile

| A | W | SB | TB | M | Mag | IP | FP |
|----|----|----|----|---|-----|----|----|
| +1 | +6 | — | — | — | — | — | — |

Skills: Academic Knowledge (any one), Academic Knowledge (Strategy/Tactics), Charm or Dodge Blow, Command, Common Knowledge (any three), Intimidate, Perception, Read/Write, Sail, Speak Language (any three), Swim

Talents: Etiquette or Seasoned Traveller, Linguistics, Master Orator, Public Speaking or Savvy

Trappings: Admiral's Whistle, Bicorn or Tricorn, Squadron of ships, Telescope

Career Entries: Noble Lord, Sea Captain

Career Exits: Ambassador (see *Realm of the Ice Queen*), Explorer, Guild Master

COMMISSIONED OFFICERS

Commissioned officers receive their authority directly from one of the Elector Counts. Each holds a commission, a letter granting them the right to exercise some of the Elector's authority in return for performing duties. Only nobles of the Empire can hold commissions, as they are official entitlements—holders of commissions are titled men of the Empire for the duration of their commission. Some commissions are hereditary—much like other entitlements such as Baron or Duke—and have been passed from father to son for many generations. Also, all commissioned officers have the right to a private cabin—a pleasure few experience in the cramped vessels of the Imperial Navy—and are attended by a number of servants.

Imperial Sea Lord

An Imperial Sea Lord is the commander of an entire fleet. Currently, there are two Sea Lords in the Empire: the aging Adalman von Hopfberg of the Imperial First Fleet, and the young Ludolf Köhler of the Imperial Second Fleet. Each is theoretically answerable to their individual Elector Counts only, but rumours suggest Ludolf is merely a figurehead for his father, Baron Ludolf Köhler of Dietershafen.

Imperial Sea Lords use the Guild Master careers.

Admiral

An admiral is responsible for a squadron of ships, which can range from an entire fleet down to two vessels, but is typically three to twelve ships. Each admiral has total control over the captains under his command, and is answerable to his Sea Lord, from whom he receives his orders.

Admirals in command of many vessels usually appoint a captain as vice-admiral to command the lead ships—the “van” division, which will bear the brunt during any engagement—and a rear-admiral to command the rear ships—the “rear” division, which is typically in least danger. Normally, the vice-admiral is rated higher than the rear-admiral, for he holds a position of greater responsibility and peril. Appointments of vice- and rear-admirals are rarely permanent.

In the northern fleet, admiral commissions are usually temporary, with each granted to an individual captain when he takes command of multiple ships, and only lasting until his individual mission is completed. By comparison, in the southern fleet, an admiral commission is usually for life.

Admirals typically use the Noble Lord or Admiral careers.

Captain

The rating of captain is a relatively new invention, established by the Prince of Altdorf in 2235IC to



differentiate between the master of a larger carrack with 700 or more men, and the master of a smaller vessel. In 2307, Magnus the Pious, recognising the importance of the position, granted captain commissioned status, meaning only noble-born men could hold it. However, to entice experienced nobles into naval service, the Prince of Altdorf and the Baron of Westerland soon granted any noble commanding a warship a captain's commission, regardless of the vessel's size, as it was significantly more important than holding the warrant of master.

Most Reiklander captains (and, indeed, almost all their lieutenants) have little or no knowledge of how to run a ship, and rely upon their warrant officers for all technical aspects of running their vessels. The average Reiklander has little interest in learning ropes or mastering complex navigation skills; he is far more interested in the title of captain, and the opportunities it presents him in regards spoils of war and prizes. In stark contrast, most Nordlander captains are seasoned veterans of ship life, for the northern admiralty refuses to grant captain commissions to those incapable of running their ships. Resultingly, most of the Nordlander captains are disinherited young nobles seeking a career in the fleet, as most older nobles and those in line for a title have little desire to undertake the work required.

Amongst the captains there is a significant amount of rivalry. Although a captain of a fourth rate war galley theoretically has the same rating as a captain of a first rate greatship, in practice this is not the case. Indeed, a

lieutenant of a larger vessel is often seen as significantly more important than the captain of a small warship. Because of this, there is a movement amongst captains and lieutenants of the larger vessels to have new ratings created to mark out their importance. So far, the Emperor has ignored these calls.

Captains typically use the Sea Captain or Noble Lord careers.

Lieutenant

Every captain is assisted by one of more lieutenants. How these lieutenants are deployed depends upon the vessel and the individual captain, but most are responsible for a quarter of a ship, a deck of a ship, or act as a second-in-command. Lieutenants of larger vessels hold as much prestige, if not more, than many captains; although, strictly speaking, they are lower rated.

The majority of lieutenants are young nobles with no navy experience; indeed, many are nothing more than cunning schemers or sycophants looking to get ahead in any way they can. Because of this, the rare competent lieutenant is in high demand by the ship captains.

Lieutenants typically use the Courtier or Mate careers.

WARRANT OFFICERS

Where the nobles command the ships, the warrant officers run them. Any position in the Imperial Navy that requires specialist

PRIESTS AT SEA

Sailors are a superstitious lot, and appeasing the Gods to avoid storms, creatures from the deep, and worse is not only seen as sensible, but necessary.

Of all the cults, Manaan, Sigmar, and Ulric have the most representatives in the Imperial Navy. Most ships in the northern fleet have a Priest of Manaan aboard, and it is a wise captain who listens to the representative of the fickle God of the Sea. Many also boast Priests of Ulric to keep the cold fires of war in the hearts of their marines; however, the unruly, drunken nature of the Ultricans is not popular with some captains. By comparison, the river-based fleet of Altdorf rarely has Manaanites aboard. Instead, Priests of Sigmar are common, and most Reiklander vessels ring a bell at midday on every Festag so the ship's Priest can lead the crew in prayers and song to the Empire's patron.

For those interested, *Tome of Salvation* provides a list of appropriate sea superstitions on page 31, and also covers all of the Cults of the Empire in detail.

MAGISTERS AT SEA

Although many see having an Imperial Magister on board as bad luck, most who have seen them in action would rather have one than not.

Of all the College Magisters, the Greys and Jades seem most at home on the ocean. Celestials are also common, and some even double as a ship's master, for many are skilled navigators. By comparison, the Bright Order, no matter how useful they are at sea, are wary of open expanses of water; that said, the Pyromancers are known for their belligerent stubbornness, so many can still be found swaying on the aft-castles of warships, green-faced, yet determined.

For more about the Magisters of the Empire, refer to *Realms of Sorcery*.

SEA AHOY!

Although the structure presented here centres upon the life at sea, the Imperial Navy also has a significant presence on land. Not only is there the massive Reiksport at Altdorf to consider, and the swelling port of Dietershafen, but up and down the Reik, and along the northern coast, the navy maintains harbours for ships, and missions for sailors.

These locations employ thousands of men and women in all manner of roles. From administrative clerks to innkeepers, from dockers to craftsmen, from fishermen to priests, all these and more are on the payroll of the navy.

skills is marked out with a warrant—a letter from the Sea Lord or Admiralty granting special privileges (including a servant and mate to aid their work, and better pay).

On vessels of the northern fleet, the class distinctions between warranted officers and commissioned officers only prevail at court. Status aboard ship depends upon the practical importance of an individual's career, rather than upon the formalities of class. Thus, a master is rated higher than a lieutenant in the northern fleet, and wardroom (high-ranking) warrant officers are treated as commissioned officers in all respects. As most southern nobles would rather die than accept an order from a commoner, or would certainly never choose to dine with them, it is quite the opposite in the Reikland fleet.

Wardroom Officers

The highest rated warrant officers are essential to the running of a ship, and are granted many privileges. They are titled wardroom warrant officers because they are allowed access to the wardroom (or, in the case of Reikland, the small wardroom), which is the officer's mess hall.

Although it varies from ship to ship, the most common wardroom officers are magisters, masters, surgeons, Priests, and pursers (who are responsible for provisioning the ship). The master is arguably the most important warrant officer, as he is normally an experienced ship commander in his own right (often of a merchant vessel), and is responsible for navigation and the general running of the vessel. Indeed, in the northern fleet, the master is second in command to the captain, ahead of the lieutenants.

Wardroom officers are typically in one of the following careers: Master Wizard, Navigator, Priest, Ship Captain, Surgeon, or Merchant.

Standing Officers

The standing warrant officers are highly skilled commoners responsible for an important aspect of running warships. They are typically involved with the fitting of their ship; indeed, many are permanently attached to their vessels. Although different ships prize different skills, almost all require the following: boatswain, carpenter, and gunner.

THE CLAWS OF ULRIC

Ships hoisting multiple red pennants are said to be “bearing their claws,” and preparing for battle. The flags are said to represent the claws of a White Wolf, one of Ulric’s holy servants, and are normally the first sign that hostilities have begun.

A WIFE ON THE OCEAN WAVES

Although there are persistent stories of women running away to sea by pretending to be men, the cramped living conditions within a warship make keeping up such a pretence particularly difficult. More commonly, commissioned officers steal their wives or mistresses aboard their vessels, unwilling to bear the long journeys on the oceans alone. Indeed, in some vessels, taking women aboard was so prevalent, that the Reikland Admiralty had to issue a slew of new maritime laws dictating how women should be treated if their husbands were to die on board.

The boatswain (pronounced “bosun”) is in charge of the ship’s rigging, sails, and anchors, as well as ensuring the crew conduct themselves efficiently. Most boatswains are absolute terrors, and are happy to lash out with heavy ropes or whack with belaying pins to spur their crew into action. As the boatswain is also responsible for administering formal floggings, he is often one of the most feared men on the ship.

The carpenter is arguably the most important standing officer, for it is his job to keep the vessel afloat. His large crew are responsible for anything made of wood on the ship, and they never stop their rounds of inspections and maintenance.

Lastly, the gunner is responsible for the ship’s guns, and ensures all carriages, cannons, tackle, instruments, and gunpowder are properly stored and ready for use. His influence is extensive, as all the gun crews and the ship’s armourer answer to him. Note: the gunner does not give the order to fire the guns; such matters are left in the hands of the lieutenants.

Standing officers are typically in one of the following careers: Artillerist (see *Warhammer Companion*), Artisan, Engineer, or Foreman (also *WC*).

Lower Officers

The lower warrant officers are skilled seamen, and have usually worked up from below-decks. Every ship has a different assortment of lower officers, and their jobs are far from secure, as the captain can, and often does, promote or demote them as the whim takes him. The most common lower officers are: armourer, cook, caulker, master-at-arms, ropemaker, and sailmaker.

The armourer serves as a smith, working metal as the gunner requires. The cook—normally an elderly or disabled sailor who earned his warrant for dedicated service—feeds the crew, often badly. The caulker fills the vessel’s seams with oakum, keeping the ship watertight, and answers to the carpenter. The master-at-arms—typically a former marine—is a warship’s watchman, responsible for keeping the peace and training the crew how to respond to boarding

actions. Lastly, the ropemaker and sailmaker, as their names suggest, make rope and sails, all at the command of the boatswain.

Lower officers are usually in one of the following careers: Artisan, Marine, Tradesman, or Watchman.

SEAMEN

At the very bottom of a warship’s ratings, and making up the majority of a warship’s complement, are the seamen. Most are formed into small squads led by coxswains (petty officers), each of which are responsible for a small section of the ship, such as a gun, or sails, or ropes.

Seamen are usually in one of the following careers: Artillerist (*WC*), Foreman (*WC*), or Seaman.

MARINES

The marines are the fighting wing of the Imperial Navy. They have a military structure mirroring the State Army rather than the Imperial Navy, and are trained to perform boarding actions on other ships, to deploy from warships to capture coastal targets, or to perform any of a selection of non-essential jobs aboard a warship, such as firefighting, bridge watching, arms training, and the like.

The marines often have a very poor relationship with the seamen, who see them as lazy good-for-nothings with little intelligence. This poor opinion is not helped by the press-gang detail, which is usually performed by marines, resulting on many new sailors with sore heads and a grudge. Hostilities are all too common during prolonged sea voyages, something the officers of both the marines and the seamen have to keep a close eye upon.

Marines typically use the following careers: Captain, Champion, Marine, Sergeant, Veteran

GOALS AND MOTIVES

The Imperial Navy’s stated goals are threefold. Firstly, it protects the coasts, rivers, trade routes, ports, and shores

of the Empire. Secondly, it investigates foreign vessels in Imperial water. Lastly, it provides transportation for men and equipment to project the power of the Emperor wherever he deems necessary. Of course, this is a vast simplification of the Imperial Navy's duties, especially as the northern fleet swears to Grand Baron Gausser, not the Karl-Franz, but it is the officially claimed goals.

The navy's motivation is equally simple: It is in the service of an Elector Count, and it is being paid to do a job. Again, this simplifies a complex situation. For example, many young nobles join the navy in the hope of making their fortune with spoils and prizes, not out of any sense of loyalty or for meagre pay—but it is all the motivation a seaman is supposed to need. Well, that and the Boatswain's cat o' nine tails.

SYMBOLS AND SIGNS

The Imperial Navy is redolent with different means of communicating information. The two primary methods are flags and pennants, and whistle blasts; however many more techniques exist, especially since the arrival of Imperial Engineers aboard many vessels.

Flags and pennants are the most popular method of long-distance communication. Twenty-six square flags are used to represent letters, and ten triangular pennants are used to represent numbers. Beyond signifying numbers and letters, each flag, or combination of flags, also has a pre-determined meaning. For example: hoisting "P" is used to summon sailors back to their ship, as it is about to disembark, and hoisting "OF" denotes that the vessel is on fire and the powder store is vulnerable, so other vessels should retreat before the vessel explodes. The northern fleet also uses a hand-flag semaphore system to communicate messages, actioned by holding an "O" flag in each hand, and positioning the flags in a succession of pre-determined poses, each of which represent a number, letter, or short code.

Heraldic flags, called ensigns by the navy, are used to provide information about the vessel and its occupants. The ensigns flown usually detail which province the ship is from, whom it represents, and whether there is a Sea Lord or Admiral aboard. Thus, the admiral's ship is commonly referred to as the flagship, for it flies his heraldic ensign.

Where flags are used to communicate at a distance, whistles are used to communicate at short range. All officers, from the Sea Lord down to the lowest petty officer, are given a whistle as a symbol of their authority. Since many of the duties performed on a warship require good rhythm and timing, the Boatswain and the Coxswains use whistles to keep time, with those falling out of time typically receiving a lashing. Further, different combinations of tones and blasts can be used to alert seamen of anything from the captain arriving on the bridge to a warning to all quarters to be ready for an engagement.

RECRUIT, CAN YOU FETCH...

The northern navy is renowned for playing simple practical jokes upon its new recruits. Most of these involve sending the victim on a fool's errand any seasoned sailor would immediately realise was nonsense, but the ignorant recruit thinks is real. Examples include:

Can you go fetch me some green oil for the starboard lantern?

Go get me a long weight from the purser.

I need the key to the port watch, can you find it for me?

Ah, this one is no good! Go get a left-handed oar, will you?

Finally, the Altdorf fleet is currently testing all manner of crazy communication methods after Karl-Franz requested the Engineers Guild make an attempt to modernise the naval communication systems. A device such as the Ultra Oculus of Distant Intercourse may sound impressive, but it turned out to be nothing more than a collection of mirrors to reflect the sunlight, which proved somewhat ineffective on a cloudy day. The High Conflagration Device of Multitudinous Meaning was a machine that launched fireworks with different chemical mixes, and thus different colours, to pass on messages, but all it managed to do was send rockets into the rigging and the sails, where they ricocheted about the ship in a spectacular, colourful, and highly dangerous fashion. Nevertheless, the Engineers Guild claims it will come up with a more effective communication method soon; in the meantime, the navy continues to use flags.

MEMBERSHIP

The Imperial Navy employs all manner of folk.

At sea, the ships are effectively large floating communities, with some boasting a complement of over a thousand souls, and supporting such numbers as this requires a broad array of skills from all levels of society. Indeed, many ship rosters read like a cross-section of the Empire. Nobles and magisters, Priests and craftsmen, soldiers and servants, and, of course, seamen; everyone is present, and everyone is needed.

This is mirrored by the navy's shore-based establishments. Naval missions employ entertainers, innkeepers, servants, craftsmen, and more. The Admiralty employs a wide array of staff to administrate the navy, and supports it with heralds, servants, stewards, scholars, scribes, and more. And then there are the shipyards, and the quays, and the warehouses, and so many other things.

The navy is a massive employer, and it is always recruiting.

RECRUITMENT

Contrary to the popular image of the press-gangers clubbing their way through the poor quarters of Altdorf, Marines “on the press” do no such thing. By maritime law, a press-ganged man must be of “seafaring habits and between the ages of 15 and 50”; after all, no one wants untrained men on their ship, as they would be of little use. Thus, most impressed men are merchantmen or occasionally foreign sailors. Of course, sometimes the marines make a mistake, and a butcher or rat catcher will find himself aboard a warship heading out to sea; but, by this time, it’s a little too late to complain.

In truth, most of a typical ship’s complement is made up of volunteers drawn to the navy life by the promise of regular pay and their own spirit of adventure. As such, the bulk of the Imperial Navy comprises unmarried men between the ages of 18 and 30.

MEMBER BENEFITS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Those employed by the Imperial Navy may have many responsibilities, but in return they get many benefits.

The greatest responsibility for any naval man is to do his job. For some, this will involve putting out to sea for months at a time. For others, it will involve working as part of the naval support network, perhaps as an innkeeper, a shipwright, a clothmaker, or even a lawyer. For a select few, it may involve working undercover, seeking to further the Navy’s long-term goals by spying on their enemies and gathering information. Whatever the job may be, it needs to be done, and that is all.

For those who manage to do their jobs, there are many benefits. Primary amongst these is the opportunity to get a fresh start, access to naval missions, and, most importantly of all, prizes.

Firstly, all new recruits are cleaned, deloused, and clothed, and, after they sign their contract of employment, are guaranteed their wages. Further, they get fed on board, a significant draw for out-of-work men with little chance of employment elsewhere.

What’s more, there is a network of naval missions down the length of the Reik that provides cheap food, bedding, and entertainment for serving seamen of the Imperial Navy. The missions are very popular, for most seamen appreciate cheap alcohol and rowdy music.

However, the greatest benefits open to a serving member of the Imperial Navy is prizes. Any ship legally captured will be sold, along with its contents, upon returning it to port. The money earned is supposed to be split amongst the crew and the Admiralty, with the Admiralty taking one eighth, the captain taking a quarter, the master and lieutenants, warrant officers, and petty officers each taking one eighth, and the remaining quarter being split amongst the seaman and marines. So great is the potential haul here, that in the three years the *Unerschrocken* plied Bretonnian waters in the early 2500s it managed to capture 53 ships as prizes, earning every crewman almost 20 years of pay on top of their normal wages. The captain, Lord Reichen von Telland, retired at the age of 26, and now owns three palaces in Altdorf, one in Nuln, and significant estates in Talabecland. However, if a ship is illegally captured, then the full brunt of the cost is borne by the captain, an end result that can easily turn a man into a pauper if he is not careful.

— GM’S SECTION —

In the GM’s Section you will find information for including the Imperial Navy in your games of *WFRP*. Hints for how to introduce the navy, even to land-based campaigns, are provided, alongside a sample mentor to support adventuring naval PCs. Supplementing this, secrets, allies, enemies, and adventure hooks for the navy are also presented, as is a sample location for naval PCs: the naval mission.

SECRETS OF THE NAVY

The Imperial Navy is a very large organisation hiding many secrets. Here you will find the biggest of them: the situation with the Imperial Sea Lords, the Nordlander plans for Marienburg, and the many allies and enemies of the navy.

“Of course, I support the Emperor’s assertions: Westerland is, indeed, still an Imperial Province; it is just in a state of rebellion. It’s not a matter of if the Empire re-establishes control; it’s a matter of when.”

—SEA LORD LUDOLF KÖHLER, NORDLANDER NOBLE

IMPERIAL SEA LORDS

The Empire claims to have two Imperial Sea Lords; thus, two fleets in their navy. However, in truth, there are four. Alongside the Sea Lords of Nordland and Reikland, Middenland and Ostland also have Sea Lords, although neither exists with the blessing of the Emperor.

MIDDENLAND

The Middenlander fleet is largely a creation of Karl-Franz’s desire to increase the quality of the Reikland fleet.

A decade ago, Karl-Franz sent across the Old World for the best shipbuilders,

and within months many flooded the Reikland capital. The Shipwrights' Guild took steps to limit the Emperor, but he would not be denied, and soon many Reiklander shipwrights found themselves sidelined, or even unemployed. Duke Leopold von Bildhofen of Carroburg saw this as an opportunity, and employed them.

Today, Carroburg has a thriving shipbuilding community, and now sports several wolfships and almost a dozen war galleys. This violates several ancient treaties, but Bildhofen has little concern for this. He plans to build a powerbase to rival the Grand Duke of Middenland, Boris Todbringer, and is willing to annoy others along the way.

Of course, Todbringer does not like this, but he has more pressing problems to deal with after the recent Chaos incursion, so has yet to take action against his errant Duke. Equally, Marienburg is annoyed, especially as several of its traders have already been taken as prizes; but, so far, it has not sailed any of its warships into Empire waters for fear of reprisal from Altdorf. Instead, Marienburg is using trade sanctions against Carroburg, and sending diplomats to the Emperor.

Thus, in turn, Karl-Franz is under a great deal of pressure to resolve the situation from his own merchants and from Marienburg, but the diplomatic powder-keg has suddenly been made more volatile because a new party has joined: the Nordland fleet, and it is supporting Carroburg.

Where this is all heading is anyone's guess, but what is certain is the Bildhofens are building their forces, and now have their own Imperial Sea Lord supported, and now trained, by the northern fleet.

OSTLAND

It is somewhat simpler in Ostland, but no less diplomatically sensitive. After the sacking of most the province by Chaos forces, Valmir von Raukov, Elector Count of Ostland, had many difficult decisions to make. The Norse had used ships to transport many of their men across the Sea of Claws, and Ostland had no decent defence against this. By comparison, Nordland's northern coast was almost untouched, primarily due to the strong fleet based there. It was clear Ostland needed a fleet.

So, Raukov made his intentions known to the Emperor, and temporarily moved his capital to Salkalten, a northern port, as the old capital of Wolfenburg was being rebuilt. However, a fleet based in Ostland would violate yet another treaty between Marienburg and the Empire, and one with Kislev, and the issues with Carrioburg and Marienburg were already enough of a problem, so Karl-Franz made it known to his old friend that he could not recommend building a fleet at this time.

Raukov was incensed. After all his people had suffered, the Grand Prince would not be denied, and set about building ships anyway, drawing upon refugee shipwrights, engineers,

and seamen from Erengrad. In turn, he declared himself an Imperial Sea Lord, making his intentions for a large fleet very public.

Neither Marienburg nor Nordland are aware of this new player on the oceans yet, but when they do find out, they are unlikely to support Raukov's ambitions.

MARIENBURG

Marienburg is a thorn in the Empire's side. Since its secession almost one hundred years ago, the city has grown richer and richer. It has strong diplomatic ties with all its neighbours, and boasts a significant naval fleet and standing army, and seems to have created itself an almost unassailable position. However, no matter how strong it is, one man in the Empire plans to take it down.

Grand Baron Theoderic Gausser of Nordland is in a weak position at home. In Salzenmund, he owes a great deal of money to the local Burgomeisters, and the rival Nikse dynasty is constantly working against him. To the south, the Todbringers look to their formal vassel province of Nordland with greedy eyes, and make repeated forays across the Nordland border, all to "hunt Beastmen." Indeed, across the Empire, Nordland is barely seen as a Grand Province at all, and many see little difference between a Nordlander and a Norseman.

Gausser plans to change this.

Indeed, he plans nothing less than invasion, and he intends to move soon. Ever since he controversially became the Elector Count, he was forced to make attempts to consolidate his position, and his plans are not small, for he intends to annexe the Wasteland. His plan involves drawing Middenlander and Marienburger eyes to Carroburg and its new fleet, and to fan the flames of war between all the parties involved. Then, when they are all blinded by the smoke, he will sweep down into Marienburg with the well-trained Dietershafen fleet and his State Army, and take the city.

Success will resolve all of his problems in one fell swoop. Firstly, he will be rich from the spoils of war, so his debts will be as nothing. Next, he will formally take the title of Prince of Marienburg and transfer the Princedom of Salzenmund back to the Nikses, consolidating his power in Nordland by creating a strong ally. Lastly, he will be the saviour of the Empire, a hero for retaking the errant Wasteland, so Middenland's ambitions will be curtailed, and the Emperor will be forced to support his conquest.

Or, at least, so he plans. So far, the Bildhofens have followed his lead, and the northern fleet has proven itself better than Gausser could have imagined, but even the best plans can fail, and an attack on Marienburg will likely be an all-or-nothing affair.

ALLIES

The Imperial Navy works very closely with the State Armies of Reikland and Nordland, and has a very good relationship with the colonels of many of the regiments from those Grand Provinces. However, the Imperial Navy's most strident supporters are not the nobles or the armies, they are the merchants.

The warships of the Empire guarantee relatively safe passage for merchant vessels along the trading routes, and this translates to a massive reduction in revenues lost to pirates. Indeed, for the last decade, many of the northern ports—especially Dietershafen, Sieverhof, Stielstand, and Salkalten—have swollen significantly due to increased protection and increased merchant activity, all brought about by the presence of the northern fleet. Because of this, the Imperial Navy is very welcome in the north.

ENEMIES

As should be expected for a fighting force, the Imperial Navy has many enemies. Primarily, the navies and merchantmen of other Old World nations pose the biggest problems; but, in turn, the Imperial Navy poses the biggest problems for them. So, whether it is marauding Norse longships, sleek Elven Dragonships, crude Greenskin hulks, or enormous Tilean galleons, the navy stands against them, and they stand against the navy.

Pirates are also a never-ending problem, and one that is harder to pin down than a foreign navy. Currently, the pirates of Strandräuber Bay off Ostland are the most notorious; they plague the trade routes into Erengard, and are known for wrecking any captured vessel.

Lastly, the navy often has to deal with monstrous creatures from the deep. For GMs wishing to pursue this, refer to the *Warhammer Companion*, where you can find rules for such creatures as the Behemoth, Mermaid, Promethean, and the dreaded Triton.

SAMPLE MENTOR

HAIMREIK VON SIERT

“Everyone talks about the Barony of Westerland, or whether Gausser can legitimately claim the Princedom of Marienburg, all conveniently forgetting the rest of us. Dieter Unfähiger’s greed left many Dukes, Margraves, and Barons disenfranchised, and I, for one, aim to rectify that.”

—ADMIRAL HAIMREIK VON SIERT, REIKLANDER NOBLE

Haimreik von Siert is angry. The Duchy of Siert, Haimreik's ancestral lands, lies behind the Wasteland's border. Just under a century ago, the merchants of Marienburg defeated the combined forces of the Empire

at Grootscher Marsh, and took Siert, as well as many other ancient seats of power, from the nobles whom had long controlled them. Haimreik is unwilling to accept this. Working from his naval mission in the West March of Reikland—just five miles from Siert—he sends agents down the Reik to further his long-term goals: the capture of Marienburg.



Von Siert is provided to show how naval PCs need not go to sea. The dispossessed noble is determined to return the Wasteland to the Empire, and is looking for able men to do this. Those whom he employs are sent across the Empire and into the Wasteland on all manner of different expeditions; so, he can be used to keep naval characters in the employ of the Imperial Navy, but still allow them a measure of freedom. Further, he can be used to introduce the Imperial Navy as a career path for non-naval PCs, for he is looking to hire capable folk from any background, and can promote those who serve him well to almost any appropriate position in the navy.

Haimreik had an easy childhood. He was raised with his siblings in Altdorf, where he grew up as one of many exiled Westerlander nobles. After the death of his mother, his aging father chose the life of a self-proclaimed “seeker of adventure” and was rarely in the city, so Haimreik was instead raised by loyal servants. In his teens, he mixed with many young exiled nobles of Westerland, and they liked to swap boasts about reclaiming their lost titles; however, unlike his peers, Haimreik decided to do something about the situation.

On one of his rare visits to Altdorf, Otto von Siert was surprised to find his eldest son a man, and a passionate one. Over steins of ale, Haimreik explained to his father that he wished to help the Reiklander naval effort in order to eventually reclaim the Siert estates. Otto tried to point out the futility of this, but his son would not listen. Secretly pleased at his son's passion, Otto bought him a commission on the *Vorhaben*, a small wolfship in the Reiklander navy.

Haimreik was not a natural captain. Indeed, he was a terrible one, but he surrounded himself with capable staff. Over the next three decades, Haimreik was a primary figure in the rebuilding and modernisation of the Altdorf fleet, and he became an Admiral in 2506IC, even though he had never seen the open sea. Now in a position of authority, he relocated himself to the border of the Empire and the Wasteland, and helped finance a naval mission in the village on Oberseert on the edge of the Grootscher Marsh. He has been there ever since, and now heads a significant movement to bring Marienburg down.

Personality

Haimreik von Siert is a confident man. He knows any right-thinking citizen of the Empire will support his goals, and uses that to persuade, cajole, and oerce others into helping him. He is not above requisitioning naval resources to further his plans; indeed, in Altdorf, he has a reputation for it, for he shamelessly breaks rules and traditions to secure what he wants, which makes him less than popular with the Admiralty.

Appearance

Haimreik's long, greying-blond hair is held in place by his elaborate tricorn sporting the Siert heraldic device of a hound rampant and enormous feathers of red and gold. He fosters a heavy blonde moustache, and his eyes are deep blue. He always wears a naval great coat, and his many colourful medals are pinned over his heart.

He knows his age, position, and appearance demand respect, and is comfortable with it, so will show obvious displeasure with any who fail to approach him appropriately.

HAIMREIK VON SIERT

Male Human Reiklander Admiral (ex-Courtier, ex-Noble, ex-Noble Lord)

| WS | BS | S | T | Ag | Int | WP | Fel |
|-----|-----|---------|---------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 50% | 48% | 39% (3) | 43% (4) | 37% | 72% | 62% | 71% |

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Genealogy/Heraldry, History +10%, Strategy/Tactics +10%), Blather +10%, Charm +20%, Command +20%, Common Knowledge (Bretonnia +20%, the Empire +20%, Kislev, the Wasteland), Consume Alcohol, Evaluate +10%, Gamble +10%, Gossip +20%, Intimidate, Perception +20%, Performer (Musician), Read/Write +20%, Ride +10%, Sail, Speak Language (Breton+10%, Classical +10%, Norscan +10%, Reikspiel +20%), Swim

Talents: Acute Hearing, Dealmaker, Etiquette, Linguistics, Luck, Master Orator, Public Speaking, Schemer, Seasoned Traveller, Specialist Weapon (Fencing, Parrying), Savvy, Suave

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 16; **Insanity Points:** 4
Armour: None

Weapons: Best Craftsmanship Foil (1d10+1), Best Craftsmanship Main Gauche (1d10)

Trappings

Admiral's Whistle, Best Craftsmanship Noble's Garb, Jewellery worth 500 *gc*, Best Craftsmanship Telescope, Best Craftsmanship Tricorn, 4 Valets

SAMPLE LOCATION: THE STONE FRIGATE

The Stone Frigate is an example of one of the many naval missions found on the Reik. The Imperial Navy provides missions as gathering places for seamen, whom they supply cheap food, drink, and lodging. Although placed in Essel in the Reikland, the mission could be sited in any river-based settlement in the Empire.

FEATURES AND DEFENCES

The Stone Frigate is a two-storey stone building carved with nautical reliefs and images of Manaen. Two towers flank the front of the building, and small ceremonial cannons poke their elaborate muzzles over the top. Two doors—a large double-door for seamen, and a smaller, more elaborate door for officers—are guarded by liveried, halberd-wielding marines whose watch changes every four hours.

The mission overlooks the large riverdock of Essel in the Duchy of Gorland in Reikland. To one side, the Dockmasters office leans precariously against the naval building, and on the other “The Grandfather Reik,” a sizeable inn, provides food, bedding, and drink for merchants and other wealthier visitors to the town.

Within, the mission has high ceilings and is lit by oil lanterns. Cleanliness, ensuring “bad air” is avoided, is of paramount importance, so the wooden floors are scrubbed daily, and all surfaces are regularly cleaned. Most of the internal decorations and furniture, unlike the grand carvings outside, are simple and functional, with broad benches, heavy tables, and a surprising amount of imaginative uses for barrels, including using them as tables, chairs, shelves, and door stops, being the most common features.

KEY LOCATIONS

The following are the important locations within the Stone Frigate.

1. Mess Hall

After passing through a broad corridor, visitors are welcomed by an open mess hall. A large bar stocked high with alcohol sits before an open hatch through to the Galley (**Area 3**). The hall is filled with long tables and benches, laid out for eating and drinking. Every evening, the tables are pushed aside, musicians are brought out, and the space fills with the sounds of singing, dancing, and drinking. The mess hall is open to all comers as long as they are with seaman, although non-navy men are viewed with suspicion; by comparison, women are always welcome.

Ivonne Bader runs the hall, and is a severe-looking woman with a tight bun. Her husband serves on the *Unerschrocken*, a ship missing now for seven months.

CAPTAIN ALLARD VON MORDENLAND

Most of the Captains and Admirals running the naval missions of the Reik serve there because they can no longer serve at sea. Captain Allard von Mordenland is no different, for he is blind.

Shrapnel ruined both the captain's eyes during an engagement with Tileans seven years ago, so now he wears a strap of cloth over his eyes, hiding the scarred mess. He is always attended by two servants who guide him about his mission and ensure he is immaculately dressed. Despite his wounds, the captain is a light-hearted, jolly fellow, although he cannot abide dirt, and demands his mission be kept immaculately clean.



2. Seaman Quarters

A selection of open halls with simple bunks and low chests constructed from half barrels, the seaman quarters provide clean bedding for any serving naval man for a nominal price. As the halls are scrubbed every morning at the eighth bell, all men are expected to leave by then, no matter how much they may have drunk the previous evening.

3. Galley

The large kitchen is simple, clean, and functional, much like the rest of the Stone Frigate. Like most of the mission's crew—who are either wives and children of serving seamen, or disabled sailors no longer able to work on a ship—the kitchens are a mixture of navy wives, pot boys, and old salts missing legs, arms, or eyes. The head cook—Coxswain

Augenlos—is a grizzled sea dog with more tales to tell than the Empire has sausages. He may only have one eye, two fingers, and one leg, but he negotiates his kitchen with practised ease, and is quick to slap at straying fingers with his enormous wooden spoon.

4. Scrub Room

The scrub room is where new recruits are brought before being admitted to their ship. Here they are stripped, shaved, and cleaned from head to toe. Many ship captains are terrified of disease and what it can do to a ship, so they ensure all new crewmembers are cleansed of their “bad air” before allowing them on board. The scrub room also has large baths, which sailors are expected to use if they wish to lodge in the seaman quarters (Area 2).

5. Admiralty Stair

The officers' entrance leads through a club room serving expensive alcohol to the Admiralty Stair. With polished banisters, carpeted floors, and gilt details worked with fish designs, it is an impressive sight, but not as impressive as the paintings hanging in the stairwell. In total, two-hundred and seventy-three paintings ranging from almost twenty feet tall to only a few inches in height line the walls, with each depicting a different Reiklander admiral. Past the scores of serious faces, the stairs lead up to the Officers' Cabins (Area 6) and the Wardroom (Area 7).

6. Officer's Cabins

The Officers' Cabins provide a score of rooms of various sizes for visiting officers. The “cabins” are provided for free, and are all clean and well appointed with wardrobes, servant quarters, large beds, chests, and so on. On the rare occasion when the mission runs out of space—for example: when multiple ships dock in Essel—the highest rated officers have first right on the rooms.

7. Wardroom

The Wardroom is a sumptuously comfortable hall where commissioned officers can relax, eat, and drink. The walls are wood-panelled, the tables are upholstered with blue



leather, and the comfortable armchairs boast heavy woods from Lustria. Most impressive of all is the thirty-candle, ormolu chandelier decorated with gems that hangs from the ceiling. Unlike in the northern fleet, the wardroom officers of the southern fleet are no longer allowed to mix with the commissioned officers, and are expected to gather in the club room downstairs if they desire a spot of food or drink.

8. The Wheel House

Captain von Mordenland's chambers are referred to as the wheelhouse. Here he hangs the highly-polished, half-shattered remains of the ship's wheel from the *Bösestern*, the last ship he served upon. Von Mordenland's two valets—Ebner One-hand and Ancel Holzzapfen—have their quarters here, and are both tremendously protective of their employer.

USING THE ORGANISATION

Including the Imperial Navy can open up a whole new area of *WFRP*: the high seas. As many warships have larger populations than some towns in the Empire, and provide ample opportunity to pursue almost any career, they make great locations to set a campaign. Not only does a warship provide all the normal gaming opportunities of warring factions, class differences, Chaos Cults, and more, but every other session the PCs can drop off in a new location, be it an Empire port, an isolated island, or somewhere more exotic, such as the hot deserts of Araby. Further, such a campaign allows antagonists to be introduced that would often be inappropriate, such as Dark Elves or Lizardmen.

However, for those running an established campaign, suddenly transporting the PCs to a warship is unlikely to be an option. Fortunately, the navy and naval characters can be added in other ways. To get you started, the following adventure hooks provide three suggestions for how you can introduce the navy into your campaign.

PLOT HOOKS

ILLEGAL PRIZES

Carroburg is alive with Sea Lord Magnus Bildhofen's successes. The docks harbour a captured Estalian merchantman with Carroburg ensigns flying from its masts. Rumours suggest the ship was transporting a significant

amount of gold—a loan from a Marienburger bank to one of the Estalian kingdoms.

A man approaches the PCs, claiming to represent the interests of Altdorf. He suggests the Emperor is not pleased to see Bildhofen stealing from his allies, and is keen to make an example of him. He asks the PCs to sabotage the ship so it cannot be easily refitted to join the swelling fleet of Carroburg, and offers a fast escape route and a significant sum of money. Is the man genuine? Or is he a representative of Elector Count Gausser looking to increase tensions between Altdorf and Carroburg? Or perhaps the man just has a grudge against the Bildhofens?

SAILING ON THE SEAS OF CHAOS

A string of murders plagues the docklands. Every week a new body is found, and the common folk are growing more upset. By the time the PCs arrive in town, there are notices everywhere, and significant rewards are being offered by grieving families, many of whom are quite rich. Unhappy citizens have taken to the streets demanding the local Watch do more to protect the common man, and it looks likely riots are not too far away.

If the PCs get involved, the killer is not too hard to find, for he has grown clumsy with his successes. He was a sailor on the *Sigmar's Grief*, a War Galley that recently put to port, which is now on its way to Altdorf. In fractured Reikspiel, he claims he was sent mad by something he saw when his ship was at sea. The problem is, everyone on the vessel saw it, and the ship has a complement of over three hundred men. What do the PCs do?

THE LONE WOLF

A large Wolfship finally returns to port after three years of being at sea. Women and children crowd the docks, keen to greet husbands, fathers, and sons. But there are no men on the decks. None on the rigging. None anywhere.

The captain of the local naval mission orders his men to board the vessel to investigate. None return. Ignoring the panic spreading through the local authorities, the captain posts messages looking for help, and he is offering a lot of money. There is something in the ship he wants, and he wants it before the admiralty comes with magisters. Do the PCs want to get involved?



CHAPTER VII: THE KNIGHTS OF MAGRITTA

Estalians Unite!

Men of Estalia, look around you and tell me what you see. Do you see a people united? Do you see champions of civilisation? Do you see one of the great nations of the Old World? No, you do not. In Bretonnia a king rules with a firm hand, but here we squabble amongst ourselves. In the Empire they are advancing the arts of science and engineering, but here we squander our gold on mercenaries. In Kislev they fight grimly against the Great Enemy, but here we pretend the power of Chaos is a myth. Estalia is the joke of the Old World and it makes me weep, my friends. But it did not have to turn out that way.

Almost a thousand years ago we had our chance. The Arabians invaded our land and conquered fair Magritta. We could have lost everything to the outlanders but we rallied as a people and, with the aid of our northern neighbours, we drove them out. We took back our land, followed their sultan back to Araby, and defeated him. This was our hour. This was our chance to unite and take our rightful place amongst the mighty nations of the Old World.

We failed. Instead of becoming one people we fell right back into our squabbling. The famed Knights of Magritta, whose deeds in the struggle against Araby had inspired every Estalian, showed us the way. They urged us to unite and to launch further crusades to keep Estalia safe. Did we listen? Did we follow our heroes into a new age? No, we did not. We criticised them for interfering with trade, taxed them until they bled doubloons, and hounded them until they left Estalia forever.

It has been almost 1, years since the Knights of Magritta sailed away from Estalia, but still the parting words of their Grand Master are remembered. He said, "Estalia will never be united until the Knights of Magritta come home." Some say this was a curse, but I believe that Estalia remains divided because we choose to make it so.

I say to you that those words were not a curse but a challenge. The Knights of Magritta may be long dead, but their spirit lives on in every Estalian. Find that spirit within you and let it grow. When we all are as bold and resolute as the Knights of Magritta, then and only then will Estalia unite.

The time is now, my friends. Remember the Knights of Magritta and bring them home in your hearts.

Up with Estalia! Unite and win!

—FROM AN ANONYMOUS BROADSHEET DISTRIBUTED IN MAGRITTA, ESTALIA

— PLAYER'S SECTION —

The Knights of Magritta are a secret society with members throughout the Old World, but strongest in Tilea and the Empire. Originally a knightly order founded to liberate Estalia after the Arabyan invasion of 1448IC, the crusading knights found they were not wanted in their home country only a hundred years later. They left Estalia and went underground, dedicated to continuing their original mission.

The Knights of Magritta have become a powerful secret order and they are always on the lookout for promising new members or allies. Player Characters who like ancient orders, intrigue, and lofty-minded idealism may find the Knights attractive and wish to aid or join them. GMs can also use the Knights to drive stories that explore different parts of the *Warhammer* world.

GMs may want to restrict access to the Player's Section of this chapter until characters are actually recruited into the organisation.

PURPOSE

The Knights want to lead a new crusade to Araby and conquer it once and for all. Their argument for many centuries was that the south was the soft underbelly of the Old World and vulnerable to renewed aggression from Araby. Better to strike first than be surprised later.

HISTORY

The Knights of Magritta were founded in 1448 in the wake of the Arabyan invasion of Estalia. Magritta, the greatest of Estalia's cities, had been the first to fall to Sultan Jaffar and his enormous army. The Knights came together to recapture the city that was the symbol of Estalian freedom and in so doing liberate their lands from the invaders. The original knights were all Estalian, but they soon accepted members from the Empire and Bretonnia as these nations became involved in the war.

After two years of conflict, the combined armies of Estalia, the Empire, and Bretonnia succeeded in liberating Estalia. Still unsatisfied, the Old Worlders followed the Sultan's fleeing armies back to Araby. After sustaining great losses, the crusading armies brought Jaffar to battle at El-Haik and decisively defeated him. This defeat led to the overthrow of Sultan Jaffar and the break-up of his empire.

Once Jaffar was beaten, most of the crusaders decided it was time to leave. Rather than stay and try to carve out new kingdoms, they simply looted the towns they had captured and then returned to the Old World. Only the Knights of Magritta and the knightly orders of the Empire wanted to

"Our flag has not flown in battle for nearly 1,000 years, but that does not mean we have been idle."

—GRAND MASTER ENZO MORETTI

stay in Araby. They continued the fight for nearly a century but the unity of the crusading army was broken. Much glory was won and a measure of vengeance was taken, but Araby was not conquered.

Back in Magritta, the leadership of the Knights continued to press for fresh crusades to Araby and spent years building a fleet to harass Arabyan shipping. These activities were popular at first but became less so as time passed. Most Estalians wanted to forget the war, and consequently membership began to decline. A hundred years after the Battle at El-Haik, the Knights of Magritta had shrunk greatly in size and influence. Furthermore, they increasingly angered the merchants of Magritta, who were in the process of building a powerful trading empire in Araby. Every time a ship of the Knights attacked an Arabyan convoy, it hurt the merchants who ran Magritta. Eventually, the most powerful merchant families determined to get rid of the troublesome knights.

A series of levies and taxes, aimed squarely at the Knights, followed. These tactics were designed to drive the Knights into bankruptcy or at least cause them to disperse their fleet. It quickly became clear to the Knights what was going on. The Grand Master of the order conferred with his advisors and made a fateful decision. In 1556 the fleet of the Knights of Magritta sailed out of the harbour. Onboard was the entire membership of the order. They left all their holdings behind, empty of valuables or any clue of where the Knights might be going. They were never seen or heard from again, sailing completely out of the pages of history.

Before they left, the Grand Master had some harsh final words for his countrymen. On the quays of Magritta, he gave a speech to the assembled crowd that ended with the following prophecy: *Estalia will never be united until the Knights of Magritta return to their native soil.* This gave birth to a legend that has only grown in stature as the centuries have gone by. With Estalia in continuing disunity, many people have begun to ask what has become of the knights, and when will they ever return?

THE KNIGHTS TODAY

Even those who remember of the Knights of Magritta think they must have died out long ago. They would be surprised to find out that the Knights not only still exist, but also continue to thrive. Granted, their days of glorious battle are largely behind them, but as a secret society in the Old World they have a long reach.

Like many secret societies, the Knights of Magritta have a public face. They founded and continue to run three military schools, known as the Aquila Academies. These are



dedicated to Myrmidia and teach the art and science of war. The original school is in Luccini (Tilea), while the others are in Nuln (the Empire) and Carcassonne (Bretonnia). These schools provide a ready source for recruits and ensure that many officers in these nations are sympathetic to the Knights' causes.

STRUCTURE

The Knights of Magritta divide their members into three groups.

Students

This group includes both actual students at the Aquila Academies and other allies and agents who do not know about the existence of the Knights of Magritta. They do much of the grunt work of the organisation without realising for whom they really work.

Teachers

Students who prove their loyalty and pass a series of physical and mental challenges become teachers. They are told the basic history of the Knights of Magritta and sworn in as full members. They swear oaths of loyalty, obedience, and secrecy. Some teachers are instructors at the academies but most are at large throughout the Old World. There are two grades of teachers in the order: junior teachers and learned teachers.

Masters

These are the leaders of the Knights of Magritta. They know the full history of the organisation and each commands a number of teachers and students. The masters elect one of their own to become the Grand Master, the leader of the entire organisation.

There are in theory five grades of masters: junior master, learned master, senior master, master of the academy (of which there are three), and grand master. In reality, there are a number of other honours and titles that can be bestowed on a master. Many of these are purely symbolic, like knight of the door and brother of the rope, but they contribute to the real pecking order of the Knights of Magritta.

GOALS AND MOTIVES

The goals of the Knights remain the unification of Estalia and the conquest of Araby. They have worked behind the scenes to achieve these aims since 1556. To achieve these things, of course the order itself must prosper. It is thus imperative that the Knights continue to expand their influence and accumulate wealth. When the time for crusade comes, its war chests must be full to overflowing.

SYMBOLS AND SIGNS

The original symbol of the order was a crimson double-headed eagle on a white field, but that is never seen in

NEW BASIC CAREER: CADET

Cadets are officers-in-training. They may attend formal schools like the Aquila Academies or they may receive direct tutelage from officers in the field. Although cadets do learn to fight, the focus of their training is leadership. Some come from noble families, but this is by no means a given. Those who earned a place with battlefield exploits are more respected because they have lived war, not just read about it in books.

Note: If you are rolling randomly for your Starting Career, you can substitute Cadet for Soldier or Student with your GM's permission.



—Cadet Advance Scheme—

| Main Profile | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|-----|----|----|-----|------|-----|------|
| WS | BS | S | T | Ag | Int | WP | Fel |
| +5% | +5% | — | — | +5% | +10% | +5% | +10% |
| Secondary Profile | | | | | | | |
| A | W | SB | TB | M | Mag | IP | FP |
| — | +2 | — | — | — | — | — | — |

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Strategy/Tactics), Command, Common Knowledge (Bretonnia, the Empire, or Tilea), Perception, Read/Write, Ride, Secret Language (Battle Tongue), Speak Language (Classical), Speak Language (Breton, Reikspiel, or Tilean)

Talents: Disarm, Savvy or Warrior Born, Specialist Weapon Group (Fencing)

Trappings: Foil or Rapier, Light Armour (Full Leather Armour), Shield, Uniform (Cadet)

Career Entries: Estalian Diestro, Mercenary, Militiaman, Noble, Roadwarden, Soldier, Squire, Student

Career Exits: Herald, Mercenary, Pistolier, Sergeant, Squire, Student

public anymore. The academies use the golden eagle of Myrmydia with a spear clutched in its claws. Luccini uses a red field, the Empire a black one, and Carcassonne a blue one. Members use variations of the triangle as a secret sign. It represents the three Aquila Academies on the map. Meaning is imparted by the use of colour. A red triangle means danger, for example, while a white means help is needed.

MEMBERSHIP

True to its roots as a military order, the Knights of Magritta recruit most heavily from soldiers, particularly officers. The Aquila Academies only reinforce this, as the cadets schooled there provide the most ready source of new members. That said, the order controls more than just military schools and mercenary companies. Its ranks include the merchants of several trading companies and politicians of various stripes. The military character of the order is strong, but the Knights long ago became a secret society and that means they have members in all parts of society.

Most members of the Knights of Magritta are worshippers of Myrmydia, but this is not required. They are not a religious organisation per se, but historically the ties between the Knights and the Cult of Myrmydia are strong.

RECRUITMENT

Most members these days come through one of the three Aquila Academies. Individual masters do recruit on their own, though sometimes academy graduates look down on these “orphans.” In theory three masters are supposed to agree on making a student into a teacher, but this isn't always possible. One master is the sponsor, and he is ultimately responsible for the actions of the candidate. Making a student into a teacher is not lightly done.

A candidate is tested for physical and mental toughness, as well as trustworthiness. If a student is deemed worthy, he is taken from his bed in the middle of the night and brought blindfolded to an old battlefield. There his sponsor asks him to swear an oath of secrecy. If this is refused, the student is taken home and never has another opportunity to join the order. A candidate that swears the oath is put through three ordeals.

The Ordeal of Obedience

The candidate is armed with a spear and shield and told to stand at attention until commanded to stop. The masters and teachers then engage in a mock battle. Various friends of the candidate cry out for help amidst the mayhem. No matter what the candidate hears, he must ignore the entreaties for aid and stand at attention.

The Ordeal of Blood

The candidate is told the battle is now over and that he must understand the price of victory. He is knocked to the ground and must crawl through a field strewn with pieces of recently slaughtered animals.

The Ordeal of Water

The candidate must now be purified. He is held upside down while bucket after bucket is poured onto him. He must not cry out or ask for it to stop. A certain amount of choking is expected.

If the candidate makes it through the ordeals, he must then swear the oaths of loyalty and obedience. The new teacher is then taken to a secluded location to learn more of the order. Heavy drinking is customary, but not required.

MEMBER BENEFITS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Members swear obedience to the Knights of Magritta so they are bound to do whatever is asked of them. Since the organisation is a secret society, teachers and masters must have a public occupation. Knights are expected to excel in their chosen fields, as doing so puts members in better position to help the order. Oftentimes members have jobs in groups the Knights control, such as the various mercenary companies. Knights are commonly tasked with aiding the order in one or more of the following areas: recruitment, finance, and intelligence.

In return for upholding their oaths, Knights receive the support of a powerful secret society. They have access to manpower, money, and information, though these are not provided without good reason.

— GM'S SECTION —

When the Knights of Magritta left Estalia, they sailed in secret to Luccini in the south of Tilea. An advanced party had bought an estate for the organisation and this became its new headquarters. The remaining rank and file knights formed the core of a new mercenary company, the Luccini Lancers. Tilea then as now was thick with mercenaries, so this made a perfect cover story. It also provided the Knights with a steady stream of income and honed their fighting skills. Over the years they would form many other mercenary companies, though the Luccini Lancers are the most storied.

The order's fighting ships, posing as pirates, continued to attack Arabyan shipping. The merchant ships became part of the newly-formed Greco Trading Company. This mercantile operation provided discrete transportation for the Knights, and again served as a source of income. For a generation the Greco Trading Company confined itself to the seas around Tilea, but once memories in Estalia began to fade they expanded their routes. Eventually their ships began to operate as far north as Marienburg and as far south as Araby. Each returning convoy brought fresh intelligence for the order, with that coming from the south particularly prized.

Over the ensuing centuries the Knights grew stronger and continued to expand their influence. They turned their martial organisation into a powerful secret society with members in every human nation of the Old World. The Knights' central contradiction, however, is that their attempts to achieve their stated goals have ultimately been

failures. It has been nearly 1,000 years since the order left Magritta and Estalia has not been united and Araby has not been conquered.

"If a Chaos army invaded Estalia, the merchants would try to sell them supplies."

—TERCERO GRAMSCI

Today the Knights of Magritta are at a crossroads. Will they continue to fight for their founding principles or have they simply changed

too much over the past millennium? The GM's Section explains the current state of the order and provides ideas on how it can be used in a *WFRP* campaign.

SECRETS OF THE KNIGHTS

The greatest secret of the Knights of Magritta is this: none of its leaders truly want a new crusade to Araby. They say the words and they swear the oaths, but the Old World and the Knights have changed since the foundation of the order. It's been over a thousand years since Sultan Jaffar invaded Estalia and since then Araby has not posed a real threat. Countless grand masters have tried to organise new crusades, but they all failed. Grand Master Enzo Moretti, who leads the order today, feels he must try to carry on in the footsteps of his forbears, but he is aged and cannot see what is happening to the organisation. The order even has spies in the Tilean Quarter of the Arabyan spice port of Copher, but Moretti is one of the few that even bothers to read their reports anymore.

Over the past two hundred years different schools of thought have developed at the three Aquila Academies. Opinion at the schools is not uniform, but the masters of each academy have developed their own vision for the

future of the Knights of Magritta. When Enzo Moretti dies, these three factions will fight for control of the order and the result could affect the whole of the Old World.

THE LUCCINI ACADEMY

In 1720IC, the Knights of Magritta founded the first of the Aquila Academies in Luccini. By the end of the century it had become the group's new headquarters and is still recognized as such. The academy was designed to house far more soldiers than the students and faculty. The idea was that it would one day become the nexus of the next crusade to Araby. There are thus extensive underground galleries, which include additional barracks, armouries, shrines, kitchens, and even a slaughterhouse. If need be, it could house an army.

That great crusade has never come about. Instead the Aquila Academy of Luccini has become a different kind of power center. The Knights of Magritta have accumulated an impressive array of holdings and assets, and they control, directly or indirectly, ten mercenary companies, three trading companies (of which Greco is by far the largest), dozens of farms and vineyards, and a variety of small businesses. With graduates of the academy all over Tilea, the Knights also have a certain amount of political influence. Grand Master Moretti has always been loath to use it, but other masters have no such qualms.

The Master of the Academy is Tercero Gramsci, who previously commanded the Luccini Lancers. He succeeded Enzo Moretti when the latter became grand master, as is tradition in the order. Gramsci was a hard-nosed field commander and he brings that same style to the politics of the order. In meetings with many Tilean masters, he has said bluntly that the Knights of Magritta have failed as crusaders but succeeded as power brokers. Gramsci and his followers believe that the Knights should focus themselves on the accumulation of wealth and power, because that's where the order excels. Estalia seems a lost cause and Araby hasn't been a real concern for centuries.

Tercero Gramsci is certain he will be the next grand master, and he may be right. The order has seen few grand masters from the Empire and Bretonnia (and Estalia, for that matter). Nonetheless, Gramsci does not underestimate his rivals in Carcassonne and Nuln.

THE CARCASSONNE ACADEMY

The second Aquila Academy was founded in Carcassonne in 1861. The Duchy of Carcassonne borders both Tilea and Estalia, which made it an ideal location for the Knights. As a border region that must protect itself constantly from Greenskin raids, it is home to a martial people well-suited for service.

The academy is located in the small town attached to Castle Carcassonne. As it is far from court and in a conflict-ridden region, the academy is not fashionable with Bretonnian chivalry. The famously laconic Duke Huebald, a true war-leader, values the academy greatly and sends promising squires there for training. Other students are drawn from the younger sons of noble families, the mercenary bands based at the castle, and recruits from Estalia itself.

Since its establishment this academy has collected intelligence about Estalia and sent periodic reports to Luccini. In fact, the academy has many ties to Estalia, since it's just across the border. Many caballeros have trained in Carcassonne and the Knights operate several mercenary bands in Estalia to support the academy. Teachers from Carcassonne are required to go on a pilgrimage to Magritta before they swear their oaths.

For these reasons the masters of Carcassonne are truly dedicated to the idea of unifying Estalia. The current Master of the Academy, Cesar Despain, believes pursuit of a new crusade is a dead end. Before the Knights of Magritta can fulfill their purpose, they must return to Estalia and unite the nation. With the nation behind them, the Knights could achieve so much more.

Despain believes that Tilea has corrupted the Luccini brethren, making them stray far from the knightly ideals of the original order. He is tired of the secrecy. He wants to ride into Estalia, unfurl the order's banners, and inspire a people.

THE NULN ACADEMY

The final Aquila Academy was founded in 2112IC in the city of Nuln. At this time the Empire was divided and without an Emperor. Initially, the Knights hoped to organise new crusading contingents from the Empire. Many Imperial knights had fought in Araby and they hoped to revive the idea, particularly amongst orders like the Knights Panther. The academy developed an excellent reputation and did succeed in recruiting new members, many of whom travelled to Tilea and points beyond. With the Empire wrapped up in its own petty wars, however, anything more than that was out of the question.

The Knights of Magritta had gone north to inspire new crusaders, but ironically enough it was they who were inspired in 2302 when the Great War Against Chaos began. When Magnus the Pious, a native of Nuln, issued a call to the people of the Empire, the Aquila Academy responded. Every student, teacher, and master that could swing a sword followed Magnus north. They fought in Kislev, facing and defeating the forces of Chaos. It was a glorious moment in the academy's history, but also a costly one. Only a third of those who marched north returned to Nuln. Many other Imperial masters also died in the war.

In 2304 Magnus the Pious was elected Emperor, reuniting the Empire at last. He did not forget the sacrifice of the

THE COMPANY OF THE COMET

The original Company of the Comet was founded in 1999 by men of Mordheim who survived their city's destruction by a twin-tailed comet. They considered themselves dead men already, cursed as their city was cursed. They never took on new recruits. The company fought until its last member was killed in battle. Minstrels and generations of drunken roustabouts found this stony fatalism romantic and it was enshrined in the epic poem "Two Tails of Doom" some time in the 23rd century.

When Helmut Balck was putting together a new mercenary company, he revived the name to both honour the memory of the slain and appeal to the Sigmar worshippers in Stirland. His own dedication to Myrmidia was something he only shared with his officers. Egon Rothstein has followed suit.

The company is based in Wurtbad, the capital of Stirland. It has a depot outside the city, where new recruits are trained and wounded men can convalesce. While the main part of the company is often away campaigning, the support staff remains. A special squad of bodyguards also stays on station in Wurtbad. These highly trained specialists are rented out to visiting dignitaries. They have an excellent reputation amongst the nobles who come to Wurtbad to take the waters. They provide valuable intelligence to Captain Rothstein and thus the Knights of Magritta.

Aquila Academy, granting it an Imperial charter and gifting it land in Nuln's Temple Quarter. New buildings sprang up near the Temple of Myrmidia and these have been the academy's home for the past two hundred years.

Today the Master of the Academy is Gunther Ostermann, a tough leader who made his name in the Knights of the Blazing Sun. He led the academy to war again during the Storm of Chaos, writing another glorious chapter in the school's history. This experience solidified the thinking of Ostermann and the Imperial masters. The Knights of Magritta were right in wanting to lead a new crusade; they were simply aiming it in the wrong direction. The clear threat was Chaos to the north, not Arabyans to the south. They believe that the Knights need to reorient themselves and that the Aquila Academy in Nuln should lead the new effort.

ALLIES

The Knights of Magritta have maintained their secrecy over the past millennia. They have allies through the Aquila Academies and their other ventures, but none of them know about the existence of the Knights behind the scenes.

The greatest allies of the Knights are the religious orders of the Cult of Myrmidia: the Knights of the Blazing Sun, the Order of the Eagle, and the Order of the Righteous Spear. In fact, many graduates of the Aquila Academies go on to join these organisations, so the borders between the groups are often fuzzy.

The Knights of Magritta also have many allies amongst the mercenary companies in the Old World. The ties are particularly strong in Tilea, which its long history of mercenary warfare.

ENEMIES

The Aquila Academies are not beloved in the north. The Cult of Ulric views the schools with contempt and sometimes, outright hostility. Myrmidia is a foreign goddess and the idea of treating war as an art or a science is repugnant to Ulric's followers. They have prevented the founding of an academy in Middenheim, though they lack the power to do anything about the Nuln school.

The Knights of Magritta believe that no enemies know they exist. This was true for many centuries but things have changed. Shihab Ibn Alim, an Arabyan sorcerer, discovered the truth of the Knights of Magritta twenty years ago. The Sultan of Copher hired him to find out who was sinking so many of his ships. Shihab captured a Sartosan pirate named Fredo Tellini, but learned little from him. He tasked one of his bound spirits to follow the pirate and then released him. Tellini, a teacher of the Knights of Magritta, unwittingly exposed the order. Since then Shihab Ibn Alim has been gathering information about the Knights of Magritta and working against their interest. He has the ear of a sultan and powerful djinn servants. The order has a formidable foe working against it and it doesn't yet realise it.

SAMPLE MENTOR

EGON ROTHSTEIN

"A dull blade can kill an opponent but a sharp one will do it faster."

—EGON ROTHSTEIN

Egon Rothstein is the captain of the Company of the Comet, a mercenary band based in Wurtbad. He is also a master of the Knights of Magritta. He is always on

the lookout for fresh talent for the Knights and due to his position he travels frequently and crosses paths with many soldiers. He makes a good patron for PCs, particularly those from the mercenary career.



Unlike many masters of the Knights of Magritta, Egon Rothstein did not attend one of the Aquila Academies. The son of a baker from Delberz, he joined a mercenary company at the age of 16 to escape a life of kneading dough. At first he wanted little but to see the Empire and make some money. Other recruits died on the harsh campaigns but Egon learned to survive. Eventually, he won a position as sergeant in the Company of the Comet. They were mostly men of Stirland, but Egon earned their respect with his professionalism and coolness in battle.

The captain of the company, Helmut Balck, took an interest in Rothstein. He taught the young mercenary to read and gave him lessons in tactics, logistics, intelligence, and strategy. Rothstein served the company faithfully for three years, at which time Balck initiated him into the Knights of Magritta. This gave Rothstein purpose for the first time in his life and he will always be grateful to Balck for that.

At the age of 30 Egon Rothstein became the captain of the Company of the Comet. Balck went south to organise a new company in Tilea. Some in the order say this is because Balck did not agree with Gunther Ostermann's views about the future of the order. Rothstein is dubious about this because he too believes in the historic mission of the Knights and he has retained his position for nearly a decade.

Personality

Egon Rothstein is every inch the professional soldier. He takes his job seriously and expects his subordinates and allies to do the same. Only two things make him outwardly emotional. One is the mistreatment of women. He simply won't abide it and has hanged several men under his command for taking liberties with local women while on campaign. The other thing that moves him is the dream of Estalia. He has seen much death and war in the Empire. He envisions retiring to Estalia, where the threat of Chaos is remote. He has never been there, so it remains a distant and perfect goal. He hopes the Knights return to Estalia in his lifetime so he can be part of that great day.

Rothstein feels he has an unpaid debt to Captain Balck. He tries to pay it back by finding worthy candidates for the Knights of Magritta and shepherding them as Balck did to him. He sends some of his charges to the Nuln academy but prefers to instruct students himself. He believes life in a mercenary company is better training for a Knight of Magritta than any schoolroom. Many of the sergeants and officers in the Company of the Comet are teachers in the Knights.

Appearance

Rothstein is a middle-aged man, with a beard that is just starting to grey. He remains fit and a life on campaign has made him tough. He favours plate armour in combat and prefers an open-faced helm so he can be heard over the din of battle. Off the field he wears a black and red uniform with a twin-tailed comet embroidered on the breast.

EGON ROTHSTEIN

Male Human Middenlander Captain (ex-Mercenary, ex-Sergeant)

| WS | BS | S | T | Ag | Int | WP | Fel |
|-----|-----|---------|---------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 57% | 43% | 41% (4) | 51% (5) | 44% | 51% | 48% | 59% |

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Strategy/Tactics) +10%, Animal Care, Command +10%, Common Knowledge (The Empire +10%, Kislev), Dodge Blow +10%, Drive, Gamble, Gossip +10%, Haggle, Intimidate, Perception +10%, Read/Write, Ride +20%, Search, Secret Language (Battle Tongue) +10%, Speak Language (Kislevian, Reikspiel, Tilean), Swim

Talents: Disarm, Excellent Vision, Quick Draw, Resistance to Poison, Seasoned Traveller, Specialist Weapon Group (Cavalry, Parrying), Street Fighting, Strike to Injure, Strike Mighty Blow

Combat

Attacks: 3; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 16; **Insanity Points:** 10
Armour (Heavy): Full Plate Armour and Shield (Head 5, Arms 5, Body 5, Legs 5)
Weapons: Hand Weapon (Sword) (1d10 +5), Lance (1d10 +6), Sword-breaker (1d10 +2)

Trappings

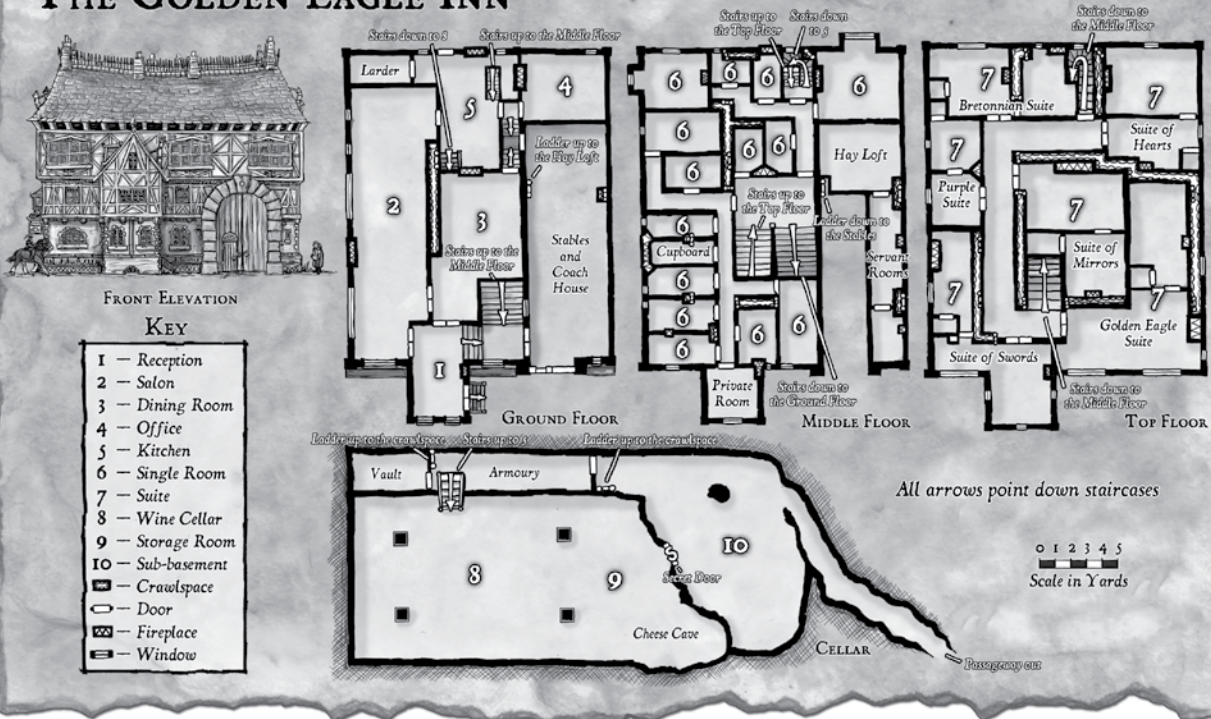
Destrier with harness and saddle, good quality uniform, telescope, library of tactical manuals

SAMPLE LOCATION: THE GOLDEN EAGLE INN

The Golden Eagle Inn is a renowned hostelry in Wurtbad. When visiting dignitaries or nobles from fashionable cities like Altdorf and Nuln come to take advantage of the city's famous hot springs, they always book a suite at the exclusive Golden Eagle Inn. It exists to serve the wealthy and powerful. It's also a secret base of the Knights of Magritta.

The whole operation was dreamed up by Jermaine Lebow, a Bretonnian master and wine connoisseur. He visited Wurtbad many times because of the city's status as the wine capital of the Empire and noticed how the elite congregated there, particularly during the summer months. If an inn could be built that catered to their

THE GOLDEN EAGLE INN



high-class tastes, he reasoned, the espionage opportunities would be endless. The Golden Eagle was an exorbitantly expensive undertaking but it has paid dividends over and over again. For more than a hundred years the elite have met at the Golden Eagle and all the while the Knights of Magritta have spied on them.

Today Adelheid and Hartwig Vogel, masters both, are the proprietors of the Golden Eagle. They've run the operation for over twenty years now and are beloved by the clientele. They have an uncanny ability to predict the needs of their patrons and are always ready with a hot bath or brandy at just the right time. They have a staff of fifty to run the place, plus another dozen who run the listening operation out of the sub-basement. About half the staffmembers are teachers in the order, and the rest are students.

FEATURES AND DEFENCES

The Golden Eagle Inn has three floors, a basement, and a secret sub-basement. It is repulsively opulent. Crystal chandeliers hang from hand-painted ceilings. Handcrafted furniture upholstered in silk and other rare fabric fills the salon and the suites. Expertly trained servants bring delicacies from across the Old World to patrons on silver and gold platters. A few hundred feet away poor townfolk live in the foulest squalor, but those staying here would never realise it.

Both the inn and its guests must be protected, of course. Barred doors and windows lock it up tight at night and the

Vogels employ three night watchmen. The sub-basement is stronger still and was designed as a refuge if necessary.

The feature that would cause the most alarm if it was ever discovered is the system of crawl spaces and shafts that allows spies access to every room in the inn. These are padded, as are the ladders that lead up from the sub-basement. They allow eavesdroppers to listen to any conversation on the first three floors. This doesn't mean that everything is heard, because the spies cannot be everywhere at once. Many secrets have been compromised at the Golden Eagle Inn, however.

KEY LOCATIONS

1. Reception

Hartwig Vogel can be found here most hours of the day, meeting and greeting guests and dealing with requests and problems. He works from a teakwood desk and keeps accurate ledgers with guest information ready at hand. To the side a servant attends a punchbowl with a refreshing herbal infusion. A cup of this is offered to guests every time they enter the inn.

2. Salon

The hub of the social scene at the Golden Eagle is the salon. Here nobles mingle, drink, and gossip, while servants stand ready to meet their needs (and listen to their conversations). Comfortable chairs and divans fill the salon and there are tables for playing parlour games.

3. Dining Room

The Golden Eagle serves three meals a day here, though many guests choose to eat in their rooms. Each plate bears the inn's emblem and the flatware is exquisitely etched silver. Adelheid handles the seating arrangements, ensuring that rivals are seated far apart and that the political pecking order is maintained.

4. Office

The heart of the Golden Eagle, the office is Adelheid's domain. Here she oversees the procurement of the food and linens, the hiring and firing of staff, and the keeping of the account books. Nothing in the office points to the Knights of Magritta. Anything incriminating is in the sub-basement. Adelheid is assisted by an accountant, Kurt, who is also a teacher.

5. Kitchen

Catering to the demands of an inn full of snooty nobles is not easy, but Chef Anton de Bordeaux is one of the best in the Empire. He runs this large kitchen like a military camp and curses delivered in a lilting Bretonnian accent are heard here frequently. Chef Anton constantly complains about the quality of the produce and foodstuffs he receives, but somehow he always manages to create delicious meals.

6. Single Rooms

The second floor of the inn has individual rooms for guests who cannot afford suites. They are quite comfortable, of course, but status demands nobles try to get the suites if they can.

7. Suites

There are six suites on the third floor of the inn. Each one has a sitting room (servants sleep here at night), a bedroom, and a toilet (a true luxury). Each suite is uniquely decorated and many nobles have a favourite. The suites are known as the Suite of Hearts, the Purple Suite, the Bretonnian Suite, the Suite of Swords (popular with the military types), the Suite of Mirrors, and the Golden Eagle Suite (the most plush of them all).

8. Wine Cellar

Over half of the basement is taken up with an extremely well-stocked wine cellar. The Golden Eagle benefits from its location in Wurtbad, which makes it easy to keep many fine vintages on hand. There are upwards of 2,000 bottles here at most times.

9. Storage Room with Cheese Cave

The rest of the basement provides storage for various foodstuffs. There is also a specially constructed cheese cave, where wheel upon wheel of cheese ages until it's just right.

10. Sub-basement

This area of the inn is hidden, accessible only from a secret door deep in the wine cellar and an exit at the end of an escape tunnel that comes up several hundred yards from the inn. From here spies can get into the system of crawlspaces that riddle the building. A dozen teachers work from this area, and at least two of them are on duty here at all times. In addition to the main working room, there is a small armoury, and a vault for the inn's receivables and the order's secret documents. Lamp oil is kept in the vault at all times, so the papers can be burned at a moment's notice in case security is breached.

USING THE ORGANISATION

The most complete way to use the Knights of Magritta is to make the organisation the centre of a campaign. The PCs could be recruited in play and learn about the Knights as the campaign unfolds, or you could simply begin with the PCs already being members. If you choose the latter course, make sure the players come up with stories for how their characters were recruited.

A Knights of Magritta campaign offers many different types of adventures. You can run political intrigue adventures, particularly if the PCs get caught up in the inter-order rivalry described in the **Secrets of the Knights** section. Alternately, the PCs could be members of a mercenary company controlled by the Knights. PCs would have to balance their duties to the company's employers vs. those of the Knights. This type of campaign also allows for a lot of battlefield action.

Another option is to set the campaign during the Knights' moment in history. The time finally comes when a new crusade departs for Araby and the PCs are part of it. Exotic Araby is quite different than the Empire and provides many opportunities for exploration and conquest. A successful crusade could lead the Knights (and the PCs) back to Estalia to attempt its unification at last. The people might welcome back the conquering heroes, but what of those in power? They would not just step aside for the Knights. And if the country is united, who would rule it?

If you don't want to run a full-on campaign centred around the Knights of Magritta, you still have options. Captain Rothstein or other masters can provide employment to adventurers. As students the PCs could become involved in all sorts of plots without realising their true masters (at least at first). They might also find themselves caught in the middle of rival plots, trying to navigate the politics of a secret society in a time of crisis.

Lastly, the Knights can be used as villains. This works particularly well if Tercero Gramsci becomes the next grand master. It would not take much work to cast a thousand year old secret society with members in the officer corps of every Old World nation as a threat.

PLOT HOOKS

THE NOBLE AND THE SORCERER

A nobleman visiting Wurtbad is murdered in the Golden Eagle. A local Witch Hunter hires or blackmails the PCs to investigate the killing. They discover that the Golden Eagle is much more than it appears. On first blush it seems the members of a sinister secret society killed the noble, but why? If ham-fisted tactics are used, the PCs will come into conflict with the Knights of Magritta. If they investigate with more finesse, they will discover that the nobleman was not the intended target at all. The assassin, a man in the employ of Shihab Ibn Alim, was trying to kill Egon Rothstein but botched it. If they play it right, the PCs could win Rothstein as an ally, particularly if the incident leads to the Knights finding out about Shihab Ibn Alim. A djinn arriving from Araby to finish the job could provide an exciting conclusion.

THE DROWNED MAN

The PCs stumbled upon a corpse outside a major city. His clothes are wet and bloody and he seems to have died by drowning, despite the lack of an obvious body of water. Tracks lead back to an old battlefield with freshly turned earth. If dug up the field reveals the remains of at least a dozen slaughtered animals. None of this makes any sense. The PCs have happened upon an initiation gone bad, in which a candidate was accidentally drowned during the Ordeal of Water. This could lead to the PCs discovering the existence of the Knights of Magritta, possibly leading them

to come into conflict with the order as they continue to investigate this bizarre death.

THE KNIGHTS RETURN

The banner of the Knights of Magritta is raised again in Estalia. The trouble is that it is not the doing of the Knights of Magritta! The PCs, as students or teachers of the order, are sent to Estalia to discover the identity of these impostors and what their goals are. Some options include a nobleman who wants to advance his own claim as the King of Estalia, a rogue master of the order who wants to force it into action, and agents of Shihab Ibn Alim trying to flush the Knights out. Whatever the motivation of the plotter, it could be that events take their own course. This could be the right time to unite Estalia and the PCs could play a role in it. This could change the Knights of Magritta and indeed the Old World forever.

THE GRAND MASTER

Grand Master Enzo Moretti dies of old age. Now the masters must elect his successor and the tensions within the order rise to new heights. The factions from Carcassonne, Luccini, and Nuln all want one of their own in charge of the order. It seems that whoever is chosen, it will be the end of an era for the Knights of Magritta. Will anyone step forward to renew the ancient vows of the order, or will a new vision change the Knights forever? The players can get involved in a number of ways. If Knights themselves, they might champion one point of view or form a faction of their own. They might also be all that stands in the way of civil war within the order.



CHAPTER VIII: THE QUINSBERRY LODGE

SHORT-STATURED STATUE ERECTED ON SEVENTH BRIDGE!

The streets of Altdorf were the site of some excitement this past MarketDay as several of the townsfolk, tradesmen, and passers-by did stand amazed at the new statue being unveiled on Seventh Bridge. The statue is to commemorate the many and celebrated achievements of the most eminent Lady Elector, Hisme Stoutheart of the Mootland. Sir Bullywick Applebag, noted Halfling merchant and gentleman about town gave a speech as the chief patron of the statue, declaring it a “grand gift to Halflings everywhere.” The statue, cast in bronze and copper, is a likeness of the Elector, and was described by Applebag as “perfectly highlighting her firm bosom” and “world-famous hairy knees.” The work is raised on a six-foot tall plinth so that, it was said, “her stature would not be diminished compared to the other statues of great men of the Empire throughout our most great capital.” Huzzahs were given and then the statue was unveiled to much celebration and the serving of baked goods.

—The Altdorf Spieler

— PLAYER'S SECTION —

It's not easy being a Halfling outside of the Moot. People look down on you, in both senses. People make fun of you. Some even ignore you altogether. It's hard for a Halfling citizen to lift himself up and make something of himself when most of the world doesn't even recognise he exists. The Quinsberry Lodge can help with this. They ensure that Halflings, wherever possible, get fair and equal treatment and all the help they need to make their mark on the Empire. Sometimes, they help in ways that can't be easily seen. Sometimes, they help without even being asked. Sometimes, they help in ways about which, perhaps, it is better *not* to ask.

PURPOSE

Wherever there are Humans, there are Halflings. And wherever there are Humans and Halflings, there is prejudice. Outside of the Moot, Humans are always the majority of the population, and the laws and customs of the Empire naturally favour the majority. To most Humans, Halflings are seen as nothing more than a curious aberration, warranting no great concern. The Empire is for Humans, and the Halflings should make the best of it, the best that they can. And them that don't like that can shut up or ship out.

“To hear the Big Footers talk, there's nothing to us but pie and pipeweed. Of course, there's a lot to be said for pie and pipeweed....”

—ELMINA ELDERBERRYBRUSHBURG,
QUARTERMASTER OF THE NULN LODGE

Halflings are very good at making the best of things. They never take things too seriously, and are fully aware that the Big Folk will always believe they are better than them. Much of the time, this is no great burden. In fact, it provides countless wonderful opportunities to prove the Big Folk wrong in their superiority. Halflings enjoy little more than undercutting Big Folk, especially blowhards or superior types. This is one reason they enjoy working as servants: Nobody is in a better position to mock the powerful than the man who helps him dress every morning. The Big Folk's generals may rule the Empire, but it is the Halflings that decide if the generals get the trots on the battlefield or not.

That said, there are times when simply mocking the humans isn't enough, when law and brutality conspire to destroy Halfling livelihoods and the whole Halfling way of life, with a severity so great that no amount of mocking can appease. Likewise, there are those who tire of having to prove their superiority over the Big Folk over and over again, of always having to be the butt of jokes, of always being ignored—

Halflings who would just like to get on with the typical business of being Halflings without constantly having to fight through the barriers the Big Folk set against them.



There is as yet no such thing as The Rights of Man in the Empire, but there is a strong sense of mercantile entitlement. Halflings pay taxes and levies like everyone else. Their houses attract the same land and window taxes even if they are half the size and the windows are tiny. Their tiny ponies are charged the same per leg to enter the city gates as a massive Nordland draughthorse pulling a six-wheel carriage. Inns charge the same price for rooms and beds and meals, while Halfling servants are typically paid half wages because their employers believe they don't need to eat as much. (In fact, Halfling appetites typically outstrip human ones, but five of them can sleep comfortably in a human bed.)

For all the taxes they pay, they get little return. The city Watch rarely respond to Halfling emergencies or try to solve the crimes in Halfling ghettos, preferring to "let the Little Folk sort it out amongst themselves." Roads and sewers aren't maintained in Halfling streets, and housing permissions are lost in bureaucracy for years. Halfling guilds are excluded from contracts for no good reason. Halfling celebrations are restricted or curtailed without explanation.

In the face of all this, many Halflings want to spit in the collective soup of the entire human society. Over the history of the Empire, many unofficial or impromptu groups have been created to try and do so, but by far the most long-standing, wealthiest, and most successful of them all is the Quinsberry Lodge.

HISTORY

Everyone knows that it was Emperor Ludwig the Fat who granted the Halflings the Mootland and an electoral vote in 1010IC. What most people don't know is it was a Halfling's idea. Hambelly Hazeldown, Jester to the Crown, suggested the creation of a Halfling elector to Ludwig as the ultimate joke at the expense of the Electors of Stirland and Averland, whose lands were divided to create the Moot. Ludwig thought it was hilarious, and soon enough the joke was rollicking through the kingdom. And the Halflings laughed all the way to the Volkshalle, seat of the Elector Counts, where Hazeldown was crowned the first Halfling Elector.

The Halfling gift of frivolity belies their natural gift for bureaucracy, but growing up in a family of a dozen practical jesters is in fact perfect training for navigating the madness of Empire politics. And the moment Hazeldown was elected, they began to put this gift to good use. Halfling politicians crawled into the Imperial bureaucracy with the same quiet efficiency with which they had occupied the serving classes, and were soon equally indispensable in the political circles of Altdorf. Those raised to power names for themselves as cunning negotiators and tricky power brokers, who could make or break a deal at the last moment. Meanwhile, all their relatives became scribes, runners, advisors, and attendants, flooding the oil of the wheels of bureaucracy with Halfling blood—so that they could, when necessary, run that oil cold.

Early on, however, two distinct mindsets became to dominate the Halflings in Elector politics. The first group believed in walking quietly, ensuring the survival of the Halflings' powerbase and the security of the Moot by making deals with the human Electors, on human terms. The second group believed that, ultimately, no power would ever be given to Halflings that wasn't taken (be it by force or trickery), and that while Halflings remained powerless, they were always at risk. During the years of the Black Plague, the Halflings suffered greatly, as human resources only helped human sufferers. This fuelled the anger of those of the second mindset and drove the two groups further apart.

In 1359, the Elector of Stirland was made Emperor (in Nuln, the second Emperor of the time), and he immediately used his power to repay Ludwig's insult upon the Moot and its people. While soldiers advanced on the new province, harsh new laws were laid down on the streets of Nuln, and racial violence predictably followed. Ghettos were burned and Halflings stoned in the streets. This was the flashpoint moment in Halfling politics.

To the conservatives, it was evidence that bold movements only painted a target on their tiny bellies. Fearing complete extermination, they took an even more cautious role, preferring to take their punishment and survive until better times came around. To the radicals, this was an

unconscionable surrender in the face of undeniable evidence of the Big Folk's unceasingly violent nature. Only by becoming a very public and vocal force could they ever hope to stop all the little prejudices that inevitably led to such terrible bloodshed. To make a stand, the Altdorf radicals journeyed south to stand with their Nuln brethren, to give them a political voice as much as possible. Doing so, however, meant relinquishing their positions in Altdorf, and severing all ties with the conservative faction. This seemed no great loss, however, as it was now clear that the only way to truly tug the Big Folks' beards was to do so outside of the Big Folks' parliaments.

Meanwhile, in Nuln, an underground society had been formed, with a network of safehouses providing food and arming vigilantes to answer the pogrom against the Little Folk. The Altdorf exiles mixed with this group, promising them the political retribution they so dreamed of, and the protection from such persecution ever being repeated. The combination of the physical protection and the impassioned rhetoric was indelible, and when the violence finally subsided in the streets, nearly every Halfling in Nuln was a sworn member of what was then named the Quinsberry Council.

The name, of course, came from Quinsberry, the Halfling god of Ancestry and Tradition, for it was Halfling tradition they most feared would be exterminated in the attacks upon them. Quinsberry was chosen as the watchword for those working to restore Halfling safety and freedoms to Nuln, and weapons or supplies marked for Halfling resisters were daubed with a stylised Q. To this day, the Q remains the symbol of the Lodge. When safer times arrived, the safehouse which had been the site of the terrible Battle of the Blamanges (when puddings were thrown at the human mobs when ammunition ran out) was turned into a meeting house for the leaders of the society. Soon enough the building became known as the Quinsberry Lodge, and thence became the name of the whole society. Whenever prejudice rose, all the Halflings of Nuln knew they could find safety, support—and a jolly good wheeze—at the Quinsberry Lodge.

After the sacking of Nuln by the Orc Warlord Gorbad Ironclaw in 1707, Halflings and Humans united to rebuild their shattered city. From this point on, the Lodge could safely come out into the public light and begin pursuing its original goals with real zeal. Lodges were established all over the Empire. In the horror of the Vampire Wars, it was the Lodge in Altdorf—not the Elector Count of the Moot, who was fighting in Sylvania—that ensured that most of the Halflings of that city did not starve during the terrible sieges. Thus the Halflings of Altdorf welcomed the Lodge to their city, and soon all the major centres followed.

After the Great War Against Chaos, providence and security returned to the Empire, and there was far less need to seek out scapegoats among the Little Folk. With this increased security, the Lodge was needed less as a safe haven, and it

began its political work in earnest. As the centuries passed, the Halflings gained more and more political and legal protection, and outright bigotry and violence faded into the background. But the Lodge knew that the prejudice was only hidden, not gone, and could return in full force at any time. So its battles continue, and shall always continue, until, perhaps someday, the Big Folk finally learn to mind their manners.

THE LODGE TODAY

Today, the organisation is one part trade union, one part gentleman's club, and one part community pride society. Halflings themselves come into contact with the society mostly in its latter two guises, but it is the former that does the real work of the organisation. As a trade union, the Lodge is a fierce political animal. It knows that political battles can be won both in the quiet halls of guild-houses as well as in the clamouring of the streets, and fights with equal skill in both arenas. But it is in the streets that it generally has its greatest successes, and its most visible effects.

Although prejudice against Halflings remains ever-present under the surface, over the last five hundred years it has become increasingly unfashionable—and thus financially disadvantageous—to be labelled as opposed to or overtly exploitative of Halflings. This has intensified with the increased prominence of Halfling culture through events such as Pie Week. The Lodge has of course heavily encouraged this stigma, and it is their greatest weapon. All that remains is that they make the world aware of the prejudices they are encountering, in such a way that it cannot be ignored by human society. In the increasingly mercantile world of the Empire, every tradesman depends on his good name, and with enough noise, the Lodge can stain that name permanently. What's more, as crafty businessmen are quickly discovering, they can also establish the reputation of those willing to support the Lodge's agenda. A tradesman marked by the Lodge as a friend of Halflings will soon find every Halfling in the neighbourhood calling on his services.

Major Lodge houses can be found in the following cities: Altdorf, Carroburg, Nuln, Averheim, Talabheim, and Wurtbad, and smaller institutions are found across the Empire. As yet, the Lodge has no presence in Middenheim, as the Halfling folk tend to avoid that dour, northern city. There are, however, foreign outposts extending the Lodge's reach into Miragliano, Tobar, and Kislev. Each of these cities has a small but proud Halfling district (or *kleinmoot*, as they are known in the Empire), and each such district boasts a fine Lodge house. From these buildings, the Lodge orchestrates its endless campaigns, but the Lodge itself has no real need of a home base. It is part of the fabric of Halfling society: its successes are shared by Halflings everywhere, and its enemies—so the Lodge says, at least—are the enemies of all right-thinking Halflings.

LODGE RIVALRIES

Altdorf and Nuln contain the two largest populations of Halflings outside the Moot, and as such are the two chief powerbases of the Lodge. Nuln, as the originator of the Lodge, believes itself more important than the Altdorf outpost, but the wealth and power concentrated in Altdorf have led its members to be more successful at achieving change. A persistent—but friendly—rivalry has grown up between the two Lodges, with each trying to outdo the other in how much support or prominence they can garner for their respective initiatives and how well they can elevate their members. Although Pie Week was a great coup for the Altdorf branch, Nuln has recently taken the title with the success of the inn called the Cock and Bucket. Although a far less visible success, the tavern is across the street from the Worshipful Guild of Legalists, so almost every lawyer in Nuln drinks there. After some conversations with the Lodge, and the recent barring from the tavern of a lawyer who took an unpopular case, it is now unlikely that legal cases against Halfling interests will be taken up in Nuln ever again.

STRUCTURE

The Quinsberry Lodge is organised not unlike the typical Halfling village, or indeed, the typical Halfling family. The elders of the society are the oldest and longest-serving members, making up what is known as the Quinsberry Council. No more than a dozen Halflings form the Council in each city, and new members are typically only permitted on the death or disbarring of a previous member. Members of the Council give themselves expansive titles such as Quartermaster, Marshall of the Keys, Invigilator, and Grand Chancellor but these titles are no indication of the work done by the individuals bearing them. Rather the Halflings use them to impress the Big Folk when necessary, and because they enjoy mocking the human obsession with titles. When a new member joins, all the members enjoy the game of coming up with a new, extemporaneous title for him.

Decisions of the Council are made through lively discussion, raucous debates, and informal voting. In the rare cases where decisions cannot be reached, deference is given to the oldest member. Disagreements of any great severity are rare, partly because Halflings don't take things so seriously, and partly because selecting members of the Council is so painstaking that like minds are almost guaranteed. Disbarments are exceedingly rare, but can be necessary if decisions continue to be questioned or ignored by a member who has turned out to be not at all what was expected. Disbarments may also occur if someone is found to be a criminal (perhaps exiled from the Moot) or acting in a way that causes disrepute to come to the Halfling people.

Generally, however, the Council is harmonious and even jolly. Self-policing works so well that individual Lodges are trusted to run themselves, and there is no central authority dictating their agendas or rules. The Nuln Lodge is the most respected as the original base, but only in as much as Halflings can respect anything.

Each Council employs staff, secretaries, and errand boys, and has many trusted assistants and associates. These make up the rest of the “official” Lodge. It is from the most trusted of these that new members of the Council are typically chosen. These Halflings do not, however, have any authority over the more casual members (see **Membership**). Nor, indeed, do the Council members have any real authority over anyone, at least not by virtue of their position. The Council only has power because it can speak for and to the Halfling community as a whole, and can thus manipulate its fortunes and sway its members. If the Council decides, for example, that a Halfling barman is not serving the interests of his fellow Halflings (because, say, he lets Watchmen drink cheap but gives no discount to littler folk), the Council can ensure that no Halflings will drink there again—nor any Halfling merchant sell to the establishment, without ever issuing a single order or instruction. Thus the power structure of the Lodge is invisible and entirely informal but no less powerful because of it.

GOALS AND MOTIVES

The Lodge's mandate is expansive and exhaustive: It is devoted to the betterment of Halfling life for all Halflings in the Empire. This has many facets, but in modern times this most often takes the form of removing the barriers and restrictions placed upon Halfling businessmen, and doing everything possible to improve the progress of Halfling business. The theory is that an increase in the wealth of Halfling communities will inevitably help all Halflings in that community, as that wealth is spread amongst them, and because increased wealth inevitably means increased political influence.

To help their fellows up the ladder of financial, social, and political prestige, the Lodge applies all the pressure it can on guilds and town councils. Its aim is to push Halfling interests into the spotlight, and if possible, make them the primary concern. At the same time, it fights to keep taxes low, wages high, prices down, and laws favourable for all the littler folk. It also works to ensure that all Halfling business are working together to help each other (and by extension, not the Big Folk). Far better that a Halfling farmer sell his grain to a Halfling miller, and he his flour to a Halfling baker, and they provide each other with a good deal, than any Big Footer getting involved and inevitably raising the price or excluding Halfling interests.

Indeed, perhaps the only thing the Lodge dislikes more than bossy Big Folk are Halflings who have decided, for whatever reason, to work against the goals of the Lodge and the Halfling community. Such actions only hurt the fortunes

of everyone else. Another of the goals of the society, then, is ensuring that this happens as rarely as possible, and that those who do so are shown the error of their ways.

The Lodge members are also involved in various charity works. They prefer Halflings to lift themselves up, but they know only too well that the Big Folk sometimes make this impossible for their people. They run soup kitchens for the homeless and displaced and maintain a fund for war veterans, widows, and orphans. Young Halflings who show intellectual promise can win annual scholarships to universities or elite apprenticeships. They also apply whatever pressure they can to other charities and institutions to ensure that their attention to Halfling needs is always at its absolute maximum.

Finally, they work to improve the reputation of Halflings in the eyes of Humans, so that they are impossible to ignore and are held in higher esteem. This goal is interpreted in a great variety of ways. For some, it is important that Halflings of significant wealth or import be seen to be such, and they arrange for wealthy members of the community to be tailored appropriately, and for their movements to be covered in the broadsheets. Likewise, any Halfling adventurers are interesting to the Lodge, as they have potential to bring great fame to Halflings, or ruin their reputation by association. Such folk come under close scrutiny. Should any Halfling achieve some noteworthy victory, the Lodge will swoop down and ensure that the entire city, if not the world, knows all about it.

Lacking individuals to trumpet, the Lodge trumpets Halfling achievements and cultural pride in the general sense. Marches and festivals are convened, pamphlets are printed, booths are erected on the commons, and soapbox speeches are given regularly at the appropriate street corners. These efforts are doubled and tripled when there is an actual issue to protest (and there almost always is) but even when everything is fine, the Lodge members are out there, making sure that nobody ever has a chance to forget all the wonderful things Halflings have done for them.

SYMBOLS AND SIGNS

The Quinsberry Lodge has two main symbols. The first is a ram's head. The ram is one of the symbols of Quinsberry himself, the other being a bunch of grapes, both of which symbolise a sense of lineage and paternity. The Lodge chose the ram because it has a greater sense of strength, and they like the image of them "butting heads" with the Big Footers. The second symbol of the Lodge is an ornate or stylised Q, which is often included in a shield or other heraldic device. Lodge headquarters usually bear such a device above the doorway or on the high lintel. Some Lodges may have a ram depicted with his horns curled into stylised Qs. In script, the Q is sometimes formed with the stroke angled up at the end, so it resembles a face smoking a pipe. Othertimes, a simple Q is sufficient. Lodge members – and most Halflings



in a city – know that any produce or dealings marked with a Q are under the protection and direction of the Lodge, and are not to be sold off to the first buyer.

The Lodge sometimes needs secrecy but it is also about pride, so it is not afraid to stamp its ram or Q device as prominently as possible on its members and property. Plaques are also sometimes erected, and certificates presented. Statues in the market will be described as "paid for by the members of the Quinsberry Lodge," while taverns give pride of place to a sign stating that their fine establishment "is considered an outstanding contributor to the Halfling community, by order of the Quinsberry Lodge."

In times when secrecy is needed, the members of the Council do have a hand signal, allowing them to make their excuses from their current conversation without giving away the situation at hand. This gesture involves making a circle with the fingers on the left hand and poking the index finger in the circle, making an approximate Q. Halflings are of course aware that this is considered a salacious symbol by some Humans, and thoroughly enjoy any confusion this causes.

MEMBERSHIP

In the eyes of the Lodge, every Halfling in its city—indeed, in the Empire—is a member of the Lodge, and this is not far from the truth. The Lodge itself is a small society, with few full members, but it counts every Halfling in its reach as being part of its operations and under its auspices. Whenever a Halfling needs assistance, the Lodge aims to provide it.

Not only is every Halfling considered, by default, to be a member, there are no conditions or ceremonies for making this fact. Halflings are not a ceremonial race to begin with, and tend to view the situation as “membership is as membership does.” The more the Lodge helps somebody, the more he tends to associate with the Lodge. The more he agrees with the Lodge’s ideas, the more he tends to help make those ideas come about. Soon enough, he finds himself smoking all his pipes of an evening at the Lodge, and that his circle of friends and business associates are all equally enthused by the Lodge and its opportunities. The Halflings also don’t see the need to label people, and there is no real stigma against those who aren’t heavily involved in the Lodge—as long as they don’t actively work against its goals. Those who aren’t with the Lodge are simply doing other things, and why not? As long as everyone pulls together when necessary, Halflings should (and certainly will) do whatever they feel like, sometimes ten times a night.

The typical Lodge “member” is a Halfling businessman or businesswoman (the Halflings have little time for sexism, or indeed any of the “isms” that bother Humans), of moderate or increasing wealth. This is also why the Lodge tends to focus on improving the financial progress of Halflings—because its financially-motivated members tend to be its most passionate devotees.

But this is not always the case. Some Lodgers have no great desire to climb every ladder, as long as they remain solvent and secure. One of the eldest and most respected members of the Nuln faction is Odfast Holwicket, owner of Odfast’s

Tavern and Pipehouse (which proudly proclaims itself “the Oddest place in town”). Odfast is a meagre merchant by any standard, but he is happy to be so because the long-standing reputation and tradition of the Od-house is more important to him than any amount of gold. Despite his lack of wealth, his elder status makes him highly respected in the Nuln Lodge, second only to old Elmina Edlerberrybrushburg herself. The Lodge respects age and tradition, but cares very little about anything else among its members, so the wealthy and the poor alike may smoke together in the Lodgehouse rooms, as can new arrivals from the Moot aside city born and bred types, and women aside men, and farmers aside bankers.

RECRUITMENT

As discussed, recruitment into the Lodge proper is a gradual process of absorption, rather than any active process of recruitment or examination. Likewise, all Halflings in the city are assumed to be part of the Lodge by default. There is, however, an important issue at the other end of the process. Joining the Lodge is a casual thing, but leaving its auspices is entirely the opposite.

What real power the Lodge possesses comes from two sources. Firstly, from whatever deals and alliances they have made with the Big Folk powers that be. Alas, everyone knows that the word of a Big Footer is not worth very much and such alliances are always unreliable. Their second source of power is the ability to make good on the threats they make in forging such alliances, the threat to be able to sway public opinion and control sections of trading, shipping, and business in a city. To do the latter, the Lodge must be able to control most of the Halfling population. The Lodge must be able to call them out to the streets to march or protest, and be able to rely on them to lock their trade down and support only Halfling interests, even when such actions may hurt them financially. The Lodge spends a great deal of its time shoring up its popular support with the Halfling community, through its charitable works and its celebrations of Halfling pride and Halfling society. With the carrot, however, there is also the stick.

Should a Halfling be found to be acting in a way that goes against the goals or unity of the Lodge, that Halfling may find himself completely blackballed. Halfling shops will no longer sell him goods, or if they do, it will be at an exorbitant mark-up. Halfling inns will give him the cheapest beer in the dirtiest glasses. Business associates will say hello in the street but will never stop to talk for very long. Halflings rarely take these things to heart so friendships are not forever severed and the punishments do not typically last long—just long enough for the Halfling to learn his lesson and acknowledge his mistake. Many times, however, the Halfling and his family choose to move on instead: Halflings are wanderers by nature and they often prefer to make a fresh start than try and rebuild the bridges they have burnt.



These measures are extreme and as such are risky. Halflings are a clannish race, and, like most families, are given to countless small arguments but always stick together in the end. To exclude one of their own is difficult for them and the Lodge must apply a lot of pressure to ensure it is kept up—favours are owed, promises are made, prices are lowered, and hands are shaken before such an event takes place so that the Lodge is sure it will succeed. It would be disastrous for the Lodge if the community took the side of the outsider instead, as it would ultimately leave the Lodge powerless. There is also the fact that most Lodge members find it genuinely distasteful to spread such division and cruelty: The teeth of their society should be aimed at the Big Folk, not their own people.

It is because it depends so much on the goodwill of the Little Folk (and indeed, the continued support of its firmer members) that the Lodge does not actively recruit. It is safer to let those who care little to simply go about their business then to try to sway them to become passionate Lodge supporters, and more profitable to sell passion to those who are already passionate. The undecided are, ultimately, swayed simply by cultural inertia. When most of their neighbours are Lodgers, it is easier to just go along with that—attend the same meetings, buy from the same stores, and sign the same petitions.

MEMBER BENEFITS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The benefits of Lodge membership are manifold, but often subtle and occasionally unexpected—and the same could be said of the responsibilities. Sometimes, the benefits of the Lodge's presence are invisible. Halflings in big cities have spent so long living under the support of the Lodge that many don't even realise that they keep prices down and taxes low. Indeed, apart from seeing them at Pie Week and hearing their name mentioned occasionally, many Halflings have no real idea of what the Lodge is or does. They would wonder why prices went up if the Lodge suddenly vanished, but they might not link the two events. The Lodge in general does not mind this—it is enough for them to know they are helping—but they do like to point it out at meetings and celebrations.

Halflings in business are far more aware of the Lodge, and receive more concrete and obvious benefits. They may receive some deliveries at ridiculously low prices, or have a tax waved on occasion, or be given large gifts on their son's birthday. These aren't given randomly (although they may appear to be so to the recipient), nor are they given out in advance. The Lodge does not believe in giving favours and asking for a return later; they prefer instead to shower gifts on those who have been (knowingly or unknowingly) the most helpful to their cause. That said, Halflings are a giving people and sometimes their gifts are given simply on a whim. On the

NEW HOLIDAYS

One part of the rivalry between the Altdorf and Nuln lodges is in the race to create (and then have ratified) newly invented Halfling holidays. After the Altdorf Lodge helped raise Pie Week to an Empire-wide celebration, Nuln countered by inventing the Fantastic Phineas Fumigatory Festival, a weeklong celebration of pipeweed and tobacco. Although this has been a huge financial success, attracting traders and buyers from as far away as Estalia and Kislev, it has been less successful at capturing the attention of the general public, not least because only men—older men—tend to smoke pipes. The Nuln Lodge followed with the much more festive High Hats Day, where Halflings (and thus soon many others) compete to wear the highest hats they can fashion. This has worked out especially well for the milliners of Nuln, almost all of whom are Halflings.

Meanwhile in Altdorf, support is being rallied around Hyacinth's Hunt, a day when young ladies remain at home until young men (typically their beaus) bring them gifts. Students are especially championing this, as the young men often find their own rewards for bringing gifts. Older folk look down on the public enshrinement of such behaviour, while certain shops in certain back alleys (run by certain Halflings) sell all manner of certain devices in preparation for the Hunt.

Still other Halfling holidays waiting to take off include Mannfred's Doom, which involves making straw vampires for young children to smash apart with sticks, Clock-Breaking Day, a midwinter festival to encourage the new summer to come faster (and more clocks to be purchased), Moot Day, where Halflings and children are encouraged to steal small things from Humans and adults in honour of the Moot being taken away from the Stirlanders, and Mop and Bucket Day, of which the less said the better.

Even if the Lodge fails to get their holidays adopted by the Big Folk, they still claim a triumphant victory (and secret guffaw) whenever a mayor, guildmaster, or foreman allows them to skip work on said day because of the "important cultural relevance of their ancient traditional celebrations."

rare occasions the Lodge gives gifts to Humans, this typically makes the Big Folk confused or nervous, but Halflings are used to such human neuroses.

Just as gifts can come by surprise, so can requests. Most of the time, requests are very standard—that those who have been helped by the Lodge return that help by keeping prices low and giving their trade first and foremost to their fellow Halflings. For many businessmen, it becomes second nature. But sometimes, the Lodge appears with a new request, and it can be obscure. Perhaps they might ask a wine merchant to give five of his best barrels to a certain noble he has never heard of. Perhaps a blacksmith

is instructed to tell all his human customers he has no arrowheads for sale until further notice. The Lodge doesn't explain, and its closer members know not to ask. The friendships and alliances the Lodge leaders make to keep Halfling interests afloat are complex and arcane. The members can see the benefits every day in their bottom line, and will not kill the golden goose by asking silly questions.

And make no mistake: The Lodge lays plenty of golden eggs. Every time a contract is awarded to a guild, the Lodge tries to ensure it goes to a Halfling-run guild. When a guild awards a contract to workers, the Lodge try to ensure Halfling labourers are chosen (even if this will increase costs). If a new noble comes to town and is seeking staff, the Lodge will be advocating that the staff be drawn from the Halfling population. If an expedition is being equipped, Lodgers will be on hand to recommend the Halfling blacksmiths, stablemen, and shopkeepers. If a party is seeking companions for adventure, the Lodge will remind them that Halflings are excellent cooks, have strong backs, make great company, and can definitely hold their own in a fight.

The Lodge Council is few, but it tries to have its members everywhere. When the coaches rattle into Altdorf, the Lodge pays some silver to the barkers to ensure that the virtues of Halfling porters are heard loud and clear. When travellers who might be friendly to Halflings stop at a pub that has proven hostile to the Lodge, there may be a cheerful Halfling in the corner who will tell them where they should be drinking. When revellers make to buy a pie from a stall at the market, they may find a hand on their shoulder, asking them if they wouldn't prefer a pie made by the real masters of pastry—not to mention a pie that hasn't had its crust stained by human greed and oppression.

Many of these appeals will not sway the Big Folk, of course. But a town the size of Nuln holds tens of thousands of Halflings. The opportunities to improve their lives and livelihoods are legion, and even a small rate of success can create a lot of wealth. And where it fails, the Lodge has other options, which is where the real obligation of members begins.

If the contracts don't go to Halfling guilds or Halfling workers, Halfling workers all over the city may be called to throw down their tools. If the noble fails to hire Halfling staff, the Halflings who work for his friends and relatives will make their displeasure known, be it with gossip at the marketplace or perhaps not passing on the offending noble's request to come to dinner one night. If the expedition doesn't purchase Halfling supplies, perhaps the Halfling cook will water down the stew that bit more, and if the party doesn't take the Halfling warrior, perhaps the Halfling ostler will fit poor quality shoes to their horses.

Again, not all of these measures will be effective. Nor will such responses happen every time. The Lodge doesn't have the power or numbers to make it happen often, nor do they have the security to withstand a massive backlash. The Lodge steps carefully, using its power when it will have the most effect. But when they do use it, they expect all their members—and every Halfling they have ever helped—to stand with them. Disloyalty of even one can weaken their whole crusade, and if anyone breaks ranks, the Lodge will make their displeasure known with all the financial and social pressure they can muster. Serving Humans is well enough in normal times, serving them when an embargo has been called will make the server a pariah among his own people, and suddenly far less in the black than he was last week.

— GM'S SECTION —

The Lodge members are not zealots but they are passionate in pursuit of their cause. Men and Halflings alike often do dark deeds in the name of passion. The Lodge is no exception.

SECRETS OF THE ORGANISATION

In every city where it has a significant presence, the Lodge has strong links with organised crime. This is often simply unavoidable, as the very businessmen that are drawn to the Lodge are also inescapably embroiled in the criminal underworld. Then there is the issue of racial pride. The Lodge doesn't wish to perpetuate the stereotype that Halflings

are criminals, but on the other hand, if there is organised crime in a city, then Halflings deserve just as big a piece of the pie as any Big Footer.

Sometimes, this arrangement is simple a casual association, each turning a blind eye in the few occasions when their needs overlap. Those businessmen who are crooked aren't asked about their dealings and they don't try to dirty the hands of those who remain (mostly) clean. In other cities, the association is one of almost complete overlap, with ranked members of each group being highly placed in the other and the meetings of one organisation doubling as a meeting for the other. This is particularly the case in Nuln. The Council in that city counts among its members "Bloody" Jacob Rumpelwheat, leader of the Resurrection Brotherhood,

"We believe in helping Halflings help themselves. Sometimes, though, we have to encourage the Big Folk to let us help ourselves—they have a tendency to grab everything with those big hands of theirs. But we find out own ways to get a fair serve of the pie, oh yes indeedy."

—SIR BULLYWICK APPLEBAG

a syndicate of very successful Halfling bodysnatchers. The Council is also quite aware of the many illegal goods traded at Odfast's Pipehouse. They make sure that any Watch attempts to investigate this are impeded by loud cries of prejudice and harassment.

The Lodges are rewarded handsomely for aiding their more criminal members, because the Lodge often has need of the services of the less morally upright. As discussed, the Lodge has to be very careful about flexing its claws, lest the Halfling community or the Big Folk strike back with greater force. However, there are ways to flex one's claws in a less public manner. Perhaps a wealthy Human who refuses to yield to financial pressure and support the Halflings in the guild may find his latest shipment of stock has sunk to the bottom of the Reik, or that his son has been beaten on the streets by some passing strangers. Meanwhile, a Halfling who refuses to unite behind the Lodge may find his shop suddenly targeted by random vandalism. The Lodge will harangue the authorities that such a crime could take place, whilst secretly smiling as the rebellious Downhills are bankrupted and forced to go home to the Moot.

Also kept secret is just how often the Lodge involves themselves in these practices, not to mention other behaviours, which, at least on the surface, seem counter to Halfling interests. For example, more than one Halfling inn- or shopkeeper has gone broke because the Lodge has forbidden him to sell to human customers or to raise his prices to a profitable level. More than one businessman has been "asked nicely" not to pursue his ideas for expansion or opportunities for great wealth because of some obscure deal the Lodge has made—or claimed to have made. And more than one Halfling has noticed that, all too often, it is the members of the Council who seem to receive the largest financial benefits from these back-stage arrangements. Of course, those who have suffered cannot voice their concerns, because the Lodge will instantly label them as troublemakers who refuse to support Halfling business and destroy all hope of them ever making a profit. If censure doesn't work, then the heavies can be called in.

The Lodge dislikes such messier extremes (things go so much more smoothly when everyone works together) and it hates to involve human parties (why hire human thugs when Halfling thugs sit idle?) but it is sometimes vital these things are done, and the Lodge's hands remain clean of them. They have no remorse, however, because everything they do is for the betterment of Halflings everywhere.

ALLIES

The Lodge has more connections than allies. Since it counts all Halflings as its members and prefers to limit dealings with the Big Folk, there are few they could ally with anyway. There are Halfling societies they do count as their allies, however—guilds and trading rings, other Halfling charity groups and pride organisations, and of course, the

OTHER HALFLING SOCIETIES

The Quinsberry Lodge is not the only society for Halflings or supporting Halfling interests. Some others include:

The Apple Banger Boys

The Apple Banger Boys is a society for young Halflings that operates in Wurtbad and Averheim. It is principally dedicated to keeping young Halflings off the streets and involved in community projects, such as "Clanks-n-Thanks Week" and fixing river barges. The most famous of these projects is baking their eponymous pastries and selling them door-to-door. So far, most people haven't noticed that the apples in the bangers are often scumped from human orchards the day before.

The K.E.D.H.I.

The Komission for Elven, Dwarven, and Halfling Interests operates out of Middenheim. Although the Komission was primarily founded to stop the elves and dwarves of that city from killing each other, Clerk Huggins Cartweasel does her best to represent the interests of the few Halflings who live in that northern town. Her current project is attracting great Halfling acts to the Middenheim carnivals, as a way of then attracting Halfling merchants in their wake.

The Campaign For Equal Heights

The Campaign For Equal Heights is a lobbyist group in Talabheim dedicated to changing some of the countless taxation strictures in that city of laws. They argue that since Halfling ceilings are half height, their building taxes should be halved. Some of their more proactive members prefer to break into public buildings at night and completely replaster the ceiling at half-height, just to prove how little space the short folk need to work with.

Crustie's Pros

Crustie's Pros are a group of crazed killers, led by Piecrust "Crustie" Buckblister, who terrorise the streets of Marienburg. After his parents died trying to keep up with human merchants, Piecrust decided Humans should be cut down to size, literally. He and his gang kidnap Humans and saw their legs off with a rusty bonesaw. The Watch is investigating, but as yet do not suspect jolly Halflings of such terribly crimes.

Groplotta's Gardeners

Groplotta's Gardeners are a fanatical group of masked Halfling guerillas working in Middenland who believe that modern farming techniques destroy the natural course of the woods and hills, with which the Halfling herbalist is so much more in tune. Groplotta is the Halfling goddess of herbalism and nature but for the most part the Gardeners are less religious than they are interested in maintaining control of the local lumber industry.

Halfling militias that are formed in various towns. In Nuln, they also find allies among the Halfling-run Resurrection Brotherhood.

In Altdorf, the Lodge's organised criminal connections are human-oriented, as they get their muscle from the dockland gangsters known as the The Elm Street Boys. They are also ably supported in Altdorf by the Priests of Shallya, and the two societies often collaborate in helping the Halfling poor and wounded. The Temple of Shallya is a frequent supporter of the Lodge across the whole Empire, and as such it is the best place for non-Halflings to find out more about the organisation—although the Shallyans have no idea of the Lodge's illegal activities.

ENEMIES

The Lodge has few organised enemies, but it has plenty of individual opponents. Every time they increase Halfling business interests, human (or Dwarf) interests suffer. Sometimes, this is simply the cut and thrust of the mercantile world, and leaves little bad blood. When the Lodge uses the entire Halfling population as a bargaining chip, however, and fights its battles with rumour and public opinion, there are many victims who feel great personal insult on top of ruinous financial injury—two prime reasons to seek revenge.

Even those who have not been directly hurt by the Lodge are concerned by their growing political power. At first it seemed a joke but more and more people are worried about the accusation of cruelty to Halflings, and that has pushed the balance of power askew. Rabblers and politicians alike call for a return to the old days, when Halflings could be knocked about with impunity and nobody had a care for what the little people thought about anything. So far, these pundits are too extreme to garner much popular support but all it would take would be one major event—the loss of a major guild project for example, driving many Humans out of work—to draw the racial battlelines in hard and deep, and for the pickets to rise.

Out of the public eye, illegal powerbrokers also fear the growth of any organised power group, especially one with such community influence. So far, the Lodge has mostly just helped itself and done little to truly impact either the finances or the control of these human forces—but again, that could change. The Resurrection Brotherhood is starting to seriously annoy the other crime gangs of Nuln. Wealthy men in the Purple Hand find themselves stymied by these enemies who seem to care little for the Hand's usual temptations and bribes. And the Lahmian Sisterhood have twice had to manoeuvre the long way around to get what they want because they had no way to control the interests of the Little Folk. Sooner or later, the Lodge is going to cross the line, and the real powers behind the thrones will bear their teeth—and leap to kill.

SAMPLE MENTOR: SIR BULLYWICK APPLEBAG

“And if that lunatic Bullywick comes knocking again, tell him I've gone on manoeuvres! In Kislev! FOR A YEAR!”

— GRAND MARSHALL KURT HELBORG, TO HIS EQUERRY

They say that Sir Bullywick Applebag won't rest until he gets a Halfling into the High Helms—an Altdorf regiment composed solely of men over 6' 6" tall. Sir Bullywick—or just plain Bully to all his friends—isn't quite so dramatic in reality. He is quite willing to let the Big Footers have their own special clubs for tall people, just as long as there is a commensurate number of clubs for littler folk. Citing Lumpin Crook's famed regiment of Halflings, the Fighting Cocks, as his prime example, he continues to campaign for better treatment and greater recognition of Halflings in the military.



That is, however, but one small part of Bullywick's eternal campaign for the betterment of Halflings. Wherever two Humans have gathered, Bully will try to find a way to be nearby, demanding to know why no Halflings were invited. The excuse that they might not want to enter a sewing circle for young mothers or a Dwarfen theatre company, say, is shouted down as poppycock. Bully is very good at shouting. He can shout so loud the whole city of Altdorf can hear him, and he will go on shouting day and night until he is satisfied. Most find it easier to acquiesce to his demands than to listen to him for very long.

Bullywick is a friend to all Halflings, especially any travelling adventurers, because they so often can bring fame to the Halfling community or, contrariwise, damn them all by association with their criminal deeds. Any Halfling spotted arriving in Altdorf by Bully will be visited forthwith to have his character judged. His companions will also be judged, to make sure they are treating their companion correctly. If they are all upstanding gentlemen, Bully will probably have plenty of jobs for them, too—in the name of Halfling betterment.

Sir Applebag is an Altdorf native, the son of Lord and Lady Applebag. His ancestors were originally titled during the Vampire Wars, when they famously offered medical aid to the injured Emperor at the battle of Hel Fenn. They immediately responded by moving to the capital and applying themselves to social climbing with the ferocity and tenacity of angry beavers. Although his family has always been politically connected, Bully is the first of the clan to be active in that realm. He fell into the role during his time at the University, where he rallied the few Halflings wealthy enough to attend into a fierce political unit, aiming to return the endless jibes

and practical jokes that were assailed upon them by the Big Footers. When Sir Hugo Lorrenstein left the Graduation Ball covered head to toe in tar and crying like a babe, Bully celebrated both a resounding victory and the discovery of his life's calling. Since then he has taken things to a higher level, using his family's connections to get his bombast into the ears of all he can reach.

Personality

Bully is tireless at being tiresome. Raised among twenty-three brothers and sisters, he learnt that the only way to get what he wanted was to be capable of making the most noise for the longest amount of time. Gifted with the lungs of an opera singer and the stamina of an ox, Bully excelled at this, and although he has moved on from childish squalls to lengthy political diatribes and street-side soapboxing, his *modus operandi* remains the same. He once famously won a public debate by talking for nineteen hours in a row, only stopping briefly to down a few pies and cups of ale as he went. Despite his constant stream of speech, Bully is well liked for his infectious zest for life and indefatigably cheerful manner—which is another way he tends to win arguments. People are so busy smiling and nodding along to his streams of verbiage that it's only after Bully has left that they realise they've sworn to do whatever he asked of them.

Appearance

The Applebags have always boasted that their name clearly describes their shape, and Bully is no exception. His stomach hangs low and round over his belt and under a barrel chest, rising up to a thin neck topped with a small head, of which most seems to be his ever-gaping mouth. Bully dresses in Halfling fashions but always immaculately, so that he can be assured entry to anywhere, from the Imperial Palace down. That is perhaps the feature most often cursed by his enemies: For a radical, he is infuriatingly well-groomed and respectable.

SIR BULLYWICK APPLEBAG

Male Altdorfer Halfling Politician, ex-Agitator, ex-Student

| WS | BS | S | T | Ag | Int | WP | Fel |
|-----|-----|---------|---------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 31% | 55% | 27% (2) | 30% (3) | 51% | 47% | 50% | 57% |

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Genealogy/Heraldry +10%, History +10%, Law), Blather, Charm +20%, Common Knowledge (the Empire +10%, Halflings), Concealment +10%, Consume Alcohol, Gamble, Gossip +10%, Haggle, Perception, Read/Write, Search, Speak Language (Breton, Classical, Halfling, Reikspiel), Trade (Cook, Merchant)

Talents: Coolheaded, Etiquette, Flee!, Master Orator, Night Vision, Public Speaking, Resistance to Chaos, Schemer, Specialist Weapon Group (Sling), Suave, Super Numerate, Very Strong

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 13

Armour (Light): Leather Jack (Arms 1, Body 1)

Weapons: Best Quality Hand Weapon (Sword) (1d10+2)

Trappings

Bully dresses to impress, with a blood-red cape with an ermine trim, a gilded belt, and a bright green doublet. He never goes anywhere without a clipboard to collect signatures and a small bucket to collect donations.

SAMPLE LOCATION: ALTDORF'S QUINSBERRY LODGE

Lodge houses around the Empire are all very similar to each other, but are very unique pieces of Halfling architecture. For the most part, Halflings prefer to build small, simple houses that encourage the comings and goings of anyone passing by. The Lodge houses require a modicum of privacy, must cast a strong sense of security, and should appear impressive and unyielding to the Big Folk. As a result, these buildings are large, multi-storey affairs that—on the outside—resemble banks or guildhouses more than typical Halfling domiciles.

Inside, things are very different. The massive amount of space allows the small inhabitants to turn the house into a maze, as warren-like corridors intersect with hidden rooms and surprising staircases. Halflings don't find this very off-putting, as they are used to just walking through other people's houses until they find what they want, but any Big Folk entering will rapidly become confused and ill at ease. Not only does this amuse Lodge members, they find it often helps with negotiations as well.

The plan below is for the Altdorf house but it could easily be any Lodge in the Empire.

FEATURES AND DEFENCES

Apart from the entrance (**Location 1**), all areas in the Lodge are at Halfling height: about 5' high. Visitors in the house will suffer a -5% penalty to all Agility, Weapon Skill, and Ballistic Skill Tests for every full 6" above that height that they stand. Anyone more than a foot taller than the ceiling also loses a point of Movement while inside. Finally, if they have been sitting for more than half an hour, those taller than 5' must make a **Routine (+10%) Intelligence Test** when standing, or hit their head on the hardwood ceiling. Treat this as an Unarmed Attack of Strength 1 that automatically hits the Head. All Dwarfs and anyone with the Tunnel Rat Talent may ignore all of these effects.



Example: Jorge Bloodsinger, a Norseman, is 6' 4" tall, putting him 16" above the roof height. Thus he suffers a -10% to Agility, Weapon Skill, and Ballistic Skill Tests, and his Movement drops to 3. His companion Hannah Dammerung is but 5' 4", only 4" above the ceiling height, so suffers no penalty at all. However, both Hannah and Jorge will have to make Intelligence Tests not to hit their heads after sitting for afternoon tea.

All Lodge houses are built to withstand a riot and outlast a public siege. Every window can be shuttered from the inside and the doors are thick oak. The cellars are filled with enough supplies to feed a small army, and also have secret access to the sewers and other underground tunnels. These connect the Lodge to the houses of members or provide escape routes out of the city. They also allow Lodge members to go to the Lodge for a drink on an evening without their wives or husbands realising they ever left the den.

KEY LOCATIONS

1. Entry

Two carved oaken doors open into an ornate room, complete with gilded picture frames, large mirrors, and a beautiful chandelier above. Coats may be hung to the right. Those who aren't to be given the run-around are directed through the door behind one of the mirrors. Others are directed left or right.

2. The Hall of Doors

This hall contains thirteen doors. Some are false doors. Some are locked, some aren't. All the rooms behind them are either empty or full of old furniture or junk. Halflings know that humans love to be thorough and they enjoy the persistence of those who try every single door.

3. The Corridor of Doors

This series of seven tiny rooms are also designed to frustrate. Each room is so narrow it can only hold two Big Folk at once, one if they want to open the next door. Here, persistence is rewarded, as the end of the passageway reveals a wide staircase. Those who are less persistent are provided with windows to leap out of, back onto the street.

4. The Maze

Although not a particularly complex maze, it is made frustrating by the corridors getting narrower and shorter at random intervals, and once again there is a joke at the end. The room behind the door in the middle of the maze is empty, apart from a letter on a table apologising most sincerely for the trouble. This room is directly above a seating area below, and thanks to amplifying devices in the floor, Halflings below can hear all the swearing that comes from above.

5. Pit Trap

Those who aren't careful along the Maze may trigger this pit trap. The polished-until-slippery wood floor drops away suddenly and diagonally. Anyone on it at the time must make an **Agility Test** or be dropped a few feet into the midden in the back alley below (no damage, although there may be a subsequent Fellowship penalty for the smell).

6. Trap Door

Near the end of the maze is a trap door in the floor. It isn't very hard to find if you are looking for it (an **Easy (+20%) Perception Test**), but hard to spot if you aren't (a **Hard (-20%) Perception Test**). In either case, it leads to **Location 7**.

7. Corridor

Dropping from the maze above puts visitors in a long corridor. The walls are imposing dark wood and there is no decoration, furniture, or markings save the doors at either end. Each of these doors is one-way, locking behind anyone who walks through. One door leads to the back alley, next to the midden below the pit. The other door leads back into the entryway, forcing the visitor to start all over again.

8. Stables

In the side street stand simple stables, typically full of Halfling ponies. Halflings aren't very prim and have no problem walking through these smelly facilities to the real door to their Lodge.



9. Main room

Halflings have far less need for privacy than Humans so their houses usually feature a large central room, and sometimes little else. This area contains two huge dining tables and several small drinking and card tables, and comfortable chairs near the fireplace. Chairs also sit near the library, and directly under **Location 4**. This room is, by human standards, rather chaotic, with games left abandoned on tables and children often running through it.

10. Kitchen

This is the large kitchen. Like any Halfling kitchen, it is never empty or quiet, and the fire almost never goes out. The trapdoor in the floor leads to a basement, which contains the enormous food stores and the secret weapons, and access to the secret passageways to other places in the Kleinmoot.

11. Sleeping Quarters

In this room are a series of bunks and mattresses, sufficient space to sleep two-dozen Halflings in relative comfort. Attached is the bathhouse and privy.

12. Smoking Room

This is the private smoking room, for the Council members are more privileged members of the Lodge. Along with thick pipe smoke, this room holds another library full of the records of the Lodge. There is a quieter atmosphere here, but it is still far more boisterous than any human gentleman's club.

13. Office

This is the official office, used for greeting new members or Big Folk the Lodge wishes to impress. It features a large (for Halflings) oak desk, and chairs only big enough to hold Halflings. Big Folk are always asked to sit, as their hosts try to keep a straight face. Like the entry, it is ornately decorated with marble and gilt and felt carpet. The left wall bears a large and exhaustingly detailed painting of the Battle of the Blamanges.

USING THE ORGANISATION

The members of the Lodge tend to be fanatics, and fanatics are great fodder for adventures. As long as the characters are in tune with the Lodge's ideals they will find no greater allies, but should they ever change that allegiance, the Lodge will become their greatest enemy. However, because their goals are, in the most part, relatively benign and often quite laudable, they are not enemies that the average hero will wish to destroy or attack. Typically, adventures are about finding the evil and stopping it. When the adventurers are dealing with the Lodge, the problem becomes one of negotiation. It is not disastrous if the Lodge is working

against them but the characters will find it far preferable if they can align themselves with the Lodge's pro-Halfling agenda. The task then becomes finding the ways in which the goals of the characters and the goals of the Lodge can overlap the most or conflict the least. Searching for a way in which their current pursuit can help Halflings will add extra depth, complication, and narrative potential to any adventure.

As an employer or patron, the Quinsberry Lodge provides a very attractive and only slightly poisoned chalice, letting the characters take just enough rope to hang themselves. To get them to take this rope, it is important that the benefits of the Lodge be highlighted as much as possible. This can come in the form of gifts or support. Gifts could include clothes, jewellery, and fine weapons. Support could include making charges disappear, removing legal restrictions like curfews or taxes, or the introduction of the heroes to powerful or wealthy people.

Another type of benefit is simply having the Lodge lay off its harassment. The Lodge are in a position to find fault with almost everything the characters do. They drink at the wrong inn, they visit the wrong stores, they don't treat their Halfling friends well enough, they make short jokes, they pay taxes to a mayor who uses that money to keep Halflings trapped in poverty and oppression and so on and so forth. The Lodge can be a constant irritant, buzzing in the party's ear everywhere they go. Should the characters fall into the Lodge's good graces, the sudden cessation of this annoyance will be viewed as a prize above all others. The characters will thank the Gods to be spared the strife, and will likely rush madly to join the Lodge if they promise to keep it that way.

And then you can tighten the noose. The Lodge demands its members give them their full support, and the buzzing may become worse than ever. Alternatively, the Lodge may ask for some larger favours, which may not quite suit the characters' senses of what is legal—or what is morally right. But the Lodge still isn't an evil to be destroyed; they have simply made a few difficult choices about what they care about, and the heroes will have to do the same. Interacting with this absolute mindset can allow your campaign to bring up questions about what the heroes really find important, and how much prejudice they are willing to just accept—as well as dropping your characters into trouble at the drop of a hat.

PLOT HOOKS

STRINGS ATTACHED

A few days after rescuing a Halfling from dire straits, the characters are surprised to be presented with a fine gift: a Best Quality sword of beautiful design and with perfect balance. Fighters in the party will soon find the weapon indispensable, but there is a catch: afterwards, Lodge members will make frequent appearances and ask



the characters for support. These won't be big things, but they may become annoying or time consuming. Examples include marching in a Halfling protest, tending a stall during Pie Week, helping an old Halfling move house, or bringing word of a recent Halfling injustice to the ears of a powerful Human. Should the characters complain about these tasks, the Lodge will ask them how they can be so churlish after receiving such a beautiful gift at no charge. If the characters try to sell the sword or give it back, the Lodge tells the city broadsheets and gossipmongers of these unfeeling adventurers. Given a relic carved by the great-grandfather of the Halfling they saved, in recognition of their great heroism, they discard it like common trash. If the characters surrender to Lodge pressure, the Lodge has a big job in mind for such brave folk, which—although dangerous—would completely remove their debt.

MOOTER THAN THOU

A prominent Halfling noble has been claiming to speak for all Halflings but some of his policies aren't in agreement with those of the Lodge. To countermand him, the Lodge have publicly accused him of being "too human," and forgetting his traditional Halfling ways. To settle the matter, the noble has offered to prove his Halfling qualities by undergoing a series of tests (for example: bake a pie, do a Halfling dance, carve a pipe, play Halfling rugger, seduce a second cousin, kill a zombie in the traditional Halfling manner, and so forth) but for it to be fair he demands the tests be adjudicated by Halflings of the Moot. He hires the characters to protect him on the journey to the homeland, a journey some Lodge members would prefer he didn't complete. If he does suffer an accident on the way, the heroes may be legally instated as "temporary acting Halflings" and have to complete the tests themselves.

PROMISES FULFILLED

The Lodge calls the characters in for a special secret meeting, where they are given a very dangerous assignment:

They must murder a very powerful and highly placed Human crime lord who is trying to run Halfling business into the ground with his protection rackets. If the characters succeed, they will not only receive monetary reward, but also the full support of the Lodge, including relocation to a new city to be safe. Whether they relocate or not, success here will leave the characters riding high on the hog for a long time. In any kleinmoot in the Empire they will now eat and sleep for free, and pay half price for all their weapons and equipment (and Halflings in the party will be offered full membership of the Lodge).

Just as the characters are getting used to living on easy street, however, they are visited by friends and colleagues who aren't Halflings. They resent the special treatment the characters are getting (especially any merchants they know, who are suffering because of Lodge finances), and are confused about where the characters' loyalties now lie. Are they Halflings or men (or Dwarfs etc)? And what happens when the crime lord's men catch up with them? Can they really rely on the Lodge to protect them, when the Lodge only truly cares about Halflings?

SHOWDOWN IN THE KLEINMOOT

After a long strike, the Lodge wins the guild contract it was seeking: The Halfling brewery will be catering for the next royal wedding and beer festival. Without this contract, however, the floundering Pendersen brewery goes broke and sacks over a hundred human staff. It is easy for the enemies of the Lodge to whip these newly unemployed labourers (and their lower-class friends) into an angry mob, looking for scapegoats. The Lodge desperately calls to any old allies to protect them when the racial violence sparks and the kleinmoot starts to burn.

Loyalties will be tested on more than just issues of race: old enemies or victims of the Lodge may find themselves working side by side with the society they hate, when they discover that the resources of the Lodge are all that can save the city's Halflings from a terrible slaughter.



CHAPTER IX: ROADWARDENS

Reader,

My name is Rigo Bacher and I am a Roadwarden of the Empire. I write this as I lie dying. Though my mind is clear, my body is wracked with age and the damage from years out on the road. Now my knees won't hardly bend and the cough that appeared several moons ago gets worse with each passing day. Nighttime is the worst.

The last time that I spent this much time in one place was back when I was a child in Selmigerholz. It's gone now, wiped out by unspeakable things that came howling from the woods. But that was a long time ago and the place is just a memory. Now, stuck in this bed, I've been asked by my good friend and companion Hadred, a fellow Roadwarden, to write of my time in that fine, noble role. Considering that he taught me how to use my letters, I figure that I owe him that.

I told him that I would be writing to you, a young man or woman who has decided to take to the saddle as a Roadwarden. Maybe you'll be reading this on the day you receive your Writ and pistols. I'm sure that you're brash and full of pride, braver than Sigmar himself, and probably as stupid as a mule for believing it. Rest assured, young Roadwarden, that the life you have chosen is probably the hardest that a person could ask for. You have signed up for days in the saddle, riding through wind, rain, and snow on trails that are hardly fit for a goat to walk on. Your legs will ache, your fingers will grow numb, and your belly will grumble for lack of food.

The people that you're out to protect will fear, even hate you, as you go about on your official duties. Every time you stop some fat merchant to inspect his wagons, you'll be accused of stealing. Every peasant you question will think that you're questioning his motives. And they'd be right to fear you, because everyone has something to hide.

But it's these hard tasks and difficult moments that make you a Roadwarden—that make you tough. Remember that you're the only one that keeps those roads safe for the ungrateful citizens of the Empire to step foot on. Bandits, highwaymen, scum, and murderers. These are the foes that you'll be facing. Greenskins, horrible beastmen, and mutants. These are the enemies that you must hunt down till your last dying breath.

Without you, young Reader, the roads would be lost and the Empire would crumble. Your task is hard, yes, but trust in your skills, your training, your horse, and your pistol to keep you and the travellers you protect safe from harm. You have chosen a dangerous path, but it is also one filled with glory and the knowledge that Sigmar smiles down upon you.

Read these words and learn from an old Roadwarden who has seen the beauty of the Empire and the horrors that threaten her.

*Rigo Bacher,
Roadwarden of the Old Forest Road*

— PLAYER'S SECTION —

The Empire is an enormous and wild place. Outside of the major cities, the impact and presence of its citizens drops off quickly, giving way to mile after mile of untamed forest and lonely hollows. All manner of danger lurks in these savage places, waiting to prey on the unwary and ill prepared. Normal bandits and highwaymen are easily the most common, but least dangerous threat that travellers can expect to encounter. Greenskins, Beastmen, and even minions of Chaos hold sway in the places avoided by good citizens of the Empire.

The trails and roads that cut through the wilderness are a double-edged sword for the Empire. While these narrow paths help connect distant towns, villages, and cities together, they also serve as a magnet for evil creatures, thieves, and murderers alike. In order to protect the roads and those who travel on them, the citizens of the Empire rely on the Roadwardens to patrol, acting as troubleshooters that allow the goods and people to travel safely from place to place. These brave Roadwardens are few in number, but vitally important. Without them, the Empire would surely falter and succumb to the many enemies that seek to see it and all of Humanity destroyed.

PURPOSE

The Roadwardens patrol the roadways that interlink the far-flung villages and cities of the Empire. They serve many roles: scouts for larger forces, sheriffs empowered with the might of the law, and warriors who take on bandits, Orcs, Beastmen, and worse threats head on. Some Roadwardens claim a single stretch of road as their charge, while others place a vast swath of land under their protection. Their knowledge of the land and its inhabitants means that Roadwardens are often consulted for information or asked to do dual duty as couriers, shuttling messages from settlement to settlement as they make their rounds.

Roadwardens put their lives on the line every day. Considering the relatively dismal pay, dangerous working conditions, and long stretches of time away from civilization, only those with an iron will and solid dedication to the safety of the Empire last for long. Of course, the exploits of valiant (or notorious) Roadwardens are celebrated in legend and song, so the lure of fame and adventure helps to bring in new recruits.

HISTORY

While there have always been individuals and small groups of citizens that have patrolled the highways and meandering roads of the Empire, there was never a concerted effort to combine their efforts or pool together resources and knowledge. All of this changed in the year 1706IC when Emperor Sigismund V received numerous letters and warnings from counts in Stirland about numerous deaths, robberies,

and disappearances along its roadways. By his decree, those already patrolling the roads on behalf of their local leaders were granted a new status as official Roadwardens and given writs that gave them impressive legal powers in order to help stop banditry. Little did Emperor Sigismund realize that the real reason for the problems were not Human bandits, but raids by Orcs and Goblins in preparation for their massive assault on the Empire in 1707IC, led by the Orc Warlord Gorbard Ironclaw. Averland, The Mootland, and Wissenland (then Solland) were decimated, Nuln sacked, and Sigismund himself killed in battle a year later.

Although their patron had died, the Roadwardens helped to push back the onslaught of Orcs and protected vital supplies coming from the west. After the Orcs had been destroyed, the Roadwardens, now official and flush with men drafted to their cause, flourished and spread throughout the Empire. Every province drafted their own laws that required a certain number of Roadwardens to patrol the highways and roads of their realm.

Over the years, the power and authority of the Roadwardens has waxed and waned, depending on who was sitting on the throne, money and manpower available, and the current political mood. Scholars have noted that the more corrupt or incompetent the Emperor, the more lax the Roadwardens who were charged in protecting His roads. For example, in the year 2101IC, corrupt Roadwardens in Nordland brought commerce to a grinding halt when a charismatic leader named Abelhard Trachsel turned several bands into a highly competent army of brigands, known as "Trachsel's Rough Riders." It took a combination of Knights and Outriders from the Imperial Army over two years to round up the last of the Trachsel's ex-Roadwarden force. When finally captured, parts of Trachsel's body were sent to Roadwardens throughout the Empire as a reminder of what happens when they exceeded their authority. This dark time is something that every recruit is reminded of and few ever speak of openly.

"Most people hide behind their walls and stay in their villages, fearful to step out onto the roads that connect our settlements like islands of light in a sea of darkness. We are the watchful eyes that keep these slender threads of civilization safe."

—MARCO DER ALT



Otherwise, Roadwardens abound in the history of the Empire, with particularly brave and diligent individuals serving as the basis for many fireside stories and epic tales filled with hyperbole. One such example is the man known as “Felix the Black.” This rakish Roadwarden dressed in the finest black clothing and carried a brace of pistols that were a gift from the Dwarf Lords of Karaz-A-Karak. According to legend, Felix the Black and his ebon horse could move a hundred miles each night and his accuracy was such that he could, from a hundred yards away, shoot the buckles off of a bandit’s belt, causing his pants to fall to his feet. He single-handedly captured dozens of notorious brigands, killed the foul Beastman known as Ungeror Three Horn and his massive herd, and saved nearly a hundred young maidens from certain doom. Despite the obvious exaggerations, Felix the Black did exist, nearly two hundred and fifty years ago, and was responsible for many heroic deeds. Most Roadwardens love the stories of this legendary figure and add their own embellishments when in their cups. Most strive to be spoken of in such high regard in the years to come.

THE ROADWARDENS TODAY

With the Storm of Chaos over, it is a dark time for the Roadwardens. The massive attacks by the forces of Chaos killed many of its members, who were among the first to witness the approaching armies. The far-flung bands of Roadwardens are hard pressed to bring on new members, all the while patrolling increasingly larger and larger territories

that might be desperately short of supplies and assistance. In order to increase their ranks, Roadwardens have been taking in capable citizens of all sorts, including ex-Soldiers, Mercenaries, and more than a few repentant Outlaws who use their skills and knowledge against the same people alongside of whom they once rode.

Since the passing of the Storm of Chaos, the Roadwardens have struggled to regain some of their lost numbers. There are old bases that need to be rebuilt or even recaptured, or if these cannot be salvaged, new ones to be built. In an effort to bring the Roadwardens back to their former status, key members of the Elector Counts have set aside large sums of coin to reforge the organisation. Of course, every time this money passes from hand to hand some is skimmed off the top, and relatively little has made it to the Captains of the Roadwarden bases, who write letters back to their superiors and lament their situation to sympathetic, but relatively disinterested, ears.

Some see the current plight of the Roadwardens as a blessing, allowing its members to shed old ties and obligations, and root out some of the corruption inherent in the system. New recruits are taught to steer clear of the tangle of favours and obligations at the local level. Some may not even have to bother with these old arrangements, as the Storm killed off many people, shifting the dynamics of power. Indeed, this power vacuum makes things interesting for the average Roadwarden, with many of the waystations and forts that could once be relied upon for food, shelter, and additional men, simply wiped out.

In many ways, being a Roadwarden today is similar to how it was long ago when the organisation was established—dedicated individuals taking up the mantle of protector and hitting the open road in search of the enemy, keeping travellers safe as they move along the road, with a passing nod towards the rule of law. Indeed, there are many Roadwardens who are little more than glorified vigilantes, although vigilantes bearing a writ from the Emperor to do their job.

STRUCTURE

Depending on where it is located, the structure of a band of Roadwardens varies wildly. Each Roadwarden is assigned to a band, and receives aid, supplies, and orders from the leader of this band, typically called the Captain. However, by law, each Roadwarden is autonomous and truly answerable only to the Emperor himself, although in reality most Roadwardens work under the guidance of some local noble or Count. The bulk of Roadwardens are content to join into bands, although some prefer working alone and even without a preset jurisdiction.

Bands of Roadwardens that patrol the busiest, and most important, routes of the Empire are far more hierarchal and structured than those in the hinterlands. These include the Old North Road, the Old Dwarf Road, and the roadways that follow the mighty Rivers Reik, Stir, Talabec, and Delb. The Roadwardens of these routes structure their bands to more closely resemble the military, with each Roadwarden reporting to an immediate superior. Their titles vary, but include lieutenant, Head Roadwarden, and Band Leader. These leaders in turn report to the Captain. A typical band has eight to twelve Roadwardens, divided into threes or fours. These small groups are then assigned a particular stretch of road to patrol and are tasked with familiarizing themselves with every hollow and switchback, and other important landmarks. Every Roadwarden band has some place that it uses as a base of operations, which may simply be the house of one of its members. Many are small keeps or large roadhouses, or even the castles and lodges of nobles that have given permission for the Roadwardens to take up residence within one of their outbuildings.

Roadwardens located in the more distant portions of the Empire run things a bit differently. On some stretches of road, particularly in the more remote stretches of Ostermark, Nordland, or Ostland, a single Roadwarden may be the only one working in a dozen leagues. These Roadwardens do not rely on their fellow comrades for assistance, but call upon local militiamen, young Outriders, and just about anyone else to help them out. Each Roadwarden ostensibly reports to a superior, but again, the sheer distance of these outposts means that they may only receive orders through couriers or simply dictate their own duties as they see fit. Given the desperate need for such individuals, the Empire has so far been content to let them do their work without much hassle.

The bases, or houses, of the Roadwardens have their own inner hierarchies, although the structure varies wildly depending on how many people each supports. Most are set up like typical country keeps, with a majordomo overseeing the day-to-day operations, who gives orders to the servants, who keep the place clean, fed, and protected. Large and successful Roadwarden bases are lucky to have their own small contingent of able-bodied men-at-arms who man the gates and can jump in the saddle when requested by the Roadwardens' captain. While nowhere near as proficient of riders as the Roadwardens, they are nonetheless appreciated when their comrades are in need of additional eyes and weapons when in pursuit of a fugitive, or when a mob of Orcs and Goblins has been spotted rampaging across the countryside.

ROADWARDENS ON THE EDGE OF EMPIRE

Although the Roadwardens are charged with protecting the highways and thoroughfares inside the Empire, there are some brave (some say insane) individuals who patrol the passes and pilgrim trails that lead to lands outside the confines of the Empire proper. In particular, there are many routes that wind their ways through the Grey Mountains, bound for Bretonnia, Tilea, or the region of the Border Princes. The ancient roads leading into the World's Edge Mountains are all that connect the reclusive holds of the Dwarfs with the Empire. Small numbers of Roadwardens claim these mountain passes as their domain—they are relatively short on the map, but fraught with dangers unseen in the forests and glens of the Empire far below. These Roadwardens typically learn how to speak Khazalid (or Eltharin if their route takes them into the Loren Forest) in order to communicate with the non-Humans that they encounter. If the typical Roadwarden is a tough individual, the Roadwardens who travel the mountains are made from flinty rock, learning to deal with rockslides, harsh weather, and the strange monsters that live only in these barren areas. Some even eschew horses in favour of sure-footed mules and donkeys to navigate the narrow paths and sheer climbs that are common on the routes they protect.

ROADWARDENS BEYOND

Most nations outside the Empire have their own version of Roadwardens. Those found in Bretonnia are the most similar in size, scope, and purpose to their counterparts in the Empire. The Roadwardens of Estalia are notoriously, even famously, corrupt, and are despised by most people who travel the roads between major cities. On the other hand, Roadwardens in Tilea have a reputation as steely-eyed gunmen who take the concept of justice very seriously. A small band of Roadwardens who patrol the highway between Remas and Scozzese keep their identities secret and are simply known as the "Men With No Names" by the locals; they are revered in story and song. Roadwardens in the Border Princes are little more than local militia, patrolling the relatively small

parcels of land controlled by their liege. Travellers expecting to cross the length of the Border Princes must undergo the scrutiny of dozens of Roadwardens as they move through each miniature kingdom.

ROADWARDENS AND THE LAW

Roadwardens are considered “free roaming lawmen” in the eyes of the Empire, with powers that let them move freely through the internal borders of the land and give them the ability to detain and question almost everyone. However, the vast majority of Roadwardens are chosen for their ability in the saddle and skill in tracking and weapons, rather than their ability to accurately interpret the law. Indeed, few Roadwardens are literate, and most have never seen a book of law (let alone a book) in their lives. Because of this, most Roadwardens try to become familiar with laws and customs in the areas that they patrol so as not to inadvertently run afoul of legal problems. Roadwardens are content to allow local authorities capture and hold onto criminals whenever possible, whilst they focus on the dangers out on the open road far from civilization.

For more on the powers, rights, and responsibilities of the Roadwardens, see **Member Benefits and Responsibilities**.

GOALS AND MOTIVES

Although the activities of the Roadwardens are difficult and taxing, the goals of the organisation are simple—protect the citizens and goods of the Empire as they travel on its roadways. They constantly patrol the lengths of highway that connect the cities of Humans together, sometimes taking weeks to make a trek, just to turn around and do it all over again, day in and day out. The Roadwarden is first and foremost a troubleshooter, and actively finds trouble in hopes of eliminating it before it can harm others. They make contacts with the locals along their routes to gather information and learn about potential threats, or to discover the whereabouts of outposts or hiding places of bandits.

Every Roadwarden has his own personal reasons for joining the organisation. Most take up the mantle to help keep their immediate home territory safe. These are the ideologues of the Roadwardens, who see themselves as the only protection that travellers might have out on the road. They usually take pride in the work they do and see the time spent and hardships endured a small price to pay to keep their homes and loved ones from harm. Some of these Roadwardens are far more bitter and jaded, having seen what happens when brigands, bandits, and worse threats are allowed to use the roadways of the Empire against its citizens—their burnt homes and murdered kin bolster their resolve to never see it happen again.

Other Roadwardens are enamored with the freedom that comes with taking this career or the excitement of chasing down criminals, bandits, and Highwaymen. They enjoy

the respect and authority that the position provides, and the pints of ale raised in their honor by grateful travellers in taverns and roadhouses. Another portion relishes the power that comes with the title of Roadwarden and takes delight in bossing around citizens and making them pay their tolls. Then there are the brutes and sadists who enjoy the impunity of rounding up, beating, and killing bandits, brigands, and Greenskins. For them, the day isn't complete without a fight.

SYMBOLS AND SIGNS

The Roadwardens have their own set of symbols, signs, calls, and warnings that are used to communicate with their comrades. In game play, this falls under the Secret Signs (Scout) skill. Most of these signs are marks set along a roadway to indicate particular dangers and the like, carved into trees or formed into branches. For example, an “X” with a line beneath it means that bandits are known to frequent a given area—each line representing 10 known enemies. A fanged maw symbolizes Greenskins. Instead of arrows marked in the ground (which proves too easy for others to interpret) to indicate a direction, stones, logs, or other natural items are stacked in a line, starting small and increasing in size to point in the desired direction. A stylized skull indicates Undead, while *actual* skulls lain in a particular manner tell other Roadwardens the type of foes that frequent the area.

In addition to the symbols they leave for their comrades, Roadwardens also have their own secret codes and “test phrases” that are used whilst out on patrol in order to identify themselves or convey covert information in the presence of suspects. One scenario that frequently occurs is when bandits capture a coach or caravan and then pass themselves off as the rightful owners when confronted by investigating Roadwardens. If a Roadwarden deduces the ploy, he'll use the phrase “they seem as solid as Sigmar” to alert his comrades, who will then wait for the right moment to strike by surprise.

To aid in identifying themselves in the darkness, every Roadwarden sets out with a few known passwords and uses it to challenge lone riders who may have disguised themselves as a fellow Roadwarden. Many Roadwardens also learn a number of animal calls and bird whistles to communicate amongst their numbers.

MEMBERSHIP

Because of their relatively small numbers, Roadwardens must be tough, resourceful, and self-reliant. Roadwardens spend the vast majority of their lives out on the open road, constantly on the move whilst tracking bandits or scouting alongside caravans, bands of pilgrims, and coaches. Most are content to ply the roads on their own, but many prefer travelling with a companion Roadwarden or in small groups.



After a Roadwarden has passed his recruitment phase (see **Recruitment**), he immediately is given a territory to patrol. Depending on the area and the particular road, a Roadwarden could be responsible for a few scant, but heavily travelled miles, or several leagues of seldom used, but still important, paths. Over the years, a veteran Roadwarden usually takes on additional territory or moves to new areas where his expertise can be passed on to newer members.

Roadwardens are consummate riders and can coax their animals to the extreme end of their capabilities. When on patrol, a Roadwarden can expect to spend all day in the saddle, getting off only to feed and water his mount. Most become experts in the care of horses and are exacting in the mount that they choose, knowing that they will rely on the beast with their lives. They are skilled with surviving in the wild, and some eventually turn their back on the more civilized lands to find solace in the quiet forests.

When speaking of the Roadwardens as an organisation, it is easy to assume that all its members belong to the Roadwarden career path. While it is easily the most common career, the strange circumstances in which the organisation finds itself mean that some of its members belong to other careers, where their skills are seen as assets. Coachmen, messengers, and outriders are also viable members, serving the organisation as necessary.

More sedentary individuals help serve the Roadwardens in an ancillary fashion. Every band of Roadwardens has a base of operations where they can rest, tend wounds, and receive new orders. Hunters and peasants are necessary to help provide food, soldiers and militiamen are required to protect the grounds, and even the rare scribe is coveted for crafting letters and keeping the books.

RECRUITMENT

Because of the nature of their work and the high mortality rate, the Roadwardens are constantly on the lookout for new recruits. Many Roadwardens are drawn from the small towns, villages, and farms that line the roadways of the Empire, as their intimate knowledge of the immediate terrain is considered a vital asset. Anyone interested in joining the Roadwardens must first show his skill on a horse and undergo a series of tests to see how he handles his mount. Recruits are tested on handling in difficult terrain, on long and boring patrols, and under fire. Only those who show complete mastery of riding are allowed to move on to additional testing.

Next, a recruit must show his skills with the weapons of the trade. In most cases, this is done on horseback, at high speeds. He must prove that he can fire and reload his weapon, even at a high gallop whilst moving through twisting woods. If he proves his worth with a firearm, his temperament is assessed. Recruits must show that they do not balk under fire, but also are smart enough to run when

the numbers are against them. Plus, recruits must show their own ability to lose pursuers or to outflank the enemy when they themselves have become the target.

Although every area has their own methods of testing recruits, some techniques are common enough to be considered universal. One such test is known as “The Hunter and the Prey.” The recruit is given a horse, enough food and water for two days, and a firearm with two shots. He is then tasked with hunting down one of the veteran members of the band, who tries to act in the manner of a bandit. This hunt can go on for days, with the veteran running the recruit in circles, through seemingly impassible terrain, and doubling back to make mock attacks on “caravans” or against lone travellers (other Roadwardens or allies tasked with putting on a good show). If the recruit manages to overtake the hunted Roadwarden, the tables are then turned and he must run and hide, trying to avoid being captured by the prey he once chased, with the goal of returning to the Roadwardens’ base. These tests can be dangerous and deaths are not out of the ordinary, as the recruit takes his mount through treacherous woods, on top of the likelihood of encountering actual bandits, Mutants, or some other threat.

Upon passing these tests, the Roadwarden recites the vows of his position and swears an oath to uphold the laws of the Empire, to protect its citizens as they traverse on its roadways, and to be vigilant, brave, and perseverant in their pursuit of its enemies. The recruit is then given his Writ of Law (see **Member Benefits and Responsibilities**) and is then considered a Roadwarden from that point on. This ceremony is usually followed with a great feast, with many Roadwardens drinking huge amounts of ale and performing crazy stunts on their mounts to the delight of any onlookers.

New Roadwardens rarely get much time to reflect on their promotion and are immediately given an assignment and territory, typically assigned to work alongside a veteran who begins their real education about life on the road, the tricks of the trade, and the best ways to hunt down the enemy.

MEMBER BENEFITS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

One of the largest appeals to becoming a Roadwarden is the freedom that it provides. By law, a Roadwarden is free to travel anywhere in the Empire, including many places that are otherwise protected by treaties and agreements against trespassing.

Roadwardens fill an unusual niche when it comes to the law in the Empire. Upon its official founding, the Roadwardens were granted several legal powers that pertained to their skills and abilities. Every Roadwarden is granted a writ (often carried in a protective leather case) that shows his powers and legal rights. However, more than a few Roadwardens refrain from carrying their legal documents

with them on the road on the chance that they are captured and killed, thus giving their attacker a chance to abuse the power that it provides. It is not uncommon for bands of Roadwardens to employ their own Litigators and experts in Imperial Law to help them interpret the numerous edicts and jurisdictional problems that inevitably arise. While they are not allowed to pursue cases involving public corruption, Roadwardens encounter such abuses of power on a regular basis and are, in theory, supposed to report such infractions to the local authorities, or even Inquisitors if such transgressions prove endemic. In reality, most Roadwardens turn a blind eye to these sorts of problems and try to do their job as best as they are able.

One of the biggest headaches that Roadwardens encounter is jurisdiction. The roads that pass through the Empire cross dozens of different territories, each with its own laws, rights, and authority figures to enforce them. A Roadwarden can only use his power when “on the open Road,” meaning that in many cases, he cannot legally pursue a suspect into a town, much less capture and arrest him. Also, the powers of Roadwardens do not extend to the rivers of the Empire, which are patrolled by their own sorts of lawmen and officials. Many Roadwardens just ignore these rules, doing so for the sake of “justice,” and more than a few settlements are willing to overlook the breach if the Roadwarden manages to catch the perpetrator within their borders. Savvy criminals or those with access to patrons well versed in the law can have their arrest and prosecution overturned if they can prove that the Roadwarden overstepped his jurisdiction. It’s rumoured that veteran Roadwardens instruct new recruits that the best way to avoid such hassles is to ensure that the perp isn’t alive at the end....

Here’s a sample of some of the legal powers that all Roadwardens possess (note that this power is not granted to any deputized citizens or servants of a Roadwarden base). It should be noted that some areas do not willingly abide to all the powers that a Roadwarden possesses and others have their own exceptions, meaning that every Roadwarden must be careful when it comes to interpreting and enforcing the law:

- The power to pursue, detain, and arrest any known fugitive or suspicious person that they encounter. (Numerous exceptions apply, however, so PCs should be wary of abusing this power.)
- The power to stop, question, and inspect the goods and cargo of, any citizen who travels on a road, highway, or legally recognized path of the Empire. This right does not extend to rivers and other waterways.
- The right to freely cross into any province or private land, excluding territory directly controlled by an Elector Count or a territory that has been marked off-limits by the council of the Elector Counts. This right applies only on roadways and legally recognized paths—once a Roadwarden passes the borders of a settlement, town, or city, he is subject to its laws.



- The right to use lethal force, both when pursuing suspects and in self-defence.
- The right to muster able-bodied citizens for the creation of posses in order to aid in the pursuit and arrest or elimination of threats. They can deputize individuals for short periods of time
- No citizen may stop or hinder a Roadwarden in his duties. (Again, hundreds of bylaws and loopholes exist, so a PC should show restraint in invoking this power.)
- Roadwardens who kill a suspect whilst in pursuit must answer to their superiors and explain why the death occurred. (Note that this right can be ludicrously overlooked in some jurisdictions and incredibly strict in others.)
- A Roadwarden must report any and all suspicious activities observed during the course of their duties.
- Priests of the recognized Cults of the Empire, as well as Cultists on pilgrimage, may not be stopped or hindered by a Roadwarden, although they must answer questions posed to them. (Many Cultists have argued that the last clause infringes on their right not to be “stopped or hindered,” resulting in confusion, anger, and many legal cases)
- No Roadwarden can allow a Greenskin, Beastman, Mutant, servant of Chaos, or practitioner of the Dark Arts to live. Willingly allowing one to escape can result in torture, interrogation and/or death.

— GM'S SECTION —

Few can deny that the Roadwardens have a daunting task—to protect untold leagues of roads from the predations of man and monsters alike. Those that take on the mantle of Roadwarden are guaranteed a lonely, dangerous life, but also one filled with appreciation from those whom they protect. Player Characters serving as Roadwardens gain certain privileges, most importantly freedom of movement and authority to question and detain suspicious looking individuals. However, they must also actively seek out danger, eliminating threats before they cause harm to the citizens of the Empire.

Roadwardens are the first line of defence for those who traverse on the roadways of the Empire. As a result, they witness many horrible things and come face to face with the ferocity of the Greenskins, the vile terror of the servants of Chaos, and, most regrettably, the corruption inherent in the Empire. Only those Roadwardens with the tenacity and will to fight on despite the odds have much chance of surviving, much less keeping their sanity in place.

SECRETS OF THE ROADWARDENS

Since they range far from civilization, the Roadwardens are privy to many secrets and information that many citizens of the Empire could not believe. Their own organisation, though noble, is often fraught with graft, internal corruption, and secrets of massacre and thievery. Roadwardens stumble upon Mutant outcasts, secret hiding places of forbidden shrines, and scenes of atrocity with alarming frequency. Although they relay this information back to their superiors to warn them of the dangers, most Roadwardens would be surprised at how often their findings are tucked away, never to be seen—if the citizens of the Empire came to understand just how many and insidious the enemies are, along with how ill-prepared it is to defend against them, then the enter system may come crumbling down.

ROADWARDENS FOR HIRE

As previously stated, no one becomes a Roadwarden with the intention of getting rich and dying of old age. The meagre pay and harsh living conditions mean that most Roadwardens have few possessions beyond what they carry on their horse. Many Roadwardens look to

outside ventures to bring in a few extra coins, up to and including illegal activities. Roadwardens cannot be stopped and searched by regular authorities unless there

is overwhelming evidence against them. Some use their status to move small, illegal cargo, letters, or other goods for individuals willing to pay handsomely for the service. Other times, wealthy individuals pay Roadwardens to overlook or ignore certain

situations, either allowing illegal goods and persons to move unmolested on the road, or to set them up for an attack by bandits also in the patron's employ. Because they "simply cannot be in all places at once," most of the corrupt Roadwardens get away with this ploy, although they must be cautious and not allow it to happen too often or it will draw attention to their lack of competence at reining in the attacks.

Other Roadwardens become little better than the bandits and brigands they are supposed to be after. It's not uncommon for a Roadwarden to hold up the occasional lone traveller or coach. Some do this under disguise (typically that of a Highwayman), but others are utterly blatant in their corruption. At the very least, many bands of Roadwardens encourage their members to impose a variety of taxes and tolls on travellers to help line their pockets, making these bands legally-sanctioned extortion rings.

Again, depending on the area, this terrible truth could be a secret held by individual Roadwardens, or systematic, with some bands operating as roving bandits bearing the Writ of the Emperor, allowing them to stop and shake down travellers. This type of operation typically occurs out on the fringes, where coin is scarce and so are the authorities that may come looking to root out this type of corruption. When this illegal behavior becomes too great, or the greedy Roadwardens rob the wrong person with the right connections, internal investigations come down from on high, up to and including Inquisitors and other stolid, incorruptible investigators arriving to ask questions and bring down the shackles.

Young or new Roadwardens are often forced to make a choice relatively early on in their careers—get in on the action and take a cut or turn their back on such flagrant violations and walk a more righteous path, whilst risking injury, blackmail, and death by those who engage in such behavior. Corrupt Captains usually reassign such idealistic Roadwardens to other jurisdictions as early as possible, but more than a few new recruits have found themselves

"Our numbers are too few and are enemies too vast for us to protect everyone who travels the Road. We must choose our wards with care and pray that Sigmar takes care of the rest."

—LUTOLF HERZ, CAPTAIN OF THE RIVER STIR FAR RIDERS

attacked by their fellow Roadwardens out in the wilderness after they have threatened to expose the operation.

HORROR SURROUNDS US

Roadwardens witness unspeakable acts and face terrible foes all throughout their careers. The lone Roadwarden who travels the lonely paths through the black, dense forests of the Empire knows that the numbers of Greenskins, Beastmen, Mutants, and servants of Chaos are grossly underestimated. Because they are often the only law around in the more distant portions, Roadwardens are often asked to look into rumours of possession, mutation, and the practicing of forbidden rites among the populace, and many find blasphemous things in their investigations. Their contact with remote farms sometimes reveals horrid mutations gone unchecked for generations or entire villages that have succumbed to the temptations of Chaos.

Many Roadwardens seek out the locations of haunted, tainted, or otherwise evil locations, so as to help others avoid them. Sometimes a Roadwarden stumbles too close to shrines dedicated to Chaos or altars dedicated to the foul Gods of the Beastmen. If not killed outright by these places' guardians, the unlucky Roadwarden may fall prey to the whispering voices and disturbing sights that often accompany these foul locations.

In times of war, Roadwardens skirt the line between civilian and military, often serving temporarily as scouts, guides, and protection for the armies or their supply trains. Many are thus exposed to terrible atrocities, seeing the full brunt of warfare and the horrors that come with assaults by the vicious Greenskins or marauding hordes of Chaos.

THE THIN LINE

Despite the tales and fireside stories that inflate the reach and amazing investigatory prowess of the Roadwardens, the truth is that the organisation has far too few numbers to make that much of an impact on the thousands of miles of highway and backwoods roads that crisscross the Empire. While the Roadwardens are suited for tracking down lone fugitives or dissuading small groups of disorganised bandits, they are no match for the hordes of Greenskins, herds of Beastmen, and Bandit Lords that lead hordes of brigands and murderous cutthroats throughout the Empire.

This puts the Roadwardens in a tough position. On one hand, they are desperate for additional men, money, and supplies to do their job and are constantly soliciting these resources from their superiors, wealthy patrons, and members of the aristocracy. On the other hand, they are reluctant to let it truly be known exactly how tenuous and fragile their reach really is—the myths and exaggerations about the Roadwardens have worked well for them all these years and they are loath to let slip their actual numbers or the territories that they no longer patrol because they do not

have the manpower to keep them safe. If the people of the Empire truly knew how unsafe they are on the roads and how unlikely it is that a Roadwarden will come to their aid, then fewer people would leave the safety of their villages and commerce would be seriously set back.

ALLIES

Roadwardens are happy to get all the help they can and work hard to build up good relations with local authorities, town elders, and other important individuals where possible. The Roadwardens' most solid ally is the Imperial Army, from which many Roadwardens get their start. Roadwardens work closely with military leaders where possible, who see the Roadwardens as useful allies and fonts of information. Roadwardens cannot directly pull members of the military from their assigned tasks, but many forge close relations with them to pull strings and ask for assistance when required.

Because they spend so much time in the wilderness, many Roadwardens also find allies in Priests belonging to the Cults of Taal and Rhya and Ulric. The fearsome Longshanks of the Cult of Taal are solid partners of the Roadwardens, seeing the latter as important to keeping the woods of the Empire free from marauding bandits and Greenskins.

Roadwardens who work near the Moot also find strong allies with the Fieldwardens—Halfings who protect their ancestral home from outside threats. The two groups work in conjunction, allowing goods and citizens to move freely on the roads, although friction does occur when Roadwardens in hot pursuit of their quarry enter into the Moot and run afoul of Fieldwardens who take umbrage with the trespass.

ENEMIES

Although the Roadwardens serve a vital role in the health of the Empire, there are many who view them with contempt, even utter hatred. Obviously, criminals of all sorts despise Roadwardens. Most citizens view Roadwardens with more than a little bit of suspicion—despite the tales of valor and bravery that they hear about them, many citizens have been shaken down by Roadwardens to pay out “road usage taxes” or “extra protection fees.”

In some areas, especially those in the more populated areas of the Empire like Reikland and Averland, Roadwardens and the local law butt heads about jurisdiction. By law, a Roadwarden cannot question or detain a suspect within the borders of a town or city and some settlements are a bit loose when it comes to defining where their territory ends and the rest of the Empire begins. Some local militias also prefer patrolling roads on their own and see the sanctioned Roadwardens as meddlers and outsiders who bring trouble to town rather than keep it away.



While most merchants, burghers, and other businessmen appreciate the service that Roadwardens provide, those who deal in shady goods despise the organisation and their right to stop caravans and search wagons to look for contraband.

The authority of a Roadwarden only applies on land and they cannot legally use their powers against anyone travelling on the rivers of the Empire. For this reason, many Roadwardens have standing rivalries with certain boatmen, smugglers, and Riverwardens who ply the rivers, thumbing their noses at the Roadwardens as they paddle down the river. Still, boats and barges must come to port at some time, where the Roadwardens lay in wait for their quarry to step foot on dry land.

SAMPLE MENTOR

HAUG BAUMANN

"Keep prattlin', your Grace. Beastmen, they can hear a whisper from fifty paces. I'm sure the way you're carrying on, you'll be stirrin' 'em up all the way past the mountains yonder."

—HAUG BAUMANN, ROADWARDEN
OF THE OLD FOREST ROAD

Haug Baumann is a veteran Roadwarden who claims the northern portions of the Empire as his territory. His years travelling the roads and forest paths have made him an expert in its inhabitants and some of its secrets. The Roadwardens rely on Haug to take on new recruits and teach them the intricacies of the job. His reputation as a serious man with unshakeable morals has so far kept him clear from the graft and corruption that run rampant within the organisation.



Haug Baumann seemed to have been born in the saddle. Almost as soon as his feet could fit the stirrups, he embarked on a life in the wilderness, serving as an Outrider for the local militia in his town in Ostland. After a stint serving with the Imperial Army, Haug took over the position as lead Coachman for a friend who had been killed on the job, and he served admirably for many years. During his time as a Coachman, he never failed to get his passengers to their destination unharmed, although he's inadvertently killed nearly a dozen horses from exhaustion due to his rough and fast driving. The buildup to the Storm of Chaos was felt early in his northern home and many of the Roadwardens he had come to count on for assistance on his journeys died by the hands of Mutants and other servants of Chaos. Haug realized that his skills were better lent alone, on a horse, silently protecting the roadways that he had come to love as if they were his home.

Personality

Haug's comrades joke (but never to his face) that he must have Dwarf blood somewhere in his family. Gruff, taciturn, and disciplined, he takes his job very seriously and knows that the only way he'll leave it is during a fight with bandits or dying of old age in the saddle. Although he has few friends, Haug is deeply respected by his peers who have long since acknowledged that they'll never see him crack a smile or laugh at a joke. He prefers to work alone and talks only business when he's accompanying travellers or riding alongside fellow Roadwardens. He despises loudmouths and chatterboxes, cutting them off with a short, but stern lecture about how sound travels in the wilderness. Haug's tastes are equally Spartan; he prefers simple meals of hardtack and jerky or whatever game he forages while on the road, and politely turns down offerings of feasts or rich wines and ales from grateful travellers he has saved whilst out on the road.

Appearance

Haug is tall and thin, with whipcord muscles. His years in the saddle have left him slightly bowlegged, which he wears as a badge of office. Haug keeps his head shaved, but wears a full, lush black beard peppered with steely grey. His keen eyes are dark, almost black, and perpetually squinting as he scouts the horizon or appraises approaching horsemen. Haug's clothing and armour are well worn and usually dusty and dirty from the road.

HAUG BAUMANN

Male Ostlander Human Roadwarden,
ex-Coachman, ex-Outrider

| WS | BS | S | T | Ag | Int | WP | Fel |
|-----|-----|---------|---------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 49% | 66% | 36% (3) | 31% (3) | 64% | 43% | 44% | 29% |

Skills: Animal Care +20%, Common Knowledge (the Empire) +30%, Drive +10%, Follow Trail, Haggle, Navigation +20%, Outdoor Survival +10%, Perception +10% (+20% sight), Ride +20%, Search +10%, Secret Signs (Ranger, Scout), Silent Move, Speak Language (Kislevian +10%, Reikspiel +10%)

Talents: Coolheaded, Excellent Vision, Night Vision, Orientation, Rapid Reload, Seasoned Traveller, Specialist Weapon Group (Entangling, Gunpowder)

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 19

Armour (Medium): Good Quality Mail Shirt and Leather Jack (Body 3, Arms 1), Shield

Weapons: Blunderbuss (3), Pistol (4), Whip (1d10–1, special)

Trappings

Haug wears the sturdy armour of a typical Roadwarden, painted in mottled green and brown. Unless he's expecting

trouble, his shield is slung across his back. He carries a bullwhip on one hip and a pistol on the other, and his trusty blunderbuss in a holster on his saddle. His horse, Gertrude, is fast, smart, and extremely loyal.

SAMPLE LOCATION: FAR RIDERS' KEEP

Far Riders' Keep is a medium-sized base of operations for a group of Roadwardens known as the Far Riders. The keep is ostensibly situated along the banks of the River Stir between Wurtbad and Krunnheim, although it is typical enough that you can use it in any location that is far between major cities.

Far Riders' Keep is the former ancestral home of a minor nobleman named Baron Luphold Behn. Behn was an eccentric man and a cruel lord to his peasants. In 2244IC, the baron was accused of holding guests, a relative of the current Count von Weben and his entourage, captive and then killing them and feasting on their flesh as an offering to the Gods of Chaos. Although the rumour was never proven, it did little to prevent a wandering Inquisitor from burning Behn at the stake.

The keep sat vacant and crumbling for nearly two-hundred years, shunned by the local populace for its past and frequent sightings of ghosts (presumably the devoured captives and Behn himself). A schism amongst the Roadwardens who patrolled the road running along the River Stir resulted in a band of these watchmen claiming the crumbling keep as their new base of operations. Over the years, the defences were repaired and the walls patched up, making it a perfect place for the Roadwardens to centre their operations. It is strategically placed close to the highway they are meant to protect, and the river lapping up against its walls makes it perfect for watching the boat traffic.

FEATURES AND DEFENCES

As most of the Roadwardens who call Far Riders' Keep home are out on patrol most of the time, the population is relatively sparse. Some of the locals have set up hovels outside the keep, providing much needed food for the far-flung headquarters. The keep also boasts a dock, allowing barges to make port and trade with the majordomo. A ferry

has recently been established at this dock as well, allowing much needed transportation across the river.

The keep is small, but sturdy, with several towers, an inner courtyard, and thick walls. Although repairs have been made over the years, they are still not complete and any Artisan specializing in stonework, an engineer, or a military expert could find several weak spots in the keep's defences. Far Riders' Keep maintains enough stores for its inhabitants to survive under siege for approximately two weeks, although most of its primary warriors (the Roadwardens) are not trained in responding to such form of assault.

KEY LOCATIONS

1. Hamlet

Over the years, a tiny, unnamed hamlet (the locals simply call it "home") has sprung up around Far Riders' Keep, drawn by the protection it provides and the chance for trade thanks to its proximity to the River Stir Road and the waterway itself. The land is ill-suited for farming, however, and the hamlet grows barely enough food for itself and the inhabitants inside the Keep. Most of the village's wealth comes from hunting (ancient laws allow for the Keep and its serfs to hunt in the surrounding forest), foraging, and fishing.

2. Main Gate

The main gate includes a remarkably sturdy portcullis and crenellated towers, allowing an unobstructed view of the hamlet below and the River Stir Road beyond. Two guards man the main gate at all times. They carry horns to alert the inhabitants of the approach of Roadwardens returning to the Keep or any approaching danger.

3. Courtyard

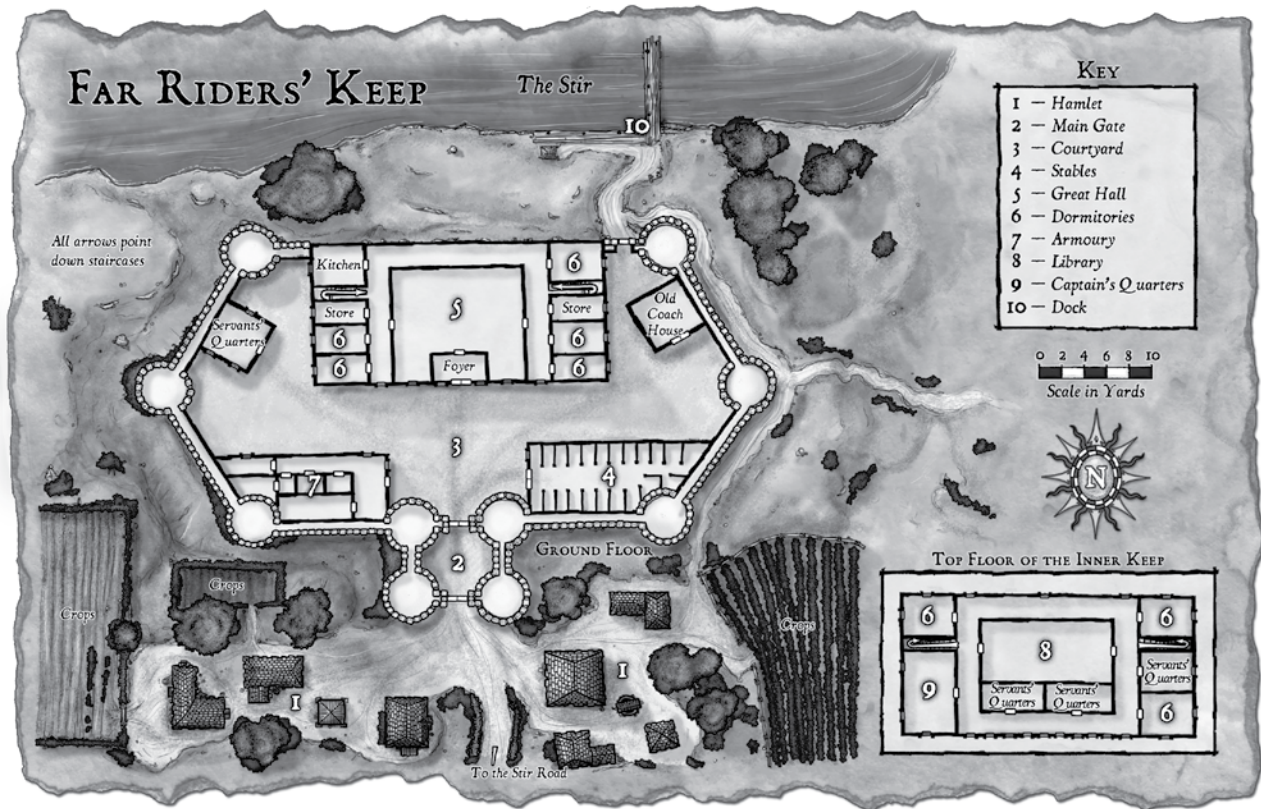
The inner courtyard of Far Riders' Keep is usually buzzing with activity during the day as Roadwardens arrive or depart from their rounds.

4. Stables

The stables of Far Riders' Keep are large and well maintained. Up to two dozen horses can be stabled here in comfort at any given time—the keep strives to keep at least two horses

THE HAUNTED KEEP?

It is up to you to decide if Far Riders' Keep is actually haunted or not. The Keep certainly has such a history of violence, depravity, and sorrow that such a possibility is within the realm of reason. If you're intending on using Far Riders' Keep as a base of operations for the Roadwardens and PCs in your campaign, it's best to work in the haunting gradually, with the occasional sighting, missing livestock, and NPCs screaming in the night when approached by a spectral shape. This could eventually lead to a full-on confrontation with the late Baron Luphold Behn or his unfortunate party guests. If you're using the Keep as a one-off encounter, the adventurers may be asked to help the Roadwardens with the threat—their enemies are mortal and corporeal more often than not, and they admit that they are far out of their area of expertise.



available for each Roadwarden, and they are constantly buying new horses to replace those killed or injured in the line of duty. A large store of feed adjacent to the stables has enough food for up to a month for the mounts.

5. Great Hall

The Great Hall of the keep was originally used by Baron Behn to entertain guests and hold court. The Far Riders use it as their headquarters, where Roadwardens receive their assignments, discuss tactics, and so forth. During the day, there are 1d10 people in the Great Hall and half that number at night.

6. Dormitories

The dormitories are for Roadwardens to bunk for the night or rest between shifts. Servants make due in other rooms or buildings.

7. Armoury

The Armoury is well stocked and boasts numerous hand weapons, suits of armour, and the like. The Keep has a relatively large cache of gunpowder for the firearms typically carried by the Roadwardens. This stash is carefully monitored and rationed out with care. The kegs of gunpowder are locked in a small, cool, dry inner chamber.

8. Library

Partially left over from Behn's reign, the library at Far Riders' Keep is filled with maps and books. The Keep's majordomo,

Lucas Allenstag, sleeps here, doing the bookwork for the band and pouring over maps and books to help them with useful bits of information. Most of the books and maps deal with local matters, and include detailed atlases, studies on the plants and animals found in the area, and histories of families and noble houses. A **Challenging (–10%) Academic Knowledge (Genealogy/Heraldry or History) Test** reveals numerous books and scrolls hidden among the stacks that would give considerably greater insight into the true lineage and rightful inheritances of several local noble houses. Such information could upset the delicate balance of treaties and agreements currently in place.

9. Captain's Quarters

The current Captain of the Far Riders is a burly Altdorfer named Horst Gaertner. This large room also serves as his office and bears an enormous, ancient map of the Empire (which would fetch a hefty price if sold in any major city).

10. Dock

A long, sturdy pier juts out from a rocky outcrop and connects to a smaller gate at the rear of the Keep. The dock can handle most of the types of flatboats and barges that ply the waterways.

USING THE ORGANISATION

The Roadwardens are the perfect organisation for “moving campaigns” that keep the players on the road, seeking

adventure in a new location each session. Their ability to move freely through jurisdictions and feudal lands (along with their companions, in most cases), means that they can sidestep a lot of the red tape, tolls, and other legal problems that come with travelling through the Empire.

Also, by definition, Roadwardens must actively seek out danger. They are constantly on the move looking for bandits, Highwaymen, orcs, goblins, and worse foes. They might range through the lonely forests, cut off from civilization, or may be entrenched with the numerous obligations, political treachery, and corruption found throughout the Empire.

Although many Roadwardens work alone, many turn to friends and companions from all walks of life to help them with their tasks. They are free to come and go as they please and consort with all types of people, from the loftiest of nobles to the dregs and scum, with most adventurers falling somewhere in between.

PLOT HOOKS

Here are some suggestions for including the Roadwardens into your campaign.

JUST ONE LITTLE FAVOUR

A well-respected Priest of Sigmar approaches the adventurers and asks them to perform a small favour for him. The Priest has learned that the Roadwardens (and thus the PCs) are supposed to make a trip along a major Highway on their way to Middenheim (or large city of your choosing). He asks if the Roadwarden could carry a small package on the way—a small token, barely weighing anything—and deliver it to a shrine just outside of town. Unbeknownst to the PCs, the token is actually an unholy relic, found at a shrine dedicated to Khaine, the God of Murder. The Priest doesn't tell the adventurers about the item's true nature, as he believes that it is more likely to get to the destination in the hands of someone ignorant of its background than in a large, heavily armed caravan that is bound to draw attention. As the Roadwarden travels, the relic seems to draw more than the usual amount of foes, mystically drawn by its power of murderous intent.



A CASE OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY

Whilst they are travelling along a road on their way to some destination, a surprisingly well-armed and trained bandit force besets the adventurers. During the battle, the adventurers wound the apparent leader of the group, who orders the bandits to retreat. A short time later, a Roadwarden rides up and demands that the adventurers identify themselves. However, one of the adventurers is a spitting image of the wounded leader (a **Hard (-20%) Perception Test** allows them to remember this) and the Roadwarden refuses to believe their protests to the contrary. He makes an effort to arrest him. The adventurers are in a quandary, for if they resist or even kill the Roadwarden, they are suddenly criminals themselves, but if they manage to convince him that they are not the bandits, they still must contend with the fact that the bandit is still on the loose, resembling one of their number—any of the adventurer's companions would also be convicted for consorting with a known bandit. They must decide whether to fight or join forces with the Roadwarden to hunt down the bandit "twin" before their good name is besmirched.

THE MIDNIGHT RUN

While Roadwardens usually freely patrol the roads, they are also sometimes tasked with guarding people from place to place. Any Roadwarden characters amongst the adventurers are asked to transfer a political prisoner from their current location to his sentencing back in Hergig, Hochland (or any other city that you prefer). The prisoner is an Agitator named Udo Jaeger who is being extradited for inciting a major riot back in Hergig. Jaeger is incredibly charismatic, persuasive, and connected to shady players throughout the province. The adventurers must guard Jaeger, who offers bribes, favours, and veiled threats, along the path. He rides his horse in shackles. To make things complicated, some of Jaeger's compatriots have hired several thugs and brigands to free him along the way and reports have been made about several clans of Goblins attacking travellers on this road. The trial is slated to occur in two weeks and if the adventurers fail, Jaeger will be set free on a technicality and will be hell-bent to seek revenge on his captors.

| | | | |
|--|-----|--|--------|
| Academy, Carcassonne..... | 93 | Hoch, Valdred..... | 11 |
| Academy, Luccini..... | 93 | Holidays..... | 105 |
| Academy, Nuln..... | 93 | Hut in the Hedge, the..... | 69 |
| Allies | | Imperial Navy..... | 72 |
| Altdorf Dockers..... | 10 | Imperial Ships..... | 75 |
| Brothers of Handrich..... | 22 | Jacobis Imports..... | 25 |
| Dreamwalkers..... | 37 | Johanssen, Hieronymous..... | 12 |
| Glorious Revolution of the People (Reformed), The..... | 50 | Knights of Magritta..... | 88 |
| Hedgefolk..... | 66 | Literacy..... | 44 |
| Imperial Navy, The..... | 84 | Marienburg..... | 83 |
| Knights of Magritta, The..... | 94 | Membership | |
| Quinsberry Lodge, The..... | 107 | Altdorf Dockers..... | 9 |
| Roadwardens..... | 121 | Brothers of Handrich..... | 20 |
| Altdorf Dockers..... | 3 | Dreamwalkers..... | 33 |
| Applebag, Sir Bullywick..... | 108 | Glorious Revolution of the People (Reformed), The..... | 47 |
| Baumann, Haug..... | 122 | Hedgefolk..... | 61 |
| Berthold's Inn..... | 39 | Imperial Navy, The..... | 81 |
| Broadsheets..... | 51 | Knights of Magritta, The..... | 91 |
| Brothers of Handrich..... | 16 | Quinsberry Lodge, The..... | 104 |
| Careers | | Roadwardens..... | 117 |
| Admiral..... | 77 | Old Docks..... | 4 |
| Cadet..... | 91 | Pendersen Brewery Printing House..... | 52 |
| Hedge Master..... | 59 | Quinsberry Lodge..... | 99 |
| Hedgecraft Apprentice..... | 59 | Raven Knights..... | 34, 39 |
| Hedgewise..... | 60 | Recruitment | |
| Pamphleteer..... | 52 | Altdorf Dockers..... | 9 |
| Company of the Comet..... | 94 | Brothers of Handrich..... | 20 |
| Corvin of Scheinfeld..... | 39 | Dreamwalkers..... | 34 |
| Cult of Morr..... | 38 | Glorious Revolution of the People (Reformed), The..... | 48 |
| Docklands..... | 4 | Hedgefolk..... | 61 |
| Drauwulf, Mathias..... | 24 | Imperial Navy, The..... | 82 |
| Dreamwalkers..... | 28 | Knights of Magritta, The..... | 91 |
| Enemies | | Quinsberry Lodge, The..... | 104 |
| Altdorf Dockers..... | 11 | Roadwardens..... | 118 |
| Brothers of Handrich..... | 22 | Reiksport..... | 3 |
| Dreamwalkers..... | 38 | Roadwardens..... | 113 |
| Glorious Revolution of the People (Reformed), The..... | 50 | Rothstein, Egon..... | 95 |
| Hedgefolk..... | 67 | Schwarzwasser, Ormil..... | 13 |
| Imperial Navy, The..... | 84 | Spells - Lore of Hedgecraft..... | 63-66 |
| Knights of Magritta, The..... | 94 | Spells - Petty Magic (Hedge)..... | 63 |
| Quinsberry Lodge, The..... | 108 | Stone Frigate, the..... | 85 |
| Roadwardens..... | 121 | Symbols | |
| Far Riders Keep..... | 123 | Altdorf Dockers..... | 9 |
| Fischer, Marcus..... | 68 | Brothers of Handrich..... | 19 |
| Floating Boat, the..... | 14 | Dreamwalkers..... | 33 |
| Fudge, Blackberry..... | 53 | Glorious Revolution of the People (Reformed), The..... | 47 |
| Gangs, Notable..... | 9 | Hedgefolk..... | 60 |
| Glorious Revolution of the People (Reformed)..... | 41 | Imperial Navy, The..... | 81 |
| Golden Eagle Inn..... | 95 | Knights of Magritta, The..... | 90 |
| Halfling Societies..... | 107 | Quinsberry Lodge, The..... | 103 |
| Haunted Keep..... | 123 | Roadwardens..... | 117 |
| Hedgefolk..... | 55 | Talents | |
| High Brother Daan Two-Fingers..... | | Extra Spell..... | 62 |
| History | | Extra Spell (Deceiving Dream)..... | 38 |
| Altdorf Dockers..... | 5 | Extra Spell (Guiding Dream)..... | 35 |
| Brothers of Handrich..... | 17 | Morrian Dreams..... | 36 |
| Dreamwalkers..... | 29 | Witch Lore..... | 60 |
| Glorious Revolution of the People (Reformed), The..... | 42 | Traits - Ethereal..... | 64 |
| Hedgefolk..... | 56 | Vampire Counts..... | 32 |
| Imperial Navy, The..... | 73 | von Siert, Haimreik..... | 84 |
| Knights of Magritta, The..... | 89 | | |
| Quinsberry Lodge, The..... | 100 | | |
| Roadwardens..... | 114 | | |

New Members Welcome!

Religions, wizard schools, and sinister cults are not the only organisations in the Old World. *Shades of Empire* delves deep into the background of *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* to bring you nine compelling organisations for your campaign. This book is designed for both players and Game Masters. Players can join these organisations, many of which feature new careers. GMs are provided with new plots, NPCs, locations, and adventure hooks. *Shades of Empire* includes full details on the following organisations:

- **ALTDORF DOCKERS:** These toughs rule the quayside in the Empire's capital.
- **THE BROTHERS OF HANDRICH:** Dedicated members of the Cult of Handrich, the Brothers are not afraid to get their hands dirty.
- **THE DREAMWALKERS:** These servants of Morr hunt Undead and Necromancers across the Old World.
- **THE GLORIOUS REVOLUTION OF THE PEOPLE:** Agitators with a cause, they fight for the common people of the Empire and an end to the monarchy and the nobility.
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- **THE KNIGHTS OF MAGRITTA:** Once a crusading order from Estalia, the Knights are now a secret society with a long reach.
- **THE QUINSBERRY LODGE:** This organisation ensures that Halflings across the Empire get fair and equal treatment. Or else.
- **THE ROADWARDENS:** Travellers count on the Roadwardens to keep the highways and byways of the Empire safe in the face of beastmen, outlaws, and other threats.

Shades of Empire has something exciting for every WFRP game. It's time for your campaign to get organised!

Adventure Awaits!

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