

WARHAMMER

VAMPIRE COUNTS



WARHAMMER ARMIES





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VAMPIRE COUNTS



By Mathias Eliasson
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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Warhammer: Vampire Counts, a gruesome grimoire that reveals the secrets of the lords of the night and their Undead minions. This book provides all the information you'll require to collect and play with a Vampire Counts army in games of Warhammer.

WHY COLLECT VAMPIRE COUNTS?

The Vampire Counts are fiends without equal. They seek to topple the civilisations of the living and supplant them with an Undead empire. Each Vampire is a unique and majestic figure with his own personality, drive and ambition. In contrast, their minions are mindlessly obedient – rank after rank of ragged and dirt-encrusted cadavers forced back to life by their masters' necromantic power.

A Vampire Counts army arrayed on the battlefield is a frightening sight. Amongst the endless ranks of maggottidden corpses and clacking, rust-clad Skeletons come hideous and misshapen predators. The skies fill with the rustle of a thousand leathery wings as giant bats whirl and screech. At the heart of this nightmare ride the Vampires themselves, moonlight gleaming from their fangs as they smile in the anticipation of the slaughter to come.

HOW THIS BOOK WORKS

Warhammer army books are split into sections, each of which deals with a different aspect of the army. *Warhammer: Vampire Counts* contains:

- **The Living Dead:** This section describes the history of the Vampire Counts, from the coming of Nagash to the undying aristocracy of the von Carsteins that holds the blasted wilderness of Sylvania in thrall.
- **Undying Hordes:** Each and every unit type in the army is examined here, with a full description alongside its complete rules. This section also includes the Vampire Counts' unique magical artefacts and macabre spell lore.
- **Vampire Counts Army List:** The army list takes all of the characters, warriors, monsters and war machines presented in the previous section and arranges them so you can choose an army for your games. Units are classed as Characters (Lords or Heroes), Core, Special, or Rare, and can be taken in different quantities depending on the size of the game you are playing.

FIND OUT MORE

While *Warhammer: Vampire Counts* contains everything you need to play the game with your army, there are other books and updates to be found. For the other books in the series and the latest rules updates, visit:

www.warhammerarmiesproject.blogspot.com







THE RESTLESS DEAD

In the forsaken lands of Sylvania, ancient evils stir and armies long dead stand ready for battle. Raised from mass graves and despoiled tombs, the Undead battalions of the Vampire Counts gather amidst the tumbled ruins and blasted groves of this ill-favoured realm. Upon fen and moor, creatures of darkness that have haunted the nightmares of Men for millennia break free from ancient cairns and age-worn mausoleums. In the eternal gloom can be heard the scrape of bone on bone, wordless moans, and the clank of rusted wargear. The unliving host advances, a tide of resurrected corpses, driven on by necromantic magic and the undying will of its Vampire general.

The living dead strike fear into the hearts of their foes, for they are a blasphemy against nature and reason. Legions of shambling soldiers wear down their enemies in a relentless tide, whilst monstrous beasts and deathless knights crush all opposition. Those that fall to the Undead armies soon rise again – where once stood defiant enemy soldiers now stand the twitching corpse-puppets of a morbid fiend.

UNDEATH ASCENDANT

No pulse, no breathe, no life, yet still they stir. Dead, but dreaming, they exist to plague the living with thoughts of their own mortality. With tongue-less mouths, they whisper a single name: Nagash. Nagash the Black, first and greatest Necromancer to ever stride the Old World, who in ancient days rivalled and challenged the gods themselves. So great was his fear of what lied beyond the realm of flesh that he was willing to commit any blasphemy, if only he could master death. From his researches and his rituals arose the Undead. In the Empire, talk of the Restless Dead turns all eyes to the east, towards Sylvania, a cursed land and once the strong hold of the great Von Carstein Vampire Counts who have all, supposedly, been destroyed. There are few that truly believe that, for those that have returned from the grave once can surely do so again.

The dead do not rest easy. Vampires lurk in haunted castles in the sinister forests of Sylvania. Necromancers seek to escape their mortality by searching for forbidden knowledge within the pages of accursed books. Ghouls infest the abandoned cemeteries of Moussillon. In lost pyramids buried beneath the desert sands of the Kingdom of the Dead, the Liche Lords rule over legions of corpses, their servants in death as they were in life. Armies slain in the poisoned wilderness of the Chaos Wastes do not lie dead as others do. Often they return to a ghastly unlife and bring terror to former comrades along the boundaries of Kislev. In the musty crypts of centuries-dead noblemen, tomb robbers freeze in terror when they hear the clink of silver rings and movement behind them in the darkness.



Fear of the walking dead and loathing of the necromantic arts is almost universal, and yet the dark art and its practitioners persist in hidden places and remote ruins. The roots of the dark art of necromancy and the curse of Undeath are buried deep within the history of the Old World. Often unseen and very subtle, the cold hand of Undeath nevertheless rests heavily over the Old World.

The mortal world is a dire place of ceaseless sorrow and deepest regret. It is a world of unending wars, famine and pestilence where hope is a commodity as precious as silver or gold. It is said that should a mortal meet his end tragically his soul maybe given reason to linger amongst the living, seeking the peace of the grave.

Few are the places in the world that go untouched by the ravages of war. For generations, countless warriors of every race and creed have fought and died across the world's battlefields. It is far too often the case that the wounded are left to die and rot where they fell. To those versed in the black arts of necromancy, such dead can be infused with the morbid energies of dark magic, and commanded to fight once again.

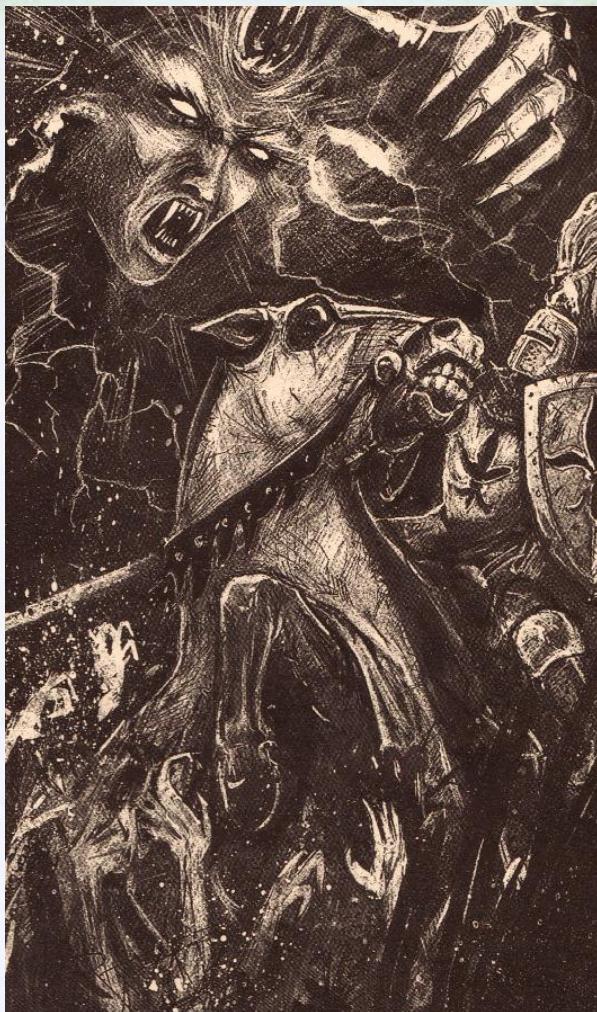
Necromancy is the magic of the dead. It allows a Necromancer to summon and command Undead creatures, and to manipulate the winds of magic so that they can age or kill mortals in mere seconds. Their spells summon back the spirits of the dead to animate corpses, and also provide the power for the Undead to move and sense the world of the living, albeit dimly. Filled with magical vigour, the Undead are an ever-present plague on the living. This horror becomes a waking nightmare when these unholy forces are bound to the will of a power-hungry Vampire.



THE VAMPIRE COUNTS

Since time began, there have been many legends of undying predators of the night who walk in the guise of men. As long as anyone can remember, people have spoken in hushed tones of beasts that hunt the unwary and because of them men have shunned the darkness. For untold centuries the word Vampire has haunted the Old World. Vampires are known by many names. Bretonnians call them Nosferatu, while in Kislev these evil creatures are known as Upyr. The folk of Estalia know them, however, as Wamphyri.

In the cobwebbed castles of the Old World lurk the Vampire Counts, masters of undeath and a scourge upon all living things. Far stronger than mortal men and serpent-fast, Vampires are frighteningly accomplished warriors. Raw dark magic flows in their veins, and at their command great hordes of decayed and rotting Undead warriors rise from the grave to wage war upon the living.



More folklore and legends surround the Vampires than any other creature of the night. Since time immemorial they have been seen as monstrous flesh-eaters, charismatic lords and ladies, and dread generals of the Undead. The most powerful of the walking dead, the Vampire race was created by unholy rituals and dread elixir many thousands of years ago.

Though physically strong, fast and resilient, it is not these qualities that make the Vampires such a threat. It is will and force of personality that drives the Vampires to seek great power, a driving force that most other Undead creatures lack. Imbued with supernatural control over the dead, Vampires make natural leaders for the armies of Undead that plague the world. Though loathed and hunted, Vampires also lurk within human society, either masquerading as aristocrats, or dwelling in haunted citadels on the edges of civilisation.

All Vampires were once human, with hopes, dreams and families of their own. Even though traces of emotion still stir in their shrivelled hearts, the Blood Kiss has transformed them into monsters without exception. Their once-humble aspirations have been consumed, twisted into a desire to conquer and rule over the mortals they left behind. In truth, though, Vampires cannot forget their past lives. Their names and heraldic symbols will be emblazoned on the shields and banners of their Undead armies, for Vampires are proud creatures that revel in the terror

they cause. Whether sorcerer or warrior, a Vampire's immortal existence is fuelled by a craving for magical power and worldly domination.

Any scholar of the black arts worth his bloodstained salt knows that it is their terrible ambition that makes Vampires so truly dangerous. Unlike the fleshy automatons and unquiet spirits that serve them, the lords of undeath are possessed of a burning desire to conquer. They work in the shadows to see Nagash's vision realised, for all truly sentient Undead lust after one thing above all – a worldwide necropolis where all are subservient to their will, the living slaughtered like cattle and raised back to life as mindlessly obedient servants to the lords of the dead.

This deadly ambition was writ large during the Vampire Wars. For over a century, the infamous von Carsteins of Sylvania waged war upon the Empire, leading armies of Undead the like of which had not been seen since the time of Sigmar. Three successive von Carstein Vampires arose to challenge for rulership of the Old World – Vlad, Konrad and Mannfred – each a unique and deadly threat. Under the command of the Vampire Counts, hordes of Zombies, legions of Skeletons and hosts of other fell Undead creatures besieged the Empire in a relentless campaign for control. Divided by politics and war, the Empire was almost overrun and came close to being enslaved to the will of a Vampire Emperor. It was only through the sacrifices of the armies of the Elector Counts, and the efforts of a few remarkable heroes of the Empire, that the Undead were held at bay.

Though the von Carsteins were eventually defeated, persistent rumours claim to this day that the last of the Vampire Counts, Mannfred von Carstein, escaped destruction and bides his time. For centuries, the tales say, he has awaited the moment when the Empire is once more weak and vulnerable. When the darkness gathers, the armies of Sylvania will go forth again, greater than ever before. While dead things stir in their graves and travellers disappear in the middle of the night in the wilds of haunted Sylvania, there is always the fear that one day the Vampire Counts will rise again, to sweep away the rule of the living and create an eternal empire of the Undead.

THE MIDNIGHT ARISTOCRACY

Vampires are tall and alabaster-skinned, long of claw and fang, many times as strong as a man and faster than the mortal eye can follow. A portion of their number can pass for human in dim light; indeed, many dwell nestled in the hot-blooded bosom of the cities of the Old World. There they pose as aristocrats and eccentric lords, slowly bleeding dry the populace at large, who go about their humdrum lives completely ignorant of the diabolical terrors in their midst.

Practically impervious to harm, Vampires are fantastically adept warriors with centuries of unlife in which to sharpen their hypnotic powers and martial prowess. Indeed it is said there are only seven ways to kill a Vampire, the most commonly known of which are to transfix it through the heart with sharpened

hawthorn or behead it with a silvered blade. Though crones and scholars tell that it is blood that empowers and energises the Vampire Counts, it is really the magic that flows in their veins that is the secret to their powers. They are able to summon up hordes of the dead which claw their way from the sodden earth to fight again, their ferocity resurrected whilst their compassion and humanity is left behind in the empty grave.



The Vampires of the Old World haunt the darkness, filled with an insatiable thirst for human blood and saturated with the raw power of Dark Magic. Since the defeat of the von Carsteins, most Vampires remain hidden from the eyes of Man. However, Vampires occasionally inveigle themselves into the great cities of the Empire, moving in high society where their lordly positions allow them to conceal their true natures. Some lurk in the deep woodlands or within dark caverns, preying on travellers and peasants. A few dwell within the mist-shrouded ruins of their old castles and emerge from their cobwebbed crypts to feast intermittently on whatever they can find. Others still have become debased and feral creatures, feeding on fresh corpses in graveyards and making their lairs in dusty mausoleums.

Such is the Vampires' innate dominion over death that it is impossible to ever know for certain whether they have been slain. They have a habit of returning and wreaking terrible vengeance on their would-be slayers when least expected. A Vampire can lie dormant for years, decades or even centuries, gathering his might while his minions prepare the way for his return to power. Once at his full strength, the Vampire will muster a horde of the Undead and go forth once more, fighting in pursuit of his depraved ambitions, seeking to reclaim the territories that it once ruled. Many have been repelled only at great cost to the troops of the Empire.

When a powerful Vampire stirs, the Dark Magic he exudes acts as a magical beacon to spirits and dead things for many miles around. In this manner, a Vampire draws all manner of dreadful creatures to his service. Ghouls and Crypt Horrors leave their graveyard lairs and Dire Wolves slink out from the shadowy forests. Ghosts and spectres, revenants of dead warriors and murdered men, draw strength from the Vampire and weave insubstantial forms for themselves in order to plague the warm-blooded living. Slack-jawed Zombies claw themselves out of shallow graves at the Vampire's command. Units of armoured Wights stalk forwards in a parody of disciplined soldiery, flanked by beasts of the wild that have been reshaped by the energies of necromancy into something far more hideous. The skies above the Vampire writhe with swarms of blood-sucking bats, some of which are as large as the dreaded Zombie Dragons that bear the lords of undeath to battle. Twisted mockeries of once-noble predators flap through the cold air alongside unliving monstrosities borne upon leathery wings.





The deathly adepts known as Necromancers can also feel the rising of such a lord of darkness, and will leave their hiding places to serve at the feet of a truly undying master. They bargain their skills and servitude in exchange for more knowledge, or in the hope of earning the Blood Kiss themselves. Some bear dread artefacts to war upon palanquins of the dead, hoping to use the might of their unholy predecessors against their prey. Perhaps most deadly of all those summoned are the other Vampires that heed the dark call – some sired by the Vampire and therefore bonded to it by magic and blood, others seeking alliance or simply a chance for fresh slaughter.

THE BEAST WITHIN

Whilst Vampires have the same physical appearance, they are nothing like the humans amongst whom they hide. Behind their masks of grace and beauty lives a predator, a hunter of the living. Even if the Vampires were good and honest souls during their mortal lives, the use of necromantic powers and the unnatural hunger for human blood would soon corrupt them. Continuous life amongst the dead will slowly drive them to morbidity and insanity and the dark magic, which they have to use, will drive them into evil.

A Vampire has to keep his tainted blood and raging dark energy checked. Often this becomes too much, and an angry Vampire can kill a man in a fit of rage. An enraged Vampire is terrible to behold – he transforms from his mortal likeness into a fiend with razor-sharp fangs, long talons and bestial features. His eyes gleam with unnatural light and the mere glance of a Vampire can cause the bravest mortal warrior to flee in panic.

After a time, a Vampire becomes so soaked in blood that he no longer cares about the death of a mortal. He may still have his human appearance, but no pity, compassion or mercy lives in his cold, unbeating heart. Vampiric blood flows through his veins and he is so unnatural that he casts no reflection on mirrored surfaces. He is now truly of the Undead.

To a Vampire, human society is a blur of change, for they do not age or change as men do. Such a life puts a terrible pressure on the minds of these beings and madness is their constant companion. If one considers the differences between these immortals and mere humans, it is easy to see why Vampires feel no pity or kinship with men. Their terrible hunger forces them into acts of murder and violence and their physical and mental superiority is vast. It is little wonder that Vampires view all of humanity as mere cattle.

Many Vampires grow weary of their eternal existence, but they fear their final death more than the horror of living forever as an Undead. It is said that their evil deeds condemn them to eternal torture in the realm of the dead and thus they cling to their bodily lives, hating their unlife but fearing the final judgement which will be passed on them in the afterlife.

THE SHADOW OF THE VAMPIRE

Humanity has always both feared and been fascinated by Vampires. Many humans, especially Necromancers, seek out Vampires and offer their services to these lords of the Undeath. For the Vampires have something that Necromancers crave: they are immortal and capable of granting this gift to others. But Vampires choose new recruits with great care: they want companions for their long, lonely existence and thus choose only the most intelligent, most beautiful and the most powerful to join their ranks. This is a great tragedy indeed, for at least the usual victims of Vampires lose only their lives and can rest in peace, but those that the Vampires choose as their companions lose their souls as well.

The unholy ritual that the Vampires use to create more of their kind is called the Blood Kiss. When granting the blood Kiss, the Vampire passes part of his own cursed blood to his victim instead of draining the unlucky mortal of his life's blood. The doomed man or woman will fall ill, grow weak and eventually die from what look like natural causes.

It is said by some scholars that the potency of each new generation is less than the last, so that the most powerful Vampires are always the oldest. The older Vampires can also choose to grant the Blood Kiss to more than one victim, while most of the younger Vampires can grant only a single Blood Kiss during their long and lonely existence.

The threat that Vampires represent to mankind cannot be underestimated. More than once the lords of the Undead have summoned their legions of the walking dead and waged war against the current masters of the known world. Only at great cost have they been repelled and each time the lords of the Undead have waged war they have come closer to a total victory.

Over three hundred years have passed since the last time that the dreaded Vampire Counts of Sylvania marched to war with their Undead legions. Their defeat at the hands of the Empire has taught them that while Vampires may be immeasurably more powerful than mere mortals, they can still be defeated. Though immortal, they have weaknesses that their enemies can exploit: sunlight renders them almost powerless and will eventually destroy them. A stake driven through the heart will end their unnatural life. Holy men have power over them. They cannot cross running water except over a bridge. They can conjure a multitude of mindless Undead slaves to serve them, but will only have a few intelligent allies. They must feast on human blood or wither away into nothing, and because of this, Vampires are always few in number. Large groups of these unnatural lords would require huge numbers of mortals to feed upon and would quickly attract the attention of the rulers of the kingdoms of the Old World. To enslave mortals to their will once and for all, Vampires must be cunning as well as brutal.

It is centuries since the Vampire Counts of Sylvania waged war upon the Empire, when hordes of Zombies poured through the streets of Waldenhof and Skeleton legions plagued the lands between Wurtbad and Bechafen on the Northern Marches. In the terrible and bloody battle of Hel Fenn the last Vampire Count of Sylvania, Mannfred von Carstein, was slain by the combined forces of the Elector Counts of Stirland and Ostermark, but his body was never found and Vampires have a habit of resting uneasily in their graves. While Vampire blood may have been eradicated from the ruling houses of the Counts of the Empire, there can be no doubt that they are far from extinct. Who knows how many eccentric and solitary men still carry the curse in their veins, or how many Vampires hide in haunted castles in the dark woods of Sylvania.

So the lords of the night patiently bide their time in their castles and crypts waiting for an opportunity to gain control of human society. Vampires are immortal so they can afford the luxury of time. Their enemies grow weary and die, but Vampires become more powerful as each year passes. They seek a chance to defeat the human nations utterly and of making all mortals their slaves. One day all the Vampires will rise again and then the earth will shake under the tread of Zombies, skies will darken under the wings of Vampire bats, and the spirits of the dead will rise from their graves. Then once more the men of the Old World will be forced to muster their armies to ward off the most terrible of all their enemies.

PLACES OF DEATH

To understand the nature of the restless dead, one must understand the nature of magic in the Known World. Gales of magical force spew from the ruined gateway of the far north, and most of these divide into the eight Winds of Magic as they gust and disperse across the globe. Magical energies permeate everything. Blowing down from the Northern Wastes most of the currents of magical energy separate into one of the eight colours of magic. These are the etheric forces channelled and



wielded as spells by the Battle Wizards of the Empire. Some of these forces, however, remain as Dark Magic, pooling and eddying in places of great emotional disturbance.

A peculiar quality of this occult energy is that like attracts like, and places of anguish and death eventually accrue so much Dark Magic that it crystallises into the evil greenish-black crystal known as warpstone. Warpstone is a substance craved by the power-hungry of all races, but by the Skaven above all. Once it starts to build up in an area, more and more of the stuff will be drawn to the same place, forming a swirling vortex of evil that will eventually coalesce into pure warpstone from the very air. Since Dark Magic provides the motivating power that animates the Undead, many of the areas where Dark Magic is strongest are also the places that attract or spawn Undead.

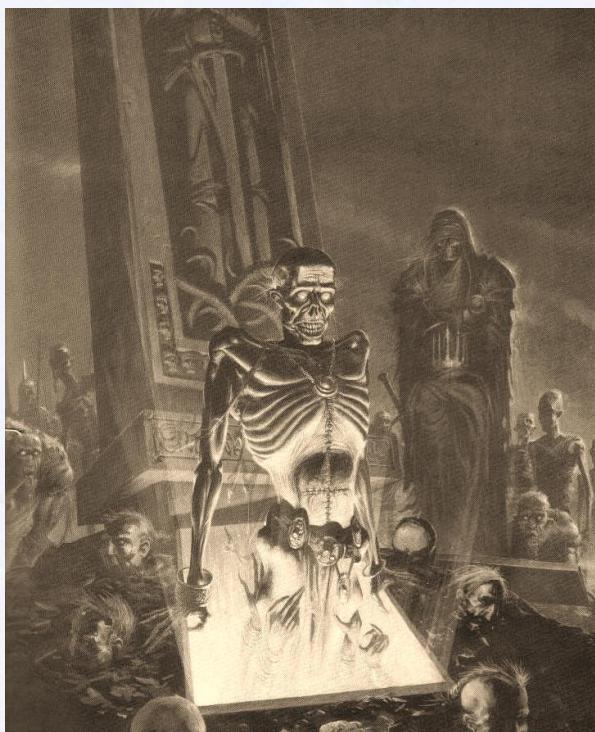
Furthermore, some philosophers observe that since Chaos feeds on strong emotions, places where great negative emotions such as fear, terror, hatred and horror have been felt also attract Dark Magic. The greatest concentration of Dark Magic gathers at battlefields and plague-ridden settlements. Even murder houses and abattoirs attract reservoirs of this invisible force, causing all manner of freakish disturbances and hauntings to manifest in the middle of the night, often compounding the horrific effects of whatever has gone before. Alternatively, it could simply be a reflection of the fact that dreadful energies are often unleashed during battles and that the mass graves and plague pits of diseased townships attract and provide cover for Necromancers and their unspeakable rites.

Whatever the reason, there are particular areas that attract the Undead. These areas include the Desolation of Nagash, the Kingdom of the Dead, the Imperial province of Sylvania, the cursed city of Moussillon in Bretonnia, the Zombie-haunted swamps south of Skavenblight in Tilea and the Mound of Krell in the Grey Mountains. The Barrow Hills in the Border Princes are scarcely less infamous. These areas, ill-famed as they are, are far from being the only places where the Undead are found. Any lonely tower with access to old burial grounds or crypts may be the haunt of a Necromancer or, worse still, one of the Vampires that they usually serve.

It is a simple matter for a Vampire within such an unhallowed site to channel his innate power over Dark Magic, harnessing the vile energies that reside there, and raise the corpses, spirits and skeletons that lie beneath the loam to serve him. Only the Priests of the death-god Morr are able to put a departed spirit to an eternal rest beyond the reach of these pallid fiends.

The great masters of the Undead have a host of lesser servants: rotting Zombies, Wight warriors, insubstantial Wraiths and wailing Banshees. Animated by the power of Dark Magic these range from the mindless to the unspeakably cunning. All can be bent to the will of those who have studied the art of necromancy. The mightiest practitioners can summon servants in vast numbers and command armies of dead equal to the greatest military forces of the Old World.

Skeletons and Zombies are the easiest to raise. All the Necromancer requires are dead bodies and a knowledge of the old rituals. These Undead can be raised and providing the incantations are performed correctly they will obey the will of their summoner. The putrefying corpses of the freshly dead become Zombies. The withered husks of the long departed become Skeletons.



There are tales of independent armies of Skeletons and Zombies. In the haunted swamps of Tilea, the dead are often dropped into the mire with lead weights attached to their legs to keep them down, but some still break free and come back to the surface to seek the flesh of the living. It is the dire reputation of the Undead that has perhaps kept men from penetrating the centre of the cursed swamp and discovering the terrible city of Skavenblight.

The Company of the Damned is a group of Undead mercenaries who were slain by treachery on the very edge of this swamp and who returned to seek a terrible vengeance. The northern border of the Troll Country, on the edge of the Chaos Wastes, is patrolled by the remnants of the doomed army of Count Boris Fenring. These Undead Kislevites are said to war unendingly with the forces of Chaos, holding them back from the land they once called home.

THE BOOKS OF THE FORBIDDEN ARTS

Mystery shrouds the study of necromancy. To learn the dark art, an aspirant must either seek a Necromancer or Vampire and become an apprentice, or acquire one of the forbidden tomes such as the Liber Mortis or one of the Nine Books of Nagash.

The Black Art

The black art of necromancy has a long history that may be traced ultimately to the Elves of Ulthuan. Though the Elves knew of the power of Dhar, undiluted Dark Magic, for years they turned their backs on it and instead studied the safer Winds. Those who finally gave in to temptation were the first of the Druchii, the Dark Elves.

When Nagash ruled Khemri, three of the Druchii were brought before him as slaves. Through years of torture he slowly teased the secrets of magic out of them and began his experimentation with what was to become necromancy.

Today's practitioners of the black art use a form of necromancy that has been shaped by other students over the centuries; the work of Vanhel and Kadon, amongst others, supplements the fragmentary translations of Nagash's work that survive. The works of these necromancers may be flawed, be missing passages, or contain traps set by their creators to ensnare the unwary. It is said the complete copy of Vanhel's Liber Mortis held under lock and key by the Sigmarites is capable of devouring the souls of any who read it and once summoned a Daemon made entirely of fingers.

Nagash's original form of necromancy still survives, however. It has been maintained by the Vampires, particularly those of the Necrarch line, passed down from master to apprentice over the centuries along with the history of their kind.



Finding a tutor has its obvious difficulties.

Necromancers shun the company of the living, to avoid discovery. Also, given their, morbid reputation and unavoidable insanity, it is perhaps safer to seek the books. Many would-be Necromancers have ended up serving their mentors in eternal, living hell as animated corpses.

Forbidden books have their own perils. The lore of necromancy is to be found in these books, written in ink distilled from human blood and bound with the skins of mortals. Only the most strong-willed can read these tomes and retain their sanity. They tell of the horrible secrets of the beyond and the dark insane nightmares that the dead dream in their eternal rest.

Many spells for waking the dead, summoning magic power and controlling the lesser Undead are recorded in these books. They also tell of rites that attract dark magic, list the days when evil magic is at its strongest, and the places that attract the highest concentration of dark magic.

First and most famous of these evil tomes are the Nine Books of Nagash. In the unimaginably distant past Nagash, the supreme lord of the Undead, the Great Necromancer himself, wrote these dreadful volumes. In them is recorded the entire lore of the art. All other books of necromancy are based in some way upon these blasphemous tomes.

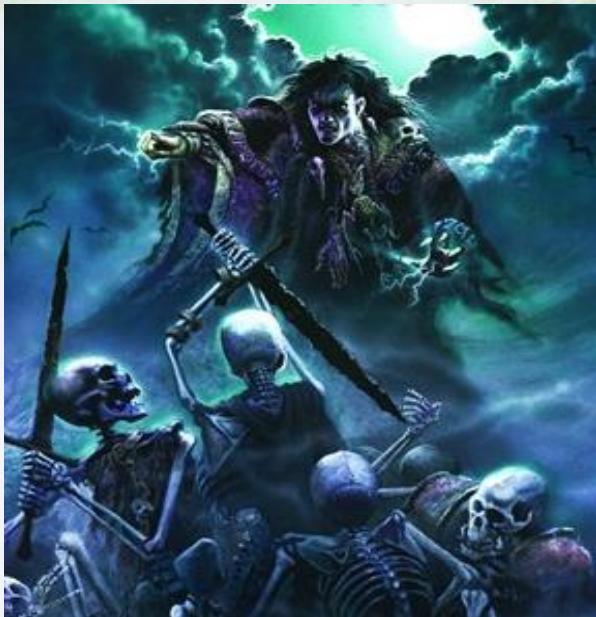
Many of the greatest spells of the Nine Books of Nagash are too demanding for mere mortals, for at his peak Nagash could rival the power of the gods

themselves. But for a diligent student they hold all the information needed to become a Necromancer. Summoning and controlling the dead and the sacrifices needed to summon spirits are also described in the pages of the Liber Mortis, as well as the secret of prolonging life by stealing the vigour of the living.

The Book of the Dead was written by the mad Arab prince Abdul ben Raschid. He travelled to the Land of the Dead in the far south and, driven mad by his experience, wrote his blasphemous masterpiece. He did not live to see the widespread public revulsion for his work, or the great pyre where the Caliph of Ka-Sabar burned all the copies of it he could lay his hands on. Unfortunately, many of them survived and were carried to the Old World by the victorious knights during the Crusades.

The Book of the Dead speaks of a great desert to the east of Araby, from which rise the necropolises – tomb cities of the unquiet dead. On dark nights, corpses of the dead stir, locked in a dance of death until the end of eternity, and within the pyramids, built aeons ago, the unholy aristocracy sit on gilded thrones amid faded grandeur and numberless corpses. They dream long, dark dreams of their former glory, stirring occasionally to issue commands to their rotting courtiers. Then the armies of the dead march to war against the other kings of the Land of the Dead, or sometimes attack the Arabians and other humans unwise enough to live too close.

The Liber Mortis is the best source of knowledge on necromancy available to the scholars of the Old World.



It was written by the Necromancer, Frederick van Hel, better known to later generations as Vanhel. The one complete surviving copy of this book is kept under lock and key in the vaults of the Great Cathedral of Sigmar in Altdorf and can only be studied by the purest-hearted scholars, and even then only after special dispensation from the Grand Theogonist himself. Vanhel was a Necromancer at the time of the Great Plague and compiled his masterpiece from translations of the Books of Nagash. It is this book and its copies that have caused so much horror and death in the lands of the Old World.

The Grimoire Necronium was written by W'soran, known as the father of Vampires. Apart from necromantic spells, it is filled with doom-laden prophesies of the future: telling of the world that is to come, where the Empire is in ruins and only the dead walk under the sunless skies and where immortal Vampires rule over pitiful slaves and hunt them for sport. It is said that any who read this book succumb to a dark pit of insanity from which there is no return. Perhaps the Grimoire Necronium holds indisputable proof that W'soran's predictions are true. Perhaps we are already doomed to eternal slavery.

THE TIRELESS HORDES

Seeking dominion over all living things, a Vampire strives to overthrow the rule of mortals and reign over the survivors as an undying, merciless emperor. When the Vampires seek to expand their territories into the realms of the young races, they practise great rituals that drag hordes of decaying corpses from their deathly repose. After all, the Old World has been the site of fierce warfare for many thousands of years, and its peaty soil is thick with armoured cadavers and the skeletons of warriors from long-forgotten regiments. Virulent diseases have swept the lands many times, and plague pits and graveyards heave with carcasses outside almost every settlement. Therefore it is a relatively simple matter for a Vampire to summon and reinforce armies of the Undead time and time again, even during the midst of battle. Furthermore, each time a warrior falls to the clawing hands and rusted blades

of the numberless hordes, his corpse can be raised to join the Vampire's ever-replenishing legions.

Raised from mass graves and despoiled tombs, the Undead army gathers amidst the tumbled ruins and blasted groves of this ill-favoured realm. Upon fen and moor, creatures of darkness that have haunted the nightmares of Men for millennia break free from ancient cairns and age-worn mausoleums. In the eternal gloom can be heard the scrape of bone on bone, wordless moans and the clank of ancient rusted wargear. A tide of the dead, driven on by Necromantic magic and the undying will of its dread general, the unliving host advances.

To face the legions of the Undead is a terrifying experience. Unnatural storm clouds gather overhead, blotting out the weak sun and casting a foreboding shadow across the battlefield. From the darkness, the chittering of bats and the bestial howls of wolves fill the air. A chill wind descends, striking icy dread into the hearts of mortal men.

The vast bulk of the Vampire armies are comprised of shuffling, moaning Zombies; incomplete bodily remains given a revolting semblance of life and reinforced with wood, rusted metal and the occasional spare limb, their lifeless eyes gazing mindlessly ahead. These loathsome composite creatures shamble forth in great multitudes, dragging sickening Corpse Carts and bone-clad siege engines to the front line, pulling down the enemy soldiery with sheer weight of numbers and filling the air with the foetid stench of decay.

As questing tendrils of Dark Magic flow over the lands, armoured Skeletons clad in the raiment of once-proud warriors from before the time of Sigmar, come to life and climb out from their lichen-covered tombs, rusted blades and battered shields clutched in their cold, dead hands. Rank upon rank march relentlessly forwards, balefire glowing in their eye sockets.

Clad in armour of distant centuries and wielding dire blades glowing with unholy power, Wights join the attack, led by their evil lords. On foot as the deadly Grave Guard or mounted on Skeletal Steeds as Black Knights, these warriors strike down even the toughest foe with a single blow of their enchanted weapons. Wight Kings, entombed within the barrows and crypts that lie scattered across the hills of the Old World, burst from their burial chambers and ride forth upon skeletal steeds.

Called forth from their graves by the magic of the Vampire Count, unquiet spirits roam the twilight fog. Their groaning cries pierce the soul, their chilling touch fatal to all mortal things. The tortured spirits of tyrants and murderesses flit from their sarcophagi, longing to close their freezing ethereal claws around warm human flesh. Glimmering with unholy energy Cairn Wraiths and Tomb Banshees flow amidst the Undead throng, seeking the warmth of the living.

Nothing that lies behind the veil of death is beyond the power of a Vampire.

TRAITORS TO THE MORTAL COIL

It is not only the truly dead who march to war when Morrslieb is full in the sky. Degenerate ghouls slink from their lairs in answer to the summoning Vampire's howling call, sharpened bones in their hands and leering grins twisting their needle-fanged features, eager to feast on the flesh of the living. Grossly swollen bats and repugnant beasts with tattered wings flap and soar from their lairs, the light of the moon blotted out by screeching swarms of their smaller but no less thirsty cousins. Yet more Undead are called forth by the malignant Necromancers who study the dark arts under the Vampire Counts, fallen scholars whose vile ambitions long burnt away any vestige of their humanity.

Even other Vampires answer the call to war. Monstrous Varghulfs, their form reflecting the beast that lurks inside every Vampire's soul, haunt the battlefield in search of fresh blood. They hunt in the darkness; beasts driven by a bloodthirst that can never be sated. A Varghulf's distended muscles ripple with strength as it bares its fangs and claws in readiness for the kill. Far less savage but consummately deadly, the militaristic and honour-bound Knights of Blood Keep ride forth from their decrepit fortresses in search of new challenges for their vampiric strength. Their lances are ever ready to pierce the hearts of those foolish enough to oppose them, for a coterie of mounted Vampires arrayed in the full panoply of war is a force of destruction like no other.



HORROR EMBODIED

Few face the Vampire Counts and live to tell the tale; the fortunate handful who survive are forever haunted by the memory. The chronicles of the Old World recall the many wars and desperate battles fought against the restless dead, and all men dread the time when the forces of the Vampire Counts go to war. Relentless, implacable and dreadful, the Undead are among the most dangerous opponents in the known world. Bound by the will of their Vampire, they are a fell and mighty force. They cannot be reasoned with, bribed or coerced. They know neither fear nor mercy, and they are totally impervious to pain. They need neither sleep nor warmth, drink nor wholesome sustenance. As they spread across the land, their ranks swell with the corpses, and sometimes even the spirits, of their slain foes. The only thing they fear are the rays of the sun that are the bane of their type, searing their unholy flesh and eventually destroying these abominations against nature. This is no help when the armies of the Vampire Counts march to war, since the Lords of the

Undead can use their necromantic powers to summon billowing storm clouds, protecting themselves and their minions from the hated sun. Where the dead walk, there the night follows.

The legions of the living dead are terrible to behold – hordes of corpses walking resolutely forward, dry flesh creaking, decaying innards exposed, corroded wargear scraping and clanking. The nauseating stench of death hangs over the army like a cloud of contagion, the air is full of grave dust and glowing witch-lights. Long-dead warriors ride into battle mounted on the rotting carcasses of warhorses. The skies darken with the tattered wings of bats, the earth trembles beneath the tread of Zombies, and the howls of the Dire Wolves fill mortals with dread. Spirits prowl like shadows among the ranks: insubstantial Wraiths, wailing Banshees and Wights plucked from their cold tombs. In battle they are very difficult to destroy because they stand firm until the last of their number is cut down. This stern resoluteness is extremely unnerving for mortal troops. Many of the Undead are poor fighters with little co-ordination or skill, but there are some extremely dangerous creatures indeed amongst them.

At the head of the army stands the Undead general, creator and leader of this Undead legion, and the most powerful and dangerous of all these nightmare creatures. It is he who has summoned the army from their graves and it is his will that binds it together. The leader and creator of an Undead army will be a potent magician, a living Necromancer perhaps, or an Undead Liche, or even one of those powerful Lords of the Undead: a Vampire. This leader is the lynchpin of all the magic power that holds the army together, the force that drives every Undead creature forward. Every Undead warrior is bound to his will in some way and without his power the whole army will crumble to dust or scatter to the four corners of the world.

But it is not the creatures of the night that kill in the name of their vampiric masters that are the foremost weapon of the Undead armies, for even a Zombie Dragon or soaring Hellwraith can be slain by the enchanted blade of a true hero. Rather it is the crippling terror that accompanies them, the dread realisation that the slain comrades at the feet of those who oppose the Vampires will rise up from their pools of blood, gnashing and moaning, pulling their former friends down into the dirt one by one until all are nothing more than the mindless, bloodstained puppets of a sadistic Undead fiend. Their cadaverous forms are wrapped in funerary vestments, and they wield ancient, rusty weapons – they are a vision of the fate that awaits all living creatures. When confronted by that which haunts all Men's nightmares, most mortals feel an indescribable horror, as much a weapon as any blade, and only the bravest warriors will stand their ground. Few things inspire more fear in the hearts of men than the sight of the walking dead, for the price of defeat is not just losing your life, but a ghastly eternity as an unliving automaton, because the lords of Undeath replenish their ranks after each battle from amongst their fallen victims. When the Undead march to war, all the living tremble in fear.

Vengeance of the Vampire

Maximillian von Klaus stretched his arms out as far as he could and yawned expansively. The weight of his chains of office shifted uncomfortably around his neck. A few joints creaked as he stretched.

Forty years ago, von Klaus had been a redoubtable warrior, the finest Grand Master of the Knights of the Blazing Sun. He had strode amongst the battlefields of the Empire, killing mutants, beastmen and... the Undead. He shivered despite the midday sun and pulled his robes closer. From the bowels of his soul, blackness welled up as the fear took hold of him again.

"One day, when you are old and weak, mortal, we shall return for you."

Maximillian stared once again at those terrible, hating eyes, the eyes that looked at him every minute of his life.

"We shall return for you. We shall drink of you. We shall revenge our beloved Elysabet!"

He looked out once more from his golden armour at the foul leech-thing. Even as his men destroyed the Vampire's minions around him, he knew terror for the first time. The Vampire Lord dissolved into mist and six knights' swords passed through it harmlessly. The cloud spread, thinning, sifting through the littered corpses of the battlefield, but that terrible whispering voice spoke torments to von Klaus.

"We shall bleed you and your Empire dry and when we have finished, you will be one of us. Your rotting flesh will be a feast for the crows and worms but you shall not rest. You will suffer an eternity of horror, Maximillian von Klaus. In forty years, we shall find you. We shall kill you. We will kill your sons, your people, your whole pitiful Empire."

The mayor returned to his senses. He staggered out across the market place towards the statue of Manann, the god of the sea. Forty years ago, he was in his prime. Now, he was old and weary. He had a pain in his chest and arthritis. But perhaps, perhaps the Vampire would forget him. Perhaps it had been killed itself. Perhaps the rumours of the Undead horde ravaging the Empire were just that, rumours spread by small-minded peasants around the fire at the local inn.

A horn sounded at the gates of the city, several more answered outside the walls. Von Klaus turned to see a column of halberdiers enter the town in the colours of Talabeccland. At their head rode a

stern-faced man wearing a monocle and dressed in expensive cloth. Upon seeing him, the man rode towards the mayor and saluted.

"Reiksmarshall Wilhelm Hague of Talabeccland. You are the Herr von Klaus?"

Maximillian nodded dumbly.

"Jolly good Mayor von Klaus, we haven't much time. I have with me four hundred men and two hundred horses. More troops are on the way from all over the Empire at the Emperor's wish and under my command. We have already began to dig some defenses outside the city for the artillery units. Rouse your city guard! The foul fiends will soon be here!"

"Foul fiends?" replied von Klaus.

"Haven't you heard?"

"Heard what?"

"The Undead are coming, mayor. Apparently for you!"

The Battle of Schrolnetz Plain saw the defeat of the Vampire Antoine von Carstein at the hands of a huge Empire once commanded by Maximillian von Klaus, in the year IC 2446. Von Carstein was on the verge of destroying the Empire before Emperor Wilhelm III united the Elector Counts against Von Klaus and his bodyguard of Knights of the Blazing Sun defeated the Vampire in the midst of a huge engagement, while the Undead legions were destroyed with cannon and volley gun fire. Antoine von Carstein swore revenge against von Klaus, his family and the Empire itself.

For forty years, von Carstein licked his wounds and plotted his revenge. He rebuilt his hordes corpse by corpse, nursing his anger until he could taste it upon his cold, pointed tongue. His shambling legions lurched out of Sylvania once more in the year 2505. Von Carstein moved cautiously, first closing small villages to test his armies against, adding the slain as new troops, fresh from the grave. The rotting faces of distant cousins slaughtered whole towns and soon rumours spread to the court of the Emperor Karl Franz of the return of the Vampire Lord. Witch Hunters and spies were sent. Some, very few, returned with news of thousands of Empire citizens bound beyond death to fight for the foul Lord of Necromancers riding openly through the countryside, and of strange horsemen searching the countryside for one man - Maximillian von Klaus.

By now, whole cities were being destroyed and Emperor Karl Franz mobilised troops from the states of Talabeccland, Stirland, Averland and Ostermark to make a stand at the home of the former hero of the Empire, the fortified harbour town of Stuttburg. The Emperor even sent a detachment of his elite guard from Altdorf aboard the Imperial Greatship, 'Pride of Sigmar'.

The Empire forces were commanded by Wilhelm Hague, an idiosyncratic man but a fine commander, who managed to organize a considerable defence in the scant few hours he had before the Undead horde descended upon Stuttburg.

The midday sky turned black as thousands of bats and insects descended upon Stuttburg and storm clouds racked the sky, bringing the darkness of night to previously beautiful day. The sea itself churned and thrust itself against the harbour walls, disgorging its victims, the corpses and souls of the sailors and townsfolk who had drowned within its stomach. Long dead fathers and sons sought out wives and children, stumbling down streets and clawing at doors, slime dripping from jawless mouths.

Antoine von Carstein himself breached the town at the Sigmar Gate, his Wight Guard slaying the brave defenders with their putrescent weapons. Behind him, Dire Wolves ran, hunting down the citizens in the streets. Ghouls feasted on the dead and dying.

Standing in the town square, Antoine von Carstein roared out the name of the mayor, commanding him to come forth and stand before him as he had at the Battle of Schrolnetz.

The storm itself could not resist that voice and lightning lashed the statue of Manann, the sea god of the Empire, as the echoes bounced around the town square. Von Klaus was thrust from the town hall by the very spirits of the dead, and having lived for forty years in terror, cowered before the Vampire Lord, tears streaming down his face.

However, before von Carstein could carry out his decades-long threat to drink the mayor's blood, a horn sounded.

Wilhelm Hague, Reiksmarshall of Talabeccland, led his Outriders across the square, their armour gleaming in the flashes from their repeating pistols.

Battle was joined.



Deadfall

The trap had been very clever. The bridge had looked solid because it was solid—it was the rocks on the opposite side that had been tunnelled into, so that they crumbled away as soon as there was enough weight past the halfway point. One man alone wouldn't trigger it; it was designed to catch whole trains of travellers and smash them into pieces as they fell to the rocks a hundred feet below, horses and all. Fine pickings for the man-eating Ogres who had no doubt spent much of their time and more of their brainpower creating the trap.

The hooded figure could smell the Ogres now, and as his head cleared, he could hear their heavy footsteps, each one twice the size of a normal man, in height and girth. Each of the three held a long, much-bloodied club, hefting the trunk-like objects in a single hand. They were grinning; bloody saliva dripped down their fangs in anticipation of their feast. He waited until they stopped in momentary surprise to see just one man caught in their trap, and then he surprised them again. He stood up.

It was only when he reached his full height that he realised his right hand was missing, the stump of the elbow hanging black and greasy in the air. He had a moment to curse the decades it would take him to grow it back before the Ogres overcame their surprise and charged the hooded figure.

Foolishly, they came at him individually. The first came fast, bellowing and driving his great club down with terrible force. The Vampire didn't try to block it but stepped inside the arc and leapt upwards. His claws tore into the Ogre's neck, but he knew he didn't have time to tear though the thick, fleshy throat. In mid-air, his legs twisted with a hideous cracking sound, and the taloned feet grasped tightly onto the still-descending wrist. The club slammed into the ground, and the Ogre tried to pull it up again. That was a mistake, for the grip of the Vampire's feet was like iron, and the Ogre's body tilted back without the arm following it. At that point, with all the Vampire's strength, he drove his remaining hand up against the man-eater's jaw and was rewarded when the shoulder joint



completely detached from the neck. The Ogre bellowed in more shock than fear and sat down, nursing his useless arm.

The other two now knew they were facing no man and moved to surround him. He sprang towards the one on his right, sailing above a height even an Ogre could swing a club and came down with all three of his taloned limbs aimed at the great beast's face. Bones as sharp as blades drove deep into eyes, and fleshless fingers followed them down. Once again, his victim toppled over, the weight of the great Vampire snapping his neck as he fell, though, in truth, he was already dead.

The last man-eater kept his back to the rock wall and put his head down low. He brought his arms forward, his huge fists clenching and unclenching with rage, his guard up, his club ready to hold off the coming charge. But the creature did not charge and instead, fled into the darkness of the cliff's shadow and the half-dawn light. The Ogre blinked, holding its stance, his nostrils flicking up, left and right, seeking the thing that moved like no man he had ever seen. It was fast, yes, but he would smell it before it would be on him, and he could smash it out of the air.

With his back hard against the stone, he took too long to turn around when he heard the noise above him. There was only a clatter of pebbles, and then a rock almost as large as his own huge form smashed his face into liquid.

Fifty feet up the sheer cliff face, the beast pulled its claws out of the stone and swung onto a ledge. His fall down had shattered his arm and broken several of his ribs; a rock that large from this height would certainly cripple the Ogre. The Greenskins or the birds would do the rest and finish what others remained. Prudence suggested he go back down and do the job himself, however, and he would. Just as soon as he found his hand.



THE NATURE OF THE VAMPIRE

The life of a Vampire begins in blood. Despite common myth, simply being bitten or drained by a Vampire is not sufficient to turn anyone into a child of blood. The transformation only comes from a shared ritual where both parties drink deeply of each other. It is called the Dark Kiss or the Blood Kiss by romantics both mortal and immortal, but it is nothing so gentle. It is a predatory act, throats torn open and blood flowing strong and thick down welcome throats. And yet it is well named, for it is also an act of extreme intimacy, considered a gift of great affection by the giver. In most cases, this is also true of the receiver. Although they may fear the unknown that lies beyond, very few are taken unwillingly, and none regret the gift once received.

THE BLOOD KISS

The manner by which a Vampire turns a mortal into another Vampire has never been recorded, and is subject to much speculation. Known variously as the Blood Kiss, the Dark Awakening, Turning and the Red Ascension, this process is believed to involve the exchange of blood in some fashion. It was Queen Neferata's blood that corrupted the first Vampires, and it is somehow through her blood that each new generation of Vampires is created. The Blood Kiss is a highly secretive and personal affair, possibly unique to every Vampire, and Vampires do not discuss it, not even with others of their kind.

Those who are given the Kiss do have reason to be afraid, for the experience is as terrifying as it is exhilarating. The hot, hunting blood of the Vampire flows into the veins, burning out the weak, mortal blood as it goes. What happens to the life and soul of the Human during this transformation is unknown, and every Vampire that speaks of it has described



something different. Some mortal priests suggest that they enter the Garden of Morr but are turned back by the God because they are an abomination to his sight. Scholars and wizards sometimes talk of them moving between the realms, trapped forever between this world and the next.

Whatever the truth, every Vampire awakens with a newly forged spirit. They retain the thoughts and memories of the mortal they once were, but within them now is a dark beast, driving them to hunt and prey, to revel in their every twisted vice, and to glory in all their dark desires. Some see this desire as a separate force – the Beast Within – whilst others believe it is simply the benefit of no longer being burdened with the weight of a soul. The nature of this change is much debated by those with a mind for such philosophising, for it asks a fundamental question about the nature of man.

Such questions are no doubt clouded by the rarefied selection of those who join the ranks of the Vampires. Although the method of deciding who will receive the gift is individual to each Vampire, each will only choose those who will bring great glory to their bloodline. Such a mortal must be beyond exceptional, a person of great aspect and incredible will. They also typically possess some dark spark, a certain shadow in their soul that their parent-in-darkness can see, coiled and waiting. Although some Vampires are less particular than others, there is no society upon the Old World more fiercely exclusive than the Vampires. Thus the creation of a Vampire is never done lightly or frivolously, but soberly, reverently, passionately, and with fear of reparations should the choice be unwise – for the parent is very often blamed for the sins of the child.

Those who are chosen are inevitably drawn from the admirers and subjects that every Vampire soon enough attracts. The popularity of the Vampire is strong and far-reaching and why not? They are everything mortals aspire to be: physical and mental titans; masters of lands, armies, lore and sorcery; and, freed from the ravages of time, they only increase in stature with each passing year. It is the vast number of adherent mortals who wish to become children of the night that provide another reason for the Vampires to be so careful in their selection – if it was too common a gift, everyone would clamour for it, and their ranks would soon be filled with the weak and stupid.

A few Vampires are so secluded they cannot be as selective as their other brethren. They may give the honour to those Ghouls or necromancers in their retinue who proved themselves worthy enough

"My kiss shall bring you eternity... and the greatest of power."

Countess Lucretia

stewards, students, or lieutenants. Some may grant the gift to apprentices who show truly exceptional talent and a sufficiently consuming obsession with the field. Others are more discerning and have unusual and unique prerequisites in their selections. For example, the Blood Dragons search the world for the greatest warriors, whatever their class or origins. Any that meet their standards—typically that of being able to defend against their attacks—are taken under consideration.

All Vampires, however, maintain a singular prejudice against non-Humans. It is perhaps not impossible for a Dwarf, Elf, or Halfling to be made a Vampire, but it is unheard of for one of the blooded to break their inveterate snobbery towards these races.

FIRE IN THE BLOOD

The change is quick. For a few hours, the newborn Vampire is weakened and disoriented, but this soon fades. As it does, so comes the exhilaration of new life and the ecstasy of first-tasted power. Within moments, the Vampire realises all his Human limitations are gone; instead, he is filled with an unholy power and vitality, his strength and speed rushing to supernatural levels as the new blood courses through him.

Their strength exceeds the strongest man; they can toss an armoured opponent on their backs as easily as if they were a new born-babe. Their flesh and skin toughens as if like leather, their blood refuses to take any poison or disease, and no withering of age or infirmity ever comes upon them. They can see as well in the dark as any owl and as far as any hawk. They can smell like the hunting hound and outrun the wolf in the chase. At will, their nails will become claws, and their teeth grow long and sharp, their jaw strong enough to snap the neck of their prey if need be. They are the ultimate hunter, a wolf in Human form, and the first blush of that incredible new strength is more thrilling than first love or first blood.

There is something else new, too; something far more powerful than simple physical changes. The mind is cleansed and perfected. Where there was doubt, there is now certainty. Where there was weakness, there is now resolution. And where there was fear of death, there is now unshakeable courage. For the first time, the Vampire is truly the master of his own soul and knows something of what it means to be a God. And with this self-mastery also comes the power to master lesser creatures; the Vampire is master of himself and of all he surveys.

This rush of power and control is intoxicating, often overwhelmingly so. Many Vampires lose themselves in it and begin a rush of excess and glorification in their new strength and control. Innocents are slaughtered by the score, rivals are butchered, old enemies tortured, taboos are broken, and dark heresies committed. This behaviour often brings the hawthorn and the silver down fast, however, so a wise parent-in-darkness stays close to his spawn to make sure they do not lose themselves entirely. Keeping them near at hand, they teach them the ways of their new blood and, more importantly, the ways of their new bloodline.



It is not that Vampires must dwell in secret but rather that there are often better ways of doing things, protocols to be observed, and duties to be attended. To feed too widely or too wildly is oft considered inappropriate. Just as the nobles of the land have a duty to their serfs, even though their lives are nothing to them, the shepherd must tend the flock even though he feeds upon them. Vampires have a duty to watch over the lesser creatures that surround them – firstly, to protect them so they may provide a steady flow of sustenance but more importantly to give their flock something far greater than each other to admire, something to cause them to know terror, awe, and majesty. Men need kings, they say, but kings need Vampires.

Secrecy, seclusion, and subtlety are useful, too. The wolf hunts best in moonlight, when his prey cannot see him coming. That said, wholesale carnage or other large indulgences are not particularly taboo and are accepted as typical behaviour of the young-blooded. The only requirement is that it be done with the proper care and attitude, as determined by their new blood line and master. Each Vampire has his own traditions and will school his get to follow them.

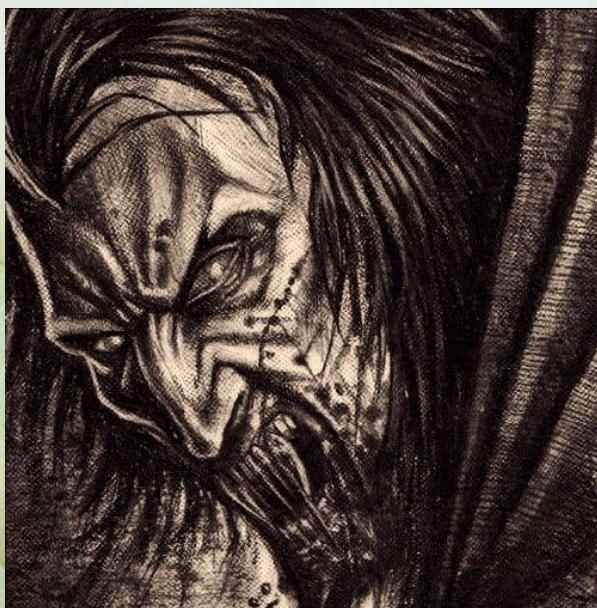
Just as Vampires are extremely careful in the selection of new blood-kin, so too are they careful to immerse their chosen in the traditions and beliefs of their bloodline from the outset – sometimes even before the Blood Kiss is given. Many Vampires take those they consider to be potential brethren as apprentices, assistants, courtiers, or companions for many years before they bestow the Kiss, as well as after. This gives them time to ensure the quality of their chosen's character and instruct them in how to act. That this arrangement also provides a steady supply of blood is a happy side effect.

THE RED THIRST

Another, equally orgiastic addition accompanies the increase in strength and speed – the mind of the predator. Not only do Vampires have the senses of a hunting beast, they can also hear, smell, and see blood, wherever it hides. In a crowded room, a Vampire can hear every heartbeat, feel the blood pouring through thick jugular veins, and smell even the tiniest wound as if it were the aroma of a blazing roast ox. And with the predator's desire also come the predator's skills. The Vampire is naturally adept at moving silently and staying invisible. Without even thinking about it, he is a natural tracker, an instinctual hunter, and a perfect combatant. The wolf needs no instruction to know when to spring and where to drive his fangs deep and neither does the Vampire. He kills by instinct, without any thought or hesitation, and he adores every minute of it.

The price of course is that there remains a need to be a predator, to feed on the blood of Humans. This is the only need a Vampire ever has; from the day he receives the Kiss, he no longer needs sleep, food, drink, warmth, nor even the air, though Vampires can (and many do) still take pleasure in these things. The Red Thirst, however, is not like any mortal hunger. It is a constant awareness of need, a tide of desire that rises and falls but is always present, keeping the predator's instinct never far from the mind. Even after drinking to the fill, the thirst never fully departs, and after long periods without feeding, it becomes an undeniable torment far beyond any mortal addiction to mandrake or other narcotics. Most who try to resist the thirst go mad and fall into a frenzy of killing and devouring, and no feasting from then on, however voluminous, will ever calm them. Others fall into a weakness or malaise that can never be lifted. Although some Vampires continue to seek ways to avoid this need to feed, most learn early and well that the thirst cannot and should not be denied.

There are exceptions; there are always exceptions in creatures that remain so close to a race as prone to variation and Chaos as humanity. The Necarchs have



discovered ways to feed their timeless existence with Warpstone or dark magic, rather than blood. The Strigoi make do with the blood of the dead, or of vermin, by necessity. Most famously, Abhorash, the great founder of the Blood Dragons, finally sated his thirst forever by drinking the blood of a great Dragon.

Centuries of age dull the need also. Experiments and explorations continue – not because there is any value in the lives of the cattle they need to ingest but because being bound forever to constant and regular dependence on mortals grates upon those who know no other need. Feeding takes time away from laboratories, campaigns, and other higher pursuits.

The Human flavour is unique to each person and even depends on their recent activities. A drunk's blood will be mildly alcoholic to a Vampire; disease can pollute both the taste and the effect; morning blood is lighter and sweeter than that taken at night. Drinking is always enjoyable, however, even for the most abstinent of Vampires, satisfying at once both their great physical urge and their terrible mental need to prey, devour, and dominate. Plus, even when drawn from the lowest of Humans, it tastes good.

Vampires need not drink every night. Newly made Vampires often do, and rare are those who can go more than a few weeks without needing another taste. Those Vampires who have lived a few centuries may only need to feed a few times a year, and the oldest perhaps only a few times a century. Such times refer only to when the lack of feeding causes physical weakness – many feel the desire to feed long before this, and it ebbs and flows like any mortal predilection. Yet even when blood is necessary to prevent weakness, the need still does not countermand reason – the likelihood of losing themselves in frenzy or other depredations only arises after a much longer denial. There are ways to reduce the need; the Strigoi have found long periods of sleep in their tombs stave off the thirst. Others simply bear the consequences of lapsed feasting – the dried-out flesh, the sluggish movement, the weaker will – without fear and compensate with restoratives and aids as best they can. They will drink only when they are ready, they say, rather than be victims of their body's bestial desires.

"However many ye send to stoppe me, foolyshe priest. I shalle send upon ye the same tally of corpses and more. I warn ye now, ye may find them ille upon the eye, and yet they will be most familiar to ye."

Come thyself if ye have the hearte.

I will show ye mastery over flesh and bone, be it quick or be it dead.

I mean to have my feast, mortalle, and not even the gods above can stop me."

Excerpt from a parchment signed in blood by Valdrek the Crimson, delivered to the Temple of Sigmar prior to the Faustarch Massacres.



Whether drinking for need or pleasure, Vampires rarely take more than a pint of blood, often less. Only in a blood frenzy or some great carelessness will more be taken, or if there is some special reason, such as revenge, or a preference for the taste. The best places to feed are the neck and wrist, but some Vampires have more exotic tastes, perhaps favouring eating the eyes whole or drinking only from the thighs. There is also preference in how it is sought; some prefer to take blood from Humans they have hunted down, others only take what is given willingly.

In the darker parts of Sylvania, cowed mortals compete for the honour of being tapped by their von Carstein lords, whilst some Blood Dragons still follow Abhorash's strictures of only feeding upon criminals and villains. Even amongst these rituals, however, there is much variation. As with everything a Vampire does, the habits of feeding are both bound by familial tradition, yet also affectedly individual.

"Hawthorn bound and sharpened true,

Silvered blade the neck must hew.

Garlic, bloodwort, witchbane too,

Keeps thine flesh yet fair to view.

Blessed lance speared through and through,

Holy verse will fiend undo.

If thou wouldest see dawn anew,

Harken well these lessons few."

Stirland proverb, as cackled by Ingrid One-Tooth

THE CURSE OF NAGASH

There are other prices to be paid for the gift of the Blood Kiss beyond the thirst for blood. For their betrayal, Nagash cursed all Vampires, and the curse has been passed down with the blood forever more; with their great strength would come great weaknesses. The curses upon their blood are many, and they may manifest in many ways and intensities. One Vampire's great nemesis may be absolutely nothing to another, though this may not be apparent (to the Vampire or their hunter) until the element is encountered. Therefore – and to ensure their prey remain ever confused – most Vampires take measures against all possible threats.

The Sun

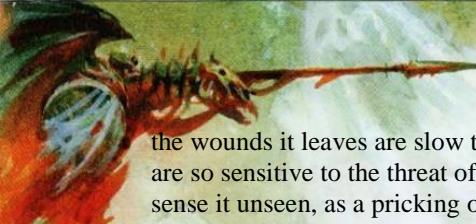
Of all the curses, this is the harshest of all. The sun is an ever-present threat and burns with a terrible intensity. Vampires sensitive to its touch are weakened instantly upon exposure to its rays, and their un-life is burnt away with every minute they remain exposed. It is an agonising experience and a savage way to die. Almost all Vampires that have lost their un-life whom were not slain by the sword were claimed by the terrible fury of sunlight. There are, however, preventative steps that can be taken.

Covered head to toe in cloak and hood, a Vampire is safe, though the risk of losing the cloak is rather high. Bindings and bandages are sometimes preferred instead. Many Vampires, particularly the von Carsteins, have the power to gather storms at will, and a thick layer of clouds seems quite sufficient protection. Then there are logistics; it is no accident, for example, that Sylvania has the highest annual rainfall of any province in the Empire. Mountain shadows and thick forests are also favoured domains. It is also not that unusual for a noble to remain inside during daylight hours, especially given the gigantic size of most of Sylvania's castles, or the need for covered walkways and thick shutters to protect against all that rain. Servants can fetch supplies, and there are indoor gardens, tennis courts, and even jousting lists inside great halls to entertain both mind and body.

In some cases, Vampires don't even need to step outside to hunt, their minions hunting for them or their victims eagerly lining up to give their blood to their masters. It is not uncommon, then, for Vampires to become recluses or shut-ins, addicted to the safety and comfort of their familiar walls. Count von Sangster is said to have never set foot outside his great library for over seven hundred years.

Silver

Even more than the sun, the Vampire fears silver. The sun is ever-present but easily avoided, whereas a silver blade can be drawn unseen from the assassin's scabbard at any moment. Silver is also the time-honoured weapon of the Vampire hunter, and there is nothing more egregious to the children of blood than those few mortals who would dare try to end the lives of their betters. Silver bites deep into the Vampire's normally resistant flesh. It stings the blood, burns the skin, and



the wounds it leaves are slow to heal. Some Vampires are so sensitive to the threat of this metal they can sense it unseen, as a pricking on their skin or smell in their nostrils.

Vampire hunting tradition makes frequent reference to "the hawthorn and the silver". Hawthorn is a sturdy hardwood, excellent for crafting stakes like the one that famously killed Tzarina Kattarin of Kislev centuries ago, but it has no special properties beyond that. It does no more damage than any other sharpened stick, which is to say less than a sword. Yet the legend lives on, much to the amusement and benefit of the Vampires.

Witchbane and Daemonsroot

The power of garlic is another myth Vampires find amusing, especially due to its source. Being epicures, a dish soaked in the stuff is distasteful to many palettes (though those Vampires who prey in Bretonnia often prefer it). The frightened citizens of Sylvania know of other herbs that do offer some protection, however. The small white flowers of Witchbane and the tangled barbs of Daemonsroot (sometimes also called Graveroot by fearful peasants unwilling to speak the name of such beasts) offer some small defence to a house that bears them. The pain is not great, and a Vampire can typically get past such wards if he wishes too. If he is seeking an easy feed, however, he will skip houses or doorways so adorned in favour of a more expedient feast.

Signs of the Gods

Witch hunters are taught many methods to use against the Undead. These include reciting prayers and hymnals from holy books, as well as the proffering of sacred symbols such as hammers of Sigmar or Ulrican wolfs' heads. Sacred water, such as the tears sometimes wept by statues of Shallya or that taken from forest



lakes dedicated to Taal, can blind and burn a Vampire. The power of priests can create a force against creatures of magic and the Aethyr, and this also seems to have power over the unnatural Vampires. The will of the Vampire is pitted against the belief of the priest, creating an unconscious contest to take control of the magical energy. But a symbol wielded by an unbeliever is useless – it must be accompanied by faith. The stronger the faith, the more power the wielder can have over the Vampire. Likewise, only the blessing of a true and faithful priest will cause a blade to act like silver, and a temple or shrine will only prevent a Vampire from entering if it is given dutiful worship by a faithful congregation. Gardens of Morr in disrepair are more often havens for Vampires than fortresses against them, and many Vampire hunters have perished with false relics in their hands.

Even a strong faith is no guarantee. Vampires are creatures of incredible will, the kind of will that can cause even the most devout priest to doubt his conviction. The older the Vampire, the stronger he is and the less reliable are these wards – and some Vampires are, as with all the curses, simply immune. The exception is when Vampires are themselves faithful or were when they were mortal. For these unfortunates, the power of the Gods is much harder to dismiss and has a great hold upon them. The few cases where this has happened, where a monastic Vampire has feared the wrath of his own once-worshipped God, have no doubt given birth to the myth of the symbol's effectiveness.

Running Water

Just as the sun has turned its back on the Vampire, so too have the other great givers of life: the streams and rivers feeding the lands of the Old World. As such, Vampires are burnt and weakened just as they are by the sun if they try to wade or ford over any running water more than a yard across. Flying or leaping over these bodies of water causes no such damage, nor does using any sort of bridge, from a simple fallen tree to a great viaduct of stone. Rowing or sailing is also safe, but the risk of disaster is very great. Those that seek to cross large bodies of water sometimes take to a deep slumber in their coffins to marshal their strength and prevent any accidents on deck. It was this precaution that allowed Luthor Harkon to reach the distant shores of Lustria, far across the Great Western Ocean.

The Mirror

The vanity of Vampires causes many to consider this curse to be the most cruel. Thankfully, outside of the great Hall of Mirrors in the Imperial Palace in Altdorf or the dressing rooms of the great theatres, mirrors of any great size or quality are still a rarity in the Empire. Even noble women are unlikely to have much more than a handheld looking glass – servants are instead employed to apply make-up, and great portraits are used to remind one of one's beauty and stature. Vampires also use portraits this way, but those who were not born into quality have little sense of what they are missing. More disturbing for a Vampire, regardless of their breeding, is the lack of reflection in everyday things such as water barrels, rain puddles, or polished

brass. However, the expectation of seeing one's image in such things is so ingrained, its presence is often assumed, and the lack of it goes unnoticed by others. Thus, this curse is less useful for Vampire hunters than one may think, except for those hawkeyed fanatics whose eyes never stop darting to shined surfaces and who carry a hand mirror everywhere.

Those Vampires who have no reflection typically also cast no shadow, whether from candle, torch, or the sun. Conversely, those who can walk in day are very often found to cast both shadow and reflection. Vampire scholars believe both these afflictions stem again from the sun turning its back on their kind, refusing them the benefit of its light and all others. Others suggest it is simply the never-ending irony of the universe that the world's most beautiful creatures are denied the wonder of gazing upon themselves, even in simple silhouette.

Fire and the Sword

Though formidable, Vampires are not impervious to damage, although they are very hard to kill. Given how notoriously difficult it is to slay a Vampire, there are great many methods employed by those who would hunt Vampires. The most traditional method is a stake through the heart! If this is not possible, then removing the head from the body is usually fatal. Younger Vampires may be slain by wounds severe enough to kill a mortal warrior. For all their strength and resilience, even the oldest Vampires can be utterly destroyed if cut into pieces – especially if those pieces are then scattered. Many witch hunters and priesthoods prescribe ritual dismemberment of a Vampire's remains to ensure that it is truly destroyed.

Common practices include beheading and burning the parts separately. Others stuff the Vampire's orifices with garlic and Daemonsroot, cut off its arms and legs, nail the parts to a church door, and bury the whole mess in a site where a priest of Morr once voided his bowels. Perhaps the most common method to ensuring a Vampire stays dead is to remove its head, scoop out its heart, chop off its limbs, fill its mouth with garlic, and burn each piece in separate fires at least thirteen feet apart. Then, one must collect the ashes and place them in a silver urn, which is packed in a chest full of salt and buried upside down. Only then can a hunter feel confident that his foe is slain.

The destruction of a Vampire does not always end with the same result. Some accounts claim that Isabella collapsed into a pile of dust. Some Vampires burst into flames, although this may simply be a spell cast by the Vampire to cover its escape! Often a Vampire simply expires and leaves a lifeless (really lifeless) corpse. This means that if a would-be victim manages to slay a vampire attacker, they often end up with the body of a normal man or woman, which requires speedy explanation to the authorities. Conversely, some nobles of the Empire have slain a political foe and later expediently claimed him to have been a Vampire.

For all the ignorance and speculation that surrounds Vampires, one thing is known for sure – few warriors face a Vampire and survive.

Extracts from *The Great Book of Banishment*

Chapter 10: Being a Description of the Diverse Artifacts with which the Righteous shall equip themselves against the Undead.

The Stake

Seek the holy tree of Sigmar and from its staves, cut thee sturdy stakes. And the length of the stakes shall not be less than two hands breadth. Then sharpen thou the stake with an axe of iron of the Dwarfs. Shun thee the iron that rusts. Harden then the spike in the holy flame, while reciting the words of banishment. And ye shall prepare not less than three such stakes and carry them with thee always.

The Hammer

Take thou thine hammer, like unto that which holy Sigmar wielded on his day of valour. Let it be graven with his holy sigil, against which nothing that is unclean may prevail. And its head shall be of the iron of the Dwarfs, which rusteth not. Let the handle be hewn from the hard oak of the Forest of Lorelor, that shall faileth not on the day of striking. And know ye that the unclean shall be dispatched with but three strikes of the hammer upon the stake. And the stake will penetrateth the heart of the evil one and accomplish the banishment for all eternity. And when thou striketh, say the prayer of Sigmar.

The Book

Keepest thou the sacred book with thee always, so none that are unclean may come nigh unto it. And its pages shall be of vellum, inscribed in the high tongue. And the leather bindings shall be graven with all the marks of Sigmar. When thou reciteth from the book, speakest thou with authority, that the evil—doer may tremble at thy words and shrink back front thee, for they cannot show their faces to righteousness.

The Mirror

Take thou a mirror of polished silver which cometh out of the Dwarf realms and tarnisheth not. Behold it is incorruptible metal and revealeth the souls of men. Keep it discreetly and let not anyone see it in the palm of thine hand. Whosoever shall have no reflection in the mirror ye shall deliver unto them the holy stake of banishment.

The Sacred Water

And thou shalt have with thee a phial and the sacred water of the well of Sigmar shall be within it. Draw thou this from the holy temple upon his feast day. Behold the sacred water burneth the flesh of the Undead and causeth them to recoil front thee.

The Sign of Sigmar

And this shall be the mark of the witch hunter. He shall wear the sign of Sigmar which is the Hammer. By this sign his foes may know that the power of holy Sigmar is with him. And none shall withstand the wrath of holy Sigmar, who cometh to save the righteous from the depredations of evil. And whosoever maketh the sign of Sigmar with his hand, he also shall be protected.

THE LIFE IMMORTAL

With great power comes great ambition. Without it, the Vampire's life sinks irrevocably into ennui and, eventually, self-destruction. The average Vampire lives a life of great privilege. Power over others and over his environment comes easily to him, his strength is instantaneously acquired and effortlessly retained, and magic and knowledge are easily mastered. Servants, lackeys, and disciples, both alive and dead, flock to him without any action on his part. Many Vampires do not even need to seek blood, for there is no end to the enamoured mortals keen for the honour of providing it. Nor does the Vampire makes obeisance to any God or Daemon, or swear allegiance to any lord or master, or follow any moral or legal code save his own. No fear holds him back from action, and no remorse follows him afterwards. What the Vampire wants is within both his power and will to simply take. Mortals dream of having the freedom to pursue their great desires. Vampires already have this freedom, so instead they must dream dreams far greater than mortals could ever conceive.

So it is that Vampires are rarely content to live a steady life of regularly feeding in safe obscurity and princely comfort. Even the least ambitious find themselves wandering the world, seeking out fresh challenges and new sensations. Few can resist the urge to conquer, none the urge to rule. For some, this typically means holding dominion over lands and armies and using the latter to ever extend the former. Others may also enjoy conquest but with subtlety and seduction, as well as ruling with secret manipulation. Vampires may gather courts around them and plan their conquests of revenge, whilst some, such as the Blood Dragons and the Necrarchs, care little for the conquest of people or lands, preferring instead to conquer abstract goals. The Dragons seek the perfection of knightly skills and disciplines, whilst the Necrarchs seek to master necromancy and the power over life and death that it offers.



There are other common obsessions and distractions: love, lust, art, scholarship, great discovery or grand accomplishment, vanity in every possible form and configuration, indulging the senses to all possible extents and levels, and of course rivalry and revenge. The Lahmians and the von Carsteins are rife with internecine conflicts, from ancient feuds aimed at nothing short of genocide to pay recompense for heinous crimes, to ten fresh oaths of vengeance sworn before breakfast for the most trivial of perceived insults. Rarely, however, do these conflicts escalate into outright war against their own kind—the immortality of their race has created a slight taboo of taking life from one of their own, except when they face a direct challenge from a singular enemy (or a disobedient servant). Besides, death is such a short victory, whereas a great humiliation can cause pain for centuries. This rule also holds true for any upstart mortals who dare to inconvenience a Vampire's un-life – death is a small revenge when they could visit agonies upon their wives, their children, their friends and their friends' families, mistresses, cobblers, bakers, butchers, candlestick makers, pets, servants, cousins twice removed, and groups of hired adventurers, all for the next ten generations.

Whether it is epic revenge or grandiose vanity they seek, a Vampire's courtly life provides plenty of opportunities to plan, plot, and scheme about how they will achieve their aims. This is why many legends imply that Vampires are seers, able to predict the tide of battle or the plans of their opponent because they have foreseen all ends. The truth is that a plan formed and analysed over a century has few, if any, flaws and accounts for every counter move. Whether seeking bloody conquest or mastery of a more abstract domain, the vast designs of the Vampire are little short of perfect – in their impossible conception, their meticulous construction, and in their dazzling execution.

Perhaps the other reason that the plans of a Vampire are so grandiose and irrevocable is that not even death, the great leveller of mortal dreams, can stop them. A Vampire's flesh may be entirely destroyed and his ashes cast to the wind, but the Blood Kiss firmly ties their spirit to this world. It will never depart to Morr's resting garden, and as such, there is always some magic that will restore them to physical form. All that is required is someone with the will to bring them back. This is why, ultimately, the only currency worth anything to a Vampire is dominion over the world and the loyalty of subjects. To die is an inconvenience; to be forgotten is the only true death a Vampire knows – and the only thing he truly fears.

"It seems to me that life is like a fast-flowing stream, and the mortals upon the world are like sticks and leaves caught helpless in its grip, dragged on through life, age, and into death. But we, the children of blood, have stepped beyond the river, rooted outside of its urging flow, standing as stones whilst life and time pass by. Thus we see all things come and go, empires rise and fall, all things once strong become weak. All things, of course, save ourselves."

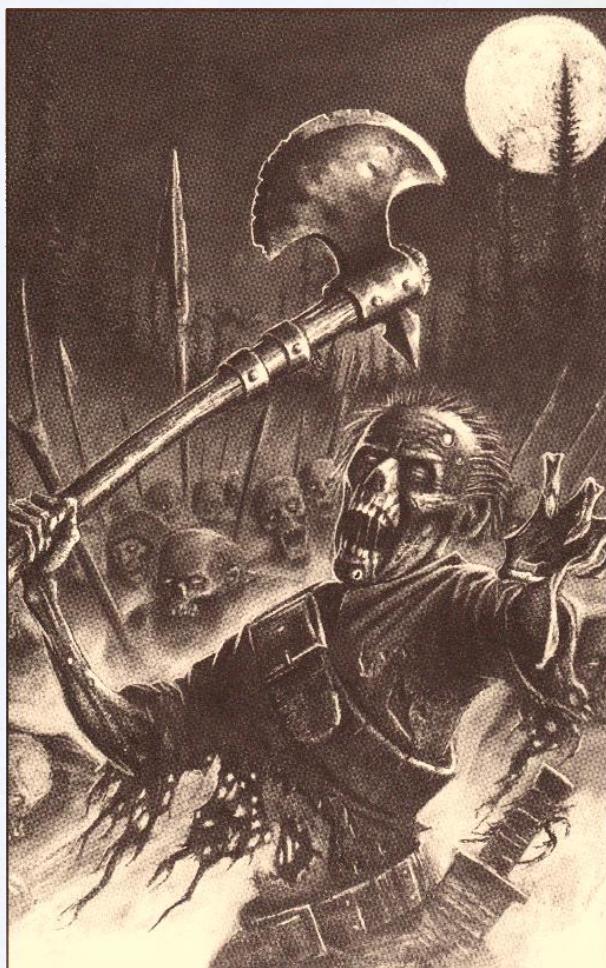
Mannfred von Carstein

Slowly Franz Beck crept through the darkness. Gently he eased open the gate of the graveyard. Night and mist reduced visibility to a spear's length ahead. The weather was perfect for his purposes. He doubted that his hooded lantern could be seen ten strides away.

The two great statues of Morr, god of death, that flanked the gate, gazed unseeing down on him. A sense of triumph filled Franz. Others would not dare come here. For many men a graveyard was not a place to be visited even in the noonday sun, let alone at night. Franz Beck was different. The dead did not frighten him. They fascinated him, and always had done, ever since he had seen the corpse of his first kitten being buried in his family's back garden.

For Franz, death was a fearsome force but it was one that could be mastered. Others tried to deny it but he knew. Before he had been expelled from the College of Wizards he had stolen a look at the forbidden library. He had seen the titles oft talked about among the students of Altdorf. He knew that the Liber Mortis and the Nine Books of Nagash were no mere legends. He knew they existed. Knowing they existed had meant that he had to know more.

The day of his expulsion from the College had started nearly two years of searching for Franz. He had haunted the book shops around the Reichmanstrasse and talked to the old men who dealt in all the forbidden works. At first he had been foolish and trusting and far too open. One man had sold him an Arabic cookery book. It was only after six months of study of that difficult tongue that Franz had learned his mistake. Another had reported him to the witch hunters and only a desperate flight across the frosty rooftops had saved Franz from a summary lynching.



He was fortunate indeed that the old bookseller was half blind, and that the witch hunter had never got a glimpse of his face, otherwise he would have been forced to leave town. One day he vowed, he would make both those dogs pay. They would learn the true meaning of terror before they died.

There were times when Franz had despaired of ever achieving the knowledge he so desperately sought. There had been times when the obstacles in his way had seemed too great to be overcome. Society abhorred necromancy; it stirred too many primordial fears. It brought into question too many things the priests wanted taken for granted. It made a mockery of the concept of an after-life. There were times when the forces the Empire had ranged against him seemed too strong to be overcome. But, in the end, he had overcome them all.

In the dusty corner of a tiny bookshop owned by an old and half senile magician, he had found the book he sought. The idiot had not even known the treasure he was parting with. It was one of the legendary grimoires of Heinrich Kemmler, the Lichemaster himself. Franz knew that it must have come from the Dark Tower's library, after the time when Kemmler had been overcome by the Cabal of Nine. He did not doubt that the tale of how the grimoire had come to be in the shop was an epic in and of itself. He did not doubt that it was a tale steeped in dark deeds and murder. The important thing though was that he had the book. He had overcome the obstacles that all of human society had placed in his way.

There were times when he admitted to himself that the obstacles were one of the reasons he wanted the knowledge. He longed for the thrill of knowing what others did not know. He liked the challenge that attaining the knowledge entailed. He wanted to be different, to have secret and forbidden power, but most of all he wanted the other things that necromancy promised.

He wanted the power of life and death. He wanted the power to inspire fear and terror in those who had mocked his ugliness. He wanted to be like those necromancers talked about in hushed voices in the long winter nights. He wanted to be like Heinrich Kemmler and Frederick van Hal and like Nagash. He wanted to live outside society, bound by no rules but his own. He wanted to be able to do as he pleased and sweep away those who sought to gainsay him. The idea of being hated did not disturb him: he had never been popular. The idea of being feared filled him with excitement.

He admitted that those others had made mistakes. Immortality had been in their grasp but they had thrown it all away. They had let themselves be dragged down by the pack. He would not allow that to happen. He would find a quiet corner of some shunned place and reveal himself only when his undead legions were numerous enough to be invincible.

Of course, he was getting a little ahead of himself here. He had not actually managed to reanimate any corpses yet. That was the purpose of tonight's exercise. Tonight, he exulted, was perfect. He had bribed the watchman with a gold imperial and then looked on as the man had drunk himself into a stupor in the Black Raven tavern. And he had found out where a strong body lay. The young knight Boris Krysler lay in state in his family's crypt. The man had died

young after a hunting accident. His body was strong and healthy and would be perfect.

Before him the Krysler tomb reared out of the mist. It was one of the vast and near palatial crypts favoured by the old families of Altdorf. Not for them a mere headstone among the riff-raff, even in death they separated themselves from the common herd. Franz would have to thank them some day. He pried open the lock with his crowbar. He paused for a moment and listened to see if the noise had disturbed anyone. No one came.

Slowly he made his way down the steps and into the crypt proper. The body lay in a long bier. Franz removed the lid and looked down on the man. The undertakers had done a good job. Franz reached out to touch his cold clammy skin. There was no pulse. He was definitely dead. He looked peaceful, as if he were sleeping rather than dead. Of course, thought Franz, to a necromancer death was but a strange sleep, and one from which the sleeper could be awoken if the summoner but knew the right words. And I do, exulted Franz. I know the incantation that will waken this sleeper.

Slowly he began to recite the words. They felt like honey on his tongue. He had longed to say them for so long, and now, finally he had the chance. Careful, he told himself. There must be no mistakes. Do not let overconfidence kill you. You have put your feet on the first steps on the stairway to immortality. Do not throw it all away.

He forced himself to breathe evenly at the end of every sentence. He emptied his mind and reached out for the Dark power. With every word it came closer to his grasp. He knew the sensation from his days as an apprentice at the College. His skin tingled with the Dark's icy touch. When he breathed little spines of ice jabbed his lungs. He felt dizzy and light-headed and had to force himself to keep going. This was the hardest part, he knew, controlling the magical energy, forcing it to do his will. But he knew he could do it. He knew no fear, and his will was indomitable. Soon the name of Franz Beck would be ranked alongside all those other necromancers. Perhaps it would even eclipse them.

An aura of darkness played round his hands now. Shadows flickered across his sight. He knew the power was his to command. Slowly, savoring every moment, he focussed it and directed it down into the body of the dead youth. The darkness touched the corpse, and crawled in through his nostrils like a black vapour being drawn into the lungs of a breathing man.

One of Boris's eyelids twitched. He looked like a sleeper who feels a spider crawling across his face. Soon Boris, thought Franz, you will be first of my many slaves. You will be my favourite. You will have a special place in my affections. The corpse's eyes were open now. He stared up at the ceiling, seeing nothing. With an act of will, Franz made him move. As the knight sat upright Franz felt like a puppet master watching a puppet dangle at the end of its strings. He felt a supreme sense of confidence, of assurance, of being in control. It was everything he had ever dreamed it would be.

Slowly the corpse began to move. It dawned on Franz that this was not right. He had not willed it so. He repeated the incantation of control he had learned from Heinrich Kemmler's grimoire. The zombie paid the words no heed.

Franz might as well have been reciting a laundry list. If anything the undead creature moved faster now, as it advanced towards him. Unable to believe that the incantation he had studied for so long was not working, Franz chanted it louder with even more arrogant self-assurance. The corpse came on even faster.

This wasn't right, thought Franz desperately. It wasn't fair. He had studied so long and planned so hard. Perhaps there was some mistake in the grimoire. Perhaps it was transcribed incorrectly. He chanted even louder, unable to quite believe what was happening. The corpse stalked ever closer till its cold clammy hands rested on his throat.

The next day the hungover watchman led the Krysler family down into the crypt for a last viewing of their beloved son. They were surprised to find a complete stranger in the bier. He was tall and ugly with a nasty blue bruise on his throat. Of their son there was nothing to be found. The next night though, the watchman disappeared.



THE ORIGIN OF THE VAMPIRES

Vampires are immortal beings that have spread the curse of undeath across the lands for thousands of years. Though almost all of them now dwell in the rain-swept forests of the north, their origins lie in the sun-baked desert cities of the Land of the Dead. Only the most ancient scrolls locked away in the Forbidden Library at the Colleges of Magic and the Great Cathedral of Sigmar hint at the origins of the Vampires. These age-old texts, brought to the Old World by crusading knights returning from Araby, tell of a land far away.

South of the Empire, south of the Border Princes, south even of the Badlands and Karak Azul, lies a land of which very little is known. Even those who know its true name – Nehekara – do not say the word aloud. They refer to it in hushed tones as the Land of the Dead. Few men have been there and returned to tell the tale, and so the history of the Land of the Dead is steeped in black rumour and shrouded in mystery. In the hieroglyphs and reliefs one can see how the aristocracy of that land once hunted men at night and drained their blood. A few insights can be gleaned from ancient texts, such as Abdul ben Raschid's Book of the Dead.



This great tome tells of how the powerful Priest King, Settra, conquered all of the cities of the realm of Nehekara, and yet he was not content, for he could not defeat death. He set his priests to solving the mystery of immortality, and though they extended his life for many years, they could not unlock the secrets of eternal life. Following Settra's death and entombment within a vast pyramid, successive Priest Kings became similarly obsessed with avoiding death. Over time, the great mortuary temples and pyramids dwarfed the cities of the living, and all thought and endeavour was bent towards immortal life. Eventually, this obsession with achieving immortality would bring about Nehekara's demise and, from its death throes, the birth of the Vampires.



THE RISE OF NAGASH

About two thousand years before the birth of Sigmar, roughly four-and-a-half thousand years before the present day, Nagash was born in Khemri, largest of the cities of the Great River. Priest Kings ruled this realm from their capital city of Khemri and upon their death they were mummified and entombed in great pyramids.

The brother of the reigning Priest King, Nagash was a mighty warrior and well-versed in the mystical incantations of his folk. From an early age, Nagash was obsessed with death, even more so than the rest of his people. Nagash wandered through the city's necropolis for weeks at a time, and entered the oldest tombs. He observed the morticians as they prepared the dead for internment. He watched warriors wounded in battle fade and die and he resolved never to die himself.

It was Nagash's capture, and subsequent torture, of a small party of shipwrecked Dark Elves that led to his discovery of Dark Magic. He then started to study this vilest of magic for a way to achieve his greatest desire: immortality. Nagash had a powerful intellect and implacable willpower and, after long years of research and experimentation, he created a new form of sorcery, which he named necromancy. Eventually he could reanimate dead bodies and prolong his own life indefinitely. Nagash recorded all his knowledge in nine huge tomes of parchment made from human skin and written in blood. A natural and brilliant sorcerer, his experiments met with considerable success. Amongst the greatest of his macabre achievements was the distillation of an elixir from human blood that would grant everlasting life to its drinker. Soon, Nagash had a loyal following of depraved noblemen with whom he shared his discovery. In a bloody coup, Nagash seized control of Khemri to become the kingdom's sole ruler, and had his brother buried alive within their father's pyramid.

As the years turned into decades and the decades turned to centuries, Nagash and his followers took to conducting their experiments and rituals hidden in the cool, dark places in the palatial tombs of the necropolis. They began to shun the light altogether as they made plans for their dark ascension. Unfortunately, though he discovered a way to force the spirit not to abandon the body, still he could find no way of stopping the flesh from succumbing to the vagaries of time. At first Nagash tried to preserve his body with the secret oils and balms that the priests used to mummify the most important among them. After two centuries, however, he could not hide the decay of his body and eventually he was driven insane by what was happening to him.

Nagash supervised the building of a great Black Pyramid, one of the mightiest structures ever attempted by men. It cost a great many lives to build, but the blood, sweat and souls given to its construction only increased its potency, for the pyramid was designed to attract the foul winds of Dark Magic. The other Priest Kings of Nehekhafe feared Nagash, they grew suspicious of his longevity and knew that he was growing too powerful. Soon he would no doubt conquer them. For the Priest Kings of the other cities, this was the final blasphemy.

At this time Lahmia was a distant province of the empire of Khemri. It was a land which suffered greatly under the tyrannical rule of Nagash. Here began the rebellion that would overthrow Nagash. King Lahmizzar of Lahmia gathered the other nobles together for a secret council. Under the leadership of King Lahmizzar of Lahmia all the other subject kingdoms of Nehekhafe decided to unite their forces against Nagash and rose up in rebellion against him and his grand vizier, Arkhan.

During the long war that followed, waves of dark power blasted the lands. Many of Nehekhafe's oases were so saturated that they became as dismal and lifeless as the surrounding desert. Lahmizzar perished in battle, and after his death, Nagash finally succeeded in blending the sorceries taught to him by his Druchii captives and altered versions of the ritual enchantments of the Mortuary Cult to bring forth his wrath against his enemies a new and terrible fashion.

Though the ushabti of Khemri's many temples had been awoken to fight for their city on numerous occasions since Lahmia first brought war against Khemri, Nagash found a way to channel the darkest magic into the rituals used to awaken the ushabti. The Great Necromancer saturated the once-sacred statues with black magic to make them more powerful, destructive and terrible of visage than ever before, making them behave and appear more like daemons than minor avatars of Nehekhafe's ancient gods.

After nearly a century of constant warfare, the armies of the Priest Kings succeeded in sacking Khemri. The last battle was fought around the huge Black Pyramid of Nagash, in which Nagash had taken refuge. Prince Lahmizzash, the son of late king Lahmizzar, set guards

outside the pyramid to wait for his inevitable surrender, but Nagash had other plans. The Black Pyramid had been constructed at the heart of the Necropolis of Khemri, and that night Nagash used his dark powers to summon a vast legion of skeletal warriors. Soldiers and kings who had been buried centuries before rose from their tombs and warred against their descendants. Nagash led them, striking fear into the brave Lahmians' hearts as he rode at the fore of his army in a chariot made of bone.

This proved to be too much for many of the peoples and soldiers of Khemri, who rose up against Nagash and his arch minister Arkhan, instead allying with the armies of Lahmia and the other city-states that had marched on Khemri. Victory went to Lahmia and the rebels, but Nagash escaped. As Nagash fled from the burning city back into the cold depths of his pyramid, the Great Necromancer swore to the Priest Kings that their cities would become as dust. The Priest Kings laughed. One by one they found Nagash's disciples within the pyramid and dragged them out screaming to be burned and beheaded in the sunlight. His pyramid was desecrated and sealed, and all priests of the Nagasite cult were put to death. All of the morbid statues and monuments to Nagash's glory were toppled into the sand. The sanctums of the Necromancer's disciples were despoiled, and the practice of Dark Magic was outlawed on pain of death. Yet the agents of the Priest Kings could not find the renegade himself. Although his disciples claimed to have seen Nagash enter his sarcophagus, the coffin itself was mysteriously empty.

But the purge of Khemri was not to be as complete as it should have been. While Lahmizzash was negotiating the end of his war-alliance with the kings of Zandri, Numas, Mahrak, Lybaras and Rasetra, and was establishing himself as king of Khemri and Emperor of all Nehekhafe, scrolls containing many of Nagash's greatest discoveries were being saved from destruction.



For Nagash had long planned against such a day as that one of his defeat. Some amongst the priesthood had resisted Nagash's perversion of their work and were driven out or murdered for their loyalty to the old ways. Nearly a decade before Lahmizzar had brought war to Khemri, Nagash had feigned to drive priests from the Mortuary Cult out of Khemri. They, he claimed, were disloyal to him and they were seen to barely escape his wrath with their lives as they fled far away to the coast and Lahmia. In truth these priests were spies sent by Nagash who already had got wind of the discontent growing in Lahmia to his rule of Nehekha. Believing them to also be the Accursed One's outcasts, the people of Nehekha took these traitors to their bosom.

W'SORAN THE WICKED

One amongst these traitors was W'soran, the eldest and wisest of those liche priests who had supposedly rebelled against Nagash. He rose to the trusted position of high priest of the city of Lahmia, the jewel on the edge of the Crystal Sea. He would become a trusted advisor of Lahmizzar, and later Lahmizzash, and also tutored Lahmizzash's only daughter, Neferatem (whose name meant Beautiful Sun) heir to Lahmia's throne. In this way the eventual fate of Lahmia and its royal court was sealed, for after Arkhan, W'Soran was the foremost of Nagash's acolytes from amongst the Mortuary Cult of Khemri.

W'soran used his position to poison the mind of the young Princess Neferatem, destined to become Queen of Lahmia. Under W'Soran's influence, Neferatem was raised with an insatiable curiosity, fascinated by magic and death who was frustrated by the Mortuary Cult's unwillingness to pass on their teachings to women. Secretly, W'soran nurtured her thirst for this forbidden knowledge, coaching her in the magical knowledge he learned at Nagash's side. So it was that as her father held council with the other kings of Nehekha, Neferatem was all too easily persuaded by W'Soran to order some of Nagash's scrolls to be snatched from the purifying flames. They were placed in a quartz chest and transported back to Lahmia along with thousands of other artefacts, inscriptions and statues as the spoils of war.



At the conclusion of the council of Nehekha's kings, it was agreed that Lahmizzash would remain in Khemri as king of that great city and Emperor of Nehekha. His daughter, now twenty four years of age, would return with her trusted advisors to Lahmia and rule there as queen. Though advancing in years, Lahmizzash took himself another wife from one of the few remaining noble houses of Khemri that Nagash had not purged and begat a son and heir for the throne of Khemri.

NEFERATEM

Immediately upon her return to Lahmia, Neferatem went about studying the Nagashi scrolls and artefacts she had ordered brought back with her from Khemri. Although Neferatem began deciphering Nagash's works with the otherwise noble intent of one whom simply wished to learn, in time her determination grew. Such was her resentment of the priesthood of the Mortuary Cult that forbade any outside of their number could ever study arcane lore, she determined to study those mysteries that even the great priests of Nehekha feared – the mysteries of the Great Heretic himself; Nagash.

Only W'Soran seemed sympathetic to this injustice, as indeed he had been from Neferatem's earliest years. He would speak privately with Neferatem, saying that he knew as truth that the only reason the priests of the Mortuary Cult forbade anyone from outside their order from studying their dark arts was simply because they wished to amass power for themselves at the expense of all others. Though priests might claim that Nagash's works were evil, W'Soran counselled Neferatem that no arcane art was evil in itself; except if one used it for evil ends. So it was that Neferatem kept the existence of Nagashi artefacts and her study of them secret from her court.

Neferatem became fascinated by Nagash's early experiments, seeing the value in his desire to find a way to defeat not only death but also the ravages of time. Before long, Neferatem began to emulate some of Nagash's simpler experiments. Soon the Queen learned the dark spells to animate and command the dead, and she too became a powerful necromancer. It did not take long for her innocent fascination to become an outright obsession with Nagash and his quest for immortality which she found in this evil grimoire and once again the search for eternal life began. This state of affairs was doubtlessly exacerbated by W'Soran's encouragement of Neferatem and indeed the addictive energies that so saturated Nagash's works.

All the while, W'soran was testing the waters of Lahmia's Mortuary Cult, learning which priests were sympathetic to his ends and which would have to be dealt with. Within three years W'Soran brought his plans for Neferatem to fruition. He secretly made it known to those priests of the Mortuary Cult who were not loyal to him that the queen had rescued Nagash's heretical works and sought to reproduce them. Without proof of such, the liche priests did not wish to move against the queen openly for fear of being accused of treason, nor could they allow Nagash's blasphemous

work to be recreated, with all the attendant horrors that this implied. So the liche priests began to move against Neferatem in more subtle ways, undermining her power at court and creating distrust and resentment against her amongst Lahmia's populace. So it was that the priesthood fractured, some loyal to their queen and others set against her.

Within another year, again with W'Soran encouraging and advising her, Neferatem decided her hand been forced. She could not risk revealing to her guards that she had indeed been seeking to emulate Nagash's accursed works, nor could she standalone against the liche priests. So it was that she invoked the darker aspects of Nagash's works – those that she had avoided until that point. In the dark of night Neferatem and W'Soran used the skills they had gleaned from Nagash's work to eradicate the most powerful of those liche priests who were moving against the queen. In panic, the remaining liche priests used their power to awaken the ushabti of their temples and send them against the palace, playing directly into W'Soran's hands. Having already gathered together those liche priests loyal to him, W'Soran raised the alarm, telling the palace guards that a renegade faction within the Mortuary Cult was attempting to overthrow their queen by using cursed magics to corrupt the ushabti.

The guards fought bravely to defend their beloved queen, but the ushabti were too powerful. It was then, just as the captain of the palace guards was leading the last of his men in an attempt to reach the queen's chambers before the ushabti, that Neferatem emerged in all her glory, surrounded by a crackling nimbus of dark energy. She stepped from her chambers with W'Soran at her side, throwing bolts of crackling darkness and unleashed the full fury of her burgeoning necromantic abilities on her foes, destroying them utterly. Once the battle was ended, Neferatem ordered that the remaining guards mobilise a contingent from the city's infantry and go with W'Soran to round up and execute all those priests who were responsible for the outrageous attack. Naturally, W'Soran assured that priests from more than just the Mortuary Cult were slain in this purge, thereby securing the power of his own acolytes within the city. With their aid, he and Neferatem continued their studies, focussing on one ritual above all others: the creation of the Elixir of Life that had granted Nagash his immortality.

THE FIRST VAMPIRE

Within five years a new cult had taken root in Lahmia, one tightly bound to the remaining priests of the Mortuary Cult. The founder of this cult was none other than queen Neferatem herself. With the forbidden knowledge contained within Nagash's books, Queen Neferatem intended to cheat death. So obsessed was Neferatem by Nagash and so intoxicated by the raw power of his sorcery, she had begun to view the Great Necromancer as a manifest god, entirely misunderstood by the petty kings of Nehekara, of whom she had grown to regard her father in distant Khemri as worst. The inception of a cult to worship Nagash was not the most profound change wrought within Lahmia. Neferatem was foolish in her pride and believed that



she could succeed where Nagash had failed. She attempted to replicate the Elixir of Life, and eventually she had a small measure of success. It is said that she received the secret of the elixir after striking a pact with a dark force whose name is better left unspoken. Neferatem had gone ever further in her experiments with Nagash's work and with W'Soran's aid had recreated all of Nagash's macabre experiments and dark rituals, including the Elixir of Immortality, its liquid was as black as night and stank of grave dust

W'soran had made subtle changes to the elixir, making it even more wondrous than Nagash's original, for this new elixir granted all who supped of it true immortality – a total immunity to death – and also took the entirety of the drinker's soul far beyond the reach of all gods and daemons in a way that Nagash himself only achieved having consumed prodigious amounts of raw warpstone.

Uttering a prayer to her ancestors, Neferatem drank deep of it. For a moment nothing happened. Then she was gripped by a fearsome pain, her veins screaming with agony. The torture turned to ecstasy, her senses filled with vibrancy, her body quivering with unnatural energy. She felt her heart stop beating, though she continued to live and breathe.

Suddenly she felt her soul pulled to another world, the world of undeath. A whole new plane of existence opened and her mind raced as she marvelled at the

beautiful images of the spirits of the dead. Her initial exhilaration was replaced by stark fear as Neferata realized that her weak and fragile soul attracted these spirits who surrounded her, seeking the warmth of the living.

They sought the essence of life that they once possessed and tore at her unprotected soul. Neferatem tried to fend them off but was unprepared for such an assault, and before long one spirit broke through her defences. When the Queen awoke, she found herself in the chamber where she had collapsed. She rose from her bed feeling and looking healthier than she ever had done. She was also stronger, faster and could think with greater speed and depth than ever before, but could feel the malicious spirit inside her. It was thirsty and sought the warm blood of the living to ease its pain.

After drinking this magical potion Neferatem no longer seemed to age, her mortal shell still looking deceptively young, but she was possessed of a terrible thirst for blood. For many years the young Queen managed to conceal her secret, limiting her nightly predations to slaves, servant and others who would not be missed. After a time, though, she could no longer contain her thirst, and it was then that she began to lure courtiers to her chambers, supping on their warm blood for relief from the torment of her possessed soul.

THE CULT OF BLOOD

After a further seventeen years of reigning in Khemri, Lahmizzash died and his young son, Lakhashar took the throne. Lakhashar ruled for twenty-one years before proving his mortality at the age of thirty eight, leaving the throne of Khemri to his own son Lakhashaz, who ruled for nigh-on forty years. Throughout the reign of Lahmizzash and his line the great necropolis were abandoned and the bodies of Lahmizzash and his two descendants were taken back for burial in the rock tombs of Lahmia.

All was not well in Nehekha, however. By the time Lakhashaz had ruled Khemri and Nehekha for twenty years, Neferatem was known to still rule in Lahmia. As the nobles of Lahmia grew older they began to question their queen's eternal youth. Most bizarrely for the other nobles of Nehekha, despite the fact that Neferatem should have been well into her eighth decade, she was reputed to not look a day older than when she had assumed the throne of Lahmia so many years before. Indeed her beauty was already legendary across the length and breadth of the desert lands.

The Mortuary Cult of Lahmia cut all its ties with the priests of other cities and began a reformation of its principles, encouraging female priests to join. The temple was rebuilt using stones taken from buildings of Khemri destroyed on Nagash's defeat, and the chambers of the temple glittered with gold and were decorated with statues and hieroglyphs telling the story of his rise to power. The cult statues within the temple were something which struck horror into the visiting dignitaries and envoys of Khemri, for they were statues of Nagash – survivors of those statues which had

adorned his accursed mortuary complex; images that were thought to have been destroyed during the sacking of the city by Lahmizzash's armies and should have been smashed into a thousand pieces. These dignitaries and envoys from the other city-states of Nehekha would return to their own lands with tales of the obvious corruption of Lahmia's aristocracy.

The Temple of Blood was the focal point of the new cult founded by Queen Neferatem and her chief priest, W'soran. The cult of blood was popular among the nobility of Lahmia and favoured by the ruling house above all other cults. The cults of the other Gods found themselves falling out of favour, struggling to be heard at court, and many of those priests left. It was the nature and practices of this cult that were to prove the downfall of Lahmia and the rule of Lahmizzash's line in Khemri, despite the fact that Lahmizzash and his offspring were far removed from the affairs of distant Lahmia.

Dark rumours began to circulate about the rulers of Lahmia a few years after Neferatem came to the throne. After an apparent attempt to overthrow the queen, the Mortuary Cult, along with many of the other cults of Lahmia, were purged by the lithe priest W'soran and his own loyal following. A short while after this, Neferatem's rule became ever more strict, brooking no criticism or insurrection. She founded a reformed Mortuary Cult, with W'soran as the cult's high priest. Unusually, this new cult allowed more women to join its ranks to start with than it did men – the males initiates being limited solely to W'soran and his own acolytes.



Neferatem invited her cousin Khalida Neferher, the Warrior-Queen of Lybaras, to join her cult. Khalida rejected her offer, suspicious of the changes going on in Lahmia and devout in her own worship of Asaph, the Asp Goddess. Worried that Khalida knew her secret, Neferatem accused her cousin of treason and attempted to assassinate her during a feast, drawing her into a duel before all the nobles of the Lahmian court. Neferatem's Vampiric strength gave her victory, and whilst Khalida lay dying, the Vampire bit her own tongue and kissed her cousin, transferring her curse. Devout Khalida prayed as she died, and her prayer was answered; Asaph drew the taint out of her blood and replaced it with poison, granting Khalida a holy death. It is said that although her death was holy, it was not complete, and Khalida lived on as the eternal guardian of Asaph's temple. Neferatem, thwarted in her attempt to gain a powerful ally, cast the remaining priests of the other Gods out of Lahmia.

THE TRUEBORN OF LAHMIA

The word in Nehekara was that the ruling house of Lahmia lay under a curse. The beauty of each princess of Lahmia, many of whom were daughters and granddaughters of Neferatem and priestesses of the cult, was such that any king of Khemri, Zandri or Numas should have been eager to ask for her hand in marriage. But instead, all these princesses were shunned, perhaps because they seemed to outlive any prince or king, and each was rumoured to possess powers of sorcery which could bend any man to her will.

The truth, of course, was that Neferatem had become the first true vampire – both powerful and immortal – and that she had begun to bestow the gift of immortality upon others. Encouraged by the ever-

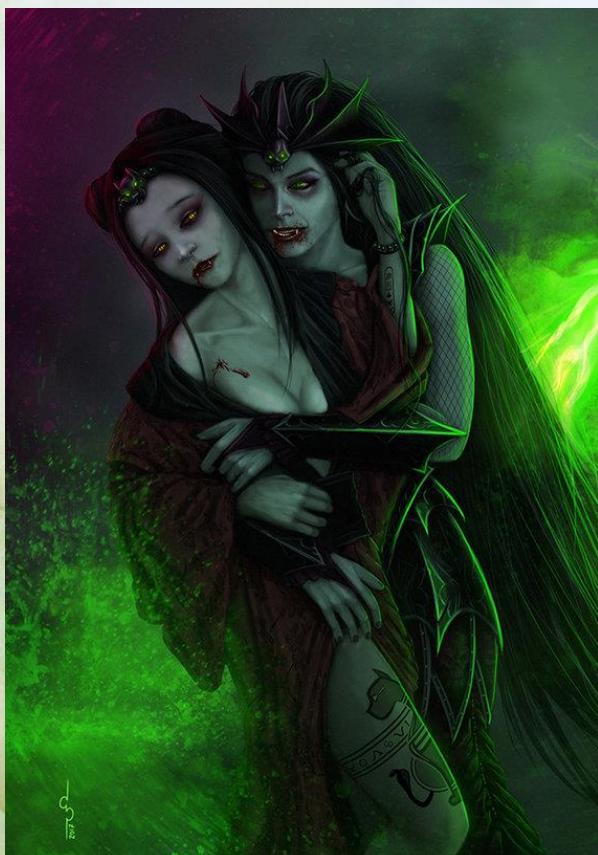
scheming W'soran, Neferatem came to realise that in time the other nobles of Lahmia would begin to question their unchanging beauty and incredible vigour. Neferatem realised that with only W'soran as her ally she was vulnerable and so, one by one, allowed others to join her and W'soran.

During this period, Neferatem had been secretly feeding on the populace of her city, arousing the suspicion of Abhorash, the love-struck captain of her guards. Handsome, strong and virtuous, Abhorash was a matchless fighter. One dark night, as she hunted the streets, Abhorash discovered Neferata drinking from a victim. He fled in terror at the unrecognizable creature he found, body awash with blood, fangs and claws bared for the kill. The following evening she summoned him to her temple and bade him drink from a chalice which, unknown to him, was filled with her blood. He was a loyal captain and drank without question. When he lifted the cup to his lips, his fate was sealed and damnation seized him with an iron grip as he drank. His mind filled with visions of death and blood, for he had been given the Elixir of Life by the Queen herself and joined his mistress across death's divide. Soon the rays of the sun started to sear his skin and he no longer felt the need for meat or water. Instead a terrible thirst for the blood of living men started to plague him.

Abhorash was horrified by Neferatem's trickery, but he could not long resist her commands. Neferatem and W'soran spread their curse to many at the Lahmian Court this way. The Queen chose eleven individuals who she considered worthy and gave them a sip of the elixir of life, and joined her as Vampire lords and ladies, including Maatmeses; Chief Judge and lord of the city watch, and the cultured court vizier, Harakhte. So began her Deathless Court, the trueborns who would be masters of the lesser Vampires they created. Each of these Masters was gifted with different powers and these distinctive traits are reflected in all other Vampires of their Bloodline. Of these lines, the one that to this day remains closest to the Vampires' ancient origins is the one descending from Neferatem.

However, Abhorash was not just a servant to his queen but to an idea: the honour of the Lahmian throne, the nobility of those who sat upon it, and their sacred duty to their loyal citizens. In the name of Lahmia, Abhorash resisted the hunger as long as he could, but the necromantic powers invested in the blood of the Queen were too strong, and eventually he could not hold back his dark desires. When he finally succumbed, his thirst was so great he slaughtered twelve men and women a single night of rage. He drained them of blood to quench his unnatural thirst. Only after he had done the deed did he understand what had happened. It is said that Abhorash wept tears of blood for his victims.

The next day, and every year afterwards on that day, he lit twelve candles in the temple to remember the lives he had taken. From then on, he fed only upon the criminals of his city or travelled to the desert to prey upon the scattered nomads and, even then, sparingly.



He also devoted himself obsessively to mastering his gift with swordplay. He vowed to learn a discipline to keep his raging thirst under control, and practised the way of the warrior to harness his great strength under his iron will.

Abhorash rose quickly in the ranks of the Vampire nobility until he became the supreme commander of the Lahmian armies. He busied himself in bringing law and order to the kingdom. While Lahmia was in many ways a city of nightmares, where the ivory-faced aristocrats hunted for blood during the night, there was at least order in the kingdom. Laws were upheld and bandits were kept in check. The officials were so afraid of their immortal overlords that corruption and bribery became virtually unknown in that land.

Abhorash still felt twinges of his goodness from life and drew up a great charter with a set of rules for the trueborn to follow, so they might follow his example and honour their noble duties, whatever their needs. Ostensibly this was a way of protecting themselves from discovery. They would only prey on criminals and slaves, not ordinary citizens, from then on. Also, they were forbidden from feuding amongst themselves, and no trueborn could kill another.

Eventually, Ushoran, Neferatem's long ignored little brother, eventually learnt of the elixir, and without his sister's consent crept into the temple and drank of it. Despite her fury at his action, Neferatem had allowed him to live because he had become one of the trueborn vampires. Thus Ushoran, the lowly Lord of Masques, was permitted to join the Deathless Court

For many years the queen and her vampire court sought to keep their altered state secret from the populace, limiting their predations to criminals in Lahmia's prisons, and certain slaves, servants and others who would not be missed. The Lahmian coven under Queen Neferatem kept itself to the shadows of their great pyramid city, slowly mastering their new powers.

RISE OF THE VAMPIRES

As time passed in Lahmia its vampiric aristocracy discovered more of their powers. Their ability to perceive and grasp the winds of magic had increased dramatically and they could weave mighty spells without fear of mutation or harm befalling them. They had the strength of a dozen men and no disease, accident nor mortal weapon could cause them lasting harm. Not even the mighty bound djinn of the desert nomads could destroy them, for although these powerful entities could shatter the vampires' bodies, the vampires could always be brought back with the aid of their fellows.

Their bodies were theirs to change as they pleased and when the hunger was upon them, they willed their teeth to grow into needlepointed fangs so that they might more easily pierce the veins of their victims. The trueborn vampires learnt also that they could pass on their gift of eternity through their own blood. Other than Neferata, few of the first vampires wished to sire or conceive children and even Neferata left the rearing

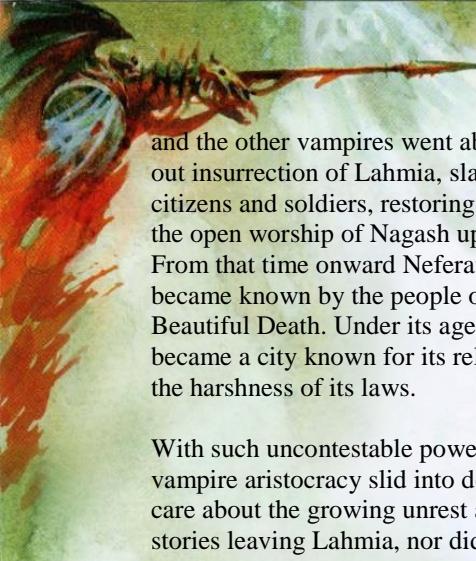


of her vampire-born children to others. The lords of Lahmia found that by giving their blood to another mortal they could create lesser vampires that could be controlled by their sire. Each new vampire could create more of his or her kind, although each generation had slightly lesser powers and abilities than their sires.

The first Vampires reigned like gods over Lahmia, governed by their undying queen and hidden from the ire of the Priest Kings. And gods they were to the populace of Lahmia, undying rulers ordained to reign for eternity. In time the temple of Lahmia became the focal point for a whole host of these immortals and they commanded that the people Lahmia worship them alongside Nagash as their manifest deities. Gradually, the Vampire covens of Lahmia began to grow in confidence, and their excesses increased. They would not submit to walk the earth like common soldiers, and insisted upon being borne upon ornate thrones at all times. Hundreds of slaves entered their palaces every day, and were never seen again. Slowly the old religion died away, to be replaced by the worship of the living ancestors, the Eternal Queen and her Deathless Court.

The Vampire nobles of Lahmia considered themselves above the laws enforced by Abhorash. The First Children mocked and ignored his charter, particularly the pompous Ushoran, and resumed their lust and decadence. Despite his warnings they often hunted for human blood in the lands of other kings. Abhorash knew what this would cost them, but he could not be disloyal to his masters.

Abhorash's predictions proved correct, and the violent and decadent ways of Lahmia did not go unnoticed by the rest of the kingdoms of Khemri. Abhorash could only watch as the arrogant Vampires roused the rulers of Numas, Zandri and Rasetra against Lahmia. Agents of the other cities began stirring up rebellion, horrified by the spread of the Cult of Blood and its veneration of Nagash, the Great Heretic. So it was that Neferatem



and the other vampires went about suppressing the all-out insurrection of Lahmia, slaying hundreds of citizens and soldiers, restoring order and then imposing the open worship of Nagash upon the entire populace. From that time onward Neferatem, the Beautiful Sun, became known by the people of Lahmia as Neferata, Beautiful Death. Under its ageless queen, Lahmia became a city known for its religious intolerance and the harshness of its laws.

With such uncontested power within Lahmia, the vampire aristocracy slid into decadence. They did not care about the growing unrest across Nehekhar at the stories leaving Lahmia, nor did they care that what they did within Lahmia was having a detrimental effect upon the rule of the Lakhashaz, the grandson of Neferata's father, in Khemri.

Although the rebellion failed, the other cities of Nehekhar still wished harm to come to Lahmia. The Vampires also learned that Nagash had not been destroyed, but was rebuilding his power in the citadel of Cripple Peak, which would become known as Nagashizzar. In thrall to the Great Necromancer and bound to him by the corrupted Elixir of Life, the rulers of Lahmia sent envoys to Cripple Peak. Agents of the Priest Kings captured and interrogated some of these heralds, and the Vampires' existence was uncovered. Enraged beyond measure, the Priest Kings once more amassed their armies and made war.



The Khemrians and the other kingdoms of Nehekhar revolted against the rule of King Lakhashaz, for how could they accept as their overlord one who was of the same blood as the heretical queen of Lahmia? Supported by the other city-states of Nehekhar, General Setep, a native Khemrian whose legion had conquered lands as far away as the south of what would later become the Empire, overthrew Lakhashaz and seized the throne. The Lahmian dynasty was ousted, but the city-state of Lahmia remained independent with Neferata and her court still in power, secure from conquest for the time being beyond the mountains.

VASHANESH

Unbeknownst to all, Lakhashaz had sired an heir, albeit one out of wedlock with one of his many concubines. Vashanesh was tall and powerful, possessing all the strength, nobility and fascination with strategy of his great-grandfather, Lahmizzash. Yet Vashanesh was said to also have had a hardness about him and a zealous drive to succeed in his endeavours, perhaps inherited from his great-grandfather's second wife, she who was of Nagash's own bloodline.

Vashanesh escaped Khemri with a small band of men loyal to him. Together they made their way to Lahmia, believing that the rumours about the city were mere fabrications invented by the jealous kings of Nehekhar. They were wrong, of course. Soon after their caravan train entered the city, tired and dusty after any weeks of travel, he was arrested by the pale guards of the city watch. Saying that he was related to the ruling family and insisting on being taken to present himself at court to deliver an important message, Vashanesh was taken before Neferata. There he told the queen all that had happened in Khemri and warned that the kings of Nehekhar had turned their eyes in hatred towards Lahmia and all its children. As Vashanesh had been a commander in General Setep's army, he knew much of the plans the general had for Lahmia.

Not quite realising the nature of the beings he faced and perhaps too arrogant to fear them even if he did, Vashanesh was entirely unafraid when Ushoran stepped forward to mock him, saying that the rulers of Lahmia were beyond the might of any to conquer and had no reason to fear anyone. To Ushoran's shock and fury, Vashanesh did not offer him a second glance, instead striding up to the foot of Neferata's throne, stopping only when her personal champion, Abhorash, drew his sword and pressed its point to Vashanesh's throat. Again, Vashanesh paid this interruption no mind, gazing directly at the pale beauty of the queen.

For her part, Neferata was greatly impressed with this confident, dark-eyed man, and saw the strength and pride of her father within him. She bade Abhorash lower his sword and dismissed him and the entire court from her presence so that she might speak with Vashanesh alone. Only W'soran remained behind, confident in his role as chief advisor to the queen but even as Vashanesh turned questioning eyes upon him, Neferata dismissed the ancient priest. It is said that

W'soran lingered there for a moment, recognizing that for the first time in nearly century his control over Neferata had been cast into doubt. Then he left, leaving the queen and the proud mortal behind him.

Once alone, Vashanesh told the queen all he had learned and all he suspected of General Setep's plans, and offered council on how best he believed to counter them. As Neferata mulled over his words, Vashanesh asked about the queen and her court, asking what relation she was to her great-grandfather's daughter, Queen Neferatem, for Neferata's beauty seemed an almost replica to the statues Vashanesh had seen of Neferatem. Neferata merely smiled, replying that she was of the same blood as the Lahmizzash's daughter. Not content with the enigma of the queen's response, Vashanesh continued to question her, criticising the ignorance and decadent arrogance of her court for thinking that they were beyond the wrath of the other kings of Nehekharra. It was perhaps then that Neferata decided upon Vashanesh's fate.

Here was a man of the same noble blood as the queen, and yet also possessing blood of Nagash's own family – however diluted. His intelligence, charisma and insight were plain for all to see, as was his pride, strength, natural command and the fact that he was obviously quite taken with the queen. With this man at her side Neferata perceived that she might be able to bring her own plans to fruition, for the queen was no fool and she had long seen the decadence of her court and how W'soran had used it to gather power enough to rival her own. Though the queen herself had ordered the inception of the Cult of Nagash, she had ever seen the object of their devotion as a great man who whose teachings offered immortality and salvation from the yoke of gods. W'soran, on the other hand, openly worshipped Nagash as a god, caring more for Nagash the being rather than Nagash's teachings, and this, amongst so many other considerations, had begun to concern Neferata. Where she was still too wrapped up in the complex politics of her court, Vashanesh was not, and it seemed unlikely that he would be cowed by anyone.

So Neferata told Vashanesh that he was correct in his judgement of Lahmia's court. They were indeed decadent and ineffectual but she also assured him that with the right hand at the tiller they could be steered to greatness. She proposed an alliance with Vashanesh, a union of the two lines of Lahmizzash. If they were too many, Vashanesh could rule Lahmia as Neferata's co-monarch and together they could reshape the kingdom into the power it should be. Vashanesh agreed.

Without further ado, Neferata bade Vashanesh follow her to her temple where within it was an altar upon which was a chalice. Perhaps guided by some instinct, Vashanesh grasped the chalice in both hands and swallowed several long draughts of the elixir within it. Whether Vashanesh willingly and knowingly partook of the Elixir of Immortality is not recorded in any history but it is known that after supping of it, he and Neferata also shared their blood with each other, creating permanent a bond between them. Abhorash

despised this bond above all else, for he had long been in love with Neferata and had desired to be her consort.

Vashanesh threw himself into his role of King of Lahmia with vigour, showing himself to be a strong and natural ruler. Regardless of the petty factions at court, Vashanesh reorganised how the city-state was run, tasking each of the firstborn vampires with reordering and making efficient a different aspect of city life. Alongside this, Vashanesh and Neferata sent out hundreds of agents to the other city-states of Nehekharra on a mission to disrupt for as long as they could the mobilisation of these states against Lahmia and to encourage conflict between them. The plan of Lahmia's co-monarchs succeeded throughout the rule of three more kings of Khemri after Setep had died. Once King Alcadizaar, known as the Conqueror, ascended to the throne of Khemri, war finally found its way to Lahmia.

THE FALL OF LAHMIA

Between Alcadizaar and his father and grandfather, all of Nehekharra had been subdued under the direct rule of Khemri once more. All, that was, save Lahmia. Alcadizaar could not abide the threat the city presented to his power, and the bloodlust of its rulers gave him all the ammunition he needed to destroy them. His ambition was to conquer Lahmia, and the tales of heresy and sorcery from that land provided him with a just cause that would unite Nehekharra behind him. Since Setep had taken the throne of Khemri, the Mortuary Cult had been reinstated within that great city's walls.

After Nagash's acolytes had been slain, Lahmizzash had chosen not to welcome the cult back into Khemri, believing that it was somehow responsible for creating Nagash, however unintentionally. Now the cult was as implicit to life in Khemri as it ever had been and Alcadizaar consulted with its priests with regards to Lahmia. They advised him that the cult in Lahmia was dangerous; that is sought to summon forth Nagash from wherever it was he had vanished to plague Nehekharra once again. Though not entirely correct in their assumption about Lahmia, the lithe priests of Khemri were not entirely wrong either.

Declaring a holy war against heresy, in the name of the traditional gods of Nehekharra, Alcadizaar raise a mighty army from all his dominions and bore down upon Lahmia. All the kings of Nehekharra followed him and the glittering legions advanced over the mountains. They did not find Lahmia unprepared.

Having placed Abhorash and his disciplined and keenly military mind in charge of all Lahmia's armies over a century before the invasion, Vashanesh had assured that the city had a credible force with which to drive back any single army. Unfortunately for fair Lahmia, they did not face a single army but many. The Nehekharan armies of Khemri, Zandri, Numas, Qatar, Mahrak, Rasetra and Lybaras were joined by the armies of Bel-Aliad, Bhagar and Ka-Sabar of the burgeoning Arabian civilisation conquered by Alcadizaar.

There was but one man who could turn them back – Abhorash, now the leader of the city's armies, and given the honorary title of the Lord of Blood. For months, Abhorash led the defence of his homeland and won many battles, holding the much larger force at bay. In his mortal life he had been Lahmia's most lauded warrior and in his immortal life he was nigh unstoppable. The dusty plains before Lahmia's gates became muddy with the blood of his foes, their bodies heaped at the bottom in a great mound of death, even as Lahmia's armies were gradually driven back. In his absolute fury, Abhorash fed on his enemies with savage abandon, and his strength grew even more.

None had studied Nagash's works as deeply as W'soran and none was more devoted to the obeying will of the Great Necromancer. With but a word from the pale slit of his mouth, W'soran caused the slain to rise once more, binding the recently dead to his will and casting them against their still-living comrades. At this time, necromancy was anew art known only to its creator, Nagash, and so it became clear to Neferata and Vashanesh that the vampiric liche priest had indeed kept in some kind of contact with his great lord across the seas of time. Legends say that all the way from Nagashizzar, Nagash turned his gaze upon the defence of Lahmia and used his vast magical powers to aid those whose cult idolised him. The Nehekharans were horrified to be met not only by the military of Lahmia but also by an army of the dead raised from their rest by W'soran. Fighting back their fear, Alcadizaar's troops brought battle to the Undead.

The Khemrians and their allies brought forth machineries of war and, though battered by rocks, burned by alchemical fire and showered transfixed with arrows and bolts, Lahmia stood defiant. The battle at the Sphynx Gate of Lahmia was long and bloody, with the deadly Vampires personally slaughtered hundreds

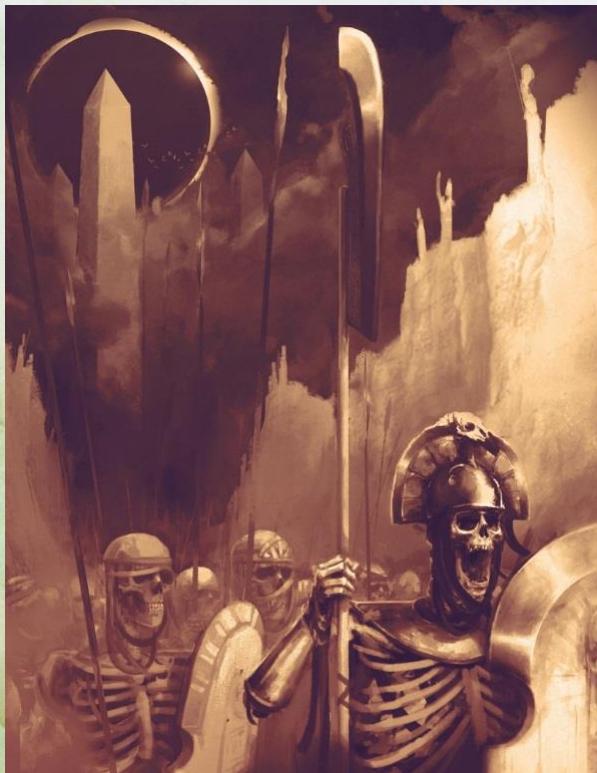
of the Nehekharan royal guard sent to destroy them. The many priests of Nehekhabra that were arrayed against Lahmia invoked their gods and the magicians of Araby released the fury of bound djinn to curse the defenders of Lahmia, and yet still the vampires fought on, though their mortal servants were slain in their thousands.

For a full week, Abhorash led his army against the bronze-clad armies of their enemies, tenaciously defending the temple and launching devastating counter-attacks mounted on a nightmarish steed. Though outnumbered, the army of Lahmia could be continually replenished, the dead rising as soon as they fell. Their mortal followers proved less reliable, and traitors amongst them turned against their masters and allowed the Nehekharans to storm the city. The army of Alcadizaar whittled down Abhorash's men, broke down the walls, and poured into the city, looting, burning, and killing. The army of Lahmia was vanquished and the few mortal survivors of the city turned against their overlords in the last days of the battle. Within the city's walls desperate mobs had begun to smash the palaces and monuments of Lahmia. The ancient tombs, pyramids and high spires of Lahmia were toppled. Street by street, building by building, the Khemrian soldiers fought their way towards the Temple of Blood. The chariots of the Jackal Squadron of Marahk coated the streets with blood, and those Vampires who did not flee were forced to do battle on the steps of the temple.

Abhorash led the defence of the temple, and none could stand against the unliving warrior. The high steps to the temple poured with the blood of his foes, their bodies heaped at the bottom in a great mound of death. In his anger, Abhorash fed wildly, and his strength grew even more. Myths speak of a mighty storm that gathered above Abhorash, lightning crackling around the Vampire as he fought, striking down those who opposed him. Abhorash's blade felled a foe with every blow, and not the strongest armour nor the most skilled parry could defend against him. Khemrians brought forth machineries of war and, though battered by rocks, burned by alchemical fire and transfixed with bolts, he was impossible to destroy. The High Priests of Zandri invoked ancient magics to curse the unliving warrior, and yet he fought on. But for all his immense ferocity and skill, and despite the deaths of thousands of his foes, he was unable to stop the Nehekharans storming the court of his Queen.

The great temple was put to the torch and those petty and decadent vampires who had chosen to hide within it rather than fight were reduced to ash by the raging flames and then scattered on the warm breeze across the desert, never to be revived again. Many of the vampiric princes and princesses of Lahmia met their end in this way.

As the great Temple of Blood collapsed, the keening cry of Abhorash echoed throughout the city. He had failed as a warrior and his beloved city was in flames, his people butchered. With this realisation, Abhorash cast away all his love for humanity, swearing to



destroy them as they had destroyed his city. His once proud realm, which used to be scattered with oases and desert gardens, was now a torched, barren land. Nothing living stirred in Lahmia, though to this day the dead do not rest in their graves, such was the strength of the magic unleashed during the titanic battle.

While the other fleeing Vampire Lords collected as many treasures and riches from the ruins as they could, Abhorash took only his weapons and armour with him to exile. Four of his vampiric minions followed him, slaying all who crossed their path, and thus he left the city to its fate. From then on, he lit the twelve candles to remind him humanity deserved their extinction, for they were nothing less than animals, and he was a fool to have ever grieved for them.

The Vampires had lost the battle. Their defeat was a bitter blow to the arrogant immortals. They had tasted power and found it to their liking, but now they had lost everything. The population of Lahmia was enslaved, the pyramids smashed, and the Vampires driven out. The bodies of those who had been entombed according to the Nagasite rite were despoiled, and priests from Khemri saw to it that the mummies were destroyed in such a way that they could never return in undeath. Many of the kings and princes were purged in this way. Unfortunately, when the sarcophagi of the queens, princesses and priestesses were broken open, some were found to be empty. The guards of the necropolis, who had fought a determined rearguard action, were captured and made to speak before being put to death. They said that the tombs were only ever occupied during the hours of daylight when the sun shone on the land. At night, the females came forth from their resting places to perform their rituals. Many Vampires who managed to flee were hunted down and slain in their tombs during the hours of daylight by the vengeful Nehekharans and their priests.

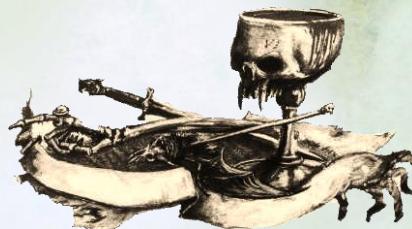
However, the eroded scrolls of Lahmia describe how seven great Vampire Lords and their closest followers escaped the sacking of the City of the Vampires. Chief amongst them were Ushoran, the Lord of Masks, Abhorash of the Blood, Vashanesh, the king of Lahmia and Neferata, Queen of Shadows, as well as Maatmeses and Harakte.

Perhaps drawn to the Lord of Undeath by some instinct, all of these great masters of all vampires except Abhorash fled northward and one by one arrived in Nagashizzar, where they came across a reborn Nagash in the midst of raising an Undead army of his own.

WAR WITH THE PRIEST KINGS

It was no coincidence that the Vampires came across Nagash. Through his agent, W'soran, Nagash had manipulated them from the first and lent them his magical aid from a distance during the siege of Lahmia. Having watched the fate of Lahmia from the moment W'soran had arrived there until its destruction, Nagash had planned for this day. Nagash looked upon the corrupt immortals and was pleased. He welcomed

the vampires, regarding them as worthy champions for his armies, their immortality a tribute to his dark genius. The Great Necromancer had become mighty indeed, and though the vampires of Lahmia were immensely powerful, they were no match for him and they knew it. Nagash said that if they obeyed him he would make them greater than ever they were before.



As proof of this promise Nagash burned from the gathered vampires all ability to experience fear and regret; a mixed blessing indeed, though not one any of the vampires had a choice in. In Vashanesh, Nagash recognised a born leader and seeing that the other vampires would never follow his chosen acolyte, W'soran, and much to the growing bitterness of the increasingly ignored Neferata, Nagash presented a ring to Vashanesh. Made from some magical alloy, the ring was set with a stone of refined and enchanted warpstone. With this ring, Vashanesh would be able to command all the other vampires and they would be impelled to obey. The only caveat upon this was that should Vashanesh ever disobey Nagash, the spell would be broken and he and all vampires would be cursed for all eternity. As an added incentive for Vashanesh, Nagash told him that the prime enchantment of the ring was to make its wearer indestructible; even were his body to be destroyed, he would not have to wait for allies to resurrect him as other vampires would. Vashanesh could not refuse such a gift as that.





So, with Vashanesh as their absolute ruler under the overarching dominion of Nagash, the vampires set about learning much of the necromantic arts from their creator. Eventually they became able to raise a host of the dead with their own magic, though none was more proficient in this than W'soran. Nagash had already raised a vast army of undead creatures and foaming fanatics who worshipped him as their god and it was to this vast horde that Nagash appointed the vampires as his captains. All seven were commanded to fight as Nagash had chosen this time, while Alcadizaar had gathered all the armies of Nehekhar together, to finally crush those lands and people that had driven him out centuries before.

Nagash promised the vampires that in return for leading his armies against the Nehekharans, he will return to them the city of Lahmia; Using Nagash's arcane viewing devices, Vashanesh and his fellow vampires studied the dispositions of Alcadizaar's armies and plan their campaign.

Nagash had not been idle and had learned much about the art of necromancy and animating the dead, conceiving of a mad and deadly master plan. Nagash had spent many decades gathering together an Undead horde the likes of which has never walked the earth since. With the Priest Kings ignorant to his presence he had raided the necropolises, and his army of darkness was set to march south. He had sworn vengeance on the Priest Kings and was set to exact a terrible toll. He vowed to turn the entire world into a necropolis filled only by the unquiet dead, where no action would be performed, no deed done) save when he willed it. Nagash would be the lord over all of it.

The first step on Nagash's road to utter dominion was the elimination of his former homeland, for he wished a bitter vengeance upon the Priest Kings. At his command, the Vampires led his legions forth to war. On ships made of fused bone, the Undead horde made its way from the Sour Sea, down what future generations would know as the Straits of Nagash, to the Bitter Sea. The Undead legions made landfall at the ruined port of Lahmia and surged forwards on their mortal foes, the exiled Vampires spearheading the attack. An army of chariots and skeletal regiments descended upon Nehekhar, but the brave people of that desert land were not about to give up. They had been roused by the defeat of the Lahmian Vampire temple and were prepared to fight.

Nagash had seriously underestimated his former countrymen. In the time of his absence, the Land of the Great Vitae River had become a mighty empire ruled by a single Priest King – Alcadizaar the Conqueror. Alcadizaar was the greatest general of his age and his empire was at the zenith of its power. When the Undead came, they found themselves opposed by a unified, confident army. Moreover, the enchanters of the Great Kingdom had made progress in the arts of magic, particularly in the creation of animated war-constructs. No easy victory was possible against them.

The ensuing wars stained the sands red for many years. The Vampires were mighty sorcerers and fell warriors, and they were determined to reclaim their kingdom. Wherever they appeared, terror and dread came upon the enemy, yet the Vampires were not invincible. The war swayed backwards and forwards for a decade. The Vampire captains used every tactic and vile strategy

their damned powers could afford them, taking a horrific toll on the armies of the Priest Kings of Nehekha. At first, the legions of the Undead had the upper hand, then the armies of Alcadizaar struck back with displays of tactical genius, their chariots slashing through the reanimated ranks like scythes through wheat. At the fore was Alcadizaar, his great golden armour glowing with magical energy, his enchanted scimitar flicking faster than the tongue of a desert snake.

Although at first the Vampires had been eager to serve as Nagash's lieutenants to gain revenge on Alcadizaar and regain Lahmia, it became apparent their survival was irrelevant to Nagash. He hurled them carelessly against the enemy as he would his mindless Undead troops. It became clear to Vashanesh that Nagash was not interested in his vampire vassals, nor yet in winning back for them lost Lahmia. Nagash simply wished to see the mortals of Nehekha destroyed and if that meant the lives of all the vampires, then so be it. Nagash was content to sit and wait in Nagashizzar for the end. In fact since the war began, Nagash had raised Arkhan, his first and most trusted lieutenant, back from death, revitalising the ancient viziq's soul that was trapped within its body. Since then, Vashanesh found that he was as bound to obey Arkhan's word as he was Nagash's. Vashanesh cursed Nagash's name, but could think of no way to free himself from the Great Necromancer's yoke.

At the height of the greatest battle of the war, upon the lush plains to the north and east of Khemri, Alcadizaar became surrounded by the undead horde and was battling for his life. Seeing this, a plan came to

Vashanesh. Suspecting the control Nagash exerted relied on a living Vampire wearing the ring, and believing the Great Necromancer's assurance it would return him from the grave, Vashanesh willed his Undead horde to step back from the embattled king of Khemri, and strode forward himself to meet Alcadizaar in a duel. Despite the Khemrian king's skill it was plain to all that he could not hope to stand between Vashanesh and triumph. Just when all seemed lost, Alcadizaar swung wildly at Vashanesh's face with his bronze sword, and although Vashanesh could have parried the blade easily, he instead lowered his own sword, allowing Alcadizaar's blade to slice off his head. As Vashanesh toppled to the ground, the other vampires were suddenly freed of Vashanesh's, and therefore Nagash's, control. Almost as one they quit the field, leaving only W'soran following Nagash's orders.

With the death of Vashanesh and the flight of the other vampires, two-thirds of Nagash's legions were destroyed and W'soran was forced to flee back across the desert to Nagashizzar.

Great was Nagash's rage. He was not fooled by Vashanesh's plan and knew that the vampire king had allowed himself to be defeated rather than live out an eternity as Nagash's servant. So the Great Necromancer cursed all vampires, decreeing that they would never again feel the warmth of the sun but would ever more feel its bite. From that day to this even the greatest of vampires have been at the very least weakened and severely discomfited by the sun's light, if not destroyed outright by its brilliance. Ever afterward they would know constant pain and their howling cries would carry the knowledge of their misery to all men.



THE DIVIDE OF THE VAMPIRES

Shortly after, the six remaining trueborn Vampires – Neferata, W'soran, Abhorash, Ushoran, Maatmeses and Harakhte – gathered together in secret from Nagash to form a plan for a new course of action. However, they bickered over where to go and who deserved to lead them. Ushoran wanted to rise against Nagash and take control of his army, Neferata saw wisdom in allying with Nagash and returning to found a new city of Lahmia. W'soran argued against both these courses of action, and sought to go into hiding once more with their dark lord, in order that together they could take control of the world through magic.

Being unable to come to an agreement, the Vampires fought with one another. The fight was savage, no single Vampire able to better the next. For the whole night they battled but, as the sun rose, the Vampires fled from each other, hiding for fear that they should be destroyed by their enemies' minions as they slept. So it was that the Vampires were split apart. There is little doubt that together they could have conquered the world but, because of their arrogance and vanity, they were destined to become bitter enemies for the rest of eternity. Now, though, a new and more elusive danger threatened each and every civilisation.

Neferata, Abhorash and Ushoran went north to the kingdoms of men in the Old World, dispersing to avoid pursuit and hiding in the distant refuges of the forests, crossing mighty mountain ranges on their travels. Thus did the Vampire Counts come unto the outskirts of the Old World, its haunted forests and lonely settlements a perfect hunting ground for creatures that thrive in shadow. Ushoran settled in Strigos. Neferata travelled widely, influencing the nations of man from their foundings and inserting her daughters in privileged positions amongst them. Maatmeses and Harakhte vanished out of history, though there are rumours of Vampires in far Cathay and the Southlands who may be of their lost bloodlines.

Of Vashanesh, no one knew his fate. His body and his head could not be found after the battle, nor the ring Nagash gave him. However, Vashanesh eventually returned as Nagash has promised he would, and he spent the next few centuries testing the limits of the ring. Even if Nagash had truly died after being abandoned by the Vampires, which seemed unlikely, the ring had allowed Arkhan to control them as well. Who knew how many other favoured servants Nagash had who would be capable of turning the Vampires into their slaves? Vashanesh set about mastering certain magical arts to make the ring his slave, rather than vice versa.

For many decades the seven trueborn Vampires remained in hiding from each other. Plotting in their dark and secret lairs, they dreamed up dark schemes as to how best they could forge enough power to withstand the other trueborn, who would no doubt seek to destroy them. Each of them came upon small secluded realms around the Old World. In these lands they began to found minor domains. No single Vampire was stronger than the next and so they kept



their locations secret, waiting patiently for the others to expose themselves before choosing whether to strike against them. Realising that, they would need strong allies were they to stand any hope of defeating the other Vampires, each of the trueborn and sired a line of parasitic successors, gifting the Blood Kiss to those they deemed as worthy companions in darkness. These are the grisly dynasties of Vampire Counts that plague the world of the living to this day.

THE FATE OF W'SORAN

W'soran stayed by Nagash's side whilst he cursed and ranted at the fickleness of Vampires. As the other Vampires fled into the dark night he remained at his master's side, agreeing to lead the army into battle. He hoped that by staying with Nagash his dark master would reveal more of his Necromantic secrets. W'soran accompanied Nagash into battle in a mighty scything chariot made of the sun bleached bones of a once monstrous creature.

He led a massive horde of skeletal warriors into combat, riding at the forefront of the army, casting his corrupt magic across the battlefield. As the bloodied bodies of his foes fell to the sandy desert floor, smashed by dark bolts of crackling energy, he would awaken their spirits, commanding them to rise and fight against their own kinfolk. The battle was savage and Alcadizar's army was weakened by the dread plague that had swept across the land. The horror of having to fight their own decayed friends and family who had been summoned from their plague ridden graves led to Alcadizaar's army crumbling under the massed assault.

Nagash was pleased with his apprentice and as a reward gave W'soran one of his dark tomes to study.

W'soran gleaned terrible arcane knowledge from the crumbling pages of the unholy book, whilst the other Vampires fled north. It is thought that one sought passage on a merchant vessel. Tales tell of how a ship was found crewless, drifting along the coast around the lands now known as Norsca. All the cargo had been thrown overboard save for a single coffin. Another headed east towards the lands of Cathay and Nippon. Little is known of the fate of these Vampires. None can know the exact routes that the Vampires chose to walk, but stories of their passing can be found amongst the myths and legends that still haunt the children of those realms to this day.

During the brief period of time that W'soran was able to study under Nagash he learned much of the other realm, the world of Undeath. Unfortunately for the Vampire trueborn, his master was slain by Alcadizzar only a year after he had risen to power. Of all the trueborn Vampires, only W'soran was truly loyal to Nagash. Neferata worshipped Nagash for a time but felt betrayed by his choice of Vashanesh over her to lead the Vampires, and the others chose to ally with Nagash only out of convenience. So it was that when Nagash fell, W'soran was the only trueborn at his side to lay claim to the Great Necromancer's works. With these, and a select group of Nagash's acolytes, W'soran fled from the Land of the Dead with the tome Nagash had presented him still in his possession to continue working towards the Great Necromancer's dream in safety. They scattered all over the world and hid themselves to patiently wait for the death of their enemies and continue their studies. They built tall towers from where they could study the stars and defend themselves if attacked.

W'soran began work on the Grimoire Necronium, which contained not only a distillation of Nagash's magic but also a series of prophecies showing W'soran's vision of the future: a world of bones populated only by the dead and ruled by his bloodline. There was one flaw with this dream of an empire of corpses – the lack of sources of blood. Thus, W'soran searched for ways to relieve himself of the red thirst.

Powerful necromantic magic made him less dependent on feeding than other Vampires, so he could go for months or years without blood. There was a price, however. His reliance on pure dark magic, rather than blood alone, to give him power caused his visage to grow hideous and corpse-like.

When W'soran granted the Blood Kiss to his aging acolytes, this curse was passed to them as well. By drawing on the power of True Dhar to a far greater degree than other Vampires, their forms grew as twisted as their master's. Over time, their minds twisted along with their bodies, and many sank into madness.

Little is known of where W'soran hid away after the defeat of Nagash. He locked himself away for centuries, studying the art of Necromancy with little interest in the affairs of his fellow Vampires. With the aid of his acolytes and his apprentices, he transcribed his notes in the dread Grimoire Necronium. His mastery of necromancy grew so profoundly that he was able to limit the red thirst that drove Vampires to live dangerously close to mankind, though the effect of this change was to hideously twist his line's physical form.



W'soran did not harbour the ambitions of the other Vampires. Conquering the world of mortals was not enough for the Necrarch. Instead, he sought to master the world of death. He knew that if he were to achieve ultimate power then it would come from knowledge of the spirit world that was the essence of his very being.

With no aspirations to build a great nation, he was not inclined as were the other Vampires to create an army of Thralls. W'soran selected a few of Nagash's most intelligent priests who had escaped the wrath of Khemri. He decided to make them into his Vampire students and went into seclusion in order that he could teach them the dark arts of Necromancy, unthreatened by the other Vampires.

Using knowledge gained from the Book of Nagash, W'soran would spend great amounts of his time walking in the Undead spirit world. It was this that ultimately led to his undoing. In order to cross the border between the mortal realm and the land of Undeath he would go into a trance-like state. In this way, his soul became free to explore and converse with the spirits of the dead.

His finest and most diligent student, a Vampire named Melkhior, seized one such moment to use to his advantage. Who knows what made Melkhior betray his master. Some rumour that the Book of Nagash spoke to him, beckoning him to slay W'soran, others believe it was simply his own twisted mind that led him to plunge a stake through the heart of his master. Nonetheless, in doing so, Melkhior plunged those Vampires that W'soran had created into a world of darkness.



THE VAMPIRE AND THE DRAGON

Once Vashanesh had allowed himself to die in order to free the vampires from Nagash's direct control, Abhorash turned his back to the lands of the south and travelled north with four disciples, searching the Old World for a sign to give meaning to his existence.

Passing through the Badlands, he and his followers let loose the predatory instincts they had so long tried to keep in check upon the Greenskins that lived there, and fed like wild animals, gorging themselves after years of denial and restraint. Such was Abhorash's skill that to this day the Orc shamans still tell the legends of the decimation wrought upon them by the "army" of throatrippers who slew five whole tribes. The Dwarfs greatly feared Abhorash, for often they would send supplies to an isolated stronghold or mine only to find that all the inhabitants had been butchered by the merciless killer.

Ancient tribes of Humans also have legends of this time, which speak of the five figures who left nothing but death in their wake. But these and all other feastings did nothing to sate Abhorash's rage or his lack of purpose. That his animalistic drives still held mastery over him made him furious, for it made him no better than the lords he had spurned or the Human vermin that surrounded him. He could never be a true warrior whilst the hunger controlled him.

After many years, Abhorash and his followers came to a mountain whose pinnacle was wreathed in flames. Abhorash was strangely drawn to this lonely mountaintop and, ignoring the advice of his followers, he decided to scale its face. Alone and furious for new destruction, Abhorash climbed to the top. As he reached the summit, a red dragon of immense size emerged from the crater and descended on the Vampire Lord. At the prospect of testing his martial abilities to the full, Abhorash drew his sword. Legend has it that as the battle between them raged, the mountains shook, and great storms split stones asunder. For a day and a night they fought, until finally, the great Vampire struck down the elder wyrm, and as his foe lashed in its death throes, Abhorash seized its throat with his fangs and drank deep. Intoxicated by the blood of the Dragon, Abhorash cast the broken carcass of the creature down from the mountaintop and emitted an exultant cry of victory. His search had ended. In the red Dragon's blood, he had found surcease of his bestial yearnings, and with its ending, his fear of the sun faded as well. Now Abhorash no longer craved the lifeblood of men. He had found an escape from the curse of Vampirism and had become the ultimate warrior, a man with the strength and powers of a Vampire and none of its weaknesses. He had attained perfection, and in that, he had found something new to believe in – himself.

Now he bid his vampiric minions to go forth and hone their martial skills, so that when their prowess equalled his own they could also escape the curse of vampirism and became free of the predator inside them and all other limitations of the weak, mortal world. Thus he told his cursed followers, "I will watch you and when I decree that you are ready, I shall call you." Then he bid

his warriors go forth, perfect their martial skills and find others worthy of joining his immortal warriors.

Since those days Abhorash's immortal sons have called themselves Blood Dragons in memory of the great dragon vanquished by their mighty sire, and they have sought to perfect their martial abilities in order to be worthy enough to rejoin with their master. The Blood Dragon Vampires took names and guises which would not raise suspicions and studied the languages men spoke in different corners of the world. Many died in battle against heroic warriors and fearsome beasts, others survived and their names have passed into infamy: Walach; The Red Duke; Varison the Blade; the Dark Knight of Maleaux and others.

Abhorash current location is unknown. Some say he wandered north, deep into the Chaos Wastes, or east into the land of the Giants to seek out even greater conquests. Others say he followed the path of Sigmar and became a God; others say he still walks amongst their ranks in the disguise of a young thrall, watching for the most worthy amongst them. Still others think of the tales of other Dragon slayers, like Gilles de Breton and Lord Amara of Hoeth, and wonder how many faces their master might wear in a life as long as his. Whatever the case, none have seen or spoken to him in centuries, and his location and his plans remain mysterious. To this day the Vampires of Abhorash's bloodline believe that somewhere, in a dark and shadowy corner of the world where the face of the sun is pale, Abhorash waits for the return of his immortal sons to his mountain home.

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE STRIGOI

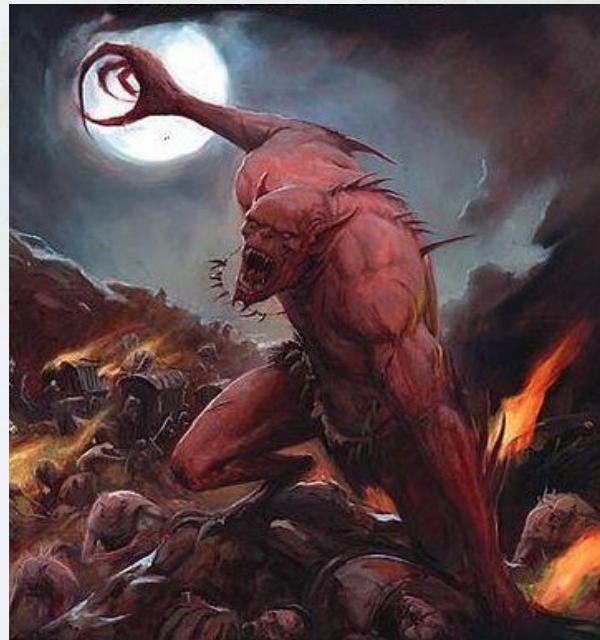
Though Ushoran was not the natural leader Vashanesh was, nor yet the consummate politician that his elder sister Neferata was, he did possess a honeyed tongue for persuasion. Added to this, although he was nowhere near as skilled a warrior as Abhorash, his truly immense muscular strength and stamina eclipsed that of all his trueborn sibling. Ushoran's only failing was that despite his incredible strength and immortality, he was ever a petty and insecure man. As a child he had never excelled, except in contests of strength, and as he grew older he found that he could gain little respect from the other nobles at court, despite being the queen's brother. His sister, for her part, cared little for him, for throughout their childhood together, Ushoran's feelings of unworthiness and insecurity had manifested themselves in his perpetual bullying of his sister.

As an adult, both before and after his rebirth into immortality, Ushoran found his place in Lahmian society as the Lord of Masks, he who planned and presided over all the great festivals and revelries of the court. Yet this only added to his sense that he was looked down upon by other nobles, for although they all enjoyed the maques he organised and his displays of strength and daring for their amusement, he was never taken seriously... until he supped the Elixir of Immortality.

After Vashanesh had sacrificed himself to be free from Nagash's dominion and before the remaining trueborn vampires had dispersed, Ushoran tried to convince his vampiric siblings that they should go forth as a group and forge for themselves a new land to rule. The other vampires were not interested in founding a new nation together, especially not one where Ushoran had a say in its governance, for they were understandably frightened that such a nation would attract Nagash's attention and ultimately his vengeance. They mocked Ushoran, choosing to follow their own individual paths. Ushoran was furious and cursed them.

So the remaining trueborn had fled across the world and went into hiding for fear of attracting Nagash's gaze. Though they could trust no one, not even each other, they could depend upon the lesser vampires that they could create by bestowing the Blood Kiss, for these vampires were always in thrall to their sires. To this end, each of the first vampires created thralls for themselves at different points in their history, awaiting the time when they would reveal themselves once more. It came as little surprise to the other vampires when they learned that Ushoran, ever rash and desperate for attention, would be the first of them to emerge from hiding.

Ushoran wandered aimlessly through the mountains for many years, before circling back on himself into the lands which are today known as the Badlands. There he found the kingdom of Mourkain in the land of Strigos, which lay on the western foothills of the World's Edge Mountains. The kingdom was under the rule of a shaman named Kadon, who wore an ancient crown that gave him magical powers. Ushoran recognised this as the Crown of Nagash. This revelation shocked Ushoran, but as he pieced together the story of how Kadon came by these artefacts, it became clear to him that Nagash must have died. Enough of Nagash had been absorbed by the crown that it possessed a reflection of him that could speak through it to the crown's bearer, though this shadow of Nagash was





subservient to the will of the bearer. Ushoran saw an opportunity to assert his dominance over Nagash. Now he would forge this kingdom into a truly powerful nation with him at its head, with no fear of reparation being sought by the now destroyed Nagash.

Insinuating himself at the court of Strigos, Ushoran spread his curse to those he saw possessed of a thirst for power like his own. Bringing all his powers of necromancy to bear and demonstrating his vampiric near indestructibility to Kadon and his disciples, Ushoran was able to convince the mortals that he was in fact a messenger of the being they took for a god – Nagash. Over a brief few decades he was able to create a small following of Vampire Thralls each of whom held high positions within the city's nobility. Within a century, the children of the Lord of Masks were holding many positions of importance in the capital of Strigos, Mourkain. Once he felt that they were in a strong enough position he made his move and with the support of the Thralls he declared himself ruler of the realm and deposed Kadon, claiming his artefacts. With these, Ushoran believed he would be able to control his sibling vampires who had so callously rejected him.

Learning a lesson from the rulership of Lahmia, he enforced a strict rule of law, allowing his kind to feed only on those who deserved to die – criminals, enemy captives and the like. Strigos became one of the most crime-free nations of history. With such a strong leader the realm prospered and before long it became obvious to the other Vampires that one of their kind must be behind the success; not that Ushoran did much to disguise what and who he was. Ushoran in his foolish pride sent his Thralls out to seek the other trueborn Vampires and bid them to come to his realm where together under his leadership they could found a new deadly dynasty. His siblings were not so foolish, for they had learned that Ushoran possessed Nagash's

crown and hand, and that with these he might have the power to subjugate them.

Neferata was the first to scorn Ushoran's invitation. Ushoran sent messengers to invite his sister to his court that she might bask in his glory. Neferata's contemptuous response was to slay his messenger and drain him of blood, sending the bloodied fangs which she had herself torn from his mouth back to Ushoran as a sign of her contempt. Neferata had built up a network of Vampires amongst the flourishing tribes that were to eventually become the Empire, and also amongst the peoples further south in the lands that would one day be known as Bretonnia, Tilea and Estalia. Making good use of this, her vampiric sisters used all their influence to goad the various chieftains and warlords of these lands of Ushoran's deadly power. Together they raised an army and marched south against Ushoran. From that day onwards the land of Strigos found itself beset from all sides.

Had the humans known what they faced they might have decided against their course of action, but the subterfuge of Neferata's Lahmian sisters was subtle. Ushoran had amassed a great army. They were a disciplined force comprising many strong and skilled warriors, with well-crafted weapons and armour. He gathered his troops and marched north to intercept the armies of men, who were little more than barbarians and no real threat to him. The humans could only harry Ushoran's realm, for they had not the unity, allies or organisation to defeat his disciplined army, and nor would any human nation from the north until the coming of Sigmar Heldenhammer.

Unfortunately for Ushoran, the fact that the northern barbarians harried the outlying towns and villages of his kingdom gave the greenskins of the surrounding mountains the confidence they needed to overcome their fear of Mourkain and the terrible fanged warriors that had stalked through their land and; in true Orc fashion, now sought to fight these monsters. Mounted on mighty Wyverns, the Orc Warboss Garsnag Craktoof and his Shaman Fuzzgig Red-Eye led a massive Waaagh! and headed north to seek vengeance for those Orcs that had been slaughtered by the dread Blood Dragon Abhorash. Whilst he was thus distracted, the huge Orc horde swept down from the mountains like a green tidal wave, engulfing Strigos.



Ushoran's force had virtually smashed the united tribes. His Thralls had been merciless on the battlefield, slaying thousands with their unholy fury. Ushoran's army would have easily defeated the men of the northern lands, but during the long campaign rumour spread of Craktoof's mighty Waaagh! Ushoran knew he had left his capital city defenceless and had to quickly march his army back south. They were harried and pursued by the humans and much of his force was destroyed as the rearguard collapsed.

Finally, when they reached the plains of dust, a short distance from the capital, Ushoran saw the might of the Orc horde. Countless numbers of Greenskins were amassed before him ready to sweep through his tired and depleted force. Bellowing savage guttural war cries, they smashed crude weapons on their shields challenging the Vampire army. Ushoran knew they were outnumbered but he had little choice other than to fight the horde.

The Orcs had underestimated the power of a Vampire and in the first Assault upon the city, Craktoof himself was slain by Ushoran, who it is said tore the Orc's head from his body with his bare hands. None dared face the Vampire and the Orc attack might have faltered had not Fuzzgig called upon the mighty powers of Waaagh! magic and struck down the Vampire Lord, engulfing him in a green, sorcerous blast of energy.



Upon seeing their master destroyed, the remaining Strigoi fled the battle knowing that the city was doomed. They desperately sought safety amongst their own kind, searching for the other Vampires. However, the Vampires had strictly segregated themselves, partly for their own safety (reasoning that in small numbers they would be less likely to either court resistance as they had in Lahmia or attract the attentions of Nagash) and partly out of unwillingness to compete for the limited resource of blood. As each of the trueborn stamped their own personality on those they chose to join them, this segregation became exaggerated, until the bloodlines became openly hostile towards each other.

The Strigoi wandered for many months, skirting the lands of the barbarian men who had harried the borders of Strigos for so long. Eventually they reached the land that is now called Kislev where they found a small castle built along lines not dissimilar to those found in distant Nehekhar, albeit modified and built from different stones. A figure wrapped in a huge wolf-skin cloak came out to meet them, and there could be little mistaking who he was.

Vashanesh stood before the assembled vampires of Strigos silent and unmoving. They begged to be allowed to stay with Vashanesh and serve him in return for his protection. Vashanesh saw these Strigoi as even more petty and vindictive than their sire. He scorned them as worthless and told them he had travelled this far so that he would not have to meet with such pathetic creatures as they. The Strigoi took exception to Vashanesh's words and fully twelve of their number attacked him. Few escaped with their lives.

Each time these Strigoi came across other vampires they received similar treatment. Neferata's bloodline had been told by their queen to expose the Strigoi wherever they tried to integrate into human communities where the Lahmi an sisters resided. Abhorash's progeny despised the Strigoi as representing all that was worst in vampires and went out of their way to hunt the Strigoi across all the lands of men. Finally, W'soran's Necrarchs used them in their necromantic experiments. So it was that the hunters had become the prey. The Strigoi were forced into hiding; everywhere they turned foes sought to destroy them.

The hunter had become the prey. The Strigoi were forced into hiding; everywhere they turned foes sought to destroy them. Their only refuges were those places shunned by civilisation. In desperation, the Strigoi began dwelling on the edges of civilisation, in tombs and in graveyards. The final torment for these wretched creatures was that if they were ever to allay their hunger fully on the blood of sentient mortals, they were invariably consigned to preying on wandering bands of lepers and other derelicts, or else digging up the recently deceased to try and find some weak nourishment in their dead, congealed blood. Normally, Vampires will not feed on the blood of those not recently dead, as it gives little sustenance and tastes of ash. The Strigoi cared not and fed on the blood and even the flesh of those long-deceased. For if they were to hunt too openly, then they risked attracting the vindictive attention of other vampires intent on exposing or destroying them. The readiest supply of human, or at least near human, blood that the Strigoi could feast on were the degenerates commonly referred to as ghouls who also haunted the hidden places, preying on the weak and on the dead. The Strigoi had little option but to live in this most vile manner with only their burning resentment to warm them.



The Strigoi found themselves driven by their hunger to those places where dark magic gathered more densely, so that their twisted souls could partake of the raw energy of magic when purer sustenance was hard to come by. Yet still the Strigoi were attracted to civilization and they became ever more bitter and twisted as they watched the many races of the Old World grow strong, but more than anything else they hated the other Vampires for what they had turned once noble and proud Vampires into: monsters lurking at the edge of civilisation who would gnaw the bones of the freshly buried dead, gathering followers from the Ghouls who inhabited the cemeteries. Lone travellers often fall prey to the Strigoi and villagers living on the poorly patrolled borders of realms tell tales of the terrible creatures that live in the dark forests.

Where they could, the Strigoi hunted wild beasts and vermin but such incognisant creatures could never truly satisfy their hunger. The bestial spirits of these creatures, when mixed with the blood of degenerate ghouls and the dark magic that was so readily drawn to the Strigoi, fashioned their once fine bodies into massive feral and beast-like things, a mockery of their former aristocratic selves.

The Strigany families who roam the Old World as itinerant pedlars in garish caravans are descended from the mortal inhabitants of Strigos. Their ancient association with the forces of darkness means the Strigany have an ill reputation in the Empire and beyond. The Strigany are widely believed to still be in league with their Vampire masters, leading to hatred and persecution wherever they travel.

VAMPIRES AND EMPIRES

Over the next two thousand years, many Vampires gave in to the ancient urge that was manifest in Lahmia and Strigos and attempted to found or take their own domains. Neferata stole Silver Pinnacle from the Dwarfs; Luthor Harkon carved the Vampire Coast out of Lustria; Walach Harkon made Blood Keep his own; the Red Duke of Aquitaine cut a swathe through

"As you know, the hordes of death have invaded once again," said the king. "I have called this council of war to decide where to make our stand. Now has anyone any opinions?"

"Baron de Guerre stood up. "Yes, sire, we must send troops to hold them at Lapocqs."

"Why should we spare troops to defend that place? It is just a rough port full of ruffians!" asked the king.

"Indeed sire, but there has been a recent outbreak of plague," replied the Baron.

"What of it?" said the king. "I am not in the least bit surprised."

"Indeed sire..." the Baron continued, "...but the cemeteries are full and our enemy shall be seeking reinforcements."

Bretonnia before being slain and then returned from the grave and made another attempt; Nourgul the Necrarch terrorised Estalia in the War of Blood. Almost unnoticed in the annals of history, Vashanesh travelled to the land of Sylvania that he had first seen as a soldier in the Legion of Setep, and calling himself "Prince Vladimir," he aided Vanhel in crafting an Undead host to defeat the Skaven who threatened the land in the wake of the Black Death. Content with this change he had wrought in history, he returned to hiding. Whatever became of him after this is unknown, though some rumours abound that he later returned under the name Vlad von Carstein.

Now the Vampires have spread themselves across the whole of the Old World. Each night their numbers grow as more fall prey to the deadly Blood Kiss of a Vampire. With each battle their armies are swollen with the re-animated bodies of the fallen, and in the war torn lands of the Old World there are countless reinforcements for their unholy hordes. Who can tell what secret plots they hatch in their ancient crypts. Decades, even centuries, are of little importance to a Vampire and they can patiently bide their time waiting for the perfect moment to strike.

One thing is certain; there are none who can safely sleep in their beds whilst the dark menace of the Vampire Counts casts its evil shadow across the land. Many have attempted to wipe the threat of the Vampire from the face of the Old World but, as of yet, none have succeeded. The Bloodlines flourish still and it is only through the acquired knowledge of their dark histories that the mortal world stands any chance of saving itself from the legions of death.



A Terror Unleashed

Clouds swathed the night sky. Only the pale green tinge of Morrlieb shone down upon the gloomy forests of Sylvania; the fell light of the Chaos moon, harbinger of evil. Like a throbbing eve, it pulsed down over the peaks of the World Edge Mountains, bathing the lands in Dark Magic.

A smaller glow greeted the dire orb, spilling sickly from a brazier atop the rampart of Drakenhof Castle. Warpstone hissed and bubbled in magical fire, sputtering noxious smoke into the still air, illuminating the soaring towers of the keep with a nauseating hue. A tall figure strode through the fog, causing it to swirl in vortexes that split into the moaning faces of souls trapped in eternal torment. The magical fumes coiled about Vlad von Carstein, seeming to paw at his pallid face and seep into his body as he stood at the battlement. The Vampire Count's eyes blazed with power as he gazed out across Sylvania, his immortal stare reaching out beyond the foetid woodlands to the dark forests of the Empire.

Vlad brought Jbrth a great book bound in human skin. It crawled within his grasp, trying to break free, but Vlad's grip was like iron. As he opened its ancient pages, the archaic words of Nagash, scrawled in blood, writhed upon parchment woven from human sinew, trying to hide their secrets from the Vampire. With the magic of warpstone fuelling his will, Vlad turned his eyes to the ragged pages. He fixed the spells in place, extending his unyielding will through a grim stare. Wrestling with the powerful energies coursing through his body, Vlad forced himself to concentrate. His veins burned and his skin raged with agony, but Vlad steeled himself against the pain and began the ritual.

The words came slowly at first, just a murmur upon the Vampire's cold lips. They were ancient words, bastardised Nehekeharan and Elvish concocted by the Great Necromancer as he sought to unravel the mysteries of life and death. With greater strength, Vlad spoke the horrifying incantations, his voice growing in volume. Dark magic burned within the warpstone smoke, coruscating in black waves around the Vampire. Vlad raised his shaking clawed hands into the air, the Book of Nagash held in front of him by the power of the count's infernal gaze. Like a storm breaking, Vlad's voice boomed out across his lands, carrying with it the magic of death and the energy of Unlife.

In long-abandoned gardens of Morrlieb dead things scraped at their stone coffins. Casket lids creaked and dusty earth shifted as corpses clawed their way to the surface. In the swamps, half-rotted creatures pulled themselves free from their sucking marshland graves. To the north, under the desecrated soil of Vanhaldenschlosse, skeletal bands tightened on sword hilts and spear shafts and bones broken by battles of antiquity knitted together. To the east upon the foothills of the mountains, the rune-carved lintels of prehistoric barrows burned with the vigour of Undeath. Unearthly shrieks echoed through the streets and alleys of Drakenhof as the souls of the von Draks' victims surged back into the world seeking vengeance.

The sound of thousands of fluttering wings resounded through the forests and grew louder. Blacker than the night sky, a heaving cloud of bats gathered about Drakenhof castle, swooping and screaming, surrounding the blasted keep with a whirlwind of red eyes. The growling and howling of wolves joined the clamour as dead beasts loped from the forests and prowled to and fro before the castle gates, awaiting the command of their new master.

All across Sylvania, the living woke from their restless sleep, disturbed by the haunting whispers in their nightmares.

The Book of Nagash closed with a thunderclap and fell to the flagstones at Vlad's feet, wisps of steam rising from its lead bindings. The Count of Sylvania could feel the Dark Magic that suffused his realm, and could sense the legions rising from the graves. Once more, Vlad looked westward. Here the nobles of the Empire squabbled and fought, allowing anarchy to reign and their people to die in famine and pointless war. Here the greatest nation of the Old World rotted from within, soon to collapse under its own rancid dilapidation.

Vlad would not allow that to happen. He would bring order where now there was mayhem. He would bring leadership where now there was weakness. Under his rule, the Empire would be united forever. With Vlad as its immortal emperor, never again would the Empire fall prey to the petty schemes of mortal men. Alive or as the Undead, the people of the Empire would serve their new emperor without question. Vlad's undying reign would sweep away lawlessness and disorder for eternity.

With the armies of the Empire at his command, nothing would stop Vlad; no force in this world or the next.





THE VAMPIRE WARS

In the eastern reaches of Stirland, under the cold shadow of the Worlds Edge Mountains, lies Sylvania, the most ill-famed region in the Empire. This land of bleak hills, blasted moorlands and mist-shrouded forests is shunned by all sensible travellers. No sane man would venture forth after dark and no questing knight or weary pilgrim ever accepts shelter within the brooding, rotting castles that tower over the land. By night, the brutish peasants of the squalid villages Lock and bar their doors, and hang bundles of witch bane and daemonsroot over their shuttered windows, in the vain hope that these protective herbs will ward against those who haunt the night.

For as long as any man can remember, evil tales have been told of Sylvania. The odds are good that if ever a tavern bard is reciting a grisly ballad, or a court poet inscribing a story of horror, then the setting will be this dire place. There are more dark legends concerning Sylvania than of all the other Imperial provinces put together, and most of these tales contain a solid kernel of truth. This is indeed a land where unquiet spirits, thirsty Vampires and evil sorcerers still walk beneath the moons' pale light. Only the bravest or the most foolhardy would wander there and then only with the most compelling of purposes.

The Winds of Magic blow strong in Sylvania, and the keeps of the nobility are all built over particularly ill-omened sites. Even the notoriously violent and fearless Stirland tax collectors wear amulets blessed by Priests of Morr and Sigmar, and go about their business in fifty-strong companies whenever their Elector Count compels them to seek his due there.

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THE BLACK DEATH

The oldest recorded incidence of the evil nature of the place dates back to the Great Plague of 1111 when it is said that even the rat-like Skaven feared to venture into the Sylvanian forests, for fear of the Undead armies that stalked the land. It is said that on the night of Geheimnisnacht, 1111, Morrisleib pulsed with emerald witchlight and a hail of incandescent meteors rained down on Sylvania. Astrologers and soothsayers prophesied catastrophe. This starfall was indeed a sign of ill-omen. It was in 1111 that the dead first walked in Sylvania. Rotting corpses, marked with the black blotches of the plague, refused to stay in their graves.

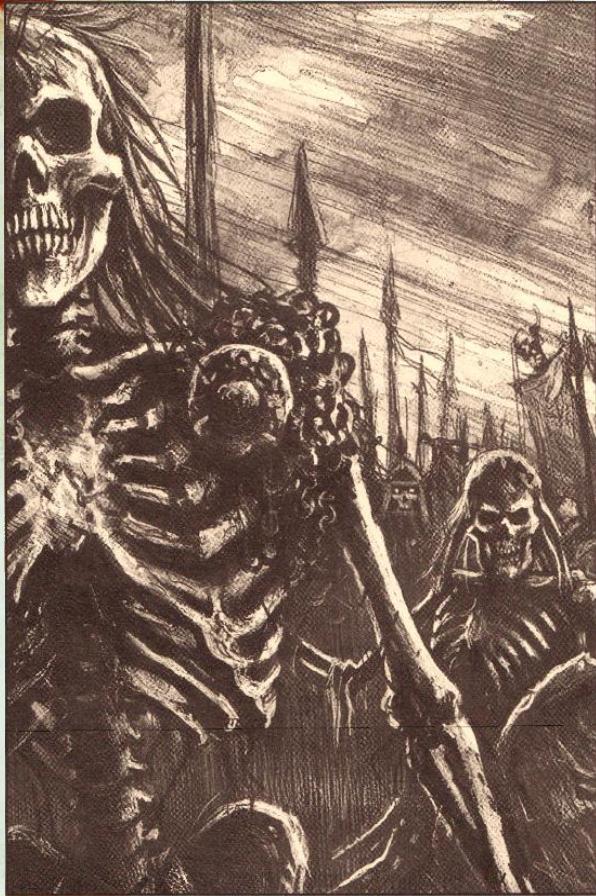
Dead fathers came back to claim their children. Even the Ghouls fled from overflowing cemeteries and charnel houses whose inhabitants would not stay at peace.

Soon armies of decomposing corpses shambled about the land needing only a will to guide them. They found it in the form of Frederick van Hal, whose name would become corrupted by later generations to Vanhel. He bound the great Undead host to his will and conquered the land that would later become known as Sylvania, building his keep at Vanhaldenschlosse, the ruined site of which is still shunned to this day.

In the time of the Black Plague, the Empire writhed under the fury talons of Skaven oppression and only the evil ratmen contained the expansion of Vanhel's necromantic domain. The Skaven and the Undead expended their strength in a long and futile war that was eventually to cause the downfall of both. Vanhel was assassinated by his ambitious apprentice Lothar von Diehl who was himself driven out of Vanhaldenschlosse by a band of knights apparently led by his master's ghost. After von Diehl's disappearance, lacking a guiding intelligence, the Undead armies wandered the land aimlessly, slaughtering the living, but being destroyed piecemeal by their human, Skaven and Orc opponents. Later generations of the Vanhal line took up the oath of the Witch Hunter in an attempt to atone for the sins of their heretical ancestor.

It took many centuries for the Empire to recover from the ravages of the Black Death; Sylvania never really did. The population was reduced to a tenth of what it once had been and the incidence of mutation and





disease was many times greater than anywhere else in the Empire. In addition, since the Great Plague, the dead of Sylvania have shown an uncomfortable tendency not to stay buried. This problem accounts for the infamous Sylvanian custom of burying corpses face down in their coffins so that if they try to dig their way out, they simply burrow downward.

In the years following the Black Death, Sylvania acquired a terrible reputation. The peasants became a byword for close-mouthed sullenness and stupidity. The thin soil of its fields produced fewer crops than anywhere else in the Empire. Famine and blight were common. Few merchants traded in the area, for there was little money to be made. Only the most desperate outlaws made their lairs in its profitless and haunted forests.

At this point, Sylvania was suffering under the rule of Otto von Drak. Von Drak came from a long line of dark wizards and necromancers who had built their castles on gathering points of the mystical energy that pervades Sylvania and had used that power in rituals of sacrifice. The ruling house of von Drak was thin-blooded, decadent and lazy half-hearted in the pursuit of their feudal duties, and had a history of congenital idiocy and insanity. It is said that they were the only noble house in the Empire not to send at least one son to the Crusades in Araby. The rest of the nobles of the region were little better. Many were evil-hearted, oppressive and thoroughly corrupt men, little better than bandits, who fought and raided each other with no respect for higher authority. The remainder were ineffectual cowards with no taste for war or other noble pursuits.

Sylvania became a backwater shunned by the rest of mankind and in its shadowy corners dreadful things went about their business unhindered. Like a magnet, it drew evil sorcerers who could pursue their study of dark magic undisturbed. Occasionally, word of dark deeds drew the attention of Witch Hunters or one of the ferocious Templar Orders and the woods were scoured, a process which the local nobility neither helped nor hindered. Otherwise the slow growth of the powers of evil in the land went unchecked. This eventually caused Grand Theogonist Jurgen VI to call for a crusade against Sylvania. Unfortunately, this was during the time of the three Emperors, when there were three claimants to the Imperial throne, so the Empire was too fragmented to respond. Thus the von Draks maintained their ineffectual rule of this blighted land.

THE MADNESS OF OTTO VON DRAK

The nadir of this dark period came centuries later when Vlad von Carstein took over the rulership of Sylvania. The tale of how the first of the infamous Vampire Counts came to power is a cruel one. It began on a storm-lashed night when Otto, last of the mad von Drak counts, lay on his death bed, cursing all the gods that he was without a male heir. As his family keenly awaited his final breath, Otto swore that he would marry his daughter Isabella to a daemon of Chaos itself rather than let his hated brother Leopold inherit. He had already refused the hand of every noble in Sylvania, for he despised them all, and no one of high blood from outside the region wanted to marry an heiress from that land. So it was that when Isabella von Drak knelt at Otto's death bed, she was still without a husband.

Otto was an evil man, given to putting the heads of peasants on a spike at the slightest provocation, once arrived at a feast riding a bear, owned a thousand hats, and when mad with drink, he was convinced that he was Sigmar re-incarnated. The nobles who should have been his liegemen had no respect for his authority and paid no attention to his commands. Bandits and bands of vicious mercenaries harried the people, and their barons treated them little better. All of Sylvania seethed with civil strife. On his deathbed, the dying man lay unrepentant, and cursed all the gods.



Outside, thunder rumbled and lightning split the storm-black darkness. Victor Guttman, the aged priest of Sigmar who had been called to shrive the old count, fainted away. Then, from out of the storm came the sound of wheels and pounding hooves. A dark coach pulled by four mighty black steeds drew up outside the keep. A heavy hand smote the door a ringing blow, and a proud voice demanded entry.

THE ARRIVAL OF VLAD

The castle gate swung open on its hinges before any man-at-arms could touch it. The visitor was revealed and, as one, the baying guard dogs ceased to howl and slunk away. The stranger was tall, darkly handsome, and of noble bearing and aspect. No-one stayed his entry as he marched directly to the count's chamber. The newcomer's accent was foreign, perhaps from Kislev, or even further afield. He named himself as Vlad von Carstein, and recited his noble antecedents to the count. He then claimed the wide-eyed Isabella's hand in marriage. Looking into the stranger's cold, dead eyes, the count perhaps regretted his rash oath, but before he knew it, he had given his blessing nonetheless.

The priest Guttman was revived from his swoon and brought to the chambers of Otto, where the marriage ceremony was performed before the dying count's bed. Almost as soon as the last of the ritual words were spoken, Otto von Drak expired, leaving his daughter and his entire estate in the charge of Vlad von Carstein. Leopold, furious at seeing his chance to inherit vanish at the last possible moment, protested. The new count's first act was to hurl Isabella's uncle Leopold through the window of the highest tower of Castle Drakenhof; historians call this the First Defenestration of Drakenhof.

Vlad seemed as eccentric as old Otto. He never ate in the servants' presence. He never walked abroad by day. He dismissed the elderly Sigmarite priest and sent him from the town. No one ever saw Victor Guttman again. Soon, many of the old servants at the keep were dismissed and mysterious, swarthy strangers took their place. However, the new count seemed less oppressive than the old one, and so the folk of Sylvania got on with their daily business, ignoring the hooded and cloaked foreigners that often visited the castle. Years of punitive von Drak rule had taught them not to question the deeds of their betters. All that concerned the lower classes was that at least the new count didn't order senseless executions or demand exorbitant taxes at a whim.



No-one doubted the Count's prowess in battle either. After Vlad installed himself as the new ruler of the province, Bernhoff the Butcher, one of the mercenary captains who lived by raiding villages at the head of a company of murderers and scoundrels, heard of the new count and saw a chance for fame and riches. He rode into town and demanded the count pay him tribute. Vlad faced him alone in the town square, and in front of a crowd of his people, he cut Bernhoff the Butcher down as if he were a stripling, although Bernhoff was a famed warrior. Vlad then proceeded to slaughter the entire mercenary band while his bodyguard watched, taking no part in the bloodbath.

The Count's popularity was assured. Here at last was a count who dealt with the bandits, lowered the taxes to practically nothing, enforced the laws, and never drunkenly ordered random executions for his amusement. He sometimes executed his rebellious liegemen, accounting for the Second through Thirteenth Defenestrations of Drakenhof, and he drove away many of the priests, but still, his people loved him.

When scant days later, word reached Drakenhof that Isabella had fallen sick with an incurable illness and was slowly wasting away, Vlad had his people's sympathy. Flowers piled up at the gates, but the doctors could not cure her. One of the physicians who tended her claimed her heart had stopped and that she had died. The new Count said this was not so. He dismissed the learned doctors, claiming he would care for her with his own hands. Thus far, he had respected Isabella's wishes and refrained from passing his curse to her, but he was unable to stand by and watch his true love die. Even the undying ones claim to feel love, and what had started as a marriage of convenience had blossomed into a love stronger even than he had felt for Neferata. Three days later she emerged onto the battlements to her people's wonder and relief, saying she was fully recovered and it appeared to be so, although she was ever afterwards pale and wan and never left her chambers save by moonlight.

A BLOODY DYNASTY

At first none of the feuding nobles of Sylvania paid any heed to the commands of the new Count; they were too wrapped up in their own bloody quarrels and rivalries to listen to the edicts of one they saw as an usurper. If this bothered Vlad von Carstein he gave no sign of it. A farmer who had newly inherited a herd of cattle could not have paid more attention to the running of his lands. Vlad calmly proceeded to rebuild estates that had suffered from centuries of neglect. The Count cherished his tenants as a peasant family cherishes a beast they are fattening for the Midsummer feast. After decades of rule by mad Otto this was all welcomed by all save the most paranoid.

After several months, however, dark things began to happen. Young men and women from the villages began to disappear. The living dead gathered at the borders of each settlement in growing numbers, quietly standing as if on guard. These were small forces at

first, and they came after only those who disobeyed the count's authority. If any rebellious Sylvanians escaped the clutches of the Undead, then they quickly fell victim to strange accidents.

Those who opposed von Carstein, claiming the marriage and his claim to nobility were shams, died mysteriously. Baron Heinz Rothermeyer was eaten by wolves. Baron Pieter Kaplin was found dead in his rooms, his eyes open wide, his hair pure white. He had died of stark terror. His wife went mad, and passed away soon afterwards. The bandit lord Boris Earbiter was found hanging upside down from a tree, his body entirely drained of blood. Others "fell" from high windows (some scholars count the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Defenestrations of Drakenhof amongst these, but it is a matter of heated debate). Only those who had sworn allegiance to Vlad von Carstein seemed immune to these depredations. Soon, the renegade nobles of Sylvania were queuing up to swear fealty to him. Within ten years, with no apparent application of military force, Vlad was more firmly in control of unruly Sylvania than the Elector Counts were of the largest states in the Empire. Some remarked that such was Vlad's success as a ruler he should in fact sit upon the Imperial throne. After all, the von Carsteins were an ancient family that could trace their lineage back to the founding of the Empire.

Generations of peasants were born and died and still, Vlad and Isabella presided over the lands, unchanged by the years. At first, few paid attention to their longevity. The lives of peasants had always been squalid and short, and nobles had always enjoyed vastly longer lifespans. However, when the oldest woman of Drakenhof insisted that her grandmother had been a girl when Vlad von Carstein came to the throne, even the most dim-witted peasantry began to surmise that all was not as it seemed. The spreading rumours drew more and more Witch Hunters to Sylvania, more of them than had been seen since Grand Theogonist Jurgen VI failed in his call for a Crusade against Sylvania. Those who chose to investigate the von Carsteins were never seen again. Yet worse was to come. The mysterious disease that had first laid low Isabella von Carstein struck other noble families allied with the count.

Soon, every castle in Sylvania was home to long-lived, nocturnal folk, pallid of aspect and merciless in their rule. The number of the living who went missing became more and more noticeable. The temples to Sigmar, Taal and Ulric were closed, the Priests of Morr were driven from the region and the dead were left untended to pile up at the sides of the roads. Grim watch posts were set up along the border, and few were allowed to cross – either into or out of Sylvania. More than any other state in the divided Empire, Sylvania became a land apart.

When catastrophe struck the Ostermark capital of Mordheim in the year 2000, Vlad was swift to act. A great meteor of warpstone had destroyed half the city, and shards of raw magic littered the ruins. As the claimants to the Imperial throne sent mercenary forces



to seize this new source of power, so too did Vlad send dark minions forth into the ruins to bring him back this magical treasure. It would be another decade before the strange seeds harvested from that blighted city would bear fruit.

Vlad Marches FORTH

On Geheimnisnacht in the year 2010, Vlad von Carstein revealed the nightmarish truth to the world. The Count of Sylvania stood upon the battlements of Castle Drakenhof and intoned a terrible incantation he had taken from one of the Nine Books of Nagash. Fuelled by the warpstone recovered from Mordheim, Vlad's magic flowed over Sylvania, coiling through unguarded Gardens of Morr and pooling in open peasant graves. Across Vlad's lands the dead awoke. Skeletons clawed their way through the peaty soil; Zombies stirred in their muddy holes; Ghouls loped from their crypt lairs to worship their new master. With this act, Vlad von Carstein had thrown down the gauntlet to the Empire. The Wars of the Vampire Counts had begun.

This was a time of strife for the Empire, as the Emperor's throne sat empty. Civil war was brewing in the lands, as three claimants for the throne vied against each other. This was the perfect time for Vlad to strike, for no unified Empire force would muster against him – they were too busy squabbling amongst themselves. Vlad von Carstein's massive Undead force swept through the Empire, heralded by a plague spread by the rats that he had sent ahead to create anarchy.

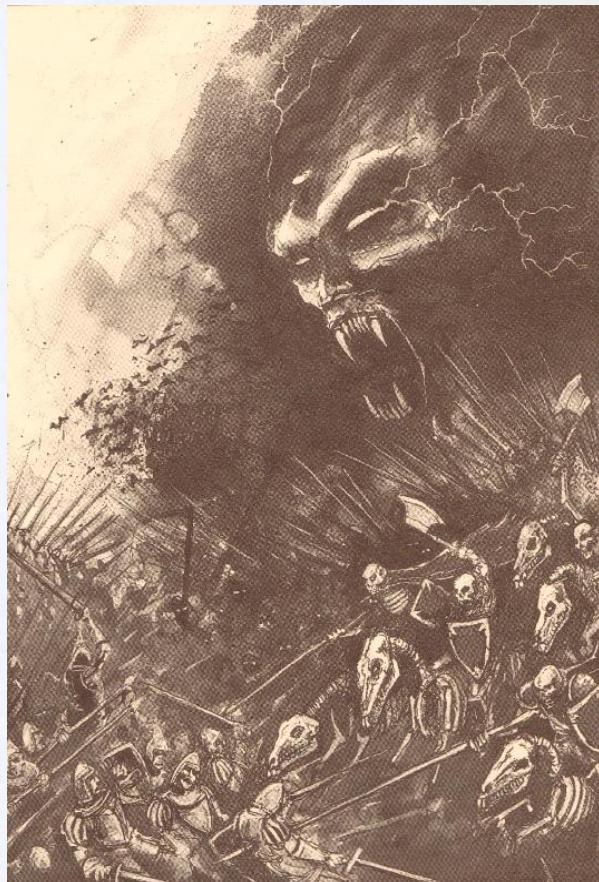
The Sylvanian armies headed northwest, crossing the Stir and driving for Talabheim, capital of the Ottilia, one of the three claimants for the Imperial throne. The Undead force blackened the horizon with its numbers, for each of the Vampire aristocracy of Sylvania led a whole army of Skeletons and Zombies. Perhaps

stranger still, the peasant levies of that land marched alongside their Undead masters, fighting as they would for any mortal overlord. These degenerates were accompanied by Crypt Ghouls and Wights and other, much darker, things.

At the Battle of Essen Ford, the Undead faced the Talabecland army of Ottilia III. Before the battle, Vlad von Carstein promised the humans clemency if they surrendered, and no mercy if they opposed him. Though fearful, Ottilia's general ordered the attack. Crossbows and bullets cut a swath through the legions of Undead as they crossed the ford, but Vlad's magic reanimated his fallen minions once more and spurred them forward. Knightly charges destroyed hundreds of walking corpses but still thousands more pressed onwards in an unstoppable wall of flesh and bone.

Vengeful spirits and spectral horsemen swept through the Talabecland lines, shrieking and killing, while the never-ending army of Zombies dragged down soldier after soldier. Embattled against a seemingly endless horde of the dead, Ottilia's forces were encircled. Vlad led the final attack himself at the head of his Black Knights, while the Wights of the Drakenhof Guard surrounded the enemy general.

Faced with the power of Vlad and his fellow Vampires, the forces of the Ottilia were overwhelmed and routed. Many surrendered, but Vlad was as good as his word. His followers butchered every captive, and then Vlad used his powers to re-animate their bodies and add them to his growing legion. As the living fell under the shadow of the disease, so they rose with the approach of the Vampire Lords army and joined its ranks.



As he watched his men executed and then raised up once more as Zombies, Ottilia's general, Hans Schliffen, became so incensed that he flew into a berserk rage. Schliffen broke free from his captors' grasp, seized the count's own enchanted sword from its scabbard, and struck off Vlad's head. For his pains, Schliffen was immediately torn limb from limb by Konrad von Carstein, most deranged of the count's followers.

With Vlad seemingly destroyed, the remaining Vampires squabbled among themselves to see who would take his place. Herman Posner, Baron of Waldenhof, finally prevailed. That very night, as Posner strutted at the head of the army, Vlad von Carstein returned. Posner claimed it was a trick and threw himself at Vlad's mercy, but was cut down without a moment's thought.

THE BATTLE OF SCHWARTZHAFEN

Several other battles following Essen Ford saw Vlad severely wounded or even apparently slain but the power of the Ring continued to resurrect this seemingly indestructible foe. At Schwartzhafen, a key point settlement along the route to the heart of the Empire, Vlad was delayed by a series of raids by various orders of Imperial Knights who were able to stall the march of the Undead army while further reinforcements arrived, led by the Elector of Middenheim.

With the approach of sunset, Vlad and the nobility of Sylvania rose from their slumber and stepped out onto the knoll facing the town which they intended would fall before the night was out. The Undead sentries and the vast cohorts that stood motionless in the fields began to animate at the beckoning of their vampiric leaders. Vlad sat back and surveyed the town, and although the activities of its citizens were concealed by the darkness, Vlad's vampiric sight saw all the frantic activity of the people of Schwartzhafen as they ran about amok and the opposing army had begun to deploy across the boundaries of the town. Vlad reached out with his senses and could immediately feel the immense fear and foreboding within the mortal troops. His reputation had preceded him and the rats had done their work. But the last few days have been inconvenient with dawn and midday raids by the Knights Panther and the White Wolf. His powers had been limited during the day and losses had been inflicted that had prevented counter attacks. Until now.

The reinforcements in the town had been strengthened by the arrival of the Elector's army, and the townspeople had learnt to cremate their plague dead on huge pyres rather than see them rise again. Isabella's cry of fear shattered Vlad's concentration. Leaping up he rushed to the crimson tents to find his beloved bride against a corner, with a tall figure, a mortal before her. With vampiric fury seizing him, Vlad rushed at the man, his razor claws outstretched. The man turned and Vlad felt the burning pain of the blessed symbols of Sigmar that hung around his neck. Despite this he cleaved his head off with one blow and the body of

Witch Hunter Max Junghstof fell to the ground lifeless. Still reeling from the effect of the holy aura and with Isabella weeping on the floor, Vlad in his fury ordered the attack to commence immediately.

Without a second thought for Isabella, he mounted his black steed and sped off towards the enemy lines brandishing his sword. The Imperial artillery crews had opened fire as soon as the dead had begun to stir and amid the deafening sounds of the Imperial guns, Jerek Kruger watched with horror as Vlad von Carstein smashed his way through the Reiksguard. Sounding the charge order to his Knights, he drew his blade and headed towards Vlad.

Vlad was cut down by Jerek Kruger, his head pulverised by his mighty hammer, in the charge of the Knights of the White Wolf that became legendary throughout the Empire. Although the Carstein Ring would resurrect Vlad and the death of Kruger would follow, the immediate consequence was the salvation of Schwartzhafen. The other Vampire Counts retreated to await the resurrection of their leader, while the enraged Isabella was held back from entering the battle lest she should fall and then there would be the devil to pay when Vlad returned....

The Empire deployed at the fringe of the town and the Undead facing them. However, while Vlad charged into battle in a fury following the assassination attempt on Isabella, the rest of the army was led by the Vampire Count Taliss von Herekstein initiating a forward charge across the scrub expanse from the high ground. The Undead army partially crumbled as Vlad fell but as he did, a flank attack was initiated by Vassili Schlossman, the Vampire Count who would survive the Vampire Wars, serving under both Mannfred and Konrad and later find haven in the accursed town of Moussillon where he established a powerful stronghold.

The Vampire army pitched camp on the high ground on the far side of the field and most of the area between is flat shrubland. However to the east lie a series of hills that reach the town. The highest of these hills, centred on the flank of the battlefield was the Empire's main objective. Here it would be hoped that the command of the high ground would enable the Empire to barrage the very camp of the Vampire Lords, conduct powerful downhill charges and, if it came to the last stand, to have the uphill advantage for missile troops and the Knights.

This hill was the site of a previous encounter with a powerful Undead force led by Vanhel and here the Empire had successfully defended the hill but had eventually lost the town. The commander of this force, Sigmund von Ulrifsson died fighting with his troops on this hill which finally fell after a lengthy siege. Soon after, the Empire army was able to push Vanhel's troops back after the assassination of the vile Necromancer and built a barrow within this hill where Sigmund and his warriors were buried. No necromancy can touch them for powerful wards were installed within the tomb together with Amulets of Sigmar. In

memory of the futile but heroic stand, this was named Sigmund's hill.

Nevertheless, less than a year later Vlad was leading another army of Sylvania – he was determined to repay Jerek Kruger and his White Wolves for his previous defeat. This was not the last time the elusive Vampire Count would come back from seeming destruction. With the army of Talabecland smashed, Vlad turned his attention even further westward, towards the fortress-city of Middenheim. This is when the Battle of Old Forest Road took place.

THE BATTLE OF OLD FOREST ROAD

Kruger had ridden from Middenheim to the Sylvanians once again, rank upon rank of White Wolf Templars at his side. The battle was fought in the depths of winter, and crisp white snow covered the forested landscape – not that this would have hindered the White Wolves, being as they are devotees of Ulric himself. I will now have a look at what von Carstein's army of Sylvania actually consisted of. There are no exact figures, but it appears that the Sylvanians were outnumbered. Being that they were in unfamiliar territory and were not as well motivated, armed or armoured than the Middenheimers, Jerek Kruger must have been confident of victory. He caught the Sylvanians off guard, and they were forced to form into a hasty defensive formation.

The personal guard of von Carstein, known as the Drakenhof Guard, were certainly present at the battle. These staunch defenders of their lord were fiercely loyal troops, armed with their great-swords and bedecked in expensive, finely wrought armour. These were the elite of the Sylvanian army, and many victories had been won by their heroics. The battle was fought across several wide open, snow-covered fields, hemmed in on the sides by thick pine. The Drakenhof Guard formed an anchor in the centre of the Sylvanian battle line. It is said that Vlad himself stood amongst





them, a loyal young captain at his side holding his family standard. It is believed this young man was Vlad's brother-in-law, Vulf.

To either flank of the Drakenhof stood the ranks of Sylvanian regular troops. They were armed with a mix of crossbow, spear and halberd, and were bedecked in their regimental colours – black, red and purple. With his usual callous lack of respect for life, Vlad forced his levy troops to array themselves before the rest of the army, to take the brunt of the initial fighting. A small force of Drakenhof Templars worked their way through the trees out to the east, together with a scouting force of hunters, moving swiftly to outflank the enemy.

The White Wolves fell upon the Sylvanians in three waves, crushing the levy utterly and routing the survivors who fell back in confusion. Vlad ordered his troops to fire upon those who fled - he tolerated no weakness. The White Wolves carried on into the hail of crossbow bolts and charged into the spearmen and halberdiers, killing hundreds of them. Jerek Kruger, leading the left flank, smashed aside all resistance. The right flank too pushed the Sylvanians back, threatening to break them. The only place where the line was not pushed back was in the centre, where von Carstein's Drakenhof Guard held firm. Nevertheless, they were being brutally cut down, until merely a handful remained. Kruger must have believed that victory was imminent. Even the appearance of the Drakenhof Templars, striking into the right flank from the treeline could not halt the White Wolves.

It was then that Vlad's necromantic powers came to the fore, if this report is to be believed. Dark energy coursed from the Count: his eyes turned black and a sick feeling of dread overcame all on the field. The clouded sky turned dark, and it is said that the heavens

were filled with a million swarming bats. The sound of howling wolves erupted on all sides, and the shapes of massive, loping canines appeared, ghosting out of the forest. Bats swarmed down onto the White Wolves, and the massive wolves leaped upon the knights, dragging them from their saddles.

But more horrific, more unnatural than this, the dead began to clamber to their feet – Sylvanians and White Wolves alike – to claw at the enemies of Vlad. Horses screamed in terror, and panic ensued. Each time another warrior fell, the forces of Vlad grew stronger. The Count's few remaining living warriors were horrified, but their Count proclaimed that even the dead fought at their side – surely this was a sign of the gods favour, he said – yet still his men were much disturbed.

Soon, there was no living White Wolf on the field of battle save for Jerek – Vlad wanted to deal with the Grand Master himself. Before the eyes of the horrified Grand Master, and the scribe who detailed this account, unseen on the edge of the trees, transfixed and fearing for his life, Vlad had his undead automatons turn on his own troops, ripping them apart. Obviously, he preferred the unquestioning obedience of the dead.

Vlad drew his blade against Jerek Kruger, and within moments had cut the Grand Master a dozen times. While the Battle of Old Forest Road might not be recorded in the histories, the demise of Kruger certainly is. He was found at the base of the Ulricsberg – the massive stone monolith that the city of Middenheim is built upon. His body was completely drained of blood, and staked to a tree – thick wooden pegs had been driven through his hands, pinning him in place. The Knights of the White Wolf and Knights Panther were scattered by Vlad's Undead creatures and winged giants that swooped down from the skies. The soldiers of Middenheim retreated to the city and destroyed the causeways leading up to the gates.

Content that the Graf of Middenheim's army posed no more threat to his ambition, Vlad ravaged Middenland to further swell his forces. At every village and town he came across, Vlad offered the same bargain – serve him and live, oppose him and die. At first, many tried to fight the Undead, but all suffered the same fate as Ottilia III's army before them. Vlad's Undead legion grew ever larger and stronger. Soon, miles-long columns of refugees fled westward, fearful of the relentless onslaught of Vlad's Undead army.

Vlad then turned east and fought along the Old Forest Road, through Hochland into Ostland. Army after army was sent to check his advance but the result of every battle was the same – the undying legions slew their enemies in a battle of attrition the living could not hope to win, while 'Vlad and his Vampires slaughtered hundreds and fed on their blood. Nothing seemed to stop Vlad, every time it appeared he had been slain he returned to wreak his revenge. At Bluthof, the Vampire Count fell with five lances through his body and the Count of Ostland's Runefang blade lodged in his heart. Three days later Vlad was seen ordering the crucifixion of prisoners outside the town gates of Bluthof.

With the northern provinces overrun and their armies smashed. Vlad turned south and made for Reikland. At Bögenhafen Bridge, a lucky cannon shot took von Carstein's head clean off. Within the hour the cannon crew were drained of blood and the army overrun. The soldiers of the Empire were gripped with terror in the face of their invincible foe, for they could not hope to win this war of attrition against an enemy that simply would not succumb to death.

ALTDORF BESIEGED

By the winter of 2051, the Sylvanians laid siege to Altdorf, capital of Reikland. The great city was surrounded by a leagues-long ditch edged with sharpened stakes, and the Reik had been redirected into the ditch to give the city a moat of fast-flowing water. None of the precautions taken by the defenders worked. They did not stop the von Carsteins and their allies for a moment. Screaming skulls lobbed by catapults built of bone terrified the citizens. Great siege engines built of fused human remains lumbered forward, animated by Dark Magic, while carrion crows and blood-sucking bats circled greedily overhead. Vlad gave his usual ultimatum - open the gates and serve him in life, or fight on and serve him in death. Ludwig, the Reikland's claimant to the Imperial throne, wanted to surrender. The Grand Theogonist Wilhelm III, high priest of the Cult of Sigmar, convinced him to defy Vlad instead. Wilhelm cloistered himself within the Great Temple of Sigmar. Wilhelm cloistered himself within the Great Temple of Sigmar and after three days of fasting and prayer he emerged once more, claiming that Sigmar had revealed the salvation of the Empire to him. He knew the source of von Carstein's immortality.

That same day, Wilhelm dispatched an agent to the Vampire Count's camp. His name was Felix Mann, and he was the greatest thief of the age. He had been offered a pardon and laid under a gear by the Grand



Theogonist. His task was to steal the Vampire Count's ornate ring. By stealth and trickery, Mann made his way to the heart of the Sylvanian camp. Heart in mouth, he entered the great black silk pavilion where the Undead aristocrats lay sleeping in their open coffins. Such was their confidence that no-one stood guard. The master thief Mann slipped the ring from von Carstein's finger and fled, never to return. No one knows what became of him and the Carstein Ring.

When he woke Vlad von Carstein was enraged. He ordered an immediate attack on the city. The Undead army surged forward. Great siege-towers of bone wheeled to the walls. On the battlements of Altdorf the defenders stood ready. Halberdiers pushed the siege ladders away and dozens of Undead fell, limbs flailing slowly, to the ground. Skeletons and swordsmen hacked at each other across the battlements. Imperial heroes armed with formidable magical weapons cut down the Vampire aristocrats and were themselves in turn cut down.

At the centre of the vast struggle that engulfed the city, the Grand Theogonist clashed with the Vampire Count Vlad. It was such a battle as few had ever seen. The two mighty champions exchanged blows. After an hour of combat, holy hammer against magical blade, Vlad gained the upper hand, for his foe was tiring and he was not. Sensing that he could not win the duel, the Theogonist decided to sacrifice his own life in an attempt to destroy the Count. He let Vlad stab him with his sword and with his last strength he grabbed Vlad and dragged both of them off the walls. The two fell together, locked in an embrace of death. First, Vlad was impaled on a wooden spike at the wall's foot, and then Wilhelm landed on top, driving the count still further on. With an awful scream the count expired for the final time, for without the power of his magical ring to resurrect him, Vlad at last proved vulnerable.

With Count Vlad destroyed and his armies crumbling, the Sylvanians were forced to lift the siege and retreat.



Over half the Vampires were dead, but so great were the casualties inflicted on the men of Altdorf that no pursuit was possible. Grand Theogonist Wilhelm was interred within the walks of the Temple of Sigmar and to this day men pray to his spirit when threatened by the Legions of the Undead. Within an iron-bound ebony treasure-chest, in the tattered remains of the black pavilion, was discovered von Carstein's copies of the Nine Books of Nagash and the Liber Mortis. These were hastily placed under lock and key within the Temple of Sigmar. The last casualty of the Battle of Altdorf was Isabella von Carstein. Apparently unable to face eternity without her husband she impaled herself on a stake and shrivelled to dust before the eyes of the would-be Emperor Ludwig and his bodyguard.

Ludwig would have used the time to press on into Sylvania and end the evil scourge forever, but the forces of the other two claimants to the Imperial throne joined against him, fearing that he might use his popularity as the surviving victor of the siege of Altdorf to press his own claim to the throne. So the pernicious lords of Sylvania were granted an interval to regather their strength.

KONRAD THE BLOODY

For a while, it was not entirely certain that they could do so. Among the Vampires there was dispute as to who was Vlad von Carstein's heir. There were five surviving claimants for Vlad's title: Fritz, Hans, Pieter, Konrad and Mannfred. All could claim to be von Carstein's heir, since he had spread his curse to all of them. No one Vampire had any better claim than the others and a vicious power struggle erupted as all of them claimed to be the true von Carstein Count. All

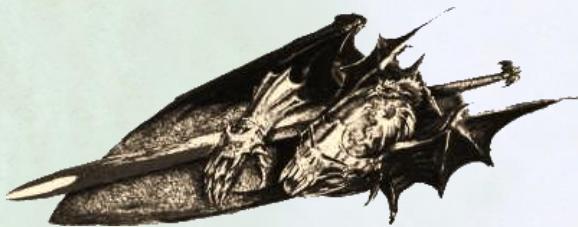
came to bad ends eventually. Fritz was killed while attempting to besiege Middenheim. For more than forty years the Vampires warred and plotted amongst themselves, giving the Empire vital time to recover from the desolation wrought by Vlad's attacks.

Fritz von Carstein was killed on the field of battle while attempting to besiege Middenheim. Hans perished when Konrad instigated a quarrel with him over who was the toughest and then slew him, cutting his body into pieces. Pieter was slain in his coffin by the Witch Hunter Helmut van Hal, a distant descendant of the infamous Necromancer Vanhal who sought to atone for his predecessor's crimes. Rumour at the time suggested that Mannfred had led van Hal to Pieter's lair. After Pieter's death, Mannfred disappeared, leaving Konrad as undisputed ruler of Sylvania.

Konrad von Carstein was completely mad even compared to the other members of his Vampire family. When he walked amongst the living he had gained the reputation of being a blood-mad butcher, cold, merciless and insanely ruthless. For his pleasure he had once ordered that every cat within his realm be used as target practice for his crossbowmen. On at least two occasions he had peasant villagers put to the torch because their smell offended him. Having tried his own mother for giving birth to him without his consent, he had her bricked up alive in her own tower, threatening death to any who tried to save her. Acquiring power and longevity through the Blood Kiss did little to strengthen his already shaky grasp on reality. His reign of terror lasted nearly a century and now his name is used by parents to frighten children across the whole of the Empire.



Lacking any great degree of skill in the art of Necromancy himself, he enslaved any magicians that his forces captured and forced them to do his evil will. Soon he headed a huge army that ravaged the length and breadth of the Empire. Where Vlad had always offered his opponents a choice between life and death, Konrad offered them a choice between dying immediately and dying painfully. Where Vlad von Carstein had looked upon humans as cattle to be husbanded as a farmer would husband his livestock, Konrad looked on humans the way a cruel sportsman would look upon a herd of deer. Nonetheless Konrad was very territorial, marking the borders of his realm with the staked heads of his enemies. The people he ruled over were his to do with as he chose and he would not tolerate any other Vampires encroaching on his land.



Konrad's ambitions paled in comparison to Vlad's, for he sought not to rule as a Vampire Emperor but only to immerse himself in bloody slaughter. His warmongering took his army as far south as Nuln and the Grey Mountains, and it was here that the mad Vampire Count first met the Knights of Blood Keep. Konrad promised the Vampire knights all the war and glory they could desire, in return for fighting alongside him. Though Konrad's behaviour was neither honourable nor noble, the promise of great victories was enough to win the Blood Knights to the Count of Sylvania's cause. With the Blood Knights in his vanguard, Konrad defeated every foe sent against him, despite his frequent bouts of hysteria and grave tactical

errors. None could stand against the raw power of Konrad's armoured host. His enemies now referred to Konrad as the Blood Count and the Beast, fitting titles for the crazed slaughterer. In his insanity, Konrad had pursued the most ludicrous campaigns against the neighbouring Elector Counts. Sporadic raids turned into full blown invasions that seemed to lack any strategic purpose and were illogical and unpredictable.

At Kleiberstorf, Konrad faced the army of Averland. Archers and mortars took a heavy toll of the Sylvanian army, but Konrad threatened and pleaded with his Necromancers to keep the army moving forward. He offered power and riches to his captive wizards and they responded to his promises, combining their powers to unleash a scourging wind on the Averland forces. As Dark Magic whipped around the soldiers, ethereal hands clawed at their souls, ripping the life force from them. Panic began to spread as the unnatural gale slew more and more men. In a moment of clarity, Konrad saw that the moment was ripe and unleashed his Blood Knights and the Drakenhof Guard. Faced with insubstantial terrors and armoured Vampires charging them, the Averland army broke and fled. Konrad pursued them for five days, hunting down and killing every last man who had opposed him.

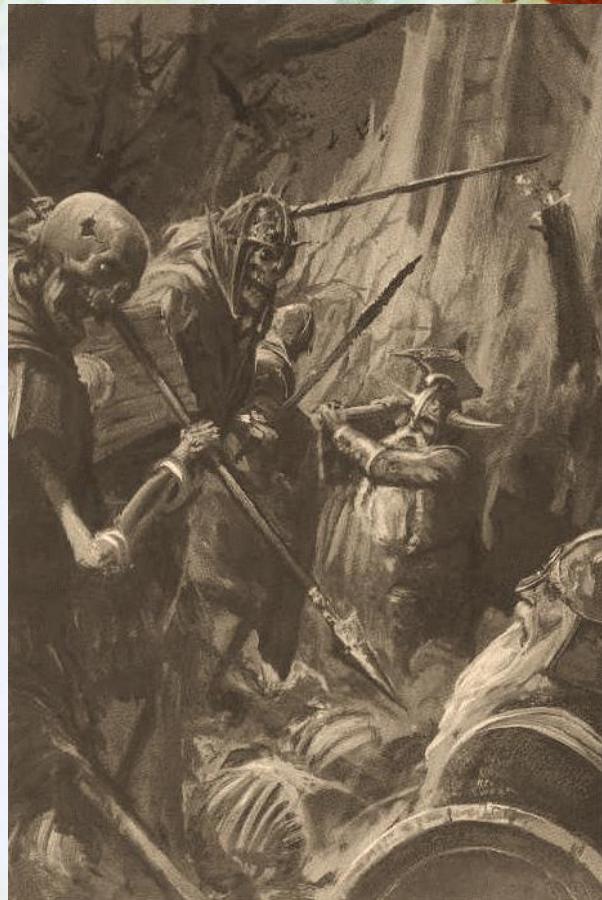
Konrad also waged war on the Dwarfs, against the cautious advice of his few counsellors. Undead armies raided outlying settlements connected with Zhufbar, rousing the ire of the Dwarfs. Led by the King of Zhufbar, the Dwarfs mounted an expedition into Sylvania to hunt for Konrad. At Nachthafen, Konrad rode forth to meet them. Konrad's army fared badly at first, with the power of the Dwarfen runesmiths quelling the magic of Konrad's pet Necromancers. Robbed of their sustaining energy, the Skeletons and Zombies of Konrad's host lay where they fell, blasted by cannons and handguns.



Konrad remained optimistic despite these setbacks. He launched an all-out attack on the right flank of the Dwarf army, leading the assault himself. Guided by his magical Vampire sight, Konrad sought out every runesmith in the army. While the Blood Knights smashed into the disciplined ranks of the Dwarfs, Konrad cut down the Runesmiths and fed on their spilt blood. As they gained the magical ascendancy, Konrad's Necromancers were able to resurrect the fallen warriors of the Undead army and, under the urging of Konrad, the unliving host lurched forwards once more. The Dwarfs fought on resolutely, never once giving in to their fear, but it was a hopeless fight. The Dwarf king challenged Konrad to single combat, but the Blood Count instead despatched Walach Harkon, the Grand Master of the Blood Knights. Harkon killed the Dwarf king with contemptuous ease and gorged himself on the royal blood of his foe. Within the next hour, the Dwarfs had all been slain.



Konrad was so unwaveringly vicious that, confronted with his wrath, the three claimants to the Imperial throne put aside their differences and combined forces against him on two separate occasions. The first time was at the Battle of Four Armies, an inconclusive clash fought outside Middenheim in 2100. This battle was most notable for the infamous scene of treachery where Ludwig's son and successor, Lutwik, and Ottilia IV of Talabecland treacherously ordered the assassination of each other during the fray – after all, a battlefield is the ideal place for a blade in the back. In the chaos that followed their mutual destruction, the nobles of the Empire desperately sought to unite under a single leader. Helmut of Marienburg was the prime candidate and received the backing of nearly all the other Counts.



A conclave of the Elector Counts assembled at Averheim to decide the matter. The only thing that stopped Helmut becoming Emperor was the fact that Konrad had killed him in the battle... Even as support for him was gathering, Helmut began to act erratically, seemingly struck dumb and vacant at a critical time. Helmut's skin began to peel away and one of his eyes dropped out, much to the horror of the assembled counts. Even Helmut's son, Belmar, refused his father's claim to the throne once it was discovered that Helmut was a Zombie under Konrad's control! Discovered, Konrad's Necromancers fled with their Zombie Emperor to-be. Enraged that his devious plan had failed, Konrad slaughtered his way from Averheim to the Howling Hills, putting to the torch every town and village he came across.

After the Battle of the Four Armies, Konrad's defeat enraged the Vampire Lord who not only ignored the option of retreating but also executed the elite vampiric nobility of his army for having failed him. His anger combined with the madness that drove him on was demonstrated by the horrific nature of the executions, which only a vampire could dread. Thus in a seething rage, Konrad led his army onwards to the Howling Hills where again he suffered devastating losses to his army. Again the enraged Vampire Lord headed on with a much smaller force, leaving behind most of the remaining vampire nobles, entombed alive in the deepest barrows, who he believed had failed him yet again. It was clear however, that Konrad's losses were due to his numerically inferior force, resurrection of the army declined drastically after the execution of most of his potent spellcasters in the aftermath of the Battle of the Four Armies.

THE BATTLE OF GRIM MOOR

Grim Moor marked the second alliance to face Konrad von Carstein. Here a combined army of men and Dwarfs finally met Konrad's host in the spring of 2121. By now Konrad's behaviour had become so erratic his favoured Necromancers feared for their lives. The remaining Vampires, in a desperate attempt to avoid the fate of their fellows, summoned an immense Necromantic Wind that although it drained them of any effective battle magic, succeeded in increasing the army to its original size. Seeing no further gain, the Blood Knights abandoned Konrad, marching away from the Count's army on the eve of battle. Konrad was so incensed he ordered his army to attack the combined forces arrayed against him, rather than retreat further.

The battlefield was ideal for the Dwarves and Humans who had set up their artillery facing the vast bleak moor, where outcrops of rock and a few shrubs served as the only cover. Various streams dissected the plain and the dramatic arrival of Konrad's army (as usual) was quickly noticed.

Whether Konrad had any battle tactics laid out in his mind will never be known, but storytellers will tell that it was his own madness that drove the army onwards across any terrain towards any opposition. Even Konrad himself had frequently charged the Imperial artillery on a hellish steed, screaming curses and brimming with hatred.

Thus the army, increased in size simply took to shambling across the moor towards the gunners and the crossbowmen. However, a flock of Fell Bats led by the Vampire Count Stefan Hauklein mounted on an Abyssal Terror were able to attack the artillery of the Human army and thus limit the advantage of the Dwarven artillery. Faced with an aerial assault and the mass infantry charge, the Imperial troops had little alternative but to march out to meet the enemy as the Dwarfs held back temporarily and their cannon attempted to reduce the size of the Undead horde. Konrad, on foot this time, spearheaded the main attack into the bulk of the Imperial army, and as he cut his way through many units the slain rose to serve him.

As before, the armoured warriors of Konrad withstood the punishment dealt them by the handguns and war machines of the Empire and Dwarfs and marched relentlessly forward. But then the regiments of the Undead faltered. The magic that bound them seeped away and they collapsed. Konrad's Necromancers had betrayed him and fled. It was only Konrad's raw will and innate Vampiric abilities that kept any semblance of his army animated, but the effort proved too much for the Sylvanian Count.

The vampire elite, fearing for their lives, abandoned their positions around him and fell back, enabling the Dwarfs and Humans to push forward. In a mad fit, Konrad wandered away from the battle, shouting manically to himself. The Dwarf hero Grutbad captured Konrad and held him down while Helmar impaled his father's killer with his Runefang. The remaining vampires left the battlefield as soon as



Konrad fell, leaving the army to crumble and the ghouls to scatter. The Dwarven and Empire armies did not bother to give chase, for now that Konrad was dead, the immediate threat of this sudden, frequent, psychotic invasions was over. The deadlier threat from the last of the Carsteins was yet to come...

LAST OF THE VON CARSTEINS

The most dangerous and cunning of the Vampire Counts was Mannfred. He was a subtle, devious and treacherous individual, who some Vampires claim was actually awake when the von Carstein Ring was stolen, and spent long years seeking Felix Mann. While Konrad von Carstein ravaged the Empire in an attempt to emulate the victories of the great Vlad, Mannfred laid low and studied the art of necromancy. He journeyed as far as the Lands of the Dead in search of the secrets of Unlife, before returning to the castle at Drakenhof with a library of dark lore. Mannfred then bided his time until he felt sure of his new-found power.

After Konrad's death, Mannfred became the undisputed ruler of Sylvania. For a full decade, he let the various contenders to the Imperial throne think the Sylvanian threat was over, and gave them time to fail out amongst themselves – which they duly did. As the Empire once again degenerated into sporadic infighting, Mannfred concealed his growing power.

Where Vlad had ruled through his iron will and raw power, and Konrad reigned with fear, Mannfred used

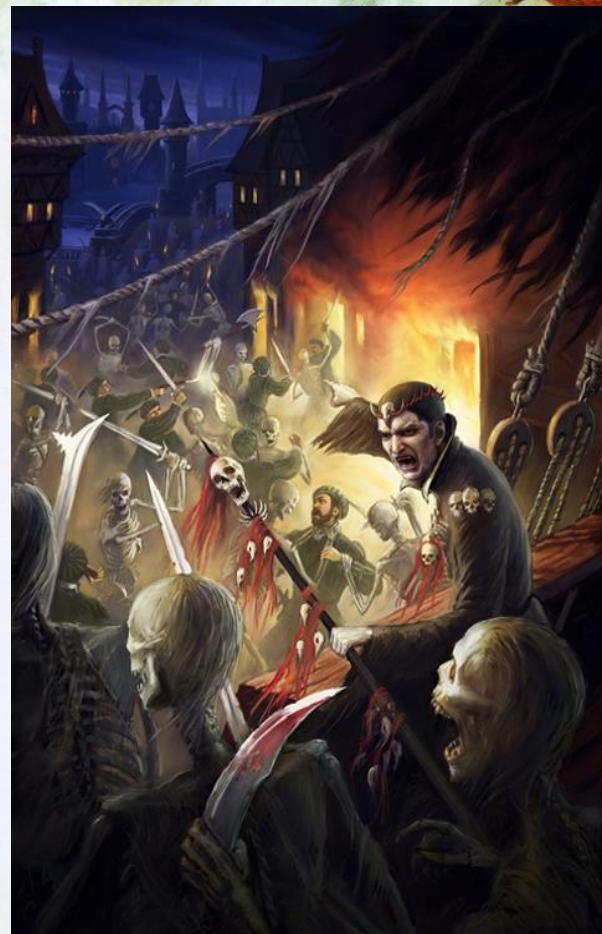
his Necromantic prowess and devious manipulation to forge his armies. He sought out Vampires from beyond the borders of Sylvania and bribed, coerced and flattered them into joining him. He spent many long months in the wild places of the Empire, rousing spirits and Wights from their decrepit tombs. Once the Empire was again wracked by vicious civil war, Mannfred deemed it time to strike.

Mannfred von Carstein's Undead legions crossed the Sylvanian border in the depths of winter. With the summer campaigning season over, the armies of the Elector Counts sat in their winter garrisons, unprepared for the sudden assault. Mannfred's armies marched through the snows towards Altdorf, putting to the sword any living men they met, raising the corpses to swell the ranks of Mannfred's horde. In the infamous Winter War of 2132, Mannfred defeated several hastily assembled Imperial armies that attempted to block his path. Victory followed victory and dark rumour of Mannfred's coming was enough to send villagers fleeing from their homes to freeze to death in the snow. Mannfred's much enlarged force reached Altdorf in the late winter months, to find the battlements empty, the city seemingly undefended.

Triumph filled Mannfred. He looked set to take the Empire's greatest city and become not a Vampire Count but a Vampire Emperor, achieving what Vlad and Konrad had failed to do. Then the Grand Theogonist, Kurt ill, appeared on the battlements. The Sigmar high priest had brought forth the evil Liber Mortis from the deepest locked vaults of his temple, and he began to recite the Great Spell of Unbinding from its pages. As the incantation continued, Mannfred's power over his minions began to weaken. Seeing his followers crumbling to dust Mannfred ordered a hasty retreat. Although Mannfred was probably the most powerful of the Vampire Counts, his foes now seemed prepared to meet the Undead threat head on.

THE BATTLE OF MARIENBURG

Though temporarily 'inconvenienced' at the siege of Altdorf, the tide had begun to turn against the Vampire Lords army. At Kylsraad, travelling down the poisoned Reik, Mannfred bellowed his demands of surrender to the city. Horrific apparitions set about their usual activity of twisting the minds of the citizens and terrifying them into submission. The following night, Kylsraad resembled a ghost town, the gates were flung open and the Undead force entered. There was no resistance, the people of Kylsraad had been reduced to quivering wrecks. Many had gone insane. Wasting no time, Mannfred abandoned Kylsraad and headed for Marienburg, leaving behind him a haunted city, full of drained husks of what were now his mindless servants. It was only after the lengthy retreat east that Kylsraad was finally razed to the ground. Witch Hunters gathered, exorcisms were performed, the city was completely destroyed and its name erased from all Imperial records. The site today bears no resemblance to a city, it has faded into the rolling moorlands of the Upper Reik. So strong was Mannfred's spell of binding that despite the exorcisms, the hauntings continue....



Unperturbed, Mannfred marched his army along the Reik to Marienburg, capturing several large vessels along the way and manning them with the raised corpses of their crews. Mannfred intended to lay siege to the port city and then sail his Zombie fleet within to attack from another direction, but he soon found his land assault was staved off by the army of Marienburg and a company of High Elves who had recently established a trading colony there. Among the Elves was the High Mage Finreir whose awesome power turned the battle against Mannfred's force at the crucial moment. Mannfred settled down for a lengthy siege. He oversaw the construction of mighty war machines, immense catapults of twisted logs and living sinew, and settled down for a siege. A few days later, his scouts revealed that an army from Altdorf was fast coming up behind him. Mannfred was forced to lift the siege of the port and retreat back the length of the Empire lest he should be caught between the Imperial and High Elf armies.

So began a long cat-and-mouse chase, with neither side entirely sure which was the cat. Mannfred's army would be whittled away by armies of the various Imperial states, only for the Undead horde to be replenished by a great victory. At Horstenbad, the army of Ostermark surrounded Mannfred as his army wound its way along the forest road, destroying nearly half of the Vampire Count's forces. Yet Mannfred escaped and within the month had seized the town of Felph and created a new army. When the army of Ostermark lay siege to Felph, Mannfred unleashed a magical storm that killed whole regiments with bolts of purple lightning, their still-smoking bodies rising to their feet



to grapple with their former comrades. The Undead sallied forth from the town and routed their enemies, and soon Mannfred's army was stronger than it had ever been.

On and on the campaign continued, with Mannfred never quite able to get the resounding victory he needed to destroy his foes, while the forces of the Empire could not slay the Vampire Count and end his threat for the last time. Twice Mannfred retreated into Sylvania to escape pursuit. The first time he smashed the Averland and Stirland army sent after him, raising up an uncountable horde of Zombies at Bylorhof. He then launched a counter-offensive that saw his army reach the walls of Averheim before an unlikely alliance of Stirland and Reikland relieved the beleaguered Wissenland capital. This second time, Mannfred was driven back into the Sylvanian forests. Determined not to make the same mistakes as they had before, the desperate nobles of the Empire swore a truce among themselves and slowly but surely began to scour the Sylvanian woods. Warriors despatched by the High King of the Dwarfs aided in the fighting. Now united, the citizens of the Empire were relentless.

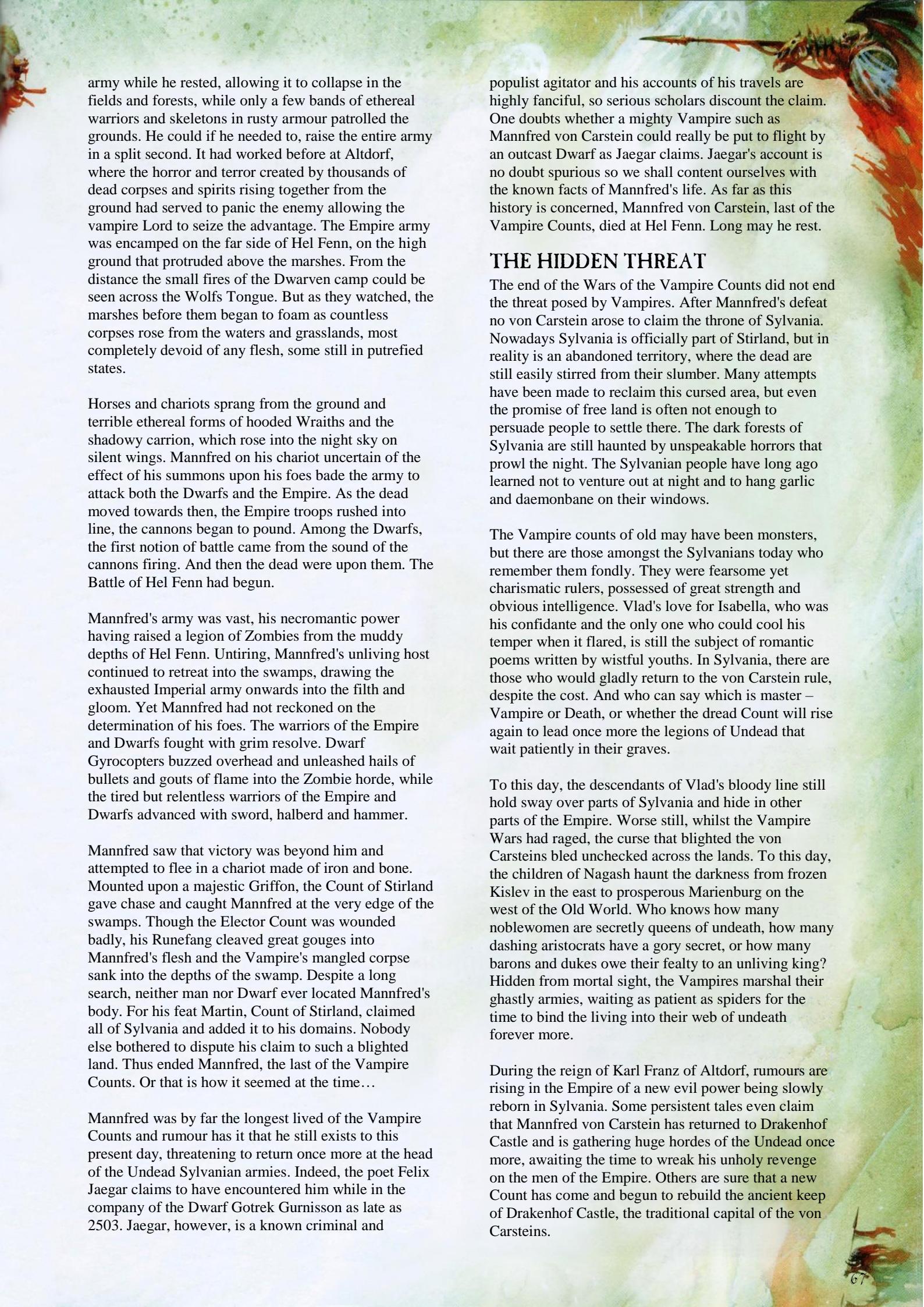
THE BATTLE FOR HEL FENN

Mannfred's force dwindled in size as he fell back through the dark woods of Sylvania, heading for his haven at Drakenhof Castle. As the army retreated, its officers slipped away, Vampire counts and nobles deserting to their own lairs and castles until only the most loyal remained with Mannfred, leading a reduced force of Undead. For as the vampires left the army, so too did the necromantic magic that held the army together dwindle gradually. The forces of the Empire united against Mannfred were ploughing through the Sylvanian woods, destroying every trace of vampirism along the way, chasing Mannfred in a desperate

attempt to destroy him before he vanished into the deepest wooded mountains where Drakenhof Castle lay. A siege in this cursed place was out of the question. Mannfred had to be stopped before he escaped and regenerated his strength and army. This view was shared by the High Elves and Dwarfs who were pursuing Mannfred along their own routes. The Dwarfs heading west through Karak Kadrin, down the river valley to cut off Mannfred from the south. The Elves following the Great River Stir from Altdorf while the Elector Counts headed through the forests of Sylvania south towards Drakenhof. At dawn, Mannfred had arrived at Hel Fenn, a marshy clearing, surrounded by the thick forests with a well worn path heading south and vanishing at a river known as the Wolfs Tongue which flooded the marshes regularly. It was here that many massacres by bands of Goblins had taken place and here that Mannfred first commanded the dead to rise from the water to serve him. Ironically although Mannfred did not know it then, it would be here where he would join the restless dead he had commanded to rise amid the marshy waters of the Wolfs Tongue.

The vampire Lord and his retinue could not move by day and so the Undead army halted at Hel Fenn. By midday the Dwarves had reached the Wolfs Tongue from the south and camped on the opposite bank, effectively blocking the retreat of the Undead army. Of the Elves there was no sign, but shortly after the sun had begun to set the Imperial army arrived from the north, eager for the destruction of the Undead horde.

Mannfred awoke to find his escape effectively halted. This would be his final stand. The vampire counts and barons bowed low and left him to raise the necromantic winds as the tireless dead lay in the fields, lifeless corpses soon to be summoned to do battle again. Mannfred would release his hold upon most of the



army while he rested, allowing it to collapse in the fields and forests, while only a few bands of ethereal warriors and skeletons in rusty armour patrolled the grounds. He could if he needed to, raise the entire army in a split second. It had worked before at Altdorf, where the horror and terror created by thousands of dead corpses and spirits rising together from the ground had served to panic the enemy allowing the vampire Lord to seize the advantage. The Empire army was encamped on the far side of Hel Fenn, on the high ground that protruded above the marshes. From the distance the small fires of the Dwarven camp could be seen across the Wolfs Tongue. But as they watched, the marshes before them began to foam as countless corpses rose from the waters and grasslands, most completely devoid of any flesh, some still in putrefied states.

Horses and chariots sprang from the ground and terrible ethereal forms of hooded Wraiths and the shadowy carrion, which rose into the night sky on silent wings. Mannfred on his chariot uncertain of the effect of his summons upon his foes bade the army to attack both the Dwarfs and the Empire. As the dead moved towards them, the Empire troops rushed into line, the cannons began to pound. Among the Dwarfs, the first notion of battle came from the sound of the cannons firing. And then the dead were upon them. The Battle of Hel Fenn had begun.

Mannfred's army was vast, his necromantic power having raised a legion of Zombies from the muddy depths of Hel Fenn. Untiring, Mannfred's unliving host continued to retreat into the swamps, drawing the exhausted Imperial army onwards into the filth and gloom. Yet Mannfred had not reckoned on the determination of his foes. The warriors of the Empire and Dwarfs fought with grim resolve. Dwarf Gyrocopters buzzed overhead and unleashed hails of bullets and gouts of flame into the Zombie horde, while the tired but relentless warriors of the Empire and Dwarfs advanced with sword, halberd and hammer.

Mannfred saw that victory was beyond him and attempted to flee in a chariot made of iron and bone. Mounted upon a majestic Griffon, the Count of Stirland gave chase and caught Mannfred at the very edge of the swamps. Though the Elector Count was wounded badly, his Runefang cleaved great gouges into Mannfred's flesh and the Vampire's mangled corpse sank into the depths of the swamp. Despite a long search, neither man nor Dwarf ever located Mannfred's body. For his feat Martin, Count of Stirland, claimed all of Sylvania and added it to his domains. Nobody else bothered to dispute his claim to such a blighted land. Thus ended Mannfred, the last of the Vampire Counts. Or that is how it seemed at the time...

Mannfred was by far the longest lived of the Vampire Counts and rumour has it that he still exists to this present day, threatening to return once more at the head of the Undead Sylvanian armies. Indeed, the poet Felix Jaegar claims to have encountered him while in the company of the Dwarf Gotrek Gurnisson as late as 2503. Jaegar, however, is a known criminal and

populist agitator and his accounts of his travels are highly fanciful, so serious scholars discount the claim. One doubts whether a mighty Vampire such as Mannfred von Carstein could really be put to flight by an outcast Dwarf as Jaegar claims. Jaegar's account is no doubt spurious so we shall content ourselves with the known facts of Mannfred's life. As far as this history is concerned, Mannfred von Carstein, last of the Vampire Counts, died at Hel Fenn. Long may he rest.

THE HIDDEN THREAT

The end of the Wars of the Vampire Counts did not end the threat posed by Vampires. After Mannfred's defeat no von Carstein arose to claim the throne of Sylvania. Nowadays Sylvania is officially part of Stirland, but in reality is an abandoned territory, where the dead are still easily stirred from their slumber. Many attempts have been made to reclaim this cursed area, but even the promise of free land is often not enough to persuade people to settle there. The dark forests of Sylvania are still haunted by unspeakable horrors that prowl the night. The Sylvanian people have long ago learned not to venture out at night and to hang garlic and daemonbane on their windows.

The Vampire counts of old may have been monsters, but there are those amongst the Sylvanians today who remember them fondly. They were fearsome yet charismatic rulers, possessed of great strength and obvious intelligence. Vlad's love for Isabella, who was his confidante and the only one who could cool his temper when it flared, is still the subject of romantic poems written by wistful youths. In Sylvania, there are those who would gladly return to the von Carstein rule, despite the cost. And who can say which is master – Vampire or Death, or whether the dread Count will rise again to lead once more the legions of Undead that wait patiently in their graves.

To this day, the descendants of Vlad's bloody line still hold sway over parts of Sylvania and hide in other parts of the Empire. Worse still, whilst the Vampire Wars had raged, the curse that blighted the von Carsteins bled unchecked across the lands. To this day, the children of Nagash haunt the darkness from frozen Kislev in the east to prosperous Marienburg on the west of the Old World. Who knows how many noblewomen are secretly queens of undeath, how many dashing aristocrats have a gory secret, or how many barons and dukes owe their fealty to an unliving king? Hidden from mortal sight, the Vampires marshal their ghastly armies, waiting as patient as spiders for the time to bind the living into their web of undeath forever more.

During the reign of Karl Franz of Altdorf, rumours are rising in the Empire of a new evil power being slowly reborn in Sylvania. Some persistent tales even claim that Mannfred von Carstein has returned to Drakenhof Castle and is gathering huge hordes of the Undead once more, awaiting the time to wreak his unholy revenge on the men of the Empire. Others are sure that a new Count has come and begun to rebuild the ancient keep of Drakenhof Castle, the traditional capital of the von Carsteins.



Mannfred von Carstein strolled along the battlements of his castle, enjoying for the first time in centuries the feeling of mobility. He had lain long in the swamps of Hel Fenn with only the dimmest awareness of his surroundings. It was not till that fool Schillman had disturbed his bones that he had possessed any more self-awareness than a slug or an insect. Now, once more, he was himself again, the proud nobleman who had come close to toppling the Empire. The master of men and magic, last of the Undying Counts of Sylvania.



The two moons peered through the dark clouds; bat-winged things scuttled along riding the winds. The signs were all there: across this ancient land the Powers of Undeath stirred once more. Ghouls gathered, plagues scoured the cities, the dead lay unquiet in their graves. An ancient familiar had brought word from the south that Nagash stirred once more, reaching out from his ancient fortress to bend the Dark to his will. That thought worried even von Carstein, for who knew what that ancient, evil liche was capable of. Once he had come close to mastering the world. He might yet if he gathered his power to him. The thought occurred to the Vampire Count that his resurrection and the awakening of Nagash might be connected but he thrust the idea aside. He was his own master, and he had his own plans, and even now they approached fulfilment.

By the ancient mazy ways he had sent word to the Brotherhood. Even now, pale riders on dark horses made their way towards this keep. Companies of skeletons and zombies were drawn to the call of his will. Ghouls scuttled in the graveyard below, and zombie servitors prepared the crypts for the arrival of his allies. Von Carstein smiled, and his white teeth gleamed in the moonlight. Soon he would have an army once more. Soon he would claim his lands back from the usurpers who had taken them. Soon he would cause mortal men to tremble.

His power had reached a peak once more. Almost he wished the Dwarf were present again so that he might break his bones and cast his bloodless corpse from the highest battlements. It still stung von Carstein's pride that he had been forced to flee through his own castle from a mere Slayer, and to hide until the Dwarf and his human henchman had grown tired of searching. Still, in his long unluck von Carstein had learned the value of patience. He knew there was a time to fight and a time to flee. At that point flight had been the most sensible course. At Hel Fenn he had learned the power of Dwarf rune weapons and that Slayer had borne one of the most potent rune weapons of all. Cold hatred filled his heart. One fine night he would make them pay for their insolence. After all, he had all the time in the world to take his revenge.

He pulled his dark cloak close about him. He should not be distracted by thoughts of revenge. He had a larger goal

to achieve. Once the army had gathered he would strike west and, one by one, the small, ancient towns of Sylvania would become aware that their Lord had returned to claim what was rightfully his. In his mind's eye he recreated the splendour of the old days. He saw the great black carriages carrying the white-fleshed nobility between their brooding keeps. He saw the glittering balls where human blood was served from crystal decanters, and masked Vampires pursued their frightened prey through the gloriously rotting gardens. He saw the deferential peasants doff their caps to him, their eyes as full of bovine stupidity as cattle. Soon, he told himself, those days would come again.

For was it not the destiny of the Vampire to feed upon humanity? Were not short-lived men simply cattle to their undying superiors? It was their doom to provide nourishment for the aristocracy of the night, just as it was the doom of cattle to be slaughtered to provide humans with food.

Von Carstein shook his head, knowing such a train of thought was dangerous. Humans were no mere cattle. They were more like the wild boar that he had hunted before he had put aside his mortality. They were dangerous and cunning and to be feared too, for they had numbers and powerful magics. He must never underestimate them as he had done in the past, when he had been filled with self-confidence by the potency of his Vampiric powers.

He caught the gleam of plump and blood filled flesh in the courtyard below. He stood quiet for a moment and listened. He heard the soft tread on the stairs behind him, and turned smiling. It was the girl the Slayer and the youth had rescued from the dungeon below. She smiled nervously back at him. She had returned, as he had known she would. Slowly he glided towards her. She threw back her head, baring her neck, ready for his kiss.





The Legion of Blood Keep

For the first time in a thousand years he could breathe fresh air. He threw his head back and laughed. It was a cold, terrible laughter that promised death to all who heard it.

First, he had to restore his rightful domains. Secondly, the Keeper of the Tower of Wizardry had to pay for her disobedience. It didn't matter to the Red Duke that the Keeper Isabeau who had defied him was long dead. Her descendant would suffice for his revenge. Then he...

"Halt" came a thin, reedy voice. "You will do my bidding. I, Renar master of the dark arts command you in the name of Nagash himself um... Supreme Lord of er..." The voice trailed off as the grim gaze of the Red Duke turned to look upon the robed figure in front of him. Then the Red Duke began to laugh once more, a laugh that was anything but mirthful.

So this puny specimen was the agent of his freedom. Pathetic. He almost felt like killing him for being so feeble, but no, he might be useful. The mortal seemed transfixed. "Master of the dark arts indeed!" He should be torn limb from limb for his presumption. Or perhaps he should be given the honour of providing the Red Duke's first sustenance. Blood. The thought was very tempting. But no, that would be rash. Instead he spoke, his unearthly voice filling the dusty tomb. "No, mortal, you will do my bidding."

For weeks the Red Duke prowled the night, preying on any who crossed his path, regaining his strength with their lifeblood. Guided by the awestruck Renar, he fell upon those foolish enough to walk the night and soon the local villagers were too terrified to leave their hovels.

But as the Red Duke hunted, his unblinking eyes missed nothing. These were his lands; this was his domain, and the people were but a means to quench his thirst. He remembered the times of glory when he had almost overthrown the King of Bretonnia. Those days would return and so would his Kingdom of Blood, where he, and he alone would rule as an immortal god-king, served by Undead knights whose loyalty was eternal. In time all those who defied him would call him their master. But now he needed to quench the thirst of a thousand years.

More weeks passed, until eventually the Red Duke felt his old strength return. His vengeance could wait no more. He returned to the shattered ruin where his castle had once stood and there, among the tumbled walls, at the darkest hour of the winter solstice, he cast the Great Spell of Doom.

Across the dividing years, through the layers of rotting earth, the dead heard his powerful words. He called out, reminding his knights of the oaths of service they had pledged to him when the world was young.

One by one they came to stand by his side. The bones of his retainers cast aside their tombstones, grasped the weapons that had been buried with them, and shambled to join his gathering armies.

Night after night, the dead of Aquitaine marched towards the shattered castle, until at last a host of Undead, thousands strong, stood ready to obey their master. Now he was prepared. He could not allow Duke Gilon, that foul usurper of his domain, any more time. He must strike without warning and without a chance of the mortals gathering their forces.

The Duke would attack in three places at once and catch his foe scattered and unaware. The fastest of his troops he would send to raze the Tower of Wizardry, exacting his vengeance by slaying the Keeper. His vanguard would ride ahead of the rest of his army, destroying all the villages and securing a bridge over the river Morceaux. He himself would ride with the main force of his troops to destroy any armies that the Bretonnians were foolish enough to raise against him.

This time he would show no mercy.



BALLAD OF THE RED DUKE

The tale of the Red Duke is an ancient story, well known throughout the lands of Bretonnia. It is told in several different ways, in differing detail, and in some the Red Duke is not the heartless villain that he is painted in others. But still it is a sad and tragic tale.

Although the events described here are shrouded by the mists of time and distorted by legends, an attentive scholar can still reconstruct the real story, sorting the facts from the flowery language of the traditional chansons and ballads of the Bretonnian minstrels. What follows is this truth...

A LONG TIME AGO, IN A LAND FAR AWAY

In the time of the Crusades, during the rule of Louis the Righteous, the fifteenth king of Bretonnia, that the heathen Arabians, led by the thrice-accursed Sultan Jaffar, conquered Estalia and threatened the freedom of the rest of the world.

Filled with righteous anger, the knights of Bretonnia gathered to oust the invaders. Amongst these knights was the Duke of Aquitaine: a handsome and powerful man, widely known as the most courageous knight in the land. When the noblest sons of Bretonnia raised their swords against the infidel, he was first amongst them, ever ready to protect the honour of Bretonnia.

During the war that eventually freed the kingdom of Estalia and saw the corrupt reign of Jaffar end, he won great fame. A multitude of songs were composed about his victorious battles against the warriors of the Sultan. That was until disaster struck.



During the siege of Lashiek, soon after the walls had been breached, the Duke of Aquitaine disappeared and was thought lost. For days rumours buzzed through the crusaders' camp about his fate until at last he was found, grievously wounded and delirious, but alive. The Duke's loyal retainers cared for him, and even when he fell into a deep coma they would not abandon him. Instead, they made their way back to Bretonnia and their homes, across burning deserts and through Orc and Skaven ambushes. All the time they bore their ailing lord with them on a shaded litter.

Eventually they reached their homeland, and there they laid their master down to die. A gloom fell over the castle as the fallen Duke finally succumbed to his fever. His knights mourned for him and vowed to serve him loyally beyond death, words that would be their downfall in the troubled times to come. They buried him beneath his castle as was the custom in those far off times, and sung chants for his soul far into the night.



THE RESTLESS DEAD

Three days he rested in his tomb, and then, in the midst of a dark, stormy night, he rose. No longer the Duke of Aquitaine, champion of the king. Instead he had become a foul Vampire, tainted by his unknown ordeal. How this had happened no-one knew, but they had other, more immediate worries. In a few terrible hours he slew all the inhabitants of the castle and then raised them from their untimely death with his newly-acquired power. Soon he had a teeming army of Undead, and so began his evil reign of terror.

In a short time the commoners came to shun his very name and began to call him the Red Duke, after the blood that soaked his clothes and deeds. Thousands of refugees fled northwards to seek the aid and protection of the king. When he heard of the events in Aquitaine, he gathered a powerful army and rode against his former vassal.

The Red Duke, wary of the power of the king, sought the aid of the Keeper of the Tower of Wizardry. The tower was an ancient, ruined building left by the High Elves of old, built in a place of great power. Its Keeper, Isabeau, was widely recognised as the most powerful magician in Aquitaine. The Red Duke offered her an alliance: together they would challenge the king and divide the Kingdom of Bretonnia.

Isabeau refused. She saw the Red Duke as he was, an inhuman monster from the realm of the Undead, and she fled to join the King's retinue.

The cataclysmic battle was fought on the fields of Ceren. Little is remembered from that conflict when the terrible Undead, still clad in the livery of Aquitaine, fought the nobility of Bretonnia. Suffice to say that no Undead creature could stand against the King, and the Grail Knights did not fear the spirits of the departed. The Keeper of the Tower, with all her power and wisdom, countered the death spells that the Red Duke had summoned in his rage. Finally the two former friends clashed, the king and his champion. The battle raged for an hour, but the Lady of the Lake was with the Bretonnian king and together they were victorious. The Red Duke's body was pierced by the king's lance, causing a death-blow that sealed the fate of his unspeakable army. His followers were scattered, his castle razed to the ground, and salt ploughed into the scattered ruins.

Isabeau advised the king to burn the remains of the Vampire, but he could not bear to see the body of his former champion desecrated. In death the Red Duke seemed his old self again. His features were noble and peaceful once more, and he seemed purged of his curse. The king ordered a great tomb to be built for his former friend and had it sealed with the mark of the Grail to honour the fallen. Then he ordered the real name of the Red Duke to be stricken from all records so that the terrible shame would be forgotten, and the relatives of the Red Duke could live without constantly being reminded of the evil that once carried their name.

AN UNQUIET GRAVE

But the Red Duke was not dead. His body may have been pierced by the lance of the king, and his will shattered by the power of the Keeper of the Tower, but he had made plans for just such an instance. He had seen to it that part of his essence had been sealed in a crimson jewel, formed from the blood of innocents and pure evil magic. The years he took to regenerate his shattered body were long, but finally he rose once more and prepared to cast aside the stone doors of his tomb. This time though it was the Red Duke who was outfoxed. The Grail symbols, and magic sigils of the Keeper held the massive stone doors shut and sealed the Red Duke inside.

For countless years he raged inside the tomb that had become his prison, but to no avail: each time he attempted to open the doors of the tomb with his ferocious strength, the holy carvings and the warding sigils burned into his hands. He cast countless spells to release himself, and used all his cunning to summon unholy creatures from beyond the walls of death to aid him but nothing could move the seal that had been placed on the doors. The wards that bound him were far too powerful.

Though the red jewel preserved the Duke's unnatural life, his hunger for the blood of the living grew until it drove him into a deep pit of madness from which there was no return. He could only scream his rage to the deaf stone walls and swear his revenge. So it remained for centuries, and people gradually forgot the evil legend of the Red Duke, until one day...



DEATH STALKS THE NIGHT

Through the night they came. Silent, relentless, never tiring. With Renar the Necromancer at their fore, the Undead force had left the Red Duke's castle at dusk, marching over dank marsh and through tangled forests to fall on the village of Mercal in the dead of night. But why Mercal? The Keeper of the Tower was not there, neither was there a route over the river Morceaux. What value did this poor village hold?

A thousand years before, after the Red Duke's defeat, it was not only he that had been sealed inside an ornate prison. As the Red Duke died and his armies began to disintegrate around him, a small group of his most trusted and fanatical retainers had fought their way clear of the disaster. Hiding in the swamps and abandoned woodland where the commoners feared to go, they fought a running battle for days, until finally they were hunted down and slain, one by one.

Like the Red Duke, these once noble sons of Bretonnia were not burned. Instead they were entombed and a Grail Chapel raised next to them so that a holy knight could watch over their spirits for eternity. This chapel lay at the heart of the little village of Mercal.

After the Necromancer Renar had freed him from his prison, the Red Duke had called his followers to arms, but these most loyal of his captains had not arrived. He was not pleased. Had they forgotten their vows? Into the darkness he sent his foul messengers, swarms of bats and tides of black, creeping fiends. Soon he discovered the fate of his favourites and it was as merciless as his own: they were entombed in Mercal. It was the faith of the holy knight that held the Duke's servants to that place, aware of their master's call, but unable to break free of their mausoleum. That man must die!

THE CHAPEL SEREINE

In the little village of Mercal all was quiet. The common folk that lived there had retired to their beds after a long day's toil in their master's fields. All was at peace.

Then, without warning the bells of the Grail Chapel began to ring. Not the measured pulse of the call to the faithful, but a frenzied clamour of alarm. The men ran to see what the matter was, only to be met by the knightly guardian of that place telling all of alarm and disaster. He had been granted a vision by the Lady of the Lake and had seen an army of the most terrible things imaginable. The Undead were coming.

"Make ready", the Holy Knight cried, "Prepare yourselves. The fate of more than our homes lies in our hands tonight." Such was the respect in which the Holy Knight was held that none thought to question his prophesy. If he said that evil was approaching, then they believed him.

The villagers ran for their weapons, hiding their wives and children, readying themselves for the battle ahead. For a few minutes all was confusion, then, in the centre of the village, the Holy Knight began to sing. It was one of the ancient battle songs of the Bretonnians, a rousing tale of bravery against all odds. Slowly the

bowmen and men-at-arms began to form up around their leader, and their confidence began to build. As they joined the ranks, they added their voices to the defiant battlehymn. By the time the end of the tale had been reached the villagers were all in place. Each man was ready, each knew his duty, and each hoped silently that the runners they had sent would bring reinforcements in time. But wait, ' what was that sound? The clatter of arms, of shields, the rattle of bones...

The Holy Knight had gathered the men of his village into large units, a sensible plan since the fear that their foes inspired could easily break smaller groups. As soon as the ghastly shapes of the Undead could be seen amongst the mist, the Bowmen began to unleash deadly waves of arrows. Many Ghouls and Skeletons went down in the hail of arrows, but the rest pushed on and soon were upon the defenders.

The young men of the village who aspired to knighthood, together with their Mounted Squires, tried their best to ride to the defence of Mercal before it was completely encircled by the Undead. However, the Skeleton Horsemen were quicker. Invigorated by Necromantic magic they struck the flank of the Knights Errant, scattering and riding them down. The Squires, seeing the destruction of the Knights, turned tail and fled.



The main regiment of Skeletons, led by Renar and a Wight Champion, attacked the Men-at-arms led by the Holy Knight. The battle raged for almost an hour, but the Undead were victorious, the Men-at-arms being cut to pieces. But the Holy Knight stood his ground, chanting the chanson of Giles le Breton and fighting on bravely even though the Skeleton Warriors surrounded him. He hewed left and right, cutting down many of the Undead warriors, Renar himself hardy avoiding this fate when he tried to attack the holy man. For a moment it seemed that through sheer courage the Holy Knight could turn the battle single-handed and save the village.

At this crucial moment the Wight Champion lifted his double-handed sword, and struck the Holy Knight from behind. The wound was a mortal one, and the Holy Knight fell. Now it was a simple matter for the Necromancer to cast the required spell to awaken the Knights slumbering in their crypts. The former Knights rose from their slumber, and as darkness fell, they hunted down the peasants as they themselves had been hunted before.

In vengeance for their insolence and stubbornness, Renar ordered the entire village burned and all the inhabitants to be put to the sword. Only one small boy survived, hiding amongst the bodies, and when it was safe he fled westwards to tell the sad tale to Duke Gilon.

REVENGE OF THE RED DUKE

Countless years had passed, but the Red Duke had not forgotten the part that the Keeper of the Tower had played in his defeat. He decided to attack the Tower of Wizardry and Aquitaine simultaneously. Knowing the sorcerous power at the disposal of the Keeper, he sent one of his most powerful servants to confront her. This was the Banshee, a wailing spirit whose mere howl could kill mortals. The Red Duke ordered her to raze the Tower of Wizardry to the ground and pollute the holy lake that it was built to guard. He also sent the fastest of his servants with her, so that they could strike quickly and unexpectedly, and then speed on to join his main force as he assaulted the borders of Aquitaine. The Undead forces included swift chariots and cavalry, as well as giant Carrion birds.

But the Keeper was not without powers of her own. Using these sorcerous powers she watched the pale lake, and saw a writhing image of dark enemies riding against her. She considered fleeing to the relative safety of Castle Aquin, but in the end she could not abandon the holy place entrusted to her care. She sent her handmaidens to warn Duke Gilon of Aquitaine of the impending doom, advised the commoners to flee with their families, and prepared to sell her own life dearly.

Instead of abandoning their homes, the commoners of the surrounding areas hastened to her side, in respect for the help that she had given them as Keeper of the Tower. The word of a lady in plight spread and many Knights Errant from the surrounding countryside rode to her aid. The Lady of the Lake had not abandoned her

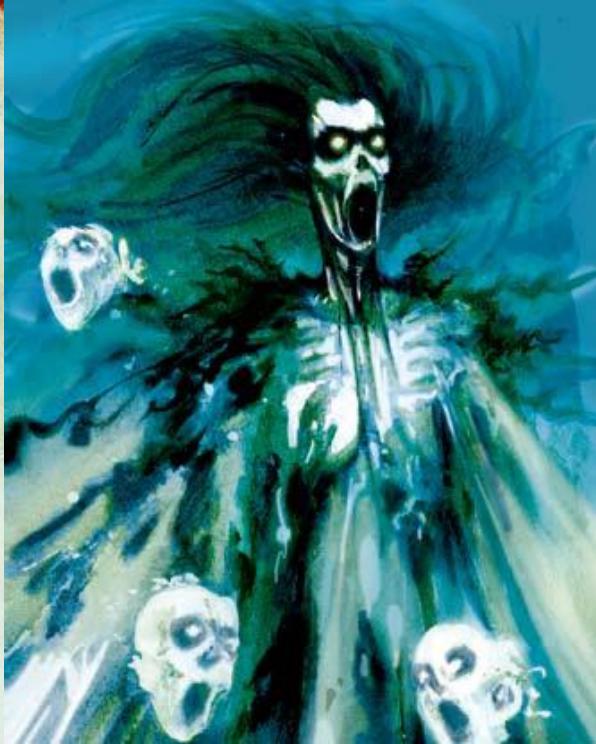


faithful servant either. Questing Knights and the scattered Grail Knights gathered by the holy lake, driven by omens and dreams sent by the Lady of the Lake.

When the Banshee arrived, both Lake Tranquil and the Tower of Wizardry were heavily defended. The opposing forces were evenly matched, but the Banshee dared not disobey her master. She prepared to lead her forces into the field surrounding the tower. There they would wait until prayers were being said to the Lady of the Lake. The Banshee knew that at that time her enemies would be at their most vulnerable.

Her heart full of compassion. Lady Iselda could not abandon the commoners who had gathered to defend their Lady. She decided to stay near her tower, leading one of the Bowmen regiments.

As the chilling howl of the Banshee announced the arrival of their enemies, the Grail Knights and the



Questing Knights who had gathered around the Blessed Lake rushed to the aid of Iselda. The swift Undead Chariots and the mounted Wights galloped to intercept them.

Driven by the Banshee's evil sorcery, the Undead host strived to drive a wedge between the Knights and the Commoners. The Skeleton Horsemen charged the Menat- arms and the Mounted Wights galloped to intercept the Knights that had gathered around the lake. The Wights proved to be no match for the Knights, but their intervention allowed the Undead to position a great flight of bloodthirsty Bats between the Knights and the Commoners.

The Banshee and Carrion assaulted the Bowmen led by Iselda, and soon the Commoners were being whittled down by the Banshee and the beaks of the Carrion. In righteous anger the Knights scattered the Bat Swarms, but as they spurred their mounts and prepared to rush to the aid of Iselda, they were attacked by the Undead Chariots.

Seeing all of her protectors die, Iselda turned and fled towards the Knights who struggled with the Undead Chariots. But her enemies were hot on her heels. Triumphant, the Banshee rode the wild wind of Dark Magic, and there was no escape for the Keeper of the Tower. She was caught and cut down by the Howling Ghost's sword. Ballads tell that fleur de lys grow at the site where she fell.

THE RETURN OF THE YOUNG HEIR

As the number of tattered refugees from the ravaged border villages increased to a steady stream, Duke Gilon of Aquitaine raised his battle standard over Castle Aquin. His heralds rode out to gather the knights of the Dukedom, and warn his neighbours of the

impending danger. Little help could be expected from outside his fiefdom, for severe weather made roads and passes useless for moving large forces. Most of the knights were in the east anyway, fighting in the King's war against the Orcs. The men of Aquitaine would have to fare this terror alone.

While Duke Gilon was gathering his forces, his son Richemont unexpectedly returned from his pilgrimage to the Grail Chapel in Couronne. He had visited the Great Chapel of the Lady of the Lake and the tombs of the heroes of Bretonnia. While he had been fasting and praying, he had fallen asleep in the Great Chapel. In a dream he saw a vision of his home being assailed by a terrible Undead host, and had immediately ridden back to his father's castle.

Sir Richemont claimed that he had found a way to thwart the Undead advance. According to the dream, no vampire could cross running water without a bridge. Since there was only one that crossed the river Morceaux for miles, the destruction of this bridge would force the Undead to take a long detour and give the Bretonnians much needed time to gather their forces. The sappers of Castle Aquin could easily demolish the bridge, and Sir Richemont offered to lead a force of knights that would ride ahead to secure it. He asked for volunteers to accompany him as he rode to defend the bridge. The council of knights was divided. Some supported young Sir Richemont, believing that his vision was sent by the Lady of the Lake, while others dismissed his plan as foolhardy and dangerous.

In the end, many of the younger knights followed him, for Sir Richemont was charismatic and popular amongst his fellow Questing Knights. But practically all the Knights of the Realm and most of the other soldiery elected to stay, for they had vowed to remain in the castle and guard the fortress of their liege lord.

Early in the morning, Richemont led his small force towards the bridge while the sappers of the castle followed in their carts as quickly as they could. But their enemies were approaching fast.

BRIDGE OVER THE RIVER MORCEAUX

Meanwhile, the Dark Knight, the most terrible of the Red Duke's captains and the herald and champion of the Kingdom of Blood, led the vanguard of the Undead army through the countryside, razing villages, burning crops and slaughtering any living thing, man or beast, that was unfortunate enough to cross his path. The bodies were left lying unburied, so that his master could perform his Necromantic rites over them and swell his army with more walking dead.

His carrion were sent to scout ahead of the army, and the evil spirits riding them told of the fast approaching force of Bretonnian knights that were on their way to the bridge. The Dark Knight, consumed with anger and pride, immediately led his force towards the bridge, determined to crush the bretonnians and secure the bridge for his dark master. He sent his Carrion to carry

the news to the Red Duke, and arrived at the bridge just as Sir Richemont was crossing it. Without waiting to form a proper battle line he charged, determined to crush the pitifully small force of knights that opposed him.

Young Sir Richemont rode in the vanguard of his army and was well ahead of the rest of his force who were still re-forming from a marching order to cross the bridge. At this crucial moment the skies darkened as the wings of countless Bats blocked out the rays of the sun. The Dark Knight, at the head of his Undead Knights, rode onto the battlefield, ordering his troops to push for the bridge, while he himself rushed ahead to intercept and destroy the Knights who were already on his side of the river.

Long is the bard's tale of the battle, but it falls into two main melees. The Undead Chariot, Mounted Wights, and Skeletons armed with rusted spears made a concentrated attack against the Questing Knights, and for a moment it seemed that the holy warriors would succumb beneath the onslaught of Undead. But the Questing Knights, filled with a holy purpose survived the avalanche of bone and steel. Striking left and right they destroyed their attackers, and though the battle raged for several hours of frantic fighting, in the end they vanquished all who opposed them. As this bloody battle was fought, young Sir Richemont galloped to challenge the Dark Knight to personal combat. They were evenly matched, but the valour of Sir Richemont prevailed and he vanquished his foe. The day ended in Bretonnian victory and the bridge was destroyed by the sappers.

Now there was no easy access to the lands of Aquitaine for the Red Duke. When he arrived at the site of the bridge the following day, he found only a raging current and could sense the wrath of the Lady of the Lake that flowed within it. His most loyal henchman

was no more, and his Undead knights were banished back to the realm of the dead. As his black heart filled with cold fury, the Red Duke swore to have his revenge and ordered his army to march east where he could cross the river over a smaller bridge. But this cost him valuable time. Now the knights of Aquitaine would be able to muster their full strength against him.

THE DARKNESS FALLS

The border villages of Aquitaine lay empty, razed by the foe. The fields were untended and winter would destroy the crops. Carrion birds flapped across the skies, the spirits of those departed were seen to walk across the fields, and the remains of the newly dead lurched to their feet to bear weapons against their sons and brothers. Each passing day swelled the foul ranks of the Red Duke. Each passing day brought victory nearer to the claws of the Undead.

The lanterns and torches of Castle Aquin burned late into the night as Duke Gilon and his advisors held council. The captains of the knights argued about which course of action to take next. No help could be expected from the King or the neighbouring dukedoms, for most knights were fighting an Errantry War against the Ores, or defending the border. No-one had expected a war here in the heart of Bretonnia. Aquitaine stood alone against an ancient evil.

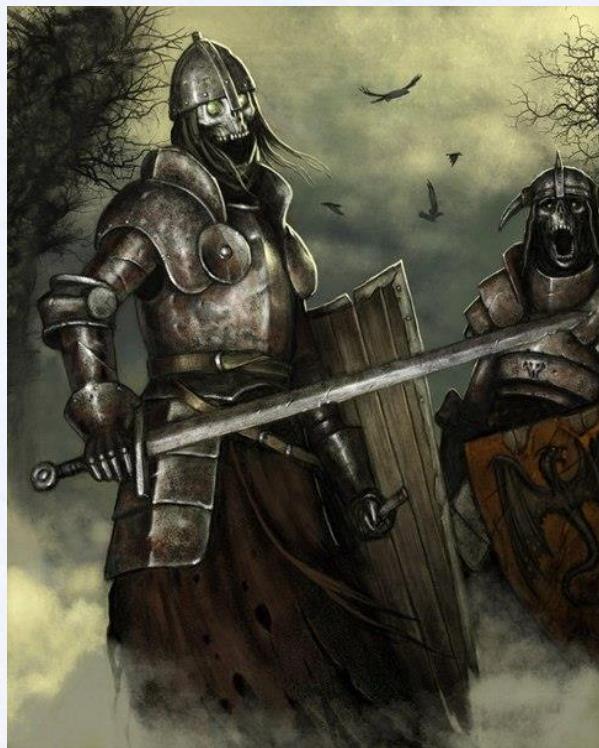
The council was divided. Some, led by young Sir Roger, wished to ride out and challenge the Red Duke to single combat. Others, grizzled veterans all, suggested that they fortify Castle Aquin further and hold out until reinforcements could be sent for. In the end Duke Gilon himself dismissed both ideas.

"We can not expect this ancient evil thing to honour the rules of chivalry," he declared. "And there are not enough supplies here in the castle to sustain a prolonged siege, while our enemies need neither rest or food. They do not rebel against their master or grow bored. The vigilance of their sentries does not wane. We would be holed up in here like rats. And we must also think about the people of Aquitaine who have no shelter from the merciless enemy! The old duke sighed heavily.

"No, our only option is to ride out to challenge our enemy where they stand, and pray to the Lady of the Lake that she will bring victory to our weapons. Who is with me? I will ask no man to accompany me against their will."

One by one the barons and knights of Aquitaine drew their swords and laid them on the table. All of them swore to follow Duke Gilon to the death. Moved by the loyalty of his men, Duke Gilon spoke. "I am proud of you all." Then he called for his squires. "Now bring me my broadsword and saddle my Pegasus! The Duke of Aquitaine goes to war!"

Within days, the war host of Aquitaine had assembled, ready to march forth to confront the Undead. Rank upon rank of knights clad in glittering armour and decorated with the magnificent heraldry of Aquitaine





stood ready to defend their land. Stalwart men-at-arms and nimble bowmen formed massed units, ready to challenge the Undead legions of the Red Duke. Squires fanned out into skirmishing units, ready to scout the land ahead of them. Duke Gilon, atop Fulminer, his loyal Pegasus, received the ovation of his forces. The legends say that Aquitaine had never gathered a greater or more courageous army than the one that rode out against the Undead of the Red Duke.

THE HOLY GROUND

The army rode through the gates of Castle Aquin and vanished into the gloom. Duke Gilon chose the fields of Ceren in which to do battle against his enemy. Here, according to the minstrels, King Louis had once won a great victory against the Red Duke.

Also at this sacred site was buried Duke Galand, an ancestor of Gilon, who fell fighting valiantly against the enemies of Bretonnia. Gilon, who understood the hearts of men well, knew that the place would spur his troops to brave deeds and raise their spirits. If Bretonnians had been able to defeat the Undead here before, they could do it again.

Half a day after the Bretonnians had arrived on the fields of Ceren, the army scouts brought word that their enemies were on the march and would arrive within the hour. Suddenly, a great shadow fell over the host of Duke Gilon. The descending darkness heralded the arrival of their enemies.

The rays of the sun were hidden by an enormous flight of great Blood Bats, summoned by the Vampire Lord. By the beat of human-skinned drums legion after legion of yellow-boned Skeletons marched into the field. Zombies shambled after them, their rotting brains obsessed with but one thought: slaying all living things. Deadly war machines made out of human bones and evil sorcery were wheeled into place. Skeleton Horsemen galloped forward as a grim reminder to the

knights that they too were mortal. And in the midst of the host, the ivory white face of the Vampire Lord showed no emotion, his eyes burning with balefires that promised eternal damnation for any who dared challenge him.

The Red Duke, blessed with senses keener than any living thing, scanned the battlefield. His gaze penetrated all shadows and caught the glitter of the armour of Duke Gilon. He raised his golden sword in a mockery of the traditional knight's challenge. There could never be peace between these two mighty men, one a fallen knight, the other a shining example of the high ideals of the code of chivalry.

The battlefield was littered with the bones of the heroes of old, the warriors who once fought against Orcs and Goblins in these fields and built the Kingdom of Bretonnia with their blood and sacrifice. This was a holy place for the Bretonnians. But the Red Duke smiled, his eyes cold as midwinter, for the winds of Dark Magic whirled across the fields concentrating around the remains of the fallen warriors. The Necromantic spells of the Red Duke would be easy to cast today.

Under the dark wings of the bats, the two forces prepared to do battle, and the gods gazed down to witness the struggle for the destiny of Aquitaine.

The Bretonnians arrived early in the morning and Duke Gilon, fearing that the Undead would encircle them and attack the villages they were defending, sent scouts to investigate the movements of his enemies. The Squires entrusted with this mission returned quickly and brought word of the approaching Undead. They warned of the great flights of Bats that flew as a vanguard for the Undead army and that the Red Duke himself rode at the head of his forces, and had nailed the body of the Holy Knight to his Battle Standard. When the old Duke heard this a cold fury filled him, and he swore that he would not leave the battlefield before Aquitaine was free of this monster. He did not have long to wait for his chance.

As the mists cleared, the Bretonnians took advantage of the slow deployment of the Undead and surged forward. This was a holy field to the Bretonnians, and they were not prepared to give an inch of ground to the foul armies of the Undead.

The Red Duke rode into battle full of confidence, his army numerically superior and better prepared for battle. The wielders of Necromantic power in his army outnumbered the magicians of the Bretonnian force three to one. He was certain that this time the Undead would be victorious and he would have his revenge.

Duke Gilon used his smaller and more manoeuvrable army to his advantage and while the Undead warriors sought out their places in the battle line, his Knights galloped forward, ready to charge the Undead as soon as possible. His son led the Questing Knights on the right flank, while Duke Gilon advanced with his loyal Knights of the Realm.

The Red Duke raised his hands and with an immense effort he cast a spell despite the best efforts of the Bretonnian wizard to thwart him. The Skeleton Horsemen crashed with the Questing Knights, but their charge lacked the strength to punch through the wall of steel and bravery gathered against them. The Questing Knights struck back with a vengeance and soon the field was littered with crushed Skeleton Steeds and riders.



The Red Duke rode to the tomb of Sir Galand, and with one sweep of his enchanted blade he scattered the stone plaque where the symbol of the Grail was engraved. Now that the tomb no longer blocked the flow of Dark Magic, he felt new power surge through his veins. To test his powers he called upon the winds of Necromantic magic, and unleashed a searing spell of doom that killed almost half of the Knights of the Realm.

The Undead catapults kept a continuous bombardment going, almost completely destroying the Knights Errant, and slaying several Squires. Things looked bad for the Bretonnians!

But the Knights fought back courageously, advancing on both flanks and smashing into the Mummies and Zombies. Once again the Knights showed just how powerful their charge was, and easily scattered the walking dead.

The Squires and Bowmen concentrated their fire on the rumbling Undead Chariots, and their efforts paid off. The last of the chariots was destroyed by Bretonnian archery mere yards before it reached the line of Bowmen. Once this threat was eliminated, the Bowmen could divide their fire between the Screaming Skull Catapults and Undead regiments.

At this crucial moment Duke Gilon himself soared down from the skies and challenged the Red Duke to single combat. Smiling coldly, the Lord of the Undead accepted, and what followed was a struggle of epic proportions. The Red Duke was wounded by the enchanted blade of the Bretonnian noble, but in response his own golden sword descended in a glittering arc. The speed and power of the blow was staggering, penetrating the armour of old Duke Gilon.

The Vampire's sword ripped through his body and the wound was a mortal one. The Knights of the Realm rushed to aid their lord but it was too late. A wave of panic ran through the Bretonnian army, but only a regiment of Squires left the battlefield.

Relishing his victory, the Red Duke howled in triumph and turned to find new foes to slay. But as his eyes scanned the battlefield, he realised his army was withering away. The Men-at-arms, redoubling their efforts, had crushed the massed ranks of Skeletons. Everywhere his army was being crushed by the Bretonnians who were taking revenge for their lost loved ones and the horrors the duchy had suffered because of the Red Duke.

As the last rays of the sun fell on the battlefield, he turned and fled into the night, screaming his hatred and vengeance, the Questing Knights hotly in pursuit.

In the end, the battle was a Bretonnian victory, but it was a hollow one. Their beloved Duke was dead and the corpses of his brave Knights were scattered around the battlefield. Less than half of the Bretonnian army survived to tell the tale, and many of them were wounded. Sir Richemont assumed the title of the Duke of Aquitaine, and vowed to rule wisely, following his father's wishes.

As for the Red Duke, he was hunted by the Questing Knights for months, but was never found. His dark legend still haunts the nightmares of the Bretonnians of Aquitaine. He had cheated death once, and who could tell if he could do it again? But at least for now the circle of blood was complete.



Fire and Water

The castle burned.

They had been thorough. Clever. Defeated her guardians. Caught her by surprise. Used fire as their ally, driving her towards them, silvered crossbow bolts biting into her flesh. Her mistake had been to come at them with fury; they were expecting that, and only two fled before her angry visage. She squeezed open another two, but they were many, and they were ready. A halfdozen blades sliced at her, and she could not avoid them all. The silver cut deep. Blood soaked her dress, her fine velvet dress – her blood! For the first time in centuries, blood from her veins, running with her life, drained her soul away. And for the first time in centuries, she ran, ran from mortals.

Back to the flames she went, wrapping herself in the thick curtains to stave off the licking fire. She grabbed a dagger then dropped it with a squeal; the heated steel had burned through to the bone. A flaming painting fell to the floor, and she saw the train of her curtain shield catch fire. Behind that, she saw the hunters at the door, kerchiefs over their faces, raising their crossbows at her. She could see their silver points glinting in the flames. She bared her fangs and, with a flourish, threw the curtain at them. She heard the twang of their bows, and then smiled as screams followed, along with the smell of burning flesh.

In the same movement, she leapt for the window.

The river was on the verge of freezing, but she hit it so hard she didn't feel the cold. The impact was like the fire, burning every nerve, stripping her skin from her flesh as easily as the dagger had. After that, the icy cold was a blessing, numbing her screaming muscles, flooding her veins with stillness. Only her lungs still burned as they filled with water. Her lungs and her mind.

She struggled to the surface, spat water, tried to stay buoyant, and failed. The water was her blood enemy; it sapped her strength with every second, and she could not fight it. As she went down again, she saw more death—the men had brought an army, peasants only, but they were armed with torches, blades, and hawthorn spikes. A wild mob with no discipline, if she was strong, she could have scattered them, but she was weak, and they were well led. Even if she made the bank, they would swarm over her, she knew, split her apart with their burning silver. She felt the memory of that agony and surrendered herself to the current. Take me, she willed it, take me away. If she was far enough downstream, she could evade her killers, slip into the forest, and vanish.

But as she was carried, she felt her strength fleeing and knew this was a death as well, a cold, certain death. The water's weight was like iron, and her blood mixed with it, flowing from her as fast as the river. She no longer had the strength to swim to the shore, and she was drifting further away from it with each second. It was a certain death, yes, but at least it was a still one, a quiet one. Not the heat of silver, not the fearful tearing of the mob. A death of her choice.

The pain faded. Her limbs felt less trapped, as if the iron of the water was leaking into them, becoming part of her.

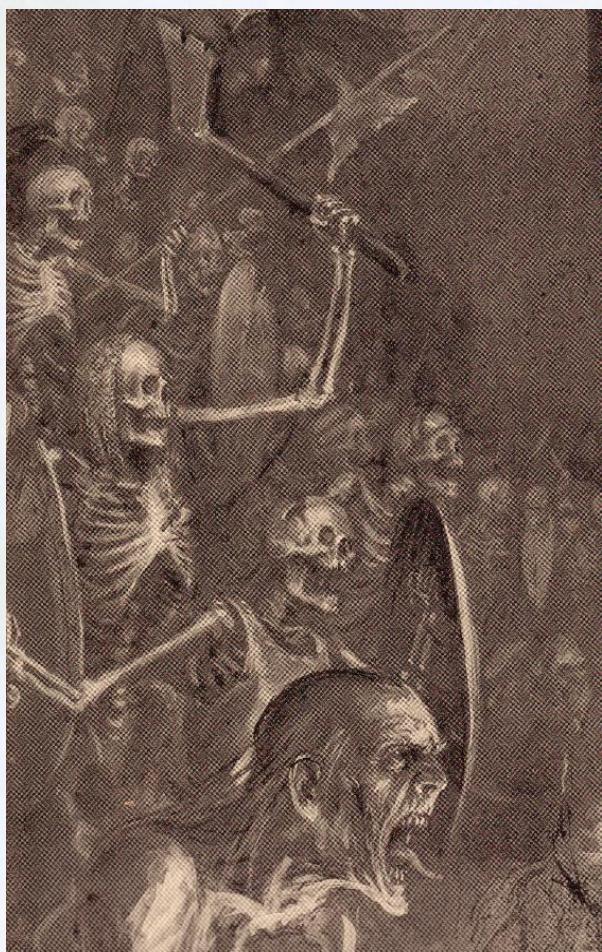
She felt her heart slow its beating, and she thought of the first time that had happened, when she was given the Blood Kiss all those centuries ago. The dark stranger from Kislev, so warm around her in his furs, his promises so exciting, and she had squealed with pleasure at the touch of his fangs. He had not lied to her; the gift was exquisite, and she had loved him for it.

The strength, the life, the timelessness, and all it had granted her. All she had seen. Countless lifetimes had passed, and she had travelled the globe, seen ten thousand sunsets over a hundred different cities. She'd lived well, better than any man could ever hope in one lifetime, better than most Vampires could ever claim. If it had to end, she had no regrets. It was quiet, it was still, it was like falling asleep and never waking again to see another starlit night.

And it was not enough.

The peasant army had split up to watch along the river bank, their lines spreading thin as they grew more and more assured that the icy water had claimed the foul leech. Without a concentration of torches, they missed her pale fingers breaking the black water. In twos and threes she took them, feeding and growing stronger as she went, her wounds closing and her fury returning but controlled now – and jubilant. Exultant.

Fifty good men of Ostermark died that night, their blood staining the grass black as pitch. And the countess smiled to see another sunset.



VENGEANCE OF THE LICEMASTER

Heinrich Kemmler was once a great and much feared necromancer. He was councillor to kings and princes, scourge of his enemies, and bane of his rivals. For over a century he wandered the Old World, studying amongst the libraries of great houses, researching new and powerful magic, uncovering incredible ancient secrets. In 2401, Kemmler made a journey to the lands of the Dead. Though most Tomb Kings reacted with hostility to his presence, he learned much from those who would treat with him.

Kemmler returned to the Old World nine years later with the goal of creating a realm that would rival the great Necropolises of the south. He gathered a dozen lesser Necromancers to him and educated them further in the Dark Arts. However, sensing the emergence of a rival, the Necrarch Brachnar the Damned subverted several of Kemmler's followers and formed the Council of Nine. Estalia became a battleground between Kemmler and Brachnar. The Estalian militas did what they could to protect the citizens of the realm, but it was not until Kemmler pursued his enemies northwards into Bretonnia that the land was truly safe.

Kemmler crushed the legions of the Council of Nine in the hills beyond Quenelles. Brachnar the Damned escaped to Bögenhafen and gathered his followers to fortify his lair in the Reikwald forest. The defences of Brachnar's lair almost proved too strong for Kemmler's forces but, after two years in which the soldiers of the Empire refused to enter some areas of the Reikwald forest, Brachnar was reduced to dust during a sorcerous duel.



In 2440, Kemmler entered the cursed Castle of Vermisace, searching for one of the Nine Books of Nagash. Despite his spells of protection he is ensnared by the ancient Liche, Crovan, who keeps the Necromancer imprisoned as a lesson in humility. Kemmler spent the next five years in a lightless crypt before finally being able to escape and defeat Crovan and his acolytes. In victory he took the name Lichemaster.

In 2460, Kemmler constructed the great fortress of Krinal in the Vaults and sent his armies against the northerly lands of Tilea. The Dukes of several Tilean cities secretly pledged allegiance to Kemmler to spare themselves the worst of his raids. The Lichemaster then turned his attention to the Bretonnian province of Carcassonne. Kemmler destroyed the Bretonnian town of Breganalle and raised its inhabitants as undead vassals. The Duke of Carcassonne led his army against Kemmler but was soundly beaten. The torn and ravaged remains of the Duke and his household knights were later found lashed to stakes along the side of the Breganalle road. King Theobald II was dismayed and outraged by these occurrences and offered a vast reward to any man who could lead the armies of Bretonnia to Kemmler's lair. In midwinter King Theobald learnt the location of Kemmler's stronghold in the Vaults and led an army into the mountains. After a bloody siege, the Lichemaster's sorcery undid the Bretonnian army, who were forced to retreat through the snow. Theobald vowed to return. Theobald ordered the holiest of weapons removed from their shrines and carried to war against Kemmler's fortress. Though the king was slain, the Lichemaster's armies were crushed and his fortress was thrown down. Badly wounded, Kemmler escaped with his life and fled deeper into the Vaults.

Taking advantage of Kemmler's ill-fortune, Brachnar the Damned, whose remains had mistakenly been animated by an Imperial hedge wizard, ambushed the Lichemaster. The Vampire had spent the last fifteen years gathering fresh servants to him and plot his revenge against Kemmler. In an epic display of sorcery that lasted three days and three nights, Kemmler once more bested the Necrarch and shattered his armies, but was driven to the edge of madness in the process.

A shadow of his former self, Kemmler spent the next decade as a beggar, wandering his way through the Grey Mountains and the Vaults, a vagrant spirit no longer completely sane or able. Then one night, as he sought shelter in a rough cave high up in the Black Mountains, Kemmler stumbled upon the resting place of an ancient warrior, a secluded grave chamber decked out in the regalia of the gods of Chaos. The great black war-blade that lay upon the tomb stirred distant memories in the mind of the old Necromancer, its runes awoke within him a curiosity he had not felt for untold ages. As his gnarled hands took the weapon he experienced an unexpected shock of power, as energy



poured through it to feed his shrivelled soul. Then he began to remember; dim memories of his past flooded into his consciousness and he recalled the fall from power against his rivals. Aware of his own weakness, still lacking his magical powers, he resolved to have vengeance on those who had almost destroyed him, a cruel and terrible vengeance that would leave their tattered souls screaming in an eternity of agony, a vengeance such as only a Necromancer could conceive. Yet the Lichemaster needed power of he was to survive, and he was still weak. Without some further form of magical sustenance he was doomed to die; the power of the sword could be exacted only once, for it was a Chaos Tomb Blade, the rest place of a man's soul and Kemmler had taken that energy into himself.

The Lichemaster continued to wander the Border Princes, a rough mountainous land of petty princedoms and bandit chiefs. He was seeking for one specific place, a legendary grace mound that belonged to a long dead Chaos Champion. This was the mound of Krell, a Kemmler had read long ago of its hidden secrets, of its powers of rejuvenation and its dead guardians. He sought for many months, from mountain valley to mountain valley until, at last, he had almost reached the end of his energy and patience. Then he found it, nestling under a great glacier in a small valley of the great Frigelhorn Mountain, and he knew his vengeance had begun. At the site of the grave mound Kemmler summoned the attention of the Chaos Gods and struck a terrible bargain with them. Kemmler would receive the help of the Undead legions of Krell and would be given power for his conjuration. In return he must slay and destroy in the name of Chaos, reliving the destruction and anarchy that had shook the world

whilst Krell was alive. Only by bringing death would the Lichemaster be gifted with further power, and only by that power could he remain alive. Heinrich Kemmler had made a terrible bargain, but one which accorded well with his own plans.

The first victims of the Lichemaster's new powers were the inhabitants of the valley, the miners, farmsteads and inhabitants of the tiny village of Frugelhofen. Following from his attack on the Frugelhorn valley Heinrich Kemmler moved westward into the country of Bretonnia. His eventual target was the monastery of La Maisontaal at the edge of the Loren Forest. This religious site is located on one of the passes in the Grey Mountains, between the Bretonnian dukedom of Quenelles and the province of Wissenland in the Empire. This monastic community is one of the major cult centres of the god Taal – the god of nature in its untamed aspect – and houses a number of clerics as well as several artefacts of considerable power and value. Kemmler had studied at the monastery in the past, and once considered its wizard-monks and their hierophantic leader Bagrian to be his friends. During his decline from power however, they did nothing to help his despite age-old promises and his repeated pleas. The Lichemaster distrusted the intentions of the monks, and suspected them of deliberately aiding his foes.

THE BATTLE OF LA MAISONTAAL ABBEY

Unknown to the Lichemaster the monks of La Maisontaal had become embroiled in a bitter fight against the Skaven of Skavenblight. Bagrian the master of La Maisontaal had been conducting experiments with artificial mechanical lifeforms. The finance and research his experiments he had helped the Lichemaster's enemies, accepting their money and ancient technical manuals as payment. So far he had succeeded in creating a mechanical humanoid, but had not been able to bring it to life. To accomplish this he required considerable power. In order to obtain this he penetrated the Skaven city of Skavenblight with the intention of stealing the awesome Black Arc – an artefact of great power and the Skaven's greatest treasure. Bagrian successfully stole the Arc right from under the nose of the Horned Rat himself, returning to La Maisontaal with the Arc in its casket. Bagrian had been trying to open the casket ever since but without success. Meanwhile the Skaven had caught up with him and had attacked the monastery. It was as the monastery burned and the monks resigned themselves to a last defence that the Lichemaster entered the scene.

The Skaven were suitable outraged that anyone should dare to steal their most sacred and powerful magical artefact. Search parties were quickly organised led by Grey Seers using special Seer-stones to track the Arc. The Skaven knew that whoever stole the Arc would be unable to open it, because it was magically sealed and could only be opened by use of a warpstone key. In spite of the magical defences of Bagrian's crypt, they located the Arc. Trailing the whereabouts of the Arc to a small monastery, the Skaven were engaged in

attempting to recover their treasure by force.

Immediately Grey Seer Gnawdoom set out at the head of an army to take the Arc from the Humans and put it back where it belonged. The Skaven besieged the fortified abbey for two days and at dawn on the third day, with most of its walls in ruin, they were ready for the final assault. To their surprise, a new force arrived on the battlefield, advancing to engage them. It was an Undead army commanded by Heinrich Kemmler.

In those days Kemmler and Krell's forces were laying waste to the borders of Quenelles. The Necromancer had sensed the presence of the invaluable warpstone in the vicinity and had rushed to the abbey. With that mighty source of magical power, he was sure he could raise all the dead between the Grey Mountains and Brionne!

At the same time Tancred, Duke of Quenelles, had mustered his knights and was headed for the Grey Mountains, obtaining safe passage through the Forest of Loren from the Wood Elves. He had to stop the Lichemaster, and was already at the feet of the Grey Mountains when his Damsels received a telepathic call for help from Bagrian. Tancred reached the abbey, but it was too late for the defenders – the Skaven had allied with the Undead and crushed them. Only the church of Taal was still intact.

Although at first the Skaven and Heinrich Kemmler's Undead forces fought together, luckily the importance of the Black Arc caused that unholy alliance to crumble. The unholy alliance broke down when the treacherous Skaven unleashed a number of hellish Warpfire Throwers into the ranks of Zombies in an effort to destroy the Lichemaster. The Necromancer walked unscathed through the green flames, and turned his forces against his deceitful allies.

The Bretonnians found the Skaven and Undead locked in a bitter fight for the precious warpstone. Allowing the Skaven and Undead to engage each other, Duc Tancred held his forces back for a single heroic charge, which smashed the forces of the Skaven, splitting them. Despite this the ratmen fought on in desperation, attacked on two sides.

While Throt the Unclean directed his mutated creations against the Undead and Bretonnian forces, Grey Seer Gnawdoom hurtled over the battlefield, borne aloft by the power of his magic. Accompanied by a small group of black-clad Gutter Runners, he managed to fight his way inside the temple of Taal and recover the Black Ark. The High Priest of Taal, Bagrian, was killed in this attack, stabbed countless times by the poisoned blades of an assassin. Many say that Bagrian brought this end upon himself, and that his interest in warpstone reeked of the taint of Chaos.

Once Gnawdoom had this sacred item within his grasp he fled the battlefield with his small bodyguard of Stormvermin, leaving the other Skaven to be slaughtered, only just making it to the tunnels. They had what they wanted, the Arc was going home! The rest was unimportant. Throt also escaped the battle, his

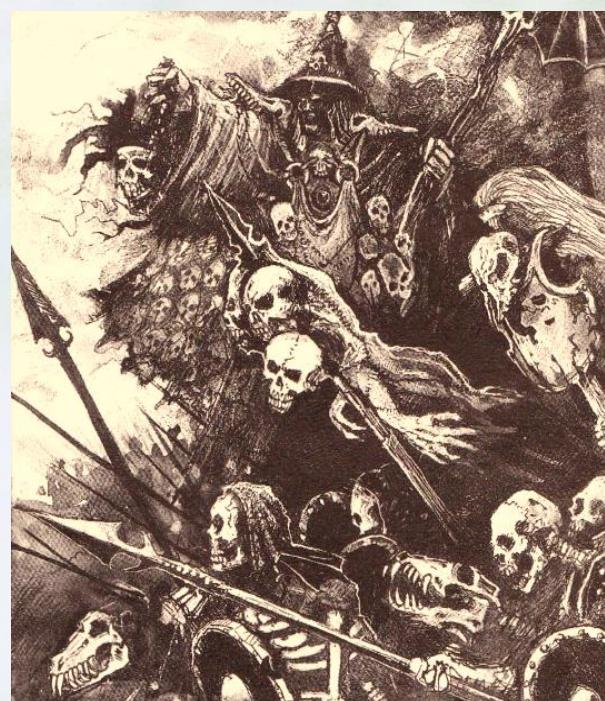
warpstone enhanced constitution keeping him alive despite horrendous wounds. It was rumoured that after the battle he hired the services of Clan Eshin to exact revenge on the treacherous Gnawdoom.

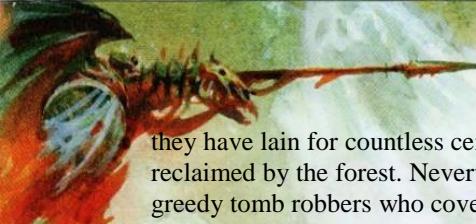
The Bretonnians took heavy casualties from the relentless press of Undead, for Kemmler kept raising those that fell using the devastating power of his magic and his sheer force of will. Eventually the Lichemaster tired of the battle, realising that the Skaven Grey Seer had already fled with his prize. Nightfall was the only thing that saved Kemmler and Krell from being totally annihilated by the Bretonnians and the two evil creatures disappeared into the woods, their forces destroyed.

Duke Tancred's knights won the day and saved the monks and peasants who were still shut in the chapel of Taal, praying for salvation. The monks of Taal praised their god for their survival and the Bretonnians returned to their lands with honour. Duc Tancred devoted the remainder of his life to seeking the downfall of the Lichemaster, tragically bringing about his own doom at the Battle of Montfort Bridge when he was abandoned by his followers. The Lichemaster sent the reanimated corpse of the Duke to bear greetings to King Feramand. Some rumours whisper that Tancred walks the world still, cursed to undeath by the foul Necromancer.

RETURN OF THE LICHMASTER

Scattered through the wild heaths on the outskirts of Athel Loren are countless ancient burial cairns, mounds and barrows. Some of these were built by the first Elves that dwelt on the edge of the forest, though a great many of them are from early human barbarian civilisations — some of which are thought to owe their traditions to the Nehekharan lands further south. Many priceless and powerful artefacts were buried within these tombs, though the Wood Elves, respectful of such places and their long-dead inhabitants, leave them as





they have lain for countless centuries, slowly to be reclaimed by the forest. Nevertheless, there are many greedy tomb robbers who covet the riches within these tombs, and so the Wood Elves are constantly battling against these interlopers. Sometimes, however, the cairns are sought for more sinister reasons than simple greed.

In the winter of 2495, a dark and evil being sought to claim these cairns. This hated creature, cursed and despised by the Wood Elves, was the Lichemaster Heinrich Kemmler. A devious foe, Kemmler was often sighted travelling through the forest, sometimes alone, often accompanied by a much larger, armoured, figure – the Wight King, Krell. Bands of Wood Elf Scouts would often seek to confront him, only for him to vanish like mist on the breeze. The bodies of other such sentries were found, turned to dust by the darkest of magics or hacked apart by the heavy blows of an axe. As the winter grew deeper, the portents became ever more dire for Athel Loren.

Great carrion, summoned by Kemmler from the southern deserts, began to perch upon the cairns, scrabbling and digging for the bones of the long-forgotten dead. With the forest still slumbering in winter's embrace, the Elves could not ignore such an incursion. Ythil the Hawk-eyed led his Kinband of Warhawk Riders against the foul creatures. With surprise on their side, the Elves descended upon the undead beings, destroying many of them before the others seemingly retreated from the forest.

Unfortunately, Kemmler was a more cunning foe than the Asrai gave him credit for. Having made his way safely across Athel Loren, Kemmler had found the prize he sought – an expansive barrow complex, bound and encircled with great power. Whilst the Elves battled his minions, he and Krell were able to break into one of the largest of the ancient burial mounds – the tomb of a great, long-dead king. Hidden from the eyes of the searching Elves in the sepulchre's dank



embrace, the Lichemaster carefully counted the passing of the twin moons through the dark skies. In the shelter of the ancient tomb, the Lichemaster had ample time to plan the next step of his vile plan whilst, far above his head, autumn turned to midwinter and the forest became ever more dormant. As no more sightings of Kemmler were reported the Asrai gradually, albeit uneasily, abandoned their hunt. Orion succumbed to the flames of his pyre, and Ariel began her slumber within the Oak of Ages.



After some weeks, Kemmler judged the time to be right and emerged from the barrow. Under a spell of concealment, he began a timeless and terrible ritual with knowledge stolen from the vaults of the cursed Castle Vermisace, as the Wight Lord Krell silently stood guard. Reaching into the void with stolen knowledge, he conjured dark spirits to aid him and summoned forth his undying minions from beneath Athel Loren. Everywhere in the arrow glade, tendrils of necromantic power suffused the air and pierced the earth. For leagues around Kemmler's rite, the trees withered and died, as the very essence of life itself was stolen from them and rechanneled for the Lichemaster's dire ends.

All across Athel Loren the forest screamed in pain. Forest Dragons roared in rage and took flight, Dryads and Tree Kin were abruptly revived from the somnolence of winter. In the heart of the Oak of Ages, the still-sleeping form of Ariel unconsciously perceived the events and wept black tears, even as her mind reached out to seek aid. The royal council of the Elves summoned all kinbands to King's Glade, yet, with the forest writhing in agony, many pathways were closed to the Elves and their army was slow to muster. Meanwhile, the Lichemaster's ritual reached its height and the tombs began to open, breached from within by cold and lifeless skeletal hands. With moss and lichen still caked upon their bones, the army beneath the barrows began to stir into an awful parody of life. All across the wild heath, the tombs and cairns were opened from within by cold and lifeless skeletal hands, and bronze-bedeviled ancient warriors marched out to form a mighty army. Screaming carrion birds filled the skies as the army of the undead marched through the snowdrifts and entered Athel Loren.



Dark Dryads of winter, crone-like and hateful, assailed Kemmler's army at every step. Driven wild by pain and anger, many spirits of the forest hurled themselves at Kemmler and his awakened army, all thoughts of caution abandoned. Slowed by the cold, the first Dryads and Kin were easy prey for the Necromancer, who turned his magics upon them and blasted them from existence without once sparing attention from his great work. Wave after wave of Dryads streamed into the glade, only to meet the same fate and, with every



moment that passed, the Lichemaster's army grew stronger. Waywatchers arose from the snow to launch their unerringly accurate arrows before disappearing once more. Nevertheless, their numbers were too few to halt the unliving. Yet, as all seemed lost, help arrived from two somewhat unlikely quarters.

A Bretonnian Grail Knight, Sir Amalric of Gaudaron, had been drawn ever closer to Athel Loren these past few days, guided by visions of the Lady. Even from the borders of the forest, Kemmler's handiwork was plain to see and, sensing a quest worthy of a Grail Knight, Amalric forced his steed to ride on through the screaming skies and writhing trees. Elsewhere in Athel Loren, the Branchwraith Drycha stood at the feet of the slumbering form of Durthu – even with the tumult around him, the Ancient slumbered as though nothing untoward is occurring. There was little love lost between the renegade Branchwraith and the venerable Treeman, yet she knew that only an Ancient could unite the disordered and desperate attacks of the forest spirits. Durthu was the only Ancient slumbering close enough to the ritual to intervene in time and so Drycha began to sing him back to wakefulness...

THE BATTLE OF THE CAIRNS

Kemmler's plan had now reached fruition. The enraged attacks of the forest spirit defenders of Athel Loren had done little to halt his progress. For each unliving warrior torn down by screeching Dryads, another three had arisen from the silent tombs. The ritual had now reached its peak and the skeleton legions had been joined by darker and more powerful creatures, some raised from below, others called to Kemmler's side from outside the forest.

For the Wood Elves, the situation was incredibly desperate. With so many foes assembling within their

borders they could only survive this storm by killing the Lichemaster, or by grinding his army to powder. Neither course of action would be an easy one and, with Orion and Ariel dormant, their armies would be hard pressed to prevail. In a last desperate council, the warrior-elder Sceolan took command of the forces – including the remnants of Drycha's ill-fated assault on the glade – and led them into battle against Kemmler's grave-born army.

A grand battle finally took place in a massive glade, deep within Athel Loren's borders. Thousands of Elves lost their lives, fighting against the seemingly never-ending skeletal hordes that were the Lichemaster's to command. Stoic Eternal Guard advanced on the foe, led by the warrior-elder Sceolan, while Glade Riders galloped around the flanks. Overhead, Ythil the Hawk-eyed and his Warhawk Rider kin swept down time and time again through the thick clouds of crows and ravens to attack the long-dead warriors. Ultimately, the battle was only won when Sceolan led a handful of Eternal Guard into combat with the Lichemaster and his bodyguard.

Though Krell mortally wounded Sceolan in the ensuing fight, Kemmler was also grievously wounded and, cloaking himself in magic, fled the battlefield, abandoning his undead army and Krell to their fates. With the Lichemaster's mind no longer guiding them, the army that he had raised swiftly fell to the fury of the Wood Elves. Only Krell escaped the frozen glade, fleeing deeper into the forest with Dryads hard upon his heels. Many Elves were slain that dark day, but the Undead were finally stopped. This was the furthest into Athel Loren any attack had ever reached, and as such the Wood Elves are hungry for vengeance against the hated Lichemaster, and are ever-watchful for his return.





Heinrich Kemmler looked down on the valley below. Perhaps here he could find a place to rum at bay and make his last stand. His enemies snapped at his heels like a pack of mangy curs. Once he would have brushed them aside like the bothersome fleas they were. Now his powers had faded and his necromantic might was all but spent. Now those who once would have been less than apprentices to him were close to ending his days forever. He felt old and he felt tired.

Kemmler leaned on his staff and asked himself how this could have happened. How could a man whose name once caused peasants to shiver with fear from Moussillon to Kislev, and the merest rumour of whose presence caused rivals to retreat to their protected crypts, have come to this? It was not that his knowledge was any the less. He could still remember every stanza of the Nine Books of Nagash. He could still quote from memory every sanity-blasting line of the Liber Mortis. He knew every spell known to the art of necromancy, and he knew many more spells from other forbidden colleges. No-one since the days when Great Nagash himself had walked the earth had his compendious knowledge of the Dark Arts, of this he felt sure. Despite the long centuries he had lived his mind was still keen.

If it wasn't lack of knowledge then what was it? How was it that now his rivals had been able to drive him from his ancient lair and forth into these empty lands as a wanderer? It wasn't that there were too many of them. In the past his enemies had gathered together in cabals, pooling their resources in vain attempts to dispute his mastery. Always he had overcome them.

He smiled with satisfaction remembering old triumphs. In the hills beyond Quennelles his mighty army had smashed the zombie legions of the Council of Nine. In the dark woods beyond the town of Bogenhafen he had overcome the three Vampire Wizards of Blutwald, and all their armies of walking dead. In the crypts beneath the cursed castle of Vermisace he had overcome the ancient undead wizard and all his acolytes and won for himself the title Lichemaster. Kemmler allowed himself a wintery smile. In those days his military genius had been as renowned as his necromancy. He had led his hordes to many victories. Even kings had come, crown in hand, to beg his assistance in their petty squabbles.

Slowly Kemmler's smile ended. Now was not the time to relive past triumphs. He could afford any time for reverie with the hounds of darkness snapping at his heels. Still, the temptation was there. It was more comfortable to recall lost glories than to relive his recent defeats. Better to remember the days when the kingdoms of men were baubles to be played with than to recall the recent shattering of his undead host by the forces of his accursed rivals.

Cold fury filled him as he looked at the pitiful remains of his undead army. Here were but a few hundred animated skeletons and ten score walking dead. A pathetic remnant of an army whose numbers had once been legion.

Once the carrion had come at his beck and call. Once the mummies from the night-black tombs of the Kingdom of the Dead had lumbered to obey his every whim. Now he had nothing. Now his enemies flicked through the pages of his unsurpassed necromantic library, and his greatest rivals drank hallucinogenic wine drawn from the cellars of his dark tower. Kemmler licked his lips. He could kill for a drink of that wine now. He recalled laying it down in the days of his glory a hundred and fifty years ago, mixing the potent mushrooms with drops of lotus and the forbidden grapes of Qu-Amaan, whose roots must be bedded in soil fertilised with the flesh of murderers. He cursed aloud and hoped the wine brought his foes nightmares, that it had gone bad and poison ran in their veins. He knew it was not to be. One glance over his shoulders and he could see the distant stream of green witchlights that marked the presence of his pursuers.

He thought of his library and a great gloom filled him. It had taken many lifetimes of men to acquire it, the greatest trove of necromantic lore outside Nagashizzar itself. Now it was in the hands of fools, lesser men without the vision or the foresight to apply it beyond their own petty ends. There was one consolation though. He had modified many of the spells in the grimoires in ways that only he knew and could compensate for. Anyone trying use those works without his knowledge was in for a few unpleasant surprises. No-one else would get much benefit from the store of knowledge he had struggled so long to accumulate.

This was getting him nowhere. He was no closer to solving the riddle of why he was being defeated. He could no longer muster the strength to break the spells of his foes. Perhaps, he thought, age had finally overcome him. In spite of the cunning of his sorceries and the supreme alchemical mastery that had prolonged his life, his strength had flowed from him, like wine from an overturned goblet. Perhaps there was a limit to how long a mortal man could continue, and perhaps he had reached it.

He knew he could no longer find the strength within himself to cast the Great Spells. He struggled with simple reanimation like a wheezing old codger trying to run a mile. He simply no longer had the power he once had. His strength had faded and withered and there seemed to be nothing he could do about it.

Perhaps all necromancers reached this point, he thought. Perhaps that was why they became liches, and bartered their mortal forms for undying carcasses. Kemmler shuddered. Even after all these centuries of eluding death, that idea was still repugnant to him. He tried to imagine what it would be like to be a liche. He tried to imagine what it would be like to find life in death, or perhaps death in life. He tried to imagine what it would be like to never breathe or feel his heartbeat or enjoy the taste of wine or food. He tried to imagine what it would be like to have maggots eat his rotting vitals and simply not to care. He tried to imagine what it would be like never to eat or sleep or feel pain or hunger or sorrow. He tried to imagine all these things and he could not.

Others might make the trade willingly but they were ignorant fools. They might think it was not so bad to swap a living, ageing body for one to which change meant nothing. He had seen liches in all their horror. He had talked with those he had bound to his will. He had some idea of what it would be like to become one. And for centuries he had put off the idea.

But, he told himself, perhaps that was simply the folly of a young and mighty mage, confident in his power. Perhaps all necromancers thought as he had when they first set their feet upon the dark path. Perhaps this was the choice that faced all of them eventually, a slow diminishing of their powers and eventual death, or a transition to a new and different stage of being. Perhaps the human form was merely a larva from which a Liche emerged, like a moth from a chrysalis.

Faced with the stark choice between extinction and continued existence maybe all men would make this choice if they could. Perhaps he was simply lucky to be in a position to make it. Countless millions of others would never be granted such a choice.



Kemmler cursed himself for a fool. He had stood here brooding on the nature of his existence and all the time his enemies grew closer. He felt a brief stab of startled panic such as a fox must feel when it hears the hounds closing in, and he fought to contain the urge to run. He would survive now only by keeping his wits about him. Those who followed would make no deals and would show no mercy. He knew he was alone. That did not frighten him. He had been alone for many long decades. His vocation had cut him off from those who followed more normal human lives. The years had taught him self-sufficiency and great cunning. It was time to put that cunning to use.

Perhaps there was something about here that might aid him. That, after all, was why he had fled in this direction. This stretch of the Vaults was dotted with ancient tombs and barrows, dating from the time before the Empire and the kingdom of Bretonnia. Some, it was whispered, dated to the time before even Dwarfs and Elves had walked these lonely paths. It was even hinted at in certain dread books that there was a barrow about here that contained a weapon of power that had once belonged to a Champion of Chaos. With such a weapon Kemmler knew that he might be able to defy those who hounded him, perhaps even reclaim his former pre-eminence. He ordered his servants to spread out and begin the search. With his will he imprinted on their rotting brains that they must find that barrow. With the relentless, implacable purpose of automatons they began their search.

Kemmler muttered a prayer to whatever dark gods might be listening. He knew his existence hung in the balance.

A LINEAGE OF BLOOD

Note: Dates are given according to the Imperial Calendar. Entries are frequently based on unreliable sources, such as the accounts of necromancers, heretics, adventurers, and other undesirables, especially those pre-dating the founding of the Empire. They are approximate and provided as a rough guide only.

c.-2500

The rise of Nehekara, the first true human civilisation. Upon their death, the Priest King rulers are mummified and entombed in great pyramids. These clusters of tombs and pyramids are called necropolises.

-2000

The Birth of Nagash.



-1968

A group of Dark Elves driven way off-course by storms is forced to dock in Khemri. Nagash studies Dark Magic and proves more than an apt pupil. Having learned all the Dark Elves have to teach him, he defeats their leaders in a sorcerous duel and has the survivors entombed alive within the Great Pyramid at Khemri.

-1959

Nagash slays the Priest King of Khemri and seizes power in his place.

-1950 to -1750

Nagash begins to prolong his fading youth by distilling an elixir from human blood. He recruits certain depraved noblemen to rule under him. They start to see themselves as gods and the city's population as cattle. As their span of life extends beyond that of ordinary mortals they shun the light and seek out cool dark places to hide from the burning day. Nagash orders the construction of the Black Pyramid of Nagash, one of the largest structures ever built by man, dwarfing even the Great Pyramid of Khemri.

-1750 to -1650

The Priest Kings become afraid of Nagash's power and form a great confederation against him. After nearly a century of warfare, Nagash's power is finally broken, and he is forced to flee north. Neferatem, the Queen of Lahmia, takes away Nagash's books left behind in the Black Library at Khemri under the influence of High Priest W'soran, and secretly seek to emulate his Dark Magic.

c.-1600

Nagash's wanderings take him to Cripple Peak, a mountain by the shores of the Sour Sea. Cripple Peak contains a massive chunk of glittering warpstone, the largest in the world. Nagash begins to experiment with warpstone but so corrosive is the influence of this huge chunk of pure Chaos that Nagash is forced to use ever more potent necromantic magics to hold onto his unlife.

-1590

A rebellion in Lahmia is brutally quashed. Neferatem becomes known as Neferata.



-1520

Neferata creates a corrupted version of the Elixir of Life. Though she achieves immortality, the Lahmian queen is left with a terrible thirst for human blood. She eventually passes the curse to others, creating the race of Vampires.

-1500 to -1350

Nagash realises that used in small quantities warpstone can be a powerful aid to his dark sorcery. Lacking followers he begins to experiment with corpses and skeletons and succeeds in animating them. He uses his Undead slaves to excavate mines beneath Cripple Peak and to create Nagashizzar, the Cursed Pit, a giant underground fortress full of alchemical laboratories, barracks, foundries and armouries. Dust and slag from the mines soon turns the land all about to waste, creating the Desolation of Nagash. Primitive human tribesmen start to worship him as a god and this eventually leads to their devolution into the corpse-eating race of Ghouls. Within a few hundred years Nagash has built a powerful empire round the shores of the Sour Sea.



-1350 to -1250

The Skaven are drawn by the huge mass of warpstone at Cripple Peak and launch a war against Nagash, but the Great Necromancer is now so powerful that his legions drive them back. Eventually a settlement is reached between Nagash and the Council of Thirteen. The Skaven lure several tribes of Orcs and Goblins into the Cursed Pit in return for warpstone mined below Cripple Peak.

-1222

A great earthquake exposes a rich seam of gromril within the Misty Mountains. Nagash forges his fabled armour from an alloy of this gromril and lead.



c.-1200 to -1170

The rulers of Lahmia become aware of the Great Necromancer's presence and send emissaries to him. Rumour of this reaches the Priest Kings who have not taken the Dark Path, and the followers of Nagash are defeated and driven out by an alliance led by the Priest King Alcadizaar the Conqueror. King Alcadizaar besieges Lahmia and drives out the Vampires. They return for a time at the head of Nagash's army before scattering.

-1163 to -1152

Nagash declares war upon the Priest Kings. Alongside other foul creatures, the Vampires lead Nagash's armies. The Priest Kings are united under King Alcadizaar, and his formidable leadership defeats Nagash's first assault. The Vampire W'soran stays with Nagash and dares his wrath, whilst the other Vampires flee to escape the Great Necromancers anger.

Nagash unleashes a plague upon the land. His own Undead forces are immune to the foul magic but the folk of the land die in droves. A new army of freshly-raised Undead invades the lands of the Priest Kings, sweeping all before them. Alcadizaar is brought in chains to Nagashizzar to be tormented by Nagash.

-1151

The Great Ritual. After consuming prodigious amounts of warpstone Nagash begins the Ritual of the Waking. Sensing the danger they are in, the Skaven free King Alcadizaar, who cuts down Nagash and flees with his Crown of Sorcery. However, many of the Undead raised by the Great Ritual remain animated, spreading terror wherever they go.

-1150
W'soran quits Nagashizzar with a cabal of Nagash's priests and one of the Great Necromancers spell books.

-1147
The body of Alcadizaar is discovered floating in the Blind River by Kadon, who wrests the Crown of Sorcery from the dead priest king's grasp. Possessed by the spirit of Nagash, the shaman founds the city of Mourkain – meaning Place of Death – atop Alcadizzars burial mound.

-1122
W'soran gives the Blood Kiss to his apprentices so that they may continue to aid him in his studies for eternity.

-1020
Ushoran arrives in Mourkain, drawn by the power of the Crown of Sorcery. He usurps Kadon and assumes control of the city, founding the kingdom of Strigos.

-c.600
Vorag Bloodymoth unites the scattered tribes of Ghouls that lurk below Cripple Peak and becomes the first and only Ghoul King. The vast and undisciplined army under his command quickly overruns and all but destroys the Red Cloud Goblin tribe. The survivors of the tribe are enslaved and forced to build the Fortress of Vorag to the east of the Plain of Bones. Vorag turns on the Grey Hag Goblin tribe, who are forced to retreat into their mountain lair. While besieging the Goblin lair Vorag is struck by a well-aimed shot from a Goblin bolt thrower and killed. Leaderless, the Ghouls scatter and make their way back to Cripple Peak. The fortress of Vorag is forgotten and falls into ruin.

-326
The Dwarf city of Silver Pinnacle is invaded and conquered by Neferata, former queen of Lahmia.

-250
The kingdom of Strigos reaches its height and Ushoran calls upon the Vampires of the old world to join with him. Neferata spurns his invitation, desiring secrecy for Vampire-kind, and uses her influence to incite the men of the surrounding regions to attack Strigos.

-223
Melkhior, one of W'soran's students, slays his master and takes the Book of Nagash from his vault.

c.-200
Mourkain is sacked by Orcs and Goblins led by Warboss Garsnag Craktoof, and its people scattered, butchered, or enslaved. Ushoran is destroyed while defending the gates, by the Orc shaman known as Dork Redeye. The surviving Strigoi Vampires are driven into the wilds and their people scatter, eventually devolving into the Ghoul Kings.



-40
Nagash is reborn exactly 1.III years after he was destroyed.

He attempts to force the Tomb Kings to obey his orders, but they rebel, and under the leadership of the Tomb King Settra force him to retreat to Nagashizzar. Upon his arrival, Nagash finds his fortress overrun by the Skaven, and drives them all out in a single night. Over the next three decades numerous Skaven counter-attacks are repelled by Nagash's forces.

-30
Nagash forges his Iron Hand.

1 to 15
Nagash returns from his crypt in Nagashizzar to rebuild his empire of the dead. He discovers that the Crown of Sorcery is now in the possession of Morath. He travels north to reclaim his crown, but Morath is defeated by Sigmar before Nagash can retrieve the crown. Nagash raises a huge Undead army and attacks the newly-founded Empire of Sigmar, and several Vampires return from their exile to fight alongside him. At the Battle of the River Reik, Nagash is slain by the man-god and the Vampires flee into hiding once more, pursued by the warriors of Sigmar.

16
Krell, the only survivor of Nagash's army, is defeated at the Battle of Glacier Lake and imprisoned in a magical tomb.

253
Abhorash slays a Dragon in the World's Edge Mountains and drinks its blood, curing himself of his Blood Thirst forever. His followers spread across the world seeking to emulate their master.

876
Norse raiders on the way to Lustria capture an Empire merchant ship and unwittingly take on board the hotly of the Vampire, Janitor Harkon.

When the ship arrives in Lustria the entire crew has been turned into Undead. Luthor shipwrecks vessels and raises their crews, creating a fleet of Zombie pirate vessels that terrorise the eastern coast of Lustria. The place gains an evil reputation and becomes known as the Vampire Coast.

1111 to 1116
The Black Death unleashed by the Skaven wipes out three-quarters of the Empire's population. Skaven erupt from their hidden tunnel systems and overrun the land. After a shower of warpstone shards falls in Sylvanis, the Necromancer Frederick Van Hal (later Vanhel) raises an army made of dead plague victims with the aid of the mysterious Prince Vladimir and fights off the Skaven invaders.

1112 to 1124
Vanhel builds the fortress of Vanhaldenschlosse and carves out a powerful Undead empire. Over the following decade Vanhel, the remnants of the Empire, and the Skaven fight a prolonged war against each other. The fighting ends when Vanhel is assassinated by his apprentice and his Undead horde crumbles. The Skaven, weakened by their war with Vanhel, are driven back underground by Count Mandred Skavenslayer.

1207 to 1244
Dieter Helsicht is discovered to be a Necromancer and driven out of the Empire city of Middenheim. He escapes to the Forest of Shadows where he raises a large Undead army and attacks the Empire. He annihilates one Empire army that is sent to stop him, but is deflated at the Battle of Beeckerhaven by a combined Empire and Kislevite force. Dieter's body is never recovered.



1454
The Duke of Aquitaine returns from the crusades as a Vampire. Known as the Red Duke, he is defeated at Ceren Field, pierced by the king's own lance, and his body magically entombed.



1681
The Night of the Restless Dead. Nagash returns to life once again, 1,666 years after he was slain by Sigmar. For one night, throughout the known world, the dead stir and walk the land, sowing terror and confusion amongst the living. Many Vampires come out of hiding and wage war to increase their domains. Countless villages and towns are overrun before the night of terror ends. In the aftermath, Sylvania gains its independence from Stirland.

1750
Nourgul the Necrarch razes all the land between the Irrana Mountains and the Southern Sea in what the Estarians call the War of Blood. After a month-long siege of Magritta, he enters the temple of Myrmidia to steal the Tome of Wisdom. His ashes are later found beside it.


1797
A Red Dawn. Vlad von Carstein becomes the first Vampire Count of Sylvania, and marries Countess Isabella von Drak. Over the following two centuries, the remaining aristocratic families of the region are infected with the curse of Vampirism.

1887
Walach Harkon, student of Abhorash, arrives at Blood Keep. In one night he defeats their best warriors, slaughtering the unworthy. He spares a few and turns them into Vampires, forming the legendary Ordo Draconis – known to the superstitious folk of the Empire as the Blood Dragons or Blood Knights.

1932
The Red Duke is freed by his disciples and once more wages war on Aquitaine. His army is again deflated at Ceren Field, and the Red Duke flees to the sanctuary of the Forest of Chalons. None know if he dwells there still.

1943
Witch hunter Gunther van Hel assaults Blood Keep with an army drawn from several imperial provinces.

1946
Blood Keep finally falls to siege. Walach Harkon and several of his followers escape the pursuing forces of the Empire.

2000
A warpstone meteor destroys the city of Mordheim. Vlad von Carstein sends agents to the ruined city to secure warpstone shards with which he can power his magic. Vlad plans to use the Warpstone to aid him in summoning a legion of the Undead.

2010
On Geheimnisnacht (the night of the Day of Mystery), Vlad von Carstein raises an army of the dead, and the Wars of the Vampire Counts begin. He devastates Ostermark, and his armies rampage between Stirland and the northern border.

2014 to 2015
Vlad attacks Middenheim and is slain by Jerek Kruger, Grand Master of the White Wolf, but returns to Middenheim within the year and butchers Jerek Kruger and his knights.

2051
Vlad von Carstein is slain at the Siege of Altdorf, and Isabella commits suicide rather than carry on without him. The Vampire Counts fight amongst themselves over who is to be the next Count of Sylvania and their Undead army splinters into separate feuding forces.

2053
Fritz von Carstein attacks Middenheim and is destroyed in the battle.

2056
A string of deaths amongst the nobles of Nuln is blamed on the Undead, creating a Vampire panic that results in the beheadings of several innocents.

2057
Fritz and Pieter von Carstein, two of Vlad's get, besiege Middenheim and Nuln, respectively, in attempts to prove themselves. A silver-tipped arrow ends Fritz before he can cause much harm to the City of the Wolf. Pieter is more successful, butchering many before he is slain by a descendant of Vanhel the Necromancer, Helmut van Hel, who seeks to redress his forefather's sins.

2058 to 2059
Konrad von Carstein leads an army of Wights into the Moot and ravages several villages. He is forced to return to Sylvania when Hans von Carstein takes up residence in Drakhof Castle and claims the rulership of Sylvania. Konrad von Carstein kills Hans von Carstein during a quarrel.

2059-2063
In the aftermath of a minor battle within the Great Mountains, the Necromancer Hessel the Vanquisher scours the fresh burial grounds for mostly intact Empire soldiers. He uses these first undead warriors to initiate years of constant war in the region. Each battle provides ever more Empire corpses for his growing retinue of Ghouls and Horrors to feast upon. A substantial force that marches out of Kislev finally brings him down.

2092
Helmut van Hal, witch hunter of the Empire, leads a force of Stirlanders over the border of Sylvania. He burns the villages of Dechstein, and Lichenheim, and slays Pieter von Carstein as he rests in the crypt of Castle Sterniente.

2094
Mannfred von Carstein leaves Sylvania and travels south. Konrad von Carstein begins his bloody reign over Sylvania.

2095
Konrad leads his forces against the Empire, attacking Stirland, Averland, Reikland and Ostermark in a series of bloody campaigns.

2100
Konrad's rampage is stopped by a union of armies from Stirland, Marienburg and Reikland, aided by Dwarfs send by the High King of Karaz-a-Karak. After the Battle of Four Armies, Count Helmut is nearly elected as Emperor until it is discovered that he is in fact a Zombie controlled by Konrad von Carstein.

2101
Konrad leads a lightning series of attacks across Stirland, Hochland and Middenland, but eventually his army is so depleted that he must return to Sylvania to regather his strength.

2105
Konrad replenishes his ranks by sending agents to kidnap several nobles from neighbouring Stirland and Ostermark and then turning them into Vampires.

2107
Konrad's captive Necromancers raise another army, which the Vampire Count leads into the Empire in an attempt to seize Averheim,

2108 to 2121
The Undead of Sylvania continue to plague Ostermark, Stirland and Middenheim, though Konrad himself is rarely seen. When the Blood Count does take command of the armies, a series of impulsive assaults against Imperial castles sees the Undead horde repelled several times. Konrad is finally defeated by a combined Empire and Dwarf army at the battle of Grim Moor. He is slain by Grufbad, the Dwarf hero, and Elector Count Helmar.

2122
Mannfred returns to Sylvania and takes undisputed rule over the von Carsteins. He bides his time and builds alliances with the Vampires beyond the borders of Sylvania, including the Sisters of the Silver Pinnacle.

2124 to 2145
The forces of the Empire and Mannfred's Undead army fight over the dozen battles in an attempt to gain a decisive superiority. After two decades of sporadic war, Mannfred is finally forced to retreat back to Sylvania by a combined army of Empire troops.

2132
Mannfred von Carstein launches a surprise attack against the Empire when it is in the grip of vicious civil war. He almost succeeds in capturing Altdorf, but is thwarted by the Grand Theogonist of Sigmar, Kurt III.

2133 Mannfred besieges Marienburg but is forced to withdraw by an army from Altdorf.

2145
Determined to end the threat of the Vampire Counts once and for all, the various factions of the Empire unite and, along with their Dwarf allies, scour the dark forests of Sylvania. Mannfred is finally brought to bay at Hel Fenn, where he is defeated and his Undead army destroyed.

2158
Gottlieb the Stern leads the Cleansing of Sylvania, hoping to prevent the von Carsteins from ever returning.

2212
After the Yellow Plague strikes Stirland, the county's burial grounds become choked with bloated corpses, many of which are brave soldiers from The Order of the Raven Knights. The Vampire Auvel Blakeep sends a cohort of Crypt Scavengers to resurrect their corpses from the Garden of Morr in Siegfriedhof. However, Blakeep is denied his due, the graves are later found to be empty, and neither the knights nor the Crypt Scavengers are ever seen again.

2245
In a Garden of Morr in Wissenland, the spells of the Necromancer Bogdan Mallesh go badly wrong. To his horror he discovers that the graves have long since been empty, and in their place a Priest of Morr has set warded traps. Mallesh's spells trigger these wards, and the dark practitioner and his minions become imprisoned forever within one of the ancient mausoleums. To this day none dare enter the garden.



2300
Duke Maidred of Moussillon is slain by the Red Pox and the city falls into decay. No Duke claims the castle or its lands and the Undead walk amongst the ruins.

2304 to 2305
The forces of Ostermark fight several battles with the Undead hordes of Waldakir Rahtep, before the Vampire is eventually slain by Captain Stefan von Kessel.

2380
The Necromancer Fenryl Xandu and his ghoulish servants penetrate nearly all the Gardens of Morr along the southern borders of the Empire. He creates a spell in each one so that, on the very next Geheimnisnacht, every corpse rises up in a shambling wave of horror. The following year is known as the Year of the Dead. The armies of the Empire are forced to fight skirmishes in every town in order to defeat the corpse uprising.

2450
Rumours abound in the taverns of Kislev concerning a large horde of zombies that is encroaching into the country's borderlands. Captain Bulkar musters a large force in order to investigate. However, they arrive to be confronted with the dead of their own countrymen and Bulkar faces his own deceased brother, thought peacefully buried and safe in the company of Morr. Their ensuing uncertainty and unease is enough to see the powerful Vampire Vikkir Rakkash cast his minions forward with great success. Before the sun has set, the two armies are united in undeath.

2491
Heinrich Kemmler, otherwise known as the Lichemaster, finds the burial mound of the dread hero Krell and raises the Chaos Champion back to life. At the head of a powerful Undead horde the two sweep down from the Grey Mountains into Bretonnia, burning and pillaging as they go, in a wild battle at la Maisontaal Abbey their army suffers such heavy casualties that they are forced to retreat back into the Grey Mountains, it can only be a matter of time before they return at the head of a new Undead army...

2503
Mannfred von Carstein is resurrected.



2505
Itinerant poet and adventurer Felix Jaeger claims to meet Mannfred von Carstein in Drakenhof Castle.

2506 to 2518
In an ironic repeat of history, Melkhior's apprentice, Zacharias, attempts to steal the Book of Nagash from his master but is thwarted. Melkhior awakens and drives Zacharias from his tower, pursuing him across the Old World. Zacharias eventually hides in the Middle Mountains. There, he slays a Black Dragon and uses the beast's carcass as a mount, returning the Melkhior's tower. A battle between the forces of master and apprentice ensues with Zacharias the victor. Melkhior is defeated and Zacharias takes possession of the accursed Book of Nagash.

2512
The Ghoul Swarms blight Stirland.

2520
Following rumours of activity in Drakenhof Castle, Grand Theogonist Volkmar despatches the Witch Hunter, Gunther Stahlberg to investigate. He is never heard from again.

c.2522
Nyklaus von Carstein, tired of the infighting of his peers, uses shadow magic to translocate his entire castle into the fabled nautical realms of the Galleon's Graveyard. There he becomes Count Noctilus, terror of the seas and command of the fabled Dreadfleet. He is hunted down and killed in his lair by a confederation of pirate lords led by the vengeful Captain Roth.

2522
Rumours begin to circulate in Stirland that Castle Drakenhof is once again inhabited by the Undead. Screams can be heard upon the winds and even more people are going missing. The Witch Hunters grow increasingly frantic as the name Nagash is once again whispered in the shadowed corners of the Old World.

From atop the ruined tower of the keep Walach, Grand Master of the Order of the Blood Dragons, gazed into the night. He stood alone, deep in thought, his iron will turned inwards, his mind travelling the dark paths of the distant past.

Memories flickered past him like corpse-candles. He still recalled the dimness of his human senses. He wondered what it would be like to breathe again, to feel the blood flow through his veins. What the world would look like if observed through the limited senses of a living man. How much more he could see and hear now. The night was full of sounds and shapes. He saw how the swirling mists of dark magic enveloped the Blood Keep like a shroud, forming nightmarish images. He could hear the howls of the wolves in the mountains, a hundred miles from the point where he was standing. Yes, he could hear and see everything.



As his fingers touched the blade of his ancient sword, memories flowed back. So many had died by that sword. He remembered the glory of the great wars of old. Blood had flowed like wine then. He had slain innumerable foes: Dwarf lords. Elven princes. Counts of the Empire, all had fallen before the might of his sword. 'Good times,' he thought.

But other memories were not so pleasant. He also remembered the day when the Templars of the White Wolf had broke down the gates of the Blood Keep. Mikael, his favourite son, was impaled by a fanatical warrior-priest of Sigmar. Aurora. His chosen bride, had been beheaded by the Reiksmarshal during the battle before he could intervene. His mailed fingers curled round the hilt of his crimson sword. 'One day!' he thought. 'Vengeance will be mine. I have all eternity to wait.' And indeed he had. He was immortal. There would be time enough.

Walach turned back to the balcony door, and stepped into the dim, reddish glow of the torches. The great feasting hall of the Order was full. Wight warriors stood on guard, while the sixteen undying immortals, the last of his Vampire knights and their unearthly-beautiful brides sat around the great table. In the dim light of the ruined hall their eyes glittered with an unspeakable hunger. For tonight was the night of the Blood Feast. As one they turned to face him and bowed. Walach motioned them to continue their revelries and took his place at the head of the feasting table.

The hall was filled with eerie sounds as the wail of Banshees carried from the dungeons. While their howls would bring death instantly to any living man, for an immortal Vampire their cries were sweet music, filled with the lonely beauty of the cold grave. At a single word from Walach, the room fell silent. The Blood Chalice, the great relic of the Vampiric Order, was brought to him by his loyal servants. He grasped the ancient cup with both hands, and drank deep. An overwhelming sensation, pain more severe than a swordblade, ecstasy more potent than anything human senses could endure, flowed through his body. He felt power and exultation fill him. He was god-like, invincible, deadly. As he passed the Blood Chalice on, he studied his Undead knights as they drank. The ancient vows of Brotherhood were exchanged as the chalice had passed from one hand to another. The splendour of the armour and the coats of arms of his knights echoed their past glories, strengthening his belief that there was no power in the world to oppose him.

His warriors had gathered. The standard of the Blood Dragon would fly above his armies once more. He would break the backs of the mortal lords of this world. For who could stand against him? There were no more true warriors left on this world. He had fought and defeated the greatest of them during times past, when being a warrior meant something. Now the world was old and there were no heroes left. The old races of Dwarfs and Elves had grown weak, while the humans had become soft, decadent, and lazy. And Walach's strength had but grown over the years. Now was the time of reckoning. Now was the time of war.



THE BLOODLINES

All the Vampires of the Old World are descendants of the First Children, the five original Vampires who drank the Elixir of Life: Neferata, Vashanesh, W'soran, Ushoran, and Abhorash. Each passed on their strengths and beliefs to their children-in-darkness, in their blood and in their teachings, and they in turn passed it to their own get. In the thousands of years that followed, the bloodlines have mingled, been polluted, and bred countless variations on the pure forms of the original scions. Whilst some scholars of Vampirism claim that there are five distinct species, or families, there are a great many more varieties that transcend such convenient limits. Those who have seen one Vampire cannot therefore think to know them all. Yet there is one thing that unites them; they are all, without exception, the deadliest of foes.

History records two other members of the First Children: Maatmeses, the very fat and very corrupt chief justice and Harakhte, the brilliant and sinister court vizier. After the betrayal of Nagash, however, they were not heard of again. Most believe they were killed by Nagash, but it is also possible they journeyed elsewhere and created their own lines. Marco Polare's writings of Cathay include legends of immortal eunuch sorcerers that drink the souls of men, and there are tales from the jungles of Ind and the Southlands about mad priests who tear out men's hearts to feed to their dark Gods. Perhaps these are the children of Maatmeses and Harakhte; perhaps one day they may pay a visit to their cousins.

THE BLOOD DRAGONS – KNIGHTS ETERNAL

To be a Blood Dragon is to seek perfect mastery of the art of combat. All else is secondary. The other bloodlines care for other things, little things, such as conquest, power, or mastery of magic. The Dragons are beyond such petty concerns. They believe not in a nation or a leader but solely in the purity of their quest. They seek to become the ultimate warriors, to transcend even the pre-eminent nature of the Vampire and become something like Gods. And if that path requires the slaughter of a hundred, or a thousand, or a million, then so be it. Blades must be tested, after all.

History

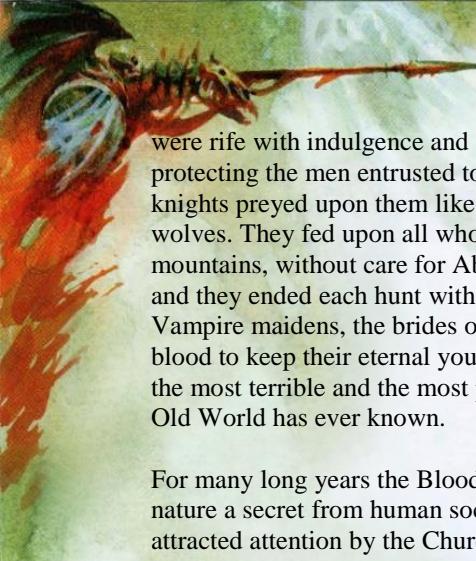
Of the Blood Dragons, many became infamous in the kingdoms of Men. Soon after Abhorash underwent his transformation, he disappeared, leaving his men with no particular idea how to follow his example. So it was Abhorash's favourite lieutenant, Walach Harkon, who gave the Blood Dragons a structure to their goal. Soon after Abhorash's disappearance, he travelled north, to the land which men called the Empire. Walach came upon a small fortress in the Grey Mountains, northwest of Nuln. Known as Blood Keep, it was home to the Ordo Draconis, an ancient and respected order of Sigmarite knights whose banner was a black drake on a red field. To Walach, there could be no clearer sign.

Once the knights of the Ordo Draconis were the noblest of the Knightly Orders of the Empire, respected by all as its defenders. Their great fortress-monastery, the Blood Keep, guarded the passes to Bretonnia and was famed for the strength of its walls and valour of its defenders. But as the Tome of Lamentations tells, one night a man of great stature and noble bearing appeared at their gates and demanded to, join the Order. He announced that he was Walach of the Harkon family and when he was admitted inside the doom of the Order was at hand.

Walach entered Blood Keep and challenged the entire Order of Templars to single combat. One by one he slew the knights and their men-at-arms. In the morning, all those he considered weak were dead and raised as Wights, whilst the strongest and most skilful had been given the Blood Kiss and gifted the curse of immortality. These reborn knights pledged their unives to Walach, their new grand master, and the Knights of the Blood Dragons were born. Soon the Undead knights ruled a kingdom of terror.

There was much in the knightly life to suit the Vampires' quest. The devotion to a higher cause gave focus to their training and testing. However, they valued no lives save their own, had no borders to protect, and were full of Abhorash's disdain for humanity. So it was not long before their knightly ways





were rife with indulgence and excess. Instead of protecting the men entrusted to them, the Vampire knights preyed upon them like a pack of voracious wolves. They fed upon all who travelled in the mountains, without care for Abhorash's old statutes, and they ended each hunt with a banquet of blood. The Vampire maidens, the brides of the Knights, bathed in blood to keep their eternal youth. The Order became the most terrible and the most powerful warriors the Old World has ever known.

For many long years the Blood Knights kept their true nature a secret from human society, but eventually they attracted attention by the Church of Sigmar, due to reports of people going missing during the night. Soon enough, the corruption of the Ordo Draconis was discovered by the Witch Hunter Gunther Van Hal. Four entire Empire Templar Orders mustered to destroy the Vampire knights, eager to prove their prowess and virtue. Together, they besieged Blood Keep. For three long years the Vampire Order held out until their gates were finally breached and their keep was set on fire. Faced with overwhelming force, the Vampire knights were forced to abandon their ancestral home. They were hunted by Templars and Witch Hunters alike and it was believed that all of them had perished. The Blood Keep fell into ruin and its evil legacy was all but forgotten.

The Empire believed the darkness had passed. The truth was different. Though the Knights of Blood Keep are by far the most famous of the Vampire warriors, they are by no means the only sons of Abhorash. Many of the Vampires survived the destruction of the keep and took its spirit and ideas with them out into the world. When their fortress-monastery was razed, the Knights of the Blood Dragon became separated from each other. They fled their pursuers and went to the



lands of Bretonnia, Estalia, Tilea and beyond to establish domains of their own. Some walked the world alone, whilst others formed their own orders and carried on the traditions of Walach – or their own variation upon them.

Society and Outlook

The Blood Dragons are the most irregular and haphazard of all the bloodlines. It is made up of individuals or small groups, each with their own versions of the code of the Dragons, each having little or no contact with the others, and what contact they have is often hostile. If it were not for their iron discipline, the Dragons would have descended into internal conflict long ago. Perhaps, too, they are held in check by Abhorash's parting promise that he would be watching them.

The unifying characteristics of the Blood Dragons are few, but they are indelible. All the Dragons swear by Abhorash's credo: to seek to master their mind and body through mastering the art of mortal combat. This single goal dominates their every thought and action, a

Night Ride

The moonlight hit his skin like ice water, fresh from a winter rain barrel. He remembered, dimly, that there had been a time when the sun's first rays at dawn had felt similarly invigorating, but that was a long time ago, and besides, he'd been alive – or something like it.

As he galloped through the forest, he ran the word over his tongue again. Alive. It was worse than a joke. It was a cruel deception, a bawd's trick, as if the Gods and their popinjay priests were shysters on the streets of Altdorf – to call that living and, worse, to presume to call this a death. He felt the strength in his muscles as he stood high in the stirrups, strength beyond anything he had ever had, even in his first blush of manhood. He tasted the cool night, savoured the wind in his hair, the smell of the horse's flank, the tantalising tang of battle to come. He felt more alive now than he ever could have imagined. There was a time, he remembered again, when he had longed to ride into battle, to lose himself in the slaughter, free from all concerns but that immediate struggle of kill or be killed. But as he now was, it seemed most every moment was like that. Even without a present challenge of arms, he felt rich with glory, and the thunder of hooves and drums hammered in his heart even when the battles were long passed.

Dead, they might call him, Daemon too, or abomination, but truly, he was beyond such distinctions. Alive or dead, he was a knight. A true and pure creature of battle, with a blood of steel and a soul – if he had ever had such a thing once, he knew he did now – of martial fire. He was a sword made flesh, a master of combat, a storm of destruction and defeat. And there was battle ahead, and he rode hard to meet it, a smile spreading fast across his lips and death coming fast in his wake.



fact that causes the other bloodlines to think the Dragons terribly dull and single minded. However, that they have little desire to conquer or to rule does not mean they cannot do these things. Should the need arise, they can raise armies and rain down dark magic as well as any of their brethren.

And their singular pursuit makes them no less an enemy of humanity. The Blood Dragons are perhaps the most disdaining of all the bloodlines because they see a great potential in Human abilities, a potential that goes wasted again and again, lost in weakness and stupidity. For other Dragons, Human existence is not even worth their consideration – it is not unusual for a Blood Dragon to slaughter an entire village simply to test the new edge on his blade or ride down a hundred men to practice a new technique. To the Blood Dragons, every Human in the world can be broken down into two categories: a worthy opponent or a training dummy. The only time a Dragon might show mercy is if he encountered an opponent who has great potential to one day be a worthy opponent; it may be better to let such a mortal become something interesting rather than snuff him out with the rest of the vermin.

Despite their aloof nature and singular obsession, even the Dragons sometimes attract followers. If a Blood Dragon finds fame with his particular approach to the quest or a devastating new combat style, others may flock to imitate and learn. So it is that new orders spring up or take root in already existing orders or organisations.

"If there be Gods, then they must smile to see their gifts so well used. If there are not, then I am surely the closest thing to them. Life and death are mine to deal, to those whom I consider worthy of each."

Lady Sigismunda, guardian of the Ferlangen Pass

The Blood Dragon Oath

The original oath, apparently dictated by Abhorash to his followers after his battle with the wyrm, is short and simple, reading as follows:

"Let your blade be your only truth, let death be your only answer, and let your quest be for nought but to become more than what you are."

This oath is still sworn by most Blood Dragons when they receive the Kiss, but its wording allows much variation of interpretation, and it is even broken outright by some. Many Blood Dragons, for example, do not in fact use swords (those from Breton typically favour the lance instead), and each one has his own idea about exactly what being "more" means for them. It also offers no specific admonishing of drinking blood, nor any demand for exterminating the Human race, so the zeal for these goals also varies. All Blood Dragons agree, however, on letting death be their only answer. Whatever their final goal, it most certainly involves a vast amount of killing.

The infamous Red Duke of Aquitaine was such a creature, beginning as a lone knight but ending up with an entire army at his command, both mortal and immortal, as word of his martial skill spread across Bretonnia. This mighty and fell Vampire Lord rose in the land of Bretonnia, and only after the fierce and bloody Battle of Ceren Fields did the ruler of Aquitaine vanquish his Undead legions. But though his army was destroyed, the Red Duke escaped and many believe that he still lurks in the mountains or trackless forests of Bretonnia.

The Knights of Irrana were a mortal order of Estalian knights until their grand master concluded that the techniques of Abhorash far outstripped those of Myrmidia and brought his whole unit into the darkness to join him. And there are many more such groups, small and large.

The rest are lone hunters, renegades and vagabond knights who roam the Old World alone and unaided. And who can say where else Blood Dragons can be found? How many matchless assassins hide ivory skin and the fangs of predators-behind their masks? How many knights of the secluded Templar Orders are, in reality, immortal creatures of darkness? Sometimes they are found guarding remote bridges or fords, testing all who would cross in mortal combat. Others live an austere existence in high mountain fortresses or secret caves, perhaps training those who have the tenacity to seek them out or perhaps just killing them for food. Alternately, they may hide amongst Humans, mixing with the noble classes or slipping amongst the ranks of knightly or monastic orders. A Blood Dragon will be anyone as long as it allows him to practice his swordplay and feed when needed. In the blood-soaked fields and streets of the Old World, the Blood Dragons can hide easily, and after the sinister Lahmians, are the most difficult of all the bloodlines to uncover. Only the glow of their eyes hints at the hunger that rages in their blood.

Isolation is not just a practical issue. Many Blood Dragons believe it is necessary to truly follow the example of Abhorash. In isolation, the knight can discover his true strength and in solitude perhaps find moments of peace from the rage burning in his heart. Such moments are rare, though, for the Blood Dragon is by nature a creature of turmoil, ruled by base desires yet driven to rise above them. It is an enduring testament to the incredible will of the Blood Dragons that so few of them succumb to insanity.

It is their isolation that is their sole weaknesses, however. Without the support of their fellow Dragons or armies of the Undead, a large body of men can sometimes overcome one of them if the Humans are cunning and plan well. The Dragons are not stupid, however, and the worst – and last – mistake a mortal can make is to underestimate what Blood Dragons can and are willing to do.

Unlike the pernicious Vampire Lords of Sylvania, the Blood Dragons never attempt to gain supremacy over entire nations. Nor do they try to raise huge armies, preferring forces consisting of Wight men-at-arms to act as hideous parodies of the retinues of mortal nobles. The principles and ideals of the Blood Dragons are more concerned with the martial prowess of individuals, rather than with attempting to create empires. But when challenged to come to war, the Blood Dragons are terrible in their wrath. Though less powerful than many other lords of Undeath in the art of necromancy, they can still summon Undead hordes to fight for them, and their prowess in combat is second to none.

Feeding and Breeding

The Dragon's discipline allows him to go longer periods than his brethren without feeding, but all except his vanished leader must still partake of blood to survive. However, the Dragons are so steeped in death that this is not something they find difficult. They are well named, for the Blood Dragons are rarely far from freshly spilled blood, and after a Blood Dragon has struck, few are left alive to care that he drinks the blood of his victims before passing on. The Dragons have little fear of exposure anyway, for there are so few who can challenge them. Let the watch, or the soldiers, or the Vampire hunters come—the Blood Dragon can always use more practice.

"A Blood Dragon should strive for excellence in all matters, but especially in the martial pursuits. Countless knights and warriors have I bested in battle, and many more come in hopes of slaying me each year. Unlike them, the passage of the ages strengthens me. You can never know what it is to know with certainty that one's skill with blade and bow increases year upon year, instead of deteriorating into middle age, dotage, and eventually death. That in itself is reason enough to give up mortal life and take up the eternal challenge of immortality."

Sir Holbein of Blood Keep, Blood Dragon Champion

Unlike all the other bloodlines, Dragons typically find the practice of feeding upon willing suppliers to be decadent and perverse, the kind of thing that leads to taking too much pleasure in the feeding. There is nothing wrong with momentarily relishing the strength that blood provides, but most reject anything more as deterring them from their quest. Blood Dragons will also not lower themselves to the level of the Strigoi, who feed on vermin or the dead.

This is not simply a matter of pride. Men are above animals, so their blood is more potent; Dragons are above men, so their blood is the most potent of all. Therefore, Blood Dragons often seek out the blood of creatures that may be greater than men, in the hope of getting some element of what Abhorash gained from the Dragon. For some this involves eating nobles, or great heroes, or the ancient Elves. Others travel far to drink the blood of great creatures such as Griffons, Wyverns, or Giants. Meloch the Giant Killer is said to sate his thirst for a century – and grow ever stronger – with each Giant he kills.

The Blood Dragons do not view their need to feed as an affliction but rather a passing need, like the need to sharpen a sword or water a horse. Just as they would not trust a knight who does not care for his weapons, they will also not grant the Blood Kiss to one who could not be trusted with the responsibility of feeding appropriately. However, what is considered appropriate varies greatly; some believe whilst they thirst, filling their cup is their lordly due, whilst others see the smallest sip a shameful reminder of their continuing failure. Note, however, the latter types have no problem with reaping mortal lives like so much wheat, only with drinking their blood afterwards. The former is a sign of strength, the latter a sign of weakness.



Far more important than their attitude to feeding is a prospective child-of-darkness' dedication to the art of war. The Dragons seek out only the most exceptional of warriors to receive the Kiss. They must be both incredibly skilled and extremely dedicated to their craft, those who make even their fellow warriors uncomfortable or weary with their endless obsession. Beyond that, however, there are no conditions—the art of war makes no distinction on nationality, creed, or gender. To measure the true calibre of a likely candidate, they often face them down in mortal combat. Those who survive are taken on as a squire and student, and if they continue to show promise, they will be brought into un-life.

There are exceptions. Trusted servants or long-time companions are sometimes given the Kiss, so they may continue to stand alongside the Vampire as the centuries pass. Occasionally, a Blood Dragon falls in love and gives his beloved the Kiss, so they will not part. Should the others of his line discover that a Dragon has abandoned his quest out of love or other worldly concerns, they remove the fallen knight from their order. However, due to their careful selection processes and their diligent self-regulation, this is a rare occurrence.

Indeed, the Blood Dragons are the most discerning of all the bloodlines in whom they choose to make their get and are by far the most sparing. To become a Blood Dragon is to take up the most sacred honour and the most demanding pursuit. Let the other bloodlines fill the world with their imperfect, inbred children. The Blood Dragons have no need for such endless families, nor any lesser brethren to be their servants. They need nothing but themselves, and so they take nothing but the very best.



Designs and Stratagems

The blood of Harkon Vampires makes them swordsmen without equal, for their sire was the greatest of the warriors of ancient Nehekhar. But this power does not come without a price – it also makes them obsessed with their prowess at arms. Their entire being is devoted to war and death. Their way is the way of the sword, each one striving to become the perfect warrior. Each competes against the others and every word uttered carries a hidden challenge. Without their iron discipline the Blood Dragons would soon succumb to anarchy. Indeed many of them become so obsessed with perfecting the craft of death that they leave their stronghold and wander the world, seeking challenges to test their martial prowess.

Many Blood Dragons live a relatively remote, hermetic life, but there is one demand they all must acknowledge, the need for opponents. Training can only do so much; ultimately, the only way to acquire true mastery of the martial arts is to face another warrior in mortal combat. Blood Dragons strive for perfection and practice different fighting styles unceasingly. But the rage inside them rarely gives them peace.

Blood Keep was perfectly located for the Vampire knights within, as it was situated on a mountain pass remote enough to escape great attention but busy enough to provide a ready supply of bodyguards and mercenaries to battle. Since its fall, other Dragons have sought out similar locations, but there are a limited amount of passes, fords, and bridges even in an Empire as large as Sigmar's. The alternative is to join or overtake a knightly order or group of soldiers. In the

The Bloody Grail

The history of the Knights of Bretonnia includes much that may be the influence of Blood Dragons or other Vampires. In 1813, Duke Merovech of Mousillon was censured by the king for his cruelty in keeping criminals impaled in his dining room.

The duke responded by challenging the king to single combat. Merovech won, tore out the king's throat and drank his blood from a goblet.

Horrified, the other lords waged war on Mousillon and annexed much of its land. Four hundred years later, Duke Maldred, lord of what remained, claimed to have found the Grail of the Lady and had all his knights drink from the wine that flowed from the heavy silver cup. The grail was proved false, and Maldred was routed and Mousillon prohibited from having a lord ever again. But the cup's liquid appeared to give Maldred's knights an unholy strength, and few Vampire hunters believe in coincidences.

Other knights also talk of being visited by the Lady of the Lake in their dreams, only this Lady is clad in dark robes and offers a grail full of blood-red wine, explaining that she must prepare the knights for the blood they soon will be called upon to spill in her name. Most do not drink. Most, but not all.



ideal case, the order will be remote from its command structure, so the Vampires can go decades without being discovered. They may even take orders from their officers and attend the battles and manoeuvres demanded of them. Who can say how many of the Empire's great victories were won only because the Blood Dragons were secretly amongst the troops?

Other Vampires hide amongst ranks of mortal soldiers. This is easier than it sounds, for soldiers are insular types and know a good fighter when they see one. If one of their number has fought well with them, they would be loath to complain if he occasionally takes a prisoner for his own uses. In these war-torn times, there are many mortal soldiers who do much the same, or worse, without any censure.

Of course, should the Vampires be discovered and marked for destruction, the Blood Dragons welcome yet another chance to test their skills. For individuals, this is just another sword fight, but for the more established societies or orders, this can be all-out war. Defending their domain represents the majority of the few times that the Blood Dragons actually ride out to war. The other occasions are typically due to a need to revenge an insult or to remind mortals of their place in the world.

Though they excel in many forms of warfare, their obsession with martial perfection and personal glory on the battlefield is often at the expense of the command of their army. They are also often lacking in necromantic powers, and even those who are so gifted seldom harness those abilities beyond summoning troops. They eschew the dark arts, just as they eschew gunpowder, considering them the weapons of cowards and fools. The Blood Dragons believe in what is solid and can be tested: the strength of steel, the power of muscle, and the courage of the heart. And time and again, they have proven this is all they need to win the day, and annihilate their enemies.

Now, centuries after the demise of their Order, men whisper that the Blood Keep is inhabited again and that immortal knights feast on human blood in its halls.

Once more the old legends of the knights that hunt for blood are told in hushed voices. In the cold catacombs beneath the Keep, the tombs of the heroes of the past are now once more resting places for Vampires.

Served by the Undead knights, the Vampires of the Harkon bloodline are a mighty force. Bound by the brotherhood of a hundred wars, these immortals have a loyal bond that goes far beyond that of any living knight. They still gather from all over the Old World in their great feasting hall once every hundred years, to perform the rites of the Brotherhood in a hideous parody of the holy feasts of the Templar Orders of the Old World. They drink blood from silver chalices and recite their ancient oaths of loyalty. They are proud, and rightly so: for there are no mightier warriors in the known world.

It is said that their lord Walach still commands them as the Grand Master of Ordo Draconis – the order of the Blood Dragon. Wherever the standard of the twin-headed blood dragon is seen, men grow desperate, for it is followed by a legion of Undead knights, commanded by immortal Vampires.

Lord Beliar was once a knight of the Blood Dragon Order. Since the fall of Blood keep he has travelled to all corners of the Old World, with the hope of finding an opponent who can test his martial skills.

Most opponents have been no match Lord Beliar's combat prowess and can now be seen accompanying him as Wight cavalry and Grave Guards. One such opponent though, did test his skill sufficiently. Baron Gruber was a knight from the realm of the Empire. As he lay on the edge of death, his heart pierced, Beliar decided to share his damnation with him. Gruber now fights at his master's side as a Vampire Thrall.

Beliar is not interested in conquering the land of the living. Instead he leads his retinue of Undead against all opponents in the hope that one day he will perfect his skulls and be able to rejoin his master, Abhorash.

Sir Lambert and the Red Knight

Lambert de Lillaz was riding along a narrow path in the very heart of the Forest of Chalons. Under the dense foliage the light of the day was reduced to a grey haze, but following the tracks by the one he was searching for was not difficult. It seemed that no attempt at all had been made to conceal them. Alas! What an arrogant villain this must be who did not fear the rightful vengeance of the knights of Bretonnia!

Only that morning, during this long quest for the grail, Lambert had passed through a woodcutter village at the edge of the forest. The poor men living there had pleaded with him to save them from the 'Red Knight of Chalon'. They told him in despair of how this terrible warrior had ridden into their village over the last four nights to abduct their sons and daughters. He was mounted on a huge, black warhorse and clad in a blood-red suit of armour. The device on his shield was that of a coiled, black Dragon on a red field. Lambert recognised him as one of the legendary Cursed Knights of the Grey Mountains. Certainly, he thought, it was a trial set by the Lady on his quest for the Grail, and so he had entered the dark forest.

In the dim light of the sunset, the path led him to a clearing, and there he was! Standing in the middle of the small glade, his opponent seemed to be waiting for him. His helm was on the ground, so Lambert could see the long mane of thin, black hair that contrasted so intensely with his pale complexion as well as with his crimson plate armour.



"I am Lambert de Lillaz, knight of Bretonnia. Mount your steed and prepare to fight. May the Lady give me the strength to strike you down and put an end to your evil deeds!" sounded the proud challenge of the Questing Knight.

After a few seconds of tense silence, the red knight spoke in a calm and confident voice. "You should not be so concerned about the fate of commoners, young Lambert. They are not worth what you are risking. This fight is meaningless, you have no hope of defeating me and I have no interest in such an uneven confrontation. Furthermore, I am already sated with the blood of those peasants and I do not need to take your life. Ride away boy."

What arrogance, though Lambert, a deep rage overcoming his reason. He lowered his lance and spurred his warhorse, charging the vampire, with a shout of 'For the Lady and the King!' The red knight did not move and Lambert's lance found its mark. The shaft shattered as the knight galloped by his opponent. The Bretonnian was immediately filled with a sense of triumph. Every opponent he had hit like that had been skewered and slain by the irresistible force of his lance. Nothing could withstand such a terrible Impact! Lambert halted his warhorse and turned it around.

The Vampire was still standing. The lance had penetrated his chest just under the collar bones and the tip was now protruding from below his shoulder blade. The creature turned slowly inwards Lambert, pulled the thick, wooden shaft out of his body and dropped it with an unnatural nonchalance. Only a very thin stream of blood trickled from his gaping wound. "A good jousting display, knight of Bretonnia. But I told you that you cannot win this combat. I will not repeat myself again. Now leave and live."

Lambert was astonished by the resilience of the Vampire, he felt a strong urge to flee as far as possible from such a powerful enemy, but he controlled his fear and answered: "Perhaps you are right, creature of the night. Perhaps I cannot defeat you. But I am a knight and I will never surrender. Death is preferable to cowardice! Defend yourself!" Drawing his sword, Lambert spurred his steed once more. When he reached the enemy, he swung his sword in a wide, deadly arc, with all the strength of his army and his charging warhorse.

This time the Vampire reacted. With blinding speed his left hand raised and grasped Lambert's wrist in an iron grasp, while the right stopped the charging warhorse. The sudden halt in their impetus shocked both the animal and the young knight, and they found themselves immobilised and helpless, at the mercy of that unnatural predator. For a second, the eyes of the two knights met. Looking into those two pools of ancient darkness, Lambert understood that there were powers in the world against which he could not prevail.

Then the Vampire unhorsed Lambert with a twist of his powerful arm and flung him like puppet into the trees. The Bretonnian crashed against a trunk and darkness engulfed him.

When Lambert opened his eyes, surprised that he was still alive, the red knight was in front of him, a sad smile on his thin lips. Lambert realised he had been thrown over the saddle of his own horse. He tried to move, and his body was overwhelmed by pain and his muscles would not respond to his will.

"I am sparing your life, Lambert – you fought with courage. And I'm going to leave this forest; you have saved your precious peasants, so your pride is intact. Now let your good steed take you to the village. There you will rest and heal, so that you can continue your quest. If you complete it, you will become a more interesting opponent and maybe we will have a fairer duel if we meet again. My name is Caleb, of the Order of the Blood Dragon, and if you learnt something from today's experience, you will not come after me before you are truly ready. Fare thee well, knight of Bretonnia."

After the Vampire disappeared into the darkness, Lambert realised that he had indeed learnt something. He had been taught a hard but necessary lesson. Only now did he understand that he was lacking one of the most important knightly virtues. To reach perfection and see the Grail, a knight needed humility. He praised the Lady for this revelation and then slipped once more into unconsciousness.

Caleb observed the vanquished young knight until his horse had taken him out of sight. The Vampire couldn't help feeling that in the future he would meet Lambert again and that he might come to regret not having killed him now. He had fought enough Grail Knights to learn not to underestimate them, but something in his tainted blood stopped him from taking any pride in defeating a knight in an uneven fight. Also, that boy reminded him of a distant past, of a time when he was not doomed to drink the blood of men to survive. The Knight of Blood shrugged off those uneasy feelings, mounted his black charger and went on his way out of the forest.

The light of the full moon caught a reflection on Caleb's shield, revealing just for an instant his old device, a blazon which long ago had been covered by the Blood Dragon icon.

It was a Fleur de Lys.

THE LAHMIANS – DEATHLESS COURTIERS

The Lahmians may not have the brute strength of some of the other bloodlines, but they more than make up for this lack in cunning, deviousness, and their mastery of others. The Lahmians are secret string-pullers of the world, invisibly exerting untellable control over history. Their immortal plots are difficult for short-lived Humans to see, and some that were set in motion in antiquity have yet to come to fruition.

In truth all the Vampires of the Lahmian sisterhood descend from the Queen of Lahmia. She is said to despise men and consequently very few Lahmians are males. Instead, enchantingly beautiful maidens are chosen from amongst the most noble families of Bretonnia and the Empire and granted the Blood Kiss. They then strive to gain control of the humans around them with cunning and intrigue. No other Vampires excel in infiltrating human society in the same way as this shadowy sisterhood.

The presence of the Lahmians is seldom noticed, but their hand is certainly felt. They may lack the brute strength of many other Vampires, but in subtlety and cunning they are unmatched. They can achieve their aims with politics and plotting instead of direct action. They are hedonistic, self-indulgent creatures who love splendour and wealth and will stop at nothing to get what they desire.



Yet they cannot taste food or enjoy the warmth of the sun. Their cold hearts can feel no love and though their youth and beauty is eternal, they are abhorred by people once they are discovered. All this means that no matter how much wealth they gather or how many pleasures they taste, their joys are always hollow.

Lahmian Vampires are as fast as quicksilver and their Vampiric powers allow them to melt into the shadows and vanish from the eyes of mortals. They can move so quickly that they are virtually invisible to the eye. The talons of the Lahmians reach to all levels of human society. They take an active interest in human affairs and no one can guess how many powerful eccentric noblewomen, widows of princes and dukes, and high-born ladies who shun the light of day and lock themselves in tall towers and opulent palaces, are in truth of the Undead. They have a great talent for art and statesmanship and their powerful personalities hold an irresistible charm for mortals. However, their temper matches the quickness of their bodies and they are easy to anger, but hard to appease.

In the most remote corners of the Old World, whole towns have fallen under the dominion of the Lahmians. There Zombies guard the gates so none can escape and Vampires form the female aristocracy that feeds on mortal cattle each night. Such places must be purged with sword and fire, often only after a bitter battle against the Vampires and their servants.

The Lahmians, unlike other Vampires of the Old World, keep in contact with each other and with their mysterious Queen, Neferata. What the Lahmians' true motives and final purposes are, none can fathom.

History

In ancient Nehekara, women were forbidden from entering the priesthood and, therefore, forbidden from learning magic. This changed in the city of Lahmia under the rule of Queen Neferata, who created a sisterhood that enabled women to learn what was previously forbidden to them. Many were attracted to this sisterhood, even coming from the other cities to learn at Neferata's feet. By forbidding women from learning magic, the priests of Nehekara ultimately drove many of them to learning the darkest magic, the necromancy of Nagash. From the most promising of these pupils, Neferata chose those who would become her progeny, Vampires of unearthly beauty and arcane learning.

"You would be nothing without us. Have you any idea how many of your highest leaders have spent their lives in thrall to us? How many of your laws would not exist without us, how many of your peasants would have starved without us? Humans are too weak to be permitted self-governance. With our guidance, the Empire can and will achieve great things. Without us, you fall to Chaos and worse."

Unnamed Imperial Noblewoman, Lahmia Lineage

When Lahmia fell, only a few of the sisterhood survived, fleeing at their mistress's side. First they fled from the forces of Alcadizaar and then from Nagash when he tried to coerce them into being his soldiers and slaves. Rejecting Nagash and the other bloodlines, Neferata and her daughters-in-darkness travelled to the Old World. As strange hermit-women and the exotic consorts of chieftains, the sisterhood gave prophetic advice as they gathered power and influence amongst the primitive tribes they found there.

They first exercised this power in an attack of the kingdom of Strigos, which had fallen under the rule of Neferata's brother. After the fall of Strigos, the Lahmians exercised their power a second time, raising an army to take Silver Pinnacle from the Dwarfs and make it their own.

From Silver Pinnacle, Neferata coordinated the Lahmians and their manipulations. As Human civilisation changed, so too did they, growing from consorts and hermits to eccentric nobles and seductive spies. Remaining in her stronghold, Neferata too changed, growing cold and idle. As she fell into the malaise that claims many ancient Vampires, her control of her agents waned. Their loyalty was tested, and some, like Lady d'Acques of Bretonnia, defied her rules to make get of who they would. Others, like d'Acques' granddaughter-in-darkness Kattarin, the Vampire Tzarina of Kislev, defied Neferata by seeking power, preferring to rule the Humans now rather than at some ill-defined and distant time when their queen deemed it right. For a time, Lahmians squabbled and fought amongst themselves. Those loyal to Neferata schemed against those who went rogue in a conflict that took place in the shadows and was rarely seen by mortal men.

Eventually, the wisdom of Neferata was proven right. The Vampire Tzarina was cast down by a society of



Kislevites, and she became a symbol for the danger of displaying the Vampires' power before the world was ready to kneel before it. However, a fracture remained, and rogue Lahmians who are not of the sisterhood persist to this day. Knowing little of their heritage, they act independently, refuse to partake in the intrigues of Neferata, and bow to no one.

The sisterhood remain hidden, gathering power and invisibly twisting events to their own ends. They have been present at many of history's most important junctures, but none can say how much influence they had over events. Lady Lenore, the Mistress of Mousillon, was present at that city's downfall, but none can be sure whether she masterminded or merely observed the affair. Similarly, Countess Cheveaux is known to have walked the streets of Mordheim shortly after its cursing, and the Vampiress Serutat had the ear of many in Araby's court at the time of the Crusades. Historians who pry into these matters find in them only their downfall, and many curious scholars have come to curious ends investigating things best left unknown.

Plots and Machinations

The ultimate aim of the Lahmian Sisterhood is the ultimate aim of Neferata herself: a triumphant return to the city of Lahmia, where she may rule as the queen of a new Cult of Blood that worships only her. This has not proven easy to achieve. Lahmia, indeed the entire Land of the Dead, is controlled by the Tomb Kings. Still, the sisterhood sponsors expeditions to the Land of the Dead to battle these dread-lords or to recover items belonging to them. The tomb robbers, crusaders, and explorers who make up these expeditions are unaware of the true motives of the mysterious women who act as their patrons.

It would not be enough to regain Lahmia through force of arms if it were still a city of ruins. Lahmia must be regained as it was at its height, complete with a population of willing and worshipful slaves. To this end, the sisterhood has devotees amongst the nobility, deluded pawns and lovers who will one day, when their dominion is complete, lead their people south.

Additionally, those people must be willing blood-cattle, unable to fight back. To this end, the Lahmians manipulate religious conflicts, stirring up the age-old enmity between the cults of Sigmar and Ulric, Ulric and Ranald, Ranald and Shallya, and so on. Simultaneously, they encourage humanistic ideas, helping agitators spread the word that the Gods are deceivers who have grown weak and old and should be disowned. Their hope is to create a world in which the Gods are abandoned, and without holy protection, their prey dare not resist.

The Lahmians have also protected mankind by strengthening them against other threats. It would achieve nothing to rule humanity only to watch them fall before the forces of Chaos. Nor would it do to have the Old World fall to the von Carsteins, whose control of the nobility of Sylvania and periodic attempts to wage war on the Empire have been thorns in Neferata's side.

Neferata has grown to hate all of the other bloodlines over the years for their failure to hold Lahmia, their betrayal when they allowed Vashanesh to lead them rather than her, and the sin of existing and daring to rival her. Amongst her goals is the downfall and enslavement of the other bloodlines. It was due to Neferata that the primitive tribes attacked Strigos, Nourgul found his passage into the temple of Myrmidia where his doom waited unguarded, and the Tsarevich Pavel Society strives against the infiltration of the von Carsteins to this day.

Society

Uniquely amongst the bloodlines, the Lahmians live alongside humanity, not in distant towers, castles, or crypts, but in the mansions and palaces of high society, as befits their station. They move invisibly amongst their victims, performing a dance that has many rules and complicated steps.

At the top of Lahmian society is Neferata. Though she rarely leaves the Silver Pinnacle, she remains in touch with her sisterhood through a network of mortal messengers and magical scrying. Her most favoured servants are given the title nuncio; they are her envoys, secret diplomats charged with shaping history. They usually maintain households of loyal servants, including lower-ranked sisters and mortals who help them maintain the illusion of noble normality. Immediately beneath them are the inter-nuncios who, rather than living in their own mansions and posing as eccentric ladies as the nuncios do, live in the households of others as loyal wives and daughters, gathering information and manipulating those around them through subtle means.

Hiding in plain sight amongst the nobility is an easier task than it may seem. Noble women are expected to behave in a highly codified way, and those who follow the laws of etiquette are allowed their eccentricities. Amongst the things proper ladies do not do is go out hunting, tour the estate, inspect the surrounding villages, or go to war. They remain at home, keeping house and maintaining their complexion. When they do leave the house, it is for social events like gala balls or opening evenings at the theatre. The majority of these events happen to take place at night.

As staying up late is a privilege of the ruling class who do not need to rise early for a hard day's work, it is considered perfectly normal, even fashionable, for the wealthy to stay up until the early hours. Only peasants eat before dusk – high society dines as late as midnight. On occasions when they are required to go out by day, a lady-like parasol can prevent a Lahmian from visibly smoking in the sun should she be forced to step down from her covered litter or coach.

Sunlight is not the only thing a sister needs to avoid. Holy symbols and mirrors can both reveal a Vampire's true self. Although some Lahmians are lucky enough to be immune to holiness, this is not true of the entire bloodline. Part of the training sisters undergo in the Silver Pinnacle is a partial desensitisation to holiness, so the instinct to flinch in its presence is overridden.

They may never overcome their susceptibility completely, however, and must spend their time judiciously avoiding and minimising exposure to the temples, shrines, and priests common in the Old World.

No Lahmian wants to be accidentally exposed by a clumsy priest wearing a holy pendant who leans in a little too close. The hand mirrors carried by some are discs of polished steel that distort any image that they are not held extremely close to and are an unreliable method of Vampire detection. Real mirrors are too expensive for common folk, but in the homes of the wealthy where the sisters dwell, wall mirrors are a status symbol. Another aspect of Neferata's training is the subtle avoidance of such mirrors, ducking to smooth a wrinkle in one's skirts at the right moment or distracting the attention of observers. Sometimes, a sister may resort to the clumsy method of "accidentally" breaking a mirror that threatens to expose her.

In addition to the sisterhood are Neferata's handmaidens, the Deathless Court of the Silver Pinnacle. There they learn the ways of the Lahmians, practising their wiles on the foolish mortals who visit the Pinnacle hoping to trade with that community of isolated, rich strangers, discover the stores of knowledge they are reputed to hide, or gaze upon the most beautiful woman in the Old World. The handmaidens also vie for Neferata's attention, practising their manipulations on each other in the Deathless Court's society in miniature where they may betray whilst smiling sweetly.





There are also Lahmians in the wider world who are not loyal members of the sisterhood but rogue agents who do not bow to Neferata. Some use their abilities for their own ends, rejecting Neferata's dream of Lahmia reborn. Others disobey their queen for gentler reasons; as the example of Neferata and Vashanesh and even Vlad and Isabella shows, the hearts of Vampires are vulnerable to more than merely sharpened stakes. Even the Undead may know something akin to love. More than once, a Lahmian has grown too fond of her mortal target and either refused to end his life when the order came or made him/her get contrary to the wishes of Neferata. These rogues are shunned by their sisters, sometimes even hunted down and destroyed, though Neferata's loyal daughters find little pleasure in disposing of their wayward kin.



Feeding and Breeding

To avoid attracting unwanted attention, Lahmians tend to feed on willing victims. Some are men who believe they are engaged in passionate affairs, not realising every torrid memory they have is a suggestion left behind by a sated Vampire. Others are knowing participants, only too willing to bare their necks in return for favours the powerful sisterhood is able to grant. These acolytes of the Lahmians may perform other services for their mistress; love-struck and loyal, they do everything from carrying her litter to guarding her whilst she sleeps. Each dreams of becoming her eternal paramour, but only the rarest of them ever do. The Lahmians can be fickle, and when they tire of their playthings most feel no regrets about ending them.

Lahmians try not to drain their victims dry too often, but when it happens, as it does on occasion, they are

never so gauche as to leave a bloodless corpse lying in the street. Such things invite all manner of questions and investigations that can be difficult to cover up and may even involve having those dreadful, scruffy watchmen stomping around the parlour.

There is a distinction between members of the Lahmian bloodline and full members of the Lahmian Sisterhood. Young women with the desirable attributes – allure being one of them – are “invited” to join the bloodline and sent to the Silver Pinnacle where they act as handmaidens to Neferata. Here they train in various arts, magical and manipulative, at the feet of their queen. Those who excel are made members of the sisterhood and sent into the world to further Neferata's aims, but there are those who do not join the sisterhood and remain at the Silver Pinnacle serving their queen, passing on their knowledge to the youngbloods, and if they are truly favoured by Neferata, tending to her many cats.

Some Lahmians bypass this period of training and make the leap directly from mortal life into the sisterhood. Usually, these are women in positions of power useful to the Lahmians already, such as widows with control over their late husband's estates or young ladies about to enter into prestigious marriages. They are promoted directly into the sisterhood and trained by their mothers-in-darkness in the field so that they may keep their former identities and maintain the illusion of mortality.

Rarer still are those males who impress them enough to be invited into the bloodline. It has been known to happen that an exceptional man joins the Lahmians, but although they join the bloodline, they are never allowed full access to the inner circle of the Silver Pinnacle and, of course, are never considered members of the sisterhood.



Innocence Lost

Saronovich was in his tent, examining the region's maps while sipping some of the best vodka in all of Kislev. He was thinking how much he hated having been assigned to such a remote outpost in the foothills. He didn't like this camp in the gloomy woods marking the border between Mother Kislev and the Dwarf kingdoms of the World's Edge Mountains. But it was his duty as an Ataman of the Horse Archers to maintain the vigil on the trails coming from the mountain passes.

Suddenly he heard movement outside the tent and two of his men walked in. With them they had a girl, one of the most beautiful young ladies he had ever seen. She was very young and frail, her skin pale and her robe in tatters. An expression of sheer terror was on her fair visage and she was shaking all over.

"Ataman, we found this girl on one of the mountain paths. It looks like she's been attacked, but she hasn't said a word. She's too terrified. We don't even know if she speaks our language."

"I see. Now bring her some hot food and something to wear."

"Yes sir." The two men left but soon returned with what the Ataman had asked for.

Sarnovich observed the girl and could not avoid being moved by the innocent look she possessed. His heart was filled with a strong affection towards her, for she reminded him of his young daughter. He noticed that she was not eating at all and drank very little and without enthusiasm; clearly she was still very scared. The old soldier tried to calm her, speaking softly.

"Do not be afraid. We are friends. Friends. Do you understand me?"

The girl looked up at him and, seeming to make sense out of his words, she nodded.

"What is your name?" asked Sarnovich.

"Mara. Me Mara," answered the pretty voice of the girl. The Ataman was relieved. He couldn't recognize her accent, but at least some communication was possible.

"What happened to you? Where is your family? Mother? Father?"

With her innocent eyes open wide, she answered "Mountain...monster...die, all die. Mara no die," and she started to cry, sobbing violently.

Sarnovich hugged her softly and lulled her until she stopped crying, then she seemed to fall sleep, exhausted. The Ataman decided to leave her alone to rest. He walked out into the red light of the setting sun and called the sergeant. "Yuri, have the men raise a tent for the girl. And double the guard tonight, she has spoken of a 'monster' and I'm afraid that the group she was travelling with might have been attacked by one of the evil creatures of these mountains. It seems she's the only survivor."

"At once sir."

Then the night came.

Sarnovich was woken up abruptly by a terrible scream that pierced the darkness. In a moment he was outside his tent, his sword ready. Where were the guards, he thought, and why had they allowed the fires to die out? He heard more shouting from the tent where his men slept and rushed in the direction. He entered the tent cautiously and by the dim light of the braziers he saw he was too late. His men were dead. Everything was drenched in blood. Some of the warriors were still in their beds, their throats ripped open. Others lay on the floor, their bodies torn apart and dismembered, apparently by the talons of a creature of awesome strength. A Troll! thought Sarnovich. No, impossible. One of those things couldn't possibly make its way into the camp to surprise these experienced warriors in their beds. What was it then? How could he fight it? The Ataman's mind was overwhelmed with fear and anger. Then a thought hit him like a warhammer: The girl! He had to protect the girl.



He rushed towards her tent but found it empty. Where could she possibly be? Suddenly a new series of cries arose at the edge of the nearby wood. Some of the sentinels were still fighting and one of the voices was clearly female-she was there! Sarnovich reached the tree line where he could clearly see a torch burning not far ahead. He headed for the light and almost trampled on the lifeless body of a guard. The girl was leaning against a tree, an arrow protruding from her shoulder. Her clothes were covered in blood but she was still alive-that was the important thing.

She looked at Sarnovich with hope and relief as he approached her cautiously, but then her eyes focused on something over his shoulder and she shouted "Behind You!" the Kislevite turned, ready to protect the innocent girl from the terrible creature which had slaughtered his men. His eyes were scanning the darkness for any trace of the monster when another voice whispered from just behind his ear, sending a shudder down his spine. It was the languid, sensual voice of a mature woman, with an evil, ironic hint in its tone:

"I told you it was behind you..."

The feral snarl that followed these words was the last sound that Ataman Sarnovich of Kislev was to hear.

THE NECRARCHS – DISCIPLES OF THE ACCURSED

There is one foul dynasty of Vampires that has perhaps brought as much death and misery to the living as the kin of Vlad von Carstein. These are the despicable descendants of the Vampire W'soran. In the ancient court of Nagash, one Vampire above all others learnt the great spells of Necromancy and dedicated his Unlit to the pursuit of the magical arts. This was W'soran and he went on to found a line of Vampire wizards that has survived to the present day. Other Vampires refer distastefully to these withered, rotting creatures as Necrarchs; an ancient word meaning 'living corpse', something far more filthy and decrepit than a 'true' Vampire. Caring not for physical appearance, W'soran's disciples turn all their energies to the manipulation of dead flesh, content for their own bodies to decay until they become as foul as the corpses upon which the Necrarchs experiment.

When their great library was burned to the ground by fearful mortals, many Necrarchs remained to burn with it, so strong was their devotion to knowledge. The Necrarchs are the most learned of Vampires, more skilled at sorcery than with the blade. These skills have come at a price, however. The appearance of the Necrarchs has grown so hideous and unnatural that an ordinary man cannot bear to look upon them, and many run screaming at the sight.

Necrarchs are incomprehensible even to their own Undead brethren, and most seem utterly insane. Their madness is tempered by their undeniable genius and mastery of alchemy and necromantic magic. Whereas many Vampires seek dominion over the kingdoms of Men either by cunning or might of arms, the Necrarchs wish to see the end of all living things. They differ from their immortal brothers in many other aspects. The most obvious is their appearance: they are reeking, rotting wizards, and few men can gaze at their horrifying visage without trembling. Necrarchs are as horrible to behold as the enchanting Lahmians are beautiful. The other differences are subtler, but perhaps more important.

Of all the Vampires, the Necrarchs can resist extremely long periods of time without the blood of Men to sustain themselves. How they defy that which dominates the existence of all other Vampires is unknown, but their secret has probably something to do with their mastery of the necromantic arts. While most Vampires must continually hunt for the blood of men with the risk of being revealed for what they are, Necrarchs can hide far from prying eyes and concentrate upon their study of black magic.

*Forever there shall be cold under the sun.
Rivers will run dry and the forests wither.
The stars shall grow dim, flicker and die.
And Death shall reign from forever to forever.*

From the Black Curse of the Necrarchs

The Necrarchs do not see the world as do other Vampires. To them the world of the living is but a blurred image, while the world of the dead, the bodies in their graves, the corpses and overflowing charnel houses, are crystal clear and far more real than the mortal world filled with life. Necrarchs are loners. They are alchemists and sorcerers whom few can match. In the arts of black sorcery they have no equals amongst Vampires, and this more than compensates for their fighting skills, which are poor in comparison with those of other Vampires. Hidden in secluded towers and dens, protected by sorcerous wards and guarded by their Undead servants, the Necrarchs devote their eternal lives to the study of Necromantic magic.

Witch hunters and Knights Errant seek these abodes and, when they uncover the den of a Necrarch, bitter battle ensues. Often those who would slay the Vampires end up serving their enemies in a ghastly unlife. Necrarchs value their privacy above all else. Still, even Necrarchs at times need blood or the bodies of living creatures to sacrifice in their magical rituals and experiments. This means that they need agents in human society. As physical beauty has little value to the Necrarchs, they accept the services of those who others scorn: the diseased, the mad, the disfigured and mutated. The Necrarchs show false pity to these outcasts, and in return their servants are fanatically faithful and are capable of performing tasks which the Vampires would find difficult. During daylight hours these dregs rob graveyards and plague pits in order to find raw materials for their masters' experiments. The most intelligent of these, the Necrarchs' school in the art of necromancy. Rarest of all are those who the Necrarchs decide to initiate into their own ranks as new Thralls.



Because of their rarity, many scholars doubt whether the Necrarchs really exist. But in the dark places of the world, hidden from the eyes of men, the Necrarchs continue their slow, insidious work. One day their labours will bear fruit, and the world will know horror unlike any before.

Of all the Vampires that are known to exist the Necrarchs are the most reviled. Due to their unearthly Necromantic skills they have the ability to summon vast hordes of Undead warriors when they march to war, replenishing the broken corpses which fall in battle with the mutilated bodies of the opposing army.

History

Like all Vampires, the origin of the Necrarchs can be traced to the ancient city of Lahmia, where they once ruled as undying overlords of that distant land. It is thought that Necrarchs claim descent from W'soran, who they revere as the father of Vampires.

With the fall of Lahmia the kingdom of Vampires came to an end and the Great Library of Lahmia was burned to the ground. The accumulated knowledge of ancient Nehekha was destroyed and many of the disciples of W'soran died in the flames, reluctant to abandon their work. Unfortunately for the world, a handful of Necrarchs fled and survived the pursuit of the armies of the kings of Numas and Zandri, taking with them books, scrolls and other fragments of the dark lore that Nagash had created.

When Melkhior killed W'soran, the Necrarchs separated and scattered across the Old World, fearing for their unlivess after this coup. Each suffered paranoid delusions, and although they all worked towards the same end, none of them trusted each other. They settled in all the nations of the Old World, and the paranoid rantings that passed for communications between them slowly grew silent.

Estalia was the chosen land of Nourgul, who had been with W'soran and Nagash in their earliest days. Even then, he dreamed of conquest and had observed Nagash's techniques and tactics closely. In 1750 he followed through on his plans, raised an army of the dead tens of thousands strong, and waged war on the petty kingdoms of Estalia, razing all the land between the Irrana Mountains and the Southern Sea. The princes of the splintered Estalian kingdoms had banded together in a futile attempt to stem the Undead tide but the proud Condottieri of Estalia were defeated in three battles, leaving thousands dead, and driven south until they had to retreat within the walls of the Estalian port Magritta. Wherever Nourgul conquered, he gathered grimoires and artefacts, from the pettiest trinkets to the most potent tomes. His ultimate aim was to possess the Tome of Wisdom, which was kept in the temple of Myrmidia, the protector goddess of Estalia. Nourgul's army laid siege to the city for a month, at the end of which the defenders fell strangely silent. Victorious, Nourgul swept down from the skies into the city on his steed, a gigantic Vampire Bat, and entered the temple of Myrmidia where the Tome of Wisdom was housed. With his black spells the Vampire slew the priests who



guarded the temple and entered the inner sanctum. For a long while the temple fell silent, until a scream unlike any the men of Estalia had ever heard before pierced the night, shaking the very foundations of the city. When the survivors of the siege dared to emerge from their hiding places, they found that the foul Undead army had collapsed, and in the temple of Myrmidia they only found a pile of ash next to the altar of the goddess where the Great Book of Wisdom, the artefact of the temple, lay open. No one has ever explained this turn of events, but the lands of Estalia still remember the dark days of the War of Blood.

Far to the north, in the Forest of Shadows, Melkhior the Ancient pursued the Necrarchs' dream in a much more subdued fashion. Now hopelessly mad, he saw little but his bizarre visions, occasionally going on a rampage amongst his servants to avoid the tedium. One of these servants, the Necrarch Zacharias, sought to repeat Melkhior's defeat of W'soran and fought Melkhior in a magical duel. Melkhior was the victor, but years later Zacharias returned, somehow vastly more powerful than he had been, and had his revenge on Melkhior.

Such is the Necrarch way. They are masters of necromancy, alchemy, and all of the natural philosophies but are hampered by the depth of their madness and distrust.

Prophecies and Machinations

From their towers, the Necrarchs cast great spells during the dark nights of Geheimnisnacht. The purpose of these sorceries is always the same: to kill all living things within the reach of the Necrarch magic. From their dark abodes corruption slowly spreads, poisoning rivers, withering forests and causing animals and men to sicken and die. It seems that the Necrarchs are determined to strangle all life from the known world.

"Dread the servants of the dead, but dread the Necrarchs above all others."

Proverb of Ostland

Those who study such things suspect the hand of the Great Necromancer, Nagash the Black himself, behind the slow, corrupting work of the Necrarchs. It is known that this dread Necromancer desires to turn the whole world into a kingdom of the dead in which no living creature walks under the sun, and only Undead eternally bound to his service remain. Such a world would have an eternal order without change, growth or life. This is why the witch hunters revile the Necrarchs above all other Vampires, and spare no effort trying to eradicate them. Finding these elusive creatures is the most difficult task a Vampire slayer can set himself.

Only very rarely do the Necrarchs openly march to war, but at such times they are perhaps more dangerous than any other lords of Undeath, for with their necromantic lore the Necrarchs can raise huge armies of Undead. Such wars are fought not for earthly gain or temporal power, but rather for acquiring knowledge and magical lore.

Ever since W'soran had his grand vision of a future made of bones and dead flesh, his Necrarchs have placed great store in prophecy and fate. They spend much time attempting to divine the future, peering through the mists of time and recording their visions. Melkhior the Ancient painted his visions onto canvases of flesh, some of which still screamed at his touch, but most prefer to record such things in tomes like the Grimoire Necronium.

To bring about the fate seen in these prophecies, the Necrarchs conduct their research into the living and the Undead so that they may more fully understand how one is made into the other in preparation for the day when all of the living become their eternal servants. At Geheimnisnacht, when both moons are full, the Necrarchs cast dark spells to blight the land, sucking the life out of an area and bringing their plans closer, one patch of scorched earth at a time.



Perhaps because of the direct blood lineage or maybe due to some terrible sorceries from the spirit of Wsoran, the Necrarch pupils found that they were somehow drawn into the world of Undeath. Their bodies remained on the mortal world free to walk that land at will but no longer able see the world as others do. Now they can only see the spirits of the dead. Mortals appear to the Necrarch Vampires as ghostly apparitions, whilst they can freely command the spirits of those who have passed into the other realm.

Many Vampires such as the von Carsteins and the Lahmiens wish to rule over the Old World as immortal masters. From that fateful day when Melkhior slew the body of Wsoran, the Necrarch Vampires' sole purpose, has been to turn all life into death. Naturally this twilight existence has led to most Necrarchs losing any sense of rationality they once possessed. Most are insane and spend their lives locked in remote towers plotting the fall of mankind, but occasionally one will march to battle.

Society

The preferred dwellings of Necrarchs are forbidding towers in the wilderness. There are several reasons for this. The vantage point of a tall tower gives greater access to Azyr, the Blue Wind of Magic, which the Necrarchs observe to gain insights into the future. A tower is easily defensible, and given their relative lack of a need for blood, the Necrarchs prefer to shy away from civilisation. Most of all, whether they admit it or not, dwelling at the base of the heavens brings the Necrarchs closer to what they see themselves as: Gods. Of all the Vampires, Necrarchs are the most interested in the Undead as replacements for the living, which they see as the weak and flawed creations of weak and flawed Gods. Their towers are shared with improved forms of life, their own monstrous necromantic creations. These patchwork creatures are created from flesh and inanimate objects melded with dark sorceries and forced into a twitching semblance of life.

Crossing Thresholds

For reasons unknown, the Necrarchs have a weakness rare amongst the other bloodlines: they are unable to enter buildings that have been made homes by the living unless they are invited. Some say Nagash cursed them this way. Intending to use the Necrarchs as little more than assistants in his research, he wished to keep them from the distractions of humanity. Others say the Necrarchs' hatred of life is so strong that they are repelled by the places where it is strongest.

As well as such necromantic experimenting, Necrarchs seek to master a variety of natural philosophies, depending on their inclinations. A Necrarch may be a master of astronomy, alchemy, engineering, or any of the sciences as a matter of course. They are also masters of self-knowledge. Necrarchs know the strengths and weaknesses of their own kind better than any, and perhaps, this is another reason for their isolation. Betrayal is a constant threat to the Necrarchs. They jealously hoard knowledge from each other; their children-in-darkness are often their apprentices—and it is in the nature of apprentices to seek to surpass their masters even if it means theft and murder. This division is what has prevented them from conquering a nation of their own. Apart from Nourgul's march across Estalia, most Necrarchs refrain from short-term empire-building, preferring to dream of a future free of the living and slowly build their own miniature kingdoms of the Undead and the outcast.

Outcasts are drawn to Necrarchs. Mutants and other freaks find acceptance that they could never find amongst Humans. These dregs of society serve as lab assistants, occasional food sources, experimental subjects, and potential apprentices. They also venture out for supplies and protect their masters during daylight hours, as well as invite Necrarchs across thresholds.

Feeding and Breeding

Necrarchs feel the need to drink blood only rarely. They may go for months or even years without it. When they do feed, it is often on the outcasts they surround themselves with. However, this is not always the case. Some Necrarchs prefer to glut themselves when they feed, bringing along their servants to help them gain access to the abodes of the living, wherein they slay entire families in mad bloodlust before returning to their towers to pass away the next few years in quiet study before they must feed again.

Necrarchs make a point of studying their own thirst for blood. Reducing the frequency with which they feed is not enough; they seek to ultimately free themselves of the thirst completely. Thus far, only Zacharias the Everliving has found the secret to this. Other Necrarchs have experimented with turning themselves into mobile nexuses of dark magic, replacing the need for blood with a need for Warpstone, or recreating the Elixir of Life to Nagash's original recipe, but all have failed. Many have failed catastrophically, becoming even

more warped than they already are. They become bloated abominations that cannot walk, bestial creatures worse than the Strigoi, awful things like Chaos Spawn with impossible forms too bizarre to hold together.

Necrarchs typically choose their most gifted apprentices to receive the Blood Kiss. It is rare for a Necrarch to find one they feel safe in granting this power to, as it may be turned against them. This is why they are the least numerous of the bloodlines. Newly turned Necrarchs do not gain their twisted appearance immediately, but it does not take long. Within a month they have been reduced to skeletal figures of nightmare. In these early days of their existence, they hunger for blood as much as a normal Vampire, drinking large quantities to power the second transformation from monster to abomination. This harrowing experience often shatters what little sanity they have left.



During this time, they also develop the powerful Witchsight of the Necrarchs. They see the spirits of the dead as clearly as if they were solid, and the Winds of Magic appear more real than the sky or the trees. Conversely, the real world appears insubstantial and barely there. This causes the Necrarchs to become disconnected from the world. As the endless years pass, they begin treating their surroundings as totally irrelevant.

Traditionally, Necrarchs take a Nehekhan name upon joining their ranks, leaving their old name behind along with their old life. This custom is shared by those necromancers who dedicate themselves to Nagash.



The Betrayal of Nicodemus

The spiral stairway to the crypt was ancient and dank – shadows danced on the walls at the sight of Nero's lantern.

He reached the bottom of the staircase and tore his way through the cobwebs obstructing the archway. Nero entered the room and at once felt that he was no longer stepping on a stone floor. The room was covered in moist soil, the foul mould of that accursed forest. That was how the Vampires recovered their supernatural energies in their daily slumber – they needed to lie in the womb of that evil land.

Then he saw the coffin and froze, holding his breath. Inch by inch he approached. After reaching it, he put down his lantern and prepared his wooden stake and mallet for the job he had come to do.

He slowly removed the lid of the coffin and... empty! There was no trace of the body. He had been fooled!

Yet something small moved suddenly in the furthest end of the coffin. Nero raised his lantern. The creature it illuminated was born out of a nightmare: it was a rotten human head standing on eight articulated legs like those of a huge spider. Certainly this was one of the experiments of the dark master of the tower. The creature hissed a disgusting "masssteerr!" and scuttled towards a dark corner of the room. Nero moved a few steps in that direction and saw a great stone sarcophagus, carved in strange symbols. They reminded him of the scrolls from the ancient kingdom of Khemri that he had studied in the past. Before he could make a move, the heavy slab covering the sarcophagus fell aside with a loud thud. Then a shadow, darker than the surrounding darkness, moved out of it and into the chamber. The air seemed to chill in the crypt. The only detail Nero could clearly see were the eyes of the Vampire, two gleaming jewels of ancient evil.

"So, miserable mortal, you thought you could catch Nicodemus unprepared?" whispered a voice from the darkness, a voice that reached Nero's innermost fears and overwhelmed his senses with sheer horror.

Nero gave a shrieking cry of frustrated anger, immediately followed by a series of arcane words of power. From his eyes erupted two black rays of pure dark magic that struck the Vampire and seemed to engulf him. The creature was surprised by the violence of the attack, hardly managing to disperse the dark energies that threatened to destroy him. Nicodemus raised his arms and chanted aloud in the language of his long-lost homeland. Answering his call, a dozen skeleton warriors clawed their way up out of the crypt's floor and started to move towards Nero. As the circle closed, a strange smile appeared on the thin lips of the human.

"Wrong move, Nicodemus!" Nero assumed the same posture as the Vampire and uttered a series of commanding words.

The skeletons stopped their advance. Nicodemus felt his control on the mindless servants fading, his sorcery challenged by another powerful mind.

He struggled to maintain control of his minions, and the two wizards, the living and the Undead, started a titanic battle of wills. Nicodemus could feel the vast flow of dark magic that his opponent was channelling and at the same time the subtle level of control he was using, in an attempt to exploit any gap in Nicodemus' defences. How was that possible? Since when had his student reached such a high level of mastery?

Slowly the skeletons turned and began to advance towards their creator. Nero started to laugh aloud "You are defeated, pathetic monster! You have lost your arrogance all of a sudden! I am the master now."

The Vampire moved back until he was pressed against the wall and then made a last attempt to regain control of the skeletons. Nero moved forward and kept the pressure high. He almost felt pity for the rotten monster that had once been his master and who was now desperately cornered in his own crypt, betrayed by his best apprentice. Then the Vampire abruptly ceased the struggle. Nero was surprised by this apparent surrender and stared at his former master with suspicion. Was he really going to give up?

Nicodemus spoke in a slow, patronising tone "I see that your knowledge of the black arts has grown to an impressive level, but you must consider you are just a human. And humans are fragile, their life is so easily crushed out of their weak bodies. Don't you think that in your eagerness to defeat me, you have come a bit too close?"

Then the Vampire darted towards Nero, literally moving through the skeletons, which exploded as if they were made of fragile clay when the creature hit them. Too late Nero realised his mistake. When he was young, in Tilea, he had heard legends of the great strength of the Lords of the Night, but he had never seen that in his former teacher, who resembled a rotting carcass. He had never imagined that Nicodemus could move so fast... never imagined that he could burst through those skeletons so easily... never imagined that those wizened hands could break his neck so quickly.

The Vampire threw away the broken puppet that was Nero's body as the skeletons collapsed to the ground. Then he staggered back towards his sarcophagus. Rest, he needed to rest. The human had wisely attacked in the middle of the day when Nicodemus' powers were at their weakest. The Vampire, could feel the presence of the sun even this deep underground. After putting the heavy lid back in place and before falling into his deep slumber Nicodemus reflected on what had happened. How was it possible that a mere scholar, a creature that had been learning necromancy for such a short time (how long had it been anyway? Maybe thirty years?) could have become a match for his powers? The Vampire had studied the black arts for thousands of years, he had been taught by the Great Necromancer himself, he who challenged Death and created the discipline of Undeath. How was it possible? Humans were weak. How could they challenge the mastery of one of the line of W'soran? He clearly remembered the flame of Nero's life extinguished by the force of his own grasp as the human passed away... Only then did Nicodemus understand. There was the answer! That was the reason why humans could progress in the necromantic arts faster than any Vampire. Humans were obsessed with the fear of dying, of passing away from the world and disappearing. Their life span was so short that they had to find a way to cheat death in the space of a few decades. The Blood Kiss brings immortality to Vampires, but immortality also means that Vampires lose that most powerful driving force, the fear of death.

At this revelation Nicodemus at first was dismayed, but then he started to think of the problem as a challenge. He needed to find another apprentice, so that he could study him much more closely. Maybe there was something that could be learned from the humans he used to prey upon. From that night on, Nicodemus would experiment on his victims with a new and refreshed scholar's interest.

THE STRIGOI – BEASTS IN SHADOW

The Vampires of the other bloodlines play at being mortal and wear the robes of lords, knights, and princes, but underneath, the Vampire is purely a beast. There are those who lose themselves so much in their pretence that they forget this. The Strigoi have not forgotten and do not pretend. They embrace the beast within them, taking all the strength and fury the animal can give them. That strength is terrible to behold, and that fury knows no end.

The pallid creatures known as Ghoul Kings are in fact once proud Strigoi Vampires forced into a troglodytic existence. Though all Strigoi descend from the same ancient lineage of Ushoran, they have devolved to become something far fouler and more hate-filled than their brethren. The Ghoul Kings spend their days creeping through the hidden places of the world, but under cover of night, they will wreak their vengeance at the head of a shambling army of Undead.

History

Every society needs a whipping boy.

It was not enough for Neferata and her brethren to simply be the lords of the great city of Lahmia. It was not enough they had drunk the Elixir of Life and became immortal. They still had to find more ways to feel superior over others, to exclude their equals from their little cult. It was this childishness of the queen that led her to prevent her younger brother, Prince Ushoran, Lord of Masques, Celebrations, and Festivities from drinking the Elixir and joining the True Blooded – her petty need to keep somebody out of her elite cadre. In order to teach her a lesson, and claim only what he was due, Ushoran stole her precious Elixir and entered into that same state of great un-life without her help. Of course, this incensed the queen, and she spent the following centuries seething at the insult and planning her revenge. She would get her chance, but not until long after the Vampires had betrayed Nagash and scattered to the wind.

When the Vampire Lords of old escaped the destruction of Lahmia and fled north, Ushoran, the Lord of Masks, was among them. A most powerful and proud Vampire Lord, he soon challenged the other Lords for supremacy. However, they resisted him and decided that nobody should rule over them anymore. They preferred to go further north and then divide, free to follow their own different paths to damnation. Ushoran was furious. He spitefully rejected them, cursed them all and then left.

Just as Ushoran cared not for the exclusivity of the Vampire cult, he also did not share their fear of Nagash. Whilst the other First Children ran far away to the north and hid from the world, the courageous Ushoran sought out a place to build a new kingdom where he could make manifest the dream of Lahmia – but free from petty squabbling and foolish politics. He guided his few remaining minions to the west, towards a small kingdom of Men. His dreams were realised

when he came upon the valley of Strigos, in the western foothills of the Worlds Edge Mountains, where the Blind River reaches the plains. The capital of this realm was the great walled city of Mourkain (which can be found on some ancient Imperial maps under the name of Morgheim), where Kadon already ruled as priest-king and had taught the people to worship Nagash as a God. It was a simple matter to replace Kadon with himself and to replace their worship of Nagash with worship of his Vampire line. Kadon had been a cruel and vacillating king; Ushoran brought his people order and prosperity, and they welcomed him for it.



In a few centuries, the children of the Lord of Masks were holding many positions of importance in the city and Ushoran eventually took over the kingdom and ruled over the Strigoi for many centuries thereafter. He was worshipped as a divinity by his human subjects in a way that was reminiscent of the ancient Cult of Blood in Lahmia. A few men, chosen from amongst the nobility, were given eternal life as Vampires and they formed Ushoran's closest ministers and the high priests of his cult. Once more human sacrifices were consumed in moonless nights, but wisely Ushoran and his priests always chose their victims from among captured enemies, slaves and criminals, so that the people of Strigos never felt threatened by their terrible masters.

Soon, the kingdom of Strigos was vast and powerful. But to rule in peace was not to be the final destiny of this line of Vampires. Ushoran sent word to his four other brethren, welcoming them to his new Vampire state, where they would be free to feed and live luxuriously, just as they had back in Nehekhar, safe from the hand of Nagash. To Neferata, this seemed yet another insult. Her interloper brother would dare to presume his empire greater than her own (though it certainly was) or that he might ever rule over her. As well, the queen saw at last her chance to get her revenge. She slaughtered Ushoran's messenger and at once spread rumours to the other bloodlines, assuring them that Ushoran either meant to enslave them all, or worse, sell them out to the reborn Nagash.

After two hundred years of living with their guilt over abandoning their master and their fear of his revenge, the Vampires had grown bitter and insular. Each



bloodline blamed the others for their betrayal and scattering but was prevented from acting on this because of the taboo against harming their own kind. When Neferata gave them a target and a reason to break this pact, the pent-up fury of the other bloodlines exploded in an orgy of violence. They sent mortal armies and Vampire assassins to that kingdom to destroy the interloper once and for all.

The Human armies sent against Ushoran's kingdom were a rabble, but they came from all sides and with an unceasing dedication fuelled by Neferata's get. Strigos was beset, and in turning back the tide, the prince was distracted at a critical time, allowing his kingdom to be ravaged by an immense tide of Greenskins, no doubt also instigated by Neferata's agents. It was when the armies of Strigos were engaged in the north of the kingdom, fighting off a raid from one of the neighbouring human kingdoms, that disaster struck.

Out of the Worlds Edge Mountains erupted a huge greenskin Waaagh! The ravening Orcs engulfed the rich plains of Strigos, annihilated the border patrols and soon laid siege to Mourkain itself. When news of the attack reached Ushoran, who was leading his army in the north, he immediately turned back to defend his capital. At the Battle of the Plain of Dust the already depleted army of Strigos clashed with the uncountable Orcs beneath the walls of the city. After a long and bloody fight, the Strigoi were defeated and retreated in desperation towards the city walls.

When the powerful Orc shaman who was leading the horde saw that the gates of the city had been opened to allow the remnants of the routed army into the city, he seized the moment and launched an all-out attack against the gate defences. A massive Orc chieftain and the shaman, both mounted on great Wyverns, fell on the beleaguered humans at the city entrance. At these gates the fate of Mourkain was to be decided, for it was there that Ushoran decided to make his last stand. The duel between the Orcs and the Vampire Lord was epic, but eventually the Undead noble succumbed to the mighty powers of the shaman who broke through Ushoran's wards and slew the great prince with a terrible magical blast. His dying scream is still said to echo at night in the sinister ruins of the great city of Mourkain.

Notable Strigoi

Both Urzen and Gashnag have convinced other Strigoi to rally to their banners, but in general, those of Ushoran's blood remain isolated from the other bloodlines, as well as the world, and the large-scale organised actions of these two are definitely the exception to the rule. But there are others on the hunt. Yudas the Shadow King continues to prey upon young girls as he has for centuries, terrifying all of Wissenland with his unrelenting harvest. The Vampire known only as the Beast of the Färlic Hills claims a caravan on the Dwarf Road once a month as his toll. And whilst Prince Rametep spends most of his time sleeping under Miragliano beside his huge collection of treasured magic items, none of the grave robbers who disturb his lair ever leave again.



Then the Orcs turned on the capital and razed it to the ground, butchering or enslaving all the population. This once proud kingdom was completely wiped from history and now the area that it occupied goes under the name of the Badlands. The few survivors who escaped the Orcs' devastation are now a scattered nomadic people, known as Strigany, travelling through the human kingdoms in small caravans and living off expediencies. Their myths and legends still remember the golden age when the 'undying king' was reigning over a rich and powerful Strigos, and they prophesise that one day he will return and guide his people to reclaim their ancient land and rebuild its splendour.

Even this great loss would not have ended Strigos, for the prince's sacrifice had won the battle, and loyal agents of Ushoran remained and fled to the human kingdoms in the north. In need of succour, they searched for others of their kind, and eventually found them in the forests of Sylvania. But with their forces weakened and their borders broken, they turned to their brethren in darkness for assistance and found them, instead, closing in like jackals. The other First Children were hungry for blood and still in desperate need of a whipping boy.

The proud von Carstein still remembered the spiteful arrogance of Ushoran and turned on his minions, hunting them down like animals in the woods. The Blood Dragons called them dishonourable. The Lahmians continued to turn Human armies against

them and laughed as they were driven like common mortals into hiding. Many of the surviving thralls of Ushoran ran, pursued to the frozen north where they sought out Vashanesh, Ushoran's favoured brother. But Vashanesh declared he had no time for cowards or weaklings, and he tore out their throats. Others turned to the hermetic Necrarchs, hoping those lonely few would share their hiding places, but the Necrarchs also rejected them, fearful of being targeted for a similar destruction by the other bloodlines. The Strigoi became so terrified of exposure and extermination that they were forced to live in dark, secret places, far from Humans and civilisation, and they fed only on indigents and hermits, lepers and Ghouls, or most usually, vermin and the already dead. In a century, the great kingdom of Strigos was no more, and its once great princes turned to yelping dogs, hiding in the shadows and stealing scraps.

After that episode of bloody betrayal, the few remaining Strigoi scattered across the Old World. Whenever they met Vampires of different lines they received the same treatment they had endured from the von Carsteins. Soon, the Strigoi Vampires had to hide from the wrath of their own kin and turned to a life of scavenging at the borders of human society. From the darkness of gutters, woods and abandoned buildings they would spy on the Lahmian and von Carstein Vampires at the balls and banquets of the aristocracy. Their beauty, nobility and wealth reminded the miserable Strigoi of what they had lost, and hatred and

envy started to devour their minds. They began to feel the same towards the martial Blood Dragons and powerful Necrarchs, who regarded the Strigoi respectively as a challenging enemy to slay in a duel, or as an interesting specimen to dissect in their laboratories.

The Strigoi slowly transformed into desperate creatures, hated both by the living and by the other Vampires. In their desolation many of them lost their minds completely and became solitary, pathetic creatures, afraid of feeding on humans for fear of attracting the attention of the witch hunters or, even worse, of other Vampires. For this reason they hid in graveyards, digging out recently buried corpses to drink their cold blood and hiding during the day in the dank crypts and gutters near their feeding ground. Their physical appearance soon started to reflect their miserable condition, as they turned into hunched grotesque monstrosities. The more bestial traits of their race soon prevailed and eradicated any semblance of human appearance.

Four hundred years later, the shame of this grew too much to bear for Vorag Bloodytooth, later called The Ghoul King, and he gathered an army of Ghouls and set about rebuilding the lost kingdom. He did create a new capital deep in the Plain of Bones, but his rage was then directed at the Greenskins rather than his fellow Vampires. Once again, fighting that endless angry tide proved deadly, both to him and to his dreams, and his empire fell as Strigos before it. Yet the efforts of Vorag the Ghoul King remain an inspiration to the Strigoi. They still dream of rebuilding their great Vampire empire, and they have learnt much from the mistakes of Vorag. They also dream of taking revenge on their brethren for their centuries of debasement and the betrayal that caused it all. The other bloodlines' folly is that they think the Strigoi are a spent force because they are all hiding or in slumber. But in the shadows, ambition burns all the brighter, and in slumber comes renewed strength. With their guards down, the other bloodlines will have no defence when the Strigoi rise again – and rise again they most surely will.

Even if most of them have to some degree lost their minds during their long exile, the Ghoul Kings still possess many of the innate powers common to all Vampires. They can tear out a victim's throat in the blink of an eye, and their authority over the Undead and the myriad creatures of the night is still strong. The Ghoul Kings have not lost the power to raise the dead from their slumber and bind them to their will, but they do so in their own instinctual way. Their magic is less subtle than the forms of necromancy practiced by other Vampires, but in the cut and thrust of combat, their savagery gives them a definite edge.

Packs of flesh-eating Ghouls are attracted to these lonely creatures and often form grotesque courts around them. Grave robbers and those vile men who gather on battlefields to steal from the bodies of the fallen have learned all too well that they must do their deeds before nightfall and then leave. With darkness,

different kinds of scavengers always fall on these places of death: swarms of Ghouls led by massive, fast and deadly night hunters: Strigoi Vampires. It is little wonder that the peoples of the Old World refer to the Strigoi as the 'Ghoul Kings'.

The same superstitious people accuse the wandering Strigany of being in contact with these dangerous creatures, of worshipping and serving them. It is said that the nomads sometimes kidnap children to offer them to the Ghoul Kings in a parody of the rituals of ancient Strigos. Others are sure that the Strigany help the Strigoi Vampires' to move from town to town in their caravans, contributing to spread this evil plague. These rumours, usually completely false, have cost the Strigany dearly, since they are often persecuted, rejected and killed for no other reason than this reputation.

Strigoi Vampires are rare and are found mostly in the southern provinces of the Empire, in Tilea and the Border Princes. They seem to be somehow attracted towards the Badlands, towards Strigos of old. At times, powerful Strigoi Ghoul Kings raise vast armies of the living dead around themselves and push south in a desperate attempt to recreate the kingdom they lost. So far, their advance has always been halted by warmongering tribes of greenskins blocking the way to the Badlands, or by disciplined armies of the Tomb Kings that stride out from the desert. Yet across the Old World, the minions of the Ghoul Kings have been sighted ever more frequently. Some say the ancient brethren of the Strigoi are uniting under one leader and massing great armies of degenerate beasts in their cavernous lairs. If this is true, no creature – living or dead – is truly safe from their wrath.



Society and Outlook

The scattered nature of the Strigoi means any sort of formal society does not exist, but each individual still remembers the time and ways of Mourkain, and a sense of tradition and history unites their customs. The Strigoi remember what it was like to be lords and kings, and they continue to act as such even though they are currently between reigns.

Their shadow courts and kingly ways are, of course, somewhat changed by the social and physical conditions in which they find themselves, warped into grotesque and often pathetic parodies of what they once were. Their courtiers and servants are now mindless Wights and mad Spirits; their palaces are underground crypts or swampclaimed graveyards. Their people are nothing but filth ridden, bestial Ghouls. Yet, they take their reign seriously, demanding absolute loyalty and proper deference from their subjects, in return offering their dutiful governance as lord protector and keeper of the law and bringing swift reparations on those who enter unwelcome. Some are more lax in their duties than others, of course.

Just as the ways of the Strigoi are rooted in the past so, too, are their minds and memories. Many Strigoi have lost the strength to keep fighting for their return to power and instead have slipped into a grand reverie of their past glories. They relive old battles and celebrations, wear their old titles, and obey long forgotten laws of noblesse oblige. For some, the despair has driven them completely into madness, and they can no longer even tell what is of the present or the past – they may wear sackcloth and believe it to be their lordly robes or converse with friends long since dead. For others, the only escape is in dreams, and they sleep almost constantly, dreaming of better days past or still to come.



Then there are those whose madness takes a more overt and dangerous form. Yudas the Shadow King became the terror of Wissenland when he saw in each young maid the face of his faithless wife. Urzen the Unrelenting still dreams of his martial days, and he drills an army of Zombies and Ghouls through a full parade each night, despite the fact that the mindless creatures can do nothing but obey his every command.

Not all of the Strigoi are lost in their reveries but, instead, use their memories of what they once had and their hunger for revenge as sparks to action and fuel for their great plans. For others, the hunger becomes a cold, terrible resolve, hardened over the centuries into a will unmatched by any other creature. And whatever their mental state, all of the Strigoi are dangerous. Like all Vampires, they take their right to feed upon and dominate all lesser beings as a birthright, and they take just as much offence as their brethren when anything upsets this natural order. A century-sleeping Strigoi may seem like an easy target for the tomb robber or Vampire hunter, but they can awaken in an instant, and their rage at the intrusion will be assuredly terrible. Whilst they lack the countless soldiers of the von Carsteins or the martial prowess of the Blood Dragons, the Strigoi are still just as fearsome. Ushoran could not match the leadership of Vashanesh or the skill of Abhorash, but even when mortal, he was incredibly powerful. Through his blood, his thralls have inherited his might and added to it their Vampiric nature, each one rippling with cord-like muscles and unholy strength. Even a Blood Dragon knows to fear the strength of the Strigoi; if they should ever make a mistake and let those powerful hands get around their neck, their life would be ended in a moment. The Strigoi take great pride in their incredible strength and consider it a sign of their true place amongst Vampire kind – the strongest should be at the top. And there are yet more gifts unique to the Strigoi – but they come with a terrible price.

The lifestyle that forced them into the dark corners of the world has also driven them deeper and deeper into their own dark natures. The more they dwell in the shadows and the bowels of the earth, the more they come to resemble shades and beasts. All pretence of their humanity has fallen away, leaving only the Vampire hunger and the pure essence of the predator, shaping their flesh to better hunt, kill, and feed.

Their bodies curve and bend, their claws become harder and sharper than steel, their fangs grow longer and far more deadly. The most distorted fall onto all fours, their legs and spine twisted, and spikes protrude from their backs. Their ears become pointed like a bat's, and their mouths extend out like that of some sort of daemonic wolf. As time passes, they no longer resemble anything remotely Human; instead, they are creatures of some deformed nightmare.

Eventually, their mind also follows suit, slipping slowly away from their aristocratic delusions, until all that is left is the vague memory of absolute power and the limitless rage at having lost it. Yet, they are still not mindless beasts; all Vampires are princely creatures

and no amount of physical devolution can change that. Even as they rave and froth and howl, they rule over their courts, however deranged, and maintain a sense of noble pride, however twisted. Unto the last, a Strigoi is nothing if not lordly.

Feeding and Breeding

The Strigoi are shunned by all other Vampires, and the Lahmians have their agents in almost every town and city. Humans are not good at keeping secrets, particularly not when they have been selected to sate a Vampire, and those drained to death quickly come to the notice of Witch Hunters. Thus, it is extremely difficult for the Strigoi to feed upon the living or dwell amongst them for any lengthy period. The sole exception to this is the travelling people of old Strigos. Without a kingdom, the last remnants of Ushoran's people were left to wander the Old World, feared and hated by all others for their Vampire-tainted past. Isolated and shunned from Human communities, the predations of the Strigoi Vampires upon these travelling folk remain unnoticed, and, of course, there are many amongst those people who rush to welcome their once and future kings. A wise Strigoi does not stay long with these people, however, for they attract Witch Hunters, as well as Vampire agents, for they know the dark reputation of these folk is often based on truth.

In the main, the Strigoi resort to feeding upon the dead instead of the living, a habit which hastens their descent into insanity and bestial appearance. The dead, unlike the living, attract no attention if disturbed, and their blood, if the corpse was killed within the year, can provide sustenance enough for survival. The taste is cold and bitter, however, so the Strigoi feed as little as possible and take no joy in it. Rats and other vermin add variety but only offer the choice between the bitter

and the insipid. The luckiest ones have learned to suppress their feeding urge, by sleeping, mental exertion, or some darker power.

Unlike their other Vampire brethren, the Strigoi are not social creatures. For safety reasons alone, it is better that they neither meet nor communicate with any of their bloodline. Most find the memories it brings back too painful. Nor do the Strigoi grant the Blood Kiss to anyone, except in the most exceptional of cases. Again, the risk of exposure is much greater after such a deed, and the idea of cursing anyone to live as they do is beyond even the vast cruelty of their dark souls. But it is snobbery as much as mercy that stays them from breeding; when Strigos does rise once again, the kingdom shall be inherited only by those who deserve to do so – those who were so cruelly deprived of it so many years ago. Someone who does not remember that event would only be able to join their number through incredible diligence and deference to the Strigos line.

Designs and Stratagems

The Strigoi do not wait idly for their past glories to return. Even those lost in reverie or insanity ache to return to power and domination. Snatching moments of dominion over mindless Ghouls or some terrified Strigany is no substitute for true kingship, as if water for wine. But how can they bring back the great kingdom of Strigos whilst they remain so desperate and despised?

The answer lies in the example of Vorag the Ghoul King. He was the first of their line to rise up after the massacre and attempt to take back what was once theirs. Although his plans failed, his methods were sound – he took strength from the powers of the Strigoi and applied them far from the realms of the other Vampires – deep in the Badlands.





The other bloodlines, as much as the Strigoi, cling tightly to their lordship over Humans. They care far less about areas where Humans cannot or will not go. Thus, the Strigoi have survived in graveyards, ruins, and dark forests, and it is why Vorag's efforts in the south went unnoticed and were not prevented. If their kingdom is to rise again, then it will do so in places that are similarly lost or forgotten.

Every ruined castle or abandoned graveyard can be a Strigoi stronghold. Every festering bog or desolate wasteland can be their standing ground. Where the lands are hidden by fog, or thick woods, or high mountains, the Strigoi take root and begin, once again, to build their armies and dream of reclaiming their thrones. A whole country, however, would have to be established somewhere quite far from the Empire and its Human agents. The Badlands present the best alternative currently – mostly empty of both Humans and other Vampires and only partly threatened by Greenskins or Ogres. The fact it was once the land of Strigos is also not lost on the Strigoi kings. Further north and almost as lacking in population are the Border Princes, and these lonely, anarchic lands are also fertile ground for the ambitious Strigoi.



Vorag also showed the strength that can be gained from an army of Ghouls, and these creatures are always the foot soldiers and servants of the Strigoi. Starvation is a constant threat across the Old World; one poor harvest, natural disaster, or lost trade caravan can leave an entire village with nothing to eat but the grass and leaves around them. Soldiers and sailors, too, are often lost miles from supplies and surrounded by the dead. Eating the flesh of men in order to survive is far more common than anyone would ever guess, but once done, this sin forever taints the soul, driving the Human to become a hideous, bestial monster. In this, the Strigoi see much of themselves, so many Strigoi are protective and compassionate towards their hideous servants. Others simply see them as a natural force, like the rats and bats and cockroaches that naturally flock to these creatures of decay – useful but due no more concern than any other beast.

Whatever their master's approach, the Ghouls seem driven by their nature to worship the Strigoi fervently and without question, some travel dozens of miles to seek out their masters, searching through the most hidden of places, or some even feel a call in their blood that leads them unerringly to their goal. Rare is the Strigoi Vampire who has no Ghouls in his court, and all of them welcome such followers, for they provide



the greatest gift of all: a chance for the Vampire to feed on the living as opposed to the dry, bitter blood of the dead. Ghoul blood is sour compared to that of a full Human, but it is a great step up from the blood of the dead.

It is easy to dismiss the Ghoul kings as mad masters of equally mad minions, but the Ghouls provide the Strigoi with both a constant supply of fresh blood and a ready army at hand. What is more, Ghouls fight with the frenzy of Troll slayers, terrifying their opponents far more than even a Zombie, and the fact their hearts still beat makes them immune to all the weaknesses of necromancy. Should the Strigoi's magic ever fail, the Ghouls will fight on.

There are many others who serve the Strigoi, of course. Like all Vampires, they are natural Necromancers, and their crypts are full of the dead, able to be summoned up to defend their resting place. They have a great fondness for Spectres, again seeing much of themselves in a creature so fired by an inconsolable need for revenge. Wights, too, make very suitable attendants; the Strigoi approve of the Wights' sense of history and propriety, as well as their unyielding determination to serve their liege lords.

The Strigoi's most powerful weapon of all, however, is simply themselves. They have no need of magic or swordplay, or armies, or political subterfuge. They alone are enough to crush all who challenge them. They are gigantic, muscle-bound monsters, their flesh rotted to a thickness almost impossible to pierce or destroy, and their arms strong enough to rip an Ogre in half. Yet despite their size, they can move faster than the eye can see, climb over any surface at incredible speeds, and use their bat or rat forms to overcome all defences. And they are fired with a hatred purer than anything ever known and a pulsating desire to destroy. They are creatures of nightmare, their hideous nature not hidden behind any Human pretence. To see one is to gaze upon the true image of death in all its terrible glory. Often, the Strigoi have no need of their strength, for their appearance alone has stopped the hearts of many strong, brave men. Especially as their appearance is often a surprise, for they sleep so long that mortals and immortals alike forget them, or think them no longer a threat. This is a mistake they rarely live long enough to regret.

This is the way of the Strigoi; they are forced to dwell in the shadows, prevented from lording over mortal men, but they have kept their pride and their fury. They take what they know they are due and crush those who make the mistake of thinking them weak. And although they stay hidden, they refuse to be cowed by fear of the other bloodlines. Let them come, say the Strigoi. Let them come into the shadows, into our world, where we rule. Let them see what strength we have found in darkness. Let them discover that this so-called dying race has strength enough to kill them all.

And let them know that like Ushoran the First, we are princes, kings, emperors and Gods. We are nobody's whipping boy.

The last group of Gutter Runners which Kreesqueek had sent to explore the access ways to the sewers of Miragliano had returned. The black-clad Assassin and his Eshin acolytes had been hired by a warrior clan and sent on a mission to poison the water reservoir of the city, in preparation for a full-scale assault.

"South entrance closed-closed, Master. Heavy gate, new gate, smell of man-things around. Sewer guards. Bad-bad."

"East gate same-same, Master." confirmed the second party.

A snarl of frustration revealed the razor sharp teeth of the Assassin as he turned towards the leader of the last group. "West gate? Same there? Speak-speak!"

"Ehr, ehm, no Master. West gate abandoned old and rusty, weak-weak, but..."

"But?" snarled the Assassin.

"Master, tunnel runs through place where man-things put dead in ground..."

"Ah, graves-graves, never understood man-things. Why waste food like that... No guards and rusty gate-f'erfence!" concluded the Assassin.

"But, Master. Smelled dead man-things there. Walking dead."

"Bah, worse than man-things in a fight. Just smell bad. Control your fear. We go there."

The cemetery was ancient and had probably been abandoned by humans for many centuries. Vines, mould and lichen had taken over the place and many tombstones were cracked or fallen. The keen eyes of the Assassin, to whom the moonless night was as clear as full daylight, inspected the place. Immediately he noticed that many tombs had been dug up, the earth lying heaped all around as if a pack of animals had clawed their way to the bodies underground. Or perhaps as if the occupants of the coffins had decided to dig their way up from below...

These were tell-tale signs of the presence of the living dead, but Kreesqueek had a mission to accomplish and so decided to proceed. He far preferred to face the Undead than have to inform the Nightlord that he had failed to carry out his orders. The Skaven scuttled silently through the old and sinister graveyard, searching for the crypt that would allow them access to the sewer system of Miragliano.

"That one!" whispered the Assassin, pointing at a small domed building, festooned with derelict statues and carrying the emblem of the noble family Biscione. "Our passage. In there."

The Gutter Runners were approaching the dark stairs leading down when a weird noise rose from deep underground. It was an extremely high-pitched scream, assaulting the fine senses of the Skaven and forcing them to cover their ears with their paws. The scream stopped as abruptly as it had begun. A strange feeling of cold and dread immediately struck the ratmen, the fur on the back of their necks stood on end and their hearts quickened. The musk of fear filled the air.

Then the Undead attacked: stumbling skeleton warriors emerged from the crypt and the mausoleums around them, rusty blades and shields in their grisly hands. The Skaven hesitated and seemed on the verge of breaking into a run, but Kreesqueek did not lose his cool: "Don't run! You flee: I kill you. Everyone! Fight-fight! They die easy!"

To demonstrate, he hurled a throwing star right through the neck of a skeleton. The skull of the thing fell to the ground and after a second the rest of its bones simply exploded.

Bolstered by the Assassin's presence, the Gutter Runners swallowed their fear, drew their swords and attacked. The Assassin smiled. He wondered if any of his underlings realised that the devastating effect of his throwing star had been due to the powdered warpstone in the poison that coated Kreesqueek's weapons. Well, at least now they were fighting. The Assassin knew that his opponents' greatest weapon was the fear they inspired and that they were next to useless at close quarters. The fight was soon over, the well-trained adepts of Clan Eshin had destroyed all the necromantic creations, receiving only a few minor wounds in return.

"Told you. Easy-easy. Too slow for Clan Eshin. Now, move in."

The Gutter Runners started their descent into the dank crypt and soon reached a large underground chapel. "Entrance under altar," whispered the Assassin. "Across the place. This way... wait!"

This time the attack was much more sudden and unexpected. From their hiding places in the alcoves and behind the pillars of the chapel, bestial humanoid creatures jumped on the Skaven, snarling ferociously.

"Ghouls-ghouls!" shouted Kreesqueek, drawing his two weeping blades and throwing himself into the fray.

This was a very different fight, the Ghouls were not as slow as the skeletons; their attack was ferocious. Even though the Gutter Runners were more skilled and better armed, the bodies of these foul creatures seemed impervious to pain and the slightest scratch from their poisonous claws and fangs could prove fatal. Soon several Skaven lay on the ground, their bodies twitching in death spasms. The ratmen would have probably been overwhelmed if Kreesqueek hadn't been there, but the formidable Assassin made all the difference in the fight. The Eshin Master moved with uncanny speed, his deadly warpstone blades cutting left and right, leaving behind a pile of mutilated corpses. After a few minutes the Ghouls' ferocity vanished under Kreesqueek's onslaught and the scavengers ran away, massing towards the far end of the hall.

Led by the Assassin, the three remaining Gutter Runners pursued them, only to stop puzzled when they saw what the Ghouls were intent on. The creatures had gathered around a massive marble sarcophagus lying behind the main altar and were now frantically hitting its lid and scratching at it with their claws, squealing and snarling in fear, as if calling for help.

The heavy lid fell to the side, moved aside easily by a taloned hand that emerged from within. A creature rose from the sarcophagus and all the Ghouls crouched on the floor, in awe. The

stench of death and ancient decay filled the hall. The Skaven began to back off, staring at this new monstrosity, which was in many ways similar to the Ghouls around it yet somehow different. This one was larger, more powerful, its body deformed and twisted, with traits that reminded the Skaven of the bats which shared their tunnels. But it was the glowing green eyes of the beast, filled with a kind of deranged evil intelligence, which made the Gutter Runners think that it regarded them merely as prey. Suddenly, emitting a piercing shriek, the creature attacked at unbelievable speed. Two Skaven were impaled by the huge claws of the monster before they could raise their weapons to defend themselves. The other turned to run, but he too was grasped and torn in two by the powerful hands of the monster.

Kreesqueek was too good a fighter to turn his back on such an opponent and kept his guard up, ready for anything. The creature stooped down and, keeping his eyes on the Skaven leader, started to drink deeply from the broken bodies of the Gutter Runners. Kreesqueek now understood what he was facing. Vampire! thought the Assassin. That's why no man-things come here.

The thing suddenly jumped and attached itself to the ceiling of the chapel, its obscene head turned completely backwards so as not to lose sight of the Assassin for a single instant.

Kreesqueek moved a few cautious steps back in the direction of the entrance. Then he froze. He could smell the Ghouls closing the circle behind him like well-coordinated predators. Kreesqueek realised that he had to try to kill the Vampire, it was his only chance. The Vampire was looking intently at the Skaven's swords from the dark ceiling. The vague, green halo surrounding the weapons was a warning to the Undead creature, for it remembered tasting the bite of similar weapons long ago and did not want to repeat the experience. The Ghouls were too close now and Kreesqueek made his move. A throwing star darted towards the Vampire, but the thing deflected it with a claw and answered by hissing a series of arcane words, a clenched finger pointed at the Assassin. At first Kreesqueek couldn't perceive any change, but soon the weeping blades he carried seemed to become heavier and more difficult to hold as his arms started to shake. When he tried to move, he felt his body sluggish and slow. With horror the Assassin saw the fur on the back of his paw turning grey and start to fall off. His was not a long-living race, and the necromantic powers unleashed against him were turning every second into a month. He was dying. Kreesqueek panicked and turned to run, but his collapsing body couldn't sustain him and he fell, never to rise again.

While the Ghouls feasted on the bodies of the Gutter Runners, the Strigoi Vampire picked up the swords of the Assassin from the pile of dust and bones which were all that was left of the Skaven. For a while the creature admired the weapons, fascinated by the green crackling energies playing on the blades. Then he retired to a dark alcove where he dropped the weeping blades on a heap of weapons, jewels and other arcane objects which he had collected during the long centuries of his existence. A strange smile split his deformed face. "One new present for Rametep... nice, shiny present" whispered the monster, rubbing its taloned hands together and tittering maniacally in the dark.

THE VON CARSTEINS – PRINCES OF DARKNESS

They say history is made by great men and women. That is certainly true for the Vampires, but none have written that history so boldly or so thick with blood as the von Carsteins. Of all the Vampires that have ever been known to man, the cursed bloodline of the von Carsteins is the most infamous. Handsome, arrogant, charismatic and proud, the von Carsteins are the true aristocracy of the night. They are creatures of enormous passion and unbridled ambition, and their most trivial desires shape the destinies of entire nations. There are few facts but much legend surrounding the origins of this Vampire bloodline, destined to become the most powerful and important in the history of the Old World – and the greatest enemy of humankind. Fear them or fall.

History

Lahmizzar was the King of Lahmia who led the first revolution against Nagash. Lahmizzar had a son, Lahmizzash, who finally drove Nagash from the land. Lahmizzash had a daughter, and she was Neferatem who became Neferata, the beautiful death. After the death of Neferatem's mother, Lahmizzash married another, a beauty known as Nefarazi, who was descended from the line of the great Nagash. The son of Lahmizzash and Nefarazi was Nalakhazar, and his son was Lakhashaz, who was the ruler of Khemri until he lost his throne to the usurper General Setep. And there the line was thought ended, for Setep killed all who dwelled in the palace.

But Lakhashaz had a son with one of his concubines: a tall and powerful lad called Vashanesh. He possessed all the nobility of Lahmizzar and all the strategic genius of Lahmizzash, and his blood carried the command of Neferata and the strength and resilience of Nagash. Vashanesh escaped the purges of Setep, disguising himself for a time as a loyal soldier, and journeyed instead to Lahmia. He knew Setep's rebellion was supported because the people of Khemri could not abide their king ignoring the decadence (and rumours of black sorcery) of the lords of Lahmia. He was determined to find the truth behind the rumours and search for allies against the usurper.

When Vashanesh arrived at the court of Neferata, he demanded a private audience with the queen. Ushoran the Prince of Masques stepped forward and mocked his

The Origin of the Name

Mortal and Vampire scholars alike can find no explanation for the choice of the name von Carstein. There is not nor has there ever been a village, town, or province in the Old World named Carstein, so the name could not have originated in the natural way. Nor are there any records of the name existing before the coming of Vlad. It seems the name was coined by the prince himself. It obviously had a powerful meaning to him, but any chance of ever knowing that meaning went with Vlad's destruction.

arrogance, but Vashanesh simply ignored him and stepped around him. Abhorash, the great warrior, stepped forward and put his blade to Vashanesh's throat, but Vashanesh did not even flinch. With his eyes still fixed on Neferata, he pushed Abhorash's blade away. With a wave of her hand, she dismissed all her court, even W'soran, her most trusted advisor.

In private discussion, Vashanesh told her all he knew of Setep's plans, and she confessed to the truth about her court. She promised to shield Vashanesh from Setep if he would discipline her court and her soldiers, the two of them ruling as king and queen. That very day they were married, and that same night Vashanesh drank deep of the Elixir of Life.

But even with Vashanesh's great wisdom and command, the seeds of tyranny laid by General Setep had run deep and wide, and eventually the new pretender, Alcadizaar, brought forth an immense army from every province and city of Nehekhar. Despite all their power and skill, the city could not hold against such a force, and it was brought to ruin, its Vampire rulers forced to flee.

Eventually, the seven First Children arrived at Nagashizar, as Nagash had foreseen. He immediately saw that Vashanesh was the greatest of them all and that Vashanesh saw the great need to control his blood kin lest they destroy themselves. So, much to the bitterness of the others, Nagash presented a ring to Vashanesh, a ring which promised him instant resurrection for every death he suffered, as well as the power to control his fellow Vampires. In return, Nagash demanded the loyalty of all the Vampires, or he would curse them forever.





Of course, it was a trap, and the ring forced Vashanesh to do Nagash's bidding, and through him, all his brethren became slaves of the necromancer. And though Nagash provided the Vampires with new powers and insight to crush Alcadizaar, it soon became obvious that he cared nothing for their battles or aims. Vashanesh cursed the name of Nagash and refused to be subjugated to another's will any longer. He devised a plan to break the hold upon him. Upon the battlefield, he challenged Alcadizaar to a duel. The Khemri king was easily outmatched by the Vampire, but Vashanesh dropped his guard deliberately, and his opponent cut off his head. With his death, the magical hold was broken, and the Vampires fled the lands of Nehekharat at once. Nagash's curse followed them, but they were free.

Of Vashanesh, there was no sign. Yet, he did not die, and centuries later he was discovered by the Strigoi in his remote fortress in Kislev – then he vanishes from records again. Legends of the time of Sigmar suggest he may have aided the God-king in his destruction of Nagash, and there are other tales, but nothing is confirmed. Certainly there were no signs of the decisive actions that so characterised this great man in his time in Lahmia. And eventually, all trace of Vashanesh disappears.

Then, two thousand years after the betrayal of Nagash, a figure appeared in Sylvania, calling himself Prince Vladimir von Carstein, and he claimed to be the heir of Vashanesh. For some, the pretence was obvious: this was undeniably Vashanesh wearing borrowed robes.

Others swore that there was something different, something greatly changed from the Vashanesh they knew. For his part, Prince Vladimir never spoke of his past nor did he ever use any other name. If he ever was Vashanesh, he was no longer.

Prince Vladimir's first actions were to help Vanhel master necromancy. They raised a giant army of the dead to turn back the Skaven menace; Vlad then vanished from history again. He appears sporadically in the records of that blighted province over the following centuries, but it was not until that fateful night of 1797 that he once again took a commanding role in the fates of nations. With his marriage to Isabella, he put into action a plan that would drive the Old World into a hundred and twenty years of devastating war – a war that would claim the lives of countless Old Worlders, destroy the strength of the Empire, and which would only be won through terrible sacrifice and amazing luck.

Eventually, Vlad was slain and his dreams followed close behind. All of his get were destroyed in succession, either by each other or by the brave warriors of the Empire: Fritz, Hans, Pieter, bloodthirsty Konrad, and finally even the cunning Mannfred. But countless others of the bloodline survived, continuing as they ever had, and their impact upon Sylvania could not be erased. The world was forever changed by their actions, and when Mannfred returned to life, he found it waiting for him with open arms and ready as ever to support his grand designs for dominion and conquest. This, however, was still not the end of the von Carsteins in the Empire. Who can tell how many eccentric men still carry the curse in their veins, or how many Vampires hide in the haunted castles or dark woods of Sylvania. It is only too likely that one day the Empire will tremble once again at the name of von Carstein.

The von Carsteins have returned, and their will shall be made law once again.

Society and Outlook

The von Carstein family traces its lineage back to the founding of the Empire. Ancient beyond compare, they have long ruled the lands of Sylvania with mixed results. Although whispers and rumours abound about their dark nature and unholy character, the people under their rule are more or less content, regarding the nobility no differently than peasants do in other lands. What many suspect but few know with certainty is that the von Carsteins have a terrible secret – they are Vampires.

Whilst easily the most famous Vampiric nobles, they are not alone in their Undead state. Throughout the Old World, there are other noble families who harbour the same curse (or blessing), but they either lack the subtlety or the numbers to survive for more than a generation before some Witch Hunter comes a-calling. It is the von Carstein perseverance, strength, and mythology that places them above the other Vampire nobles and ensures their place as some of the most dreadful Vampires in the Warhammer world.

Many nobles believe deeply in the concept of the peerage to its literal extreme. Nobility, in other words, is in the blood. The upper classes are placed above the lower because only they have the qualities necessary to rule, and these qualities can only be passed through the blood. The von Carsteins are no exception.

The von Carstein family does not just apply this theory to the lands of Sylvania or their bondsmen, however. It applies to the entire world and everything in it. The simple truth every von Carstein knows is that they were born to rule, and everyone not of their bloodline was born to grovel at their feet.

They are, every one, prideful, arrogant, and Megalomaniacal – although, one wonders if it is truly arrogance to believe in their own superiority given the endless amount of times it has been proven. The von Carsteins are naturally theatrical and consummate braggarts, yet over and over they have proven that their

Notable von Carsteins
The von Carstein family tree is vast, twisted, and bloodstained, and each of its members have left behind enough suffering and destruction to fill a history book. All of them, in short, are notable figures, and those few that stand out have written the history of the world—or will soon enough.

*Vlad the Great, his immortal love Isabella, Konrad the Butcher, and Mannfred the Last: these are names known to every history student in the Empire. Other scholars might know Constantin von Carstein, the great scholar and biographer of Konrad and Mannfred. As a vicious killer and consummate swordsman, he had the opportunity to be close to Konrad throughout his entire campaign, and much of the information known about the Vampire counts comes from the scavenged pages of his detailed works. He did not die with his masters, however, and he may be planning to make some history of his own. Count von Sangster is also famed for his scholarship, amongst both mortals and Vampires. It is said his great library is rivalled only by that of Mannfred, and Sangster's recent *History of the Empire* is considered to be the greatest and most complete ever compiled. So much so that Human scholars will gladly risk the association with the author to read a copy – and as he lives in Nuln, access is not difficult to arrange.*

History students of the Empire will also know the name of Tzarina Kattarin of Kislev. Her Vampiric nature is less well known, but she is famed for her blood-soaked reign. After trying to resist her need to feed for many months, she went insane and slaughtered thousands of her own people, as well as countless soldiers of the Empire. She was eventually killed by agents of the Lahmian Sisterhood, but her corpse remains preserved in a great block of ice, and there are many who would love to see her returned to power in the frozen north.

words are not empty, and they can indeed do all they boast. Beware the von Carstein who swears to hunt you to the ends of the earth, for he is not exaggerating, and he will keep that promise.

This is not least because of family pride. The von Carsteins take their name and noble duties very seriously, and if they swear something upon them, they will move all the earth to see it through. Of course, herein lies the terrible contradiction of the von Carsteins. They consider their bloodline sacred, yet because the blood itself is considered enough to make one a member of their ranks, they are often faced with less ideal members making a mockery of their name. The only solution is to constantly engage in internecine wars so that only the truly greatest amongst them are allowed to bear the illustrious name.

Thus it is that the von Carsteins devote most of their lives to the twin obsessions at the heart of all nobility, conspiring to improve their status over each other and waging outright war. Very often, they war amongst themselves, but they much prefer to wage it upon the foolish mortals who still refuse to recognise the von Carstein greatness.

All Vampires crave power and dominion, but they rarely understand what it truly is or how to get it. The von Carsteins know, in the Old World, ultimate power rests in the control of land. They do not, therefore, seek to dominate people or organisations, except as a means to gathering more territory. And the only sure way to gather and secure territory is through force. As a result, most von Carsteins are trained to be generals, as well as princes. Even women of the line study strategy and tactics and learn the costs and conditions of battle. Of



course, many soon tire of such schooling or forgo it to devote themselves to more sensual pursuits, but there is no more fertile bed of military genius than the von Carstein family.

War against mortals also serves to unify the squabbling family and direct their violence outwards. Thus, when a strong leader takes control of the bloodline, he almost always follows with a bloody crusade to expand the borders of Sylvania. Of course, not all of the bloodline live in that province, but their blood and their fortunes are irrevocably tied to it. In order to rule properly, they require land, as mentioned. Sylvania is the first step towards that, a home base of sorts, where they can rest in relative safety and conspire to make the entire world their Sylvania. Until they reach that goal, however, and perhaps even when they do, Sylvania will be as dear to them as their own lives, and they will never surrender it to the upstarts of Stirland or other pretenders. Land is power, and if Sylvania ever falls, then so do the von Carsteins. They are too proud to go into hiding like the Strigoi or the Necrarchs. For the von Carsteins, there are only two choices, total domination or destruction.

This determination does not mean that they are foolish, nor will they sacrifice victory for pride or pique. Nor are they consumed by warfare as the Blood Dragons are. It is the source of their power, not the aim of it, and there is much time for other noble pursuits – art, music, history, literature, science, great quests, and distant exploration are common themes, as are the studies of magic and necromancy. Although some have no interest or much power, only the obsessed Necrarchs can match the most scholarly von Carsteins in mastery of the Dark Arts.



The von Carsteins also make time to build up their empires, creating not just grand and beautiful castles but also improving public works, supporting the peasants, and administering the law. Acutely aware of the need to enshrine their memories, they are the most generous of patrons to artists, minstrels, and architects, and they host the most lavish of parties for their fellow nobles and even organise celebrations for the common folk. Sometimes these events or creations are entirely innocent, or rather, designed simply to improve the Vampire's popularity. Other times, they take a darker aspect. Countess Lavash's bathhouse is a wonder of modern engineering, automatically sluicing the fresh blood spilt by the rotating knives down into her deep bath, heating it en-route, and the great Sun Still sporting festival in Allebrand has the peasants competing for the honour of becoming their lord's next meal, ensuring the strongest warriors of the village are eliminated. The Allebranders are told their lord sends the best athletes off to the Reikland to fight for the Emperor, but the peasants are becoming suspicious about the lack of letters sent home.

Perhaps the most famous social event, however, was the infamous Danse Macabre of 2010. Vlad and Isabella had re-popularised the custom of dressing as the dead upon Geheimnisnacht, and had invited every noble in Sylvania, and many more from beyond its borders, to attend a great celebration in Vanhaldenschlosse. Thanks to the von Carstein gifts in propriety and presentation, it was viewed to be the social event of the decade, and hundreds of nobles flocked to their castle to see and be seen. Of course, as Vlad read his great spell of awakening from the

Mortal von Carsteins

Johann Haifisch was one of several necromancers who wore the guise of a noble in Sylvania. His great accomplishment was a ritual to forever bind his blood to the land using the magic of the Waystones, blood sacrifice, and pacts with dark powers to buy himself and his descendants a foul inheritance of evil and magic. The Haifisch family survived Vlad's rise to power by offering up their beautiful daughters, and through intermarriage with the Vampires, they were eventually given the name of von Carstein. The magical potency of these mortal von Carsteins increases greatly when they are made Vampires, so the two lines have existed alongside each other, intertwined for centuries. When Mannfred fell at Hel Fenn, they assumed other names and hid themselves, waiting for his return.

The current heir of the mortal von Carstein line was named Vlad in preparation for a great honour. Upon Mannfred's return he would be the first to receive the Blood Kiss and become a symbol of the return of the old ways. Young Vlad, however, had other ideas. He ran away from home to pursue his own dreams in the Empire and has not been seen since. The von Carsteins have agents searching for him, and they believe he is currently making a living as some kind of entertainer in Altdorf.



battlements, Isabella and their men fell upon the guests, devouring every one until the massive ballroom was a charnel house, knee-deep in blood and gore. It was the quintessential von Carstein celebration, combining their two greatest talents: high society and abundant slaughter.

Feeding and Breeding

The reason the von Carsteins need land and people to tend it is that they share a common desire to domesticate their food source. It is not that they mind hunting – many of them adore it – but they find it insulting that they should have to do it from the shadows, with care, lest the prey lash out at the predator. It is not enough men should die for them; they should die like sheep.

The Vampires of the von Carstein bloodline do everything they can to remind mortals of their proper place in the world – as either food or slaves. They play upon humanity's natural tendency to be swayed by authority figures, playing upon the feudal system and the role of the noble within it. They provide defence of the lands whilst the peasants provide the food – only literally, in this case. They also make sure their justice is swift and their might visible, so the mortals are awed by their strength and cowed by it.

They strongly encourage the romantic image of the noble as shining symbols of greatness, chosen by the Gods because of their inherent superiority. Possessing such a superior, holy nature, it is therefore a simple step to convince people that being fed upon is the greatest honour, a chance to be blessed by these Gods amongst men, and share, if only for a moment, a glimmer of their glory.

And all too often, it works.

And it works not because the feeding is almost painless and gives the victim wyrd-root dreams combined with the courage of good whiskey, nor because of the illicit or romantic image of the transaction, nor because of any dark knowledge or political advantage that might be gained – although, all these do occur. It works because Humans are always ready to believe in their own inherent inferiority and the superiority of other, better men. Nobles, Elves, or Vampires, it is all the same.

In Sylvania, because they can act so publicly, the cult of the Vampire is very strong, sometimes literally, as in the case with the Wiederauferstanden, the Cult of the Risen Dead, who worship the von Carsteins as Gods. Others serve no less ardently, despite lacking a religious belief; there are towns in eastern Sylvania where the people compete for the honour of being bled, lining up like lambs for the slaughter. Those who miss out on providing sustenance may console themselves by touching their lord's coat or similar, or they may find many other ways to serve him, in his household or without. There is honour and privilege even in scrubbing a great Vampire's floors – and if the job is done exceptionally, it may lead to greater honours.

Of course, it is not this overt everywhere in Sylvania, and though the instinct to tug the forelock runs deep and wide, there are many in that province who still have not forgotten the true nature of the Vampires. For such people, however, their very fear keeps them equally pacified and controlled. Others have lived so long under a threat constantly shown to be invincible that they give into despair and simply accept their fate. Inevitably, there are few who have the will to resist their predators, and fewer still with the strength to do anything about it, and so the von Carsteins can feed openly, easily, and without fear. One day, the von Carsteins believe, all the world will be the same.

Their dependence on the lofty, noble image of the Vampire is why they are so selective in giving the Blood Kiss. There is no point passing on the von Carstein blood to one who will mingle with the common folk or not uphold the high standards of the family. A von Carstein must be arrogant to the core, fundamentally assured of both his family's prominent place in the universe and his own. If this is not the case when the Kiss is given, instruction will be provided; indeed, new Vampires are schooled in every aspect of their noble life, including strategy, manipulation, and conspiracy.

Likewise, if the Vampire is ever found wanting in his lordly skills and duties, he may (if he is lucky) be prompted to mind the honour of his family name. Nobody is warned twice. The simplest way to ensure someone has all the appropriate breeding and temperament the von Carsteins demand is to ensure they are blood relations to the von Carstein family. By restricting their attention to those of familial blood, they ensure the continuation of the line and expand the true family. Those who would join the von Carsteins and who are not born to the blood must marry into the family. This is no small matter. Just like the snobbish

nobles of Altdorf, von Carstein Vampires often examine the background of a prospective inclusion with a fine-tooth comb, going back hundreds of years to make sure there are no signs of commoner blood or inappropriate conduct. Of course, such things can be covered up or doctored; Lady Ariette managed to seriously damage the reputation of her rival Lady Carlotta when she encouraged her to embrace the seemingly spotless Lord Engelmier, only to reveal afterwards the scandalous gossip that Engelmier's grandfather had been a crofter.

There are, as always, exceptions to this careful attitude, for nobles are eccentrics by nature, and the von Carsteins doubly so. Full-blown madness also runs rife through their blood. There are tales of the Vampire counts transforming common stable boys or serving wenches because they liked their looks, not to mention their favourite horses, dogs, and cats. Such exceptions are frowned upon (especially since favourites can be stuffed or resurrected as Zombies), but eccentricities are also seen as the right and privilege of the noble blooded. If one is eccentric enough, he may become the talk of the season and thus redeem his social standing – one stableboy is an insult, but a harem of half a hundred is a grandiose diversion.

In short, when it comes to the Blood Kiss, as with almost everything in the life of these idle rich, there is a great deal of propriety to be observed – but every rule can be broken if one is powerful enough to do so.

Designs and Stratagems

The von Carsteins have links to the majority of the ruling nobles of the land of Sylvania, and as such, their aims are like any noble house – to remain powerful and wealthy and to increase their power and wealth. They go about achieving these goals in much the same way as any other province of the Empire and through the same political system.

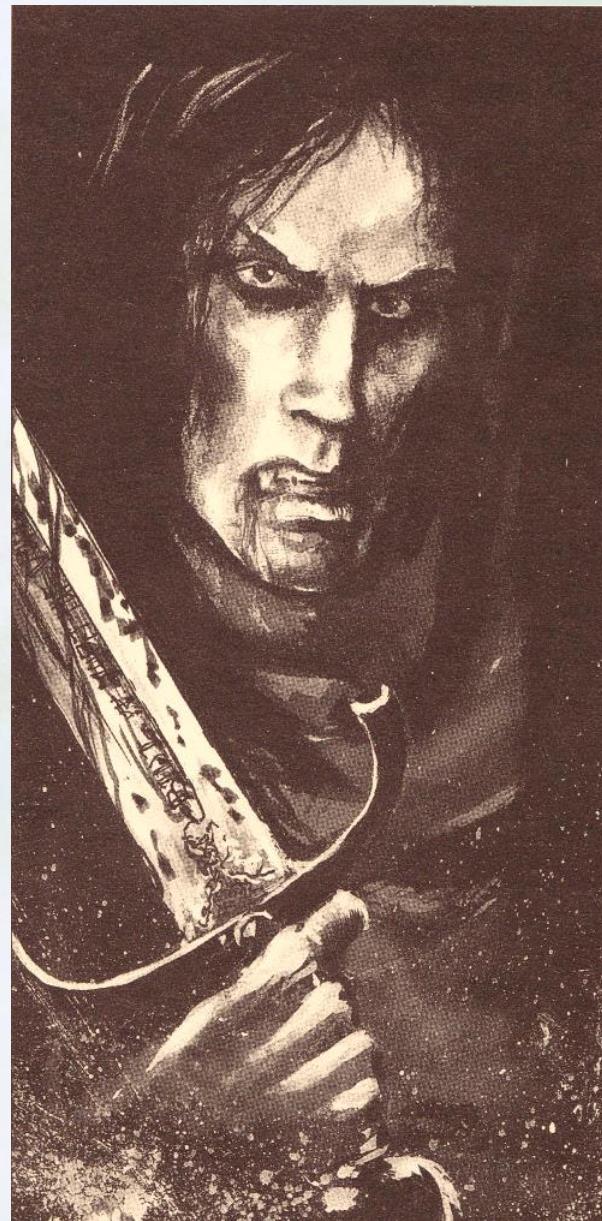
Five Brothers

Wilhelmina von Garrick, Magister Vigilant of the Amethyst Order, has discovered the true extent of Mannfred's new plans for the Empire and knows they are far from ready to resist him. They need time to rebuild their defences and study the ways of resisting necromancy. And the best way to ensure they have that time is to use the von Carsteins' tendencies against them.

Wilhelmina intends to raise the other four of Vlad's get to life, knowing they will fall into squabbling amongst each other and delay Mannfred's plans. She understands the risks to her soul but believes that just as the priests of Sigmar studied the works of Nagash to hold back Mannfred, the risk is worth it given the danger. There are some within her order who are looking to find some adventurers to stop her without an official incident—but she makes a persuasive argument, and many adventurers might decide instead to join her in her lengthy quest instead.

The newly returned Mannfred is the ruler of the land, and his nobles owe him allegiance and support. The Vampires of his land are considered the most powerful, followed by those of the von Carstein line who lack the Kiss, and then the remaining nobles outside the family. Each noble provides land taxes and troop levies to his superior, and each receives military support in return. In practice, of course, it rarely works so smoothly.

Mannfred only holds power because of his military strength, his enduring charisma, and a complex system of alliances and promises he has made with the lesser lords. And his power is relatively limited; if his fellow counts have a strong reason to object to one of his campaigns, they can deny him troops – and pray that Mannfred lacks the manpower to crush them for the insult. Despite his military strength, Mannfred has to be a political creature as well and must choose actions that will be well supported. Luckily, everyone supports expanding the borders of Sylvania and crushing the armies of the Empire, and this is a constant theme in Mannfred's plans. Also, few Vampires want to make Mannfred angry because few want the responsibility and dangers of his position. Most are content to let him





work on the problem of conquering the Old World, as long as they remain assured of their place in his new republic when it comes.

Beyond the provision of troops, however, Mannfred has little official control over any of his subordinates, nor is there any unifying laws or vows that must be kept. Each feudal lord is therefore free to do whatever he wishes with the land he owns and the peasants who are tenants on it, and the only greater consequence of any such actions might be the slightest change in his social standing. Gifted with a cowed and terrified populace, the individual Vampire lords are free to inflict the most cruel and unusual strictures and enjoy the most indulgent and decadent oppression, and pursuing this entertainment indefinitely is often the limit of the evil plans of most von Carstein Vampires.

It makes up in cruelty for what it lacks in vision, however. The temptation to create more and more savage or bizarre demands upon the peasants – simply to see if they can get away with it – is certainly too hard for many to resist. Count Marcellan von Carstein once ordered his townsfolk to eat nothing but grass, in order to study the effects of such a diet, whilst Lady Carlotta famously forced husbands to execute their own wives if they committed the crime of bearing them more than two children. Her reason was she didn't want her town growing too fast, as it might then spread over her favourite patch of lilies on a nearby hillside.

When not oppressing their own people, the chief aims of the von Carsteins are, as mentioned, waging war upon each other and waging war upon mortals. Either way, the motivation is the same – to acquire more land – and the mechanics rarely stray far from the common theme. Before outright hostilities begin, there is blackmail, deceit, and manipulation. Afterwards, there are waves of Undead soldiers: Skeletons, Zombies,

Wight cavalry on great Nightmares, and more. Against each other, this often results in a stalemate, as each side can simply keep renewing their troops, and the Vampires are usually forced to return to more subtle methods. But against the fragile mortals, the direct approach has a terrible effectiveness.

It is not a subtle strategy, but it has no need to be. No mortal army can stand against one whose troops never die and whose forces grow larger with every conflict, won or lost. Vlad's army was only turned back at Altdorf because of trickery, by one of his own get. Konrad was defeated only because his subordinates tired of serving under his raging insanity. And Mannfred's great campaign was only halted when the grand theogonist damned his own soul by reading from the Books of Nagash – and afterwards, it took every standing army in the entire Empire to drive him home and attempt to end his life.

But no Vampire can truly die whilst there are those who remember him, and if there is one thing every von Carstein Vampire is good at it, it is stamping a legacy hard and deep into the hearts and minds of his people, into their history and their legends, even into the landscape itself. Sylvania can never forget the Vampire counts, and thus, they will return again and again and again, ready and eager to once more rain down death upon the Empire and crush its people under their cruel dominion, until all the world sinks beneath a darkness of their making – a darkness from which it will never awake.



For the eyes of the most benevolent grand Theogonist, Volkmar of Altdorf.

2nd of Sigmarzeit

Your Holiness, according to your wishes, I have travelled to the tainted land of Sylvania, crossing the border on 1st of Sigmarzeit, to investigate the rumors of the resurgence of the most vile Undead, in this province known for the activity of the restless dead. We have heard claims that a minor Necromancer has taken residence in Drakenhof Castle, and I have gathered a force of forty men from amongst order, including Klaus Kriegsburg, a warrior-priest in the service of the most holy Sigmar. I am confident that we shall finish this quest quickly and efficiently.

It has been a long journey and a hard one, and I am pleased-to inform you that daring my travel's I had put two villages, Lichenheim and Forburg, to the torch, due to the unmistakable blasphemous rites in which the peasants of said villages hung bundles of garlic and witchbane to ward off evil. Me and my men acquired confessions of witchcraft, daemon-worship and unnatural practices from the villagers, and I ordered the ultimate sanction. There were no survivors in either place. We cannot tolerate such open displays of black sorcery in our most holy Empire, and we must show the righteous wrath of Sigmar to these wretches.

23rd of Sigmarzeit

Now, after spending three weeks on the accursed roads and paths of this, the most dire of the provinces, my men and I can see the ruins of Drakenhof Castle on the horizon. Sigmar willing, we shall be able to reach them before dusk-time tomorrow.

24th of Sigmarzeit

Coming upon the Castle, my suspicions were immediately raised, as the rained battlements were restored, and a banner bearing the device of a snarling wolf was flying from the top most tower.

We first encountered resistance when we approached the gates of the castle itself. Five huge wolves, their eyes gleaming in the dark, attacked from nowhere. My own four warhounds, brave beasts though they are, whimpered in terror and refused to attack them. Three of my men died fighting against these hounds from hell, for even after they were mortally wounded, these ghastly refused to die. We had to cut them to pieces, and even then the bodies continued to twitch, long after any natural animal would have given up its life.

We decided to catty in the ruins of the hamlet of Drakenhof, and I set a strong watch for the night. Despite this, I felt uneasy and my sleep was plagued by nightmares.

Unknown day

I beg forgiveness froth your Holiness, for I have not been able to write for several days. I am hiding somewhere in these accursed-woods, and my lifeblood is slowly draining away. There is little time, and much to tell.

The following morning I found my sentries dead, their faces ashen with terror, their hair white as if they had aged fifty years in a single night. One of my men wished to abandon our mission, and I was forced to shoot him as he tried to run. There is no room for cowards in the ranks of our order. The rest of my men saw the sound reasoning of my argument, and followed me to the gates of the castle.

We entered the gates unopposed, and made our way through the dimly fit corridors of the castle. Torches and braziers illuminated the halls and chambers, a further proof that someone occupied the castle. We made our way all the way to the great banquet hall before meeting anyone or anything.

On the table, laid out on a red silk tablecloth, was a hideous parody of a nobleman's feast. Carcasses of men and women were laid on the plates, still dripping blood and the golden goblets were filled with red liquid. I have smelled blood before, and I knew that men had given up their lives so those who gathered around this table could drink.

At the head of the table sat a tall gaunt man, dressed in the fashion of noblemen of old. When we entered he stood up, and smiled, revealing long, canine teeth. He spoke to us, confirming my fears.

"I am von Carstein. Welcome to my house. I hope your stay here will be long. Very long."

I immediately gave the command to attack. Dieter, my adjutant, charged the man claiming to be von Carstein, but was flung aside, his skull crushed by the force of the blow. I didn't even see when the man struck, so swift was his hand.

The man claiming to be von Carstein drew a sword with a wolf-head guard, and in an instant was in our midst. He had killed two before the rest of us could draw our weapons. The blade of Hans, my best swordsman, took him in chest, and yet he did not go down but gutted the brave Highlander with a deadly riposte.

Klaus, the Warrior Priest, lifted his warhammer with a prayer to Sigmar in his lips, but the Count turned his red eyes on the holy man, and spoke a single word. To my horror I saw the flesh rip from Klaus's, and his skeleton collapsed on the floor.

I knew then that we could not stand against such horror alone, and ordered a retreat. As we ran, we could hear the mocking laughter of the Vampire Count following us.

There is little else to tell; for we fled through the Sylvanian woods and my men were taken one by one by the pursuers the Count sent after us: walking corpses, huge, blood-sucking bats and great Undead wolves. Now only I remain, and I am mortally wounded. There is no donor in my mind – the dread Count has returned to his abode and even now he prepares his armies to wreak a terrible revenge on the Old-World.

All of my men are dead: or worse, and I can hear my pursuers closing in. The howling of the great wolves fills the air, and it can be only a short while before they find me. There is little time left for me before I go Morr, in the land of the dead.

I will tie this scroll to the collar of my last warhound Stein, and hope that it somehow reaches the capital and finds its way to your presence. I urge your Holiness to alert his Majesty the Emperor to the danger. If I am right, we are all in dire peril, and it will be only a matter of time before the armies of the vile Undead strike west against Stirland and Ostland, as they did three hundred years ago.

Even in death I remain your most humble servant,

Gunther Stahlberg, Witch Hunter Captain of the Secret Brethren of Sigmar

My lord von Carstein, we recovered this letter before it could reach the safety of Stirland. I felt that your lordship would find it amusing.



Aristocracy of the Night

Witch hunters came to the town. The Elector Count, tiring of the incessant reports of strange happenings, unaccountable deaths, apparitions and such like, and fearing the hysteria of the mob, finally sent for them. They were given the edict of authority and carried the Theogonist's seal, with the haste and zeal that is typical of them they set to work at once. Some wretches were rounded up quickly by the torch-bearing mobs that followed the witch hunters from village to village. Who knows how many of those summarily dispatched by the sword, the stake and the flame were really Vampires or sorcerers? These witch hunters are not reasonable men, and they thrive on the superstition of the ignorant.

Having purged the countryside, the witch hunters turned their attention on the nobility. Wealth, luxury and decadence were denounced in the public square, and the mobs began banging and baying at the doors of rich households. Even the Count was alarmed at this turn of events and chose this moment to visit Altdorf with his entire household so as to be safely out of the way. The strange Zmada family, merchants from Ostland, also vanished overnight, leaving their huge, ornate and creaking timbered mansion deserted in the centre of the town. It was not long before the leader of the witch hunters, Lars Tonowe, broke in, with the usual mob behind him. As soon as he saw the splendour of the mansion and had decided for himself that the Vampires had fled (for there was no doubt in his mind that is what they were), he commandeered the house as his headquarters for the duration of the purges.

That night Lars dined in the mansion with the other two witch hunters. There was nothing to light the room except flickering candles. They drank the good ale of the Zmada cellars and ate food from their larder. They did not pause from their meal long enough to reflect that Vampires do not need to eat ordinary food. Instead the conversation revolved around estimating the value of the ornaments and paintings in the great hall, and how they could be turned into funds for the holy cause.

The paintings were indeed very fine. Portraits of several generations of the Zmada family hung above the witch hunters on the walls, dimly lit by

the candlelight. The females of the family were particularly striking, with their pale white faces and long dark hair, bedecked in jewels. There seemed to be no end to the wine and the flagon hardly needed refilling from the barrels' in the cellar each time it went round the table.

The next day the mob burst into the mansion again, vexed this time by the fact that the witch hunters had not made an appearance for most of the day. They found Lars and his companions slumped, in their chairs, their faces on the table and blood dripping from the wounds in their throats. The mob recoiled in fear. Then someone pointed at the Zmada family portraits. Red paint was running down the walls from the finely curved lips of the Zmada ladies. But it was not paint, it was blood. The mob fled in terror, screaming and making the sign of Sigmar. That night they burnt the mansion to the ground.





Fenryl Xandu watched his minions within the garden. They were so incredibly loud, he thought. There was certainly no finesse to what these creatures were doing – thrusting poles through the stomachs of soldiers and smashing in their skulls with fragments of tombstones. It certainly was no art like necromancy. Still, they managed to clear the way so that Xandu could do his work.

Xandu watched them for some time from the corner of the garden. Amidst the frenzy of the fighting, he was as still as a statue. He moved only when a soldier stumbled too close to him. Xandu would trip them up with the end of his staff and skewer them with his blade. He was always careful how he killed them for, when he brought them back to life a little later, they would be far more effective undead soldiers if they were mostly intact. When the Crypt Horrors had finished with a body, having crushed skulls and ripped their bodies to shreds, there was very little even someone as skilled as Xandu could do to make much use of the remains. No, a quick jab of a blade through some vital organ, and Xandu would have them up and shambling to war in no time.

Eventually, the melee diminished into the death cry of one last soldier. Once that man had become stilled, Xandu walked over to the centre of the burial ground. He hauled up the mighty tome that was fixed to his waist and rested it atop a tombstone. Whilst humming a tuneless lament, he carefully turned the thick pages of the book over until he came across the correct spell.

As he had done time and time again, he quietly whispered the ancient, forbidden words. Utterly focused on the cadence of the syntax – for a slight mispronunciation could have devastating consequences – he worked his way slowly through the entirety of the Invocation of the Rising Moon.

Within an instant of his finishing, a roiling cloud of purple smoke billowed in and across the Garden of Morr. No sooner had it come than it vanished, seeping into the very earth beneath his feet.

He could hear them then, long before anyone else would be able to – the moans of the undead coming back to life, the shock of finding themselves barely conscious. The spell naturally gave the undead a desire to break from their subterranean imprisonment, so within a few heartbeats the zombies began to claw upwards. Presently the ground itself sifted, the little eddies of soil drifting back and forth. Rotten bone-hands lurched free of the surface and clasped the air.

A smile came to Fenryl Xandu's aged lips. Slowly he gestured to the gates of the Garden and, in unison, a dozen figures began to climb from their graves. In varying states of decay, and with different loathsome colours of the Empire, they materialised. Some of the corpses of the recently killed had been animated too, their faces bloody, some skewered on their own weapons. One without a head, but even he would have his use.

Figure by shambling figure, the living dead advanced out of Morr's prison, ready to do Xandu's bidding.







DOMAINS OF THE UNDEAD

Though many people believe that the Undead are limited to the Kingdom of the Dead and Sylvania, they in fact haunt many ill-famed places in the world. From the wind-swept plains of Kislev and the forests of Bretonnia to the far lands of Lustria there are areas where necromancy prevails over the living. Here the masters of the Undead rule over their servants. Most often these individuals are Necromancers, humans who have learned the secrets of necromantic magic, but sometimes great Vampire Lords muster their armies in the desolation of the east, and come to reclaim the lands they ruled aeons ago. Some of the most infamous are described below.

MOUSSILLON, THE CITY OF THE DAMNED

The Bretonnian city of Moussillon has an evil reputation. It is commonly known as the City of the Damned and is shunned by all sensible people. Over the past fifteen hundred years Moussillon has grown from a small village into a vast dark city. Built in a very inauspicious location on the banks of the River Grismerie the city is flooded every spring, sweeping away the hovels of the poor and leaving the streets under a foot of foul, murky water. Outbreaks of disease are common and the cadavers of victims lie side by side in long ranks on the city streets. Cold and damp pervade the walls of every building: wood rots and warps, stones crumble like rotten cheese, and fungus covers the walls. Over half the city's houses are empty, testimony to the ravages of a particularly virulent strain of the Red Pox two centuries ago. The city has never recovered from this loss of population, and is known as the poorest and most dire of all the cities of Bretonnia. With all this death the city attracts Necromancers and other practitioners of the dark arts, and the wardens of the cemeteries and tombs are often prosecuted for selling the corpses to the highest bidders.

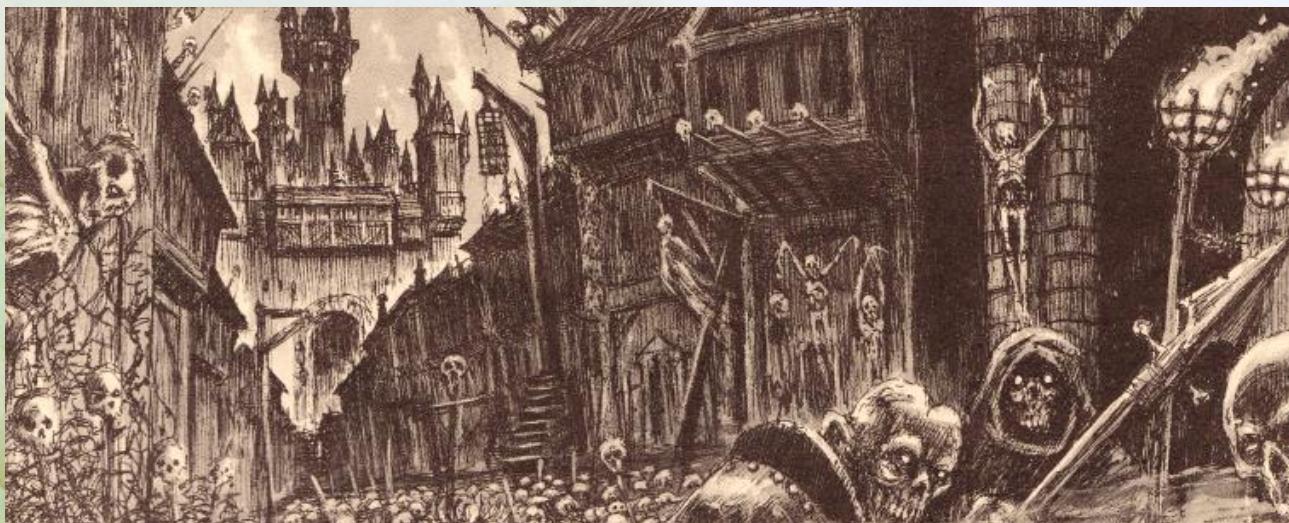
The aura of doom is all-pervasive, so that even the finery of the rich folk of Moussillon is ragged, dirty and disgusting. Those few that live here roam the

quagmire streets like zombies, soulless and unseeing, and embittered noblemen on horseback beat or maim those who are not fast enough to get out of their way. In the markets the peasants haggle for rotten fruit and mildewed meat – some of which may even have come from the city's overflowing plague pits or the corpses lined side by side in the city streets. It is said that the cemeteries and charnel houses are infested with clans of Ghouls and those unwary enough to walk the streets of Moussillon after dark are never seen again.

In the middle of all this corruption stands the ruined and sealed palace of Duke Maldred, a corrupt pretender to the throne of Bretonnia, whose reign of evil two centuries ago is a reviled memory. It is a strange and eerie sight, covered in grotesque gargoyles and many arcane symbols. The roof has collapsed and sinister unclean birds nest in its chimneys. When Maldred's claim to the throne was dismissed by the Fay Enchantress, he and his sorcerous wife Malfleur retreated to Moussillon. They defended the city for three years as the knights of Bretonnia laid siege to it and during this time an extremely virulent outbreak of the Red Pox scythed through the city.

It is said that during the Red Pox Duke Jean-Luc vowed to cheat death and summoned all the city's noble families to a great party that was to last until the Pox ended. All the food in the city was hoarded in the cellars and all the doors were locked. An orchestra played quadrilles and dance tunes and the nobles made merry while the poor of the city starved and died outside.

On Winter's Eve the Duke celebrated with the traditional masked ball. The nobles of his court immersed themselves in an orgy of self-indulgence. Dressed in red silks and satins and wearing fantastic masks they danced and drank sparkling wine. At the height of the festivities, as the nobles cavorted and laughed all around him, he noticed a man standing just inside the doorway. He was garbed in black and red, and carried a huge scythe. No-one recognised the



stranger, and the Duke thought his costume in bad taste given the fact that everyone present was trying to forget the plague outside. Maldred thought that this was a poor joke and ordered the guest to be thrown out of the palace. But as his guards rushed to grab the eerie figure, they collapsed, and the marks of the Red Pox could be seen on their hands and faces. One by one the torches of the palace flickered and died, as the red-garbed stranger stalked into the banquet hall. Next day the siege ended, for the Duke and all his guests were found dead inside the palace, their bodies marked by the Red Pox.

It is said that every year on Winter's Eve the eerie strains of phantom bards can be heard within the palace and anyone bold enough to venture inside will meet the reanimated corpses of the Duke and his guests re-enacting their final dreadful night. Corpses cavort around the banquet hall, Zombie minstrels play haunting tunes and the silk-wrapped bodies of Maldred and Malfleur are locked in an eternal embrace of damnation.

Because the drainage of Moussillon was so bad the city's tombs were built above ground, rather than bury the dead in the soggy earth. Vast cemeteries situated on low hills ring the city and their sheer size testifies that Moussillon was once far more densely populated than it is today. Each graveyard is full of vaults which range from the private marble mausoleums where the noble dead are interred, to the infamous public charnel house

where the poor lie side by side in long ranks. The wardens are often prosecuted for selling cadavers to medical students and those who study other darker arts. From its earliest years Moussillon has been associated with Necromancers so most crypts have thick walls and private guards to prevent grave robbery.

And yet Mousillon is a city of proud Bretonnia. It has its own heraldry, court and bloodlines of high birth, and its knightly defenders bear the black fleur-de-lys of Duke Maldred upon their shields. Though these chevaliers are few in number, when war comes to the City of the Damned, the city seethes with warriors both living and dead. Hidden beneath Mousillon are subterranean halls lined with Black Knights arrayed in tarnished battle armour, waiting in ever-patient ranks for the summons of their fell Duke.

Recently it has been speculated that the city's wells have been contaminated by warpstone, for many more mutants are born here than in any other Bretonnian city. After an outbreak of the Red Pox two centuries ago the population was almost halved, so there are many empty buildings for the mutants to hide in. Almost inevitably in a city so associated with death, clans of Ghouls are said to make their homes in the ruined tenements overlooking the graveyards. Every now and again the king of Bretonnia orders the ruins cleared and parties of knights hunt the monsters through the streets of the darkened city. They do not always return.

At the Walls of Mousillon

The city of Mousillon has ever been a cursed and forbidding place. Outside its crumbling walls the sprawling and macabre graveyards are likened to towns in their own right, inhabited by Necromancers, Crypt Ghouls and other fell creatures. When the Chaos Lord Mawhrin Skell landed his forces in Bretonnia with conquest in mind, it was to the damned city of Mousillon he was inexplicably drawn.

The Bretonnians were not ignorant of the Chaos Lord's arrival. A Bretonnian ship, le Cygne Noir, had spotted the invading fleet approaching and raced to Quenelles with the dire news. The Duke of Quenelles acted swiftly, calling Knights to his cause and rousing Peasant levies. By the time the Chaos forces had navigated the swampish mire that surrounded Mousillon and set about tearing down the walls of the decrepit city, the Bretonnians had assembled a mighty host determined to repulse the invaders from their lands.

And so just outside the walls of Mousillon, across the grave-strewn landscape, amidst the crypts and mausoleums, battle was joined even as a storm of magic shattered the sky. Mawhrin took to his new foe with relish for he was proud and haughty, determined to find his martial equal on the field of battle. Knights of the Realm clashed with those of Chaos, and Peasants were mercilessly sent to hinder the iron-clad warriors of Chaos. As men died on both sides, Ghouls scuttled out from the shadow of their tombs to claim the bodies of the fallen and swiftly steal them away to be consumed in their lairs.

Just as the tide had turned to Chaos, the Gates of Mousillon opened and dread knights clad in red armour charged forth. The dead arose from their crypts to set upon the invading army. The Undead nobles of Mousillon had donned their armour and honoured the magical pact unveiled by the Prophetess as she stood upon an Arcane Fulcrum. The price for victory, and the aid of the Undead, was such that it would haunt the nobility of Quenelles for generations to come.

The Bloody Baron, Moriva Darkstalker was feared throughout Bretonnia, for he had long preyed on the neighbouring duchies. No mortal man could match swords with him and survive, but Mawhrin Skell had passed beyond such trivial states as life and death after he embraced Tzeentch. So it was that these two mighty warriors locked gazes across the battlefield, spurring their nightmarish steeds forwards. As Manticore grappled Zombie Dragon, so too did Moriva lock blades with Skell. Up into the clouds the two beasts spiralled, blows ringing across the sky like thunder in the clouds, but when battle was at an end only the Vampire returned to Mousillon. Of Skell no trace was seen for a century...

BLOOD KEEP

South of Nuln, high in the Grey Mountains, stands the long forgotten fortress-monastery called the Blood Keep. It is a ruined fortress of immense size and rests on top of a mountain, with only one lonely path leading up to its gate. Once it was home to the most noble of the Knightly Orders of the Empire, but hundreds of years ago they were infected by the dread curse of vampirism and turned against the humans they were sworn to protect. The crypts below the Keep became resting places for immortal Vampires and Wights, dressed in the garb of the men-at-arms of the Order, patrolled the walls of the Blood Keep. From here the Vampires launched attacks against the countryside. Garbed in armour, they could have passed for any of the numerous robber knights plaguing the Empire at that time and none could guess their true nature. In secret, they dragged their screaming victims back to the Blood Keep and feasted on their living essence.

The Vampires' reign of terror lasted for decades until their true nature was revealed by the famous Witch Hunter, Gunther van Hel. The Blood Keep was besieged for three years and finally taken after an epic struggle. Its Undead inhabitants were destroyed one by one and stakes were driven through their hearts. Walach, the Grand Master of the Vampire Knights, led a desperate break-out with his most powerful knights, but they were pursued by the Knights of the White Wolf and merciless Witch Hunters.

The great siege which broke the power of the Blood Knights left the fortress ruined and blackened by flames, and its walls cast down. The great bastions were shattered by siege engines, but the Blood Keep has retained its grim reputation. Men shun the place and only the most desperate treasure hunters dare to explore its ruins.

It is said that during moonless nights the warriors whose remains still lay unburied in and around the Blood Keep stir and slay any who dare to venture near. The catacombs provide nesting places for huge bats which range far and wide to hunt for blood. Some say that lonely figures can be seen standing guard on top of the ruined battlements and the men of the Empire whisper that perhaps some of the Vampire knights survived the siege.

SILVER PINNACLE

Near Karak Ungor, high in the most inaccessible part of the Worlds Edge Mountains stands a desolate mountain top, called the Silver Pinnacle. A long time ago, the Dwarf race built a huge stronghold here, for the Silver Pinnacle was an incredibly rich source of gemstones. After the mine was emptied of silver but long before the Dwarfs were prepared to leave it, it was taken from them by force in a single night. As the Great Book of Grudges remembers, the Silver Pinnacle was invaded by an army that surged through the tunnels, taking the defenders by surprise. These were not Goblins or Skaven, but Zombies and Skeletons, led by a female Vampire called Neferata. Her Undead armies forced the Dwarfs to abandon the Silver



Pinnacle, and they have not been able to reclaim it since. The event is still recorded in the Book of Grudges. The entry describes their leader as the 'Queen of Evil'. With the Dwarfs gone, Neferata rebuilt Silver Pinnacle, transforming it from a functional stronghold to a mirror of her palace in Lahmia. She delighted in its isolation and the windows of clever dwarf-make that, when opened, flooded the upper chambers with starlight.

Many centuries have passed since that time. None, save for a few crazed Dwarf Troll Slayers and travellers from the lands of men, dare to approach the Silver Pinnacle any more, for it is home to the living dead. Surrounding the centre is a network of trapped passages. Her mountain lair is honeycombed with passageways, tunnels and chambers, creating a titanic maze. Traps for the unwary and a host of Undead creatures make it one of the most dangerous places in the known world. Those who perish in that maze join its denizens in ghastly unlife, though their tortured moans seldom carry into the upper chambers, where decorous gaiety abounds. If a man were ever to get through the trap-laden passages and fight his way past the chambers filled with Undead warriors, he would come to the heart of the mountain, where the secret chambers of Neferata are located. From here she controls her Undead servants and ventures out to hunt for blood.

Strange as it may seem, there are some who have visited the Silver Pinnacle and returned alive to tell the tale. Their tales do not speak of horror as one might think. Instead they tell of a splendid court, arrayed in the fashions of some ancient civilisation and of a palace cut out of the rock with statues and walls adorned with strange inscriptions, yet it is a place of darkness, where the light of day is not permitted to enter. The queen who rules here is said to be of

exquisite beauty, attended by handmaidens any man would die for. Little do they know that this is literally true!

Those who visit the Silver Pinnacle are not informed of the true nature of what they see there, and those who are allowed to leave have spread exaggerated tales of the banquets they are permitted to attend (at which only they seem to have an appetite) and of the wonders they have seen, encouraging others to visit the Silver Pinnacle and, perhaps, never leave. Stories of the Palace of the Night Queen have been told for centuries, and can be found in the ballads of Bretonnia, the writings of the Empire and the poems of Tilea. Even in the kasbahs of Araby and in the sweat lodges of Kislev can similar rumours be heard.

It is a weird and disturbing place, filled with the spirits of the dead and the mighty Vampires who rule over them. Giant winged creatures fly to the Silver Pinnacle during the night and sometimes black coaches travel there, bringing cloaked women who enter through the Zombie-guarded doors. No one knows what tangled plots are weaved during these visits but they are sure to bring great woe and misery to any who have come to the attention of the Lahmian Vampires.



The guards of the Silver Pinnacle are said to be swathed in black from head to toe and show not their faces. They shuffle and handle their weapons jerkily. The interior of the palace is described as dark, lit as if by moonlight. Only those mortals of the queen's choosing are allowed past them. Certain guileless Knights of Bretonnian and greedy merchants with exotic goods who have heard legends of the beautiful palace hidden in the mountains approach and are given audience with the queen.

At the heart of the maze of the Silver Pinnacle are situated the quarters of Neferata. It is a monument to its Undead mistress. Here Neferata has rebuilt the splendour of her royal palace in Lahmia. Walking into the inner halls of the Silver Pinnacle is like stepping into another world or time. The walls are covered in hieroglyphics picked out with gemstones and gold. Garbed in ancient costumes the Undead courtiers of the Vampire Queen keep alive the ancient rites and traditions of Nehekharans. Statues of ancient Nehekharan gods guard the portrait-filled galleries and chambers, while regiments of skeletal warriors and Wights stand in readiness upon the fortified walls and parapets. The few valuable artefacts Neferata salvaged from Lahmia during her flight are kept within an ancient Dwarf treasure vault, guarded by the cursed spirits of Neferata's victims. The sickly-sweet scent of incense and luxurious oils hangs over the opulent chambers where the statues of gods with heads of eagles and jackals stand guarding the doors. Forgotten treasures of old, golden masks and lapis lazuli gleam in the darkness, illuminated only by the blood-red glow of torches and the starlight reflected from the silver-coated skulls set around the walls to serve as her lamps. Treasures of old, rescued from Lahmia's fall, are here also: Aken-seth, the Staff of Pain, whose enchantments add crippling agonies to any sorceries she wields; Akmet-kar, the Dagger of Jet, whose cursed edge screams with the death agonies of innocents. These are all that remain from Neferata's time as Lahmia's high priestess of death, and she suffers no other to touch them.

In the Realm of the Night Queen
Although this story does not state it explicitly, some scholars consider it to be a veiled Vampire tale. It is a Bretonnian ballad about two honourable knights who travel to the World's Edge Mountains to visit the palace of the legendary Night Queen. After the two knights travel for many weeks, facing various tests of their chivalry along the way, they arrive at a castle made entirely of silver. Here the Night Queen lives, a woman of unearthly beauty who is cursed to never see the sun until a truly virtuous man takes her as his bride.

Naturally, the two knights fall in love with the Night Queen, and both seek her hand in marriage. Jealousy tears them apart, and the two knights duel for her favour, resulting in both their deaths and leaving the Night Queen trapped in her castle to suffer from her supernatural curse for all time.

In the centre of the court is her chamber, though she is never seen or spoken to directly. She conducts business from behind seven veils, and her voice is beguiling. Her court is composed of other female vampires who are bound to her by blood and ambition, foolish mortals under her spell, and her cats. Here Neferata lies on a divan, drinking the blood of handsome youths from golden cups and listening as her Undead courtiers play harps, pipes and lutes to amuse her and ease the burdens of immortality. Here she lives a life of hedonism and plotting. Vampires of the Lahmian Sisterhood are her eyes and ears in the outside world and using the information from their reports she plots and weaves a web of intrigue that ensnares mortals and Vampires alike. Here, Neferata idly pulls the strings that will one day put her in control of an army of Vampires to take back the Land of the Dead, whilst she drinks the blood of beautiful youths and listens to the music her Undead children make.

Men can seldom be found within these rooms. Though Neferata delights in corrupting mortal men of pure heart – she is especially fond of Bretonnian knights, whose chivalric codes are easily exploited – seldom do these doomed souls entertain her for long. Most sate an appetite entirely different to the one that they expected to fulfil, their bloodless bodies cast into the labyrinths below the peak. To a very few, Neferata grants the blood kiss, but even these must take care, lest their eye linger overlong on one of the court's many handmaidens.

Purebred cats of ancient breeds walk where they will and have free reign of the palace, which Neferata is said to breed. There is a tale of a Tilean merchant who was given a black cat. Halfway to Tilea the cat was gone, but sitting in his wagon was a beautiful lady. He had no idea where she had appeared from, but took her on to Tilea, asking no questions. There she paid him for the journey, bade him farewell and entered the monastery of a female religious order. There is another tale, told in Bretonnia, of a knight errant who returned with a lady of exquisite beauty and a pale complexion, praised by Bretonnian troubadours. He made her his wife and lady of his castle. Guests at the castle commented that the lady only showed herself at banquets in the night, and that she drank goblets of red wine and ate no other food, yet the castle had no vineyards. These and the many other similar tales reveal, to those wise enough to see, how the bloodline of Neferata has spread over many centuries into many lands.

NAGASHIZZAR

By the shores of the Sour Sea, surrounded by the glittering desert of the Desolation of Nagash, is Nagashizzar, the Cursed Pit, home of the Great Necromancer Nagash and mightiest fortress this world has ever seen. Built over centuries by the tireless labour of countless Undead things the castle rises nearly half a mile over the desert. It was sculpted and excavated from the living rock of Cripple Peak and the mountain top is its highest spire. Hundreds of other great towers bristle from the mountain side. By night

terrible green witchlights are often seen burning in their windows.

Nagashizzar is a fortified mountain pierced by countless leagues of corridor. Within thousands of chambers hundreds of Undead things wait ready to answer their Lord's every command. Vast as this great army is, it is but a tiny fraction of the legions who once served the Great Necromancer.

Four mighty gates guard the approaches to Nagashizzar, each watched over by mighty war machines of the most dangerous type – animated golems of bone, bolt throwers that fire the thigh-bones of giants wound round with deadly runes, catapults that throw screaming skulls and worse. The gates themselves are made from some nameless black metal which shines like burnished obsidian and is ten times harder than steel.

The pits beneath Nagashizzar extend down almost twice the height of the mountain, forming a huge honeycomb of galleries and mines where once Undead and Skaven toiled to find warpstone. These corridors are patrolled by untiring sentries from Nagash's Undead legions, who must be eternally vigilant in case the Skaven should ever return.

Within his great audience chamber at the height of the peak the husk of Nagash, the Great Necromancer himself, sits on his throne of skulls. He has brooded here for over a millennium, waiting and planning and guiding his host of agents by the power of his thoughts. Now infused by the power of the Dark Magic that has surged through the world since the last great incursion of Chaos he is almost ready to strike once more at the world of the living.



The only living things within this vast fortress are the disciples of Nagash. These madmen worship the Great Necromancer as a god and lead his cult until the day he re-emerges from his audience-vault to conquer the world. Sometimes strangers come seeking guidance and tuition in the dark arts of Necromancy. Most of these are killed and their corpses swell the ranks of Nagash's Undead servants. The most evil and driven are given what they desire and sent forth once more into the world to do Nagash's bidding.

THE PLAIN OF BONES

North of the Kingdom of the Dead, east of the Worlds Edge Mountains, lies the Plain of Bones. This is a desert land, despoiled by windblown pollutants carried from the furnaces and factories of the Chaos Dwarf Empire and ravaged by centuries of abuse by wandering tribes of Orcs and Goblins. The northern and eastern edges of this awful place abut the empire of the Chaos Dwarfs where the dread tower of Gorgoth looks out over the Desolation of Azgorh. The southern boundary lies on beaches of poisoned sand along the shores of the Sea of Dread.

The Plain of Bones is a desert of multi-coloured refractive sand from which rear huge rib-cages many times larger than a man. For this is the place where dragons came to die, to rest their bones among those of their ancestors as they had done for millions of years, before any other sentient beings walked the surface of the Known World.

Here lie the bones of the great ancestral dragons: ribcages as large as hills mingle with skulls the size of castle towers and leg-bones larger than mighty oak trees. These bones date from the great days of the draconic race, before their long decline. Today's dragons are a lesser breed, still incomparably mightier than lesser races, but mere pygmies compared to their ancestors.

Since the time before the first great Chaos incursion, dragons flew to this parched land when they knew their time of dying was upon them. At the end of their last flight they would lie where they fell. No-one knows what instinct drew them here, but over the long millennia literally tens of thousands came here in their last hours. This continued until the time of the first great Chaos incursion when dark power seeped out of the north and malignant evil entered the corpses of the dead dragons.

Soon the dead dragons stirred once more, their eyes bright with unnatural light, their bones peeking through their parchment skins. These fell creatures still prowl the Plain of Bones, evil and near mindless, driven by terrible unnatural hungers. Dragons are proud creatures and do not willingly submit themselves to such a fate. They no longer come here to die, though no-one now knows where they do go to end their days.

Among the bones of dragons lie the remains of many others, drawn to this dark land by the promise of near infinite wealth, because, for those willing to risk the perils, it is a source of astonishing riches. To aid their digestion dragons swallow vast amounts of gold and gems. These line their stomach, the grinding action helping to break down the vast meals that dragons must devour to stay alive.

When dragons die their glittering carcasses often contain a king's ransom for those bold and foolish enough to try and claim it. In a land roasted by baking sun, devoid of any drinkable water and home to thousands of poisonous scorpions and mutated monsters, death comes easily. Some die after drinking from poisonous wells; others become prey for the great mummified Zombie Dragons. Many fall victim to their own greed and ignorance of elementary survival techniques. Their glistening bones lie strewn across the sands of this, the world's most inhospitable place.



SONNENTAL

In the northern Border Princes, in the shadow of the haunted Geistenmund Hills, lies the town of Sonnental. Originally founded by Imperial exiles, Sonnental now has a darker heritage. The town's walls are guarded by the Undead, not only to keep the marauders and Greenskins out, but also to keep the inhabitants in. The Lahmian Sisterhood rules Sonnental – a miniature model of how the city of Lahmia will look when its long-lost daughters finally return.

By day, the people of Sonnental go about their dreary lives. The preferred servants of the Lahmians are allowed out of town to work the farms, always under the watchful guard of the Vampires' Undead servants—Zombies and Wights taken from the barrows in the hills. These servants also travel further afield, kidnapping travellers and those who will not be missed, dragging them back to Sonnental to replenish the town's ever-dwindling population.

By night, the people huddle in their homes as beautiful figures clothed in the elegant costumes the people slave to create walk the streets, selecting those they wish to feed on. Those who cooperate with the Vampires may win immunity for themselves and their households, either by informing on those who attempt to escape or organise uprisings, or by crafting especially ornate pieces of finery for their mistresses to wear.

New arrivals to Sonnental are surprised by how cowed the citizenry are. Partly, this situation is caused by the Lahmians' preternatural ability to dominate those around them, but there is more to it than magic. In the war-torn and unstable Border Princes, Sonnental is a rare outpost of relative safety, at least to threats from without. Compared to the ravening hordes wandering the countryside, the Vampires are at least a threat that can be bargained with. Most of the townspeople concentrate on finding ways to make themselves useful to their dark mistresses rather than trying to defeat

them – and those who do plot against them are publicly made examples of, their drained and mutilated corpses gibbeted in the town square for all to see.

MOURKAIN

In the heart of the Badlands lies a desolate and haunted ruin named as Morgheim – which means the Place of Death – on certain Imperial maps. These remains are all that's left of the once great city of Mourkain, which long ago thrived under the reign of successive rulers of the Undead, before being destroyed by an Orc horde and lost to the annals of history.

Mourkain was originally founded by the shaman, Kadon, after the chance discovery of a corpse in the river clutching a crown in its dead hands: the ancient Nehekharan King Alcadizaar and the Crown of Nagash. Kadon buried the body, but kept the crown, and was afterwards compelled by the nascent spirit within it to build a city atop the burial mound of Alcadizaar and establish a cult in Nagash's worship. With his Undead armies, Kadon pushed back the Greenskin tribes, and an evil civilisation flourished for a brief time. A huge force of Zombies laboured endlessly to raise great towers and citadels, and the cult of Nagash spread across the Badlands. The host of Mourkhain even laid siege to the Dwarf Hold of Barak Varr, though was defeated after many battles.

The settlement grew and the cult of Nagash spread across the Badlands, soon attracting the exiled Ushoran. Eventually usurping power by killing Kadon, Ushoran became the new ruler of Mourkain. He expanded the borders and founded the kingdom of Strigos. His desire was to rebuild the lost glory of Lahmia, but this was not to be. The Orc tribes of the region united, and not even Ushoran and his Vampire court could stay the destruction they wrought. Morath, Ushoran's lieutenant, escaped with the Crown when Ushoran was slain defending the gates. The rest of his court fled as the city burned behind them. Now it is a tumbled ruin haunted by the spirits of the ancient dead.





THE MARSHES OF MADNESS

The southern limits of the Badlands are defined by a great stretch of festering swampland. This area is rightfully known as the Marshes of Madness, for the tainted waters can drive a man insane with but a sip from their stagnant depths, and the mists rising from the marshes can turn friend against friend. It is a realm of the Undead and a remnant of a past civilisation, forever cursed when the Crown of Sorcery was discovered on the banks of the Blind River. It is now a virulent swamp that is shunned by all. Few who venture into the Marshes of Madness return in one piece, for not only is the terrain maddening but its depths are filled with all manner of dangerous creatures. Within the marshes lies Morgheim, a wretched and ruined city that long ago fell to corruption and treachery, and the insidious Tree of Beards, a testament to the folly of the Dwarfs when they once tried to tame the swamp.

The foetid water that indolently makes its way from the Sour Sea to the Marshes of Madness is not one to come across if you have a thirst. The water is black, putrid and if you don't see a dead animal drifting in it, chances are you will come across one should you follow it for a league or so. However, it is those desperate and foolish enough to have drunk from the Blight Water that have most to fear for the rancid taste hides a deadlier threat – one that will not only cause a slow and inescapable death, but will see the victim rise again as a mindless Zombie.

FROM BEYOND OUR LANDS

The influence and history of the Vampires is hardly restricted to the Empire, or indeed the Old World. Nor

are Humans the only race set upon by the masters of the night. All over the world, the sanguine thirst of the Vampires has wreaked havoc.

Bretonnia

The fair land of Bretonnia may not be as tainted with the curse of Undeath as many other areas of the Old World, but even the land of chivalry is not entirely safe from this evil. The cursed city of Mousillon in the west has always been tainted by the presence of the walking dead and the coastline towns and cities of Bretonnia are forever under the threat of raids by the Undead fleets of Settra.

Bretonnians have many customs to protect the deceased from rising from the grave. One such custom dictates bow the deceased is buried. The corpse is first beheaded and then blessed by a Grail Damsel who sprinkles water from a sacred lake over it. Then the mouth of the deceased is filled with cloves of garlic and the grave that the corpse is lowered into is sealed with spells of binding. Even then these measures may not be enough to prevent a determined Necromancer.

Vampires in Bretonnia are very rare, but extremely dangerous. As they invariably belong to the noble classes, they can command considerable temporal power in addition to their own unnatural abilities. If they were powerful liege lords in their former lives, the vows of their knights and retainers in life will bind them beyond death, and if not freed from them, they are destined to serve their foul Undead lords for all eternity. Thus Bretonnian Vampires are served by a vast host of slaves, and the armies they raise are extremely deadly serving their lord as faithfully in death as they did in life.



The superstitious peasants of Bretonnia know only fear at the mention of Vampires. They have adopted some of the practices of Sylvania, sometimes burying their dead face down so they do not rise again, placing cloves of garlic in the ears of the dead and dried crows' feet in their mouths. Bretonnia was the home of the infamous Blood Dragon called the Red Duke, who was the scourge of Aquitaine, and rumours persist that others of his dread kind dwell in isolated hamlets and forests. These Vampire knights are considered to be worthy opponents by questing knights, who see them as chivalrous, tortured souls. The glamour of the knightly ideal blinds them to the truth of the matter—the Red Duke was a barbarous killer as are most of his kind. The courtly ideals of Bretonnian nobles make them easy prey for the Lahmians, who have secretly infiltrated Bretonnian society as easily and as thoroughly as they have that of the Empire.

Estalia and Tilea

In the south, Estalia still bears the scars of its own Vampire war, and the people there have an unforgiving view of the Undead. On the other hand, the Tilean city-states appear to have been free of large-scale Vampire activity, though some Strigoi nests are to be found in the country. Perhaps this is because of the warding influence of the cult of Morr, who are strong in Tilea and hold their great convocations in the Tilean city of Luccini. Perhaps, more sinisterly, the Byzantine politics of Tilea make it easy for Vampires to remain hidden and work their influence from the shadows; the city of Miragliano in particular is rumoured to be a haven for Vampires.

Kislev

Most of the Vampires who dwell in Kislev are of the monstrous kind, beasts barely better than ruthlessly hunted animals. It is believed that regular consumption of Chesnochnaya, garlic vodka, will keep them at bay. The Kislevites' lack of familiarity with Vampires in their other, more seductive, guise is what allowed the Tsarina Kattarin to keep her rulership of the country even after she became a Vampire. The Kislevites have a long tradition of magic-wielding ice witches holding positions of power, so a pale and beautiful woman with magical abilities holding the throne was not without precedent. Her reign was cut short when the country's boyars realised having an immortal ruling them meant nobody else would ever rise to the top, and they would be reduced to squabbling amongst themselves for greater shares of power. An alliance lead by Tsarevich Pavel finally dealt with Kattarin. Her frozen corpse is still on display in the Frost Palace as a warning to other Vampires.

Other Lands

In Araby, knowledge of necromancy is not suppressed, and so they do not suffer from the ignorance that allows Vampires to gain footholds amongst them as in the Empire. Only the Blood Dragons have a presence there, and that is in the western desert. The people of Norsca and Albion are fortunate not to have had much experience of Vampires, perhaps because their aversion to running water keeps many Vampires from travelling by sea. It cannot be long, however, as even Lustria has learned to fear the Vampire Luther Harkon and his Undead pirates who control the region known as the Vampire Coast.



Mousillon by Night

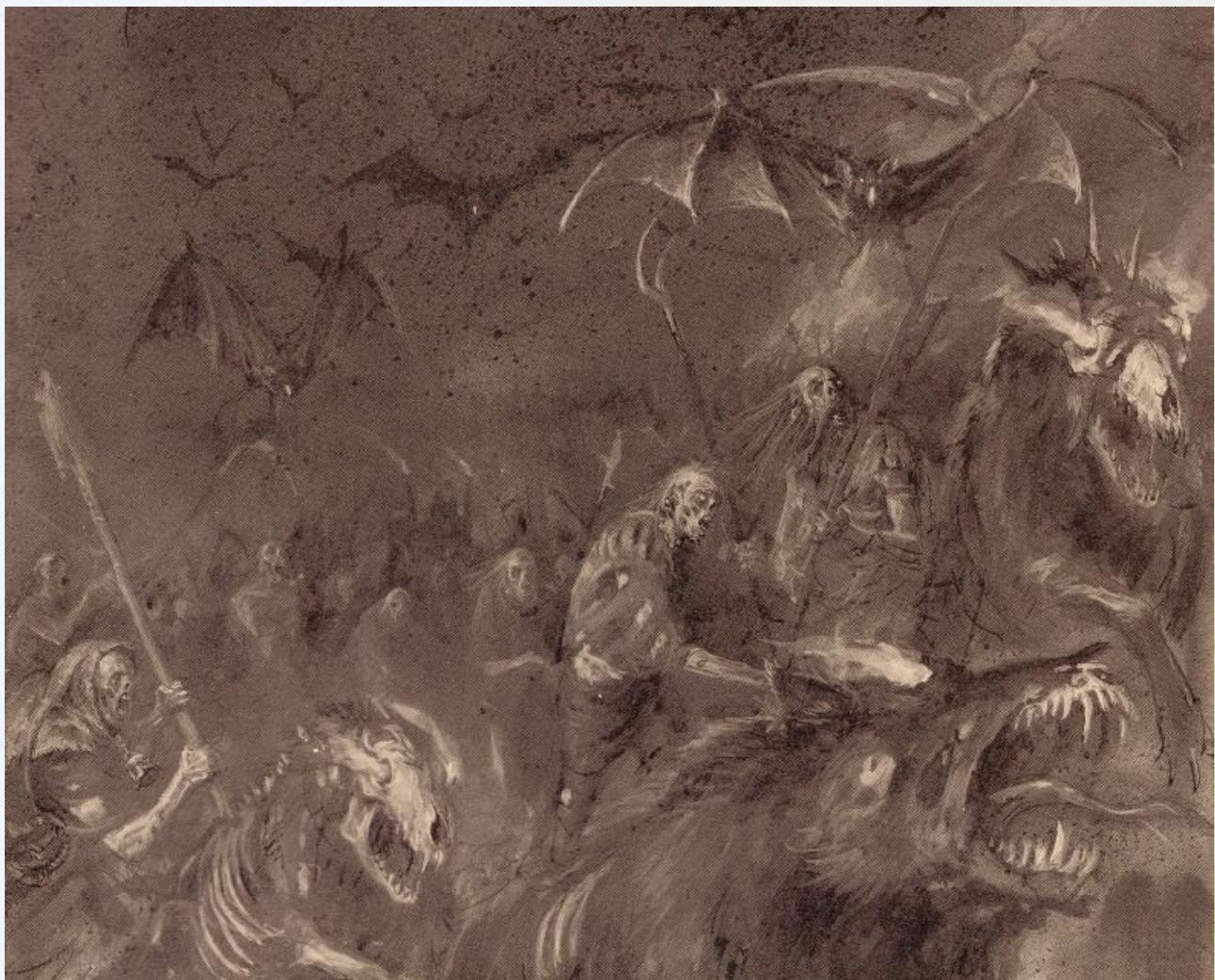
The Curse of Mousillon is well known throughout Bretonnia. It is said that the Lady of the Lake abandoned the city during the affair of the False Grail. The city was devastated by outbreaks of Red Pox during this time. It is now a forsaken place, still inhabited by the deformed and the diseased. The streets are filled with rancid, putrescent bodies. Some of the more able citizens have dug pits to burn the carcasses of the plague victims but still the stench of decay lingers. Day and night, thick plumes of smoke emerge from the pits. The river flowing through Mousillon has turned red because of contamination and is choked with debris and corpses. Although open to errantry, the town has not been successfully reclaimed. Many knights have entered never to return. Rumours of a Vampire have spread like wildfire throughout the provinces, prompting a fresh crusade against the town.

During the winter of 2495, the town of Mousillon entered from history into legend when the Vampire Count Vassili Schlossman and the Necromancer Lord Armand de Vontour allied to raise a powerful army actually within the city and overran the province of Bastonne. Led by Tancred, the Duc de Quenelles, an army of holy Knights brought vengeance and justice to the rampaging Undead menace. The army of Undead was vanquished but Schlossman and Vontour escaped to Mousillon, losing themselves within the dark, plague-ridden streets. The army of Quenelles followed but were unable to find their enemies and, fearing infection, withdrew to the city boundaries. It was not long before the dead began to stir again. Duc Tancred was haunted by terrifying nightmares the following few nights and on the fourth night he woke only an hour after he had retired to learn of the advance of a fresh Undead army from Mousillon. Ordering immediate mobilisation, the Duc donned his armour, and armed himself with the most sacred of relics given to him by the King for his quest to slay the Lichemaster.

The dead came forth, a sea of gleaming white bone that had been picked clean of flesh by the rats of Mousillon. Following the legions of Skeletons and Zombies came Chariots, Skullchuckers, and a mass of rotting Undead cavalry, that was once the splendour of Bretonnian chivalry. The Knights of Quenelles shuddered as they recognised the faded colours of some of their fellow knights who had entered Mousillon in the past but had never returned. Leading the cavalry was the first of such knights, Jaques de Brielle, now a powerful Wight Lord in the service of the Necromancer Vontour.

As the dead shuffled into their positions, mechanically, all moving in perfect synchronisation, the Necromancer Lord was leading a group of mounted Wights. The largest unit of skeletal warriors bore a ghastly standard that stood high against the crimson outline of the city walls.

The Grail Knights and Questing knights had waited outside the city patiently and now lined up ready to do battle. Archers lit their arrows, braziers were positioned at every few yards on the battleline and burning arrows were shot into the sky, landing in various places on the field before them and creating a series of dim beacons. Sounding the advance, the Bretonnian Knights began to move forwards, followed by their retinues on foot. The Knights broke into a gallop yelling their war-cries as they charged down the hill towards the field below. The response was instantaneous. Skullchuckers opened fire, Chariots raced towards the Knights and the dreaded Army Standard began to advance followed by a swarming host of the dead. And from within the city as if instructed by some unseen command, the rats came, their mouths still weeping blood from the Red Pox that the vermin carried...





Frederick the pedlar sighed in relief. He had been travelling on this cursed road for three days without seeing a single village or hamlet. His cloak was dusty, his pony was tired and he was weary of the dark woods of Sylvania, where the twisting paths seemed to be leading nowhere. But here finally was a village.

As the blood red sun set on the horizon, Frederick rode through the village gate. It rested on rusty hinges, and creaked as if it hadn't been opened for ages. The houses of the small town were a shambles and many of them lacked roofs. Windows were broken and an unhealthy stench rested heavily over the whole area.

The villagers opened their windows to see who had entered the village. They were stooped and ugly, marred by blotches and boils and unmistakable marks of mutation. One of them stared at him with his only eye, lifting his misshapen hand in what Frederick thought was a greeting. He forced a smile and waved back.

Frederick had seen such human dregs before and knew the cause. It was not unusual in isolated villages for relatives to intermarry and the results were often hideous. But Frederick was not here to judge people, he was here to sell his wares and get back to Stirland. Other merchants might be fearful of trading in Sylvania, but Frederick Hansen was not a coward. He cared little for the tales of frightened old women and the mumblings of priests. The severe winter had caused famine throughout the Empire, and now his grain would certainly fetch a good price here, where the harvest had been especially poor if the rumours were true.

As Frederick rode to the town square to seek an inn, he noticed something near the well. A young girl lay on the ground, as if she had fallen. She had on a white dress, like those worn by the dead when they are buried. A man dressed in filthy rags was crouched over her, evidently trying to help her, obscuring the girl's head from view. Suddenly Frederick heard a crunch, as if something had broken. He ran forwards to see if the girl was badly hurt. He wished he hadn't. The crouched man turned his head towards him and two luminous eyes stared at him from a bald face.

Cold, black blood dripped from the man's mouth. In his hand he held the head of the young girl. Frederick felt sick.

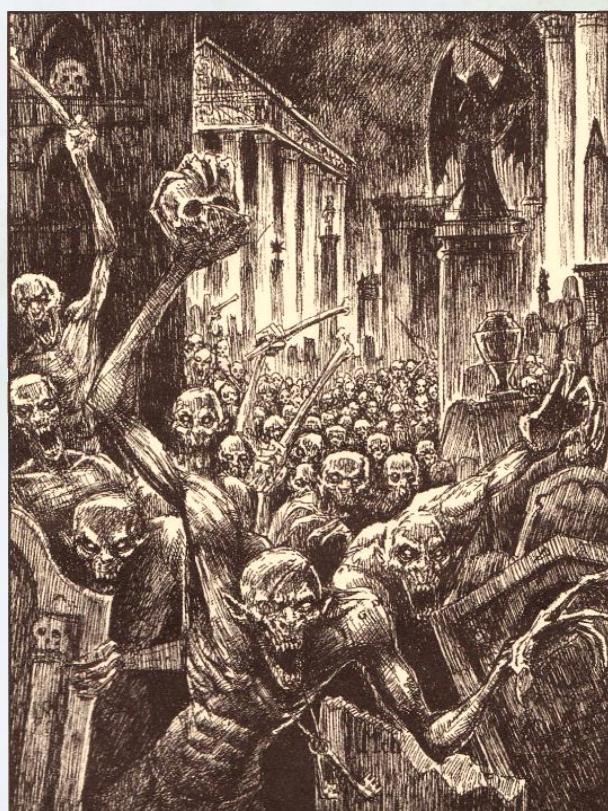
'Ghouls!' Frederick thought. He had of course heard tales of the corpse-eating men of Sylvania, but he had never expected to meet one of these nightmarish cannibals. The creature lurched to its feet and took a step towards Frederick. Its parted lips revealed a row of teeth that seemed to be filed to sharp points.

Fighting back the nausea, the pedlar drew a hidden short sword from under his cloak. The long years on

the road had taught him to be ready for almost anything. A quick slash cut the approaching Ghoul's hand from its wrist, just as it tried to reach for his face. Frederick jumped back as the Ghoul fell screaming, holding its stump. The pedlar looked around nervously. To his horror the villagers were beginning to come out of their houses and were coming towards him. A group of stooped, ugly men, women and disfigured children had soon surrounded him.

With a growing sense of panic, Frederick scanned for a route of escape. He found none. His pony whinnied in terror and bolted, only to be dragged down by a howling mob of Ghouls. As slashing claws and teeth tore the hapless animal apart, the saddlebags were ripped open. While the Ghouls feasted on the meat, the priceless grain was trodden into the muddy ground. Then, slowly the ring started to close on Frederick. He waved his sword around wildly, trying to keep the creatures at bay. Suddenly his legs were grabbed from behind. Twisting his upper body he saw that a young boy had crawled behind him and now held on to his legs with a feverish strength. He felt the small, sharp teeth sink into his thigh and brought his blade down to split the boy's head, brains and fluids splattered all over him. Frederick, fighting for balance, collapsed to the ground.

In an instant the reeking creatures were upon him and his wildly slashing sword was wrestled from his hand. The last thing Frederick the pedlar saw before the merciful darkness descended upon him was a Ghoul-woman, naked and covered with filth as she licked her cracked lips and bent over his chest to tear away a great chunk of warm, steaming meat.





THE LANDS OF SYLVANIA

Sylvania is the most ill-famed region of the Empire. It is a land of dark forests, lonely moors and ruined castles. It is also the source of the darkest legends of all the Old World. From the Spider Haunts to the Bane of Troth, Corpse Run to the Necromanse, Sylvania is a realm steeped in dark legend. Under the shadow of the Vampires, its populace has become a terrified, superstitious people.

As far as most Empire folk are concerned, the county of Sylvania may as well be a different country. Despite its proximity to the Moot and Zhufbar, Halflings and Dwarfs are virtually unknown there. Technologically, it lags behind the rest of the Empire, and gunpowder is treated as a frightening marvel. The emergent middle class of the Empire scarcely exists, and an unbridgeable gap between the peasantry and the nobility persists, even more so than in Bretonnia.

To the east, Sylvania is bordered by the World's Edge Mountains, but in the other directions, its borders are less well-defined. The line between Sylvania and Stirland to the west has been redrawn every time

independence has been declared; it has ranged from the edge of the Haunted Hills to the abandoned village of Murieste, and it currently stretches from the ruins of Mordheim down to the edge of Bylrorhof Marsh. In the north, the River Stir provides a border with Ostermark. To the south Sylvania stops at a barren region historically claimed by Averland, but currently held by Stirland; however the haunted reputation of that place's stinking marshes and fallow hills results in both Grand Provinces largely ignoring the area. The south-western corner of Sylvania edges onto Mootland, a narrow border that is steadfastly patrolled by Halfling Fieldwardens.

The jagged shadows of the mountains stretch over this land of night, and cold winds blow down from the peaks. It is a land of harsh winters that paint the ground blindingly white. To go out after dark in such a winter is almost certain death, but to go out at night in a Sylvanian summer is little safer.



The Land of Night

Come with me now to Sylvania, to the land where the shadow of horror holds sway over humanity. It is the place of darkness. It is the place of fear. It is the place of the Dead.

Listen.

Here cold wind blows over grim moors, and the howls of great wolves can be heard in the distance. In the chilling air one can make out the desperate wailing of long-dead Banshees. If you are silent you can hear the beat of leathery wings somewhere close.

Watch.

Riders roam the night. They gallop through the darkness on steeds with eyes of fire, and they hunt those who foolishly venture forth after dusk. For them, the blood of mortals is sweet wine, which alone can slake their thirst. Ivory-faced men who shun the light of day play the game of intrigue with the nobles and lords of the Old World and weave a web of deception, betrayal and insanity.

Observe.

The ruined castles and abandoned mansions are not empty. Something dark stirs in the charnel houses and crypts. Armies gather under black banners, summoned by a call to arms that the living cannot hear. The Vampire Lords are calling them to battle once more.

And the restless dead walk the land.

Storms frequently come down off the mountains along with the winds and snows. This makes for damp land with many bogs and lonely moors: Dark Moor, Grim Moor on the southern edge of the Grim Wood, the Bylrorhof Marsh, Morffenn, and the twisted Hel Fenn that witnessed the fall of Mannfred von Carstein. The Fennone people disposed of their dead in these bogs for hundreds of years, and many of the von Carsteins' Undead troops come from there. Though the unstable ground and threat of Undead makes them dangerous places, the Sylvanians are forced to visit them as they are the source of the peat that fertilises their fields and fuels their fires over the winter, and the area is also home to edible berries like the sweet cowberry.

It is in Sylvania that the woods of the southern Empire become dense forests, shadowy places patrolled by packs of large, perpetually hungry wolves. In the northwest is Verhungern or Hunger Wood, where the canopy of trees is so tangled that a permanent night is created underneath them in which many strange fungi grow. In the northeast is Grim Wood, which is haunted by an unseen monster that takes only maidens who dare to tread there. To the south is Ghoul Wood, said to be ruled by one of the Strigoi who has thrown in his lot with the von Carsteins and lent them the aid of the flesh-eaters.

Bisecting the land is a string of chalk hills that make good sheep-herding country if nothing else, the Warten Downs in the northeast stretching down to the Haunted Hills in the west. Even when it isn't chalk, most of the soil of Sylvania is a thin and useless stuff on which the people struggle to eke out a living.



Never has a land been so forsaken by nature and the gods as Sylvania. Close to uninhabitable, Sylvania's forests are dingy coves of twisted, half-rotted trees that claw what nourishment they can from the bone-strewn soil. Desolate moorlands and sluggish rivers of clotted blood punctuate the yellow-leaved woods, wind-swept and stormshrouded by dark clouds that seep down from the Worlds Edge Mountains on an almost daily basis.

It is a depressing, dismal realm settled in the time of Sigmar by dissident, evil men dispossessed by the god-king's unification of the peoples of the Empire. When warps tone shards fell upon the lands in 1111, Sylvania's fell reputation was sealed, as the dead erupted from their graves and laid siege to the villages and towns. Ever since, it has been a loathed and feared province, avoided by the other people of the Empire, common folk and lawmakers alike.



Sparingly populated, Sylvania has long proved a refuge for men intent on dark deeds and secretive studies, as well as evil creatures hunted by the forces of the Emperor. Long before Vlad von Carstein unleashed his Undead armies upon the Empire, Sylvania had been home to Crypt Ghouls, Necromancers and Chaos worshippers. Sylvania is nominally part of Stirland now, though Vlad's bloody legacy holds Sylvania in its infernal grip; the dread realm is still home to brooding malice and evil powers.

In crumbling castles, towering mausoleums and forgotten keeps dwell the Vampire progeny of Vlad von Carstein. Though they are wary now of the Empire, united as it is under the rule of Emperor Karl Franz, the surviving von Carsteins still plot and scheme, dreaming of immortal power. They muster their forces in secret, building armies of the dead from bodies and bones, waiting for any sign of weakness in the Empire.

Sylvanian Superstitions

Centuries of religious persecution under the von Carsteins have changed the attitudes of Sylvanians. Priests and temples are rare, but the people have adapted, developing a widespread belief in superstition to replace religion. Rather than praying to the Gods, Sylvanians watch for omens and perform good-luck rituals. It gives them a feeling of control over their lives that they would otherwise lack.

"Spilled salt, spilled tears." Spilling salt is unlucky. The only remedy is to take a handful of salt and run around your dwelling three times without spilling a grain.

"Magpies bring messages." If you see a magpie sitting on a wall, it means a message is coming for you.

"Sweep away dust, not luck." Sweeping on Festag is bad luck.

"Candles for the dead." On Geheimnisnacht, Sylvanians light a candle for each dead family member and then place the candles in the windows of the rooms where they died (family members who died outside the house have their candles placed on the doorstep). Some unlucky villages are so brightly lit on Geheimnisnacht it seems like daylight.

"Whistlin' past the graveyard." If you do not whistle whilst passing graves you may breathe in a ghost, bringing bad luck.

"We won't be weeping long." Spending too much time in grief for the dead brings bad luck and may even cause them to rise as Undead.

"Scissors in storms." It is good luck to cut your hair during a storm.

"Spy your reflection, spit in its face." A Sylvanian catching a glimpse of his reflection in a pond will spit in the water to avoid bad luck. Although mirrors are rare in Sylvania, the same behaviour is followed. This odd habit has only added to their uncultured image in the eyes of the rest of the Empire.

HISTORY OF SYLVANIA

Not much is known of the Fennone tribe who lived in the area that would later become Sylvania. They were a strange and secretive people who spoke their own language and had little to do with the other tribes or the Dwarfs of Zhufbar. They did not join Sigmar's Empire until the "Drive to the Frontiers" encroached onto their land centuries after its founding. Their tongue persists as a second language, usually reserved for use around suspicious strangers.

When Sylvania was incorporated as part of Stirland, there was a mingling of the two peoples, though Stirlanders often say the Fennone blood won out in their dour Sylvanian cousins. Dark rumours circulated about the people dabbling in magic. The Winds blow strong in Sylvania, and not just the cold winds that whip down from the World's Edge Mountains. Sylvania's nobles built their homes on the points marked by ancient Waystones, nexuses of magical power, though what they used it for is uncertain.

Although still not prominent and in many ways struggling, Sylvania suffered a terrible blow in the twelfth century. The Black Plague boiled up from seemingly nowhere, sweeping across the Empire, wiping out entire communities and leaving anguish and despair in its wake. Nowhere was as hard hit as Sylvania, though, for what records remain of this time, nine out of ten people perished from this insidious plague.

It wasn't until later in that same year that Sylvania's character would become known throughout the Old World. On Geheimnisnacht, Morrslieb seemed to glow, and a rain of Warpstone fell on Sylvania. Naturally, this phenomenon attracted the Skaven, who came into this land to collect the coveted treasure. The foul lords of this land were ready, though, and they called up the plague victims from their graves to defend their country. Under the command of Frederick van Hel, who would later be known as Vanhel, the Undead horde crushed the Skaven menace and drove them back to the warrens and tunnels of the Under-Empire. Ever

since then, the dead have refused to rest long in the cursed, thin soil of Sylvania.

This was to have an unexpected benefit. During the Night of the Restless Dead in 1681, the Sylvanians were uniquely placed to battle the Undead, being more accustomed to them than most. Some even fought necromancy with necromancy, and corpses battled through the streets. Whilst Stirland was ravaged by the Undead, much of Sylvania escaped unharmed and used this to its advantage, buying its independence with the aid it offered during the recovery.



The von Draks were amongst the dark wizards who rose to power in Sylvania, a family of brutal rulers despised by all. When Vlad von Carstein took control, the people were glad of it, and many did not change their minds when he revealed himself to be a Vampire. As the Vampire count went to war, the Sylvanians willingly went with him, damning themselves in the eyes of the Empire. Only when Konrad replaced Vlad, demanding exorbitant rents and feeding with such gluttony and abandon that it was hard to find a living soul in the lands around Drakenhof Castle, did Sylvanians begin to regret the Faustian pact they had made. However, Konrad did not last and was replaced by Mannfred, a ruler more in the vein of Vlad. Once again, the people willingly joined his army. After Mannfred's defeat, the cursed Sylvanians were hated by the common people of the Empire for their part in the wars, an attitude that survives to this day. Those who dare leave the province often claim to be from elsewhere to avoid persecution.





Immediately after Mannfred's fall, Sylvania was brought back under Stirland's control and given over to a new nobility made of impoverished noble houses, younger siblings, and bastards of the Stirland line. Bitter at being sent into what was essentially exile, these new rulers treated their people no better than the von Draks of old and were worse at protecting them from the Undead and other inhuman scavengers. Ghoul attacks on the villages became more common without the Vampires to hold the flesh-eaters back and point them at targets outside the province.

In 2158, Gottlieb the Stern lead the "Cleansing of Sylvania," and Witch Hunters scoured the land, eradicating many who were deemed collaborators in the Wars of the Vampire Counts. This only cemented the resentment towards Imperials felt by Sylvanians, who see themselves as a separate nation. When the mortal family who bore the name von Carstein went public to show they were the true heirs of Sylvania, they won much support amongst the peasants.

THE SYLVANIANS

Sylvanians often have a blasé attitude towards death and the dead that is at odds with their neighbours. They take a perverse pride in the harshness of their life, seeing others as "soft" for living in warmer climes, using blackpowder weapons, or associating with the other races. Sylvanians believe in the worst stereotypes, and it is common to find they believe Dwarfs drown cats, and Halflings routinely eat each other. This attitude goes all the way back to the Fennones of old, who refused to deal with the Dwarfs they encountered in the foothills of the World's Edge Mountains because they came from the same place as the marauding Greenskins who raided their land.

The largest towns of Sylvania would still be considered rural backwaters by cultured Empire folk, half-empty

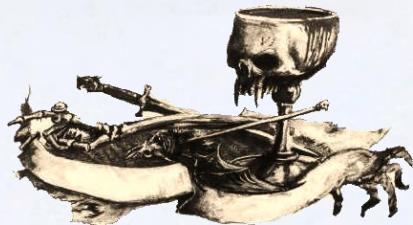
places where everybody wears codpieces that haven't been fashionable for over fifty years. These towns support only a few burghers, as few can afford their bills, and most are merely overgrown villages that happen to have been built on slightly better land. As Sylvania's population never recovered from the Black Plague and the countless contagions that followed, overcrowding has never been a problem.

In addition to disease, mutation is rife amongst the peasants. The thin soil has been riddled with Warpstone since 1111, giving Sylvania one of the highest rates of mutation in the Empire. The most deformed Mutants are cast out into the woods or sent to Drakenhof, but many who would be burned elsewhere are accepted in Sylvania. Hunchbacks, walleyes, and those with additional digits are treated no differently from others.

With the low yield of crops, starvation is a constant threat, and most accept hunger pains as a normal part of life. Turning to "sweet pork," the Sylvanians' euphemism for Human flesh, is considered distasteful but not evil. Desperate times can call for desperate measures, and the Ghouls that raid the villages often lived amongst their victims the winter before.

All this has led to the Sylvanians becoming an insular people. They harbour resentments towards the Empire, especially Stirland. They avoid all contact with the outside world, and many know embarrassingly little about it. It is not uncommon for Sylvanians to not realise they are a part of the Empire, and many could not name the current Emperor if asked. Those who do know a little of the lands beyond their own know that they will not be accepted there, and Empire folk have as low an opinion of Sylvanians as Sylvanians do of the Empire folk.

The life of a typical Sylvanian is as harsh, brutal, and short as that of any Old Worlder, and they see the Vampires as merely another aspect of that. Sometimes the crops fail, sometimes the winter is harsh, sometimes Chaos Warriors raid from the mountains, sometimes the plague comes, and sometimes the Vampires come. They keep garlic and other herbs around their windows as a matter of course, yet they willingly give up the children they cannot afford to feed for the blood tax and turn over foreigners foolish enough to spend the night in their inns.



The blood tax is the only tax paid by many Sylvanians, a tradition dating back generations. The amount paid differs from place to place, depending on the Vampire who controls the land. In Nachthafen, Countess Gabriella refuses to feed on the lowest peasants and only taxes the relatively affluent townspeople who can afford more than one set of clothes. She prefers to leave them alive after feeding, most of the time, to increase their loyalty to her. In Eschen, the tax demands the firstborn daughter of every family, who is never seen again, leading to some parents attempting to disguise their girls as boys to avoid payment. The smaller villages are typically only taxed once per year, though the amount varies based purely on whim. Those few who are foolish enough to hide from the count's men when they come to collect are dealt with harshly, and the blood tax is raised in those places where they are found. This leads to situations where neighbours turn in their neighbours to avoid offending their masters.

IN THE SHADOW OF DEATH

The scattered villages and hamlets of Sylvania are even more isolated and parochial than other settlements of the Empire. Grubbing what existence they can from the infertile land, the peasantry live in small communities of inter-related families, and never venture far from their crude hovels for fear of what lies in wait in the wilderness that surrounds them.

There are few stone roads; rutted, half-flooded tracks and paths link most villages, all but impossible to navigate except in a couple of relatively dry summer months. For the rest of the year, the villages are cut off from all except the most desperate or foolish travellers and the villagers have little knowledge of the outside world. Not that the populace care overly much for news. They are for the most part concerned with day-to-day survival, raising famished, skinny goats and pigs, tending to what scraps of farmland they have in the hope of gathering enough crops to survive the Long and cruel winter.

Sylvanian villages are in a constant state of disrepair, for good stone and wood is hard to come by, and many buildings have been patched up for centuries, even millennia. All, however, have barred or boarded windows and heavy doors to keep out the night's predators. Crude fetishes and charms of a dozen gods hang on every lintel and frame. The villagers daub symbols of protection on their doors and gates with pig's blood, to guard against the unnatural horrors of this frightful land. Ever since Vlad closed the holy shrines, they have fallen into disregard, for no priest ventures into Sylvania without a sturdy guard of armed men. Of these, none wishes to stay for more than the few days needed to gather their meagre tithes or perform what rituals they can for the ungrateful peasantry. Truly, Sylvania is a godless realm, for darkness claimed it many centuries ago.





DRAKENHOF CASTLE

In the midst of the wretched land of Sylvania stands Drakenhof Castle, the accursed citadel from which Vlad von Carstein began his reign of terror and summoned his Undead army. This was the centre of the web, from where Mannfred von Carstein plotted his conquest. Dark forces are still drawn to this place and it is shunned by all the locals. It was home to generations of von Draks before Vlad came, and some say it is the home of Mannfred von Carstein to this day.

The castle was built by the von Drak family, and some whisper that it was done with the assistance of the unliving. The spot chosen for its construction was long considered cursed. During the starfall of 1111, a gigantic chunk of Warpstone called the Jewel of Morrlieb is said to have impacted on the very spot. Some dark influence certainly spreads from the place and did so even before Vlad von Carstein made it the home of his bloodline.

Adventurers still seek the towering castle out because of the treasure trove of occult lore rumoured to be contained in its library. It is said that copies of all the great sorcerous works can be found there, shackled tight to shelves made from wood that bleeds scarlet in the candlelight, but no one who has sought them has ever returned. The castle itself is huge, built on top of a massive clifftop far above the town that is its namesake, from where it dominates the surrounding forest, like a coiled serpent eyeing its prey. The jagged peaks behind it are mirrored by the jagged towers thrusting skyward from this gigantic, black edifice. Ravens circle the towers, perching on the gargoyles that ring the battlements. Wizards of the Empire claim that nowhere else does dark magic rest as heavily and concentrated as over this infamous castle. It has four mighty towers and a gigantic central keep, beneath which are a huge number of crypts, dungeons and abandoned torture chambers where unspeakable horrors were once inflicted on the prisoners of the mad

von Draks. All are now empty save for a few skeletons which are said to stir from time to time to relive the horrors of their torture and seek revenge on the living. Secret passages run all the way through the cliff and are said to come out in the woods.

The notorious poet-adventurer Felix Jaeger, purportedly the last living visitor to Drakenhof, reports that the castle seems abandoned, though thin screams emanate from its spires every night. The curtains and tapestries have rotted away, and the furniture is cracked and dusty. In the dining hall, the obsidian goblets, from which Mannfred and his lackeys used to drink blood, still stand undisturbed on the banqueting table. The walls of the great hall are hung all along with portraits of the Vampire Counts: tall, gaunt, red-eyed men who have each carved a bloody furrow into history. It is possible that since they could not see themselves in mirrors, the Counts required the pictures to remind them of their physical likeness.

Over the centuries, Castle Drakenhof has been partially destroyed and rebuilt many times. In 2158's Cleansing of Sylvania, one entire wing was demolished, though the rest was left standing when the workmen began turning on each other and voraciously devouring each other's flesh. Mannfred von Carstein dedicated himself to rebuilding it to recapture its former glory. This was not a simple task. The labyrinthine structure has been renovated and added to many times before, and attempts to modify it are sometimes resisted by the walls themselves.

In recent years, it seems that some Undead evil has returned to the castle. Peasants in nearby villages claim their young people are mysteriously vanishing. Huge red-eyed wolves prowl the forest and keep trespassers at bay, and the name von Carstein is whispered once. By night, sinister coaches make their way to the castle on clandestine business, and the dead once more stir uneasily in their tombs.

FORT OBERSTYRE

When Vlad von Carstein was defeated at the Siege of Altdorf, the Count of Stirland ordered a castle to be built overlooking the westward road from Sylvania. Fort Oberstyre took twenty-three years to build, but in its day was the epitome of Imperial construction and military technology. Its angled walls were proof against rocks and cannonballs and its stake-lined moat was thought to be impenetrable. It could hold a garrison of three thousand men and was protected by four cannon batteries that left no approach unguarded.

Yet the ongoing political and military battles for control of the Empire sapped Stirland's coffers and in 2088 the garrison was reduced to just seven hundred men; three of the batteries were removed for use in the siege of Glustebad and many of the battlements began to fall into disrepair. When Konrad attacked in 2094, Fort Oberstyre held out for less than two hours. Konrad leapt the moat and scaled the wall of the gate tower before lowering the drawbridge to allow his Vampire knight allies and skeletal men-at-arms to swiftly butcher all inside.

After Konrad was finally despatched at the Battle of Grim Moor, Fort Oberstyre was renovated and heavily rebuilt, and the Count of Stirland maintained a full strength garrison despite the drain on his treasury. In mockery of these efforts, Mannfred von Carstein swept away the defenders in a single night. As the sun set on Fort Oberstyre, Mannfred used his Necromantic enchantments to rouse the spirits of those slain by Konrad and set them upon the soldiers within. The wailing spectres and ghosts killed men with their chilling touch and the garrison, driven mad with fear, surrendered or fled before dawn's rays touched the castle's walls.

Ever since, there have been several attempts to reclaim Fort Oberstyre, but even the most dedicated Priests of Morr and the witch hunters have failed to exorcise the wild spirits that now rule the castle. Whole garrisons stationed at Fort Oberstyre have committed suicide rather than spend another night in its haunted chambers and it remains an evil blight upon travellers using the western road, luring them to their doom on storm-wracked nights.

"It was a dreadful place; a land perpetually shrouded in gloom and mist, where abandoned castles glared down like hungry ogres on the dismal roads; where sullen villagers, some bearing obvious stigmata of mutation, mumbled dark warnings against going abroad by night; and where, one evening, a red-eyed, pale faced nobleman studied us hungrily through the curtained window of his night-black coach, for all the world like a Bretonnian epicure inspecting his next meal."

"At the sight of him an awful premonition ran through my mind, that we would come to terrible harm on our journey. I mentioned my forebodings to my companion but he, as ever, insisted on mocking my premonitions of disaster, and then went on to make his usual disparaging remarks concerning the hardihood of the entire race of Man."

"I take no pleasure in stating that subsequent events were to prove my worst fears well-founded. Of all the awful lands that I had then journeyed through, I have no hesitation in saying that Sylvania was easily the most dire."

*From My Travels With Gotrek, Vol IV.
By Felix Jaeger, Altdorf Press, 2505*





HUNGER WOOD

Of all the miserable forests of Sylvania, Hunger Wood is the least populated and most despised by the Sylvanian folk. It is a spirit-infested maze of briars and bogs, in which the unwary are easily trapped. Parties that venture beneath the contorted boughs do not return. Instead, they are doomed to wander for days and weeks, until they are lost and crazed with hunger and thirst, forced to fall upon each other to feed and drink, devouring human flesh and drinking blood to survive. For centuries, this hellish wood has claimed its victims and several tribes of Crypt Ghouls claim it as their territory.

On the southern border of Hunger Wood stands Castle Templehof, once home to Countess Emmanuelle. A cousin of Konrad von Carstein, Emmanuelle fought against the Dwarfs during the infamous Night Siege. Dark spells swathed her fortress and its surrounds in an ever-present gloom, and for several months the Dwarfs fought in darkness, preyed upon by the voracious creatures of the woods and the minions of the Countess Emmanuelle. Eventually the castle was stormed and Emmanuelle slain, and the Dwarfs laid runic markers upon the dreadful site to repel Dark Magic. Over recent decades these markers have faded in power and some have been removed; foul things once more stir in the southern boundaries of Hunger Wood, guided by some evil intelligence.

CORPSE RUN

A stretch of the Aver Reach river, the Corpse Run forms a nauseating barrier between the south of Sylvania and Averland. Upstream in the Worlds Edge Mountains, melting snow and spring floods often wash through burial grounds, both new and ancient. By quirk of the flow of the Aver Reach, these bones and body parts are often deposited around a small island south west of Ghoul Wood. The bottom of this unwholesome stream is littered with bones polished smooth over many centuries, along with rotting limbs and disfigured heads. Tainted with warpstone dust, the Corpse Run is

home to many mutated fish, which feed upon the corrupted corpses to grow into monstrous carnivorous terrors. Driven into a frenzy by the smell of flesh, these creatures have been known to leap from the water to attack people – even the most foolhardy fisherman steers clear of Corpse Run!

The warpstone also infects the bodies of the dead, and on occasion they rise from their watery graves to attack nearby villages. Zombies hung with dirty grey weeds and gnawed by fish drag themselves up the riverbank to waylay travellers. Skeletons covered in algae and encrusted with filth lurch mindlessly along the river road. During Konrad von Carstein's attacks upon Averland, the Vampire's thrall Necromancers commanded the Undead creatures of Corpse Run. They directed the river-dead into towns and villages to spread chaos, terror and disease, paving the way for Konrad's relentless advances.

BYLORHOF

Bylorthof is home to the worship of Bylork, God of the Marshes, believed by some scholars to be an aspect of Taal or Manann. To the residents of this settlement, though, Bylork is no scholar's aspect – he's their God, and they're proud to be his holiest site. When Vlad von Carstein began to drive the priests out of Sylvania, Bylorthof's priests of Sigmar, Shallya, and Morr all fled, but not the priest of Bylork. Going underground, he maintained his cult amongst the thousand souls of Bylorthof, ignored by the Vampires who considered them worshippers of the worthless "God of the swamp behind the chicken pen."

This changed when Count Ranelf von Feuerfliege was given control of the town after Mannfred's resurrection. Eager to prove his abilities, he took on the cult of Bylork and lost. His decapitated body is now staked to the bottom of Bylorthof Marsh. In the sudden vacuum of power, the priests of Bylork took control, reassuring the people they would be safe from retribution. They reopened the town's temples and

invited priests from Stirland to administer them, and they began petitioning Wurtbad to bring them back into the fold, subtly suggesting they would turn to Averland for assistance if they did not.

With four temples operating and the belief in the God of the marshes at an all-time high, Bylorhof glows painfully with holiness when seen with Vampire's eyes. It is the only place in Sylvania to have successfully resisted the Vampire counts, at least, so far.

NACHTHAFEN

Countess Gabriella von Bundebad is rare amongst von Carsteins in that she prefers to maintain the status quo and is more interested tending her herd in the town of Nachthafen, just as they tend their sheep and goats, than uniting the country and waging a dangerous war on the Empire. To that end, she secretly aided the Stirlander exiles who were Sylvania's former rulers, helping them hide from Mannfred's minions and organise a mercenary force to fight for them.

Unfortunately, they were betrayed by one of their own, and this coalition was defeated.

She still rules Nachthafen and plays along with Mannfred's schemes for the moment, including providing troops for his march towards Middenheim. Should evidence of her betrayal ever be found, it could spark a civil war.

THE RED ABBEY

The Red Abbey was a Sigmarite monastery perched on the edge of the World's Edge Mountains, where it was ignored by Vlad during his purge of the priests. The monks considered themselves blessed, protected by Sigmar's aura of holiness, until Konrad came to power and proved them wrong. They were wrong, not only because some Vampires may tread on the holiest ground but also because they did not realise their piety would not protect them from the Zombies raised by

Konrad's pet necromancers. The monks of the Red Abbey were slaughtered to a man, and Konrad was well pleased with the work. Afterwards, the curse of Sylvania kept the Red Abbey's inhabitants from finding their deserved rest, and the skeletal remains of the monks still walk its halls whilst the bell tolls the hours without making a sound any mortal can hear.

REGAKHOF

Baron Trentino Regak, the last of his line, attempted to join the aristocracy of the night by the clumsy method of drinking the blood of virgin youths, convinced this would grant him immortality. Instead, it had the opposite effect. Regak came to the attention of Ostermark, and a band of Vampire hunters aided by the Knights of the White Wolf burned him out. They congratulated themselves on saving the townspeople and claimed Castle Regak for Ostermark. Regakhof, however, remained inside the border of Sylvania, sitting on the wrong bank of the River Stir.

For over ten years, the people of Regakhof ruled themselves, electing a burgomeister from amongst their shopkeepers to govern them. It could not last, however. When Mannfred von Carstein rose again, he had the burgomeister impaled and set alight in the town's square and let his men take who they pleased from amongst the townspeople in a display as terrifying as anything Baron Trentino Regak could have managed.

SUMPFDORF

The small village of Sumpfdorf sits above the water of Dark Moor, the buildings built on stilts and connected by planks and ropes. The inhabitants of Sumpfdorf live on an unvaried diet of fish and swamp vegetables, knowing that, since the only way to approach the village is by boat, they are safe from the Ghouls and Zombies of the Dark Moor. Still, once a year, the count's men from Castle Wartenhof fly in and collect the blood tax.





WALDENHOF

The cursed capital of Sylvania is Waldenhof. Although it is the capital, the province is ruled from Castle Drakenhof, which Mannfred is attempting to repair and reinvigorate. Whilst Mannfred is away, his retainers in Waldenhof have free reign. They spend their nights carousing and feeding as they will and have passed a reverse curfew law that forces all taverns to stay open at night. It is considered uncouth to feed on the tavern staff, but any others they come across are fair game and will be hunted through the streets for sport. The residents of Waldenhof lock and bolt their doors after dark and will not open them no matter how much the prey begs.

HEL FENN

Second in infamy only to Castle Drakenhof, Hel Fenn is the centre of Zombie activity in Sylvania. In ages past, the tribes of men who scratched a living from these lands used to bury their dead in this swampland in the east of Sylvania. When the great warpstone showers came, Hel Fenn boiled, churned and fumed, and spewed forth a multitude of dead from centuries past. Rotted corpses erupting from the thrashing mire engulfed entire villages, as Zombies draped with mud and reeds broke into houses and carried away the living.

It was to Hel Fenn that Mannfred finally retreated when his campaign against the Empire faltered and then failed. In the middle of the blighted marshland, he turned at bay to confront his pursuers. Even as the Imperial army trudged through the mire, grasping hands from the chill waters dragged soldiers to their doom, while at night sentries were lured to their deaths by flickering ghostlights in the gloom. Fully a quarter of the Empire's army died in Hel Fenn before they even saw battle. Nearly as many deserted on the hideous march in pursuit of the Vampire Count as former comrades returned in the darkness to attack the camps.

Even after Mannfred's defeat, the marshes took a heavy toll and of those soldiers that survived the battle against the Vampire hundreds never escaped the clutches of Hel Fenn. Trapped by the Dark Magic unleashed in the battle, these poor souls still wander the marshes as stumbling Zombies. These foul creatures remain like rotten fruit to be harvested and so Hel Fenn remains a haunt of Vampires and Necromancers seeking to control the Undead hordes of the swamps.



GRIM MOOR

Between Templehof and the shores of Helsee lies Grim Moor. A stretch of peat bogs and trickling waterways that rises into muddy hills to the west, it was upon Grim Moor that Konrad made his final stand against an army of men and Dwarfs. It was not an idle choice, for Konrad was insane, not foolish. The hills of Grim Moor are dotted with ancient tombs and cairns and from here his Necromancers had drawn forth a great number of Wraiths, Wights and other Undead. Close to their own burial grounds, these creatures were more powerful than on Konrad's distant campaigns and but for Konrad's madness, and the endeavours of the Dwarf hero Grutbad and the young Count Heiman, it is likely Konrad would have been victorious.

Despite the best efforts of the Dwarf runesmiths the ancient magic of the cairns still hold strong. When Morrslieb waxes strong the ghosts of the prehistoric dead march and fight across the moorlands, their tattered armies surrounded by a spectral glow that can be seen for many miles across the night sky. Shrill battle cries and the distant clash of weapons echo upon the chilling winds and on such nights the people of nearby villages stuff goat's cheese into their ears and hide beneath the bed covers.

The fog didn't help, admittedly. It wasn't much good being a night watchman if you couldn't actually see anything.

It was all right to boast about being a talented soldier in a tavern, but out here, in the cold of night, with the fog closing in and talk of unnatural beasts clamouring at the railings of this graveyard, Valik wasn't feeling quite so bold. Not that he'd admit it to the others on duty. It was that fog that disturbed him the most, because it didn't seem a natural occurrence. That he saw the occasional swirling face within the mists was something he tried to convince himself was down to that strong ale he'd been drinking earlier that afternoon.

What's more, Valik had his doubts about the priest's wards. Valik had no skills in such matters, but the old man seemed evasive to the few questions put to him by the night watchmen. How strong are they? How long can they hold off fiends? Have they been tested against vampires? Nothing that sounded trustworthy came from the priest's mouth – nothing reassuring, at least.

Every time Valik heard a clank he reached for his sword. That reaction wasn't because of his fear, of course. No, definitely not fear. He was just doing his job and preparing for the worst. If something came at him he'd be ready for it, ready to chop its head clean off.

'Vampires,' someone muttered. It was Grull – now he was clearly frightened, judging by that look on his face. There were five of them on guard that night and no one laughed at the banter – if this was banter.

'That a warning or a joke?' Valik replied.

'No, they're here.' Grull was gesturing with the tip of his blade to the railings on the north side of the garden, beyond the mausoleum and next to the main gates to Morr's sanctuary.

'Can't see further than that tombstone,' Valik said, peering into the gloom. 'What makes you so sure it's vampires?

A pair of glowing eyes. No sooner had Valik seen it himself than it vanished again.

'I said what makes you so sure?'

Grull never replied – not coherently anyway. From out of his stomach came the spearheaded end of an iron railing. Blood pooled on the floor and bubbled up from his mouth. Suddenly, Grull rose through the air, lifted with a supernatural force, and behind him stood one of the most hideous sights Valik had ever seen. It was massive and hunched, with spines protruding from its back and bones jutting out of its stretched flesh. The creature threw Grull's ruined body to the ground and hauled out the iron pole. Appalled, Valik watched the thing chew the innards that had become caught on the tip of the weapon. Around it swarmed smaller creatures, just as vile in their own way. They buried their faces within Grull's open torso to feast upon his innards.

Valik swallowed. He'd be damned if the same thing was going to happen to him, and damned if those creatures were going to get to the graves. With his blade raised, he screamed his defiance and charged directly at the fiend.



INFAMOUS VAMPIRES

Though the rise of the von Carsteins heralded the gravest Undead threat to the Old World since the time of Nagash, there have been many Vampires that have plagued the lands of men.

LADY ARIETTE VON CARSTEIN, FIRST OF THE NEW GENERATION

Lady Ariette von Carstein is the eldest of the most recent branch of the von Carstein family. When Hermann Schtillmann performed the dark ritual that brought Mannfred back from the dead, it was young Ariette who was intended to be the count's first meal. However, the three were interrupted by the arrival of Gotrek Gurnisson and his ridiculous biographer. It took Ariette twelve hours to escape from her "rescuers" and return to look for the handsome man whom she knew could give her everything she wanted.

On her journey back, she formulated a plan to present herself to Mannfred as a young noble girl who'd been carried off unwillingly by a pair of travellers. She explained to Mannfred that she escaped while the two disgusting men slept, and she had watched them kill a poor peasant girl that they had deemed "tainted." She told Mannfred that these travellers aimed to return with reinforcements, and upon learning this, she knew she had to return to warn him at all costs. Impressed by her courage and passion, Mannfred agreed to grant her the Kiss.



Ariette has gone to great lengths to hide her true background. Previously, she was an irrelevant peasant. Now she has power, wealth, and influence and a mind to use them, and she has no intention of ever losing her current status. She enjoys the finer things in life but is not overindulgent. Most of all, she loves to travel. Sometimes, she does this to help re-create the cult around the von Carstein name in the younger Sylvanian nobles; other times, she just wants to see the world. She has even been known to fall in amongst adventurers because they travel to such exotic places and see so many strange things. Also, as adventurers tend to be rootless vagabonds, nobody complains if she gets peckish en route.

"Let us not be foolish here and talk as if to children. It is painful, extremely so. The flesh tears, the blood gushes forth, the pain is like a blow to the head, knocking one senseless. One feels one's very life is draining away, and with that comes panic and terror. But pain and terror can be weathered and controlled. And what in this world worth having does not come with a price of pain or suffering?"

Lady Ariette von Carstein

BARONESS HELENA VON CULPER

Amongst the Emperor's advisors in the Council of State is the Chamberlain of the Seal. Whilst the chamberlain performs the diplomatic duty of managing foreign relations, he is also the unofficial master of the Emperor's spies and assassins. For this reason, the position of chamberlain is one the Lahmians have long sought control over.

The previous Chamberlain, Otto von Bitternach, known as the Iron Graf for his pragmatism and strength of will, was immune to the Lahmians' charms and ploys for the duration of his service, first to Luitpold, then to Karl Franz. When old age finally claimed Bitternach, strings were pulled, and a more pliant replacement was found. Baron Amadeus Menken is an apprehensive and uncertain man who was easily convinced of a need to clean house when he took over the position, and he appointed Baroness Helena von Culper as a Master of the Komission of the Imperial Archives, one of the Empire's chief information-gathering agencies.

Baroness von Culper has used this position to collect useful confidence that is then passed on to other members of the sisterhood to allow them to better manipulate their targets. One of her aims is to verify the existence of a rumoured network of magister-spies who are so secret that even the Emperor is not kept aware of their activities. So far, she has found no evidence proving or disproving their existence.

Those spies who report to the Altdorf townhouse in which the baroness dwells are impressed by her cover. She appears to be an independent and striking widow who spends most of her time acting as an aunt and chaperone to the young socialites of the city, and few would suspect her of being a master of deeper intrigues.

LADY KHEMALLA

One of the oldest Lahmians, Lady Khemalla, survived her city's fall at Neferata's side. Through the ages she has taken many names and identities. She has been Lady Lenore, the Vampire Mistress of Mousillon, Katrina the Bloody, the Countess Karmilla, Mirkalla von Leicheberg, Eleanor la Voisine, and doubtless many others. As a nuncio of the sisterhood, she travels the world doing Neferata's will. Her specialty is the elimination of Vampires of the other bloodlines who would threaten the Lahmians' grasp on power. To keep herself occupied over the years between hunts, Khemalla uses her beauty to attract men of intellectual and artistic genius whose conversation helps her pass the nights until she tires of them. Khemalla has one of the world's most valuable collections of artwork, containing paintings produced by long-dead masters from da Venzio to Dari, and every single painting is a portrait of her.

GENEVIEVE DIEUDONNE

A rogue Lahmian, Genevieve is the daughter-in-darkness of Chandagnac who was in turn made a Vampire by Lady Melissa d'Acques without the



permission of Neferata. In life, Genevieve was a Bretonnian child of court before she was turned at the age of sixteen. For over six centuries, she has travelled the world as an outlaw, a slave, a student, a bodyguard, an adventurer, and many other things. Most notable was her brief role as unlikely hero when she was instrumental in saving Karl Franz from an assassination attempt. She was grudgingly allowed to take up public residence in Altdorf with her mortal lover, the famed playwright Detlef Sierck. Unsurprisingly, this did not impress many of the locals, including the priests of Morr, but attempts to have her un-life ended, ranging from political machinations to a mob's public lynching, failed. The sisterhood secretly protect her; despite her status as a third generation rogue with no place amongst the true Lahmians, she is valued for her ability to influence the minds of mortals into softening towards Vampires, so they will be all the more pliant and willing slaves when Neferata makes them hers.

ANTIOCHUS BLAND

In life, Antiochus Bland was a zealous priest of Morr who politicked his way to the rank of Temple Father of Altdorf. He used his position to begin a popular campaign against the Undead of the city – Altdorf is rumoured to contain a small but thriving community of Vampires, perhaps because its population is large enough, and compressed enough, to hide them. Bland used these rumours to stir the Altdorf mob into a frenzy that reached its strange conclusion when he was turned by a Vampire of the Lahmian bloodline, effectively defusing his war against the undying ones before it could truly begin.

Bland is still temple father, but he controls the Morrian monastery through his puppet Father Knock, who handles most of the drudgery involved with maintaining the site. Bland cloisters himself in a secure cell in the temple, where he speaks to his minion



through a window in the door – and where his minion delivers the beasts on which the Vampire feeds. Knock serves Bland because he believes only Morr has the right to strike down one of his own priests, so he refuses to slay the Undead temple father. Thus far, he has maintained the secret, but he fears if word spreads to the rest of the monks, the entire complex would collapse from infighting.

And what of Bland himself? His self-loathing consumes him; he bathes and blesses his unclean new body all night long, and he burned himself on holy symbols before they were taken from him. Father Knock insures that Bland has animals to feed on (though Bland feeds only when his hunger conquers his disgust) and observes him through a peephole, making notes for his treatise on the Undead and how they pose little real threat to the living. Knock believes that the people's fear of Vampires is mostly unfounded and that the cult has wasted too much time and money hunting exaggerated legends when it should be concentrating on its role helping the bereaved and burying the dead.

SIR TIBERIUS KAELE

Sir Kael was once a member of the Knights of the White Wolf, devoting his life to the service of Ulric and to mastering his passions for the sword and for the hunt. When he realised his mortal body would never be able to match the abilities of the gaunt stranger who had bested him at the ford, he made a very easy choice. Since then, Kael has followed in the footsteps of Abhorash, wandering the Empire and seeking great martial challenges and epic hunts to test his mettle. He sees little point fighting men when nature can provide so many far more brutal and terrible killers. Until he is ready to face a Dragon, he tests himself against Wyverns, Griffons, Trolls and other dark things of the



"When the hunt is loosed, the hounds are held back so the fox may make ground and the chase have length in it. Such are our curses too, for the Gods seek to raise the most sport they can from our hunting."

Sir Tiberius Kael, Blood Dragon

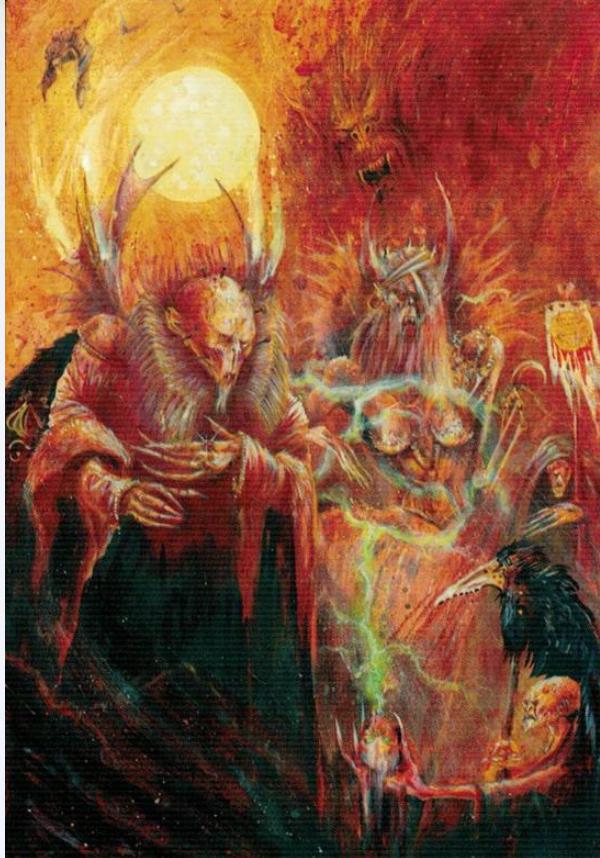
forests and mountains. Kael is no friend to Humans, but the only thing he truly values is the glory and thrill of the hunt. He may therefore be merciful if the Humans can lead him to a truly great challenge, such as a Dragon Ogre or a Giant. On the other hand, he is equally likely to use mortals as bait or as beaters to draw out such a beast. Lacking the presence of such a beast, he instead will give them a night's head start and begin hunting them on the morrow.

MUNDWARD THE CRUEL, THE MASTER OF SHADOWS

Amongst the dark, twisting alleyways and sordid haunts of Marienburg's east docklands lurk footpads, cut-throats, cultists and all manner of wicked and deadly folk. These are men hardened by a life of constant crime. Yet there is a name that strikes fear into the hearts of even these ruthless and selfish men – the Master of Shadows. None have ever seen the Master of Shadows, or at least none have ever survived to speak of it, but his presence is felt everywhere. From the musky black lotus dens of the Suidworf to the illegal fighting pits beneath the warehouse district, no criminal act takes place without the Master of Shadows' consent. Some believe him to be a dispossessed noble from the Reikland, others claim that he was once a high priest of the cult of Ranald. The foolish scoff and say that he is a myth, but they do not live long.



Even the oldest smugglers and fences cannot remember a time when things were different. As they learned their illicit trades from the greybeards of the day, they were taught not to cross the Master of Shadows, and of the grisly fates that have befallen those that defied his wishes. Every lowlife thief and petty crook in the east dock has heard of 'Bent Harald': how he was found with no hands or heart after he burgled a nobleman's house against the Master of Shadows' orders. Then there is the tale of Geidrik Henstlewurt who was found on the steps of the Great Temple, his dead face screaming in a pale rictus of utter terror. Everyone knows not to cross the Master of Shadows, for his spies see every misdeed and his retribution is truly terrible.



Were these underground denizens to know the truth, their terror would be all the greater. The Master of Shadows is a Vampire who has stalked the streets of Marienburg since he deserted Mannfred von Carstein following the Sylvanian count's aborted attack on the city. For generations this Vampire has moved amongst the living, masquerading as one of them whilst feeding upon young, innocent victims. He has many guises. To the criminal underclass he is the Master of Shadows; the ruling elite of the city know him as the reclusive Baron von Kasparlund; to traders he is the Secretary of the Merchant's Guild, Daimler Voltz; secretive cultists fear him as the Magister of the Temple Ascendant.

With these multitudinous personae to hide his true nature, the Master of Shadows continues to weave his plots, growing in strength and influence year by year. He has wealth and physical power aplenty, and over the decades, as the number of his victims has multiplied, so too have the Undead minions at his command. So great has this hidden army become, perhaps even he does not know the full extent of its numbers. All across Marienburg, in every strata of society, the Master of the Shadows' Zombies and thrall creatures slay those who oppose his rise to power. Slowly, unseen, the Master of Shadows' grip on Marienburg tightens, until the day he reveals himself; becoming rider of the city and plunging it into an age of Undead slavery.

DINTOMAZ

The madhouse of Lembrooke was built by the Physician's Guild, not to grant succour to the insane, as the priestesses of Shallya do in their hospices, but as a home for the study of the deranged in a secluded location where only the beasts and trees would be able

to hear the screams. Lembrooke was run by doctors Feder and Teer, who were at the forefront of their field, using such forward-thinking techniques as trepanation to let the troublesome Daemons out through holes in the skull, thyroid removal, heated brands, and mild poisoning.

Over the years, a handful of their subjects escaped into the surrounding countryside, but this was only to be expected. The point of building Lembrooke far from civilisation was precisely so that these incidents wouldn't cause trouble with the neighbours. One of those escapees, who suffered from a case of Feder's Vexatious Forgetfulness so badly that he only answered to the name of "Nummersieben" because it was written on the door of his cell, wandered in the wilderness until chance crossed his path with that of the Necrarch Dintomaz. Dintomaz sought help with experiments of his own and found Nummersieben to be a useful servant. When Dintomaz discerned from his servant's ramblings that there was an entire building full of potentially useful servants – and subjects – nearby, he was intrigued.

For one night the screams of the physicians joined the screams of the patients as Dintomaz made it known that Lembrooke belonged to him and that its inhabitants would serve him, whether living or dead.

A grander experiment takes place in those dark halls now. In life, Dintomaz had been a necromancer obsessed with contacting the dead, in Undeath he is a master of controlling spirits. By placing the ghosts under his command inside the addled minds of lunatics, he has gained a small army of the living he can control as easily as any Zombie. The Lembrooke lunatics suffer none of the usual weaknesses of the Undead and can easily travel amongst the living, gathering more subjects for Dintomaz and preparing for the day when they cast down the society that cast them out.



THE SILVER PRINCESS

In 2293 of the Imperial Calendar, the Empire was still in much disarray. Three Elector Counts laid claim to the Imperial throne, and barons warred with each other over power and land. The Vampire Wars had ended, and the bickering noble families had forgotten their unity against the dread threat of the Vampires, believing them destroyed.

In that year; a strange visitor came to the court of Stirland. The heralds announced her as Princess Layla of Gopher, one of the Arabyan cities of the south. Her slim figure was swathed in black silk robes, which danced and swayed with a life of their own. A mask of silver depicting a beautiful yet stern expression concealed her face, beneath a thick headscarf of crimson wool. Olive-skinned retainers accompanied her; casting rose water upon her body and into the air. Soldiers dressed in black mail and enamelled plate, their heads covered by spiked helmets with blank faceplates, marched stiffly behind the princess as she made her way into the chamber of Count Ewald.

The Count was awestruck by the graceful apparition before him, and without question or hesitation, Ewald invited the princess to stay in his castle. The two dined alone, while the Count's men remarked upon the silence of her guards, who did not enter the barracks, but left the castle and stationed themselves in black tents in the archer), fields outside. No fire burned in their camp and curious sentries on the battlements above could not hear a single voice. The only movement was of the endlessly patrolling soldiers.



The following morning, Ewald announced his betrothal to Princess Layla, to forge an alliance with the Arabyans. With these new allies, he promised, he would be able to take the Imperial Throne for Stirland. Many were heartened by this news, for the Count needed an heir; and Stirland's fortunes were waning in the fight for domination. There were a few, however, who did not like this turn of events, Chief amongst them was Gerhardt, the Count's Chancellor of the Treasury, He bad beard of exorbitant dowries asked by Arab lords for the marriage of their daughters, and suspected that Layla was not even a princess. He set his agents to spying on the princess and her entourage.

Weeks passed, and Gerhardt had no word from his spies. Layla was rarely seen, though the count spent almost all of his time with her. Gerhardt feared his agents had been slain and investigated for himself. That night he placed five of his sturdiest fighters outside the quarters given over to Layla. Then, by a hidden route known only to a few servants and courtiers, entered the chambers to see what was concealed within.

What he found was far more fearsome than a gold-hungry woman. Layla's silver mask lay upon the bed, her headdress cast back. In the glitter of the candlelight, Gerhardt saw pale, bald skin. The princess hunched over something and as she swayed to one side, the chancellor saw that it was one of his agents. Blood trickled from a wide gash in his neck as the 'princess' let his corpse drop to the ground. The chancellor could not stop a gasp of amazement escaping his lips, and quick as lightning Layla spun and saw him. Fangs as long as a man's fingers jutted from her mouth, and scar tissue and cuts twisted her bestial face. With no rose water to conceal it, the air was thick with the stench of decay. Gerhardt bellowed for his guards and fled back down the passage. The Vampire summoned her own warriors. Their fleshless faces revealed in the moonlight, Undead soldiers stormed the gates, while Layla stalked the corridors within. The Count himself was removed from danger; while battle raged across the walls and courtyard. For several hours the brave men of Stirland fought against the skeletal soldiers. As the first rays of dawn began to spread, the she-Vampire rejoined her warriors, having sated her thirst on dozens of soldiers and servants. The Undead army withdrew eastwards into the glimmering pre-dawn gloom, heading towards the mountains, and was never seen again.

LOUIS CYpher

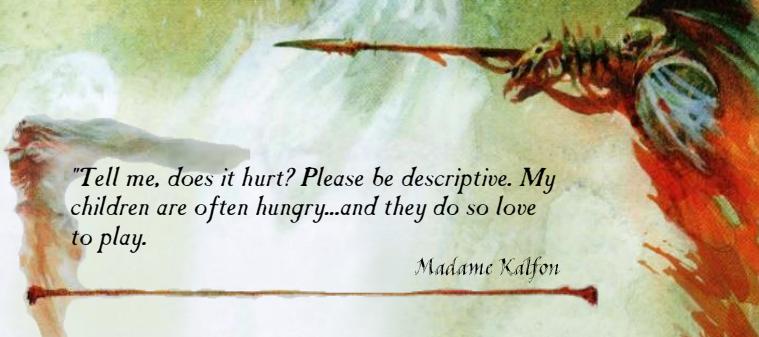
A Bretonnian Necrarch, Louis Cypher sought to increase his magical abilities by absorbing the stored power of the ancient standing stones that are scattered over the Old World. With each stone he uprooted, his power grew, as did his legion of the damned. Some say those stones were erected by the Elves before their war with the Dwarfs, and Louis Cypher evidently believed this because he took his army aboard a fleet of ghostly ships and sailed to the land of Ulthuan. He has not been heard of since, and whether he was eradicated by the High Elves or if he fights them still for the magic locked into their network of standing stones, none can say.

MADAME KALFON

The forested Dukedom of Parravon borders on the lands of the Fay, who steal away children gifted with magical talent. Madame Kalfon's parents, seeing the dishes mysteriously leap into the air and then shatter when their baby daughter was in tears, sought to hide her and her obvious gift from the Fay by abandoning her in the mountains, their peasant heads full of nonsense fairytales about kindly hermits who took in foundlings. In a way, the fairytale came true.

Heloise Kalfon was taken in and given her name by a band of Mutants living in the Grey Mountains. A peaceful group, they treated her well despite her lack of deformities and the strange things that happened whenever she threw a tantrum.

Eventually, these Mutants came to the attention of the Necrarch Chigaru, who was investigating the ruins of an infamous castle from his base in the mountains. Chigaru took the outcasts in and provided shelter and food in return for loyal service. Seeing the potential in Heloise and believing her youth would make her easy to control, he made her his get, though she was only twelve years old. This did not do much for her sanity. Neither did watching as Chigaru used the techniques he had learned from a grimoire looted from the castle to further mutate her surrogate family into yet more twisted forms until their bodies broke from the strain. Heloise spitefully pushed her father-in-darkness from the tower for revenge, and the hated man fell onto a spike, impaling him so that he was trapped helpless until the first rays of the sun scoured his presence from existence.



"Tell me, does it hurt? Please be descriptive. My children are often hungry...and they do so love to play.

Madame Kalfon

Taking the name "Madame Kalfon" to make her seem more grown-up, the diminutive Necrarch took over Chigaru's tower and made its wondrous toys her own. Over the years, she has mastered the techniques of creating new life with a childlike glee, pulling beings apart and putting them back together in unusual combinations as she would with any doll. Chigaru's tower is now full of the precocious girl's playthings and friends.

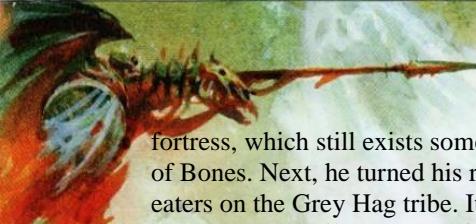
Madame Kalfon knows why her parents abandoned her and nurses a special grudge towards the Fay for stealing children like her away. Looking down from her tower towards the Wildwood at the eastern end of Athel Loren she saw a means of satiating her need for revenge and her constant curiosity. Madame Kalfon captured a swarm of the Fay nature spirits called Spites and began using them in her experiments.

Although they were spirits, they were not Ghosts and could not be controlled by the usual necromantic techniques. The spirits had physical forms, but shortly after they died, these forms dissolved, making it impossible to reanimate them. She experimented obsessively until she struck the right combination of preserving chemicals and limb-replacement to create something solid enough to be reanimated. And so another form of life was conquered and added to her mountaintop menagerie.

VORAG BLOODYTOOTH, THE FIRST GHOUL KING

Vorag Bloodytooth, the first Ghoul King, was a gigantic creature whose hatred for the living and for other Vampires was matched only by his urge to rebuild the lost kingdom of Strigos. Legends say that he was once pursued into the woods of southern Sylvania by a hunting party led by Franz von Carstein. Vorag defeated the Count in single combat and drank his blood, thereby increasing his already considerable powers. Around him rallied the many tribes of deranged men inhabiting the forbidding place known as Ghoul Wood in southern Sylvania, and soon he ruled over a huge horde of scavengers. Playing on his kind's kinship with the Ghouls, he united an army of them.

This unruly force of Ghouls he took south, crossing the mountains at Black Fire Pass and carving a red trail across the Border Princes. When he reached the Badlands his army counted many Undead minions as well. Orc and Goblin tribes were slaughtered in their thousands as Vorag made his way towards the ruins of ancient Mourkain. His rage was then directed at the Greenskins rather than his fellow Vampires. He led his Ghouls against the Red Cloud tribe of Goblins. Those he did not kill were enslaved and forced to build a



fortress, which still exists somewhere east of the Plain of Bones. Next, he turned his rag-tag army of carrion-eaters on the Grey Hag tribe. It was in battle against them that a missile launched from a bolt thrower pierced his heart and ended the reign of Vorag Bloodytooth. His fortress was forgotten and fell into ruin.

Yet the efforts of Vorag the Ghoul King remain an inspiration to the Strigoi. They still dream of rebuilding their great Vampire empire, and they have learnt much from the mistakes of Vorag. Although his plans failed, his methods were sound – he took strength from the powers of the Strigoi and applied them far from the realms of the other Vampires – deep in the Badlands, away from Human civilisation by increasing power in graveyards, ruins, and dark forests. In that way, Vorag's efforts in the south went unnoticed and were not prevented. Vorag also showed the strength that can be gained from an army of Ghouls, and these creatures are always the foot soldiers and servants of the Strigoi.



URZEN THE UNRELENTING

Urzen the Unrelenting has followed Vorag's example by amassing a great army of Ghouls, camped around his ruined fortress deep inside the Forest of Shadows. His agents are spreading throughout the graveyards of the Empire, conscripting the Ghouls and commanding the Zombies to follow them back to his great staging ground. Each day, his army grows more massive, and Urzen, ever the general, drills them relentlessly each evening.

Urzen isn't building his army to take over the Empire, however, but to attack the Silver Pinnacle and get his revenge on Queen Neferata herself. Urzen was Ushoran's military advisor, and he has spent more than three thousand years dreaming of his redressing the wrongs done to his master. The only thing that might hinder this is if the Lahmians discover his plans and send Human agents against him before he can bring the full numbers of his troops to bear. To that end, Urzen has instructed his mortal servants to do everything they can to help Vampire hunters – guiding them to Vampire lairs, providing them with the location of great magic weapons, informing them of an individual Vampire's weaknesses – whilst taking care that his hand in things is never discovered and that the hunters target only Lahmians.

"For now, we sleep, and we dream. But one day we will rise, and we will make our dreams real again."

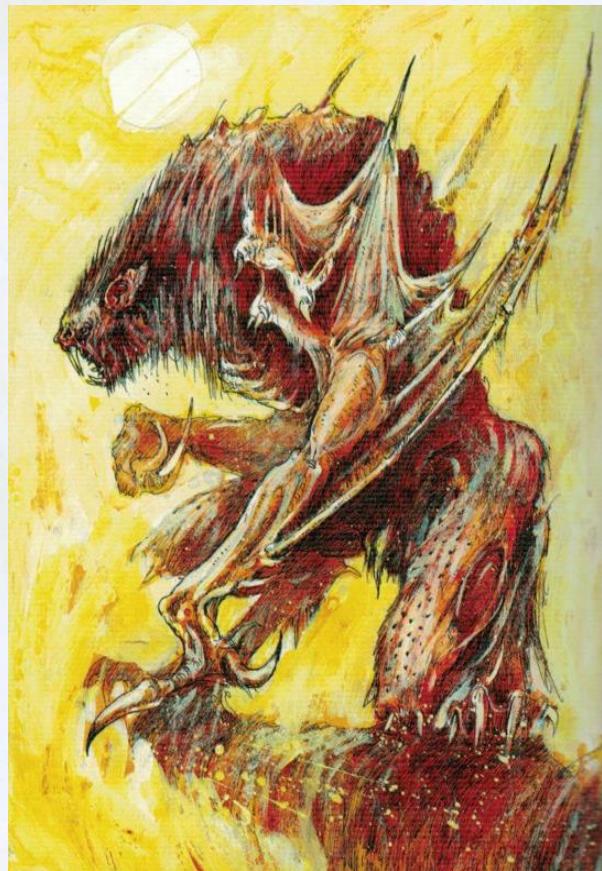
Urzen the Unrelenting

DHROX, THE KRUDENWALD FIEND

For over three hundred years successive Counts of Hochland have offered a princely reward for the destruction of a bloodthirsty beast that has terrorised the forests around Krudenwald. The woodcuts that depict this creature show it to be a monstrous wolf, that can run on its hind legs and stands twice the height of a tall man. Local legend holds that on the darkest nights of the year, the Fiend of Krudenwald stalks the forest at the head of a great pack of monstrous wolves. Their howls echo through the trees, and swarms of gigantic bats swoop down through the canopy at their hellish call. Other things, man-like yet devolved and depraved, carrying bone-tipped clubs and bloodstained rocks, lope beneath the boughs following the spectral hunt.

The Fiend of Krudenwald preys upon villages isolated from each other by the bitter winter nights. With no soldiers to patrol the roads, no huntsmen to guard the woodland tracks, the Fiend and its unholy pack are free to roam and attack at will. Nobody ventures out into the winter dark in Krudenwald, and great bonfires light the night sky to ward away the voracious beast.

Yet every winter there are ignorant travellers upon the road that are found brutally ripped apart and drained of blood. As the spring thaws come and people travel abroad again, they find farmsteads with their doors smashed in, the bloodless bodies of the families and their livestock scattered about the yards and barns. No tracks are ever found, no body of bat or wolf. Those that survive give thanks to Taal and Rhea for sparing them, yet all are consumed by sadness and anxiety, for they know that winter will come again all too soon.



Von Carstein's Revenge

Gustav Krecher was impressed by the visiting aristocrat with the foreign accent. He was of noble stock and as knowledgeable of ancient tomes as any trader Krecher had ever encountered. Yet something about the stranger's incessant and arrogant tone began to wear thin, and there was something that troubled him besides. The flash of anger that crossed the stranger's eyes when Krecher told him that certain books of his collection were not for viewing was alarming – almost inhuman in its rage. The stranger whirled around and left the extravagant feast, walking out into the night. Krecher felt a moment of fear, despite the reassuring knowledge that a high wall encircled his keep, and his guard – one hundred men strong – was vigilant.

Mannfred von Carstein was not a man to be thwarted. In fact, he was no longer a man at all, but a Vampire Lord of great power. In his wrath at the foolish noble of Altdorf, Mannfred channeled his mind, summoning forth his minion. With a plodding ring of ironclad feet, the Wight King came.

"What is your will, my master?"

The Wight's thoughts entered Mannfred's mind without sound, a voice as chill as the tombs.

"Assemble your warriors. You will be storming the keep of Gustav Krecher. Slay everyone that breathes. Then, search his library and retrieve a single tome, a book for which I have long sought," commanded Mannfred out loud.

The Wight King's eyeless sockets flickered with unnatural light as Mannfred described the volume he sought, and the ancient creature nodded once in obedience.

"As you will master, so shall it be done."

Advancing within an unnatural shroud of fog, Mannfred von Carstein's assault force was upon the gate guards before they

could bar the way. Blaring horns summoned the guards and soon the clash of steel on steel rang through the courtyard. Krecher's men were battleproven soldiers, but they were not prepared for the skeletons that came out of the fog. Unnerved by the walking dead, the men fought in a panic, and so wavered and were cut down.

Only in the courtyard's centre did the men stand their ground. There, rallied by their captain, they made a shield wall and beat back their skeletal assailants. Another horn rang out in the fog, followed by the sound of many galloping hooves. The men peered out from beneath interlocking shields. The entrance gate was too narrow to permit more than two horses to ride side-by-side, so the sounds of a cavalry unit charging were perplexing. Then, to the soldiers' rising horror, black-armoured knights rode through the walls, coming hard at their unprotected flank. The lowered lances clove through the men and the Black Knights rode them down. In a last effort to halt the slaughter, the Captain of the guard tried to rally his men once more, but the Wight King ensured that it would not happen. Relentlessly that fell Lord swung his sword, first splintering the captain's shield, then his skull.

The Undead did not stop until every living soul was hunted down and slain. Far away.

Mannfred von Carstein once again heard his indomitable servant's voice within his head.

"Your will is done, my Master. The book you sought was not there."

Despite himself, Mannfred smiled. He had not truly thought that Krecher could have had one of the fabled tomes scribed by Nagash. But by raising the Vampire's ire, the Imperial noble had ensured his fate.







THE UNDYING HORDES

The Vampires of the Old World claim dominion over the mortal remains of all earthly creatures. To die is to surrender oneself to their power. The generals of the Empire claim that the night is always darkest before the dawn; the Warrior Priests of Sigmar preach that there is hope yet. But they know little of the games immortals play. Patient, cunning, devious, the Vampires work to conquer the lands of the living with ancient and corrupted sorcery. Should they succeed in their dread goals, the rays of the sun shall be forever suffocated by the night, and the age of men will be replaced by an age of the dead. The world will be transformed into a ghastly necropolis of mindless and unliving slaves, ruled over by the iron will of the Vampire Counts.

When death alone is certain, how can the living possibly hope to prevail?

In this section you will find details for all the different troops, heroes, monsters and war machines used in the Vampire Counts army. It provides the background, imagery, characteristic profiles and rules necessary to use all the elements of the army, from Core troops to special characters and from the Lore of the Necromancy to the magic items used by their champions.

ARMY SPECIAL RULES

This section of the book describes all the different units used in a Vampire Counts army, along with any rules necessary to use them in your games of Warhammer. Where a model has a special rule that is explained in the *Warhammer* rulebook, only the name of that rule is given. If a model has a special rule that is unique to it, that rule is detailed alongside its description. However, there are a number of commonly recurring ‘army special rules’ that apply to several Vampire Counts units, and these are detailed here.

UNDEAD

All units with the Undead special rule have the Fear, Immunity (Poisoned Attacks) and Unstable special rules. In addition, units with the Undead special rule cannot make march moves unless they are within 12" of the army General or within 6" of a Wizard with the Lore of Necromancy, in which case they can march as usual. Lastly, when a unit with the Undead special rule is charged, it can only elect to hold.

VAMPIRIC

Models with the Vampiric special rule have the Fear and Immunity (Psychology) special rules. In addition, enemies must re-roll successful To Wound rolls against them. This does not apply to Magical Attacks, Flaming Attacks, or successful Killing Blows.

THE RED THIRST

Whenever a model with this special rule kills one or more enemy models in close combat, roll a D6 at the end of the Close Combat phase. On the roll of a 5+, the model recovers a single Wound lost earlier in the battle. This does not work against models with the Undead or Daemonic special rules (as well any other model that clearly does not have blood!).

THE GENERALS OF UNDEATH

Every Vampire Counts army is animated and driven onwards by the sorcery of its General. Your army's General must be a Wizard. If they are able to choose a spell lore, they must use the Lore of Necromancy.

Slain General

At the end of the phase in which the General is removed as a casualty, and at the start of every friendly turn thereafter, all friendly Undead units on the battlefield must take a Leadership test. If the test is failed, the unit immediately suffers a number of Wounds equal to the amount by which it failed the Leadership test, with no saves of any kind allowed. These Wounds are distributed as if from a shooting attack.

If, at the start of any of your turns following the death of the General, there is one or more friendly Wizards on the table who know spells from the Lore of Necromancy, no unit in the army needs to take this Leadership test while at least one of them remain.

Battle Standards

In addition to the normal rules for the army battle standard, units of Undead within 12" of their battle standard suffer one less Wound than they normally would due to the Unstable special rule, or following the death of the army's General.

Characters and Units

Characters who are not Undead may join Undead units despite not being Unstable themselves. Mounted Characters ignore the Undead special rule of the mount. If an Undead unit would get destroyed as a result of Unstable, any remaining character(s) will need to take a Break test as normal the same phase, using the Leadership modifier that they lost the combat by.

RESURRECTING FALLEN WARRIORS

Some magic spells and items can resurrect fallen warriors in an Undead unit by restoring a number of Wounds' worth of models to the unit. If the target consists of a single model, such as a lone character or a Corpse Cart, then it can never exceed its starting Wounds value. If the target is a unit of more than one model, then Wounds regained in this way follow a strict order. First, the unit champion is resurrected – if there was one – and then the musician. Standard bearers are never resurrected; if the bearer has been destroyed, the banner crumbles to dust. Resurrected command models displace rank and file models as required. Finally, any remaining Wounds resurrect rank and file models. In the case of multiple Wound models, all models in the unit must be fully healed before another can be resurrected.

Resurrected models are added to the front rank until it reaches at least five models (or three models in the case of monstrous infantry). Additional models can then be added to the front or rear rank. If the unit already has more than one rank, models can only be added to the rear rank.

Raised models may never displace enemy units; if there is not enough room, any excess models are wasted. Similarly, if you do not have enough models of the appropriate type, place as many as you can - the rest are wasted. A unit cannot usually be taken beyond its starting size, though certain powers, spells and special rules may provide exceptions. Unless specifically stated otherwise, spells and magic items that restore lost Wounds cannot heal characters or their mounts. If a character has joined a unit, only the unit will recover lost Wounds.

Although not every creature in the armies of the Vampire Counts is technically one of the living dead, all the warriors and creatures of the Vampire's army are bound to the will and magical power of their general. Some may be mesmerised and kept in thrall, others are slavish followers or creatures of little willpower that are easily dominated by the Vampire's personality.

VAMPIRES

Vampires are incredibly powerful creatures and the true masters of Undeath. Unlike most of the Undead, Vampires retain all of their intelligence and will, and hence all of their ambition and desire. This makes them very dangerous indeed, for they can continue to grow and learn, spending eternity perfecting their skills and honing their plans and schemes. A Vampire is ultimately a selfish creature, which retains much of the traits and drives it possessed when mortal. Whilst the crudest of their kind exist only to feed, some lust after temporal power and conquest of the living. The brotherhood of the Necrarchs strive to attain unparalleled necromantic skills, whereas Lahmians possess immense wealth beyond the dreams of avarice.

Vampires have no set appearance, other than being basically humanoid, and their blood is tainted with supernatural energy. Most can pass as human at a distance with only their pale skin, sharp canine teeth and sometimes glowing eyes giving tell-tale clues of their true natures to a knowledgeable observer. Some are even more convincing mimics of mankind, and hide their evil nature behind a veneer of aristocratic nobility. Sometimes they are darkly handsome or disturbingly beautiful. Only those that feed well and regularly can maintain the masquerade of the living for any length of time. Yet for all of their guile and glamours, a Vampire is a dead thing, possessed of no heartbeat and no breath. It is a rotting corpse kept animated by its immortal will and Dark Magic. The strain of retaining their appearance is a drain on a Vampire's energies, and when it is stressed or angered, particularly in the heat of battle, its true face may be revealed. Some Vampires make no attempt to hide their unholy nature, such as the Strigoi, whose monstrous size and deformed strength are clearly inhuman, and the Necrarchs, whose bodies have wasted away to a far more extreme degree than

those of the typical Vampire. These creatures revel in the crepuscule and decay that has become their existence. Their skin has sloughed off, their fangs are prominent and their fingernails have become curling talons. The scent of gravedust hangs around them, mixed with the stench of rotted meat and stale blood.

Though their outward appearance can fool all but the wisest, Vampires are wholly unnatural. They are stronger than any living man, capable of wrestling down a bear or cleaving a fully armoured man in two with one blow. A wound that would leave a man dead on the battlefield has little effect on a Vampire. They can see the dark wind of necromantic magic and bend it to their will. Spirits and animated dead are theirs to command. Beasts naturally attuned to darkness are slaves to their merest whim and packs of bats and wolves follow them wherever they go.

The greatest curse of Neferata's legacy is that Vampires cannot live on normal food and drink, but must imbibe the fresh blood of the living for sustenance. They must do this regularly if they are to continue in their Undead existence, or else they will fade into nothing. For the youngest Vampires the red thirst is very strong. At this stage they are often rash and easily caught and killed by witch hunters and other dedicated enemies of the night. Though most Vampires learn how to survive on less and less fresh blood until they need to feed only every few years, some never overcome their primal hunting instincts. For most Vampires, this frenzied desire for blood is their main concern, and many of their other actions can be seen in this light. Even the Vampire control over Sylvania is more about ensuring a continuous supply of blood than it is about politics.

Vampires can feed off people without their victims becoming more Vampires. When a Vampire does wish to create another of its kind, it will give a human the 'blood kiss', although what this exactly entails remains obscure. Giving a person the blood kiss is not a casual act on the part of the Vampire. Vampires are selfish individuals and they are cautious when it comes to sharing their immortality with others. When the Priest Kings drove out Neferata and her kind, they destroyed the original Elixir of Life and its means of being created. Thus the taint of vampirism gets more diluted and weakened with every generation. The more debased the vampiric bloodline, the less powerful the Vampires of later generations. A Vampire that sires too many other Vampires will weaken itself and create fairly weak thralls. A Vampire that bestows the blood kiss too freely will often be hunted down and slain by its own kind. The most ancient Vampires can exert significant control over their underlings. As Vampires grow in age, their will either strengthens until they are independent of their sire, or weakens to the point that they become little more than a pawn to their creator's whims.

As a Vampire ages, its powers increase. He becomes physically stronger and faster, until he is able to tear a man in half and move as fast as the wind. He is able to call upon a host of powers, the nature of which vary from Vampire to Vampire. Its Necromantic abilities expand, both naturally and through study. Along with its spelcasting abilities growing, an older Vampire becomes more in tune with Dark Magic, and is able to call upon creatures such as wolves and bats, and sometimes even learn how to change into these forms. Others are able to mesmerise weak-willed mortals with barely a glance. If the Vampire has a strong affinity for magic, then his necromantic abilities expand both naturally and through study. Despite these awe-inspiring powers,



however, there is a terrible price to pay. As the decades become centuries, many Vampires lose their minds, sliding inexorably into madness.

There is very little known concerning the capabilities of Vampires. Not all Vampires have the same power or abilities and these manifest themselves physically and magically in different ways. As magical creatures Vampires possess many strange characteristics, but there is as much folklore as there is truth. It is believed that they cast no reflection in mirrors. It is widely accepted that Vampires can charm or hypnotise ordinary people with their powerful will. Many tales speak of the mesmeric gaze of these Undead lords.

People bitten by a Vampire become subject to the Vampire's will, increasingly so the more the Vampire feeds. There is no evidence one way or the other concerning whether Vampires can cross running water, although this idea may stem from the divine properties attributed to certain rivers such as the Talabec.

One source of debate is how sensitive a Vampire is to sunlight. In truth, this varies with age and lineage. Ever since Nagash cursed their kind centuries ago, Vampires have loathed the sun. The sun weakens them, and may even kill lesser Vampires. The greatest Vampires can move abroad during daylight, though they do not favour it. Even in the twilight they wear dark cloaks to cover them from the sun's rays. To achieve its full power, such as in battle, a Vampire summons dark clouds to swathe the sky and swarms of bats to obscure sunlight. The enemy quails at this magical darkness, wary of the fight to come. In battle, there are those Vampires whose martial pride compels them to stride directly towards the leaders of the enemy armies, flanked by the most elite of their Undead minions. Their contempt is evident in their unhurried approach and the smug twist of their pale lips. Others, preferring not to entrust the magical augmentation of their Undead army to mere Necromancers, devote their energies to spell casting instead. Even so, a warrior foolhardy enough to meet a Vampire in combat will quickly realise the scale of his mistake as a lightning-quick strike of an ancestral blade pierces his heart and cold, sharp fangs pierce his throat.

The majority of Vampires sleep, or are at least otherwise dormant, during daylight; dreaming long, dark dreams that only the dead dream. At such times they are vulnerable and a stake driven through their heart can end their unlife. There is no evidence to suggest that Vampires must lie in coffins filled with their native earth, though if such ground is steeped in Dark Magic this would bolster the Vampire's strength, so there may be some basis to this belief. Vampires are practitioners of magic, and hence depending on their studies may have other magical abilities as well as their Necromancy.

Vampires are incredibly ancient beings and the vaults of their Sylvanian keeps hide great stores of magical artefacts, as well as armour, swords, axes, lances and other wargear. Some of these treasure troves contain items dating back to the wars with Nehekhar, trophies Liken in battle, magical tomes, the works of thrall Necromancers and such. When a Vampire goes to war, it is often clad in the finest suit of armour and armed to the teeth (so to speak...).

Vampires who have reached the level of lord have grown, matured, and consolidated their powers and abilities. They are no longer the terror of mere towns and hamlets, nor are they content to prey on isolated individuals. Their influence is felt across the land, and they dominate mortals, Undead, and several of their Vampire kin as well. The Vampire count is nothing like the wild, bestial creature he started out as; instead, he is a patient and meticulous hunter of men. He is

also a man with a plan and the means to carry it out, and he fears no rag-tag group of adventurers who think they can stop him.

A Vampire Lord is incredibly powerful in both his own abilities and his temporal domain. The world shakes at his will, and the bravest heroes tremble to hear his name. Only the best of the Vampires reach this rank; it is not enough to simply control kingdoms or to have lived for centuries, the Vampire must also be a true master of dealing death, of dominating minds, and of harnessing his strength to the utmost effect. The Vampires have no Gods; the Vampire Lords are close enough to suffice.

Whichever bloodline the dread creatures belong to, be it Strigoi, Lahmia, Nechrach, or the noble houses of the Blood Dragons and Von Carsteins, Vampires are a blight upon the world of the living.

VON CARSTEIN VAMPIRES

Of all the Vampires that have been known to Man, the cursed bloodline of the von Carsteins is the most infamous. Handsome, arrogant, charismatic, and proud, the von Carsteins are the true aristocracy of the night. The von Carsteins were true rulers of the Undead. They have great powers of persuasion, and an uncanny ability to cheat death.

It was Vlad von Carstein, the first of their line, who brought vampirism to the unhappy land of Sylvania. He inflicted the dread curse on all the greatest and most powerful nobles of the land, bound them to his will, and became the undisputed ruler and master of an Undead kingdom at the very heart of the Empire. Various von Carsteins have risen, fallen, and risen again to seek vengeance since that time and Sylvania continues to be a haunted land where the dead do not rest easily. The Witch Hunters believe that the dark woods of Sylvania still harbour the last of the von Carsteins.

Von Carstein armies are unique because the peasants of Sylvania still consider them as their legitimate rulers and gladly fight for them. This creates a strange mixture of living and Undead troops in the curst of their armies. The eldritch powers of the von Carsteins attract large numbers of Bats and Dire Wolves to their hosts and it is also rumoured that more than one Black Coach has been seen following their armies.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
von Carstein									
Vampire Lord	6	7	5	5	5	3	7	4	10
von Carstein									
Vampire	6	6	4	5	4	2	6	3	9

TROOP TYPE: Infantry (Character).

MAGIC: von Carstein Vampires who are Wizards who use the Lore of Necromancy, Lore of Shadow or the Lore of Death.

SPECIAL RULES: The Red Thirst, Vampiric.

"It is the natural way of things. The strong prey on the weak, in the wilderness and in the stone cities of men and Emperors. Yet we are careful not to take too much from you, for that way would lay our own starvation. You do the same with your kine and your sheep – you even protect them from other predators, just as I do with the people of Sylvania. Am I not a caring and gentle shepherd to my flock?"

Constantin von Carstein, Vampire Lord

NECRARCH VAMPIRES

Necrarch Vampires are perhaps the most terrifying of all the lords of the night. Most Vampires retain their Human features when they join the ranks of the Undead, but something in the blood of the Necarchs is tainted and foul. Their physical corruption begins as soon as they enter the ranks of the Undead. Skeletal and reeking with the stench of charnel houses, the Necrarch Vampires are truly a horrifying sight. Despite their appearance, however, Necarchs are highly intelligent. They live in high towers, where they study the Heavens and the secrets of dark magic. From time to time they summon the dead that sleep in the catacombs and tombs around their dwellings and go conquer the lands of the mortals.

Necrarch armies always include many necromantic constructs, such as Abyssal Terrors and Zombie Dragons. So great is their power over their unloving minions that these huge beasts can fight on their own, without the need of a rider to directly control them.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Necrarch Vampire									
Lord	6	5	3	5	5	3	6	3	9
Necrarch Vampire	6	4	3	5	4	2	5	2	8

TROOP TYPE: Infantry (Character).

MAGIC: Necrarch Vampires who are Wizards who use the Lore of Necromancy, Lore of Metal, Lore of the Heavens, Lore of Shadow or the Lore of Death.

SPECIAL RULES: The Red Thirst, Vampiric.

LAHMIAN VAMPIRES

All the Vampires of the Lahmian sisterhood are said to be descended from the Queen of Lahmia, one of the seven Vampire nobles who escaped the destruction of that vile city. She is said to despise men and consequently very few Lahmians are male. Instead, enchantingly beautiful maidens are chosen from amongst the most noble families of the Old World and granted the Blood Kiss of the Vampire. They then strive to gain control of Humans around them with cunning and intrigue. No other Vampires excel in infiltrating Human society in the same way as this shadowy sisterhood.

The armies of the Lahmian Vampires are similar to those ancient Khemri, being based on vast hordes of skeleton warriors, but the greatest surprise for their enemies is having to face living heroes fighting alongside the Undead. These naive fools strive to prove their loyalty to their beloved one by exhibiting daring feats of arms, eager to receive the Blood Kiss and join the Vampires in eternal life.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Lahmian Vampire									
Lady	6	6	5	5	5	3	8	4	9
Lahmian Vampire	6	5	4	5	4	2	7	3	8

TROOP TYPE: Infantry (Character).

MAGIC: Lahmian Vampires who are Wizards who use the Lore of Necromancy, Lore of Shadow or the Lore of Death.

SPECIAL RULES: The Red Thirst, Vampiric.

BLOOD DRAGON VAMPIRES

The Order of the Blood Dragon was once a celebrated knightly brotherhood of the Empire. In one night, however, a Vampire of the Harkon line turned the entire order into his Undead minions. Their original headquarters of Blood Keep was destroyed by four orders of righteous Templars centuries ago and since that time the Blood Dragons have wandered the Old World seeking to master the martial arts. Their way is the way of the sword and each one strives to become the perfect warrior.

Using a small, tactically flexible force of elite troops is the Blood Dragon way of waging war, because this leaves plenty of scope for individual feats of arms. If the Black Knights were of Bretonnian origin during their lives, they will still fight in their renowned lance formation.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Blood Dragon									
Vampire Lord	6	8	3	5	5	3	7	5	10
Blood Dragon									
Vampire	6	7	3	5	4	2	6	4	9

TROOP TYPE: Infantry (Character).

MAGIC: Blood Dragon Vampires who are Wizards use the Lore of Necromancy, Lore of Shadow or the Lore of Death.

SPECIAL RULES: The Red Thirst, Vampiric.

Martial Honour: The Vampire must always issue and accept challenges when possible.

STRIGOI VAMPIRES

The Strigoi are desperate creatures, hated by both the living and the Undead. Once the proud brood of Ushoran, the Lord of Masks, the Strigoi were laid low when Orcs destroyed their kingdom. Now, they dare not feed on humans for fear of attracting the attention of Witch Hunters or other Vampires. For this reason they hide in graveyards, living on the cold blood of recently buried corpses. These hunched monstrosities lack any semblance of human appearance. Packs of flesh-eating Ghouls are attracted to these lonely creatures and often form grotesque courts around them.

Normally an Undead army is a wall of rotten corpses slowly shambling forward in numberless ranks. Completely different, the armies of the Strigoi Vampires are more like a huge pack of howling hunters rushing towards the enemy with cannibalistic intentions.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Strigoi Vampire									
Lord	6	6	3	5	5	3	7	5	9
Strigoi Vampire	6	5	3	5	4	2	6	4	8

TROOP TYPE: Infantry (Character).

MAGIC: Strigoi Vampires who are Wizards use the Lore of Necromancy or the Lore of Beasts.

SPECIAL RULES: Armour Piercing (1), Hatred, The Red Thirst, Vampiric.

NECROMANCERS

Many strange, unearthly things hide in the forests and mountains of the Old World, lurking among the long abandoned Elf watch-towers, stalking ancient ruins, and crawling through the subterranean caverns beneath the surface. In the Old World it is all too easy for evil to hide. Many men fall prey to temptation, and the more powerful they are the more terrible the consequences. The secrets of life and death tempt many wizards into the dark and evil study of necromantic sorcery.

Men fear death above all other things. Most people are content to raise sons and daughters to ensure that their lineage will continue after their death. Kings and emperors erect monuments so that generations to come will remember them – this way something of them will remain even after their death. But some individuals resort to darker, more desperate measures. They turn to the dark art of necromancy.

A Necromancer is an evil wizard with powers over the world of the dead and even over the dead themselves. His magic enables him to extend his own life for centuries and to raise corpses from the ground to create Skeleton and Zombie legions. Necromancers are extremely dangerous individuals. They are able to steal the vigour of living creatures to make themselves stronger and tougher, and they have many magical powers that they use to destroy and confound their enemies. Necromancy is the magic of the past, of

withered flesh and faded times. It is similar to Amethyst magic, of which it's a somewhat corrupted version. Amethyst wizards draw upon the powers of the afterlife, but their philosophy sees death as a universal rule that all mortals, including themselves, are bound by. To the Necromancer, on the other hand, magic is a way to cheat death and achieve eternal life. These individuals soon abandon human society to conduct their foul magical experiments in solitude, raising the dead, questioning long departed spirits, and creating their own Undead servants to fight on his behalf.

Necromancers are universally abhorred. The men of the Old World respect the dead, and the priests of Mort and Witch Hunters tirelessly track down any who would defile the rest of the departed. Many an aspiring Necromancer has perished in the cleansing flames of the Witch Hunters.

Necromancers are amongst the most cursed of all those who practice the magical arts, for they have exchanged their humanity for the ability to raise the dead and command them to wage war upon the living. Strange as it may seem, these depraved madmen have made this dread pact willingly. At the heart of each Necromancer's morbid obsession is the need to subjugate and punish those who have persecuted him in the past, regardless of the cost.

It is usually men, rather than the longer-lived races, that delve into the study of necromancy. Scholars have often speculated on the reason for this. Perhaps, because Elves have such vast lifespans, they do not feel the need to prolong them by unnatural means. Dwarfs have no aptitude for magic, let alone a desire to defile the honoured dead. Orcs and Goblins have little concept of their own mortality and do not fear death in the way men do. Most Skaven are too caught up in their own scuttling pursuit of the way of the Horned Rat. Thus it is usually only men who set their feet on the path that will lead them either to a peculiarly horrible form of everlasting life, or to an existence of eternal damnation. When the covetous minds of men focus on longevity beyond what is naturally permitted, it is to the foul arts of Necromancy to which they turn.

Those individuals who turn to Necromancy are not necessarily evil to begin with. Many may well be inclined to madness and dark desires, for what else could lead them to the study of such a vile form of the mage's art? Some may desire knowledge for its own sake or seek to save their own lives or that of a loved one. However, even if they are not intrinsically bad men, something about their unnatural pursuit invariably turns them to a darker path. Perhaps it is the horror their fellows feel for them or perhaps the pulsing energy of Dark Magic inevitably warps their minds. For whatever reason, when men take to the path of Necromancy, madness is never far behind. Necromantic magic corrupts everything it touches and



the constant dealing with the living dead and fear of persecution soon drive even the most strong-willed to paranoia and insanity. Necromancers are shunned by all right-thinking people. Witch hunters trail them and the dark magicians are feared and hated as much as the worshippers of Chaos.

Mystery shrouds the study of necromancy. It is this intrinsic mystery that drives Necromancers to become servants of the Vampire Counts, hoping to learn first-hand from the masters of undeath. For the majority of these would-be wizards, once they are in the thrall of a Vampire, they can never leave their service, for Vampires are notoriously domineering and loath to let their devoted subjects depart. Even finding a Vampire willing to be a tutor has its obvious difficulties. Many of those who have sought apprenticeship with a Vampire have ended up serving in a more menial way; as an animated corpse, for instance, a light snack, or as raw ingredients for a particularly difficult enchantment.

Given the morbid reputation and dreadful habits of Vampires, it is perhaps safer to confine oneself to the study of blasphemous tomes instead. However, many are copies of older texts from long-forgotten times, and there is no guarantee that any of the rituals found in them are correctly transcribed. Some simply do not work at all, and others may go disastrously wrong, such as when the infamous Jacques de Noirot accidentally animated all of the corpses in the cemeteries of Mousillon and then found he could not control them. Possessed of an insatiable desire for human flesh, the Zombies devoured the hapless Necromancer and rampaged through the city streets. After feeding on hundreds of peasants, merchants and men-at-arms, they were eventually destroyed by the King of Bretonnia's household knights.

Those who practise this most dire of forbidden arts face many terrible dangers. Some try to extend their lives for decades or even centuries beyond their natural span. Sometimes they succeed, and these individuals retain their physical body and what is left of their sanity, but usually the result is far more horrible than death itself. Continual use of dark magic drains the soul and distorts the body and as time passes, a Necromancer becomes more and more cadaverous in appearance.

Necromancers shield themselves from the deadly effects of Dark Magic by channelling the power through or into dead creatures or their spirits. The Necromancer is therefore one step removed from the destructive energies he uses, which offers a considerable measure of protection from its effects, although this method is by no means foolproof. Only Vampires have the strength of will and physical resilience to use Necromantic Magic with no ill effects. Human Necromancers will slowly be corrupted by their contact with dark energy. In the end, death will claim

"You needn't worry about me killing you, soldier, for I'll soon bring you back in one piece. I cannot, however, vouch for the quality of my associates' handiwork."

Hessel the Vanquisher

them in a particularly horrible way. The most powerful Necromancers are able to survive this slow disintegration, eventually emerging as a powerful Undead Liche with their intellect and powers more or less intact. Lesser Necromancers will be reduced to the Undead spirits known as a Wraiths, cursed to roam the lands of the living for all eternity. Their keen intellect will be eroded, their bodies reduced to reeking, walking corpses and their sanity will be lost in the sea of terrors that it faces in the world of the dead.

As a man follows the dark path of the Necromancer, he becomes ever more detached from his mortal roots. Morbidly questing after the secrets of death, a Necromancer can come to resemble the shuddering creations of his magic. Those wizards deeply steeped in the art of Necromancy stand betwixt the living and the dead, neither wholly alive nor one of the Undead. His body twisted with unholy power, his mind seared by the horrors he has witnessed, a Necromancer has more in common with his lurching, moaning minions than with the living he seeks to slay.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Master Necromancer	4	3	3	3	4	3	3	1	8
Necromancer	4	3	3	3	3	2	3	1	7

TROOP TYPE: Infantry (Character).

MAGIC: Necromancers and Master Necromancers are Wizards who use the Lore of Necromancy or the Lore of Death.

UPGRADES:

Master of the Dead: The Necromancer is able to use the *Invocation of Nehek* spell to increase units of Skeleton Warriors beyond their starting size.



LICHE LORDS

Worse than Necromancers, worse even than Vampires, are the terrible Liche Lords, the greatest and mightiest of whom was Nagash, the Great Necromancer himself. In ancient times this unspeakable sorcerer blazed the trail that all other lesser Necromancers have followed since. He smashed armies and made pacts with evil gods, and at the height of his power slaughtered an entire kingdom and compelled its people into Undead servitude.

Such is the power of the Great Necromancer's name that it is still used in certain blasphemous rituals to compel and bind the Undead. Dire rumour states that the ages-old cult of his followers has managed to summon Nagash back from whatever dark place his spirit wandered. If this is so then the world should quake in terror for his power was virtually limitless and he was defeated only by the treachery of his evil allies. Even if the rumours are untrue, and Nagash has not risen, then there are other Liches to worry about. These are the animated corpses of powerful Necromancers.



The majority of Necromancers who turn to the study of the Dark Arts in order to stave off the effects of death wind up insane, incorporeal Wraiths, or dead. However, there are some who find a way to beat the odds. Some Necromancers are powerful enough to defy death itself and return to the world of the living as an evil-hearted Liche. Liches are beings with such a mastery of the Purple Wind that they've managed to arrest decay within their own bodies long after death and time should have claimed them.

"Sealed in This Vault is the Immortal Sage and Prophet, MELIK MORTERIS. Having Given himself to the Undying Pursuit of Knowledge, he has Caused this Vault to be Built over his Place of Study."

"Know all ye who would Think to Trespass Here, the inhabitant of this Vault is an UNDEAD, a LICH possessed of Eternal Life and Magical Powers, and he will punish Any who create Disturbances."

Inscription on a basement wall within the northeast tower of Schloss Blutwasser

A Liches mental and bodily functions are preserved by powerful magic, but their bodies continue to decompose as if they were truly dead. Their souls have been bound to the worm-eaten husks of their mortal remains by the most of awful of magics. Although his flesh may be shrivelled and his bones cracked and ancient, he is still immensely powerful. In fact he is probably more powerful than he ever was when alive, with the added powers of the Undead as well as his ability to cast spells. Many are to be found in the infamous tomb-cities of the Kingdom of the Dead, but others are found closer to the Old World, in the dark, shunned forests and peaks on the boundaries of the Empire.

Liches have had centuries to perfect the study of magic, and they are some of the most powerful spell casters one can encounter in the entire world. To a Liche, the passage of time is no longer a yoke that holds them. They are free to devote all their time and efforts to gaining and perfecting forbidden knowledge.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Liche Lord	4	4	3	5	5	4	2	2	9

TROOP TYPE: Infantry (Character).

MAGIC: Liche Lords are Wizards who use the Lore of Necromancy or the Lore of Death.

SPECIAL RULES: Master of the Dead (see Necromancers), Undead.



WIGHT KINGS

All across the Old World from the barrow mounds of the Border Princes to the frozen tombs of Kislev, there can be found the tombs and cairns of the ancestors of men. Atop rocky hillocks, within forest groves and high in the mountains, those cultures that once lived in what is now the Empire entombed their greatest leaders in mighty barrows. Charms of protection were laid upon these tombs to ward away grave robbers and scavengers. Crude runes were carved into the lintels of the graves, and amulets and talismans were hung from the walls to protect their hoard, and potent enchantments were placed over the dead so that they could keep vigil over their resting place. Some of these still hang in place, a testament to the magic they contain, though many of them have been defaced, stolen or destroyed by the creeping minions that serve the Vampire Counts. Others are unaccountably changed by the dark energy that seeps through the earth, and now bear grim symbols and the face of death itself.

Not all of these warded tombs lie silent. Some were built in areas where Dark Magic flows and gathers. In these accursed places, the incumbents rest uneasily, their souls flickering between the world of mortals and the realm of the afterlife. When the flow of Dark Magic grows strong enough, the ancient warlords rise from their crypts as Wight Kings, eyes glowing with unnatural life. Those buried in this way were not all good men – many were rotten-hearted lords enmeshed

by evil magic and worldly greed. In these barrows the spirits of evil men found a strange sustenance which enabled them to hold onto a half-life beyond the grave. It is their restless corpses which still haunt the abandoned grave mounds, and it is the cold chill of their evil that causes living creatures to shun these places. They lie within their tombs and reach out for the living with their bony talons. Sometimes they lure the unwary to their destruction, summoning the living with evil sendings. Even for those prehistoric kings who lie in relatively safe tombs, there is not always the eternal rest for which they yearn. Determined Necromancers and Vampires endeavour to break open the seals of the ancient cairns and use their magical powers to direct baleful energies inside, resurrecting the dead within and enslaving the entombed lords to their will.

The chieftains of the ancient tribes were buried in their full ceremonial panoply, with bronze breastplates protecting their ribs and winged helms framing their grinning skulls. The tribe's shamans placed the best swords, axes and spears in the dead grip of the ancient kings as they were laid on their slabs. The interior walls of the barrows were painted with scenes of the leader's life, so that should they awaken, they would be reminded of their greatest deeds and most heroic victories.

In the mountain range known as the Vaults, savage tribes of men wage war upon the monsters that haunt the peaks. In caverns hidden from beast and storm, they bury their honoured dead in the fashion of the ancients. In caves facing towards the sunrise they place the bodies of their leaders in a sitting position, surrounded by their meagre riches. Every year, the tribesmen return to pay homage to the chieftains of the past, and every year, there are always a few who are no longer in place. These waking dead walk the lands once more, the tattered remnants of their majesty bound to the service of the lords of the night.



The Helm of the Draesca

The Draesca tribe dwells near the mines of Oakenhammer, in the mountains to the far south of Sylvania. During each tribal coronation, the new High King will don the Helm of the Draesca: an ancient artefact that accelerates the ageing process of its wearer dramatically. Seven years of twilight are granted to the King before he finally succumbs to undeath altogether. During that time, his every whim is catered for – the helm grants him great power over the living and the dead alike. Each new High King is determined to carve his mark on the world before his tenure has passed, and so the armies of the Draescan Kings go forth into the world every seven-year cycle, their numbers bolstered not only by thousands of the living dead but by the dusty cadavers of every king to have ever worn the helm.

Although Wights usually prefer to inhabit the ancient gravemounds in which they were buried, they are not magically tied to those places, unlike Ghosts or Spectres. Wights who are given an opportunity to go to war at the hands of a new overlord, such as a powerful Vampire, will often do so gladly, forsaking their beloved graves for months or even years to follow on campaign one more time. Wights still have all their military knowledge and experience available to them from when they were alive, and many of them have been fighting for centuries or even millennia when Undead, as well.

Their personalities are not as complete as that of a Vampire, but their intelligence is deep and their goals often extensive. Wight lords are sometimes found ruling small duchies or necropolises or harnessing armies of Skeletons, just as their Vampire masters do. They also lack the great charisma and noble bearing of the Vampires, but since Wights have little taste for political machinations anyway, they are quite happy to leave such things to their masters. Like any good warrior, the Wight knows his station and seldom exceeds it.

Wight Kings are incredibly powerful Undead, almost as hard to destroy as Vampires. Although their bodies have decayed leaving only bones and tattered flesh, Wights are held together by evil magic so strong that it has endured for centuries. Wights are almost always arrayed in full armour, but their pale faces are visible beneath the helm, spectral remnants of their long-decayed bodies. Though most have no flesh left, nothing but bones turned brown from their long exposure to the soil, still their faces are set in a grim and warlike frown. They wear ancient battle gear of bronze and black iron, corroded by time and dusty with the years. The combination of armour and bones makes them very resilient, but it also at least gives their enemies something to aim for – these are not incorporeal, intangible monsters like Spectres or Wraiths. Regardless of their origin, they are skilled in the ways of war, and all have an eternal thirst for battle and warfare.

Wights most often wield cold iron swords, enchanted to slay mortals by the ancient runes set along the blade. Many favour greatswords or huge axes instead, again inscribed with runes of ancient power. They carry bright Wight Blades of bronze or steel, weapons inlaid with evil runes and glistening with gold and silver. Suffused with Dark Magic, a Wight King's weapons shimmer with baleful energy. The merest touch of their spear tip or blade can drain the life from their foes, or slice through flesh and bone with an ease that is

"Unquestioningly loyal. Infallibly brave. The pinnacle of the necromantic arts. If I had a hundred such as them, I could conquer any nation, rout any army – and never lack for camaraderie either. Although, they are typically poor conversationalists."

Lady Aricte von Carstein

frightening to behold. Their shrivelled and horrific bodies are adorned with golden amulets and rings, precious metals and rare gem stones. With their dreadful glowing eyes and chill touch they are a sight to place fear in the heart of any man.

Here is necromancy at its peak – a creature with the dark will of the Spectre combined with the bodily strength and unflagging discipline of the Skeleton. Though their flesh may rot, their bones remain strong, and their minds retain their mastery of the art of combat and their lust for slaughter. As the Skeleton is to the Empire's foot soldiers, the Wight is to its great generals and heroes.

Even to stand before one of these skeletal warriors of antiquity takes an extreme effort of will. For these reasons, a Vampire will often charge a Wight King with carrying forth the Undead general's personal banner, the Wight King able to hold aloft the army standard amidst the fiercest fighting. Undead battle standards are particularly horrible creations, made from the remains of the dead, animated by necromantic magic. Such a duty is often integral to the army's stability, and these indomitable Undead warriors are able to hold aloft the army standard whilst tirelessly striking down one foe after another.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Wight King	4	4	0	4	5	2	4	3	8

TROOP TYPE: Infantry (Character).

SPECIAL RULES: Killing Blow, Undead.



SKELETONS

For thousands of years armies have marched and fought across the Old World. There's barely a field, hill or valley that has not seen fierce fighting at some point in the near or distant past. The battlefields of the Old World are strewn with the graves of many nameless warriors who have fallen in combat and been consigned to a hasty resting place, or left upon the ground amidst the carnage. However, all surrendered to the passage of time as the flesh moldered from their bones, and the earth swallowed them whole. Going as far back as the time of Sigmar and even earlier, these great battles have left unmarked graves beyond counting. Such charnel fields attract Dark Magic, and the souls of some warriors remain in this plane – the spirits of men betrayed by their commanders, of cowards who were cut down as they ran, or those who died without proper funeral rites being performed over their corpses.

Beneath the mud lie the bones of these bitter, ancient warriors. They carry rusty weapons, axes and swords, spears with splintered shafts and other ancient wargear. A few tattered rags may still cling to their old bones, or they may still be encased in battered armour covered with filth and corrosion. Even in death there is no rest for the fallen warriors, for they can be summoned back to the world of the living by black sorcery. Skeletons are animated by powerful Necromantic magic, outlawed throughout the Empire for its ability to create a crude and evil mockery of true life. Skeletons are created when necromancers violate graveyards and

reanimate the bones of the dead. A Necromancer or Vampire can use the coiling energies of Dark Magic to instil a semblance of life into these dormant warriors. Necromancy can return a flicker of spirit to the worm-gnawed skeletons held in the bosom of the bloodied dirt.

As the regiments of past massacres claw their way to the surface their eyes glow with unholy power. Silently they gather together in a semblance of their old ranks, mutely awaiting the commands of their new lord. Tattered banners flap in the unnatural breeze of their creation. Lipless horn blowers raise their instruments and sound a spectral, mournful dirge.

These are the Vampire's most trusted foot soldiers. There is hardly a field in the Empire that has not known past slaughters, so a Vampire need not even bring troops to the field – he can simply raise them from the earth, under his enemy's very feet. Cut them down, and they spring up anew, and any losses suffered by their enemy will only add to their numbers. They are uncountable in number and infinite in returning.

"Tapping this rich resource, a skilful Necromancer can cast a minor skeletal summons in seconds, leaving a number of arisen dead to help make good his escape."

Hans Hasselbacher, Necromancer



"The ultimate emblem of Death. You will find its head on flags and banners and bottles of poison. Or take the whole body, grant it a scythe as a reaper of men not grass... astonishing how well that image scares your warriors when it is returned to an unnatural mockery of life. However you look at it, the Skeleton is a perfect symbol of both Death and Undeath; that part which endures after the rotting of the body and the departure of the soul... Fitting then, that these are among our most feared and numerous soldiers. What Human could hope to resist Death? You might flail and flounder against Him, but sooner or later He will claim you. If you are lucky, I may even allow you to live again in my service..."

Constantin von Carstein, Vampire Lord

They are soldiers that require no rations, are not slowed by wounds, suffer no exhaustion, nor pine for the comforts of home. They cannot be frightened, confused, or distracted. They have no intelligence, no thought, and no desire to improvise. When generals dream, they dream of soldiers like the Undead – soldiers who appear on the field exactly where you want them, when you want them, and never break or flee, no matter what the odds. On such a foundation, almost any victory can be assured.

They also make excellent servants and guardsmen away from the battlefield and are so easily summoned that necromancers are rarely without them. Any adventurer with any contact with necromancy will face them over and over. Yet they remain frightening – the stink of the grave, the stilted movement, and empty eyes. But most of all, Skeletons terrify mortals because they are the incarnation of their fear of death, their grinning skull being the emblem of death's winnowing hand.



Their only limitation is that they can follow only simple orders, such as march, guard, protect, or attack, and they must remain close to their commander – and should his magic ever falter, they fall to pieces. The necromancer must always guard himself with his Undead legions to prevent this destruction, but it is hardly a problem because each and every time his troops are cut down, he can bring them back in but a moment.

Though a Skeleton no longer possesses flesh to cut, nor organs to pierce, a well-aimed blow can destroy it. Dark Magic replaces flesh long since devoured by the creatures of the earth. An arrow or sword thrust can disrupt the magic binding together the ancient bones of these soldiers. However, even those that are felled can be raised again. Necromantic power knits together shattered bones and instils them with unholy vigour once more.

Unlike the more powerful corporeal Undead such as Wights and Mummies, Skeletons do not retain any trace of the spirit or essence of their former "owners". They are kept animate purely by sorcery. All that these long-dead fighters can recall of mortal life are faint memories of battles fought in ages past. All feel the compulsion to fight, to march, to wage war, and obey the commands of their master as they did when they were alive. The power of Dark Magic binds their bones together and gives strength to their grip. They are mindless creatures that need to be controlled by magic lest they return to their eternal slumber. They have no true intelligence, though some vestige of old skills remains ingrained in their bones, and they do not need to eat or rest and they never retreat or surrender. Driven by the undying will of a Vampire these ragged warriors can still wield their swords and spears, and raise a shield to block an enemy attack.

A mortal who dares to fight an army of Skeletons is confronted by a ghastly apparition. Who could remain unafraid when faced with the soldiers of antiquity lurching towards him?

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Skeleton Warrior	4	2	2	3	3	1	2	1	3
Skeleton Champion	4	2	2	3	3	1	2	2	3

TROOP TYPE: Infantry.

SPECIAL RULES: Undead.

"Skeletons know not of stealth, but neither do they draw breath and from this, ye can profit. Choose thy battleground long before ye engage and sew it with your troops, or bring thine enemy after ye into graveyards or the sites of ancient battles. Then, spring thy trap as ye summon them about yer foes, which will find themselves suddenly beset on all sides by yer warriors. Yer troops shall tire not as mortal men do, use that to harry yer enemies without pause. Let them find no rest and ye shall have the mastery."

Vanhel from his forbidden book, Darker Matters

ZOMBIES

Zombies are the corpses of the freshly dead revivified by the power of Dark Magic. Across the Old World and beyond, random pools of Dark Magic can animate those interred recently in their graves. In such places mindless, flailing creatures burst forth to terrorise the living. Grotesquely reanimated corpses, they are compelled by the Dark Magic of a Vampire or Necromancer, and driven by the will of their master to commit acts of extreme violence. Being more recently dead than Skeletons they retain more of their intellect and are more like living humans, although they are totally under the will of the Necromancer whose conjurations created them. Zombies are created by much the same process as are Skeletons, but if anything Zombies are even less effective. Their rotten flesh is a hindrance to their movement, and there is nothing quite so lacking in agility and speed as a Zombie. Known variously as Zombiyes, Zhombies, Coffin Walkers and Corpse Puppets by different peoples, these are the weakest of all Undead. However, they are slightly easier to create than a Skeleton, and so are often used in incredible numbers as servitors and soldiers for Undead lords or Necromancers. Zombies are shambling horrors that stagger towards the enemy battle line in a noisome horde.

The raising of a Zombie is the easiest of spells. Anyone with any experience in necromancy can achieve it; the only variation is the amount of corpses that can be raised with each casting. Experienced necromancers

think nothing of creating a dozen or more – assuming sufficient corpses are available to be raised. It is this reason that Zombies are more commonly seen than Skeletons, as the freshly dead are more easily located and closer to the surface. In action, however, there is little difference between the two; they are both equally capable of exterminating the living.

"And I beheld a great host descending: a horde of bodies, not one of them complete. An arm missing here, a leg there, a jaw elsewhere; a desiccated mass of horror, tumbling from the mountainside..."

Survivor of the Battle of Essen Ford (Nameless)

Zombies are foul to behold. Although rejuvenated by magic they continue to decay. Their bodies are rotting and torn beyond the limits of sanity. The evidence of their violent deaths is clear for all to see, and their unclean flesh is rank, blotched with rot and riddled with maggots and vermin, and their clothes are tattered and caked with blood. A Zombie's skin hangs in strips from his tattered frame, revealing withered muscle, unbeating hearts and veins through which no blood flows because it is cold and clotted. Broken legs propel them onward with lurching strides and twisted fingers clutch hungrily at their victims. Yet Zombies are often made from more than corpses, for when the Vampire Counts are on the warpath, their Necromancers are often forced to improvise in order to amass a truly unstoppable horde. Spiked and rusting railings from





"What better reminder to the living than this?
What better reminder of the fate they will soon
share?"

Constantin von Carstein, Vampire Lord

graveyard fences are substituted for missing limbs; broken backs are buttressed by mouldering planks or hammered into a semblance of solidity with rusted coffin nails. Fingers hacked off by wild sword thrusts are replaced with jagged spikes and Elven arrowheads. Any debilitating wound they suffer is compensated for with stomach-churning expediency, for all that a Zombie's masters require of it is to stumble into battle. Terrible balefires burn in their putrefying eyes and they are gripped by an urge to kill and devour all living things. Some Zombies are decayed and rotten to the point where they are little more than skeletons with only a few tatters of flesh remaining. Others have a terrifying resemblance to the recently deceased, as if they were walking corpses stolen from fresh graves, only revealed as Undead by the gaping axe wound in its forehead.

Mindless corpses still wearing the tattered and bloodstained clothing of their previous lives, zombies are perhaps the most disturbing minions of the undead. They can sometimes recognise friends, family, or neighbours, but are oblivious to past relationships, biting and clawing at those they once held dear. Some zombies carry rudimentary weapons, usually associated with their past livelihood: a dead blacksmith may carry a hammer; a rotting farmer may wield a pitchfork. They can be just as dangerous unarmed, mindlessly gorging on the flesh and innards of their dying victims. The stench of rot and decay accompanies zombies wherever they go, adding to the disturbing nature of these unnatural fiends.

For all their horrific appearance, Zombies are slow and clumsy, making it easy for local militia and adventuring warbands to destroy individuals or even to bring down small groups. Unfortunately for the innocent folks sleeping fitfully in their fortified towns and villages, the Old World boasts a rich supply of corpses, and thus Zombies can be raised and set loose upon the living in overwhelming numbers.

All fear the witching hour, when a tide of groaning, clawing Undead batters down sturdy wooden gates, or when a crowd of Zombies pile together in order to spill over walls and palisades. When the Chaos moon rises high in the sky and wolf-howls pierce the night air, watch-fires are stoked and holy amulets of Sigmar are clasped a little tighter.

To call the way a Zombie attacks 'fighting', is perhaps to give the foul creature credit beyond its due. These sickening half things have no skill to speak of, but are instead driven only by the insatiable urge to rend, kill and consume the living. Any warrior unfortunate enough to be pulled down by a Zombie horde will find himself torn slowly apart by a mass of desperate clawing fingers, his flesh gouged from his body in grisly, glistening chunks. The fortunate die quickly, but

those unlucky souls who are trampled beneath the horde spend their death throes in miserable agony as their innards become a crimson feast.

Like Skeletons, Zombies are animated by magic, and this link can be broken as they fight, making them vulnerable to weapons in the same way as living men. Soldiers who have met in battle with the Undead before, or who hear the terrifying tales whispered at campfires, know the best methods with which to slay the restless dead. Zombies are poor fighters, lacking any kind of coordination or strength, and their rotted bodies are easily hacked apart or crushed. Slow and mindless, a single Zombie presents little physical threat to trained warriors. A blow to the skull with a hammer or axe will slay usually a Zombie outright, and severing the head is an even surer method of destruction. But precise strikes such as these take focus and skill, and Zombies are seldom found in ones or twos. Instead, these death-walkers are raised in large numbers, gathering upon the battlefield in their hundreds. Against hordes such as these, even the strongest sword arms tire, the stoutest hearts can falter, and the most skilled blades can become lodged in putrid flesh. Even those of surpassing skill will eventually feel the clammy touch of dead hands upon their skin. Only the bravest mortals fight to the last. Most turn and flee sooner or later, losing more of their number as the Zombies lunge forward and drag down the slowest.

Zombies are easily sustained by the powers of necromancy, jerking back to their feet like jangling puppets as invisible force swirls around them. Their numbers can seem almost infinite as they press relentlessly forwards, those that fall in battle compelled by necromantic power to stagger or crawl towards the foe moments after being cut down. Such shuffling hordes are often used by Vampires to exhaust the regiments of their enemies before committing more deadly regiments of Undead warriors, slowly overwhelming the foe in a ceaseless tide of blood-slicked, maggot-ridden flesh.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Zombie	4	2	1	3	3	1	1	1	2

TROOP TYPE: Infantry.

SPECIAL RULES: **Fight in Extra Ranks (1), Undead.**

The Newly Dead: Zombie units can be increased beyond their starting size by spells and effects that add models to an existing unit. In addition, when Zombie units are successfully targeted by the *Invocation of Nehek* spell from the Lore of the Vampires, they regain an extra D6 Wounds.



"I would rather face a thousand Orcs than a hundred of these things."

General Morrsheim,
marshal of the T'abecland Armies

CRYPT GHOULS

In the Old World, starvation is common, and all too many men come so close to death that they commit the ultimate sin and feed on the flesh of their fellow men. But whatever the reason, Morr has set his law firm and absolute: those who eat Human flesh are irrevocably cursed with the taint of the Ghoul.

Crypt Ghouls are ugly, stooping creatures with only a vestigial sense of reason. Ghouls closely resemble crooked, skinny, misshapen Humans with hideous bloodshot eyes that swell out of their sockets and shine with inhuman rage. Their skin is sallow and filthy, their eyes are bestial and insane, and their snarling lips reveal sharp-pointed teeth in slavering mouths. They are believed to file their teeth, and so have upper and lower rows of triangular cutting fangs, perfect for biting and tearing flesh. Dressed only in the rags they pull from their victims, the Crypt Ghouls carry weapons they have picked up or have crudely fashioned from the remains of their unwholesome meals. Many carry long bones which they wield as primitive clubs. These skulking fiends do not need such implements to kill, however, for they have long claws sufficient for their needs. Their hands and fingers have stiffened and hardened, their fingernails growing into great tough talons, which constantly secrete viscous black venom. These claws are encrusted with grave-filth and decaying meat; those that take even the lightest scratch from their talons can die from unnaturally potent infections that spread through the victim's body. In addition, their constant diet of rot-fouled meat confers a sinewy and unwholesome resilience. Worse, their minds follow their bodies, growing ever more degraded, bestial,

and frenzied. The more flesh they eat, the hungrier they become, until their bodies and minds know nothing but an eternal gnawing need to find and devour the corpses of men. Driven by an unspeakable craving for human flesh, they dwell near graveyards, digging up the corpses of the recently buried and consuming the cold flesh, but they also crave the warm flesh of the living.

The early stages of the curse are slow, however, and few have the stomach to kill their neighbours or relatives when they begin to present the symptoms. Their loved ones and friends consider it merciful to drive the Ghoul away from society, but this only allows him to feed more freely. Crypts and graveyards become their castles and their feast tables. The only thing that can draw Ghouls away from such places is the call of their masters; their tainted souls are under the thrall of Vampires and necromancers. They must come to any who call them, and indeed, will often come unbidden, drawn to those who are lords of life and death as if to the lodestone.



Despite their emaciated, almost skeletal appearance, their nocturnal nature, and their association with Vampires, Ghouls are not in fact Undead. They associate with powerful Undead because they know that where such masters of life and death go, carnage is sure to follow – and Ghouls are scavengers by preference. They will sometimes fight to get fresh Human meat, but they are quite satisfied with second helpings or even partially rotted flesh.

Ghouls have a certain low animal cunning, but this is constantly at war with their near-eternal hunger for flesh. The sophistication of their tactics depends entirely on whether the drive for survival or for meat is uppermost in their minds at the time. Against a superior foe, they will likely hang back and harass the enemy, perhaps even following a party as they travel through the wilderness of Sylvania, waiting for one of them to lag behind or for the group to be attacked by others. Sooner or later, however, they tire of their waiting game – perhaps not realizing that they could win, if they only stuck it out long enough, for all things must die eventually. Once their blood is up, once the hunger has taken over every other drive, the Ghouls will charge in a growling, slavering mass, not stopping until they have a surfeit of flesh to eat.



"These creatures always amuse me. Oh, certainly they can be useful – having minions who can go out in the daylight, however much they might not want to, is not to be underrated. Yet the irony is not lost on me, that I have some Humans (or former Humans, if you want to be precise) who are so desperate for the scraps from my table that they will even fight the rest of you for the chance to bite on a few corpses."

Constantin von Carstein, Vampire Lord



"Oooo, tha's lovely. I like's my marrow gamey, but raw and wet's fine here and there. Pass on some more of his shoulder, eh?"

Unnamed (and unusually intelligent) Ghoul

Though not truly Undead, Crypt Ghouls unconsciously feel the Dark Magic that surrounds the most powerful Undead lords and are drawn inexorably towards it like moths to a flame. Once their presence is betrayed, their newfound master quickly dominates their weak and willing minds. Though they will lop into battle at the behest of their master, Crypt Ghouls, and even their ghastly pack leaders, are cowardly creatures rout en masse if their prey seems to be fighting back with any real determination, preferring to scavenge amongst the battle-dead rather than overcome living foes.

Though they cannot literally be raised like the living dead, Crypt Ghouls can be summoned through Dark Magic. Those who are fleeing are infused with the ire of their master and they unwillingly rejoin their packs. Crypt ghouls tend to follow the armies of the Undead, seeking to feast on the battlefield after the enemy has been defeated. These skulking onlookers can be gripped by the power of the Undead commander and dragged forth to bolster the numbers of their filthy kin. Something in their cold, tainted blood calls them and they must go. Vampires and Necromancers are their masters, and Ghouls fear their wrath enough to obey their commands. All the Vampires find uses for them, especially as warriors. Their slavering ranks cause more fear than a steady line of Skeletons, and they fear no priest or holy ground.

The first Ghouls were the descendants of the insane and evil hearted cannibals of the Far South – men who ate the flesh of their dead in gory rituals. These primitive corpse-eaters lived upon the shores of the Sour Sea, drawn to dwell under the looming, freezing shadow of Nagashizzar. These primitive tribes worshipped the Great Necromancer and frequently partook of the Dark Feast. While great fires burned to attract the attention of their dark god, the elders of the tribes would prepare chosen sacrifices for the slaughter – criminals and captives of other tribes when possible, the members of ill-favoured families when necessary. They would gorge themselves on the flesh of their own and, generation by generation, they were driven mad by their own loathsome practices and changed into warped and twisted parodies of men. Now, these devolved humanoids roam the Desolation of Nagash and the surrounding lands, preying on travellers in their search for fresh meat.

Even in the enlightened era of Emperor Karl Franz, there are tales of cannibalism within the borders of the Empire. When the lean and hungry times of pestilence and famine come upon the Old World, certain depraved persons take to feasting on the flesh of humans to stay alive. The stories tell that isolated farms, and sometimes even whole villages, have devolved to this vile state. Some even claim the practice has become customary rather than necessary. Certain in-bred hamlets in Sylvania have been burned to the ground by the Emperor's troops because of this disgusting affliction. Literally driven underground, these cannibals and their offspring hide in catacombs and

mausoleums, devouring the carcasses of nobles, and take to living in the graveyards of the poor, feeding on peasant corpses.

During the Ghoul Swarms of 2512, when the crops failed for the third year running, the Knightly Orders of Stir land were employed en masse to 'investigate' the borders of their barren realm. The full-scale battle between the brightly-clad soldiery of the Elector Count and the ravenous, blotch-skinned hordes of the afflicted villagers has not been easily forgotten. Their fields and shabby hamlets were burned to the ground, but the memory of their foulness lingers on.

Literally driven underground by their persecutors, these cannibals and their mutant offspring hide in catacombs and mausoleums. There, the Crypt Ghouls devour the carcasses of nobles, or take to living in the graveyards of the poor where they feed on peasant corpses. The Priests of Morr do what they can to protect their holy gardens against the encroachments of Crypt Ghouls, forever busy sanctifying the graves of the dead to ward off these vile creatures. However, many of the Old World's graveyards and cemeteries date back a thousand years or more, and beneath them are labyrinths of subterranean chambers and tunnels, for countless generations dug larger and larger tombs for their dead and erected ever greater mausoleums.

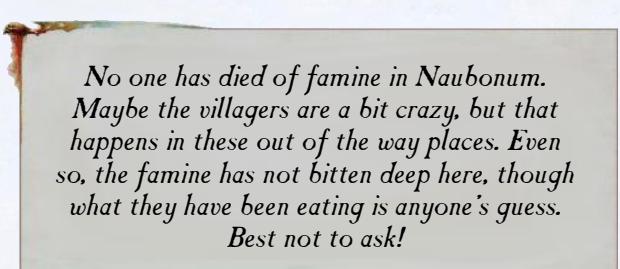
On occasion, the Brotherhood of Morr will employ a professional Witch Hunter to sweep the catacombs with sword and fire. As time passes, though, the Crypt Ghouls return to eat the dead and prey upon isolated mourners and priests. Other colonies of ghoulish fiends creep through the years undiscovered. It is said that a small army of these foul, verminous creatures dwells within the great burial crypts on the hills around Mousillon, and they sweep down into the cursed city every time the Chaos moon is full. Even in times of relative peace, the city guard are all always well-armed, and never enter the mausoleums and sepulchres of Mousillon's cemeteries except in bands of at least a dozen men.

The Strigoi seem to value the Ghouls most of all, perhaps seeing something of themselves in their outcast status. There are many tales of the vast armies and giant cities of Ghouls controlled by the Strigoi lords. Such places are beyond perception. When lacking the flesh of the living or the dead, the Ghouls turn on one another, ripping each other apart in an orgy of violence. If the Strigoi kingdom ever rises again, these still-living monsters will be their champions.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Crypt Ghoul	4	2	0	3	4	1	3	2	5
Crypt Ghast	4	2	0	3	4	1	3	3	5

TROOP TYPE: Infantry.

SPECIAL RULES: Poisoned Attacks.



No one has died of famine in Naubonum. Maybe the villagers are a bit crazy, but that happens in these out of the way places. Even so, the famine has not bitten deep here, though what they have been eating is anyone's guess.

Best not to ask!

SYLVANIAN PEASANT LEVY

When one thinks of armies commanded by the foul vampire counts in Sylvania, what springs immediately to mind are shuffling Zombies, slavering Ghouls and mindless Skeletons. However, there is another group of creatures that invariably follows in the wake of their vampire masters, one that defies the logic of god-fearing men. What man would willingly march to war under the banners of the undead? And why do the counts tolerate these warm-blooded folk and induct them into their otherwise rotting and fleshless ranks? It is hard to understand either of these questions, and some will never be able to fully come to terms with the answers, but there are reasons why these people fight for their undead masters. It is important to remember that Sylvania is unlike any of the other states of the Empire, and so are the people who live there.

Sylvania is a land ruled by the dead. For the living unfortunate enough to exist there, they live ever in the thrall of the vampire overlords who suck them of the will to fight with fear and high taxes. The men of Sylvania fight for their cruel masters because they fear them. They have been beaten down by years of drudgery and poverty, and the ever-present threat of death and rebirth as a flesh-craving zombie or skeleton. Fear can drive a man to do many things, and few entities are more effective at causing fear than the Vampire Counts of Sylvania.

The peasant levies raised to fight with the undead armies are not professional fighters and are rarely armed and trained well. They are not expected to put up much of a fight, but they may slow down an attack long enough for more effective forces to be brought to bear. The peasant levies are sometimes provided with equipment by their masters, but will more usually arm themselves and then add to their accoutrements from the bodies of the fallen. Verily they can be found to be armed with spears, staves, pikes, axes, hammers, scythes, reapers and occasionally hunting bows and crossbows.

Their everyday life of privation and fear gives Sylvanian peasants an unhealthy pallor, pale and wan. In fact, many have suggested that where their comrades are undead, the peasants are the half-dead, their lives glimmering dimly in a black sea of misery, waiting with petrified patience for the inevitable end when they will truly become the slaves of the vampires. However, they are not to be underestimated in battle. Their fear of their masters ensures they fight with fervency and

"By all means, try and stop 'em. I won't stand in your way. Beat them back, chop them down, hold the line, carry the day. Cover yourself in glory, or in guts, it makes no difference to me. Or to the dead, for that matter. You're just postponing the inevitable, lad. Mark my words, they'll get us all in the end."

Black Ruyrecht, veteran of the Vampire Wars

desperation, knowing that any failure on their part will result in them or their family being horribly punished. The vampire counts use the peasant levies in their armies because they are numerous, as easily controllable as their zombies and skeletons yet capable of independent thought which may give them an edge in battle. They can be used to soak up missile fire and generally bolster the ranks – and of course when they die, they can always be re-animated.

It is hard for mortals to comprehend why these people rise up to fight on behalf of the undead. But to them, the Vampire Counts are their legitimate lords and masters who must be obeyed. They are infected with a twisted sense of loyalty and a misplaced desire to protect their homeland from any invader. Other Imperials make no excuses for their conduct, and have little compunction to show them mercy in battle. However, it is important to understand why they act like they do, and pity them for their desperate lot in life. Bringing death to them in battle is doubtless a release from a much worse fate.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Peasant	4	2	2	3	3	1	3	1	5
Militia Leader	4	2	2	3	3	1	3	2	5

TROOP TYPE: Infantry.



DIRE WOLVES

The land of Sylvania is plagued by giant wolves which emerge in winter from their lairs high in the Worlds Edge Mountains to destroy entire villages. The men of the Empire hunt these beasts mercilessly, but this is not always enough. Even from beyond the grave these awful creatures return to terrorise men. The carcasses of these wolves are buried in great pits, but the cursed earth of Sylvania does not allow them to rest. Often they burrow their way through the rotting layers of earth and emerge to hunt once more. Their howls from beyond the world of the living are frightening in the extreme. These Undead wolves are the hunting packs of Vampires, and gather around the castles of the Vampire Lords to follow the Princes of Undeath to war.

Dire Wolves are macabre parodies of the living Giant Wolves that roam the Badlands and the forests of the Old World. Dire Wolves have skull-like heads and rotting black fur. Their flesh hangs in tatters from cracking bones, their skulls and innards exposed through tears in their skin. They are swathed in an eerie, glimmering twilight and their eyes glow with unnatural energy, and their bodies dissolve into nothing when they are finally slain. The stench of putrefaction hangs on their wet breath and their howls cause shivers of fear to freeze the bold. When they are slain, their bodies dissolve into a coiling miasma, leaving nothing behind.

The lands of the eastern Empire are plagued by giant wolves that emerge in winter from lairs high in the Worlds Edge Mountains. Driven by a ravenous hunger, they descend to the foothills in large packs, attacking farms and villages and preying on travellers. The men of the Empire hunt these beasts mercilessly, but this only serves to keep their numbers in check, and their voracious attacks at bay, for a short time.



In the blighted lands of Sylvania, wolf corpses must be burnt or buried deeply, for those that are not will return from the dead and continue the hunt in Unlife. Even when these precautions are taken and the bodies of these monstrous wolves are buried in deep pits, the Dark Magic can gather and resurrect them. Half-rotted, their fur matted with blood and grime, the animated carcasses claw their way through the earth to hunt again. The smell of decaying flesh surrounds them, maggots writhe in open wounds and charred skin hangs from their bones in ragged flaps.

These Dire Wolves are the hunting hounds of the Vampires. They gather in great packs around the castles and towers of the Undead lords of Sylvania, their piercing howls echoing for miles across the still night. When the Princes of Undeath march to war, the Dire Wolves follow, treating the Vampire as their pack leader. Though Undead, their senses are as keen as they were in life, and the Dire Wolves lead the army, tracking down the living. In battle the Dire Wolves often speed along the flanks of the Undead army, driving away enemy cavalry and picking on small, vulnerable regiments or war machine crews.



Dire Wolves are common features of the armies and castles of the Vampires, but they lack cunning. Occasionally, a Vampire lord will select a wolf of great intelligence and strength to be the leader of their Undead packs, using special rituals to preserve these abilities in their Undead forms. Such beasts are known as Doom Wolves, and many Vampires keep them as special companions, both on the hunt and in the home. Vampires sometimes keep the largest of these creatures in pens deep below their castles and towers, feeding them on local peasants until they are large and glutted, then goading them to new heights of viciousness. Like Dire Wolves, Doom Wolves are covered in black fur cut with streaks of gore, topped by skull-like heads with burning red eyes. Doom Wolves are often found leading great packs of Dire Wolves, turning those monsters into a killing force of terrifying effectiveness in an unending service of carnage and darkness.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Dire Wolf	9	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	3
Doom Wolf	9	3	0	3	3	1	3	2	3

TROOP TYPE: Infantry.

SPECIAL RULES: Undead, Vanguard.

Slavering Charge: In a turn that they successfully charge, models with this special rule gains Strength Bonus (1).

"Ah, the children of the night, their howls are music to my ears! The thrill of the hunt as the pack spread out ahead, with the Doom Wolf leading them. Nothing can stand before us!"

Constantin von Carstein, Vampire Lord

FELL BATS

In the benighted lands of Sylvania the skies harbour all manner of deadly creatures that prey upon villagers and travellers. These winged predators are known by locals as Fell Bats, or sometimes Bloodwings or Vampire Bats. Fell Bats are horrific predators as large as a man, with broad leathery wings strong enough to drag their victims into the air. They grow to monstrous proportions, some with wingspans of twelve feet or more. Fell Bats have distended mouths filled with sharp fangs dripping with noxious phlegm. They exist solely on the blood of the living, that of Men being their favourite.

Fell Bats typically hunt alone, in which case they will seek out small groups of travellers or better still lone merchants and wanderers. Rarely, several Fell Bats may hunt together, or be recruited into the army of a necromancer or Vampire Lord. In this case they will attack more openly, but otherwise with variants of their usual tactics – either overwhelming a group who have inferior numbers, or else carrying off victims. Unlike its smaller cousins, the Giant Bat is not strictly nocturnal. Reports of the beasts carrying off prey in the midday sun are commonplace.

Fell Bats are darker than midnight and silent as death, even when in full flight. In fact, the only noises that a Fell Bat makes on the hunt are horrible gobbling slurps when it sinks its distended mouth into living flesh. In truth, a Fell Bat bears as much resemblance to an



ordinary bat as a maddened lion does to a domestic cat. A Vampire Bat is further distinguished from a mere bat by its obviously Undead nature. Although its body is usually in far better condition than a Zombie or other lesser Undead, its pallid skin and red-glowing eyes are a clear warning to anyone who sees it. Those who have encountered them, and lived, tell how they hunt with unerring accuracy, swooping down to knock knights from their saddles or pick off lone warriors unawares. They are partly living, partly Undead, and wholly terrifying.



Scholars have long debated whether the prodigious size of the Giant Bat is due to the warping effects of Chaos, or some other insidious force. To this day, the cause of the species' unnatural growth is unknown. It is speculated by scholars that centuries ago the ancestors of the Fell Bats fed upon tainted corpses, or perhaps even the blood of a Vampire. Corrupted by the curse of Undeath, these creatures have little instinct except to kill and feed. Vampires sometimes take a great deal of interest in their foul pets, feeding them on fresh blood and gory gruel made from the organs of the Vampire's victims. The Fell Bats fall under the control of the Vampire, and act as guardians, scouts and hunters for the undying lord. The wings of these gigantic Bats darken the skies when the armies of the Undead aristocracy go to war.

Vampires view Fell Bats much as a Bretonnian Lord might his prized hunting falcons. Precious sweetmeats are offered to Fell Bats from the ramparts of the Vampire's fortress, but to harness an entire flock, a grander sacrifice must be made. A fresh victim, belly-slit and screaming, or a terrified messenger sent to run into the night with his eyes put out is more to their taste. Once they have the scent of gore, they will fall upon the enemy battle line with bloodthirsty intent.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Fell Bat	1	3	0	3	3	2	3	2	3

TROOP TYPE: War Beast.

SPECIAL RULES: Fly.

"I believe them to be related to the Strigoi somehow, though Vampire Bats are certainly more physically appealing and socially adept than the average Strigoi."

Constantin von Carstein, Vampire Lord

BAT SWARMS

When the armies of the Vampires go to war, the skies above them are obscured by a multitude of bats. Like great nebulous shadows these immense clouds obscure light of sun and moon alike, swathing the battlefield in darkness, the better to confound and demoralise the living. As battle commences, hundreds of these animals descend on the enemy, battering and clawing at eyes and hands in order to distract the foe, often buying enough time for the Undead army to close in. These are no ordinary bats, but bloodthirsty scavengers that descend in great swarms to attack bands of travellers.

Mutated by the Dark Magic that saturates the ancient towers and caves where they roost, these bats can grow so large their wingspan can be as wide as a man's outstretched arms. In dark clouds they fall upon the foe, chittering, scratching and biting. Though each bat presents little threat to an armoured warrior, when numbered in their scores they can tear the skin from a man and strip the flesh from his bones in minutes.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Bat Swarm	1	3	0	2	2	5	4	5	3

TROOP TYPE: Swarm.

SPECIAL RULES: Hover.

Cloud of Horror: An enemy unit that is flanked by one or more Bat Swarms is automatically Disrupted.



Mist coils along the poorly cobbled street, probing at barred doors and shuttered windows. The torches on the street corners flutter in their sconces, and then flicker and die. The light of Mannslieb has long since disappeared and now only the haunting green glow of Morrslieb glitters in the fog.

A slow clanking noise approaches, still muffled by the mist. The rattle of wheels on uneven stones makes an arrhythmic beat to accompany a stilted shuffling. A lone bell tolls, low and mournful, and there rises a clamour amongst the dogs and cats of the village, who set to howling and shrieking. A sickly hue grows brighter in the fog, silhouetting a ghastly apparition.

The shambling dead march forth, and in their midst there rumbles a cart built of spliced wood and bone, dragged along by animated corpses lashed and nailed to its yoke. The bell tolls again and a cloak-swathed figure rises from the back of the cart. Bodies writhe at his feet, organs and limbs joining and parting, fusing together into monstrous things with lifeless eyes and grasping bands. For the third time the bell tolls and silence descends, stark and oppressive. From every direction, more shapes gather, tottering forward in their mortuary rags. Skin sloughs from rotted flesh and joints crack and shake with unnatural vitality.

The figure upon the wagon stands triumphantly, beckoning to the dead things that walk upon the rutted, age-worn road. A chance breeze of magic wafts aside the hood of his robe, revealing a haggard, cruel face. His eyes are pallid orbs under a craggy brow, the pinpricks of his pupils darting left and right as he surveys his lifeless minions. His skin is thin, looking like crumpled leather blotched and worn with age. Pale scars carved into the shape of dark runes peek through the grime caking his features. A sneering smile twists his lips as more and more of the walking dead answer his necromantic call.

Like the toys of some demented, godly puppeteer; a parade of corpses lurches down the street. Wisps of magical energy play about their limbs and faces, jerking them forwards with ungainly steps. Some trip in potholes and puddles, and tumble to the ground before lifting themselves awkwardly back to their feet. Others bump and stumble against hedges and walls, scraping dead fingers across brickwork and window Panes. Gangling and lurching, the Zombies converge upon the dread cart, stretching their rotting arms towards it in clumsy supplication.

As the peasants shiver in their beds, the dead of Eschen join the wretched carnival, doomed to walk the road of Undeath for eternity.

GRAVE GUARD

Upon the walls of Drakenhof Castle, and the other Vampire-haunted keeps of Sylvania, patrol tireless warriors clad in rust-gnawed armour and wielding glowing blades. These dread sentries are the Grave Guard – Wights drawn from their ancient tombs to act as guardians for the Vampire rulers of Sylvania. Although their bodies have decayed, leaving only bones and tattered flesh, Grave Guard are held together by evil magic so strong that it has endured for centuries. They wear ancient battle gear of primitive alloy, corroded by time and dusty with the years. They carry iron weapons inlaid with evil runes, an accursed parody of once powerful magical blades. In their rusted wargear, Wights are a grim reminder to the nobility of the Old World that they too are mortal.

These eerie, silent sentinels stand constant vigil on the crumbling battlements and at the iron-bound gates, never resting, eternally ready to defend their Vampire masters. When a Vampire marches forth, his Grave Guard advance at the head of the Undead host. They form a formidable corps of warriors, protected by heavy armour, their enchanted blades cutting down the toughest of enemies with strike after pitiless strike.

A surge of excitement invigorated Pieter von Carstein as he snapped the neck of another Orc. The sluggish, bitter blood that spilled from the creature's mouth did not interest Pieter in the slightest. The moment of death was far more intoxicating. Pieter felt the strength in his dead muscles swelling.

A crude, cleaver-like blade thudded into Pieter's arm, clanging off his lacquered armour. Contemptuously, Pieter lashed out with his claws, tearing off the Orc's face in one swipe. As another blow skidded ineffectually from Pieter's helm, the Vampire looked at the tattered web of skin that drooped from his fingers, and casually flicked it away. A spear tip plunged into Pieters cheek, and he broke from his bloodthirsty reverie to focus on the greenskins swarming around him. With a snarl, the Vampire slashed his sword across the chest of an Orc, knocking it backwards into its bellowing fellows. A reverse sweep decapitated another greenskin, and Pieter's armour was drenched in an arterial fountain. Driven on by the love of death, Pieter hacked and chopped, his Grave Guard unceremoniously beheading any Orcs that escaped his wrath. Suddenly, Pieter realised that his foes had scattered and fled.

Ahead lay the crude collection of tents and huts that the Greenskins had tried to protect. The Orcs were rallying after their initial rout, and were gathering inside the log walls of the compound.

"Attend me," Pieter snarled, gesturing to an imposing figure that stood nearby, clad in tarnished gold and bronze armour, a glowing sword in its skeletal grip. Asteron, long-dead monarch of the Dolgars, approached Pieter, eyes blazing.

"What is your will, master?"

The Wight's thoughts entered Pieter's head without sound, resonating like the echoes of a crypt.

"Assemble your warriors, prepare for the final attack." Pieter commanded.

"As you will it, master, so shall it be."

The sheer resilience of the Grave Guard has become well known across the nations of Human, Elf and Dwarf. Their combination of stout shields, thick armour plates, and the natural resilience of the Undead means that a simple sword blow has little chance of stopping them. When Lichemaster Kemmler broke the wards of Athel Loren and raised a legion of Grave Guard from the barrows hidden in its outskirts, the Wood Elves of that verdant realm found their usual tactic of pin-cushioning the intruders with arrows to be ineffective. The Undead warriors trudged on tirelessly into the forest, many with slender shafts sticking out from their eye sockets and jutting from their empty ribcages. They were only defeated when the ancient tree-spirits of that realm arose and crushed the Grave Guard one by one under giant root-encrusted feet. Unfortunately for the defenders of Athel Loren, the Grave Guard attack was merely a diversion. Kemmler had escaped with the magical artefacts he had come for hours before his plan was uncovered. Worse still, that same night, he raised up every last one of the Grave Guard to fight once more, and the forest was stained with Elven blood.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Grave Guard	4	3	2	4	4	1	3	1	6
Seneschal	4	3	2	4	4	1	3	2	6

TROOP TYPE: Infantry.

SPECIAL RULES: Killing Blow, Undead.



BLACK KNIGHTS

In the times before the Empire, there were few domesticated horses, and horsemen were exceedingly rare. In most tribes, a steed was a symbol of wealth and status. So it was often that only a chieftain and his closest warriors would ride mounted into battle, the wealthiest of their number clad in crude iron plate and carrying stout shields. When these early knights died, their horses were ritually killed and buried in the barrows alongside their masters, to carry them in the afterlife.

Many centuries later, the Vampire Counts are known to summon forth the gruesome remains of those ancient knights in order to bolster the masses of lesser Undead minions under their control. As a Vampire stalks through barrows and mausoleums, Dark Magic swirls invisibly around him like a cloak, probing and penetrating the cracked and overgrown porticos of each resting place and saturating the bones of the armoured corpses within. A thousand years of dust shifts and dissipates as the parchment-dry cadavers twitch and sit upright. In a morbid mockery of their old lives, these Black Knights stir into motion, tearing themselves free of thorny creepers and thick cobwebs, cold fingers clamping around the hilts of age-blackened blades. Alongside them, the skeletal remains of their steeds jerk to unlife, twisted by magic into hellish mockeries of the noble beasts they once were.

Outside the barrow, the Vampire splits open the resting place of his new servants with a deafening crack. At his word, fully formed Black Knights ride pell-mell from the tumbledown ruins of their tombs, whole units of warrior horsemen arrayed in the corroded armour of a bygone age. Their steeds are trapped in a strange half-life by rituals that have bound them to their riders. Borne by their sorcerous steeds, the Black Knights exist neither wholly in the hereafter, nor wholly in the material world. They can pass through walls without hindrance, and gallop at full speed across fen and moor. There have been reports of Black Knights galloping straight through the rubble of ruined cities, or even charging across the surface of a lake without leaving so much as a ripple. These unliving cavaliers

"Clever, fast, cunning Zombies, that's all they really are. It is a fine thing to know that the greater one of your hero's powers as a mortal, the greater will be his prowess once he has become one of the Undead. Some corpses would be wasted as mere Zombies or Skeletons; they have the fighting instincts of a hero, still, deep within their dead muscles and nerves. I can use that. I can use that to smash more of your heroes to their deaths, but at the end of the night, a Wight can be thrown away as easily as any other minion. There are plenty more where they came from. This world will never be short of dead heroes – a heartening thought, no?"

Constantin von Carstein, Vampire Lord

crash into the ranks of their living enemies, spitting their foes on lances wreathed in cold flame, and lashing out with heavy swords older than the Empire itself.

During their mortal lives, these unearthly knights used weapons bearing enchantments of destruction. Though corrupted by the patina of the ages, these tools of slaughter are no less potent than when the wielder was a man of flesh and blood. It is said that one pierced by a Black Knight's lance or sword never recovers. In their rusted wargear Wight cavalry are a grim reminder to the proud knightly orders of the Old World that every man is mortal.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Black Knight	4	3	2	4	4	1	3	1	6
Death Knight	4	3	2	4	4	1	3	2	6
Skeleton Steed	8	2	0	3	3	1	2	1	3

TROOP TYPE: Cavalry.

SPECIAL RULES: Killing Blow, Spectral Steeds, Undead.

"Raise, brothers! Remember the days of glory, the echoes of war. We march to battle once more, and the thrones of the Old World shall tremble at our coming. We are a legion, and we shall never grow weary of slaughter. Come, and we shall ride from forever to forever..."



CORPSE CART

When Vlad von Carstein unleashed the armies of Sylvania upon the Empire, between the trudging crowds of Zombies and the endless ranks of Skeletons could be seen the constructs known as Corpse Carts. Driven by macabre, shrouded figures, these unnatural wagons are made of rotted wood, rusted metal and diseased flesh, and each is heaped with writhing body parts. Clawed limbs reach out from the cart's interior to grab at those close enough to touch.

The Corpse Carts act like magnets to Dark Magic, drawing its power from the ground and air and animating the dead around them. Sometimes a Corpse Cart is hung with a great bell, the clapper of which is a fell lodestone of eldritch provenance. When Necromantic magic is cast upon the Corpse Cart the bell tolls menacingly and ripples of Dark Magic spread out from it. Under the influence of this mystical knell, the dead are drawn back together and corpses stagger to their feet. Other times, Corpse Carts have been sighted with braziers burning with dark flames. The smoke from these balefires contains particles of warpstone, which interfere with the Winds of Magic and drive enemy wizards insane.

Though Vlad used the power of the Corpse Carts in his war upon the Empire, he was not the first to employ them. On Geheimnisnacht of the year 1111, Morrslieb showered down great meteors upon the lands of Sylvania and legions of black-blotted plague victims rose from mass graves, their flesh pocked and burnt. The warpstone meteors also affected the plague wagons that carried the thousands of dead plague victims to the charnel pits. Bodies fused together into writhing Undead masses, and the drivers of the carts changed into strange, withered creatures. The infamous Necromancer, Frederick Vanhal, formed an army of the Undead from the newly risen, using his Dark Magic to bind the Corpse Carts to his will. Infused with warpstone and driven forth by Vanhal's evil, the Corpse Carts acted as loci for the Necromancer's magic. When Vanhal's apprentice turned on his master and killed him, the Corpse Carts were no longer controlled. Without Vanhal's guiding influence, the devilish chariots dispersed into the wilds.

Though most were hunted down and put to the torch, for over a thousand years, the remaining Corpse Carts have wandered along the back roads and dirt tracks of Sylvania, carrying death and misery with them like a shroud. On dark nights, they enter ramshackle villages, stirring the dead in their graves and filling the dreams of slumbering peasants with visions of rot and death. These strange constructs are valued highly by Vampires, for Undead creatures near a Corpse Cart will fight with a frenetic vigour, bolstering the battle line of a Vampire's army.

Similar constructs are found near the damned city of Mousillon, but whether they are true Corpse Carts is unsure. Folklore tells of macabre wagons hung with scraps of brightly-coloured skin, known as Charnevals. The morbid chansons of Bretonnia tell of entranced mortals drained of life by a Charneval, their husk-like bodies climbing on board to join its eternal procession through the night as the Corpsemaster seeks final death in the fires of battle.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Corpse Cart	-	-	-	4	5	4	-	-	-
Corpsemaster	-	3	3	4	4	1	3	1	6
The Restless Dead	4	2	0	3	-	-	1	*	-

TROOP TYPE: Shrine (Armour Save 6+).

SPECIAL RULES: *Random Attacks (2D6), Regeneration (4+), Undead.

Vigour Mortis: *The Corpse Cart hardens shattered spirits and emboldens tattered bodies to ever greater acts of violence.*

All friendly Skeleton Warrior and Zombie units within 6" of one or more Corpse Carts gain +1 Attack. In addition, Zombie units within 6" by a Corpse Cart gain the Regeneration (6+) special rule.

UPGRADES:

Balefire: *Balefire contains trace elements of Warpstone, so the burning braziers slowly drive mortal men to madness.*

Enemy Wizards suffer a -1 modifier to their casting rolls if there is one or more units with a Balefire within 24".

Unholy Lodestone: *The ringing of the arcane bell atop the Corpse Cart inspires Undead minions to continue fighting, even when grievously wounded.*

When a friendly Wizard within 6" of an Unholy Lodestone successfully casts Invocation of Nehek, they may re-roll a single D6 to determine how many Wounds are restored for each eligible infantry unit.



CRYPT HORRORS

The malformed monstrosities known as Crypt Horrors are, thankfully, a rare sight. Spoken of in hushed whispers by night watchmen, old priests of Morr, grave-keepers and other nocturnal citizens of the Empire, the few persistent reports of these looming and moon-mad fiends are dismissed as the ravings of superstitious fools. At best, they are thought to be exaggerated sightings of Crypt Ghouls. Unfortunately for the lands of the Old World, however, the stories are often accurate, for Crypt Horrors are very real.

Crypt Horrors are only seen openly in times of war, where they are primarily used as the shock troops of ambitious Strigoi Ghoul Kings. Crypt Ghouls are counted amongst the lowliest of all Vampiric servants; after all, they lack even the common decency to be properly dead. So the sight of a pack of Crypt Horrors accompanying a Vampire to battle is evidence of the terrible depths that their master has sunk to in his quest for survival. In order to create a Crypt Horror, a Vampire must open his veins to a Ghoul and allow it to gulp down his precious blood – essentially a pale bastardisation of the Dark Kiss – an act that is reviled by those who count themselves amongst the elite of Sylvanian society.

For a Strigoi to allow a Crypt Ghoul's foetid mouth to sink into its flesh is a sign that the Vampire is truly desperate. Nonetheless, some Ghoul Kings encourage this strange and abhorrent practice. Once a Crypt Ghoul has drunk the blood of a Vampire, its eyes turn red and it goes into a killing frenzy. It pulls down weaker members of its own pack, dragging its screeching prey into an open grave or a shattered tomb in order to consume its gruesome feast undisturbed. Finishing its cannibalistic orgy with a smacking of lips, the swollen Ghoul will crawl back to its waiting master, hoping for another draught of vampiric blood. By the coming of the next full moon, the new Crypt Horror will have grown to several times its original size and ferocity.

Crypt Horrors provide a tangible benefit to their Strigoi masters. True Undead can be warded away from grave-haunts by sacred sigils and priests of Morr, and Crypt Ghouls are too cowardly to mount a full-scale assault on such a place. Hence, Strigoi Ghoul Kings will create Crypt Horrors whenever they need to smash through such defences. Crypt Horrors are neither living nor truly dead, and as the call of Morr's realm pulls at what remains of their souls, they vent their rage upon the crypt-gardens of the god of death. Because of this, the keepers of sepulchres and mausoleums fear Crypt Horrors above all other minions of the Ghoul Kings. Once the magical wards guarding the cemeteries are destroyed by the rampage of these foul beasts, their vampiric master is free to raid the corpse-fields beyond.

Though the lineage of Strigos has broken every taboo by creating them, they are able to gain power in this way. A Crypt Horror towers over its Ghoul brethren, and though it retains the characteristic stoop and loping gait of its former life, its sinews become hard as iron. Bony growths and protrusions push out from the creature's spine, and talons lengthen from splayed, dextrous hands. The potent diet of tough Ghoul flesh washed down with vampiric

blood wreaks changes inside as well as out. Though the Crypt Horror's freakish metabolism will soon drive the creature's body to consume itself, in the meantime, the fiend's constitution is such that it can reknit even the most horrific wound with an effort of will. This is the main reason why the more elitist Vampire cliques tolerate these foul monsters – Dark Magic, the sustaining power of necromancy, literally runs in a Crypt Ghoul's veins, and therefore the sheer violence it can unleash is not to be underestimated.

In battle, packs of Crypt Horrors muscle their way towards the front lines, eyes glowing with dire light. They use shattered gravestones, tomb statuary and cemetery railings to smash aside those brave enough to stand before them, but it is their meat-encrusted fangs and talons that are to be avoided at all costs. Even a shallow wound from a Crypt Horror bears enough poisonous rot to kill a horse. Despised by the living and the dead alike, Crypt Horrors are creatures to be truly feared.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Crypt Horror	6	3	0	4	5	3	2	3	7
Crypt Haunter	6	3	0	4	5	3	2	4	7

TROOP TYPE: Monstrous Infantry.

SPECIAL RULES: Poisoned Attacks, Regeneration (5+).



VARGHEISTS

Vargheists are the darkness in a Vampire's soul made manifest. They are towering winged humanoids, each several times the size of a man. Though the Vargheists once walked and talked as lords amongst the chattel, these curse-born Vampires have devolved into ravening predators desperate for the taste of blood. They prowl the battlefield in packs, ready to pounce upon the least sign of weakness and tear a hole in the enemy ranks with crimson claw and bloody fang.

The creation of a Vargheist is a strange metamorphosis that takes place far from the eyes of mortal. Under the extensive castles of the von Carsteins are vast subterranean networks of basements, galleries and dining halls with vaulted ceilings that stretch into the pitch darkness above. This realm of former glories is where the Vargheist's dark birth takes place.

Once, these haunted hall were places of grandeur and largesse, the sites of sinister speeches, flesh banquets and epic displays of privilege. Now, they are little more than antique graveyards filled with the detritus of an ancient aristocracy. Moth-eaten drapes and tapestries hang like curtains of moss from the damp-raddled walls. Embroidered rugs and mosaics of bone are hidden by inches of tainted and brackish water that seeps through from the cursed lands above. Broken harpsichords lean drunkenly against the cloth-bound statuary of ancient gods; shattered coaches and rot-nawed sedan chairs are heaped amongst haunted

portraits and magical relics stolen from conquered civilisations. Within the mounds of priceless bric-a-brac, chain-bound coffins and sculpted sarcophagi nestle like chrysalises in a rotting woodpile. If a chance visitor were to approach these coffins and blow away the carpet of dust upon them, the name 'VON CARSTEIN' could just about be made out, chiselled in baroque letters upon elaborate stone scrollwork.

Not all of these coffins are empty, for this hidden realm is where the von Carsteins lock away those of their family who have fallen out of favour. Those who come off worse in the endless power struggles of the Vampires often find themselves prematurely buried and left at the mercy of their own relentless thirsts. Slowly, over the course of decades, the constantly dripping water – magically tainted by warpstone in the stalactites overhead – finds its way into the prisons of these unfortunates. Torpid for want of fresh blood, the slumbering Vampires begin to devolve and change shape, growing larger and more bestial as the diluted Dark Magic swilling around them lends them a terrible strength.

Whilst the transformation from humanoid into monster takes hold, the muscular Vargheist will crack open its stone prison with a great effort. Casting aside its chains, the creature unfolds its leathery wings and rears up into the darkness, letting loose a terrible scream of rage and betrayal that sends great swarms of bats whirling throughout the cavernous chambers. The shattered remnants of its sarcophagus fall away, and the name and personality of its former incumbent is left behind in the mire. The newborn Vargheist begins to hunt, desperate to sink its teeth into mortal veins. At the first taste of blood, the transformation is made permanent – what was once a proud lord of the dead is forever cursed to an existence as a ravening beast.

Though each Vargheist emerges from its prison far stronger in body, it is invariably weaker in mind. After centuries of thirsty confinement, all they really want to do is feed. These creatures are easily bound to their jailor's will as a result, and are sent into battle in packs in order to feast on those enemies foolish enough to stray too far from the sanctuary of the main battle line. Vargheists make formidable fighters, for their raw fury and terrible hunger is undiminished by the control exerted by their cruel, vampiric masters.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Vargheist	6	4	0	5	4	3	4	3	7
Vargoyle	6	4	0	5	4	3	4	4	7

TROOP TYPE: Monstrous Infantry.

SPECIAL RULES: Fly, Frenzy, The Red Thirst, Vampiric.

"Say farewell to light, for the Darkness beckons..."
Unknown Vampire



VARGHULFS

Within every Vampire's soul lurks a slavering monster, driven to feed on the blood of the living time and again. For many Vampires it is a curse, something to keep in check, an unavoidable price for their powers. These Vampires maintain the pretences of the living, moving amongst human society and concealing their nature. Most Vampires seek control over this side of their existence, clinging to the trappings of aristocracy, privilege, or – in some extreme cases – a debased form of martial honour.

Yet not all Vampires care for the trappings of life or seek to control their inner urges. There are a few Vampires who embrace their thirst, who allow the bestial hunter within to take over and consume their personality completely. These feral predators abandon their citadels in order to run unfettered through the forest, hunting at the head of packs of Dire Wolves or even stranger beasts. Those who revel in such behaviour become physically changed beyond recognition by the Vampiric curse. Hence are born the creatures known to the peasant folk as Varghulfs.

Over the centuries, these most devolved of Vampires become blood-mad killers that exist only to feed. Like enraged, starved wolves, they run rampant, devouring whole villages and yet never sating their thirst. They slaughter without mercy, luxuriating in bloody carnage. As well as devouring the living, a Varghulf will ransack graves and feast upon the bodies of the dead. Other Vampires consider them disgusting scavengers, though nonetheless desirable and deadly fighters despite their uncivilised behaviour.

A Varghulf has a monstrously swollen body, swelled by the life essence of its many victims and a constant diet of red meat. Unbound by human form, a Varghulf

is a contorted mass of packed muscle, giving it the strength to crush a chariot, smash through a wall to get at its prey, or bowl over entire ranks of those stupid enough to try and pen it in. Powerful legs and broad wingflaps allow Varghulfs to chase down their kills in swift, gliding leaps, and they can lash out at enemies around them with shocking speed. They use their immense claws to strip flesh from bone, the better to suck at the juicy marrow of their prey. A Varghulf's main weapon, however, is a wide mouth filled with dagger-like fangs capable of puncturing armour and crushing skulls.

In battle, the Varghulf becomes a whirlwind of rage. Though voracious and unpredictable killers, Varghulfs are far from mindless. They do not possess the aptitude or inclination for sorcery of their Vampiric cousins, but their presence still acts as a conduit for Dark Magic, and they are able to reknit themselves with the raw stuff of necromancy should they suffer injury.

Pack animals will instinctively follow Varghulfs, recognising the apex predator in their midst. Crypt Ghouls in particular are drawn to Varghulfs, recognising something of their own unwholesome nature in the massive beasts. Hence, the caverns of the Strigoi Ghoul Kings often play host to a Varghulf or two. On occasion, a Varghulf will become a leader of its own pack of Crypt Ghouls, sharing its lair with a loathsome court of flesh-eaters. From a secret cave or decrepit mausoleum, the Varghulf sends forth its gruesome attendants to bring it victims to kill, or corpses if the living cannot be taken. As well as leading its gruesome attendants in midnight hunts that always end in the slaughter of the living. For their part, the Crypt Ghouls gain a powerful protector, something the cowardly creatures value highly. Though the hidden armies of Ghoulkin that lurk in the catacombs of the world prefer to skulk and hide than to wage open war, when they boil out of the darkness, a Varghulf's presence can be the difference between victory and defeat.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Varghulf	8	5	0	5	5	4	4	5	7

TROOP TYPE: Monster.

SPECIAL RULES: Hatred, The Red Thirst, Regeneration (5+), Vampiric.

Bestial Fury: For the purposes of calculating combat result bonuses, a Varghulf counts as having no flanks or rear.

"The Red Thirst makes us strong because we must resist its temptations every day of our lives or be forever damned."

Unknown Vampire



LAHMIAN HANDMAIDENS

Neferata's Handmaidens are like a harem of exquisite beauties from every human kingdom, past and present. In their courtly disguises they are ravishing ladies – porcelain-skinned nobles and exotic princesses from afar. This is a masquerade: each is a vampiress, a member of Neferata's retinue, and their beauty lasts only so long as they have fresh blood. They are cruel and sadistic, and though their true skills reside in courtside infiltration and politics of subversion, they are still deadly foes upon the battlefield.

Potential inductees are identified by Neferata's vast web of thralls, which entangles all the major cities of the world. The chosen maiden's journey – consented to or otherwise – is arranged in secret, and fulfilled via luxuriously appointed carriages that no border guard dares challenge. Neferata does not give her dark blessing easily, however. Beauty is required, as are cleverness and wit, but countless maidens who possess all of these qualities have been rejected, their blood harvested to provide refreshment for guests with unsophisticated palates. What Neferata cannot admit, even to herself, is that some of those she rejects are perhaps more beautiful, cleverer or wittier than the Queen of Mysteries herself.

Neferata's web of thralls is not merely a tool for expanding the sisterhood; rather it is the Queen of Mysteries' true source of power. The influence of the Silver Pinnacle stems not from armies or sorcery – although Neferata can call upon these easily enough, should she choose – but from secrets that others would sooner keep hidden. There is little that does not reach Neferata's starlit throne, for her spies are everywhere, not just in the human realms, but in Ulthuan and Naggaroth. Even the dwarf holds are not beyond her reach. Scandals, deployments, quarrels of succession, trading agreements – all of these and more find their way to Neferata's ears. Some reports are trivial, fit only for simple amusement, but others... others can be used to alter the destiny of a rival, a city or perhaps even a nation. These are the tales which seize Neferata's attention and cause her to send



messengers out into the night. Even the Queen of Mysteries can no longer remember how many great leaders have been brought low by her web of intrigue, how many realms have been humbled at her whim. It is a game to her now, a means of whiling away the centuries, but in those first desperate years following the destruction of Lahmia, it was the coin with which Neferata bought her survival. She had many enemies in those days, Nagash amongst them, and knowledge was her shield. Nowadays, she knows who will be the next Emperor before the incumbent has passed away.

Many of Neferata's handmaidens are spread across the realms of mankind, and some of the most known are the Pallid Sisters, twins from icy Kislev; Lycindia the Cruel, the Duchess of Malstomia; Naaima, a concubine out of far Cathay; and the Red Coven, made up of Heterneb of ancient Lahmia, Giselle of Marienburg, and Bellatash of Tilea.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Handmaiden	6	5	4	5	4	1	6	2	7
Royal Handmaiden	6	5	4	5	4	1	6	3	7

TROOP TYPE: Infantry.

SPECIAL RULES: Skirmishers, Vampiric.

UPGRADE:

Asp Bow (Magic Weapon)

Tomb robbers unearthed the Asp Bow in the city of Khemri, along with several other artefacts bearing the marks of a Nehekharan snake Goddess named Asaph who claimed dominion over magic, beauty, and vengeance. When the tomb robbers returned to the Old World, a strange curse seemed to fall upon them, and all those who possessed items from the expedition died mysteriously. The Asp Bow eventually found its way into the hands of Neferata, and it is now used by her most favoured assassin. Although ornate and intricately carved with serpent imagery, this bow seems utterly mundane. It reveals its true character when a wielder notches an arrow, at which point the arrowhead assumes the character and likeness of a hissing, venomous snake. Its arrows are like poisonous serpents which eagerly seek their target's heart.

The Asp Bow is a missile weapon with the following profile:

Range:	Strength:	Special Rules:
30"	4	Multiple Wounds (2), Poisoned Attacks, Sniper

"Fight you? I think not. Can you not see what I hold in my hand? Don't you recognise your own beating heart?"

*I sodora of the Lahmian Sisterhood
to Baron Rochefort at the Battle of Chalon*

BLOOD KNIGHTS

Blood Knights are the most fearsome cavalry in all of the Old World. Their training and discipline in life is enhanced by the unnatural speed and strength of the vampiric curse. Blood Knights are nigh indestructible, riding with fangs bared through storms of arrow and shot. Such is their honour that they will refuse no martial challenge, and will fight at the forefront of an Undead army without question. It is said that even the fabled Grail Knights of Bretonnia cannot match the Blood Knights lance for lance upon the field.

Centuries ago, the people of the Empire would have named the knights of the Order of the Blood Dragon amongst the noblest of warriors defending their lands. Their great fortress, Blood Keep, guarded the passes to Bretonnia and was famed for the strength of its walls and the valour of its defenders. As the Tome of Lamentations records, one night, a man of great stature and noble bearing appeared before the gates and demanded entrance. He named himself as Walach of the Harkon family, and when the knights opened the gates to him, they unwittingly sealed their doom.

Walach challenged the knights to combat. He slew them with ease, for he was a Vampire who had learned his war craft from the great Abhorash. Though no knight could hope to defeat the Undead monster, Walach spared those who fought bravely and with honour. To these knights, he passed on his vampirism; the others he slew without pause and fed on their life force. Blood Keep became a Vampire lair, from which the deadly knights preyed upon those they once protected.

Many decades later, the witch hunter Gunther van Hel discovered the truth and attacked Blood Keep with an army sent from Wissenland and Reikland, and supported by four Knightly Orders. The siege lasted for three years, during

which the bloodshed was like nothing the men of the Empire had seen. Van Hel and his soldiers destroyed many Vampires when they finally stormed the castle, and hunted the survivors through the wilds for years to come. Afterwards, Blood Keep fell into ruin and its evil masters passed into myth. Though Blood Keep was brought low, many Blood Dragons escaped, scattering across the Empire, Bretonnia, Tilea and further afield. Fearsomely accomplished with lance and sword, these warriors became fearsome raiders, either mercenaries led by dark Kastellans or solitary duellists.

Over time, the Blood Knights have become a macabre parody of the virtuous templars that Walach turned. Though they retain the Dragon as their symbol, their armour is encrusted with images of death and slaughter. Their blades are fell weapons inscribed with dark runes, chased with precious metals and fashioned in the likenesses of evil beasts. The blazons and crests of Blood Keep take the shape of dragons and dragon wings. The knights do not ride flesh and blood horses, but charge across the field of battle upon evil Nightmares with fiery eyes and foetid breath, that are clad in thick bardings painted with disturbing icons of necromantic power.

In the present day, centuries after the demise of their order, there are whispers that Blood Keep is once again inhabited. Those who live near the mountains say nocturnal hunters perturb the folk of the Dwarf Holds. Gossipmongers claim that immortal knights once more feast on human blood in the ancient halls, and skeletal sentries patrol the ramparts. Some even say that Walach himself has returned with his closest disciples, and that he is gathering his forces to wage war upon the lands of those who attempted to destroy him.

They are the most fearsome knights in all of the Old World. Their training and discipline in life is married with the unnatural speed and strength of Undeath. The Blood Knights are nigh indestructible, and their bloodthirst makes them ferocious and implacable. Such is their honour that they will refuse no challenge, and will fight at the forefront of an army. It is said that even the fabled Grail Knights of Bretonnia cannot match the Blood Knights on the field of battle.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Blood Knight	6	6	3	5	4	1	5	2	7
Kastellan	6	6	3	5	4	1	5	3	7
Nightmare	8	3	0	4	4	1	2	1	3

TROOP TYPE: Cavalry.

SPECIAL RULES: Vampiric.

UPGRADE:

The Flag of Blood Keep

50 points

This ancient flag is emblazoned with a dragon device, the symbol of Blood Keep for many years. The Blood Knights that bear this flag banner are the disciples of Walach himself. They hold the same disdain for ranged weapons now as they did in mortal life; a disgust exemplified by the enchantments woven into the banner.

Magic Standard. A unit of Blood Knights with the Flag of Blood Keep upgrade gains a Ward save (4+) against missile attacks.



SPIRIT HOSTS

The dead do not rest easy in the Old World. Ghosts, shades and spectres of dead men return to haunt the land of the living. On certain nights these lost souls can be seen hovering above the places of their death, shimmering with unnatural light. Spectres are insubstantial and often semi-transparent, glowing pale white with magical energy. They are silent creatures but no less frightening for being so.

When a mortal dies, his essence dissipates, leaving only a shell behind. Skeletons and Zombies are those shells returned to life without essence. Spirits are the opposite – the shell is gone, but the essence remains, trapped in the mortal world. What remains is not the same as what was there in life but an echo of rage and guilt and dark determination. This perversion that perseveres is of great use to the Vampires and necromancers.

All the peoples of the Empire share a common view of what happens to the souls of the dead – they pass into the underworld, the land of Morr, god of Death. Priests of Morr and wizards of the Amethyst College have been known to contact a soul in the underworld and remind it of its former life, strengthening the soul's grip on its memories. The mortal can then commune with that spirit, and learn of things that have passed and things that are yet to pass. The Empire's citizens also believe that sometimes Morr will close the gates of the underworld, and forbid a spirit from entering. He may



do this if it is not that individual's time to pass beyond the veil, for instance, or the person has sworn an oath that they have not yet fulfilled. These souls burn brightly in the underworld and disturb the other spirits, and so Morr banishes them back to the realm of the living, condemning them to a shade-like existence until their duty is done.

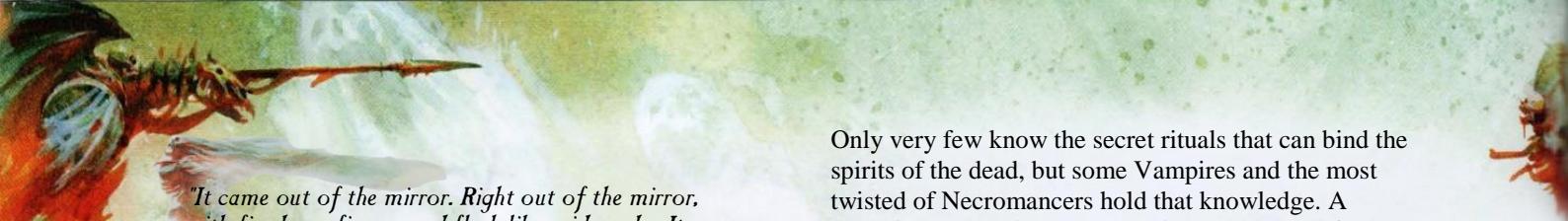
Spirits are ethereal Undead that seem to resemble various once living beings, though whether they are actually the souls of the departed or something other is open to speculation. A ghost, the most commonly seen spirit, arises when the circumstances surrounding a person's death cause some part of his or her soul to remain near the place of death. The most common reason is that the person was not buried properly – either not in consecrated ground, without the correct funerary rites, or both. Sometimes a ghost may also arise because a person died with some great task unfulfilled, or was murdered by a killer who is still at large. Some seek only release, while others hate the living with such passion that they give themselves over to evil.

One of the more mischievous types of spirit are the poltergeists. They generally seek to frighten the living by tossing objects about and making a nuisance of themselves. The most frightening, though, are the spectres. Spectres are in many ways the malevolent counterparts of ghosts and they seldom wish the living any good. The majority of spectres remain behind due to being the victims of a horrible curse or by being an oath-breaker or other form of traitor. They are angry beings, full of malice for the living and despair at their own state.

A few Spectres may make common cause with the living in the hopes relieving their condition and gaining freedom at last. The majority, though, have been driven mad, evil, or both by their years of torment and the knowledge that they helped bring it upon themselves. They are cursed by their own crimes, be they murder, defilement, or the violation of a sworn stricture or solemn vow, and their punishment is their imprisonment between the realms, eternally chastised by their own guilt. This torment soon drives them mad, and they lash out at the living with incoherent rage. They attack the living out of pure malice, reaching their hands out from within walls or other objects to paralyze and slowly kill anyone that falls into their clutches. Those who survive such attacks are rarely sane afterwards.

"You cannot deny that our ways are efficient. Often I find that after killing and draining one of your kind, I can bring his body back as a Zombie and set his Spirit to haunting or spooking too."

Constantin von Carstein, Vampire Lord



"It came out of the mirror. Right out of the mirror, with five bony fingers and flesh like spiderwebs. It grabbed Karl's heart and crushed it in a moment. The blood frothed out of Karl's mouth like fatty tallow as he died, and I stopped my thieving that very night."

Marius Fignell, priest of Morr

To even behold a Spectre can be enough to scare a mortal to death. As spirits, they are all also invisible to the naked eye and immune to mundane weapons. They can pass through all barriers and fly across the land at incredible speeds. They can thus single-handedly devastate any armies who have not already fled in terror. However, the force of will that keeps the spirit present means that summoning and controlling them is far from simple.

Across Sylvania, poltergeists and ghosts haunt peasants with dreadful groans and freezing touches, sometimes driving whole villages to be abandoned as a result. When the Vampire Counts go to war, these restless spirits are pulled along by the Dark Magic of the Undead army. Insubstantial and impervious to mortal weapons, these angry ghosts swarm over the enemy, leeching energy from the living and leaving stark horror in their wake.

The scouts stealthily worked their way through the pine forest. It was getting dark, but soon they would be in position watching the road. The air was becoming cold and damp. What could those eerie sounds be, and those strange luminous lights up ahead among the trees? They waited. It was not the living. Suddenly they were all around them, wispy, whispering, formless shapes. Swords cleaved through vapour and fear chilled their hearts.

Sylvania is rich in the spirits of the dead, for it has a long history of misery and suffering, and is rife with polluting warpstone and Dark Magic. As well as animating the physical remains of the dead, this sorcerous energy also has an effect on the souls of the departed. When Vlad von Carstein cast out the priests of Morr, wardens of the dead, he ensured that the spirits of those who had died could not pass into the afterlife. Since then, the unquiet spirits can often be seen as mournful, swirling mists, through which protrude mournful, wailing faces and grasping hands. Their touch draws some of a victim's soul into the underworld, dragging them into a waking nightmare or stealing their knowledge of who they are. Only a priest of Morr can restore the mind of one who has had his spirit drained by a ghost, and survivors of the process are rare.

These banished souls become ghosts and revenants, forced to haunt the homes and battlefields where they died. Many Spirits are unable to stray far from their place of death, though the precise distance they can wander is enormously varied, depending on such factors as the willpower of the spirit when alive, the number of years since its death, and how determined it is to achieve its release.

Only very few know the secret rituals that can bind the spirits of the dead, but some Vampires and the most twisted of Necromancers hold that knowledge. A Vampire can use its Necromantic power to call forth these spirits, channelling Dark Magic so that the roaming souls can manifest themselves and unleash them upon their enemies. Vampires prefer to use them as guards, luring them to specific locations where they will happily slaughter any trespassers. A powerful Spectre can protect an entire castle from intruders for millennia and thank his master for the constant supply of souls.

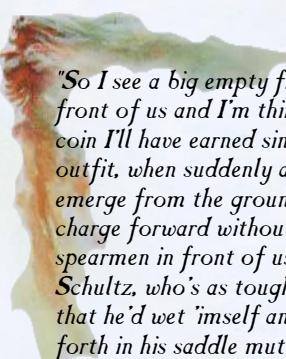
Necromancers must undergo a stranger process still to bind the souls of men, sending their own spirits to the underworld of Morr. Once there, they can steal a few souls, snatching them from under the gaze of the god of the dead. However, sometimes Morr catches these interlopers, imprisoning them for eternity. Their body falls into a catatonic state and then slowly rots away, while their soul suffers anguish without end.

On the field of battle, these vengeful apparitions cluster together into vast hosts when summoned that drift slowly towards their warm-blooded victims with terrible inevitability. These are made up of a mixture of ghosts and spectres. Spectres are particularly favoured for this task, since they can inflict significant damage on the enemy, but most Spirit Hosts are rounded out by a fair number of ghosts. Although ghosts cannot harm the living directly, they are capable of forcing their enemies to flee in fear, and that can be almost as useful on the battlefield. Even a cannonball strike will not damage a Spirit Host, for they exist only partially in this world. However, their twilight state does anything but render these spirits harmless. The ghost of a cursed man can claw at a mortal's flesh with long, taloned hands, stilling the victim's beating heart with a touch and killing him outright even as his eyes widen in shock.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Spirit Host	6	3	0	3	3	4	1	4	4

TROOP TYPE: Swarm.

SPECIAL RULES: Ethereal, Undead.



"So I see a big empty field all full of nuffin' in front of us and I'm thinking this'll be the easiest coin I'll have earned since joining up with this outfit, when suddenly a hundred ghostly figures emerge from the ground in parade formation. They charge forward without a sound and cut the unit of spearmen in front of us to ribbons. I turned to ol' Schultz, who's as tough as shoe leather, and saw that he'd wet 'imself an was slowly rockin' back and forth in his saddle mutterin' to 'imself and making the sign of Sigmar's 'ammer over and over. It was then and there that I decided if I lived through the fight to never join up with any more mercenary companies that went anywhere near Sylvania. Ever again."

Jurgen, Mercenary

HEXWRAITHS

The origins of the Hexwraiths are shrouded in mystery, but it is said that they are created on Hexensnacht, tearing their way into the mortal realm from the very bowels of the underworld. Their single-minded purpose seems to be the pursuit of those evil men who have cheated their rightful fate, for a Hexwraith's shade-like existence leaves it with a hunger that only the succour of a damned soul can sate. Once the curse of the Hexwraiths has been laid upon their prey, there can be no escape – the spectral horsemen can hurtle across rivers and pass through mountainsides on their incorporeal steeds without slowing their headlong charge.

Often, their quarry will hide in a brightly lit tavern or well defended fortress, hoping to escape the robed figures that gallop through his dreams and maybe drown his sorrows into the bargain. This is no defence; sooner or later, the Hexwraiths will charge straight through the thickest walls with a ripple of cruel laughter, cutting the soul from their prey and riding out through the other side in one terrifying instant. The only proof that the cloaked and burning apparitions were not figments of the imagination is the rapidly cooling corpse left in their wake, and perhaps a patch of sulphurous soot where the creatures passed through the walls.

Hexwraiths are able to move from the realm of spirits to the mortal world and back again at will. They share many similarities with Cairn Wraith, though they are not bound to places of death and grief, in fact able to ride abroad swiftly at the command of their Undead masters. The scythe-like weapons they use to slay their prey would be lethal enough in the material realm, but because the Hexwraiths shimmer between worlds, their spirit scythes are able to pass through gromril armour or scaled Dragon-hide without hindrance.

A single blow from a spirit scythes can snatch away a mortal's essence whilst leaving his physical form completely unharmed. It is these strange weapons that earn the Hexwraiths their nickname of 'reaper knights', for they harvest the souls of the living just as a farmer reaps his crop. A soul taken by a Hexwraith does not dissipate altogether, but is instead absorbed by the spectre that took it. These dread reapers hence burn with flickering flame; all that is left of the horrified spirits they have stolen from the mortal realm.

The arcane bloodline of the lecrarchs were the first to bind Hexwraiths into their armies – some say they learnt the art of their summoning from the stolen Book of Arkhan, others that the legendary Melkhior was the first to master their control. In recent years, however, they have been seen in Undead armies all across the land. When bound into a Vampire's service and commanded by their Hellwraith leaders to ride into battle, whole packs of these apparitions hurtle across the field, plunging headlong through the swiftly dwindling ranks of the foe.

In recent years, the Vampires of Sylvania have learned to bind these creatures of shadow to their service, using them as weapons of war. The sight of a pack of cackling Hexwraiths approaching fast, spirit scythes held high and unnatural soulfires flickering from their eye sockets, is enough to chill the blood of even the most seasoned warrior. It is small wonder that these deathly riders are amongst the most feared of all the minions of the Vampire Counts.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Hexwraith	6	3	0	3	3	1	2	1	5
Hellwraith	6	3	0	3	3	1	2	2	5
Skeletal Steed	8	2	0	3	3	1	2	1	3

TROOP TYPE: Cavalry.

SPECIAL RULES: Ethereal, Fast Cavalry, Terror, Undead.

Soul Reapers: Attacks made by Hexwraiths and Hellwraiths in close combat have the Flaming Attacks and Ignores Armour saves special rules.

Soulstriders: Hexwraiths and Hellwraiths can move through unengaged units (whether friendly or enemy) during the Remaining Moves sub-phase, but cannot end their movement within 1" of another unit.



CAIRN WRAITHS

Greatest of the lesser Undead are the Cairn Wraiths. Cairn Wraiths are hooded, spectral creatures that dwell in the realms of nightmare, haunting the dreams of men. They are amongst the most dreaded of all Undead. Lacking physical forms altogether, they cannot be put down by axe, sword or hammer blow. Even the strongest faith cannot banish such creatures easily. Worse still, the icy touch of a Cairn Wraith drains the essence of mortal men. A Cairn Wraith is capable of reaching into the body of an adversary and closing its freezing claws around the victim's vital organs, sending painful chills right through a man's soul. Once they were great men, wizards of considerable power, Necromancers with legions of Undead at their command, but now they are just shadows held between life and death by their own bitterness.

Before the founding of the Colleges of Magic, men knew little about the magical arts. For thousands of years there were tribal wise men, gifted seers, healers, astrologers and hedge magicians who were viewed with suspicion, awe or fear. Through a quirk of nature or mindset, these lucky few were able to use the Winds of Magic with relative safety. For most, the only magic that could be harnessed was sorcery – the use of magic in its undivided form. These sorcerers dabbled with magical energies, scribbling their sporadic findings into stone tablets, recording their crude knowledge on ancient vellum and crumbling parchments. Many did

not realise the dangers of what they were doing, nor the harm their magic did to those around them. Slowly, the sorcery corrupted them. These sorcerers became steeped in Dark Magic, beginning to experiment with various methods of keeping themselves alive, and learned to extend the span of their lives by decades, even centuries. However, those who practise Dark Magic face many terrible dangers. Sometimes they succeed, and the individual retains his physical body and mental powers, but more often the result is far more horrible than death itself.

Most of these seekers of immortality managed only to preserve their spirits, not their bodies, leaving only an echo of their identity on the Winds of Dhar they manipulated. Decay took their mortal forms, rotting it away even as they sought desperately to sustain it. Continual use of Dark Magic drains the soul and withers the body, until only an insubstantial husk remains, deprived of its substance and driven by a mind twisted by its most hideous fears. With no corporeal form to speak of, these sorcerers became wandering spirits, clad only in their death shrouds. The only features visible beneath the cloak are their glowing red eyes glimmering with malign knowledge, though some throw back their hoods to reveal the ethereal likeness of an evilly grinning skull beneath. They carry ethereal scythes and are often confused with images of Morr – and they most certainly bring only death wherever they pass. They are dangerous because their chill touch drains life from living creatures, sucking out the warmth and spirit, driving their victims wild with terror.

As their grip on the world of mortals weakened, these vagrant souls were drawn to places of grief, where they lingered, feeding on the sorrow of mourners. Not truly alive but unable to die, they cling to their tragic existence, becoming chilling shadows caught between this world and the next as miserable spirits who hunger for the warmth and flesh of mortals. Bound in the mortal realm to tombs and barrows, swathed in robes of inky darkness, these spirits became Cairn Wraiths. To come so close to their goal yet be denied drives them instantly insane and fills them with an unimaginable hatred for the living, whose souls they take great pleasure in draining away.

"So tragic, to have gained immortality yet forever lost the pleasures of the flesh. Better by far to remain forever young and vital, able to interact with the living without them fleeing in terror. Your Wizards and Necromancers who want to live forever should come to me – I could help those who were worthy. That does not mean, of course, that I do not regard Wraiths as useful minions; I do, of course I do, but one cannot help but find them awfully dull company."

Constantin von Carstein, Vampire Lord



*"Passing cruel thisss world iss that you still
breathe and I musst rot. Crueller still am I, for I
will rectify matterss. Thisss iss your death. Say
prayerss if it pleasesss you; they will not save your
life, not protect your soul from the tormentss I
plan for it..."*

The so-called Marquis of Mullyn

So unnatural are Cairn Wraiths that their very presence fills the air with horror. Even the hardened soldiery of the Empire shiver at the mention of a Cairn Wraith sighting; most folks that have actually set eyes upon them become crazed with fear long before they are killed. Though each Wraith is possessed of a glimmering will, there are ancient rituals known to the eldest Vampires that can call forth these unquiet spirits and bind them into an army. Only when the ritual is intoned backwards, syllable by syllable, are the Cairn Wraiths released back to the place of their death. They serve their masters grudgingly, hating all life but fearing final death more.



Vampire Counts purposefully bind Cairn Wraiths to their service, using them as shock troops against the living. Accompanied by units of deathless warriors, these sinister creatures glide across the battlefield, tattered robes rippling in etheric winds as arrows, bullets and bolts pass harmlessly through them. Unhindered by cannonball or flame, the Wraiths close in on their prey, seeking out and cutting down the enemy without so much as a whisper.

Because they are impervious to physical weaponry, only the raw energies of magic or a well-placed blow from an enchanted weapon can slay a Cairn Wraith. The crippling fear that arises from having a nigh-unkillable spectre scythe down any too slow to escape causes even brave men to quit the field. Those who do resist the urge to flee find their return blows passing through the Wraith's incorporeal form. It is well that such creatures are so rare, for these silent assassins are quite capable of slaughtering their way through an entire garrison over the course of a single moonless night.

*"In that dread desert, beneath the moons' pale gaze,
the dead men walk. They haunt the dunes in that
breathless, windless night. They brandish their
weapons in mocking challenge to all life, and
sometimes in ghastly dry voices, like the rustling of
sore leaves, they whisper the one word they
remember from life, the name of their ancient, dark
master. They whisper the name Nagash."*

*From The Book of the Dead by Aba'l ben Raschid
translated from the Arabic by Heinrich Kummel.*

Wraiths are often quite intelligent, and will sometimes use their ethereality to ambush enemies. Often, though, they prefer to simply attack; revelling in their sheer power and in the terror they cause, swinging their scythes with wild abandon, half-believing themselves to be truly the incarnations of Death which they so resemble. Though possessed of their own will, there are rituals that a Vampire uses to call forth these unquiet spirits and bind them to his army. Filled with rage, the spirits fall upon the enemy. Only when released can they return to their dismal abodes.

Mightiest of the Wraiths are the Dark Lords of Nagash, those five fell beings who in ancient times were the foremost of his captains and apprentices and the most feared hunters of his enemies. They survived his fall and still walk the world bringing despair to the living.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Cairn Wraith	6	3	0	3	3	2	2	3	5

TROOP TYPE: Infantry (Character).

SPECIAL RULES: Ethereal, Terror, Undead.

Chill Grasp: A Wraith can substitute all of its Attacks in close combat for a single Chill Grasp Attack. The Wraith makes a single Attack; if this Attack hits, then it will automatically wound with the Ignores Armour saves special rule.

*"Do you know my masster, mortal man? Hiss
name is Kadon, and all who dwell within the
Marshes are hisss subjectss and his pawns.
Should you chance to meet him, you too will join
our dark brotherhood and cassst away forever the
concernss of your earthly life and your coat of
warm flesh!"*

Wraith encountered in the Marshes of Madness



TOMB BANSHEE

The inhuman sounds that accompany the advance of the Undead armies often prove a weapon in their own right. The low moaning of the Zombies, the chittering of swarming bats, the cackling laughter of Necromancers raising the battlefield dead to fight once more – all these unsettle and disturb the foe. But it is the howl of the Tomb Banshee that is the most dreaded weapon of all, for it spears the souls of those who hear it like a lance through the heart.

Many sorceresses, enchantresses and witches have plagued the lands over the centuries. After the death of a murderer or other woman who has committed particularly evil crimes, the most bitter, restless spirits of these evil-hearted women became the unquiet horrors men call Tomb Banshees. Known as Grave Harridans in the southern Empire, Wailing Hags in Bretonnia and the Freezing Shriek by the Dwarfs, these shades cannot pass into the afterlife. Their shades linger in the material world, fearing to cross the void to face whatever punishment awaits them for their evil deeds, and so it is an easy matter for a Vampire to bind them to his service. Never will such a creature be called to account for her crimes in life, and she will forever roam this world, angry and resentful of the living.

Tomb Banshees constantly howl in remembrance of the forbidden pleasures of the life that was once theirs and in bitterness for the peace of the grave that they cannot



attain. Their grief-stricken wails can be lethal to mortals and strike terror into the hearts of all who hear them. Those who do not have a will of iron can die of sheer fright upon hearing the mournful screams of the Tomb Banshees. Blood trickles from their ears and fills up the whites of their eyes as the mind-wrenching shriek takes its supernatural toll. Fully armoured knights collapse lifeless from their saddles and whole ranks of infantry fall lifelessly as the Banshee does her evil work.



A Tomb Banshee's visage is sunken and skull-like, eternally frozen in a grimace of agony and everlasting pain. Their great mane of lank hair writhes like a nest of serpents or a black cloud. She is swathed in flimsy shrouds and grave-robes that swirl with a life of their own, or drift and cling to the wearer's slender frame as if she was carried forwards by underwater currents. Each Tomb Banshee is surrounded by flickering ghost lights; all that remains of the men she murdered whilst alive, which appear in the form of glowing skulls and faces just as agonised as the Banshee herself.. These glowing will o' the wisps are forced by some strange alchemy of the soul to crackle and swirl around their tormentor, disembodied ghostly heads etched with a permanent expression of fear. A single Banshee is a terrifying prospect, and even those warriors skilled enough to match blades with a Vampire have little defence against her unnatural screams. It is not unheard of for one of the most powerful Undead lords to bind several to their service.

*"We call 'er the White Lady of the Marsh. In life
she were the daughter of a wealthy nobleman, and
'er name were Aldreda Ohrsten. From 'er young
years, it were clear that 'er soul were touched by
darkness. She conspired to kill 'er own father and
all three brothers besides, all to get 'er filthy 'ands
on the family fortune. A life o' pleasures she lived,
and many men she took to 'er bed, though few
lived long thereafter. When rumor reached the
village that 'er manor had become a refuge for
worshippers of evil, we sealed the doors and burned
it to the ground. We heard 'er screams then as we
do now, though they've become a bit more deadly
since, I'll wager!"*

Norris Streckenbach, tavernkeeper

"Ahh, Banshees. Exquisite. There is nothing quite so elegant as the combination of death, beauty, agony, and absolute terror."

Constantin von Carstein, Vampire Lord

Banshees prefer to use stealth to attack an enemy, concealing themselves within a suitable object. A concealed Banshee will periodically peek out, leaning forward and passing her head out of the object to do so. When her chosen prey is close, she will leap forth and attack. The more cunning Banshees may attempt to pick their victims off one at a time, targeting stragglers or lone scouts first before attacking the rest of the party. Most, however, are too driven by fury and hatred to bother with any more subterfuge than hiding before an attack.



At the Siege of Ironstone Fortress, the canny Vampire Lord Vykters von Kreiger found that his infantry were being pounded to dust by artillery fire faster than he could raise them up. Even his elite troops could not breach the heavily barred stone gate at the front of the castle. Sending in the spirits of the three witch-women that had led him down the path of necromancy in the first place, von Kreiger pushed once more towards the gates. The stout ironstone doors of the fortress were proof against physical foes but they could not keep out the deadly shrieks of the Tomb Banshees.

With the three Banshees howling through arrow slits and murder holes, the gate's defenders turned white and died of shock to a man. It was a simple matter for von Kreiger to raise the dead guards with a necromantic spell, forcing them to unbar the gates to the castle – their first act in an eternity of servitude. Tales such as these resound throughout the lands of men, and it is a foolish warrior indeed who does not shudder at the sound of those ghostly howls in the night air.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Tomb Banshee	6	3	0	3	3	2	3	1	5

TROOP TYPE: Infantry.

SPECIAL RULES: Ethereal, Terror, Undead.

Ghostly Howl: A Ghostly Howl is a special attack that can be used against a single enemy unit in the Shooting phase, even if the Tomb Banshee has marched, charged or is engaged in close combat. This attack has a range of 8" and needs line of sight to its target. If the Tomb Banshee is engaged in combat, her Ghostly Howl can only target an enemy unit in base contact.

To resolve a Ghostly Howl, roll 2D6+2. For each point by which the result exceeds the target unit's Leadership, the target unit suffers 1 Wound with no armour saves allowed. Wounds from a Ghostly Howl are magical attacks and are distributed as if from shooting.

"Oh, there's one of them lives in our woods. She don't harm nobody, unless it's your time to die of course. She appeared to that mad old Marienburger, Frans, who used to live in the village. Saw her washing bloody clothes at the ford he did. She took one look at him and opened her mouth to wail, that's the way he told it. Then she carried on washing. He came back to the village and all his hair had turned white, petrified with shock he was. He said he knew it had been an omen – that once she'd laid her eye on him and given him that wail, he knew his time was up. He took to his bed that same day and never got up again. Yes, he died in that same bed, five years later. I said he started out a little mad – eccentric, you might say, if he'd been slightly richer – well, once he'd seen her, he was as mad as can be. There was no going back for him from that moment on. He knew he was going to die, and he just lay in bed the rest of his life waiting for the end."

Fritz Bodger, Forester

MOURNGULS

Mournguls are feared and whispered of above all other dangers that haunt the bleak and empty places of the Old World. They are a thing neither dead nor alive, possess an insatiable hunger and are malice personified. From the cold wastes of Norsca to the lofty heights of the Grey Mountains dreadful tales are told around huddled fires of those lost in the white killing cold of the mountain winter, driven mad by famine and pain, insane enough to devour their own companion and former friends for meat, and the warmth of their fast-flowing blood. But for these damned souls there is no relent and no salvation, and even the horrors in which these monsters indulge cannot save them. When death overtakes some of them, such is their desperation and malice that it lingers on after death, and the most destructive and insidious winds of magic are drawn to coil around their spirits to taint and saturate them. Then their cadavers are warped and twisted into inhuman proportions, and they become something neither ghost nor revenant – a terrifying mockery of life, a monstrous, razor-thin shadow of cold, dead flesh and frostbite-cracked bone, with a gaping maw of needle-teeth and a cavernous stomach that hangs open like a dreadful wound. A Mourngul is a thing of shadows and icy fogs. Despite its size it can slip unseen through the darkness and even in broad daylight seems to waver like an evil mirage until it fastens its long sharp claws around its victim's neck.

Mournguls are condemned to an eternity of empty hunger and terrible isolation, doomed to haunt the high, chill barrens, preying on whatever and whomever they happen across, be they travellers, hunters, or outcasts, where they enter the legends of Man, Orc and Beastman alike, and in every one are a horror to be fled from and avoided. It is only in the harshest of winters when the snows crash down the mountains and crushing cold grips the lowlands that the Mournguls can descend to feast upon the towns and villages, an all but unstoppable terror, but no matter how many they rend and devour, they can never know relief from the madness of the hunger within them, and only fire is any defence against their kind.



Such is the Mournguls' dark repute that both the noble knights of civilised lands and mighty Champions of Chaos alike seek them out to slay for glory, but few succeed, and many Necromancers who have sought to enslave them have endured their half-lives at the Mourngul's grasping claws. Only when the winds of magic surge and arcane storms scream across the world can powerful binding scrolls be fashioned to contain and control these nightmare creatures, and even then total control of them is never assured.

Mourngul	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Mourngul	6	5	0	5	5	4	2	4	5

TROOP TYPE: Monster.

SPECIAL RULES: **Immunity (Ice Attacks), Killing Blow, Undead.**

Haunter of the Dark: *A Mourngul is a thing of shadows and icy fogs. Despite its size it can slip unseen through the darkness and even in broad daylight seems to waver like an evil mirage until it fastens long claws around its victim's neck.*

Mourngul's have a Ward save (4+) against non-magical attacks.

Carnophage: For every unsaved Wound the Mourngul inflicts in close combat, it regains one Wound it has previously lost during the battle.

Killing Cold: All models in base contact with a Mourngul are subject to the Always Strikes Last special rule.

"...It is only by the Grace of Sigmar that I live, but I am so very cold and so very hungry. After the attacks by the Chaos-filth in the pass above Scalvad I became separated from the war party and have seen no living soul since. I can remember little of the battle in truth but a savage blur of flashing axe-blade, steaming blood and snow, snow as white as death... Day and night have become a grey twilight to me, and I could not say how long ago that was or how far I have staggered, half-blind, and hungry, and I write these few lines in my journal in a desperate attempt to keep my sanity... I cannot account for my continued survival, but my wounds have at least stopped bleeding, and save for the cut in my stomach which is every hour more worrisome, their pain had faded to a dim echo of what it was. If only I could be warm again, if only I could have something to eat. It is all I think of between dark waking dreams I do not dare to recall. It is strange, passing strange, for I cannot remember the enemy striking me there, the emptiness, imaging things so... hungry... cannot think... a fire in the valley... so hungry..."

Parchment scrap found in the ruins of a destroyed encampment in the Vergo Crags. No bodies were found.

BLACK COACH

In ramshackle and garlic-hung taverns, grim tales are told of the Black Coaches that haunt the mountain passes. These morbid carriages are omens of disaster and death. They are horrific, unholy things, neither wholly real nor immaterial. A Black Coach is a herald of famine, war and murder, the sight of which can drive a sane man to suicide and cause families to fall upon themselves in senseless killing. Many an Imperial road warden or Bretonnian Knight has attempted to halt one of these ghastly apparitions and died for his trouble.

Legend has it that the driver of a Black Coach is a terrifying Wraith of some kind, and that grisly Nightmares pull it to war. The legends say that even if the creatures are destroyed, the Coach can continue to move on its own pushed by supernatural powers. On the battlefield, a Black Coach grows ever more powerful, feeding on magics wielded by mortal and immortal sorcerers alike. A Black Coach feeds on the souls of mortals, growing more powerful on the spirits of those slain nearby. Driven on by the undying will of the Vampire couched within it, the Black Coach crushes or scythes down the ranks of the enemy without slowing. Its mere presence can drain the blood from a man and the more it slays, the more terrifying its power becomes.

When a Vampire is 'slain', its body may crumble to dust, immolate into a pile of ashes, or otherwise disintegrate. For the most powerful Vampires, this does not necessarily signal their demise, for their wicked spirits can live on even in these frugal remains. Many of the greatest lords of Undeath have returned after

I lie in my casket, dreaming. Oh what dreams! When I was born I cannot remember. It was so long, long ago now. When I was born again to my immortality, I can bring it back to my mind, but it is dim. It was in the castle. The same castle that rises above me now. My castle. I can feel the weight of the stone and the dankness. The cool, moist dampness that is so good for my complexion. Has it not preserved me for so many centuries here in my tomb? In my casket of lead.

For long years have I waited. Why do I awake now? What is it that has stirred me. I returned my crypt for the last time long ago. There was strife in the castle then. Everybody perished. There was fire. I do not like fire! So I descended into the cool of my tomb.

Now I have awoken. What sounds can I perceive echoing through these ancient halls? Is it laughter and music? The castle is occupied again! There are living, breathing, heaving, red-blooded beings here again. Knights! I always did love knights. Such strength, such good red blood, nurtured on the venison and the good red wine of our land. Ah, the blood of the brave...

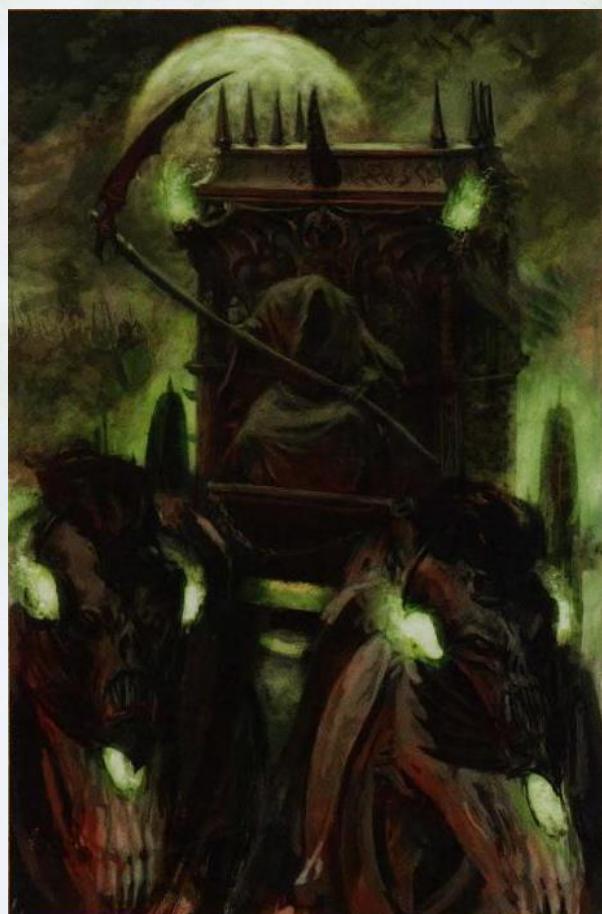
Yes, I shall arise this night. I shall be arrayed in all my beauty. I shall take for myself a new lover. I tire of the old one, he is nothing but skin and bone!

their bodies have been destroyed, for who can say which is the master, death or the Vampire?

If a Vampire's followers can gather his physical remnants and place them within his coffin, the unholy remains will be safe. This gives the Vampire's necromantic servants the time they need to perform certain rituals, enchanting a carriage to bear the remains of their lord while his mortal form slowly feeds upon the energies of death.

By creating a Black Coach, the Vampire's retainers can transport their master's rejuvenating form to places of slaughter such as battlefields and plague-stricken towns to strengthen the regenerating spirit of the Vampire. This allows the Vampire to revivify himself, drinking in the coalescing energies that swirl around the crucible of war. Each Black Coach is a magnet for such baleful forces; as it drives onward, it soaks in the energies of the battlefield, shimmering with sorcerous power until it is all but unstoppable. The creaking cart of death carries its loathsome cargo of doom into the centre of a battle, bolstering the power of the Undead and filling the hearts of their enemies with despair.

Few symbols of death are as horrifying for mortals, or as potent an aid to the Undead. It is said that the blood of ten thousand' mortals can stir the Vampire Lord from his slumber, ready to walk the land of the living once more.



"You have seen the Black Coach? You are lucky then. Some say the coach is driven by daemons. I have heard it pass by here on Geheimnisnacht every year. Some say it carries wee children from Altdorf who are sacrificed at the Darkstone Ring."

Reikwald Innkeeper,
during the Night of Geheimnisnacht Eve

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Black Coach	-	-	-	5	5	4	-	-	-
Cairn Wraith	-	3	0	3	-	-	2	3	5
Nightmare	8	3	0	4	-	-	2	1	-

TROOP TYPE: Chariot (Armour save 3+).

SPECIAL RULES: Chill Grasp, Terror, Undead, Ward Save (4+).

Evocation of Death: At the beginning of the owning player's Magic phase, the Black Coach feeds on magical energy. Immediately after the total number of power dice for that phase has been determined, roll all the power dice in the pool. If any of these dice roll a 6, a portion of the power it represents is siphoned into the Black Coach. Power dice that are 'siphoned' by the Black Coach in this fashion can be used in the Magic phase as normal, though keep a note of how many are siphoned in this way. If you have more than one Black Coach in your army, randomly determine which Black Coach gains each siphoned dice. Each dice increases that Black Coach's abilities for the rest of the game, as detailed on the chart below. All of the increases listed are cumulative.

D6 Effect

- 1 *The Black Coach manifest gleaming scythes.*
The Black Coach adds +1 to the number of Impact Hits it inflicts when it charges.
- 2 *The Cairn Wraith and the steeds pulling the Black Coach are filled with unholy vigour.*
The Cairn Wraith and Nightmares have +1 Strength.
- 3 *Blades and fangs glow with green witch-fire.*
The Black Coach's Impact Hits, Skeletal Steeds and Cairn Wraith's Attacks gain the Killing Blow and Flaming Attacks special rules.
- 4 *A pulsing nimbus of darkness envelops the Black Coach.*
The Black Coach gains the Magic Resistance (2) and Strider special rules.
- 5 *The Black Coach flickers between the world of the living and the realm of the dead.*
The Black Coach has the Ethereal special rule.
- 6 *Howling winds swirls around the Black Coach, lifting it into the air.*
The Black Coach has the Fly special rule.



Geheimnisnacht and Hexennacht

There are two nights every year considered evil above all others, when the dark spirits of the world come forth and the creatures of Chaos howl in the darkness. The first night is Hexensnacht, the Witching Night, which marks the new year. The better known, and more feared night, is Geheimnisnacht, the Night of Mysteries, as the harvest season draws to a close and fingers of frost grasp the land. These are the only two nights when both moons, Morrslieb and Mannslieb, are completely full. Where Mannslieb is bright and consistent, Morrslieb is an unpredictable and immense chunk of warpstone, a massive satellite of raw magic. Whenever Morrslieb nears the surface of the world, the Winds of Magic blow with the force of a gale and Dark Magic gathers in invisible tides and pools. It is this Dark Magic that stirs the dead in their graves, mutates unborn animals and drives livestock to devour each other. The combined forces of both moons pulling at the world at the same time make these nights extremely important to cultists, Necromancers, Vampires and other fell sorcerers, for at such times their powers are at their height. Even the least talented wizard finds raw power crackling around him – strange magical beasts are summoned by the unwise, torpid monstrosities are roused from their slumbers and the dead walk the lands in unprecedented number. Sacrifices are made to the dark gods, and dire rituals bring forth whole armies from their graves. Ancient artefacts are bound into reliquaries and unholy weapons are forged. The people of the Old World bar their doors and windows, mutter prayers, stoke their fires high, and pray that they will survive to see the dawn. Every regiment from every province is on active duty, ready to repel the endless hordes of shambling dead that roam the lands in search of warm flesh to devour. Eventually Morrslieb sinks below the horizon once more, but in its wake it leaves villages razed to the ground, battlefields strewn with corpses and the cloying stench of fear.

MORTIS ENGINE

Many Necromancers and liche-lords have risen to kingship over the Undead, becoming so saturated with evil power that their physical forms radiate magic. Some Vampires actively seek out the citadels of those lords who have gone before, hoping to take possession of their remains and to use them against the living.

No mere casket or hearse could be fit to bear the remains of one of these masters of the night. Instead, they are enshrined within a Mortis Engine, a cage of fused bone, surrounded by trappings of grandeur and borne to war by a host of spirits bound to the infernal device. Though all that remains of their evil sovereign may be a wizened skull or a gilded finger bone, these spirits are forced to protect the unhallowed remains for the rest of eternity. The evil soul that clings to the unholy relic attracts the attentions of wailing Tomb Banshees, who shriek and howl in the air above the grotesque hearse. The Mortis Engines are watched over by deathless attendants known as Corpsemasters, trusted servants of the Vampire Counts who have proven immune to the dire energies that emanate from the relics within.

When the Corpsemaster removes the locks and opens the lead-lined reliquary, the deadly artefact inside can be held aloft, stealing life energy from the enemy and energising nearby Undead. The longer a battle rages, the more energies the relic absorbs, and the more powerful it becomes. Mortis Engines can usually be

found where the fighting is thickest, drifting ominously near to the battle line where their power is needed most. However, so redolent with Dark Magic are these artefacts that opening the reliquary is not without risk - its power can sometimes tear apart the engine itself! Indeed, if such a dread relic is ever shattered upon the field of battle, the subsequent release of pure evil has been known to smite everything in the vicinity, living or Undead, in a wave of destructive Dark Magic.

Some reliquaries also carry blasphemous tomes to battle, or scrolls of parchment rumoured to have been penned by Nagash himself. Oftentimes the winds of magic become nigh uncontrollable when such a fell tome is near. Heavy with evil magics, painstakingly illuminated with such care that their creator's souls have passed into the leaves of human skin that form its pages, these books can be a boon to the twisted practitioners of necromancy, but also the bane of reckless and unwary spellcasters.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Mortis Engine	-	-	-	5	5	5	-	-	-
Corpsemaster	-	3	0	3	-	-	2	1	5
Banshee Swarm	-	3	0	3	-	-	3	3	-
Spirit Horde	8	3	0	3	-	-	1	*	-

TROOP TYPE: Chariot (Armour save 5+).

SPECIAL RULES: **Ghostly Howl, Large Target,**
***Random Attacks (2D6), Regeneration (4+),**
Spectral Steeds, Terror, Undead.

The Reliquary: At the start of each of your turns, roll 2D6 and add the current turn number. This is range of the reliquary's dark aura this turn in inches. All enemy units within range of the dark aura immediately take D6 hits, with a Strength equal to the current turn number, distributed as from shooting. Also, place a marker next to all friendly Undead units that were within range of the dark aura at the start of the turn. These units improve their Regeneration saves by one point until the start of their next turn, to a maximum of 4+. If they have no Regeneration save, they are treated as having the Regeneration (6+) special rule instead. Finally, if the 2D6 result was a double, then the fell energies prove too powerful; in addition to the usual effects, the Mortis Engine takes 1 Wound with no saves of any kind allowed. When the Mortis Engine suffers its last unsaved Wound, every unit within 12 plus the turn number in inches, friend or foe, must take 2D6 hits with a Strength equal to the current turn number. These hits are distributed as shooting.

UPGRADES:

Blasphemous Tome: All Wizards (friend or foe) within 12" of one or more models with a Blasphemous Tome gain +2 to their casting result when casting spells from the Lore of Necromancy. If any Wizard miscasts within 12" of one or more models with a Blasphemous Tome upgrade, they must roll twice on the Miscast table. The miscasting player's opponent chooses which result applies.

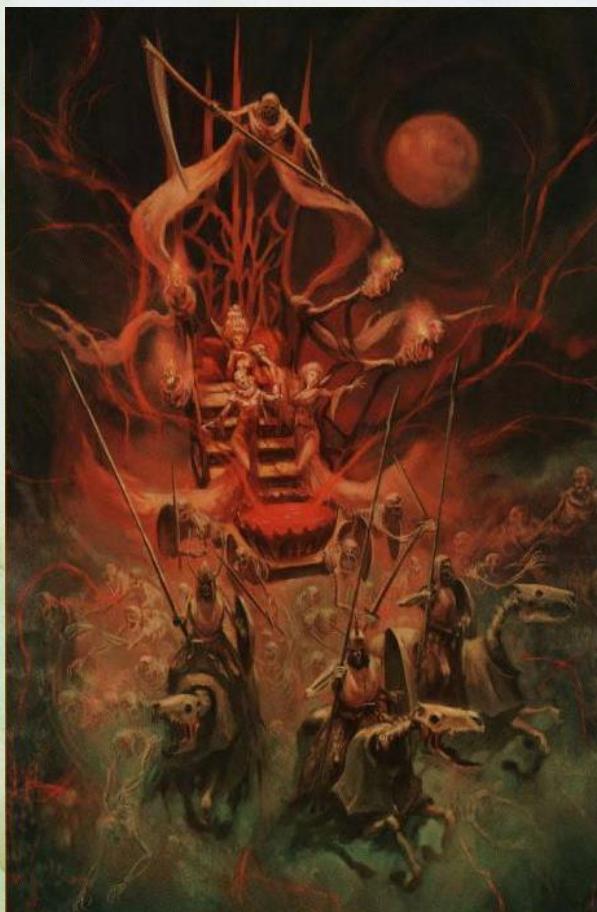


COVEN THRONE

Compensating for a cursed existence with grandeur and luxury is a common theme amongst the Vampire elite. A true lord or lady of undeath refuses to churn through the mud of a battlefield like a common peasant or be content with the dubious dignity of sitting astride a grave-beast. Instead, the monarchs of the night are often borne to war on gilded palanquins known as Coven Thrones. These bone-frame constructs are held aloft by the departed spirits of those who have fallen in love with their owners and got nothing in return but a violent death. Mortal men shiver in awestruck disbelief at the exotic beauty of the handmaidens lounging upon these Coven Thrones - hypnotised by a beguiling glance, a kiss upon the air, or a subtle finger beckoning them into eternal servitude.

The legend of the Vampires originates in the desert realm of Lahmia, and it is the Lahmians who are famed above all for their use of Coven Thrones. Those who hail from that land consider themselves the first amongst the aristocracy of the night, for their darkling city was the first ever to bear the curse of vampirism. All Lahmians descend from Neferata, the Queen of Mysteries, who is said to despise men with a passion.

Consequently, very few Lahmians are male. Instead, the most enchantingly beautiful maidens are chosen from amongst the noble families of Bretonnia and the Empire and granted the Blood Kiss. They then gain control of the humans around them with cunning and intrigue, for Lahmians take an active interest in human affairs - no one knows how many eccentric noblewomen, widows and high-born ladies are, in truth, members of the Undead.



The Lahmians are hedonistic, self-indulgent creatures that take great pains to present themselves in splendour and majesty at all times. Thus the Coven Thrones that carry the Lahmian sisterhood are bedecked with rare artefacts and strewn with silk-embroidered cushions and other finery. Over the centuries, the Lahmians have become skilled in the arts of foretelling and prescience in order to stay one step ahead of the agents who pursue them. The Coven Thrones bear great enchanted bowls full of fresh virgin's blood, within which the Vampire's handmaidens can scry the future. What the Lahmians' final purpose is, however, none can fathom.

Despite their luxury, these ostentatious palanquins are potent weapons upon the battlefield. The Vampires themselves move so swiftly as to be virtually invisible to the eye, but their true strength lies in their unity. A coven of Vampires fighting as one is as formidable a prospect as any Dragon or Daemon Lord.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Coven Throne	-	-	-	5	5	5	-	-	-
Pallid Handmaiden	-	5	3	5	-	-	6	2	7
Spirit Horde	8	3	0	3	-	-	1	*	-

TROOP TYPE: Chariot (Armour save 5+).

SPECIAL RULES: Large Target, *Random Attacks (2D6), Spectral Steeds, Undead, Ward Save (4+).

Scrying Pool: Bound Spell, Power Level 3. If cast successfully, the Coven Throne and all of its constituent parts, including its crew and any character using it as a mount, re-rolls failed To Hit or To Wound rolls (owning player's choice) for the remainder of the turn.

Battle of Wills: Immediately before the first model in an enemy unit rolls To Hit against the Coven Throne or a character upon it (either in close combat or shooting), the opponent must roll a D6 and add it to his unit's Leadership (attacks that do not roll To Hit are exempt from this effect). Next, roll a D6 and add it to the Coven Throne's Leadership. To find the result of the Battle of Wills, subtract the enemy's total from the Coven Throne's total, and apply the result to the table below – the results last until the end of the turn.

Result	Effect
0 or less	Back off, devils! : No effect.
1-2	Must... resist... : The enemy is at -1 Weapon Skill and -1 Ballistic Skill.
3-5	Bewitched : The enemy must re-roll successful To Hit rolls.
6+	Completely enthralled : The enemy turn upon themselves. Every model in the attacking unit makes a single close combat attack, resolved against its own unit. War machines take a single Strength 3 hit for each remaining crewman against the crews' Toughness. Affected units may not otherwise shoot or attack this turn.

NECROFEX COLOSSUS

The baleful art of necromancy had born many a morbid creation into the world – from the animation of human carcasses into near-mindless zombies to nightmarish and insane creatures, part dead flesh and part automata, brought to unholy life to serve a Necromancer's final purposes. Of this latter unhallowed form one of the most singular and terrifying are the 'Necrofexus Incabula Macros', as they are named in the damned Red Book of Van Hel, and more widely in arcane lore as Necrofex Colossus.

These creations are the grater workings of the Necromancer's dark arts, far beyond the abilities of mere backwoods corpse-dancers and the subservient chatelaine wizards of the Vampire bloodlines. Instead only those Necromancers of singular power and (arguably insane) vision such as the greatest scion of the Necrarch and infamous necromantic masters as Sorn Ghoulskin and the legendary Van Hel himself are able to fashion them. These colossuses vary in size and composition, but always hold true to the same basic form – a monstrous humanoid shape, akin to a Giant, fashioned upon a frame of timber, iron or bone, onto which the 'flesh' and musculature of the dead has been bound and shaped, with scores of sometimes hundreds of corpses used in their creation. Their horrific bodies, cadaver-stitched and sealed with human fat, are left headless during the long hours of dark and terrible rites needed to prepare them, and when the times arrives to



breathe unholy life into their forms, into the wound-like necks of the headless monsters living humans are lashed and sewn with profane surgery.

Strong must be the soul of these living sacrifices, for only through a single life-force and mind acting as a focus for the necromantic magics of the magnitude needed to animate these abominations can they be controlled, and should the soul of the 'head' perish, the whole creation will be torn apart by the hateful undead that make up its fabric in a self-destructive frenzy. But if these dark and blasphemous rites prove successful the Necromancers will have created a truly terrifying monstrosity, a giant of unloving flesh that fear neither pain nor injury, a walking vortex of deathly energy around which the souls of the damned howl and against which no mortal can stand. With so much unholy power concentrated in their forms, Necrofex Colossuses are no mere mindless thralls, but possess deathly wills and dark appetites of their own, and ill often outlast their creator or even prove their undoing should their master's control slip even for a moment. No two Necrofex Colossuses are quite alike, and are instead the product of the insane ambition and morbid imagination of the Necromancer that has fashioned them.



In the history of the Old World, the creation of Necrofex Colossus has thankfully been rare, but in their terrible wake many dark stories have been spawned, from the terror of the 'Gallows Giant' of Bögenhafen to the 'Deathwalker' of Sorn Ghoulskin, who fashioned perhaps the largest Necrofex Colossus from the wreckage of the 'Iron Fetter', a great galleass hulk used as a floating prison, after it sank in a terrible storm he had summoned, and articulated it with the bodies of the drowned. Perhaps the widest-known examples of a Necrofex Colossus in recent times belonged to the vengeful Infanta Leanora Navre, now known to fable as 'Darkness' Daughter' who, after being outcast and hunted by the nobles of Estalia for her terrible crimes, dared to bind herself within a Necrofex Colossus and ravaged her erstwhile domains for more than a century like a daemon from the night.

*Awake O dead for there is no rest for ye beneath
the earth,
Let splintered bone burrow from grave pall,
Let cold fingers grip time-eaten blades,
And unseeing eyes look upon the fields of
slaughter
For your time has come once more,
And the dead shall walk upon the earth.*

from the spell of doom

Necrofex Colossus	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
	6	3	0	6	6	6	2	*	5

TROOP TYPE: Monster.

SPECIAL RULES: Magical Attacks, Regeneration (4+), Undead.

Vortex of Death: A Necrofex Colossus is an abomination against the natural order of the world and a loadstone of dark forces which sustain it and renew the countless cadavers that make up its body with their unholy power.

Any Wizard attempting to cast spells from the Lore of Death or Lore of Necromancy within 12" of the Necrofex Colossus gain +1 to their Casting roll.



Corpse Giant Special Attacks: A creature of nightmarish power and massive stature, a Necrofex Colossus can make one of a number of attacks in close combat. When it is the Corpse Giant's turn to strike in close combat, roll a D6 and consult the table below to determine what kind of attack it will make:

D6 Result

- 1-2 Batter and Slash:** The Necrofex flails and smashes at its enemies with its massive limbs. The Corpse Giant fights using the Random Attacks (D6+1) special rule.
- 3-4 Impale:** The Necrofex Colossus impales a single foe with its misshapen claw and tries to strip their soul from their body. Select a single model in base contact – that model must pass an Initiative test or suffer a Strength 7 Hit with the Multiple Wounds (D6) special rule.
- 5-6 Screams of the Damned:** The Corpse Giant may make a Death Shriek into close combat.

"And they will rise from their graves to march upon the world of the living. Each and every mortal that falls will swell their numbers until only a world of darkness remains. Only then will the world know of the eternal order that lies within the peace of Undeath."

Taken from *The Grimoire Necronomicon, chapter XII, The book of W'soran*

"Only the humans have the wit to see it. We Druchi are too pallid in our blood, touched too greatly with the maladies of spite and melancholia, our palettes too faded.

As for the rest – they are too brutal, too unsubtle, or simply too arrogant to false to admit the truth. Only those delightfully insane, short-lived creatures called Man – born astride a grave compared to us, and yet always so desperately hungry to go on, to exist, whatever the price. The truth is bred in their bones. Only they could work such depraved winders of tortured corpse and bitter desire, only they truly see the future.

One day, soon or late, despite all our sorceries and our hubris, only one king shall reign and I name him Death."

Sha'dra the Nuclean, Blood Seer of Karonn Kar

UPGRADES:

Scythes and Barbs: The limbs of the Necrofex Colossus have been shot through with broken sword blades, spear points, meat hook and scythes to cut and snag its enemies with and rip open their bodies.

The Necrofex Colossus' number of Random Attacks and Stomp hits may be re-rolled.

Corpse Killers: The dead reach out from the body of the Necrofex Colossus with grasping hands and broken teeth to fasten themselves on any living creature they can and drag them into the seething mass of the Necrofex Colossus's body.

All enemy units in base contact with the Necrofex Colossus suffers D6 Strength 2 hits. This attack is resolved at Initiative 1.

Vampire Blood: The flesh and blood of Ghouls and Vampires have long been used in a Necrofex's creation, suffusing it with even greater life, but forcing it to suffer from a black hunger it cannot satiate.

The Necrofex Colossus gain the Regeneration (3+) special rule, but is also subject to the Berserk Rage part of Frenzy.

Dark Soul: On rare occasions a Necromancer or Vampire is themselves bound within the Necrofex Colossus, creating a monster of truly frightening power.

The Necrofex Colossus becomes a Level 1 Wizard who uses spells from the Lore of Death or Lore of the Vampires. However, should the Necrofex Colossus suffer a miscast, in addition to any other effect, the Necrofex Colossus permanently has its Toughness value reduced by 1, as the backlash of the miscast damages the very fabric that holds the horror together.

TERRORGHEISTS

In the hidden reaches of Sylvania, titanic bats the size of Dragons soar out from their caves to hunt horses, caravans and pegasi under the sickly skies. It is the ambush tactic of the creatures that give them their truly terrifying reputation. A Terrorgheist's vision is poor, so the swooping monstrosity ensures that its prey is rendered motionless by emitting a piercing shriek so loud and unexpected it can stun even a Bretonnian warhorse into paralysis. At that precise moment the Terrorgheist will dive down, gather up rider and mount in its talons, and return to its lair to glut itself on warm blood.

The lairs of the largest Terrorgheists are strewn with enough corpses to make a Necromancer rub his clammy hands in glee. Few have the nerve to stray inside, though, just in case the Terrorgheist returns from its hunt to find a meal has sought it out, rather than the other way round. Being drained of blood by a Terrorgheist's stinking snout is no one's idea of a good death.

It is the mortal remains of these troglodytic beasts that the Ghoul Kings of the caverns bind to their service. The binding process comes easily to these reclusive Vampires, for Strigoi Ghoul Kings and Terrorgheists have much in common. As Dark Magic swirls around the monstrous cave-creature, a bond of blood is formed between master and beast. Much like any other creature that drinks from a Ghoul King's veins, Terrorgheists have necromantic power running in their blood that can heal even the most severe of wounds.

In death, a Terrorgheist becomes a nightmare made real. Guided by its master's will, the monstrosity creaks



through the clouds above the battlefield on blotch-skinned pinions, its rotten flesh and withered organs open to the night air. Clotted hanks of fur cling in patches to its skeletal neck, and its skull swings from side to side as it tracks its prey on the plains below.

It is the deathly shriek of an unliving Terrorgheist that is perhaps its most fearsome aspect. As the magics of undeath are worked upon the beast, its cry is transformed from a simple but shockingly loud noise into a barrage of eldritch power. Some say the Terrorgheist's shriek is nothing less than the screams of the damned, channelled directly from the Realm of Chaos. It matters little to the Terrorgheist's prey, for so devastating is its sonic attack that it can cause a man to die of fright in an instant. By venting this unholy noise as it dives down upon its prey, a Terrorgheist can cripple an enemy regiment moments before it slams into the reeling survivors, slaughtering the rest with tooth and claw.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Terrorgheist	6	3	0	5	6	6	3	4	4

TROOP TYPE: Monster.

SPECIAL RULES: Fly, Regeneration (6+), Undead.

Death Shriek: A Death Shriek is a special attack that can be used against a single unit in the Shooting phase, even if the Terrorgheist has marched, charged, or is engaged in close combat. This attack has a range of 8" and needs line of sight to its target. If the Terrorgheist is engaged in combat, its Death Shriek may target a unit in base contact.

To resolve a Death Shriek, roll 2D6 and add the number of Wounds the Terrorgheist has left. For each point by which the result exceeds the target unit's Leadership, the target unit suffers 1 Wound with no armour saves allowed. A Death Shriek is a magical attack and Wounds suffered from it are distributed as from shooting.

UPGRADES:

Infested: Legend has it that Terrorgheists explode, into a multitude of bats that feast on those nearby, when slain.

When a Terrorgheist with this upgrade is removed as a casualty, all units that were in base contact (friend or foe) take 3D6 Strength 2 hits.

Rancid Maw: The Terrorgheist's fangs are encrusted with the remains of prey the monster can no longer digest.

Attacks made by a Terrorgheist with this upgrade have the Poisoned Attacks special rule. Note that this does not include the Terrorgheist's Stomp rule.

ZOMBIE DRAGON

In death, no creature is beyond the powers of the Vampire. From the smallest bat to the mightiest Manticore, every man, monster or beast can be pulled from death's embrace and bound to fight once more for a new master. The elder race of Dragons is no exception. Those Vampires gifted in the art of necromancy bind the corpses of the great drakes to their will, resurrecting them as Zombie Dragons. These once majestic creatures stagger upright once more with a great despairing roar before stooping to allow their new master to ride atop their powerful shoulders. Wreathed in a fog of rot and surrounded by swarms of blood-hungry flies, a Zombie Dragon can turn the tide of a battle purely by dint of its horrific presence.

North of the Land of the Dead, east of the Worlds Edge Mountains, lies the Plain of Bones. The northern and eastern edges of this awful place about the empire of the Chaos Dwarfs where the dread tower of Gorgoth looks out over the Desolation of Azgorh. The southern boundary lies on beaches of poisoned sand along the shores of the Sea of Dread. This is a desert land, despoiled by windblown pollutants carried from the furnaces and factories of the Chaos Dwarf empire and ravaged by centuries of abuse by wandering tribes of Orcs and Goblins.

The Plain of Bones is a desert of multi-coloured refractive sand from which protrude huge rib cages many times larger than a man. This is the place where Dragons once came to die, to rest their bones amongst those of their ancestors as they had done for millions of years, before any other sentient beings walked the world. Here lie the bones of the great ancestral Dragons: rib-cages as large as hills mingle with skulls the size of castle towers and leg-bones larger than

The Nightguard

The Madman of Mousillion, Pitre Fonce, was a reclusive noble of that Bretonnian city. He secretly studied the dark arts of Necromancy. In his growing madness, the twisted Necromancer began to use his fell powers to terrorise that region. He raised an army of the Restless Dead to wreak his foul will upon those that dared disagree with him. The Black Duke – a fearsome Wight King raised from the Grimnoire Barrows, led the Necromancer's assault force. The Undead troops themselves were raised from the burial chambers of his own fortress, but in his lust for power and revenge, the Necromancer cared not that he raised the remains of his ancestors to commit his foul acts. Under cover of darkness the Undead would march over cobblestoned streets to reach their destination. Peasants pulled shutters tight while the dead walked by – a phenomenon they called the coming of the Nightguard. Guided to their target by the Necromancer's evil will, the Undead armies would attack only their named targets, or any who dared get in their way. They stormed the tower of the Marquis Rocher and killed its lord, putting his head upon a spike of his own iron gates. So fell a dozen of the local nobility. Although many suspected the long-lived and eccentric Pitre, none were so bold as to openly accuse him – for they feared they would be the next to hear the march of the Nightguard...

mighty oak trees. These bones date from the great days of the draconic race. Today's dragons are a lesser breed, still incomparably mightier than other races, but mere pygmies compared to their ancestors.

Since the time before the first great Chaos incursion, dragons flew to this parched land when they knew their time of dying was upon them. At the end of their last flight they would lie where they fell. No one knows what instinct drew them, but over the long millennia literally tens of thousands came here in their last hours. This continued until the time of the first great Chaos incursion when dark power seeped out of the north and malignant evil entered the corpses of the dead dragons.

Soon the deceased monsters stirred once more, their eyes bright with unnatural ghostlights, their bones peeking through their parchment skins. These fell abominations still prowl the Plain of Bones, evil and near mindless, driven by terrible, unnatural hungers. Dragons are proud creatures, and those that survived the coming of Chaos do not willingly submit themselves to such a fate. They no longer come here to die, though none save the Dragon-riding nobles of Ulthuan know where they now go to end their days. When they are still among the living, Dragons swallow vast amounts of gold and gems to aid their digestion. These line their stomach, the grinding action helping to break down the vast meals that Dragons devour. When they die, their glittering carcasses contain a king's ransom for those brave enough to claim it. There are always those who become bold when treasure is involved, but in a land devoid of drinkable water and home to poisonous and mutated monsters, death comes to these treasure seekers easily. Some die after drinking from toxic wells, while others fall prey to the great Zombie Dragons that prowl that godless realm. The glistening bones of treasure-seekers lie strewn across the sands of the world's most inhospitable place.



I thought there were few pleasures left in the world that I had not already experienced, certainly none that were worth expending any effort towards. I must confess, though, to the great thrill I felt when first I bound Agorak the Silent to my will. As delicious as it was, it paled in comparison to the joy I felt when I finally had the opportunity to unleash him on my enemies. Nothing quite like a Dragon to put fear in the hearts of men. So much the better if he's Undead.

Constantin von Carstein, Vampire Lord

These perils mean little to the Undead, however, so it is to the Plain of Bones that practitioners of the necromantic arts travel to claim a Zombie Dragon as their servant. Many fail and their bones join those of the millions of others that litter the plains, but the few that succeed gain a monstrous Undead ally who will fight tirelessly at their side. Animated by Dark Magic, a Zombie Dragon is borne aloft by great tattered wings, its body covered with thick, withered hide. Though in life it once breathed fire capable of melting steel, a Zombie Dragon can only belch forth a cloud of pestilent gas which strips flesh from bones and corrodes armour. A Zombie Dragon's claws and sword-like teeth remain as sharp and deadly as they ever were, and it is capable of ripping an armoured knight in half and swallowing his warhorse in one motion. When such a monster is used as a steed by a powerful

Vampire Lord, even the greatest heroes and sturdiest warriors quail before the raw might of undeath, for the combined might of hero and mount is enough to break the back of any army.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Zombie Dragon	6	4	0	6	6	6	2	5	4

TROOP TYPE: Monster.

SPECIAL RULES: Fly, Natural Armour (5+), Undead.

Pestilential Breath: Zombie Dragons can expel deadly pestilential black vapour from their jaws. Flesh touched by this vapour blackens and shrivels, causing an agonising death.

The Zombie Dragon has a Breath Weapon. Any model hit suffers a Strength 2 hit, with a -3 armour save modifier.

Swarm of Flies: Zombie Dragons are surrounded by a black cloud of flies. When the Dragon is fighting, these evil, buzzing creatures fly into the mouths and eyes of its opponents, clogging their ears and crawling up their nostrils.

Enemies in base contact with a Zombie Dragon deduct 1 from their rolls To Hit in close combat.



UNDEAD MOUNTS

SKELETAL STEED

It is not just the foot soldiers of long dead armies who are plucked from their graves to fight for their necromantic masters. Fleshless horses carry bony riders to battle once more, with loose and dangling harness, dull brass fittings and rotted saddles. Even though their substance has long since vanished, these creatures are animated by a ferocious will. Their hooves are hard and their teeth as sharp as ever, and many a foe is crushed or kicked by a bony limb or gripped between mouldered teeth.



In the time before the coming of Sigmar, evil kings and leaders of men would bargain with Sorcerers to enchant their steeds. With runic brands upon their flanks, talismans woven into the manes and tails, and enchantments laid upon their bridles, these horses were protected from the blows of the enemy and harmful magic.

So potent were these sorceries that the horses were protected even after death. Long after their masters were laid to rest, these creatures endured, until their bodies rotted away and only bones remained of their mortal forms. Their spirits, remained, knitting together



the skeleton of these beasts and giving them the power to ride through the densest terrain without slowing. It is even said that these creatures can bear their riders between the realms of the living and the dead...

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Skeletal Steed	8	2	0	3	3	1	2	1	3

TROOP TYPE: War Beast.

SPECIAL RULES: Undead.

Spectral Steeds: A model mounted upon (or pulled by) a model with this special rule gains the Ethereal special rule for the purposes of movement only. They do not suffer the movement penalty for being barded. Whilst a unit with this special rule is joined by a character without the Spectral Steeds or Ethereal special rules, then it loses this special rule.

BARROW CHARIOT

Each barrow complex was built to house a single great king and his entourage. The greatest of the old kings were buried with servants to attend them in the next world and warriors to guard them. Most moulder through the centuries, surrounded by the burial gifts of their people and ossified remains of their followers, but some are not so fortunate. Many Necromancers covet the service of a Barrow King's entourage and seek out their burial sites with the aim of raising the fallen ruler – and his legion – into their service.

Among the ancient barrow kings of old, there were many who travelled into battle upon mighty chariots to lead their warrior from the front line. These ancient chariots are once again brought into battle, pulled by skeletal steeds and ridden by a Wight King in a cruel mockery of the splendour and glory of the ancient times when they were alive. These Barrow Chariots advance along the battle line, ready to charge in and crush their foes until their wheels.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Barrow Chariot	-	-	-	5	5	4	-	-	-
Skeletal Steed	8	2	0	3	-	-	2	1	-

TROOP TYPE: Chariot (Armour save 5+).

SPECIAL RULES: Spectral Steeds, Undead.

"They buried the Baron with his sword, armour, warhorse, and favourite dogs. I told them not to do it, but they said it was the custom in this land. I knew that his bones would not be left to rest, but they would not listen. "It is the custom." they said. But I knew that the sword which had once upheld the right would soon be tarnished. But they understood me not."

NIGHTMARES

Vampires do not ride to battle atop mounts of mortal flesh and blood. The steeds of the Vampire aristocracy are unnatural destriers called Nightmares, and they are particularly favoured Blood Dragon Vampires. Some Nightmares are the carcasses of dead warhorses, their bodies rotted and maggot-riddled, brought back to life through necromantic magic. Though their flesh is withered and their skin pocked and rank, these mighty steeds are infused with Dark Magic and can easily bite or kick a soldier to death. Other Nightmares are sorcerous constructs of sinew, bone and metal, empowered by magic. The sickening stench of death hangs around them as they gallop into battle, crushing the living beneath their mouldy hooves.

The most impressive Nightmares are those born out of defiled flesh and bone, reared on fresh blood until they stand tall and proud. Their shadowy flanks shimmer with magical energy, their eyes glow like hot coals and their hooves burn with a coruscating magical flame. Smoke snorts from a Nightmare's flaring nostrils, carrying the stench of brimstone and decay. These beasts are often clad in heavy barding or wear caparisons of rusting chainmail. They have viciously spiked chamfrons to protect their heads and gore a soldier, and barbed flanchards on their flanks to tear at the flesh of foes.

Nightmare	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
	8	3	0	4	4	1	2	1	3

TROOP TYPE: War Beast.

SPECIAL RULES: Undead.



HELLSTEED

Some types of Nightmare are known as Hellsteeds. Although at first glance a Hellsteed is a winged horse, it is far stranger than any mortal creature. Its skin is thick and covered in hard scales, and its head is ridged with protective protrusions of bone. It has long fangs, and claws instead of hooves, and is easily capable of disembowelling an armoured man. When cut by a foe's blade, its blood hisses black and fills the air with the stench of sulphur. Its long fangs and claws are easily capable of disembowelling an armoured man.

A Hellsteed's wings are bat-like and broad of span, tipped with talons, and when furled they are protected by thick scales and bone protrusions. Some Hellsteeds have no skin, their exposed tendons and muscles stretching and bunching as they power through the air on powerful pinions. Hellsteeds often have manes and tails of flame, matching the fires that burn in their eye sockets.

Hellsteeds are notoriously vicious, and Vampires that dabble in the binding of beasts delight in breaking these wild creatures to their will. In battle, Hellsteeds are driven mad by the scent of blood and strain at their reins, eager to trample their prey into the dirt as they plunge into the fray and devour living flesh.

Hellsteed	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
	8	3	0	4	4	1	2	1	3

TROOP TYPE: War Beast.

SPECIAL RULES: Fly, Undead.

ABYSSAL TERRORS

The most warlike Vampires ride to battle on the backs of monstrous, dread-inspiring winged mounts. Some are huge bat-like beasts with slavering jaws and leathery wings, with serpentine tails tipped with a numbing sting. Others are creatures of Chaos from the mountains, hybrids of wolf and eagle with rapacious hunger, or gigantic lizard-headed vultures from the Northlands. Some are nightmarish creations of Dark Magic, bound with fear and shadows and given bodies of writhing blood and flayed skin. The most common of these winged fiends are known as Abyssal Terrors.

Abyssal Terrors are inevitably borne to war on ragged wings, allowing their Undead masters to strike at the heart of the enemy army. The latter-day von Carsteins, for their part, were known for their use of huge wolf-headed monsters with slavering jaws and leathery wings. The exposed spinal columns and bony tails of their mounts oozed with a numbing poison that drew all warmth from those it infected, and jagged blades were fused to each Terror's claws.

Creating an Abyssal Terror is considered the pinnacle of achievement for a master of the necromantic arts. The creation of these disturbing constructs has more to do with the unholy science of those who follow the dark arts than with any natural process. Necromancers and Vampires often create a mount for themselves by reanimating the bodies of Pegasi, Hippogriffs or Manticores. The most talented of the Vampires that create them, such as the hidden brotherhood of the Necrarchs, draw a twisted amusement from such blasphemous births – they use parts

harvested from a wide variety of monsters, fusing together sinew and bone with ragged muscles and tattered skin to create a shocking mockery of the mighty beasts that soar through the turbulent skies of the Chaos Wastes. The Necromancer has to cast many terrible spells to meld and fuse the remains of these monsters into this nightmarish horror. A Winged Nightmare is at least as dangerous as the creatures it has been created from with the addition of unholy strength, for a talented Necromancer can mould flesh and bones as if they were clay, to make the creature even more deadly, festooning it with tusks, fangs, spines and huge malformed claws. Their vile creation is finally given animus when Morrslieb is at its fullest and a portion of that cyclopean moon's power is invested in the beast as it lurches and twitches upright. When the Spell of Awakening is complete, the Winged Nightmare rises and is ready to impale any who stand against its master, with its deadly spines, tusks and huge razor sharp claws.

Some mounts are stranger still, such as the twin-headed winged serpent that is said to have carried Frederick Van Hal into battle against the Skaven. The chronicles of the Grand Theogonists record that at the Siege of Altdorf by Vlad von Carstein, Vampires took to the skies on zombified Wyverns and Griffons. In the far south, ancient Arabyan tales speak of Arkhan the Black's chariot, built around the still-living heart and wings of a Manticoore. Whatever their form, these creatures are powerful and deadly, and cause grown men to flee in dread. These abominations are favoured by Vampires as beasts of war, partly in mockery of the war Griffons ridden by the Emperor and his knights but mostly because their terrifying appearance alone has been known to rout entire forces. If the galloping charge of a Nightmare is enough to scatter entire units of troops on the field of battle, the sight of a Vampire Lord entering the battle on the back of an Abyssal Terror can send entire armies fleeing in terror. A Vampire mounted on the back of such a monster can smash regiments and overwhelm the strongest heroes of their enemy.



	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Abyssal Terror	6	4	0	5	5	4	2	3	4

TROOP TYPE: Monster.

SPECIAL RULES: Fly, Undead.

UPGRADES:

Poisonous Tail

10 points

Abyssal Terrors often have elongated tails ending in venom-tipped bony protrusions. The poison can render a man completely paralysed in just a few seconds.

The Abyssal Terror gains the Poisoned Attacks.

Sword-claws

10 points

Some Abyssal Terrors have their dreadful physiognomy enhanced by devilishly sharp claw-blades. Some Necromancers take this further by fusing jagged swords directly to the Terror's bones.

The Abyssal Terror gains Armour Piercing (1).

VLAD VON CARSTEIN

First Count of Sylvania

Vlad von Carstein was the first and greatest of the Vampire Counts of Sylvania. A master swordsman and skilled general with no small aptitude in the magical arts, it was he who tainted the aristocracy of Sylvania with the curse of vampirism, and in so doing, created an Undead kingdom in the heart of the Empire.

Count Vlad was a towering figure of a man, with a mane of black hair and piercing eyes. Those who met him and survived described him as having a feral charm and being extremely intelligent, but with an evil temper that could turn into a berserk fury if he was thwarted in his endeavours. It was said that at such times only his wife Isabella could calm him without blood being spilt.

No records tell of the origins of Vlad before his coming to Sylvania. Even the Vampires of that realm know nothing of Vlad's life before that fateful night in Drakenhof, and Vlad certainly never recounted or wrote down his personal history. That he had spent much time in the north was clear from his accent. However, he might not have been born there, and may even have only travelled to the realm of the Tzars after being turned into a Vampire. That he knew much about the workings of the Empire, and its internal division at the time of his arrival, attests to knowledge of the dealings of mortal men for many years. In all



possibility, Vlad was a noble of the Empire who was dispossessed some time before he received the Dark Kiss. Baseless speculation even contests that he was in some way a relation (possibly even an ancestor) of one of the contenders to the Imperial throne. For years he gathered his strength until he felt confident enough to attempt the conquest of the whole Empire. Then Vlad fought a brilliant campaign against the warring Elector Counts and almost managed to claim total victory. He was halted at the very gates of Altdorf, the capital of the Empire. With his final death, all knowledge of Vlad's earlier life passed away.



Vlad was not the first Vampire to have been encountered in the Empire, but before his rise to power, these Undead creatures had been solitary predators. A few had perhaps amassed small forces and carved out far-flung domains, but it was Vlad's usurpation of Sylvania, and his ascendancy to the position of Count, that marked a new era of bloodshed in the Empire. As the first true Vampire Count, Vlad had designs not only to create a realm of the dead, but also to secure dominion over the living. Vlad waged his war in order to become Emperor, for he truly believed he had a legitimate claim to the throne. With the might of the Empire at his command, and Isabella at his side, he would have become one of the most powerful rulers in the world. Who can say how far Vlad's dominion of undeath might have stretched across the globe had he succeeded? That he came so close to achieving his ambition should have been a dire warning to the other Elector Counts, but they forgot the lessons of the first war and fell to bickering amongst themselves again, paving the way for Vlad's unholy successors. These descendants have continued to assail the Empire to this day.

In battle Vlad wields the Sword of Unholy Power, an enchanted blade that grants its owner great magical power. On his left hand he wears the infamous Carstein Ring, a magical artefact which gave Vlad the ability to cheat death time and again. It was only after the Carstein Ring had been stolen from him that Vlad von Carstein was finally defeated.

"I, Vlad von Carstein, come in faith to make you an offer I urge you to consider and answer for the best of your people"

Vlad von Carstein



"Surrender and serve me in life, or die and slave for me in death."

Vlad von Carstein

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Vlad von Carstein	6	7	5	5	5	3	7	5	10

TROOP TYPE: Infantry (Special Character).

MAGIC: Vlad is a Level 3 Wizard. He uses spells from the Lore of the Vampires.

VAMPIRIC POWERS: Aura of Dark Majesty, Supernatural Horror, Transfix.

SPECIAL RULES: The Red Thirst, Vampiric.

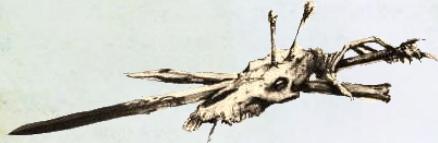
Beloved in Death: If Vlad and Isabella von Carstein are in the same unit, they are inspired to fight all the harder, and gains +1 Combat Resolution. Furthermore, Vlad becomes subject to Frenzy and Hatred should Isabella be slain, and vice versa.

MAGIC ITEMS:

Blood Drinker (Magic Weapon)

Vlad's weapon of choice was a beautifully crafted longsword with a screaming face upon the hilt. When this sword draws blood, the lift force of the victim is used to revitalise the blade's master. The blade of this evil sword is never satisfied with the amount of blood it drinks and constantly emits a piercing scream, demanding more. As it moves through the air, the blade screams and wails hungrily for the blood of men. Blood Drinker was crafted by the Dark Elves of Naggaroth, and it was carried with those explorers from that land who first came to ancient Nehekara. It was presented to Vashanesh by Nagash along with the Von Carstein Ring, and it was used by Vlad in his great campaign against the Empire. After his fall at the Siege of Altdorf, the blade was believed buried with Vlad under the temple of Sigmar, but in the tide of war, few are sure the right blade was seized.

Close combat attacks made with Blood Drinker are resolved at +1 Strength. In addition, whilst Vlad wields Blood Drinker, he restores lost Wounds on a score of 3+ rather than 5+ for the purposes of the Red Thirst special rule.



The Carstein Ring (Talisman)

On his hand Vlad wore the infamous Carstein Ring, a magical artefact that gave Vlad the ability to cheat death time and again. The origins of the ring are as mysterious as Vlad's own. One Imperial scholar claims that the ring dates back thousands of years, and was created by Nagash for the Vampire Vashanesh. Through the ring, Nagash was able to control the Vampires and make them his warrior-slaves. To free

the Vampires from this control, Vashanesh killed himself, knowing that the ring would eventually return him to un-life and that, without the Vampires, Nagash would fall. A few self-styled 'experts' on the Undead even claim that this means Vlad was actually Vashanesh. However, there is only one obscure reference to this meeting, thought unreliable by many. Also, the appearance of the Carstein Ring, as described by those who fought Vlad, was more contemporary in design. If indeed Nagash ever made such a ring, it is more likely that the Carstein Ring is a less powerful copy. Vlad demonstrated no particular skills of craftsmanship, so it is certain that the Carstein Ring was not made by him. It is more likely that Vlad forced a thrall Necromancer to create it or took it from its owner. The Carstein Ring was most famously worn by Vlad von Carstein during the Wars of the Vampire Counts, during which it saved him from final death many times. It was stolen from him by an Imperial thief, though rumour has it the thief would not have been able to approach Vlad if it wasn't for the treachery of Mannfred von Carstein who magically aided him, shielding the thief from Vlad's gaze. Some believe that Mannfred spent much of his time away from Sylvania seeking Felix Mann to recover the ring. If he was successful, he never revealed this to anyone else. Vlad knows the secrets of the Carstein Ring and uses the full extent of its powers. This ancient heirloom of the twisted house of Sylvania makes the Vampire carrying it almost impossible to kill.

The Carstein Ring grants Vlad a 4+ ward save. Furthermore, the first time Vlad is removed from play, roll a D6 at the end of the phase. On a roll of 2+, he is immediately returned to 'life' with a single Wound. Vlad must then be placed in the front rank of a friendly unit anywhere within 12" of the point where he fell (even one in close combat). If there is no such unit for Vlad to join, he is removed as a casualty.



ISABELLA VON CARSTEIN

Beloved of Vlad

Daughter of the mad Count Otto von Drak, in life Isabella was like many of her noble counterparts. She was vain, immoral and selfish, and cared little for anything that did not affect her personal comfort and standing. Though very intelligent, she had a classical rather than practical education. She was considered somewhat strange for her love of some of the more male pursuits such as hunting and falconry rather than needlework and music. In fact, outside of Sylvania, the only thing that made Isabella vaguely desirable as a wife was her stunning, cold beauty. This however, was not enough to tempt suitors who would be worthy of inheriting the throne of Sylvania, and mad Otto certainly did not wish to give her hand to any of his rivals within the province.

"Please, come in and join me for dinner. I can see from the way you dress, you are a man of exquisite... taste."

Isabella von Carstein

When Vlad von Carstein arrived on the night of Otto's death, Isabella was pleased that creepy old Uncle Leopold would not inherit, though she was far from happy at having to marry this sinister stranger. As the months passed, however, what had started out as a marriage of convenience developed into something far more. Vlad's charm was irresistible, and Isabella's devotion to him grew so strong that Vlad and his wife became inseparable. Vlad long resisted Isabella's requests to join him in undeath, but



when – she lay dying from a fatal, wasting illness, Vlad realised that he could not carry on without her, and reluctantly inducted her into the ranks of the Undead. As a Vampire, Countess Isabella was forever at Vlad's side, feeding his ambition and teaching him the ways of the Sylvanian court and about the wider Empire. Isabella was Vlad's most valued confidante, and the only person, living or dead, whose advice he trusted.

When Vlad set forth on his mission to become Emperor, Isabella accompanied him on the road to war. She carried an heirloom of the von Draks with her – a chalice made for her great grandmother, Countess Bathori. Corrupted by Dark Magic, this golden goblet was forever filled with fresh blood, from which Isabella drank even in the midst of the fiercest fighting. Those who dared confront her in battle would stare wide-eyed as her wounds healed within seconds, time seeming to flow backwards for the lithe Vampire Countess as blood crawled back into opened veins and alabaster flesh neatly sealed in its wake. Their hesitation would invariably cost them dearly, for when they returned to their senses, they would invariably find their throats slit or a sword driven right through their chests.

It is claimed that when Vlad died, Isabella was fighting atop one of the gate towers of Altdorf. Protected by a ring of Grave Guard, she battled against the self-declared Emperor Ludwig and his Greatswords. When the Wights suddenly collapsed around her, Isabella realised that her beloved had been finally destroyed and his necromantic power undone. So stricken was Isabella that she turned from the men battling against her and flung herself from the tower. Isabella's body was impaled on the stakes below like her husband, before crumbling into dust.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Isabella von Carstein	6	6	4	5	4	2	6	3	8

TROOP TYPE: Infantry (Special Character).

VAMPIRIC POWERS: Beguile.

SPECIAL RULES: Beloved in Death (see Vlad von Carstein), The Red Thirst, Vampiric.

MAGIC ITEMS:

Blood Chalice of Bathori (Enchanted Item)

Countless are the innocent souls whose life essence has flowed into this bewitched goblet.

Isabella, or another Vampiric character in the same unit, may drink from the Blood Chalice of Bathori at the start of each friendly Magic phase. The chosen model regains a single Wound lost earlier in the battle.

"It's a game, yes, but there are rules. There are always rules, except for us."

Isabella von Carstein

MANNFRED VON CARSTEIN

Last of the von Carsteins

While Vlad von Carstein was the most physically powerful of the Vampire Counts, Mannfred was the most cunning. Mannfred lacked the vision and true genius of Vlad, but it was perhaps the only thing he lacked. Mannfred was exceptionally cunning and devious, more than any other of the counts. He was both willing and able to defeat his sire by betraying him to the enemy. Some say that Mannfred betrayed Vlad, and that he allowed his master's ring to be stolen. When Vlad was slain, Mannfred did not involve himself in the infighting that would see Konrad rise to prominence, instead avoiding his brother-in-darkness's brutal rule by being very far away. Indeed, whilst his predecessors were trying to conquer the world, Mannfred stood back and watched them – and the world. He studied everything they did and learnt everything he could. He travelled far and wide, seeking to deepen his knowledge of necromantic lore. He made an unholy pilgrimage to the ancient tombs of Nehekara and the ancient city of Lahmia, where he wrested the secrets of the Liche Priests from bone-dry papyrus and scrolls made from human skin to learn everything about the origins of his kind.

Mannfred studied the ancient spells within the Book of the Dead and his power over Dark Magic grew. Eventually Mannfred's journeys took him all the way to Nagashizzar and there he studied under the great

masters who serve Nagash. None can say what foul bargains Mannfred made with that surreal realm's inhabitants in return for forbidden knowledge. Having learnt many of the darkest secrets of man and magic, Mannfred finally returned to Sylvania more powerful than ever, and took over the Undead legions in the wake of Konrad's destruction.

As he sought for allies beyond Sylvania's borders, frequently Mannfred would travel abroad in the guise of an Imperial lord with striking features. Mannfred was described as a handsome, tall man with deep set eyes and long black hair. He was always courteous and lordly to those he met on his travels, as befits a noble from such a powerful family. When Mannfred revealed himself at the height of his power, his appearance was far more horrifying. Infused with Necromantic energy, his face became contorted and almost corpselike, and his skin writhed with magical energy. Yet his newfound powers were not enough. In the end Mannfred was defeated and his army annihilated at the Battle of Hel Fenn. History records that Mannfred fell whilst trying to retreat from the battle, and so Hel Fenn is celebrated for the demise of the last of the Vampire Counts of Sylvania.

Yet not everyone believes that Mannfred was destroyed at Hel Fenn. He was by far the longest lived of the Vampire Counts and persistent rumour has it that Mannfred still exists to this day, threatening to return once more at the head of the Undead Sylvanian armies. They say that he is now gathering his strength in order to wreak his revenge on the descendants of those who defeated him all those centuries ago. It can only be a matter of time before an army led by the last of the Vampire Counts once again marches on the Empire. Indeed, the minor poet Felix Jaeger claims to have encountered him while in the company of the Dwarf Gotrek Gurnisson as recently as 2503. Jaeger, however, is a known criminal and populist agitator and his accounts of his travels are highly fanciful, so serious scholars discount the claim. One doubts whether a mighty Vampire such as Mannfred von Carstein could really be put to flight by an outcast Dwarf wielding a pair of silver candlesticks, as Jaeger claims occurred. Jaeger's account is no doubt spurious so most scholars shall content themselves with the known facts of Mannfred's life. As far as official history is concerned, Mannfred von Carstein, last of the Vampire Counts, perished at Hel Fenn.

"When the darkness falls our time is at hand. We are the rulers of the Night. We are the predators of the Shadows. We are the aristocracy of the night. Come hither and we will show you the true meaning of terror."

Mannfred von Carstein



"This land is my home, my birthright. The wind and rain are my allies. The trees and stones are my foot soldiers. The very earth will rise up against you should you try to take it from me. And my people will feast on your bones."

Mannfred von Carstein

Over the years, Mannfred has accumulated a library of staggering proportions, but it is minuscule compared to the knowledge he keeps inside his head. Yet, he still considers himself a student and still voraciously pursues every piece of knowledge and experience he can gain. He is wise enough to know there is always something to be learned and that he is never omnipotent nor invulnerable. He does not content himself that his Vampiric powers are enough to save him, nor would he ever trust entirely in a magic item like the Carstein Ring.

If Mannfred has a flaw, it is his need to understand. He could have easily destroyed Konrad at any point and attacked the Empire whilst they were still reeling from Vlad's advance; his delay in order to appear non-threatening and to get the most accurate view of his history and the political situation allowed the cult of Sigmar the time to find the only way to defeat him. However, Mannfred also possesses the rarest of qualities in the powerful – the ability to recognise his own mistakes and learn from them. Mannfred learnt much from his defeat, and he is determined not to make the same mistakes again. If indeed the master tactician has acquired the ferocity of Konrad and the vision of Vlad, then the Empire is surely doomed. It is just a matter of when the blow will fall, and it will surely fall soon.



	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Mannfred von Carstein	6	7	5	5	5	3	7	4	10

TROOP TYPE: Infantry (Special Character).

MAGIC: Mannfred is a Level 4 Wizard. He uses spells from both the Lore of Death and the Lore of the Necromancy.

VAMPIRIC POWERS: Dark Acolyte, Master of the Black Arts, Summon Creatures of the Night.

SPECIAL RULES: Loremaster (Lore of Death/Necromancy), The Red Thirst, Vampiric.

"Vlad may not have loved me the most; that honour, I am certain, went to Isabella, but he certainly loved me the longest."

Mannfred von Carstein

MAGIC ITEMS:

Timor Noctis, the Sword of Unholy Power

(Magic Weapon)

Mannfred always carries Timor Noctis into battle. This massive two-handed sword has a Dragon-scale hilt, a huge black onyx for a pommel stone, and its name – meaning Night's Dark Terror – emblazoned along its blade. Timor Noctis appears to be of Dwarfen craftsmanship yet also bears clear marks of Chaos. During his wanderings of the world, Mannfred journeyed east and met the Chaos Dwarfs of Zhar-Nagrund. Somehow, he convinced them to forge him a sword worthy of his stature, and he has carried it with him ever since. Sensing his poor chances at the climax of Hel Fenn, he hid the sword in that swamp to reclaim when he returned to life. The taste of blood unlocks the dire powers of this blade, allowing the wielder to exert greater control over the Winds of Magic.

For each unsaved Wound caused by the sword, Mannfred gains an extra dice at the start of the ensuing Magic phase (this will be a power dice in his own Magic phase, and a dispel dice in the enemy's Magic phase).

"We are the masters of night, and humans are but our cattle. While we walk upright, they're on their knees."

Mannfred von Carstein

Armour of Templehof (Magic Armour)

A product of ancient and twisted sorcery, this construct fuses with the wearer, imbuing his essence with tremendous endurance.

Heavy armour. The Armour of Templehof gives Mannfred +2 Wounds (in addition to any Wounds he would get from being mounted on a Monster).

Cloak of Darkness (Talisman)

This mantle has been enchanted by Mannfred himself and is one of the most powerful magical defences ever created.

The Cloak of Darkness provides Mannfred with Magic Resistance (3+).

Ebony Staff (Arcane Item)

The Ebony Staff, also known as the Black Staff of Undeath, is a powerful tool of evil. Mannfred risked everything to retrieve it from a Chaos servant's fortress.

This staff allows Mannfred to cast *Invocation of Nehek* from the Lore of the Vampires without using any Power dice in each of his Magic phases. The spell is cast with a Power Level equal to its basic casting value and can be dispelled normally.



KONRAD VON CARSTEIN

The Mad Blood Count

There are few things more dangerous than a violent lunatic, but one of them is an immortal violent lunatic with the strength and speed of a Vampire. Adding a literal thirst for blood to Konrad's figurative one did little for the noble's stretched sanity. The first of the von Carsteins had considered this as a potential advantage, and Konrad was one of the last of the von Carsteins to be embraced into the family.

Perhaps Konrad's complete lack of scruples and his tenuous grasp on reality amused Vlad. In retrospect, however, it might have better served his dynasty if Vlad had simply cut off Konrad's head when the chance first presented itself; his insane depravity resulted in far more harm than good. Once given the Blood Kiss, Konrad made no attempt to hide his supernatural powers, and fed openly on his friends and subjects (as well as rats, cats, cows, wandering pedlars and anything else with a pulse that came too close). Konrad appointed himself as something of a berserk enforcer for Vlad, executing anyone who displeased the count. This, naturally, also included anyone who displeased Konrad. Over time, this encompassed many victims, including enemy generals, priests of all descriptions, people with a squint, and several Necromancers who had laughed at Konrad's pitiful magical skills.



When Konrad usurped power after Vlad's death, he took a very different view to ecromancers, and encouraged many to join his entourage. He rewarded them greatly, for though he was barking mad, Konrad was no fool. He needed the Necromancers to raise his armies for him, and while they served him well, he guaranteed their safety.

In battle, Konrad would lose all self-restraint. He revelled in the shedding of blood, and was a skilled swordsman. Driven on by a never-ending rage, Konrad led his army more as a bloodthirsty whirlwind than a general, his unconscious will pushing his minions forwards. However, when in this state, Konrad was also prone to excessive feeding, and would sometimes stop in the middle of a battle to lick clean his armour and sword, or drink from fallen enemies. It was during one of these blood-drunk fits that Konrad was slain by the Dwarf Thane Grufbad and the Elector Count Helmar.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Konrad von Carstein	6	7	4	5	4	2	6	3	6

TROOP TYPE: Infantry (Special Character).

VAMPIRIC POWERS: Red Fury.

SPECIAL RULES: Hatred, The Red Thirst, Vampiric.

One Bat Short of a Belfry: At the start of each of Konrad's turns, you must determine the state of the mad Vampire's fragile mind. Roll a D6. On a roll of a 1-3, Konrad is subject to the rules for Stupidity until the start of his next turn. On a roll of a 4-6, Konrad is subject to Frenzy until the start of his next turn.

MAGIC ITEMS:

Sword of Waldenhof (Magic Weapon)

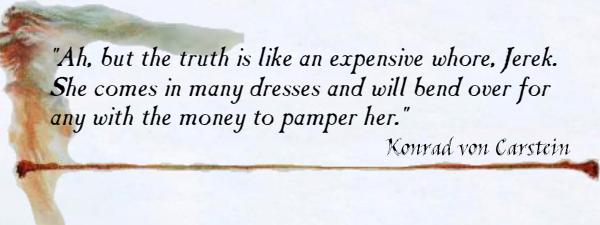
The heirloom of the lords of Waldenhof Castle has never been more expertly wielded than in the hands of Konrad. This spirit-possessed sword bites deeply when it strikes.

Two hand weapons. The Sword of Waldenhof has the Multiple Wounds (2) special rule.

Ring of the Night (Talisman)

This magic jewel has the power to draw a cloud of concealing darkness around the bearer.

The Ring of the Night gives Konrad a Ward save (5+).



NEFERATA

The Queen of Mysteries and Shadows, the First Vampire

Legends tell of an ancient Vampire Queen who resides high in the Worlds Edge Mountains. Most believe it to be merely an old wives' tale, but a few scholars know better. The Vampire Queen of Mysteries does indeed exist, and those who know call her Neferata, which means 'she who is beautiful in death' in the ancient tongue of Nehekhara, the land of the Dead.

It is claimed that she is the same decadent Vampire Queen who fled the sack of Lahmia. If this is true, she is very ancient indeed, for the great River Mortis has flowed for three thousand years since those events. Legends say that she created a Vampiric Lahmian Sisterhood to serve her and that all the Vampires of this cult have been corrupted by her own blood. Neferata has no equal, for she holds much of the knowledge that was lost during the destruction of Lahmia; ancient rituals and lore that only she will ever know.

Neferata, then Neferatem, was the daughter of King Lahmizzash of Nehekhara, and as a girl, she expressed a wish to join the Mortuary Cult. Her father laughed at her and explained that women could not join the priesthood and, indeed, could never learn magic. Instead, she was destined to rule the city of Lahmia when she came of age.

Under the malign influence of High Priest W'soran, one of Nagash's spies, she used this position to save some of the Great Necromancer's works from the pyres and studied them herself. With these works and W'soran's aid, she distilled the Elixir of Life, and they became the first Vampires. They cast the priests out of Lahmia and replaced them with their own cult dedicated to Nagash, based around the Temple of Blood. Not all the people of Lahmia appreciated this. After all, it was Lahmia that first rebelled against Nagash. When the people rose up against Neferatem, she emerged at the head of her court of Vampires to destroy the rebels utterly.



Neferata ruled Lahmia alone for many decades, until a relative of hers called Vashanesh, who was also of Nagash's blood, brought news that General Setep had ousted her family from the throne of Khemri. Vashanesh had been a commander in Setep's army and knew much of tactics; Neferata gave him the Elixir of Life and made him her king, much to Abhorash's jealous dismay. But even with Vashanesh, Lahmia could not stand against all of Nehekhara when the holy war finally came. The Temple of Blood burned, and Neferata and her court fled to Nagashizar.

Nagash made the Vampires his soldiers, under the command of Vashanesh. Now it was Neferata's turn to be jealous of him. Her years of worship were repaid with nothing. Nagash made her his vassal and commanded her to attack his enemies like a dog. The anger towards men she had felt as a youth forbidden from joining the priesthood resurfaced. When Vashanesh fell and Nagash's control was broken, she fled to the north, determined to never again take orders from a man.

Moving amongst the primitive men of the fledgling nations of the Old World, she planted her spies, her network of sisters-in-darkness who have secretly influenced the Humans since the earliest days. Raising an army of the dead, she took the Silver Pinnacle from the Dwarfs in a single night, an act that earned her the title "Queen of Evil" in the Book of Grudges.

Physically, Neferata is said to be divinely beautiful. Indeed, though her memories reach back millennia to when Lahmia and Khemri were still sprawling cities of the living, she retains the appearance of a maiden of tender years. Her plaited black tresses flow around her lovely face and she is as enchanting now as she was in her youth. From a distance, she appears innocent, almost fragile: she is the very image of a damsel in need of a protector, a vision of divine beauty to be guarded against the perils of the world. Up close, the illusion is dispelled. Though her skin is as white as alabaster, her eyes have turned yellow, and the long years of evil have washed all trace of pity and compassion from her face and her dark eyes are windows upon an ancient and wicked soul. Only the addled or the bewitched could mistake her for the innocent she pretends to be. Alas, any who approach so close are likely already prisoners of her fabled allure, shackled to her will by a desire stronger than chains of gromril.

The Queen of Mysteries dreams of enslaving all the Vampires of the known world. As the first and oldest of the blood drinkers, she believes that all Vampirekind owe her their allegiance. When her descendants have sworn their loyalty to Neferata on bonded knee, she will return to ruined Lahmia at the head of an Undead army. There she will overthrow the mummified rulers of that desolate city and reclaim her throne. The glories of Lahmia will be rebuilt anew - a glory of sandstone, marble and gold – and Neferata's Temple of Blood will become her palace once more. There she will rule as a beautiful goddess of death!

"You come to me with gifts and promises and expect me to be swayed by them? You believe that I owe you the Kiss because of your years of service? You are a greater fool than even I believed, and never shall you join my kin. We are guests at the ultimate masque, and your kind is simply not invited."

Queen Neferata

Neferata delights in seducing mortal men of pure heart and causing their fall from grace. She is especially fond of Bretonnian knights, for she finds their code of chivalry easy to exploit. Some of her victims Neferata keeps as her lovers, while others she simply drains of their blood. The most favoured of them she transforms into Undead servants, though few amuse her for long enough that she will consider granting them the Blood Kiss.

Sometimes, in periods of ennui, Neferata seeks sport, and she bids her network of spies reveal her existence to a bold band of fighting men in order to tempt them to assail her stronghold. Such 'volunteers' are carefully selected, for the Queen of Mysteries has no desire to waste her time fighting commoners or glory-seekers; only driven men, such as witch hunters or knights, will do. As the army makes the long approach to the Silver Pinnacle, Neferata smiles and readies her own household to do battle – skeletons, wights and other dark things drawn to her malign presence. If feeling particularly generous, the Queen of Mysteries will even take to battle herself, slitting throats with a quicksilver grace that would shame an Elf, and wielding sorceries lost to the world when the city of Lahmia fell. Neferata finds few equals in combat, for she is the Queen of Mysteries of old and is terrible in her wrath. She holds much of the magical knowledge that was lost during the destruction of Lahmia, ancient rituals and mysteries that only she will ever know. None who have attacked the Silver Pinnacle have returned – except as the unliving servants of Neferata.

Languorous though Neferata's existence has seemingly become, still she entertains dreams of reclaiming that which she lost millennia ago. She talks to her handmaidens of one day ruling all the vampires of the known world, of claiming the station that is hers by right. Yet those handmaidens who know their mistress best know that what she truly desires is to return to Lahmia, to raise the cursed city up out of ruin, restoring its palaces and temples to their finery of marble, polished sandstone and shimmering gold. It is one thing to be a queen in the darkness of the mountains, and quite another to rule in the glorious lands of the south.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Neferata	6	7	5	5	5	3	9	5	10

TROOP TYPE: Infantry (Special Character).

MAGIC: Neferata is a level 3 Wizard. She uses spells from the Lore of Necromancy, Shadow, or Death. In addition, she knows the following spell:

Shadowblood

Cast on 7+

The Vampire Queen opens wounds on her palms and while uttering an ancient incantation, her blood bursts from the wounds. It is a more potent poison than that of any serpent and bursts into flames upon contact with anything.

Shadowblood is a **magic missile** with a range of 24". When cast, Neferata must declare how many Wounds she is using to boost the effects of the spell. The spell causes D6 Strength 5 hits with the Flaming Attacks special rule plus an extra D6 hits for each wound Neferata expends. In addition, a unit suffering one or more wounds from this spell must immediately take a Panic test.

SPECIAL RULES: The Red Thirst, Vampiric.

Queen of Lahmia: Neferata must be the Army General. In addition, units of Lahmian Handmaidens may be included as Special Units rather than Rare Units.

Heavenly Creature: Enemy units in base contact with Neferata suffer a -2 penalty to their Leadership.

VAMPIRIC POWERS: Lightning Reflexes, Quickblood, Seduction.

MAGIC ITEMS:

Dagger of Jet (Magic Weapon)

This dagger took countless lives on the altars of Lahmia when Neferata was the high priestess of death under the Cult of Blood. Condemned criminals had their throats cut with it, and their blood was consumed by Neferata and her court. After centuries of tasting blood, the Dagger of Jet gained Vampiric powers of its own. Both its handle and blade are as black as pitch.

Attacks made with the Dagger of Jetl are at +1 Strength with the Poisoned Attacks special rule.

Ruby of Lahmia (Talisman)

The mark of her dominion over the City of Vampires, Neferata's diadem is a golden snake which rests over her cruel and beautiful face, and carries a huge ruby in its jaw. This unique jewel pulses with the power of eternal life and feeds Neferata with almost unlimited energy.

At the end of each turn of the game that Neferata is still alive, the Ruby of Lahmia automatically lets her regain one Wound that she has lost during the battle.

The Staff of Pain (Arcane Item)

This ancient staff resembles the bladed tail of a Khemrian Warsphinx, with an inlaid cartouche and fan-shaped outer blade. The enchantments of the Staff of Pains add crippling agonies to any sorceries Neferata wields.

When Neferata successfully casts a magic missile, direct damage or hex spell, each target suffer D3 additional Strength 5 hits after the spell effect has been resolved.

Bastet (Enchanted Item)

Bastet is Neferata's familiar, a slender black Khemrian cat who was entombed with her beloved Queen. Now she is just a feline shadow that follows Neferata and protects her from danger. In the Old World it is said that black cats presage bad luck, and maybe in this case it could be true...

At the beginning of each of her turns, Neferata can send Bastet to any enemy unit on the battlefield within 12". Place a marker of Bastet next to the affected unit. Bastet looks just like an ordinary black cat and therefore will be ignored by the enemy (the model can be moved through, it doesn't stop the enemy from marching, etc.). The target unit will be afflicted by miserable bad luck and everything that can go wrong will. The unit must re-roll any successful armour save it takes while under Bastet's influence. This lasts for the duration of the Vampire player's turn.

"Behind every great man is a great woman. And behind those great women is me."

Queen Neferata

ZACHARIAS THE EVERLIVING

Little is known of the life of Zacharias before he succumbed to the lure of the necromantic arts. As a mortal, Zacharias was an apprentice of Dieter Helsnicht, a necromancer expelled from Middenheim who launched attacks on that city from a fortress in the Forest of Shadows. Whilst Helsnicht busied himself with tactics and raising armies, Zacharias took note of his surroundings. He saw they were not the first to work powerful necromancy in the forest. He saw strange flows in the Winds of Magic, which led him all the way to the tower of Melkhior the Necrarch.

For weeks, Zacharias observed the tower and its guards, plotting to break in through the crypt at the tower's base to steal the Vampire's grimoires which Melkhior had acquired during his many years of unholy afterlife. He magically blinded the Undead guardians to his presence but was captured by Melkhior's living servants before he had even made it inside. Zacharias was brought before the Vampire, who saw the great potential inside him. That night, rather than killing the over-inquisitive Necromancer, Melkhior gave him the Kiss of the Vampire and decided to take him on as a pupil.

The newly created Necrarch was horrified by the changes his body underwent and swore to take revenge on his father-in-darkness. Knowing he was too weak to confront the ancient Vampire, he bided his time and studied like a good pupil. Over the following years, though, he began to embrace the power which Melkhior had bestowed upon him. Each night the two would rise and Melkhior would warn Zacharias that he grew bored of his company and that he would probably kill him before dawn. But Zacharias was a keen pupil and would constantly surprise Melkhior with his capacity to learn and growing power. Melkhior taught his acolyte everything he knew, but never let Zacharias near his precious Book of Nagash.

Melkhior was mad, even by the standards of Necarchs, and would often fall into fits of insanity, killing his living servants and drinking their blood in a great feast of flesh. Zacharias was wise and always avoided his master's wrath during these tantrums. It was during one of these occasions that Zacharias boldly crept into Melkhior's chamber, finally seeing his chance to steal away the books he had never been allowed to see whilst Melkhior stalked his slaves through the tower. There on a great plinth was the unholy tome – the book of Nagash. Unfortunately for



Zacharias, Melkhior was not as unaware as he seemed. Melkhior returned to his chamber whilst his pupil was still reading and a great fight ensued. Invigorated by the blood of his dead slaves, Melkhior was too powerful for Zacharias, who barely escaped with his life. Deeply wounded he fled into the Middle Mountains.

For the following year Zacharias was pursued by the minions of Melkhior. From one cave refuge to the next he would flee, tired and severely emaciated from lack of blood; he would no sooner find a suitably secluded hiding place then his location would be discovered. Zacharias fed on wild animals wherever he could, but the constant running exhausted him. Finally he stumbled into a large, dark cavern in the heart of the mountains where he found a small niche deep inside, and there he fell into a sound slumber. Totally exhausted from the fight with Melkhior and the constant pursuit of Melkhior's dark servants, Zacharias' rest was to last for over a decade.

During this time a Black Dragon also discovered the cave. Unaware of the Undead abomination which slept within, she made her nest there, and, as do all Dragons, gathered a small mound of treasure around her. When Zacharias awoke, his thirst was great and the sleeping Dragon was a perfect source of nourishment. Finding soft exposed flesh on the Dragon's underside he bit deep into the slumbering monster like a newborn on his mother's teat. The blood of the great beast flowed through the veins of Zacharias, empowering him with untold strength. Such is the might of a Vampire that even a Dragon is unable to wake from its deathly bite. Over the following month Zacharias drank from the great beast, draining it clean of blood. Legends say that drinking the blood of a Dragon frees Vampires from their need for blood for the rest of their eternal life. If that is true, then who knows what other powers were bestowed upon Zacharias by the blood of the great wyrm. Using the dark necromantic powers he had learnt from Melkhior he raised the Dragon from death and flew on its back to Melkhior's hidden keep, where he fought a great battle with his master. It is said that so powerful were the magic forces unleashed that the tower was all but destroyed. When the dust and debris cleared Zacharias was the victor.

Of Melkhior no one knows of his fate; some say he was slain by Zacharias, who drank his blood to gain further powers. Others believe that Melkhior, is in hiding, licking his wounds whilst plotting revenge on his former pupil. Whatever Melkhior's fate, Zacharias claimed all of the magical wealth that his master had acquired and hoarded over his long rule of terror, including the powerful Book of Nagash. Zacharias now rules over the Forest of Shadows from a rebuilt keep, where both the Orcs of the mountains and the people of the forest live in equal fear of the vengeance of Zacharias the Everliving. There he studies the books so long denied to him and planning for an eternity.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Zacharias	6	6	3	5	5	3	6	3	9
Zombie Dragon	6	4	0	6	6	6	2	5	4

TROOP TYPE: Monster (Special Character).

MAGIC: Zacharias is a level 4 Wizard. He uses spells from the Lore of the Necromancy or any of the eight Lores of Magic (except the Lore of Life).

VAMPIRIC POWERS: Dark Acolyte, Forbidden Lore, Master of the Black Arts.

SPECIAL RULES: Fly, Natural Armour (5+), Pestilential Breath, Swarm of Flies, The Red Thirst, Vampiric.

MAGIC ITEMS:

Staff of Kaphamon (Enchanted Item)

This ancient artefact was found by the nomads of Araby under the sands of the Great Desert. It is a gnarled and ancient staff holding a gem that pulses with purple light. Kaphamon was a wizard of Araby, and not much is known of him save that he was a master of the death magic that was treated by the people of that land as a natural aspect of life. Kaphamon's staff was unearthed from beneath the desert sands by wandering nomads, and it changed hands many times before it fell into the possession of one who understood its power.

Bound Spell, power level 4. This staff contains the *Gaze of Nagash* spell.

Circlet of Rathek (Talisman)

The Circlet of Rathek holds a jewel that was sacred to the lost Gods of Nehekhar. The Circlet of Rathek was plucked from a dead priest of the Mortuary Cult by High Priest W'soran, from whom it was taken by his apprentice Melkhior, who in turn lost it to Zacharias. Despite its protective power, all those who have worn it have been betrayed, perhaps a final revenge from the lost Gods of the Land of the Dead. The jewel in the centre of this unholy object has the power of invoking on the bearer the protection of the gods of lost Nehekhar.

The circlet confers a Ward save (4+) to Zacharias.

Scrolls of Semhtep (Arcane Item)

The long formulas written in these arcane papyri trigger powerful counter spells.

The Scrolls of Semhtep follow all the rules for Dispel Scrolls, except that you may attempt use one in each of the opposing player's Magic phases. After the first time you have used one, roll a D6; on a 2+ you can use a scroll the next turn as well. The second time you use one, you need to roll a 3+, the third time a 4+ and so on. A roll of 6 always succeeds.

Book of Nagash (Arcane Item)

The nine Books of Nagash contain the ultimate secrets of Necromancy.

The Book allows Zacharias to cast Invocation of Nehek on a 24+ Casting Value. If cast successfully, the spell will have a range of 24".

"Today is a good day to be dead."

Zacharias the Everlasting

MELKHIOR THE ANCIENT

The Necarchs are the most reclusive and incomprehensible of the undying Vampires, and none more so than Melkhior, the oldest of the Necarchs created by W'soran, and his most ambitious follower. Melkhior is a loathsome creature who eventually betrayed and destroyed W'soran, and took the Book of Nagash from his former master's Library of grimoires. Melkhior experimented with the living as well as the dead, trying to find out how they could overcome their fear of death. Countless men were sacrificed to Melkhior's obsession but still the answer eluded him. He became so suffused with Dark Magic that he decomposed to the point where he was a skeletal, reeking horror. His eyes were pools of darkness that harboured the purest evil and an aura of death hung heavily about him.

Melkhior lives far from human settlements and his secret tower is hidden from view in the great Forest of Shadows by powerful enchantments. In the highest chamber of this tower, the most ancient of Vampires works alone. He is decayed, irredeemably evil, and utterly insane.

In the total darkness of his hellish fortress, Melkhior painted on human skins. He painted terrifying scenes of a world where there are no living, where the Undead walk the land and withered, dead trees blight the bleak landscape. Melkhior claimed that he painted visions of the future, glimpses of a time that is to come.



Melkhior experiments with the living, trying to find out how they can be made to understand the benefit of joining the Undead and how they could overcome their fear of the dead. Countless men have died in Melkhior's obsessive search, but still the answer he searches for eludes him. Pain, suffering and horror fascinate this mad being. The dungeons and torture chambers of his dark tower are filled with wretched prisoners who undergo indescribable agony to satisfy the curiosity of this insane Vampire Lord.

Melkhior's abandoned fortress is a monument to suffering and terror, filled with the results of his insane experiments: Zombies that are half-dead and half-alive, severed heads that scream endlessly in the darkness, limbs that crawl in lightless passageways, and countless other horrors created by Melkhior's dark arts.

Now and then the ancient Vampire leads his Undead servants out of his stronghold to capture new victims for his experiments or to swell the Undead legions that guard him. At such times, armies of Zombies commanded by the twisted acolytes of Melkhior pour from the forest and hunt for the living to bring back to their master.

Normally a Vampire's grasp of necromantic magic is limited by his Undead condition. Melkhior, on the other hand, has almost the same knowledge of the necromantic arts as the most powerful living Necromancers, for he has thousands of years of experience in these matters. He is so suffused with dark magic that he is now more part of the world of the dead than the living and is decomposed to the point where he is a skeletal, reeking horror. His eyes are two pools of darkness that mirror the purest evil in everything they see and an aura of death hangs heavily about him. In the total darkness of his hellish fortress, the ancient Vampire paints on human skins. He paints terrifying scenes of a world where there are no living, where the dead walk the land and withered, Undead trees blight the bleak landscape. Melkhior claims that he paints visions of the future, glimpses of the time that is to come. Perhaps his visions are true and the known world is doomed to the horrible existence of unlife.

The hunger for knowledge and the need to replenish the number of 'guinea pigs' in his laboratory has often forced Melkhior out of seclusion. Throughout history he has been known to have led his horde of minions on raiding campaigns, looking for new victims for his experiments. In ancient times, before the armies of the Old World were strong enough to stop them, the forces of Melkhior reached as far as Tilea and Bretonnia, leaving a trail of destruction and horror behind them.

"Death will only be the beginning of your eternal pain, mortal. Beyond the grave there awaits a world of horrors that you could scarcely begin to ever imagine."

Melkhior of the Necarchs

In his tower in the Forest of Shadows, Melkhior continued W'soran's work on the Grimoire Necronium, his visions of the future growing more disturbed over the centuries as his sanity cracked further and further. Eventually, his visions grew so vivid they could not be depicted in prose, and he began painting on canvases of skin. His dungeons were filled with the living for him to torment. He often turned his mad attentions on his loyal servants as well, until Zacharias challenged him and, eventually, defeated him. Melkhior was not destroyed, however, but slumbers whilst regaining his strength so that he can return to revenge himself upon his wayward student and claim back his rightful position of Master of the Necrarchs.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Melkhior	6	6	3	5	5	3	6	3	9
Abyssal Terror	6	4	0	5	5	4	2	3	4

TROOP TYPE: Monster (Special Character).

MAGIC: Melkhior is a level 4 Wizard. He uses spells from the Lore of the Necromancy.

VAMPIRIC POWERS: Dark Acolyte, Forbidden Lore, Nehekara's Noble Blood.

SPECIAL RULES: Fly, Frenzy, Stupidity, The Red Thirst, Vampiric.

MAGIC ITEMS:

Painbringer (Magic Weapon)

Painbringer is the black sword of Melkhior, said to be made from the magical life force of insane men. The mere touch of this blade brings insanity and hideous pain.

If Melkhior rolls a 6 when rolling To Wound, that attack has the Multiple Wounds (D3) special rule.

Grimoire Necronium (Arcane Item)

Written by Melkhior himself, this book is one of the greatest works of necromancy. In its pages are described the blasphemous rites and evil spells that allow wizards to summon and command the dead.

This book allows Melkhior to cast *Invocation of Nehek* at its basic value without using any Power dice. Each time you use the book roll a D6: on a roll of 1 it runs out of power and cannot be used for the remainder of the battle.

Black Cloak of Lahmia (Talisman)

This cloak is one of the great treasures of Lahmia, the city of the Vampires. Merely looking at the cloak can make eyes bleed and sanity vanish.

The Black Cloak makes Melkhior unable to be targeted by non-magical shooting attacks.

We Only Come Out at Night

Anhurit watched from the shadows as the man worked, shovelling dirt out of the grave. He was hard to focus on—through her Vampire's eyes, the graveyard was filled with much more interesting things. The ground was thick with Shyish, the Purple Wind, lying low to the ground like fog, occasionally reaching upwards with tendrils like grasping fingers. One played around the digging man, who stopped for a moment as if he sensed something amiss. He turned and looked over the rim of the hole, squinting into the blackness beyond the dim circle of light cast by his covered lantern. He looked directly at the pool of darkness Anhurit stood in but saw nothing and soon returned to his labour.

As well as the fog of Shyish, the spirits of the dead wandered through the graveyard, lost and confused. Some wailed over their tombstones whilst others stumbled about repeating the same actions over and over, grasping at things and wondering why they could not touch them, unaware they were dead. Amongst them was the spirit of the butcher whose grave was in the midst of having its sanctity disturbed, playing over his murderous motions, stabbing at nonexistent figures again and again.

There was a thud as the grave robber hit wood. His pace sped up as he frantically cleared the dirt from around the coffin's lid. Without pausing, he worked it open and reached into the coffin; he avoided looking at the corpse's face as he grabbed its hand and worked the ring off its finger. Triumphant, he held up his prize, a smile splitting his filthy face.

He started at the sound: A dry, leathery slapping as Anhurit slowly clapped her hands, standing at the edge of the hole. Terrified, the grave robber backed away, treading on the corpse as he stumbled to the far end of the grave. Anhurit took a step forward and landed gracefully on the narrow rim of the coffin. The man began making noises as if trying to say something.

"Yes," she said to him. "A Vampire."

Losing interest in him, she reached down and took the body's hand. With a sawing motion, as easily as slicing a loaf of bread, she took it off with her claw and then repeated the action with the other hand. Holding up the hands, she appraised them. Yes, they would suit her purposes nicely.

The grave robber soiled himself, and Anhurit remembered he was there.

"You dig quickly," she said. "Therefore, you may live. Keep up your good work."

She waved one of the severed hands at him as if to say goodbye and then leapt out of the grave and walked away. "Yes, they would do very nicely indeed."

SETHEP THE MERCILESS

The origins of Sethep are shrouded in mystery. It is thought by Imperial scholars that he was one of the students of W'soran, the father of the Necrarch Vampires. After the death of W'soran, it is recorded in ancient Khemri scripture that his students fled the lands of Khemri and made their way north to the Old World. Sethep was a bitter rival of the infamous Necrarch Vampire Melkhior, and the two spent many centuries trying to destroy each other. The name of Sethep spread fear across the whole of the Old World. He was a ruthless killer and cared nothing for the sanctity of life. Wherever he passed, death would follow. The forests where his ruined tomb lay were eerie in their silence. No living creature dared venture near the Vampire Lord, who saw life as a disease that needed to be extinguished.

Whole villages in the province of Sylvania would be found deserted as Sethep tried to create his world of undeath. A cold and calculating killer, Sethep had one of the most twisted and evil minds that had ever walked the face of the Old World. No mortals who crossed his path were ever allowed to live to tell the tale, which lent him his macabre name Sethep the Merciless.

For many decades Sethep had secretly plotted how best to defeat Vlad and his armies during the Vampire Wars, but knew that ultimately any such attempt would be futile. Vlad had simply been too great an opponent. At last he spied an opportunity to begin his conquest of the remote province and, after raising a small Undead host, he marched towards Essen. En route he attacked many of the small villages and hamlets that had grown within the forest, swelling his army with the bodies of those slain. The churchyards and burial sites became fields of opportunity for the Necrarch to gather more dead to join his host.



By the time the terrifying horde reached the town of Essen, his force had grown in strength and was thirsty for the blood of the townsfolk. If his Undead legion was set loose in the town then he would soon have an army large enough to threaten the whole of Sylvania. Only a small force barred his way, but at the head of the opposition stood Konrad von Carstein. In one of his rare moments of sanity, Konrad had realised that Sethep's force would have to cross the River Stir. The only crossing available to Sethep was a small ford on the outskirts of the town. It was here that Konrad chose to make his stand. Calling forth his own legions of the dead, he marched his army to the river's edge and prepared to meet Sethep before he could cross the ford.

The only mortal witness of the ensuing battle was a lone woodsman travelling home from the tavern. Before his mysterious disappearance he recounted the dark tale of the battle which has become legend to the folk of Sylvania. As the Necrarch's force tried to cross the river, Konrad unleashed his own minions of death. Skeletons hacked down Zombies and in turn their bones were gnawed upon by Ghouls. It is said that at one point, spirit fought spirit in the ethereal plane, their damned souls doomed to an eternity of torment in the land of the dead.

As the fighting reached its greatest intensity and the carnage of the dead was at its greatest, the two Vampires met. Intense blasts of energy flew from the fingers of Sethep, exploding on the chest of Konrad, but the martial skill of the mighty von Carstein won the day. As Sethep's Zombies crossed the ford, Konrad brought his great weapon down on the Necrarch, beheading him. With no one left to oppose his Necromancer's magical powers, he ordered them to summon a torrent of water to sweep away the threatening Zombies. Although still under the fearsome rule of Konrad von Carstein, the entire province, and perhaps the whole of the world, had been saved from eternal service in undeath.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Sethep	6	5	3	5	4	2	5	2	8

TROOP TYPE: Infantry (Special Character).

MAGIC: Sethep is a level 2 Wizard. He uses spells from the Lore of Necromancy or the Lore of Death.

VAMPIRIC POWERS: Fear Incarnate, Nehekara's Noble Blood.

SPECIAL RULES: The Red Thirst, Vampiric.

MAGIC ITEMS:

Staff of Raukhamon (Arcane Item)

Bound Spell, power level 4. This staff contains the *Hellish Vigour* spell from the Lore of Necromancy. Roll a D6 each time the Staff is used. On a roll of 1, the Staff is temporarily exhausted and loses its spell powers for the rest of the battle. In addition, all enemy models within 6" of the Staff's bearer suffer a -1 penalty on their rolls to hit in close combat.

WALACH HARKON

Grand Master of the Blood Knights

Walach the Dark Star. Walach the Hated. Few legends are as infamous as that of the Grand Master of the Blood Knights. It was this mighty Vampire Lord that brought the curse of Undeath to one of the greatest Knightly Orders of the Empire, and built a kingdom of terror, where his will was enforced by immortal warriors.

But his life in death was not easy. He lost Mikael, his favourite, during a raid on a Sigmarite temple in Gottenburg. The fortress-monastery of the Order was besieged and razed by Empire troops, and Walach's bride, the Vampire maiden Aurora was slain. Most of the Vampires of his Order were destroyed by the priests of Sigmar or the fanatical Witch Hunters of Relicland and Wissenland. But some survived and are scattered across the Old World. Walach himself disappeared and was believed dead, but the world is not that lucky. The Vampire Lord survived.

Walach is a proud warrior. His word is a bond stronger than steel, and though he looks upon humans as tattle, a man of exceptional prowess and courage may catch his eye, and such warriors he challenges to single combat. Those that then impress him (and survive) he invites to join the ranks of the Vampire knights. Those that fail to put up a decent fight Walach will slay without mercy. Knights of the Blood Dragon Order are all much like their master: proud, powerful and supremely confident in their martial prowess.

Walach Harkon gave the Blood Dragons their structure as a knightly order, turning Abhorash's ideas into a reality. Harkon does not share his master's piety, however – he does not, for example, feed only on criminals – but he does share his devotion to perfection and believes the vows of knighthood are the best way to achieve it. Many believe Harkon takes this too far, as he insists on mimicking every aspect of knightly ceremony, including, since the death of his great love Aurora, absolute chastity. Harkon hears no argument, however, and considers anyone who does not follow his traditions to the letter to be undisciplined swine, better culled with the Humans than allowed to further insult the purity of the order.

Harkon was also greatly insulted by the mortals who removed him from his glorious Blood Keep. Now it is believed that Walach is the master of the Blood Keep once more, and the armies of the dead are said to gather under his banners. His goal is to make both the upstart mortals and his fellow Vampires recognise once again the singular superiority of Blood Keep and its knights. Every hundred years the Blood Knights gather to their Keep to feast, recount their deeds and wars, and renew their oaths of fealty to Walach. Walach has sent word to all the Blood Dragons that those who consider themselves worthy should join him in rebuilding the keep and in his new vision for the order. This is not just

to reinstate the keep but to use it as the centre for his campaign for total extermination of the Human race. If Harkon gathers his strength quickly, he could make his dream a reality. One day Walach will lead them once again to war and exact revenge for his defeat: a debt that can only be paid in blood.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Walach Harkon	6	9	3	5	5	3	7	5	10
Nightmare	8	3	0	4	4	1	2	1	3

TROOP TYPE: Cavalry (Special Character).

MAGIC: Walach is a level 2 Wizard. He uses spells from the Lore of Necromancy.

VAMPIRIC POWERS: Dread Knight, Doom Rider, Warrior Pride.

SPECIAL RULES: Hatred (The Empire), Martial Honour, The Red Thirst, Vampiric.

Grand Master of the Blood Knights: If Walach is included in your army, you may take units of Blood Knights as Special Units rather than Rare Units.

MAGIC ITEMS:

Crimson Blade (Magic Weapon)

This is the sword that Walach used to cut down the true Grand Master of the Order of the Blood Dragons. Its keen edge means red ruin to any who dare oppose him, as it cuts very deep with each strike

The Crimson Blade automatically Wounds on a 2+. In addition, to see what additional effect the attack has, compare the result of each To Wound dice rolled with the table below:

D6 Result

- 2-3 Arm wound.** Walach cuts his opponent deep, causing indescribable agony.
The model (or rider if mounted) loses 1 Attack for the remainder of the game.
- 4-5 Chest wound.** Walach strikes his foe close to its heart, inflicting grievous wounds.
The attack is resolved with the Multiple Wounds (D3) special rule.
- 6 Beheaded.** Walach's enemy is beheaded and slain outright.
The attack is resolved as a Killing Blow.

Walach's Bloody Hauberk (Magic Armour)

Vile magic has fused the blood of Walach's victims into this armour's enchantments, providing a shielding aura made of the souls of the damned.

Full plate armour. Walach's Bloody Hauberk gives him a Ward save (5+).

Blood Chalice (Enchanted Item)

In a mockery of the Grail Knights, the Vampires of Blood Keep drank fresh blood from a great metallic chalice so heavy that an ordinary mortal would have trouble lifting it onehanded. The chalice contains the life blood of the greatest opponents Walach has slain in battle. Their pure and noble blood is a potent source of power to any Vampire who drinks it. Shortly after claiming Blood Keep, Walach found the chalice and filled it with the blood of his most respected opponents, including the former Master of the Order. Over the years, he added splashes of blood from other knights, holy men, and Witch Hunters. When his Vampire bride, Aurora, was slain during the siege of Blood Keep, he added her potent blood to the mixture.

At the beginning of each Vampire Counts turn, Walach can drink from the Blood Chalice allowing him to do one of the following:

- Heal 1 wound he suffered earlier in the battle.
- Walach gains an extra Attack.

- Walach coats his sword with blood, which bursts into flames. Walach may re-roll 1's To Hit and To Wound and gain the Flaming Attacks special rule.

The last two effects last until the start of the next Vampire Counts' turn.

Blood Dragon Standard (Magic Standard)

The Order of the Blood Dragon's standard was held by Mikael, second-in command to Walach. After his death the Grand Master has carried the banner himself to remind his knights of the legacy of vengeance.

This is the army's Battle Standard. All Blood Dragon Vampires and Blood Knights within 12" gain the Hatred special rule.

"We are the swords of the night. We are the warriors of the dark. Fear us, for we are your death."

Walach Harkon



THE RED DUKE

Scourge of Aquitaine

The tale of the Red Duke is an ancient Bretonnian story, well known throughout those lands. There are many versions, some of which portray the Duke as a tragic victim, others that paint a story of a heartless, bloodthirsty beast. The troubadours of Bretonnia use all manner of flouncing, flowery language for their chansons and tales, making it all but impossible to tell historical fact from linguistic embroidery. Some say he is a knight who was greatly wronged and falsely disinherited long ago. Some say he is the dark counterpart to the Green Knight, the great swordsman of the Fey, and he exists to test the arms and hearts of the Grail Knights. Whatever the truth, many Questing Knights take the quest of seeking him out and ending his evil once and for all. Those few who find him never return.

Most tales concern a Duke of Aquitaine who was wounded during the crusades against Araby, and found in a deep coma from which he could not be awoken. His loyal retainers carried him on the long journey back to Aquitaine. Across burning desert and through Skaven- and Orc-infested lands they marched, bearing their feverish lord upon a covered bier. Most of them died on the journey, but the Duke survived and was taken to the chambers of his castle to die.

A gloom fell over his castle as he finally succumbed to his illness. His knights, who had endured so much in his service, mourned greatly and swore to serve their master even in death – an oath that would lead to their downfall. The Duke was buried with due ceremony in the mausoleums of his family in the castle catacombs, as was their custom.

For three days the Duke rested within his sarcophagus. Then, as the more cliché-loving storytellers would have us believe, there came a dark and stormy night like no other witnessed in Aquitaine. Amidst the clamour of thunder and the flash of lightning, the dead duke rose from his stone coffin. He was no longer a champion of the King but a foul lord of the Undead.

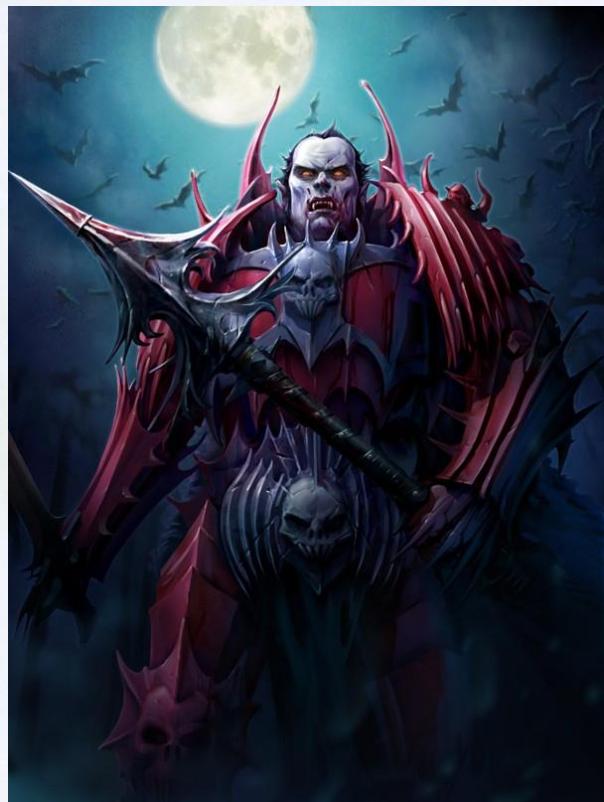
*His grave, gaping wide,
Quietly outs the hungry Sprite,
On his horse to ride.
Hurrah! The dead do ride apace,
And over the land he speeds.
Finding prey they all give chase,
And on our blood he feeds.
Look forth, look forth, the moon shines
bright,
He and the dead gallop fast through the
night.*

*From the Rhyme of the Vampire Knight,
a popular Bretonnian poem*

In a few terrible hours the Duke slew his retainers and raised them back from the dead to be his Undead army and servants. As mindless Zombies his serfs served their master in death. Skeletal men-at-arms now patrolled the Duke's castle. His knights who had so recklessly sworn away their souls returned as vengeful blights. The peasants began to refer to this Vampire as the Red Duke, after his evil thirst and blood-hued armour. The Red Duke was filled with vanity and ambition, and sought to overthrow the king. There were many theories on his identity, but none ever saw his face. His fame grew however, both as a brutal killer and an unmatched swordsman, and as many Bretonnians joined his colours for the latter as cursed his name for the former. The Vampire duke gathered his forces and sought allies against the ruler of Bretonnia, yet the king was forewarned and raised his own army. At Ceren Fields the two hosts met.

As the flower of Bretonnian chivalry battled against the army of the dead, the Red Duke sought out the king and challenged him to personal combat. The two squared off against each other, the king atop his snorting warhorse, the Red Duke mounted upon an unliving steed of bone and magic. The two raised their lances in salute and charged.

Though both were knights of great expertise and skill, the Lady blessed the king that day. Louis triumphed over the Red Duke, transfixing the Vampire with his lance. Without their lord's power to sustain them, the Red Duke's army crumbled to dust and piles of bone.



*With my strength I shall destroy.
With my sword I shall kill.
With my power I shall dominate.
With my blood I shall corrupt.*

The first verse of the Brotherhood of Blood

The castle of Aquitaine was razed to the ground and the earth around ploughed with salt blessed by Grail Knights. Despite the urging of his advisors, the king did not burn the Red Duke's body, but was instead moved to commemorate the life of his champion rather than the dark nature of his death. The king built a great tomb to the Duke of Aquitaine's glory and sealed it with a mark of the Grail. Then he ordered the birth name of the Red Duke to be removed from all records, so that the shameful events would pass from memory.

But the Red Duke was not destroyed by that lance strike. The power of his Unlife was bound within a crimson jewel that he wore on a chain about his neck, which the Red Duke had fuelled with the blood of innocents. In the darkness of his grave, the jewel regenerated the Red Duke, until he rose from his coffin once again.

Alone and trapped by magic within his tomb, the Red Duke raged for centuries. The monument to his glory had become an ironic prison. In the solitary darkness the Red Duke ranted and raved, cursed the gods and swore revenge on those that had imprisoned him. For all the magic that bound him, the Vampire's presence could not be masked and over a thousand years after his fall the Red Duke was freed by a coven of evil followers.



In the centuries that had passed, a new family had taken rule over Aquitaine and the duke had raised a castle upon the Red Duke's ancient lands. Filled with jealousy and paranoia, the Red Duke terrorised the folk of Aquitaine and drank deep of Bretonnian blood. He quickly cast a bloody shadow over Aquitaine, burning villages and slaughtering thousands. He raised another army of the dead to overthrow this usurper, fighting his way to its current duke and taking his murderous revenge upon him. Once more at Ceren Fields the knights of Bretonnia and the Undead host of the Red Duke clashed. As before, the army of Bretonnia proved the strongest and the Undead soldiers were banished back to their graves. This time the Red Duke proved too powerful to slay and he killed dozens of brave knights to escape final destruction, before galloping into the shadowy boughs of the Forest of Chalons to elude pursuit. Aquitaine folklore is littered with tales of the dark knight who stalks the moonless nights and feeds on the living; the jealous Red Duke who will once more return to seek revenge against the lords of Bretonnia. As it is now over five hundred years since his first return, it seems likely he will not strike soon, if at all.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
The Red Duke	6	8	3	5	5	3	7	5	10

TROOP TYPE: Infantry (Special Character).

MAGIC: The Red Duke is a level 1 Wizard. He uses spells from the Lore of Necromancy.

VAMPIRIC POWERS: Heart Piercing, Honour or Death, Red Fury.

SPECIAL RULES: Hatred (Bretonnia), Martial Honour, The Red Thirst, Vampiric.

MAGIC ITEMS:

Blade of Leaping Gold (Magic Weapon)

The Red Duke took this sword from an Emir of Araby he defeated in single combat.

Two hand weapons. This sword gives the Red Duke +1 Strength and +1 To Hit in close combat.

The Armour of Blood (Magic Armour)

The Red Duke wears the Armour of Blood, a suit of armour with mystic properties.

Full plate armour. The Armour of Blood allows the Red Thirst to regain Wounds automatically for every Wound, no need to roll is needed.



"Hatred is a virtue!"

Ahron of the Blood Dragons

GASHNAG

The Black Prince

The Border Principalities are wild lands ruled over by dozens of robber barons and petty nobles. These small provinces war frequently, and are beset by the raids of greenskins from the south. Yet there is one town, protected by a soaring dark citadel, which has survived the trials and tribulations of the Borderlands for many centuries, outliving many of the longest-ruling dynasties of the region. This small kingdom is the domain of Gashnag, the Black Prince, scion of ancient Strigos.

While other Vampires of the Strigoi claw an existence in the filth of old crypts, dreaming of glories past, Gashnag has raised himself from the sewers (quite literally). In him is reborn the ancient power of the Strigoi, or so he tells unthinking courtiers. The realm of Gashnag has developed a sinister reputation amongst the other Border Princes. Wolf packs prowl its borders like patrols, and merchants who pass into the cursed lands never return. There are tales of foolhardy nobles who besieged the dark citadel, and even more tales of their grisly deaths.

Though none of the townsfolk have seen them, hundreds of Crypt Ghouls haunt the catacombs of the citadel. By secret ways they move into and out of the castle to act as the court of the Black Prince, bringing news of the wider world and despatched on errands of their dark lord. The wolves that prowl the realm of Gashnag answer his call too. No flocks of the local farmers have ever been harmed by these voracious packs, yet the livestock of rival towns seem to be plagued by their attacks.

For all his bestial appearance and brutal appetite, Gashnag is not without wit and guile. A child-in-darkness of Vorag, Gashnag is determined not to make the same mistakes of his sire. He rose to notoriety slowly, and he has borrowed

from the Lahmians the gifts of subtle manipulation. He has practised hard to conserve his most vicious rages for enemies on the battlefield. Resisting his brethren's taste for being worshipped as a God, he has instead recast himself as a romantic hero. Under the sobriquet The Black Prince, he appears on his battlements only at night and sees no one but his closest advisors, ever-stoking the mystique that surrounds him. Gashnag has even travelled abroad, swathed in a thick cloak to hide his misshapen form. Through his agents, Gashnag has paid bards and troubadours to spread tales of his greatness (and good looks!) across the Old World and as far afield as Araby. These fanciful tales speak that he is under a terrible curse that causes him to appear beastly and savage but that he was once strikingly handsome prince, disinherited from his fortune, who seeks a loved one to provide him with an heir. It is perhaps best not to speak of what Gashnag would do should a suitable lady of breeding declare her interest...

Gashnag also saves all his violence for the enemies of his tiny kingdom, and the only time he does appear in public, his hideous form is hidden beneath a huge and heavy cloak as he swiftly rides to mete out justice or defend the borders. When a tribe of ravenous Ogres descended from the Black Mountains and laid waste to three kingdoms in a rampage of hungry destruction, it was Gashnag who rode out alone to meet them. He returned the next night and planted a pole in the town square, adorned with the heads of a dozen Ogres, so his people would know they were safe again. It is not just protection that Gashnag offers his subjects. A strange air of romance and daring surrounds his kingdom, drawing all manner of devoted yet misguided folk, which has caused the province to swell in population in recent years. If this continues, The Black Prince may very well succeed where his sire failed and return the Strigoi to a great power once again – and one far closer to the Empire.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Gashnag	6	7	3	5	5	3	7	5	9

TROOP TYPE: Infantry (Special Character).

MAGIC: Gashnag is a level 2 Wizard. He uses spells from the Lore of Necromancy or the Lore of Death.

VAMPIRIC POWERS: Infinite Hatred, Iron Sinews.

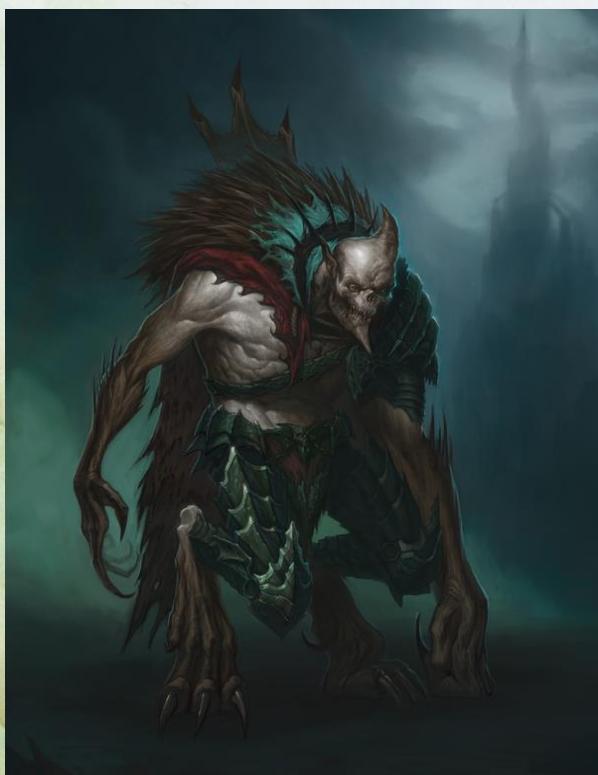
SPECIAL RULES: Armour Piercing (1), Hatred, Multiple Wounds (D3), The Red Thirst, Vampiric.

MAGIC ITEMS:

Cloak of Strigos (Talisman)

The cloak worn by Gashnag not only function to hide his hideous form from prying eyes, but is also a magical artefact from ancient Strigos.

The Cloak of Strigos gives Gashnag a Ward save (5+). In addition, enemies targeting him in close combat and with missile attacks suffers -1 To Hit.



HEINRICH KEMMLER

The Lichemaster

Heinrich Kemmler burns with the need for power. Having recognised the limits that mortality placed upon him in his early years, Kemmler made it his life's work to escape them. He plunged into the world of Necromancy as a young man, and by the time he had reached his fortieth year he was able to raise entire graveyards of corpses to do his bidding.

Kemmler became a great and much-feared Necromancer, plundering every Wizard's tower and ancient temple he could find in his search for dark truths. His star was in the ascendant for many decades until ambitious rivals began to usurp his power. United, those who Kemmler had defeated proved stronger than even the self-styled Lichemaster. At the Battle of Ten Thousand Skulls, Kemmler's foes succeeded in driving him to his knees. Although he finally managed to scatter his attackers with a great spell of confusion, his body was broken and his mind blasted in the battle.

For many years Heinrich wandered the Grey Mountains and the Border Princes as little better than a half-sane beggar. By some quirk of fate, he uncovered the tomb of Krell; a long dead Chaos Champion whose burial mound was so magnificent it towered high above him. Here Kemmler struck a terrible pact with the gods. They restored him to his former power and in return, Heinrich swore to slay and destroy in their name. Now, the name of the Lichemaster once again strikes terror into the hearts of ordinary folk and tales of his foul deeds are whispered when retold throughout the Old World.

Heinrich stands a little under six feet tall and has long, filthy white hair. Beneath Kemmler's robes, his body is covered



with scars, cuts and abrasions from his years of madness. He is shrouded in a large dark cloak that can carry its wearer across the veil between worlds. When going into battle he wields the Chaos Tomb Blade, given to him when he made his pact with the forces of Chaos; and the Skull Staff, a potent magical artefact which is topped with a skull that chatters and gibbers constantly.

Though he does not know it, Kemmler's wanderings in the mountains were subtly guided by the spirit of Nagash – part of an evil plan that would free Krell and unite him with the forces of the Undead. Nagash's plans have suffered a minor setback following the heavy casualties that the Lichemaster's armies suffered at the Battle of Maisontaal Abbey, but in time they are sure to bear rich and terrible fruit.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Heinrich Kemmler	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	1	8

TROOP TYPE: Infantry (Special Character, Master Necromancer).

MAGIC: Kemmler is a Level 4 Wizard. He uses spells from the Lore of Necromancy.

SPECIAL RULES: **Loremaster (Lore of Necromancy), Master of the Dead.**

MAGIC ITEMS:

Chaos Tomb Blade (Magic Weapon)

The Chaos Tomb Blade once belonged to a mighty Chaos Warrior. It is forged from the raw stuff of Chaos and thirsts for blood and death, and will reward Heinrich with magical power for any lives that he takes. This evil weapon not only fills its wielder with an unholy energy but also entraps the souls of those it cleaves, binding their fleshless remains in servitude.

The Chaos Tomb Blade confers +2 Attacks. Furthermore, if Kemmler is in a unit of Skeleton Warriors or Grave Guard, for each model he slays in close combat, an extra model is added to his unit following the rules for Resurrecting Fallen Warriors. Newly created models have the same equipment as the rest of the unit.

Cloak of Mists and Shadows (Enchanted Item)

Kemmler is surrounded by a dark cloak that swirls and twists with a life of its own. It makes his body melt into a dark mist which swirls across the battlefield.

At the beginning of each of Kemmler's turns, choose either the Fly or Ethereal special rule. Kemmler has that rule until the beginning of his next turn.

Skull Staff (Arcane Item)

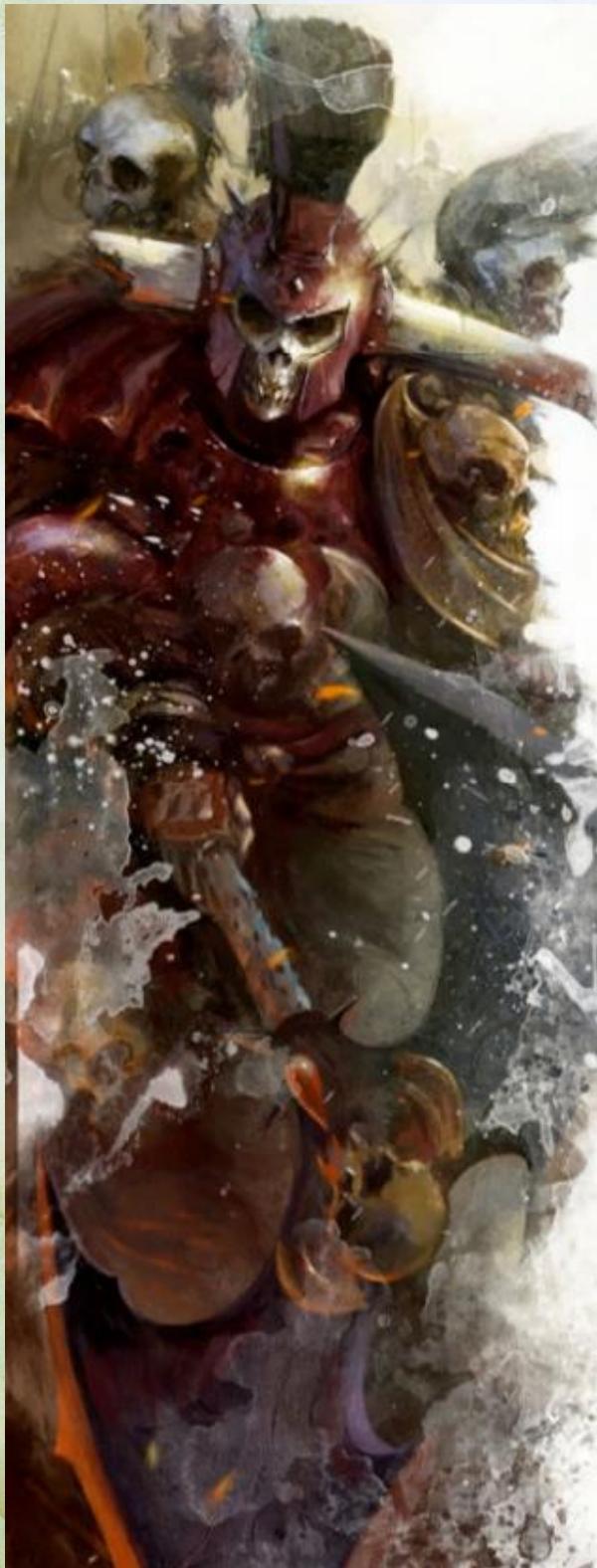
The jaws of the skull staff chatter and gnash together warning Heinrich of the use of magic against him, or of hidden magical items that are nearby.

At the beginning of the friendly Magic phase, your opponent must declare all of his magic items that are within 12" of Kemmler, and the models/units that are carrying them. In addition, Kemmler receives a +1 to his dice rolls when he attempts to dispel.

KRELL

Lord of Undeath

Krell was a mighty Chaos Champion in the days long before the birth of the Empire. At this time there were only a few scattered tribes of men, barbarians with few skills and little learning. Krell was the ruler of a barbarian tribe who was corrupted by the Chaos god known as Khorne. He quickly carved out an empire amongst the barbarian tribes of the north and then



turned against the Dwarfs to the south. This was during the period that the Dwarfs call the Time of Woes, when the Dwarf empire had been riven by earthquakes and volcanic explosions, then assaulted by massed tribes of Orcs, Goblins, Skaven and other evil creatures. Krell allied with the Night Goblins that stormed the Dwarf strongholds of Karak Ungor and Karak Varn. His name is recorded many times in the Great Book of Grudges. He was finally slain by the Dwarf Hero Grimbul Ironhelm during the assault on Karak Kadrin.

Krell's followers carried away his body and buried it in a crudely wrought tomb on the edge of the area now known as the Chaos Wastes. Nearly 1500 years later, Nagash came upon the tomb when he was searching for the lost Crown of Sorcery. Easily translating the runic inscriptions on the tomb walls, Nagash realised that this barrow held the remains of a mighty champion. Nagash had heard much of Krell and his brief but bloody reign, so he raised the mighty warrior from the dead to fight in his armies. Krell was placed in command of one of Nagash's Undead legions when he fought against Sigmar at the Battle of the River Reik.

Krell's forces were to attack the Empire's Dwarf allies, giving Krell an opportunity to avenge his defeat at Dwarf hands centuries before. Leading his legion from the front, Krell smashed into the Dwarfs. The battle raged furiously, the Dwarfs stubbornly refusing to give ground against the seemingly endless ranks of Undead troops. But just as it seemed that the Dwarf line was crumbling, Sigmar cut down Nagash. In moments, the Undead army was all but destroyed, as units turned to dust without Nagash's will to keep them alive. Only Krell and his Grave Guard survived Nagash's defeat. At the head of his troops, he was able to battle his way through the Dwarf lines and escape.

The Barrow Kings
As well as the barbaric crypts of the pre-Empire tribes, there are other ancient monuments housing the dead kings and princes of old. At its peak, the ancient civilisation of Nehekhar stretched northwards into what is now the Badlands and Border Princes. Although they could not build the massive pyramids of their borne cities, the Nehekharans still constructed necropolises to house their dead. Many of these tomb settlements were unaffected by Nagash's great awakening and lie as tumbled ruins, but some were touched by the dark magic and their occupants arose from their slumbers just as in the south. These are the Barrow Kings, as jealous of the living as the Tomb Kings of Khemri, and as warlike and ambitious in death as they were in life.

Sigmar's forces were exhausted by the battle they had just fought and did not pursue Krell immediately. This proved a costly mistake, for such human frailties did not worry Krell or his Undead followers. Marching night and day, Krell led what remained of his forces on a dance of destruction that cut a bloody swathe across the lands of the fledgling Empire. Entire communities were destroyed, towns sacked, and castles burnt to the ground, while the cities of the Empire filled with refugees fleeing from Krell's army. Krell was finally cornered by Sigmar and defeated at the Battle of Glacier Lake, and his body was imprisoned in a magically constructed tomb. To this day, tales of Krell and his doomed legion are still told round campfires and taverns across the Empire.

Hundreds of years later Heinrich Kemmler, better known as the Lichennaster, came upon the Krell's tomb. He struck a deal with the Krell and freed him to do his bidding, or so he thought. In fact, Kemmler's wanderings in the mountains had been subtly guided by Nagash as part of a cunning and evil plan which would free Krell and unite him with the Lichemaster, and then unleash these two powerful Undead champions against the Kingdom of Bretonnia. Nagash's plans have suffered a minor setback following the heavy casualties the Lichemaster's and Krell's forces suffered at the Battle of La Maisontaal Abbey, but in time they are sure to bear rich and terrible fruit.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Krell	4	5	0	4	5	3	5	3	9

TROOP TYPE: Infantry (Special Character).



SPECIAL RULES: Killing Blow, Terror, Undead.

Champion of the Dead: Krell must always issue a challenge whenever possible, and must answer any challenge issued by the enemy. If Krell is fighting a challenge whilst in the same unit as Heinrich Kemmler, he has the Heroic Killing Blow special rule.

MAGIC ITEMS:

The Black Axe of Krell (Magic Weapon)

The Black Axe is a huge double-handed axe carved from a solid piece of black obsidian rock and enchanted with powerful spells. When the axe bites into flesh small pieces of the blade break off and are left embedded in the victim's flesh. If the victim is not killed outright then these razor-sharp slivers start working their way deeper and deeper into the victim's body, causing a slow agonising death.

Great weapon. The Black Axe of Krell confers the Multiple Wounds (D3) special rules. Furthermore, any model taking an unsaved Wound from the Black Axe but not removed from play must roll a D6 at the start of each of its subsequent turns. If the result is higher than the number of Wounds it has remaining, that model suffers an additional Wound with no armour saves allowed.

Armour of the Barrows (Magic Armour)

The passage of the ages has strengthened rather than weakened this elaborate Chaos plate armour. Such is the aura of entropy that surrounds it that it has the power to decay the magic of enemy weapons in an instant.

Full plate armour. If an enemy with a magic weapon wounds Krell in close combat and Krell passes his armour save, that magic weapon's abilities are nullified; it is treated as a normal, non-magical weapon of the same type for the remainder of the game. If no type is listed, treat it as a hand weapon.

Crown of the Damned (Talisman)

The bearer draws revitalising energies from the spirits imprisoned within the Crown, but at times their eternal wailing can be overpowering.

The Crown grants Krell the Ward save (4+) and Stupidity special rules.

"Now I been fightin' in one scrap or another every day for as long back as I can remember. Truth be told, can't even think back to a day when I didn't have to kill a man just to survive until the next. What I'm sayin' in this is that I'm pretty fair with a blade. I can handle me own. A Wight though? I ain't got nothin' on a Wight. Some of those creatures been fightin' for centuries! I would say they live to fight, but that's obviously not true, since they don't really 'live' at all. If a Liche holds onto a semblance of life so he can perfect his study of magic, then a Wight is the soldierin' equivalent of a Liche."

Lars Bodger, Mercenary

DIETER HELSNICHT

Doom Lord of Middenheim

Dieter Helsnicht was once a great and renowned wizard who lived in the Empire city of Middenheim during the time of the Three Emperors. Over the course of his studies Dieter learned of the great Necromancer king Kadon and decided to travel to the lands that he had once ruled in the Border Princes in order to find out more about this enigmatic and evil figure. It was while he was there that Dieter first started to hear rumours of the return of Nagash after his defeat by Sigmar. Dieter, drawn by an irresistible curiosity, continued his journey and travelled to the fortress of Nagashizzar. What happened to him in that cursed place is not known, but he returned to Middenheim a changed man, his hair turned prematurely grey and his skin tinged with an unhealthy pallor. The Doomlord had been born!

Shortly after his return word began to spread of evil practices and vile rituals being performed in the dead of night by Dieter and his followers. Only too aware of where such things could lead, the High Priest of Ulric gathered a company of Knights and descended on Dieter's dwelling. They arrived just in time, disrupting a magic ritual that would have allowed Dieter to raise the dead buried in Middenheim into a powerful Undead army. Shaking his fist and vowing revenge Dieter fled from the city, swooping away over the heads of the astonished High Priest and Knights atop the back of a monstrous Manticore.



Dieter was a man of deep, if twisted, intelligence and had prepared for every eventuality. He had built a secret fortress deep in the Forest of Shadows to which he could escape should his activities be discovered. From this dark and evil place he plotted his revenge and slowly built up his strength. Decades passed, and those who had known Dieter Helsnicht had either died or forgotten him, when rumours started that a dark tide of pestilence and death was spreading through the forest towards the Empire. Bands of Orcs and Beastmen were being driven before it, and travel along the road that joined Middenheim and Erengard became extremely perilous.

Determined to do something about the problem. Einrich Moltke, the Elector Count of Nordland, mobilised his army. He advanced quickly, easily crushing the scattered Orc and Beastman warbands that opposed him. However, when he pushed deeper into the Forest of Shadows, disaster struck! As the army marched along an ancient path beside the Lake of Woes, it was ambushed by a powerful Undead horde. Caught in column of march, with the lake on one flank and the Undead on the other, the army was all but annihilated. Some troops attempted to flee across the lake, but Dieter had cunningly concealed units of Undead in the water, so as the troops tried to swim they were dragged below the surface to a horrible death. At a stroke Dieter had wiped out almost half of the Empire forces that lay between him and Middenheim!

One of the few survivors of the battle was the Elector Count himself. When the ambush was sprung he had been leading a unit of Pistoliars that was scouting ahead of the main army. At the head of this small unit he was able to cut his way out of the ambush and make it back to the small village of Beeckerhoven on the Middenheim to Erengard road. A small garrison had been left here to guard the army's lines of communication, and now this, along with the few scattered survivors of the ambush, were all that remained of the once mighty Nordland army. Grimly the Count organised his meagre forces and prepared for a desperate defence. Messengers were sent galloping to Middenheim and Kislev requesting reinforcements.

Fortunately for the Empire, Dieter did not pursue the Elector Count immediately, delaying his advance so that he could perform the rituals that would allow him to add the dead Nordland troops to his Undead host. Even then he advanced very slowly, despatching Undead horsemen and Carrion to scout ahead of the main army. By the time that the Undead host arrived at Beeckerhoven, the Elector Count had had several days to prepare, and reinforcements from Kislev and Middenheim were already on their way from the east.

"It is a common mistake to believe death marks an end, for it is merely another journey. The steps of those who walk this path can easily be retraced, but such adventurers may see many disturbing sights on the way, and will not be the same upon their return."

The Book of Graves

Dieter's caution had not been in vain, however, for he knew exactly what forces he faced in Beeckerhoven, and that reinforcements were on the way. He realised that if the Empire contingents were allowed to concentrate into one force they would outnumber his own Undead army. Rather than allow this to happen he determined to strike quickly and attempt to defeat the separate contingents before they had a chance to combine into one unstoppable force.

To this end Dieter despatched a small force of Undead horsemen north to stop, or at least slow down, the Kislev reinforcements. There was nothing that he could do to delay the Middenheim reinforcements as the village of Beeckerhoven lay between Dieter and the advancing Middenheim army. Instead he prepared to launch a whirlwind assault on Beeckerhoven. If he could just destroy the Count of Nordland's troops quickly enough he would then be able to turn his entire army against the Middenland reinforcements and crush them as they arrived on the battlefield.

Dieter's plan almost succeeded. He began the attack by assaulting Beeckerhoven with regiments of Skeletons. Zombies and Ghouls, while keeping his chariots and cavalry in reserve. The attack was well supported by Screaming Skull catapults which poured a deadly accurate fire into the village, quickly silencing the Nordland artillery before it caused any significant damage to the Undead forces. The Undead assault troops crashed into the terribly outnumbered defenders and soon furious battles were raging amongst the streets and buildings of the village. Slowly but surely the defenders were pushed back. The Count of Nordland lead a desperate counterattack at the head of a regiment of Halberdiers, but he was quickly cut off and surrounded by the victorious Undead forces.

Meanwhile, the Count of Middenland had been force marching his army so that he would arrive as quickly as possible. Although the Steam Tank accompanying the army blew a gasket and had to be abandoned, the rest of the reinforcements arrived just in time to save the last valiant defenders of Beeckerhoven. Sweeping onto the battlefield the Middenland forces crashed into the flank of the Undead army.

The Nordlanders took new heart and redoubled their efforts, and for a moment it appeared as if the Undead army would be hurled back. It was at this moment that Dieter committed his reserves, charging his cavalry and chariots into the midst of the newly arrived Empire troops. Dieter himself led the charge on the back of his manticore, swooping down to engage the Elector Count of Middenland and the White Wolf Knights in furious hand-to-hand combat. The battle hung in the balance as combat raged all along the line of battle.

At this vital moment the Kislev reinforcements arrived, having wiped out Dieter's small holding force. Wasting no time, the Winged Lancers charged into the rear of the Undead units that were attacking Beeckerhoven, decisively turning the tide against the forces of Undeath. As the attack weakened the Count of Nordland seized the opportunity to cut through the thinning ranks of Undead to attack the Doomboss directly. When the Count approached, Dieter seized him in a vice-like grip and unleashed a powerful spell which would have blasted the

Count's soul were it not for the protective Black Amulet he wore. This magic artifact turned the power of the spell back on its caster, stunning Dieter and leaving him helpless.

The Elector Count lunged at the defenceless figure, and ran Dieter through with his sword. With a terrible cry Dieter slumped in his saddle, and the legions animated by his dark will collapsed. Skeletons fell into piles of bones. Zombies stumbled and fell, decomposing before the eyes of the watchers till they became pools of rot on the ground. Ghouls fled into the deep woods. Silence fell over the battlefield, and then with a terrible creaking wail, the Doomboss's Manticore rose into the air and soared away, bearing Dieter away on its back. The Doomboss's plans had been thwarted!

The Doomboss survived the battle, although he had suffered wounds that would have slain any normal man. Over the coming centuries he would return to threaten Middenheim many more times. From his secret fortress hidden deep in the Forest of Shadows he remains a threat to the Empire's security to the present day.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Dieter Helsnicht	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	1	8
Manticore	6	5	0	5	5	4	5	4	5

TROOP TYPE: Monster (Special Character)

MAGIC: Dieter is a level 4 Wizard. He uses spells from the Lore of Necromancy and/or Lore of Death. He may freely choose spells from both Lores.

SPECIAL RULES: **Fly**, **Frenzy** (Manticore only), **Killing Blow** (Manticore only).

Doom Lord: *Dieter has an iron will and can bend even the most powerful creatures to his authority.*

Dieter does not need to test for Berserk Rage from his Manticore's Frenzy.

MAGIC ITEMS:

Chaos Runesword (Magic Weapon)

This weapon was forged by Grungni Ironheart, a Dwarf Runesmith who was corrupted and led astray by the Chaos Gods.

The runes carved into the blade gives the bearer's +1 Weapon Skill, +1 Strength and +1 Attack.

Staff of Flaming Death (Enchanted Item)

The eyes of the Staff of Flaming Death glow bright with magical fire and its jaws clatter and gnash constantly.

Bound Spell, power level 4. This staff contains the *Burning Head* spell from the Lore of Fire.

Power Scroll (Arcane Item)

This scroll is imbued with great magical power which is released when it is read aloud.

One use only. The bearer can use the scroll to cast one of his spells at its basic power level automatically without using any Power dice. It can be dispelled as normal.

HELMAN GHORST

Originally the youngest of five strong brothers from the village of Templehof, Ghorst was a farrier and groom just like his father. His love of danger and the open road was well known, and he would take any excuse to deliver messages to Ulfheim in the west or Vassel in the south. One day he returned from his adventures to find his brothers and father dead in their beds, taken by the Plague of Blue Roses. Fungus-bruises covered their bodies, and its spores were thick in the air. Ghorst could not accept the loss. At first, he tried to contract the plague himself by embracing his lost brothers, but it would not take him. Eventually, Ghorst plunged himself into the study on the black arts, hoping to return his brothers to life.

Word of Ghorst's studies reached the peasantry and, in due course, the ears of von Korden. Escaping the Witch Hunter's wrath by hiding amongst the corpses of a nearby plague pit, Ghorst loaded the bodies of his dead relatives onto a mouldering carriage under cover of darkness. He lashed it to a pair of famished oxen and fled deep into nearby Vargavia.

"A nightmare in the flesh is Helman Ghorst. I saw him once, I did. Ensconced in a cart pulled not by horses, nor demon steeds, but men. And not just any men – his own dead brothers resurrected! Makes you shudder..."

Eckhart Blitz, Captain, Ostermark Garrison

It was in that forsaken realm that the wanderer encountered Mannfred von Carstein. The count saw a powerful madness growing in Ghorst's eyes. Instead of killing him for his presumption in trespassing, Mannfred began to teach Ghorst the secrets of necromancy, even going so far as to gift him an unholy tome of magic. It is no longer a desperate adventurer that answers to the name Helman Ghorst, just as it is no longer oxen that draw his carriage across the dirt tracks of Sylvania. Instead, his bone-ridged cart is pulled through the night by the four selfsame siblings he 'rescued' from his village, each once-handsome farrier restored to a mockery of life and forced to stumble along at the head of their brother's unliving host.



	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Helman Ghorst	4	3	3	3	3	2	3	1	7
Corpse Cart	-	-	-	4	5	4	-	-	-
The Brother's Ghorst	4	2	0	4	-	-	1	*	-

TROOP TYPE: Infantry (Special Character).

MAGIC: Helman Ghorst is a Level 2 Wizard. He uses spells from the Lore of Necromancy.

SPECIAL RULES: Master of the Dead.

Awaken from the Grave: Helman Ghorst uses his dark knowledge of the black arts to raise the dead and bring them under his control.

When Helman Ghorst successfully casts the *Invocation of Nehek* or *Raise Dead* spells, he can add +D3 to the total number of Skeletons or Zombies created.

MAGIC ITEMS:

The Liber Noctis (Arcane Item)

This decrepit tome bristles with secrets and eldritch powers. Reading from it summons dark thoughts and grim deeds.

This tome gives Helman +1 Power dice in each of his Magic phases. Only he may use this dice.

*"What is death but an obstacle to be overcome?
There is no true death beneath the eternal night."*

Necromancer Helman Ghorst



THE LORE OF NECROMANCY

INVOCATION OF NEHEK

(Signature Spell)

The Vampire channels the winds of Magic to replenish his army. The caster intones the dread syllables handed down from Nagash himself, breathing unlife into the cadavers strewn across the battlefield.

Invocation of Nehek is an **augment** spell that targets all friendly Undead units within 6". The target units immediately regain a number of Wounds as follows: infantry gain D6 plus the caster's Wizard level in Wounds (roll for each unit); other troop types targeted gain 1 plus the caster's Wizard level in Wounds. However, characters, Shrines, Chariots, Monsters or models with the Ethereal special rule can never regain more than 1 Wound per successful casting. Wounds gained are distributed as described in Resurrecting Fallen Warriors. The Wizard can choose to target all friendly Undead units within 12". If they do so, the casting value is increased to 12+. Alternatively, he can choose to target all friendly Undead units within 18". If they do so, the casting value is increased to 18+.



1. VANHELS DANSE MACABRE

Cast on 6+

The Undead are filled with an unholy magical energy that causes them jerk forwards on the attack and stride across the battlefield with an unnatural speed that even most mortals are unable to match.

Vanhel's Danse Macabre is an **augment** spell that targets a friendly Undead unit within 12". The target unit re-rolls failed To Hit rolls in close combat until the start of the caster's next Magic phase. In addition, if the target unit is unengaged, it can immediately make a normal move as if it were the Remaining Moves sub-phase. The Wizard can choose to have this spell target all friendly Undead units within 12". If they do so, the casting value is increased to 12+.

2. HELLISH VIGOUR

Cast on 8+

The Undead concentrates on animating the creatures under his control. They attack with such speed and ferocity that few can defend against their flurry of blows.

Hellish Vigour is an **augment** spell that targets a friendly Undead unit within 12". The unit re-rolls failed To Wound rolls in Close Combat until the start of the caster's next Magic phase. The Wizard can choose to have this spell target all friendly Undead units within 12". If they do so, the casting value is increased to 16+.

3. GAZE OF NAGASH

Cast on 9+

Bolts of Dark Magic leap from the Undead spellcaster's eyes. Where the beams touch the victims' flesh, their skin blackens and withers, sloughing away till the white gleam of bone is visible beneath.

Gaze of Nagash is a **magic missile** with a range of 24" that causes 2D6 Strength 4 hits. The Wizard can choose to extend the range to 48". If they do so, the casting value is increased to 12+.

THE CURSE OF UNDEATH (Lore Attribute)

As the powers of Dark Magic are wielded to the purpose of necromancy, its unwholesome energies animate and invigorate the Undead.

When a spell from the Lore of Necromancy is successfully cast, one Undead unit within 6" of the caster regain 1 Wound following the rules for *Invocation of Nehek*.

4. RAISE DEAD

Cast on 9+

War and plague are common within the Old World and the bones of their victims lie but shallowly buried. A Necromancer can awaken these mortal remains to reinforce the Undead legions under his control and serve him in a ghastly mockery of life.

Raise Dead is a special type of spell with a range of 18" that brings a brand new unit of Zombies into play. Choose a point on the battlefield – that point need not lie in the caster's line of sight or forward arc. Next, roll 2D6+3. This is how many models comprise the new unit. The caster can choose to summon 2D6+3 Skeleton Warriors instead. If they do so, the casting value is increased to 14+.

When placing this unit, it must be wholly within the spell's range and at least 1" away from all units, buildings and impassable terrain. It can be placed facing any direction, and in any legal formation, as long as the unit's front rank contains at least five models. This unit does not have any upgrades or command models. Units summoned by this spell cannot be dispelled, and do not award victory points under any circumstances. Finally, if a summoned unit cannot be placed because there is not enough room, the unit does not enter play at all, though the spell's lore attribute may still apply.

5. CURSE OF YEARS

Cast on 12+

The Wizard spits out an ancient curse and his enemies age at an incredible rate. They feel their skin shrivelling, bodies decaying and their hair turns white. They collapse, unable to support themselves as withering age engulfs them.

Remains in Play. *Curse of Years* is a **hex** spell with a range of 1 8". When cast, roll a D6 for every model in the target unit - on a score of 6 the model suffers a Wound. At the end of the next Magic phase, roll again for each model in the unit, they will suffer a Wound on a 5+, and so on, to a maximum of 2+. No armour saves are allowed against Wounds caused by Curse of Years.

6. WIND OF DEATH

Cast on 15+

The Wizard calls forth spectral winds that howl through the ranks of the foe, tearing their souls from their bodies.

Remains in play. *Wind of Death* is a **magical vortex** that uses the small round template. Once the template is placed, the player then nominates the direction in which the Wind of Death will move. To determine how many inches the template moves, roll an artillery dice and multiply the result by 3. Any unit beneath or passed over by the template takes D6 Strength 3 hits for each rank of models in the unit with no armour saves allowed. If the result on the artillery dice is a misfire, centre the template on the caster and roll a scatter dice and a D6. The template moves a number of inches equal to the roll of the D6, in the direction indicated by the scatter dice. If a Hit! is rolled, use the small arrow on the Hit! symbol. In either event, in subsequent turns, the Wind of Death will move a number of inches determined by rolling an artillery dice, in a random direction determined by rolling a scatter dice. If a misfire is rolled in subsequent turns, the Wind of Death dissipates and is removed. The caster may choose to infuse the Wind of Death with more power so that it uses the large round template and its Strength is increased to 4 instead. If they do so, the casting value is 25+.

VAMPIRIC POWERS

Vampires originate from the ancient land of Lahmia, where the first of them actually reigned as kings and queens. Here they followed a corrupted form of the death cult of Khemri. When Lahmia was overthrown and destroyed and its necropolis was ransacked, only seven of the blood drinking nobility escaped. They fled to different parts of the known world and hid among mortal society.

Of these seven original Vampires, five are known to the men of the Old World. All the Vampires recorded in history are their descendants and so have inherited common family traits. The oldest Vampires have the purest blood and the most direct line of descent. Their powers are greater and therefore their influence and standing among the Vampire kind is also greater.

On this page, you will find powers that can be bought for your Vampires. You cannot buy multiples of the same power for a single Vampire, but different Vampires in the same army can have the same powers if you wish. Each Vampire may only take powers from their own Bloodline (unless specified).

Red Fury 55 points

The Vampire enters the melee, as it has always done in centuries past, with a savage and unstoppable blood-lust. It won't stop until all its enemies lie dead on the ground.

Blood Dragon or Strigoi only. For each enemy model slain by the Vampire in close combat, it can immediately make a further Attack. These additional Attacks do not benefit from Red Fury.

Fear Incarnate 25 points

This Vampire has a dread reputation. It is said that it has slaughtered thousands of would-be heroes over the centuries, and no right-minded warrior will seek battle with such a foe. The mere presence of such an unnatural creature is enough to stop the heart of weak beings and to cast despair in the strongest of souls.

Von Carstein, Necrarch, Blood Dragon, Strigoi only. Enemy units in base contact with the Vampire must take a Leadership test at the start of each round of close combat. If failed, the unit will only Hit on 6's this round. Models with the Immunity (Psychology) special rule are immune to this power.

Supernatural Horror 25 points

This Vampire is hideous to look upon, having long since forsaken the trappings of nobility and beauty. The revulsion it causes in mortals vindicates their decision to embrace the beast within. The appearance of this Vampire reflects the evil in its veins a thousand fold; the true horror is open for all to see.

Von Carstein, Necrarch or Strigoi only. The Vampire has the Terror special rule.

Flying Horror 25 points

This Vampire soars through the stormy skies, kept aloft with Dark Magic or bat-like wings, often transforming into a bat or whirl of mist. In doing so, they gain all the advantages of the new form and become exceedingly fast.

Von Carstein, Necrarch, Strigoi or Lahmia only. The Vampire has the Fly special rule.

Curse of the Revenant 30 points

So strong is the desire for some to continue living that they defy death. But this has a price – the eternal thirst for the blood of the living.

Necrarch or Strigoi only. The Vampire gains the Regeneration (4+) special rule.

Transfix 20 points

The entrancing gaze of the Vampire traps the weak-willed. Mesmerised, the Vampire's victim can do nothing to ward away the inevitable deathblow.

Von Carstein or Lahmia only. At the beginning of the Close Combat phase select one model in base contact with the Vampire. If the test is failed, the victim cannot attack in that Close Combat phase and all attacks directed against the victim will hit automatically. Models with the Immunity (Psychology) special rule are immune to this power.

Unbending Willpower 20 points

Some of these immortal bunters have crossed the oceans of time, commanded armies and ruled kingdoms in their everlasting undeath. There are few creatures that can avoid being overcome with awe and falling on their knees before them and the obedience they obtain from their servants is absolute.

Von Carstein or Necrarch only. Units of Undead within 6" of a model with this power suffer one less Wound than they normally would due to the Unstable special rule, or following the death of the army's General. This is cumulative with the Battle Standard, but not other Vampires with this power.

Honour or Death 5 points

Many mortal champions have quickly changed their attitude after the proud challenge they issued was accepted by a dark creature whose eyes were the eyes of death.

Von Carstein or Blood Dragon only. At the start of a challenge, the enemy character selected to take on the Vampire must take a Leadership test before any blows are struck. If failed, the enemy model will fight with Weapon Skill 1 for the remainder of the turn. Models with the Immunity (Psychology) special rule are immune to this power.

VON CARSTEIN:

Walking Death

25 points
So powerful is the unholy presence of the Vampire that mere mortals are forced to flee in dread.

The presence of one or more von Carstein Vampires with this power in a combat adds +1 to their side's combat resolution.

Aura of Dark Majesty

25 points
The very greatest of Vampires project an aura of utter supremacy and poise that induces fear and awe in even the proudest of beings. To be in the presence of this Vampire is to know your lowly place in the scheme of the world.

All enemy units within 6" of one or more Vampires with the Aura of Dark Majesty suffer a -1 penalty to their Leadership. This penalty is cumulative with any other modifiers.

Wolf Form

15 points

Some Vampires can change their shape to that of a great wolf. In doing so, they gain all the advantages of the new form and become extremely fast.

Model on foot only. The Vampire gains Movement 9 and the Swiftstride special rule.



Call Winds

15 points

The anger of a von Carstein is so powerful that even the sky reflects it, in the form of exceptionally strong winds and storms that hit enemy units with all their strength and power.

Innate Bound Spell, Power Level 5. *Call Winds* is a hex spell that affects all enemy units within 24" of the Vampire. All units effected suffer -1 To Hit with missile attacks if they either fire within or at a target within this distance.

Wolf Lord

15 points

Upon his home soil this Vampire has an almost unparalleled mastery of the Dark Arts, able to control Dire Wolves with but a thought.

The Vampire allows all units of Dire Wolves within 24" of it to March and perform Flee moves as a charge reaction.

Summon Creatures of the Night

10 points

The Vampire produces a loud spine-chilling wail that pierces the darkness and calls for help from the creatures of the night. These beasts are slaves to the implacable will of the Carstein blood.

This Vampire can use the Invocation of Nehek spell to increase units of Dire Wolves, Bat Swarms and Fell Bats beyond their starting size.

NECRARCH:

Master of the Black Arts

75 points

What challenge do the winds of magic present to a being who sits outside the loop of time? What mortal creature can match the magical prowess of one so ancient that its teacher might have been the Great Necromancer himself?

A player using a Vampire with the Master of the Black Arts power can re-roll one of the dice when it is determining the strength of the Winds of Magic.

Spectral Form

50 points

By shifting its physical form into a vaporous state, the Vampire becomes invulnerable to mortal weapons and is almost impossible to destroy.

Model on foot only. The Vampire gains the Ethereal special rule. However, it may not join non-Ethereal units or take any magic items.

Forbidden Lore

30 points

Long must one study to gain knowledge of the netherworld, but time is no worry to an undying scholar.

The Vampire has the Loremaster special rule.

Dark Acolyte

25 points

All Undead creatures are steeped in Dark Magic, and Vampires are no different. Some increase their powers through years of study and practise. The Necrarch bloodline carries with it the lust for knowledge and even the lowliest in its ranks follow the long and difficult path of the Necromancer. Some Vampires have an affinity for necromantic magic beyond that of their peers, which only increases with age and practice.

The Vampire adds +D3 to the casting total whenever it successfully casts Invocation of Nehek (regardless of the casting value chosen).

Nehekara's Noble Blood

20 points

The only thing the Necrarchs could take from their land was their necromantic lore. These dark secrets can now be found in the cursed scrolls hidden in the lairs of the oldest Vampire Lords of the Necrarch family.

The Vampire gains +1 to cast spells.

Unholy Cynosure

20 points

The Necrarch can focus his power into a different plane to foresee the future and change the present.

Once per game, the Vampire can re-roll one of the dice rolled to cast a spell. This can be used to negate a Miscast result or could cause an Irresistible Force result.

"As you are, we once were. As we are, you are too."
Unknown Vampire

BLOOD DRAGON:

Doomrider 35 points

A knight and his horse share a very strong bond – so strong that sometimes it can continue even after death.

Model on Nightmare only. The Vampire and any Cavalry unit it is with can re-roll failed charge distances.

Might of Arms 25 points

The Vampire has trained for centuries in the use of his favourite weapons, acquiring a skill that is rarely matched, even by the best of mortals.

The Vampire can re-roll failed rolls To Hit in close combat.

Warrior Pride 25 points

A Blood Dragon High Lord will be buried with his finest and most precious suit of armour. A true knight will never abandon his armour and sometimes the steel skin becomes part of his own body.

The Vampire can re-roll failed armour saves.

Dread Knight 25 points

This Vampire has followed the path of the warrior to its ultimate conclusion, taking up arms in dark mockery of a knightly vow.

While fighting in a challenge, the Vampire will gain +1 To Hit and To Wound.

Heart Piercing 25 points

Using a combination of his great strength and amazing speed, it's easy for the Vampire to create a gap in his opponent's guard.

The Vampire can re-roll failed rolls To Wound in close combat.

Master Strike 25 points

So strong is the lord of the night, that a well-placed blow from his sword can sever a limb from the toughest of creatures.

The Vampire has the Killing Blow special rule.

Strength of Steel 15 points

Such is the Vampire's martial prowess that it is able to strike at the precise moment when it will cause the most carnage.

The Vampire has the Devastating Charge special rule and +1 Strength in turns it makes a successful charge.

Blademaster 10 points

Trained by the best swordsmen of different periods and cultures, a Blood Dragon Vampire can easily deflect the blows from his puny enemies.

The Vampire gains the Parry (6+) special rule.

STRIGOI:

Massive Monstrosity 20 points

Such is the size of some of the more ancient Strigoi that a blow which would kill a normal creature is but a mere scratch to these gigantic beasts.

The Vampire has +1 Wound on his profile.

Iron Sinews 20 points

After death the Vampire's muscles grow far greater than they ever could have in his mortal life. The Strigoi becomes a beast of pure muscular power.

The Vampire gains to his +1 Strength.

Hunter in the Dark 20 points

Who knows what terrors lurk in the dark places of the world, biding their time until the moment to strike has come?

Model on foot only. The Vampire has the Scout special rule.

Infinite Hatred 15 points

The Strigoi know no love; shunned by all, they brood in their solitude vowing death upon all they meet. Driven by bloodlust beyond mortal comparison, the Vampire fights with an intensity that turns aside the most skilled parry or stoutest shield.

The Vampire's Hatred special rule apply in every close combat round, not just the first.

Ghoulinkin 15 points

This Vampire has a strong kinship with Ghouls, using them as its eyes and ears in the wider world.

One unit of Crypt Ghouls may be deployed as Scouts.

Summon Ghouls 10 points

The Vampire bellows a guttural cry which can be heard by his flesh-eating minions. These creatures are slaves to the authority of the Ghoul Kings. Easily dominated by a stern master, Crypt Ghouls worship this Vampire as a living god of death.

The Vampire allows up to 3 units of Crypt Ghouls to deploy as Ambushers.

"I say you can find out the servants of Death by their mark. No man is born so unnatural that his body does not revolt at the foul pollution of Undead blood. And by these marks can you tell them. By the fangs of the predator, for their thirst of blood is the thirst of a fanged fiend. From their porcelain white skin, cold to the touch and unnatural to the eye. From the glow of their eyes behind which lives the Hunger. These are the marks of the blackest evil. These are the marks of the Vampire."

Johann Van Hal, the Witch Hunter General

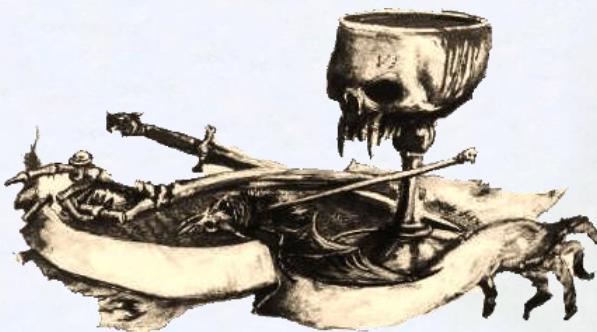
LAHMIA:

Seduction

30 points

How can a mortal resist the lure of a creature who has preyed on warm-blooded males since the dawn of time? Who can refuse to become her willing slave?

At the beginning of the Close Combat round, after challenges have been issued and/or accepted, select a model in base contact with the Vampire. The selected model must take a Leadership test with a -1 modifier. If the test is failed, the victim is controlled by the Vampire player in that Close Combat phase. The model will direct its attacks against his own side. The model cannot be attacked by either side in that Close Combat phase but, after combat resolution has been worked out, it reverts immediately to the original player's control and can therefore use his Leadership for any Break tests and can be broken and pursued as normal. If the model has no friendly models in base contact, counts as being Transfixed instead. If the Vampire was in a challenge with a model that it takes control of, the challenge ends and both models may attack other targets as normal. Models with the Immunity (Psychology) special rule are immune to this power.



Quickblood

30 points

Is it possible to dart aside and avoid a cannon ball? Is it possible to grab an arrow in flight with one's hand? It certainly is for a Lahmian Vampire.

The Vampire gains a Ward save (5+).

Lightning Reflexes

30 points

The body of a Vampire looks human, but is capable of reactions so fast that even the quickest swordsman would look clumsy in comparison.

Enemies must re-roll successful rolls To Hit in close combat.

Night Creature

25 points

Sometimes, in the uncertain light of the forest, a hunter can see a beautiful pale girl, but in the blink of an eye she disappears. If he is wise, he should realise that he is now the prey.

Model on foot only. Whenever an enemy unit attempts to shoot or charge a Vampire with this powers, they must first roll a D6. On a 4+, they may charge as normal. On a 1-3, they must choose another target. This only applies to lone characters.

Innocence Lost

25 points

One defence of these deceptive creatures is to look so inoffensive and vulnerable that the enemy lowers his own defence. That is when they strike with all their supernatural strength, ripping apart armour and bodies with their seemingly innocent hands. The sword-strokes of even the most skilful men are but clumsy and childlike before the preternatural speed of the Vampire.

The Vampire has the Always Strikes First special rule.

Beguile

10 points

The Vampire is so beautiful that a mere mortal's will to fight immediately disappears before her. What brute would dare to attack such a vulnerable lady?

At the beginning of the Close Combat round, after challenges have been issued and/or accepted, select a model in base contact with the Vampire. That model must take a Leadership test with a -3 modifier; if the test is failed, the model must re-roll successful To Hit rolls that phase. Models with the Immunity (Psychology) special rule are immune to this power.

Swiftness

5 points

How swift and sure is the tread of these beautiful and arrogant maidens of Undeath!

Model on foot only. The Vampire gains the Swiftstride special rule.

"The beast had skin like alabaster and eyes that burned like hot coals. Each time I looked over my shoulder, the monster and his Nightmare steed had gained on us. Why oh why did we decide to travel through this area at night!? The villagers had tried to warn us but we were too pig-headed to listen.

We thundered across a small wooden bridge. Suddenly, Lukas pulled up his reins and stopped. "What are you doing?" I shouted.

"Vampires cannot cross moving water. We're safe here." He punctuated this statement by crossing his arms and staring defiantly at the charging Vampire as it approached the bridge at breakneck pace.

"But those are old wives' tales and fairy stories! You don't even know if they're based in fact!" I didn't wait to hear his answer, my horse and I kept running.

The last thing I heard before I reached town was Lukas' screams as the beast proved that you can't always believe everything you hear."

Excerpt from the journal of Kurt Scrivener

ARTEFACTS OF DEATH

On these pages are magic items available to Vampire Counts armies. These can be taken in addition to any of the magic items listed in the Warhammer rule book.

FROSTBLADE 65 points

Magic Weapon

This blade of blue ice-steel is bound with such deadly spells that its merest touch will suck the soul from its victim's body and freeze his heart.

If a model suffers one or more Wounds from the Frostblade (after saves) they are slain outright and lose all remaining Wounds.

SKABSCRATH 50 points

Magic Weapon

The legendary blade of the Undead mercenary, Ennio Mordini, Skabscrath flickers with pale flame. A blade so potent it cannot be sheathed without first taking a life, Skabscrath is possessed of an evil sentience that drives the wielder to ever darker acts. Some claim the blade is more steeped in evil than any Vampire, for it will betray its wielder if its bloodlust is not sated. When unsheathed, Skabscrath emits the terrible screams of all those it has slain, amplified to such a degree that it can cause those who hear them to die off right.

The bearer has the Devastating Charge and Frenzy special rules, and all close combat attacks made by the bearer have the Flaming Attacks special rule. In addition, the bearer of Skabscrath gains the Ghostly Howl special rule.



NIGHTSHROUD 40 points

Magic Armour

Ensorcelled in pitch darkness in the heart of Castle Drachenfels, the Nightshroud owes more to the otherworld than to reality. Originally fashioned from the death-raiments of King Pharatohep, the Nightshroud has since been soaked in the blood of sorcerers and witches. The aura of gloom that clings to it is so strong it can physically manifest, lashing out with shadowy tendrils that grapple with all those who would strike the wearer.

The Nightshroud gives the wearer a 6+ armour save. Furthermore, enemy models in base contact with the wearer lose all Strength bonuses conferred from normal and magical weapons, and is subject to the Always Strikes Last special rule. Wizards can wear the Nightshroud with no penalty to cast spells.

BLACK PERIAPT 45 points

Arcane Item

Any tomb robber would sell his own grandmother for a gem the size of the Black Periapt, but the true power of this strangely glowing artefact is only realized in the hands of a spellcaster.

The Black Periapt allows the bearer to save up to two of his army's unused power dice or dispel dice at the end of any Magic phase, and then add them to his side's power or dispel dice pool at the start of the next Magic phase.

STAFF OF DAMNATION 45 points

Arcane Item

This gnarled stave has been carved from the blackened heartwood of the Hangman's Tree. Decorated with the bones of murderers and soaked in the blood of the traitorous Necromancer Ulbrecht ThriceCursed, the Staff of Damnation contains a powerful spell that fills nearby Undead with a frantic vitality.

Bound Spell (Power Level 5). If cast successfully, this item casts an *augment* spell. All friendly Undead units (and their mounts) within 6" of the bearer gain +1 Attack until the start of the bearer's next Magic phase.

Blasphemous Artefacts

Just as there are men whose souls resonate with cruelty even after death, there are dark treasures in the world that are saturated with the energies of evil deeds. Many of these have spent centuries in the possession of potent liches or Vampire lords; some are even said to have belonged to the Great Necromancer Nagash himself. Wars have been fought and countless lives expended over such nefarious items, for it is rumoured that some can grant power over death itself.

THE CURSED BOOK

35 points

Arcane Item

This tome was written by the mad Necromancer Harak-Iman, said to be the most depraved man to have ever lived. His vileness radiates from The Cursed Book, draining life and energy from all living beings. Each page contains a powerful curse that can cripple and demoralise those nearby, though once read, they fade from sight until the light of Morrslieb is cast upon them.

At the beginning of the bearer's Magic phase, the bearer may choose to sacrifice D3 power dice from the pool. If they do so, roll a D6 on the following chart. Assuming there is a viable target for the indicated spell, that spell is automatically cast at its minimum casting value, requiring no power dice. A dispel attempt can be made as normal. If you don't have the requisite number of dice to sacrifice, then you lose what dice you have and the book has no effect this turn.

D6 Spell Cast

- 1 Melkoth's Mystifying Miasma (Lore of Shadow)
- 2 The Enfeebling Foe (Lore of Shadow)
- 3 The Withering (Lore of Shadow)
- 4 Soulblight (Lore of Death)
- 5 Doom and Darkness (Lore of Death)
- 6 Curse of the Midnight Wind (Lore of Heavens)

BOOK OF ARKHAN

30 points

Arcane Item

This terrible book is said to have belonged to the infamous Arkhan the Black, greatest of Nagash's disciples. During the long years of his tutelage, Arkhan kept extensive notes on his reviled experiments within the pages of this tome, and it is said that he still searches for it to this day. When its words are intoned, nearby Undead move with a vigour that defies belief.

Bound Spell (Power Level 4). This item casts the Vanhel's Danse Macabre spell.

ROD OF FLAMING DEATH

35 points

Enchanted Item

The eye sockets of the skull atop this ages-old rod glow bright with magical fire, and its jaws clatter and gnash constantly. It contains a spell of fiery destruction that takes the shape of a shrieking skull. When the skull detonates upon its targets, thick tendrils of green-black flame swirl around them, turning everything they touch to ash.

Bound Spell (Power Level 4). If cast successfully, this item casts a magic missile with a range of 18" that inflicts D6 Strength 4 hits with the Flaming Attacks special rule. Any unit taking one or more unsaved Wounds from this spell must immediately take a Panic test. Furthermore, if the target unit moves for any reason during its next turn, every model in the unit suffers an immediate Strength 4 hit, after which the spell's effects end. If the unit does not move the spell ends at the start of the caster's next Magic phase.

BANNER OF THE BARROWS

40 points

Magic Standard

Woven from the wind and the cold, the chill of this banner touches the hearts of those who stand before it, sapping their will and ability to fight. Worse still, the banner exude a palpable aura of dread that manifests as screaming death heads, filling the living with unnameable fear. Many of the ancient warriors that go to war beneath the Banner of the Barrows fought under it when they were still creatures of flesh and blood, though they are now forever bound to its shimmering presence.

All Grave Guard, Black Knights and Wight Kings (including Krell) in the same unit as the Banner of the Barrows receive +1 To Hit in close combat. Note that the bonus is not conferred to any mounts they may have.

THE SCREAMING BANNER

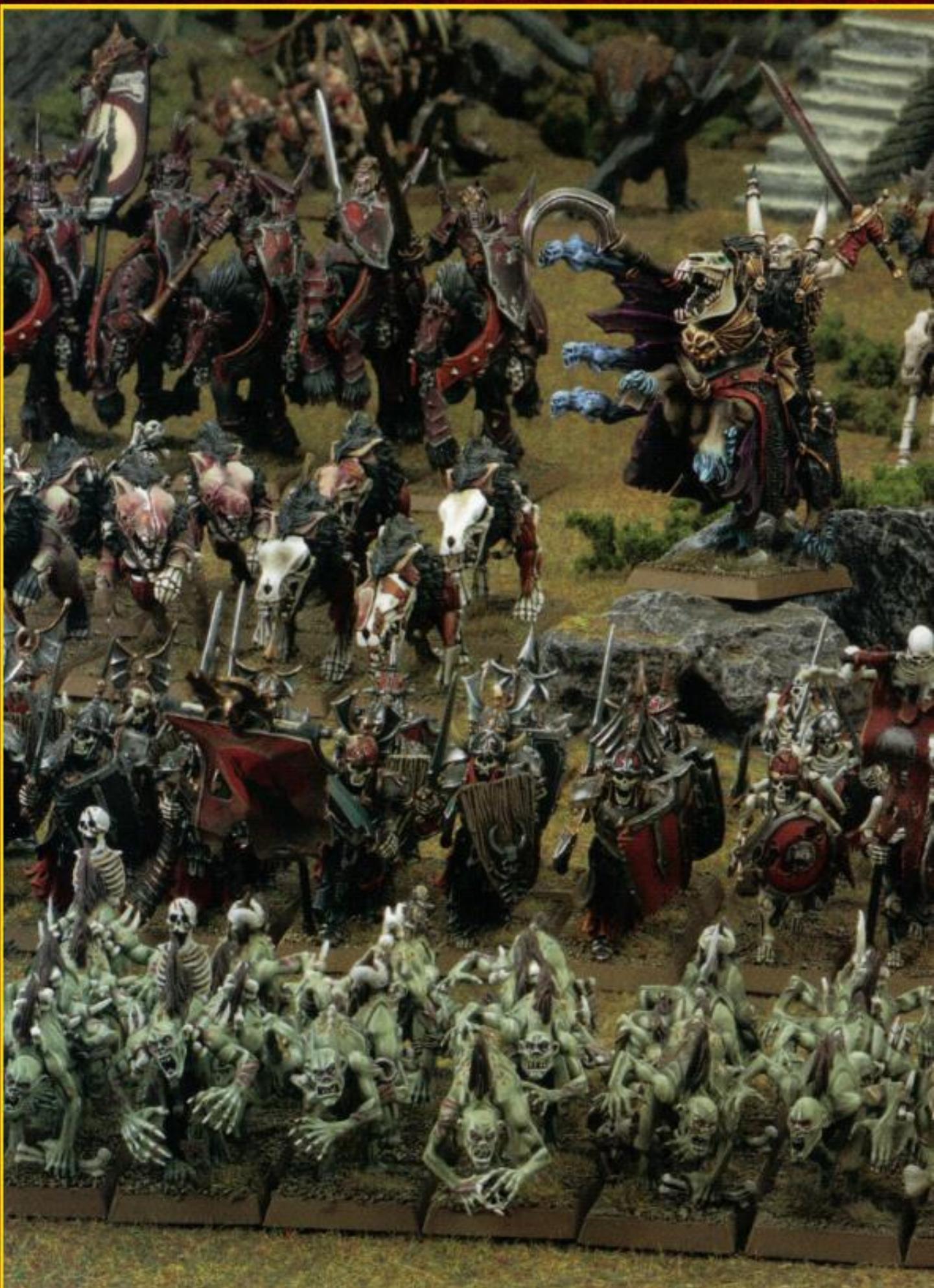
25 points

Magic Standard

Even the bravest warriors tremble at the thought of fighting against a unit carrying this terrifying banner. The squalling wails emanating from the folds of this tattered standard recall the horrors of war and the laments of the wounded and dying. All who hear it swear later that their fallen comrades cried out to them, screaming in pain and begging for their soul's release from torment.

Enemy units on base contact with the unit carrying this banner must pass a Leadership at the start of each close combat phase. If failed, they require 6's To Hit for the duration of the phase.







VAMPIRE COUNTS ARMY LIST

The Vampires and their Undead legions have marched to war many times in the history of the Warhammer world, and each time have brought terror and blood to the realms of the Old World.

The Vampire Counts are the aristocracy of undeath, unliving masters of dark power. They seek to crush the proud armies of the living with great hordes of mindlessly obedient corpses, and to raise up the fallen into their control. From the most repulsive Zombie to the mightiest Varghulf, the creatures of the night are all bound to a single purpose: the conquest of the mortal realms.

This section of the book helps you turn your collection of Vampire Counts miniatures into a horde of corpse-soldiers ready for a tabletop battle. At the back of this section, you will also find a summary page that lists every unit's characteristics profile, for quick and easy reference during your games.

USING THE ARMY LIST

The army list is used alongside the 'Choosing an Army' section of the Warhammer rulebook to pick a force ready for battle. Over the following pages you will find an entry for each of the models in your army. These entries give you all of the gaming information that you need to shape your collection of models into the units that will form your army. Amongst other things, they will tell you what your models are equipped with, what options are available to them, and their points costs.

UNIT CATEGORIES

As described in the Warhammer rulebook, the units in the army list are organised into five categories: Lords, Heroes, Core Units, Special Units and Rare Units.

ARMY LIST ENTRIES

Each army list entry contains all the information you need to choose and field that unit at a glance, using the following format:

SKELETON WARRIORS

Profile

Skeleton Warrior

Skeleton Champion

4 points per model

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
4	2	2	3	3	1	2	1	3
4	2	2	3	3	1	2	2	3

Troop Type

Infantry

Infantry

Unit Size: 10+

Special Rules:

- Undead

Equipment:

- Hand weapon
- Shield

Options:

- One Skeleton Warrior may be upgraded to a Skeleton Champion... *10 points*
- One Skeleton Warrior may be upgraded to a musician..... *5 points*
- One Skeleton Warrior may be upgraded to a standard bearer..... *10 points*
 - One unit may have a magic standard worth up to..... *25 points*
- The entire unit may take one of the following:
 - Spears..... *1 point per model*
 - Halberds..... *1 point per model*
 - Bows (replacing shields)..... *free*
 - Crossbows (replacing shields)..... *2 points per model*
- The entire unit may wear light armour..... *1 point per model*

1. Name. *The name by which the unit or character is identified.*

2. Profiles. *The characteristic profiles for the model(s) in each unit are provided as a reminder. Where several profiles are required these are also given, even if they are optional (such as unit champions).*

3. Troop Type. *Each entry specifies the troop type of its models (e.g. 'infantry', 'monstrous cavalry' and so on).*

4. Points value. *Every miniature in the Warhammer range costs an amount of points that reflects how effective it is on the battlefield.*

5. Unit Size. *This specifies the minimum size for each unit, which is the smallest number of models needed to form that unit. In some cases units also have a maximum size, or can even comprise just a single model.*

6. Equipment. *This is a list of the standard weapons and armour for that unit. The cost of these items is included in the basic points value.*

7. Special Rules. *Many troops have special rules that are fully described earlier in this book or in the Warhammer rulebook. The names of these rules are listed here as a reminder.*

8. Options. *This is a list of optional weapons and armour; mounts, magic items and other upgrades for units or characters, including the points cost for each particular option. Many unit entries include the option to upgrade a unit member to a champion, standard bearer or musician. Some units may carry a magic standard or take magic items at a further points cost.*



LORDS

VLAD VON CARSTEIN

520 points

Profile

Vlad von Carstein

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
6	7	5	5	5	3	7	5	10

Troop Type

Infantry (Special Character)

Equipment:

- Full plate armour

Magic Items:

- Blood Drinker
- The Carstein Ring

Magic:

Vlad is a Level 3 Wizard who uses spells from the Lore of Necromancy.

Vampiric Powers:

- Aura of Dark Majesty
- Transfix
- Supernatural Horror

Special Rules:

- Beloved in Death
- The Red Thirst
- Vampiric

MANNFRED VON CARSTEIN

600 points

Profile

Mannfred von Carstein

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
6	7	5	5	5	3	7	4	10

Troop Type

Infantry (Special Character)

Magic Items:

- Timor Noctis, the Sword of Unholy Power
- Armour of Templehof
- Cloak of Darkness
- Ebony Staff

Vampiric Powers:

- Dark Acolyte
- Master of the Black Arts
- Summon Creatures of the Night

Options:

- May be mounted upon one of the following:
 - Nightmare.....21 points
 - May be upgraded to have barding.....6 points
 - Hellsteed.....30 points
 - Abyssal Terror.....120 points
 - Zombie Dragon.....245 points

Magic:

Mannfred is a Level 4 Wizard who uses spells from the Lore of Death and Necromancy.

Special Rules:

- Loremaster (Lore of Death/Necromancy)
- The Red Thirst
- Vampiric

NEFERATA

565 points

Profile

Neferata

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
6	7	5	5	5	3	9	5	10

Troop Type

Infantry (Special Character)

Magic Items:

- Dagger of Jet
- Ruby of Lahmia
- The Staff of Pain
- Bastet

Magic:

Neferata is a Level 3 Wizard who uses spells from the Lore of Necromancy, Shadow, or Death.

Vampiric Powers:

- Lightning Reflexes
- Quickblood
- Seduction

Options:

- May wear medium armour.....6 points
- May be mounted upon one of the following:
 - Nightmare.....21 points
 - May be upgraded to have barding.....6 points
 - Hellsteed.....30 points
 - Coven Throne.....200 points

Special Rules:

- Heavenly Creature
- Queen of Lahmia
- The Red Thirst
- Vampiric

MELKHIOR THE ANCIENT

555 points

Profile

Melkhior the Ancient

Abyssal Terror

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
6	6	3	5	5	3	6	3	9
6	4	0	5	5	4	2	3	4

Troop Type

Infantry (Special Character)

Monster

Magic Items:

- Painbringer
- Grimoire Necronium
- Black Cloak of Lahmia

Magic:

Melkhior is a Level 4 Wizard who uses spells from the Lore of the Necromancy.

Mount:

Abyssal Terror

Vampiric Powers:

- Dark Acolyte
- Forbidden Lore
- Nehekara's Noble Blood

Special Rules:

- Fly
- Frenzy
- Stupidity
- The Red Thirst
- Vampiric

LORDS

ZACHARIAS THE EVERLIVING

765 points

Profile

Zacharias the Everliving	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Zacharias the Everliving	6	6	3	5	5	3	6	3	9
Zombie Dragon	6	4	0	6	6	6	2	5	4

Troop Type

Infantry (Special Character)
Monster

Magic Items:

- Staff of Kaphamon
- Circlet of Rathek
- Scrolls of Semhtep
- Book of Nagash

Magic:

Zacharias is a Level 4 Wizard who uses spells from the Lore of the Necromancy or any of the eight Lores of Magic (except the Lore of Life).

Mount:

Zombie Dragon

Vampiric Powers:

- Dark Acolyte
- Forbidden Lore
- Master of the Black Arts

Special Rules:

- Fly
- Natural Armour (5+)
- Pestilential Breath
- Swarm of Flies
- The Red Thirst
- Vampiric

WALACH HARKON

510 points

Profile

Walach Harkon	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Walach Harkon	6	9	3	5	5	3	7	5	10
Nightmare	8	3	0	4	4	1	2	1	3

Troop Type

Cavalry (Special Character)

Magic Items:

- Crimson Blade
- Walach's Bloody Hauberk
- Blood Chalice

Magic:

Walach is a Level 2 Wizard who uses spells from the Lore of the Necromancy.

Vampiric Powers:

- Dread Knight
- Doom Rider
- Warrior Pride

Options:

- May be mounted upon a Zombie Dragon (replacing Nightmare).....185 points

Mount:

Barded Nightmare

Special Rules:

- Hatred (The Empire)
- Martial Honour
- The Red Thirst
- Vampiric



THE RED DUKE

415 points

Profile

The Red Duke	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
The Red Duke	6	8	3	5	5	3	7	5	10

Troop Type

Infantry (Special Character)

Magic Items:

- Blade of Leaping Gold
- The Armour of Blood

Vampiric Powers:

- Heart Piercing
- Honour or Death
- Red Fury

Special Rules:

- Hatred (Bretonnia)
- Martial Honour
- The Red Thirst
- Vampiric

Options:

- May be mounted upon a barded Nightmare.....27 points

Magic:

The Red Duke is a Level 1 Wizard who uses spells from the Lore of the Necromancy.

GASHNAG

340 points

Profile

Gashnag	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Gashnag	6	7	3	5	5	3	7	5	9

Troop Type

Infantry (Special Character)

Equipment:

- Light armour

Magic Items:

- Cloak of Strigos

Magic:

Gashnag is a Level 2 Wizard who uses spells from the Lore of the Necromancy.

Vampiric Powers:

- Infinite Hatred
- Iron Sinews

Special Rules:

- Armour Piercing (1)
- Hatred
- Multiple Wounds (D3)
- The Red Thirst
- Vampiric

LORDS

HEINRICH KEMMLER

340 points

Profile

Heinrich Kemmler

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
4	4	3	4	4	3	4	1	8

Troop Type

Infantry (Special Character)

Magic Items:

- Chaos Tomb Blade
- Cloak of Mists and Shadows
- Skull Staff

Magic:

Heinrich Kemmler is a Level 4 Wizard who uses spells from the Lore of Necromancy.

Special Rules:

- Loremaster (Lore of Necromancy)
- Master of the Dead



DIETER HELSNICHT

425 points

Profile

Dieter Helsnicht

Manticore

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
4	4	3	4	4	3	4	1	8
6	5	0	5	5	4	5	4	5

Troop Type

Infantry (Special Character)
Monster

Magic Items:

- Chaos Runesword
- Staff of Flaming Death
- Power Scroll

Magic:

Dieter Helsnicht is a Level 4 Wizard who uses spells from the Lore of the Necromancy.

Mount:

Manticore

Special Rules:

- Doom Lord
- Fly
- Frenzy (Manticore only)
- Killing Blow (Manticore only)



LORDS

VON CARSTEIN VAMPIRE LORD

270 points

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
von Carstein Vampire Lord	6	7	5	5	5	3	7	4	10

Troop Type
Infantry (Character)

Equipment:

- Hand weapon

Special Rules:

- The Red Thirst
- Vampiric

Magic:

A von Carstein Vampire Lord is a Level 2 Wizard who uses spells from the Lore of Shadow, Death or Necromancy.

Options:

- May be upgraded to a Level 3 Wizard.....50 points
- May be armed with one of the following:
 - Additional hand weapon.....6 points
 - Great weapon.....8 points
 - Lance.....8 points
- May wear one of the following:
 - Light armour.....3 points
 - Medium armour6 points
 - Heavy armour9 points
- May be mounted upon one of the following:
 - Nightmare.....21 points
 - May be upgraded to have barding.....6 points
 - Hellsteed.....30 points
 - Abyssal Terror.....120 points
 - Zombie Dragon.....245 points
- May take Vampiric Powers up to a total of.....100 points
- May take magic items up to a total of.....100 points



NECRARCH VAMPIRE LORD

270 points

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Necrarch Vampire Lord	6	5	3	5	5	3	6	3	9

Troop Type
Infantry (Character)

Equipment:

- Hand weapon

Special Rules:

- The Red Thirst
- Vampiric

Magic:

A Necrarch Vampire Lord is a Level 3 Wizard who uses spells from the Lore of Metal, Heavens, Shadow, Death or Necromancy.

Options:

- May be upgraded to a Level 4 Wizard.....35 points
- May be mounted upon one of the following:
 - Nightmare.....21 points
 - May be upgraded to have barding.....6 points
 - Hellsteed.....30 points
 - Abyssal Terror.....120 points
 - Zombie Dragon.....245 points
- May take Vampiric Powers up to a total of.....100 points
- May take magic items up to a total of.....100 points

LAHMIAN VAMPIRE LADY

260 points

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Lahmian Vampire Lady	6	6	5	5	5	3	8	4	9

Troop Type
Infantry (Character)

Equipment:

- Hand weapon

Special Rules:

- The Red Thirst
- Vampiric

Magic:

A Lahmian Vampire Lady is a Level 2 Wizard who uses spells from the Lore of Shadow, Death or Necromancy.

Options:

- May be upgraded to a Level 3 Wizard.....50 points
- May take an additional hand weapon.....6 points
- May wear light armour.....3 points
- May have Poisoned Attacks.....10 points
- May be mounted upon one of the following:
 - Nightmare.....21 points
 - May be upgraded to have barding.....6 points
 - Hellsteed.....30 points
 - Coven Throne.....200 points
- May take Vampiric Powers up to a total of.....100 points
- May take magic items up to a total of.....100 points

LORDS

BLOOD DRAGON VAMPIRE LORD

265 points

Profile

Blood Dragon Vampire Lord

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
6	8	3	5	5	3	7	5	10

Troop Type

Infantry (Character)

Equipment:

- Hand weapon
- Full plate armour

Special Rules:

- Martial Honour
- The Red Thirst
- Vampiric

Magic:

A Blood Dragon Vampire Lord is a Level 1 Wizard who uses spells from the Lore of Shadow, Death or Necromancy.

Options:

- May be upgraded to a Level 2 Wizard.....35 points
- May be armed with one of the following:
 - Additional hand weapon.....6 points
 - Great weapon.....10 points
 - Lance.....10 points
- May take a shield.....3 points
- May be mounted upon one of the following:
 - Nightmare.....21 points
 - May be upgraded to have barding.....6 points
 - Hellsteed.....30 points
 - Abyssal Terror.....120 points
 - Zombie Dragon.....245 points
- May take Vampiric Powers up to a total of.....100 points
- May take magic items up to a total of.....100 points



STRIGOI VAMPIRE LORD

245 points

Profile

Strigoi Vampire Lord

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
6	6	3	5	5	3	7	5	9

Troop Type

Infantry (Character)

Special Rules:

- Armour Piercing (1)
- Hatred
- The Red Thirst
- Vampiric

Magic:

A Strigoi Vampire Lord is a Level 1 Wizard who use the Lore of Necromancy or the Lore of Beasts.

Options:

- May be upgraded to a Level 2 Wizard.....35 points
- May be mounted upon one of the following:
 - Terrorgheist.....225 points
 - May be upgraded to be Infested.....10 points
 - May be upgraded to have Rancid Maw.....15 points
- May take Vampiric Powers up to a total of.....100 points
- May take magic items (except Magic Weapons or Magic Armour) up to a total of.....100 points

MASTER NECROMANCER

165 points

Profile

Master Necromancer

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
4	3	3	3	4	3	3	1	8

Troop Type

Infantry (Character)

Equipment:

- Hand weapon

Magic:

A Master Necromancer is a Level 3 Wizard who uses spells from the Lore of Death or Necromancy.

Options:

- May be upgraded to a Level 4 Wizard.....35 points
- May be upgraded to a Master of the Dead.....20 points
- May be mounted upon one of the following:
 - Nightmare.....21 points
 - May be upgraded to have barding.....6 points
 - Hellsteed.....30 points
 - Corpse Cart (replacing the Corpsemaster).....90 points
 - May be upgraded to have Bale-fire.....15 points
 - May be upgraded to have Unholy Lodestone.....30 points
 - Abyssal Terror.....120 points
 - May be upgraded to have Poisonous Tail.....15 points
 - May be upgraded to have Sword-claws.....10 points
- May take magic items up to a total of.....100 points



LORDS

LICHE LORD

300 points

Profile

Liche Lord

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
4	4	3	5	5	4	2	2	9

Troop Type

Infantry (Character)

Equipment:

- Hand weapon

Special Rules:

- Master of the Dead
- Undead

Magic:

A Liche Lord is a Level 4 Wizard who uses spells from the Lore of Death or Necromancy.

Options:

- May take magic items up to a total of 100 points
- May be mounted on a Mortis Engine (replacing the Corpsemaster) 220 points
- May take a Blasphemous Tome 20 points



CHARACTER MOUNTS

Profile

Skeletal Steed

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
---	----	----	---	---	---	---	---	----	------------

8	2	0	3	3	1	2	1	3	War Beast
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	-----------

Nightmare

8	3	0	4	4	1	2	1	3	War Beast
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	-----------

Hellsteed

8	3	0	4	4	3	2	1	3	War Beast
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	-----------

Barrow Chariot

-	-	-	5	5	4	-	-	-	Chariot (Armour save 5+)
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--------------------------

Skeletal Steed

8	2	0	3	-	-	2	1	-	-
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Abyssal Terror

6	4	0	5	5	4	2	4	4	Monster
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------

Terrorgheist

6	3	0	6	6	6	3	4	4	Monster
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------

Zombie Dragon

6	4	0	6	6	6	2	5	4	Monster
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------

Special Rules:

- *Skeletal Steed*: Spectral Steeds, Undead.
- *Nightmare*: Undead.
- *Hellsteed*: Fly, Undead.
- *Barrow Chariot*: Spectral Steeds, Undead.
- *Abyssal Terror*: Fly, Undead.
- *Terrorgheist*: Death Shriek, Fly, Regeneration (6+), Undead.
- *Zombie Dragon*: Fly, Natural Armour (5+), Pestilential Breath, Swarm of Flies, Undead.

COVEN THRONE

Profile

Coven Throne

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
---	----	----	---	---	---	---	---	----	------------

-	-	-	5	5	5	-	-	-	Chariot (Armour save 5+)
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--------------------------

Pallid Handmaiden

-	5	3	5	-	-	6	2	7	-
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Spirit Horde

8	3	0	3	-	-	1	*	-	-
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Crew:

2 Pallid Handmaidens

Special Rules:

- Battle of Wills
- Large Target
- *Random Attacks (2D6)
- Scrying Pool
- Spectral Steeds
- Undead
- Ward save (4+)

Drawn by:

Spirit Horde

Equipment:

- Hand weapon

HEROES

ISABELLA VON CARSTEIN

135 points

Profile

Isabella von Carstein

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
6	6	4	5	4	2	6	3	8

Troop Type

Infantry (Special Character)

Equipment:

- Hand weapon
- Heavy armour

Magic Items:

- Blood Chalice of Bathori

Vampiric Powers:

- Beguile

Special Rules:

- Beloved in Death
- The Red Thirst
- Vampiric

KONRAD VON CARSTEIN

215 points

Profile

Konrad von Carstein

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
6	7	4	5	4	2	6	3	6

Troop Type

Infantry (Special Character)

Equipment:

- Full plate armour

Magic Items:

- Sword of Waldenhof
- Ring of the Night

Vampiric Powers:

- Red Fury

Special Rules:

- Hatred
- One Bat Short of a Belfry
- The Red Thirst
- Vampiric

SETHEP THE MERCILESS

215 points

Profile

Sethep

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
6	5	3	5	4	2	5	2	8

Troop Type

Infantry (Special Character)

Equipment:

- Hand weapon

Magic Items:

- Staff of Raukhamon

Magic:

Sethep is a Level 2 Wizard who uses spells from the Lore of Necromancy or the Lore of Death.

Vampiric Powers:

- Fear Incarnate
- Nehekhar's Noble Blood

Special Rules:

- The Red Thirst
- Vampiric

KRELL

220 points

Profile

Krell

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
4	5	0	4	5	3	5	3	9

Troop Type

Infantry (Special Character)

Magic Items:

- The Black Axe of Krell
- Armour of the Barrows
- Crown of the Damned

Special Rules:

- Champion of the Dead
- Killing Blow
- Terror
- Undead



HELMAN GHORST

165 points

Profile

Helman Ghorst

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
4	3	3	3	3	2	3	1	7

Troop Type

Infantry (Special Character)

Corpse Cart

-	-	-	4	4	4	-	-	-
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Shrine (Armour save 6+)

The Brother's Ghorst

4	2	0	4	-	-	-	*	-
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

-

Equipment

- Hand weapon

Magic:

Helman Ghorst is a Level 2 Wizard who uses spells from the Lore of Necromancy.

Special Rules:

- Awaken from the Grave
- Master of the Dead

Options:

- May be mounted on a Corpse Cart (using the profile above).....95 points
 - May be upgraded with one of the following:
 - Balefire.....15 points
 - Unholy Lodestone.....30 points

HEROES

VON CARSTEIN VAMPIRE

95 points

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
von Carstein Vampire	6	6	5	5	4	2	6	3	9

Troop Type
Infantry (Character)

Equipment:

- Hand weapon

Special Rules:

- The Red Thirst
- Vampiric

Magic:

A von Carstein Vampire who is a Level 1 Wizard who uses spells from the Lore of Shadow, Death or Necromancy.

Options:

- May be upgraded to a Level 1 Wizard.....50 points
 - May be upgraded to a Level 2 Wizard.....35 points
- May be armed with one of the following:
 - Additional hand weapon.....4 points
 - Great weapon.....6 points
 - Lance.....6 points
- May wear one of the following:
 - Light armour.....2 points
 - Medium armour4 points
 - Heavy armour6 points
- May be mounted upon one of the following:
 - Nightmare.....14 points
 - May be upgraded to have barding.....4 points
 - Hellsteed.....30 points
- May take Vampiric Powers up to a total of.....50 points
- May take magic items up to a total of.....50 points



NECRARCH VAMPIRE

110 points

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Necrarch Vampire	6	4	3	5	4	2	5	2	8

Troop Type
Infantry (Character)

Equipment:

- Hand weapon

Special Rules:

- The Red Thirst
- Vampiric

Magic:

A Necrarch Vampire is a Level 1 Wizard who uses spells from the Lore of Shadow, Death or Necromancy.

Options:

- May be upgraded to a Level 2 Wizard.....35 points
- May be mounted upon one of the following:
 - Nightmare.....14 points
 - May be upgraded to have barding.....4 points
 - Hellsteed.....30 points
 - Abyssal Terror.....120 points
- May take Vampiric Powers up to a total of.....50 points
- May take magic items up to a total of.....50 points

LAHMIAN VAMPIRE

85 points

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Lahmian Vampire	6	5	5	5	4	2	7	3	8

Troop Type
Infantry (Character)

Equipment:

- Hand weapon

Special Rules:

- The Red Thirst
- Vampiric

Magic:

A Lahmian Vampire who is a Level 1 Wizard who uses spells from the Lore of Shadow, Death or Necromancy.

Options:

- May be upgraded to a Level 1 Wizard.....50 points
 - May be upgraded to a Level 2 Wizard.....35 points
- May take an additional hand weapon.....4 points
- May wear light armour.....2 points
- May have Poisoned Attacks.....10 points
- May be mounted upon one of the following:
 - Nightmare.....14 points
 - May be upgraded to have barding.....4 points
 - Hellsteed.....30 points
- May take Vampiric Powers up to a total of.....50 points
- May take magic items up to a total of.....50 points

HEROES

BLOOD DRAGON VAMPIRE

125 points

Profile
Blood Dragon Vampire

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
6	7	3	5	4	2	6	4	9	Infantry (Character)

Equipment:

- Hand weapon
- Full plate armour

Special Rules:

- Martial Honour
- The Red Thirst
- Vampiric

Magic:

A Blood Dragon Vampire who is a Wizard uses spells from the Lore of Shadow, Death or Necromancy.

Options:

- May be upgraded to a Level 1 Wizard.....50 points
- May be armed with one of the following:
 - Additional hand weapon.....4 points
 - Great weapon.....8 points
 - Lance.....8 points
- May take a shield.....2 points
- May be mounted upon one of the following:
 - Nightmare.....14 points
 - May be upgraded to have barding.....4 points
 - Hellsteed.....30 points
 - Abyssal Terror.....120 points
- May take Vampiric Powers up to a total of.....50 points
- May take magic items up to a total of.....50 points



STRIGOI VAMPIRE

120 points

Profile
Strigoi Vampire

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
6	5	3	5	4	2	6	4	8	Infantry (Character)

Special Rules:

- Armour Piercing (1)
- Hatred
- The Red Thirst
- Vampiric

Magic:

A Strigoi Vampire who is a Wizard uses the Lore of Necromancy or the Lore of Beasts.

Options:

- May be upgraded to a Level 1 Wizard.....50 points
- May take Vampiric Powers up to a total of.....50 points
- May take magic items (except Magic Weapons or Magic Armour) up to a total of.....50 points



NECROMANCER

65 points

Profile
Necromancer

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
4	3	3	3	3	2	3	1	7	Infantry (Character)

Equipment:

- Hand weapon

Magic:

A Necromancer is a Level 1 Wizard who uses spells from the Lore of Death or Necromancy.

Options:

- May be upgraded to a Level 2 Wizard.....35 points
- May be mounted upon one of the following:
 - Nightmare.....14 points
 - May be upgraded to have barding.....4 points
 - Corpse Cart (replacing the Corpsemaster).....90 points
 - May be upgraded to have Bale-fire.....15 points
 - May be upgraded to have Unholy Lodestone.....30 points
- May take magic items up to a total of.....50 points

HEROES

WIGHT KING

80 points

Profile

Wight King

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
4	4	3	4	5	2	4	3	8	Infantry (Character)

Equipment:

- Hand weapon
- Undead
- Medium armour
- Killing Blow

ARMY BATTLE STANDARD

One Wight King or Vampire in the army may carry the Battle Standard for +25 points. The Battle Standard Bearer can have a magic banner (no points limit). A model carrying a magic standard cannot carry any other magic items.

Special Rules:

- May be armed with one of the following:

- Additional hand weapon.....3 points
- Great weapon.....6 points
- Lance.....6 points

- May take a shield.....2 points
- May upgrade to heavy armour.....3 points

- May be mounted upon one of the following:

- Skeletal Steed.....12 points
- May be upgraded to have barding.....4 points
- Barrow Chariot.....70 points

- May take magic items up to a total of.....50 points

CAIRN WRAITH

60 points

Profile

Cairn Wraith

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
6	3	0	3	3	2	2	3	5	Infantry (Character)

Equipment:

- Great weapon

Special Rules:

- Chill Grasp
- Ethereal
- Terror
- Undead

Options:

- May be mounted upon a Skeletal Steed*.....12 points

- May take magic items up to a total of.....25 points

*A Cairn Wraith mounted on a Skeletal Steed follows the rules for Fast Cavalry.



CORE UNITS

SKELETON WARRIORS

4 points per model

Profile

Skeleton Warrior

Skeleton Champion

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
4	2	2	3	3	1	2	1	3	Infantry
4	2	2	3	3	1	2	2	3	Infantry

Unit Size: 10+

Special Rules:

- Undead

Equipment:

- Hand weapon
- Shield

**You may not have more units of Skeleton Warriors armed with bows or crossbows than you have other units of Skeleton Warriors without them.*

Options:

- One Skeleton Warrior may be upgraded to a Skeleton Champion... 10 points
- One Skeleton Warrior may be upgraded to a musician..... 5 points
- One Skeleton Warrior may be upgraded to a standard bearer..... 10 points
 - One unit may have a magic standard worth up to..... 25 points
- The entire unit may take one of the following:
 - Spears..... 1 point per model
 - Halberds..... 1 point per model
 - Bows* (replacing shields)..... 1 points per model
 - Crossbows* (replacing shields)..... 3 points per model
- The entire unit may wear one of the following:
 - Light armour..... 1 point per model
 - Medium armour..... 2 points per model

ZOMBIES

3 points per model

Profile

Zombie

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
4	2	0	3	3	1	1	1	2	Infantry

Unit Size: 20+

Special Rules:

- Fight in Extra Ranks (1)
- The Newly Dead
- Undead

Options:

- One Zombie may be upgraded to a musician..... 5 points
- One Zombie may be upgraded to a standard bearer..... 5 points

CRYPT GHOULS

6 points per model

Profile

Crypt Ghoul

Crypt Ghast

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
4	2	0	3	4	1	3	2	5	Infantry
4	2	0	3	4	1	3	3	5	Infantry

Unit Size: 10+

Special Rules:

- Poisoned Attacks

Options:

- One Crypt Ghoul may be upgraded to a Crypt Ghast..... 10 points
- The entire unit may skirmish..... free



CORE UNITS

SYLVANIAN PEASANT LEVY

2 points per model

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Peasant	4	2	2	3	3	1	3	1	5	Infantry
Militia Leader	4	2	2	3	3	1	3	2	5	Infantry

Note: You may only include Sylvanian Peasant Levy if your army is led by a von Carstein Vampire (including special characters). They do not count towards the minimum number of Core Units you need to include in your army.

Unit Size: 10+

Options:

- One Peasant may be upgraded to a Militia Leader.....10 points
- One Peasant may be upgraded to a musician.....10 points
- One Peasant may be upgraded to a standard bearer.....10 points
- The entire unit may take one of the following:
 - Spears.....1 point per model
 - Torches (Flaming Attacks).....1 point per model
 - Bows.....2 points per model
 - Crossbows.....4 points per model

DIRE WOLVES

6 points per model

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Dire Wolf	9	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	3	War Beast
Doom Wolf	9	3	0	3	3	1	3	2	3	War Beast

Note: Dire Wolves do not count towards the minimum number of Core Units you need to include in your army.

Unit Size: 5+

Special Rules:

- Slavering Charge
- Undead
- Vanguard
- One Dire Wolf may be upgraded to a Doom Wolf.....10 points

FELL BATS

16 points per base

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Fell Bat	1	3	0	3	3	2	3	2	3	War Beast

Note: Fell Bats do not count towards the minimum number of Core Units you need to include in your army.

Unit Size: 3+

Special Rules:

- Fly

BAT SWARMS

35 points per base

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Bat Swarm	1	3	0	2	2	5	4	5	3	Swarm

Note: Bat Swarms do not count towards the minimum number of Core Units you need to include in your army.

Unit Size: 3+ bases

Special Rules:

- Cloud of Horror
- Hover

SPECIAL UNITS

GRAVE GUARD

11 points per model

Profile

Grave Guard

Seneschal

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Grave Guard	4	3	3	4	4	1	3	1	6	Infantry
Seneschal	4	3	3	4	4	1	3	2	6	Infantry

Unit Size:

10+

Special Rules:

- Killing Blow
- Undead

Equipment:

- Hand weapon
- Medium armour
- Shield

Options:

- One Grave Guard may be upgraded to a Seneschal.....10 points
- One Grave Guard may be upgraded to a musician.....5 points
- One Grave Guard may be upgraded to a standard bearer.....10 points
 - May have a magic standard worth up to.....50 points
- The entire unit may replace their shields with one of the following:
 - Halberds.....free
 - Great weapons.....1 point per model
- The entire unit may upgrade to heavy armour.....1 point per model

BLACK KNIGHTS

22 points per model

Profile

Black Knight

Hell Knight

Skeletal Steed

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Black Knight	4	3	3	4	4	1	3	1	6	Cavalry
Hell Knight	4	3	3	4	4	1	3	2	6	Cavalry
Skeletal Steed	8	2	0	3	3	1	2	1	3	-

Unit Size:

5+

Special Rules:

- Killing Blow
- Undead

Equipment:

- Hand weapon
- Lance
- Medium armour
- Shield

Mount:

- Skeletal Steed

Options:

- One Black Knight may be upgraded to a Hell Knight.....10 points
- One Black Knight may be upgraded to a musician.....5 points
- One Black Knight may be upgraded to a standard bearer.....10 points
 - May have a magic standard worth up to.....50 points
- The entire unit may upgrade to heavy armour.....2 points per model
- The entire unit may take barding.....2 points per model

HEXWRAITHS

27 points per model

Profile

Hexwraith

Hellwraith

Skeletal Steed

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Hexwraith	6	3	0	3	3	1	2	1	5	Cavalry
Hellwraith	6	3	0	3	3	1	2	2	5	Cavalry
Skeletal Steed	8	2	0	3	3	1	2	1	3	-

Unit Size:

5+

Special Rules:

- Ethereal

- Fast Cavalry

- Terror

- Soul Reapers

- Soulstriders

- Undead

Equipment:

- Great weapon

Mount:

- Skeletal Steed

Options:

- One Hexwraith may be upgraded to a Hellwraith.....10 points



CRYPT HORRORS

37 points per model

Profile

Crypt Horror

Crypt Haunter

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Crypt Horror	6	3	0	4	5	3	2	3	7	Monstrous Infantry
Crypt Haunter	6	3	0	4	5	3	2	4	7	Monstrous Infantry

Unit Size:

3+

Special Rules:

- Poisoned Attacks

- Regeneration (5+)

Equipment:

- Hand weapon

Options:

- One Crypt Horror may be upgraded to a Crypt Haunter.....10 points

SPECIAL UNITS

CORPSE CART

90 points per model

Profile

Corpse Cart

Corpsemaster

The Restless Dead

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
-	-	-	-	4	5	4	-	-	-
4	3	3	3	-	-	2	1	5	-
4	2	0	3	-	-	1	*	-	-

Troop Type

Shrine (Armour save 6+)

Unit Size: 1

Special Rules:

- *Random Attacks (2D6)
- Regeneration (4+)
- Undead
- Vigour Mortis

Options:

- May be upgraded with one of the following:
 - Balefire.....20 points
 - Unholy Lodestone.....30 points

Drawn by:

The Restless Dead

VARGHEISTS

50 points per model

Profile

Vargheist

Vargoyle

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
6	4	0	5	4	3	4	3	7	
6	4	0	5	4	3	4	4	7	

Troop Type

Monstrous Infantry

Monstrous Infantry

Unit Size: 3+

Special Rules:

- Fly
- Frenzy
- The Red Thirst
- Vampiric

Options:

- One Vargheist may be upgraded to a Vargoyle.....10 points

SPIRIT HOST

45 points per base

Profile

Spirit Host

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
6	3	0	3	3	4	1	4	4	

Troop Type

Swarm

Unit Size:

3-10 bases

Special Rules:

- Ethereal
- Undead



RARE UNITS

BLOOD KNIGHTS

42 points per model

Profile

- Blood Knight
- Kastellan
- Nightmare

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Blood Knight	6	6	3	5	4	1	5	2	8
Kastellan	6	6	3	5	4	1	5	3	8
Nightmare	8	3	0	4	4	1	2	1	3

Troop Type

- Cavalry
- Cavalry
-

Unit Size:

3+

Special Rules:

- Vampiric

Equipment:

- Hand weapon
- Lance
- Full plate armour
- Shield
- Barding

Mount:

- Nightmare

Options:

- One Blood Knight may be upgraded to a Kastellan.....10 points
- One Blood Knight may be upgraded to a musician.....10 points
- One Blood Knight may be upgraded to a standard bearer.....10 points
- May have a magic standard worth up to.....75 points

LAHMIAN HANDMAIDENS

21 points per model

Profile

- Handmaiden
- Royal Handmaiden

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Handmaiden	6	5	4	5	4	1	6	2	7
Royal Handmaiden	6	5	4	5	4	1	6	3	7

Troop Type

- Infantry
- Infantry

Unit Size:

3+

Special Rules:

- Skirmishers
- Vampiric

Equipment:

- Two hand weapons
- Light armour

Options:

- One Handmaiden may be upgraded to a Royal Handmaiden.....10 points
- May take the Asp Bow.....25 points

BLACK COACH

170 points

Profile

- Black Coach
- Cairn Wraith
- Nightmare

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Black Coach	-	-	-	5	5	4	-	-	-
Cairn Wraith	6	3	0	3	-	-	2	3	5
Nightmare	8	3	0	4	-	-	2	1	-

Troop Type

- Chariot (Armour save 5+)

Unit Size:

1

Equipment (Cairn Wraith):

- Great weapon

Crew:

1 Cairn Wraith

Special Rules:

- Evocation of Death
- Chill Grasp (Cairn Wraith only)
- Terror
- Undead
- Ward save (4+)

VARGHULF

200 points

Profile

- Varghulf

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Varghulf	8	5	0	5	5	4	4	5	7

Troop Type

- Monster

Unit Size:

1

Special Rules:

- Bestial Fury
- Hatred
- The Red Thirst
- Regeneration (5+)
- Vampiric



RARE UNITS

MORTIS ENGINE

220 points

Profile

Mortis Engine

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
---	----	----	---	---	---	---	---	----

Troop Type

Chariot (Armour save 5+)

Corpsemaster

-	3	0	3	-	-	2	1	5
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Banshee Swarms

-	3	0	3	-	-	2	3	-
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Spirit Horde

8	3	0	3	-	-	2	*	-
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Unit Size: 1

Special Rules:

Options:

- Ghostly Howl
- Large Target
- *Random Attacks (2D6)
- Regeneration (4+)
- Spectral Steeds
- Terror
- The Reliquary
- Undead

- May take a Blasphemous Tome.....20 points

Crew: 1 Corpsemaster
and a Banshee Swarm

Drawn by:
Spirit Horde

CAIRN WRAITHS

50 points per model

Profile

Cairn Wraith

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
---	----	----	---	---	---	---	---	----

Troop Type

Infantry

Unit Size: 3-10

Special Rules:

- Chill Grasp
- Ethereal
- Terror
- Undead



TOMB BANSHEE

75 points per model

Profile

Tomb Banshee

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
---	----	----	---	---	---	---	---	----

Troop Type

Infantry

Unit Size: 1

Special Rules:

- Ethereal
- Ghostly Howl
- Terror
- Undead

MOURNGUL

170 points

Profile

Mourngul

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
---	----	----	---	---	---	---	---	----

Troop Type

Monster

Unit Size: 1

Special Rules:

- Carnophage
- Haunter in the Dark
- Killing Blow
- Killing Cold
- Undead

RARE UNITS

TERRORGHEIST

225 points

Profile

Terrorgheist

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
	6	3	0	5	6	6	3	4	4	Monster

Unit Size: 1

Special Rules:

- Death Shriek
- Fly
- Regeneration (6+)
- Undead

Options:

- May be upgraded with any of the following:
 - Infested.....10 points
 - Rancid Maw.....15 points

ZOMBIE DRAGON

245 points

Profile

Zombie Dragon

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
	6	4	0	6	6	6	2	5	4	Monster

Unit Size: 1

Special Rules:

- Fly
- Natural Armour (5+)
- Pestilential Breath
- Swarm of Flies
- Undead



NECROFEX COLOSSUS

240 points

Profile

Necrofex Colossus

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
	6	3	0	6	6	6	2	*	8	Monster

Unit Size: 1

Special Rules:

- Corpse Giant Special Attacks
- Magical Attacks
- Regeneration (4+)
- Undead
- Vortex of Death

Options:

- May take any of the following:
 - Scythes and Barbs.....10 points
 - Vampire Blood.....10 points
 - Corpse Killers.....20 points
 - Dark Soul.....45 points



SUMMARY

LORDS	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Type
Blood Dragon Vampire Lord	6	8	3	5	5	3	7	5	10	In
Dieter Helsnight - Manticore	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	1	8	In
Gashnag	6	7	3	5	5	3	7	5	9	In
Heinrich Kemmler	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	1	8	In
Lahmian Vampire Lady	6	6	5	5	5	3	8	4	9	In
Liche Lord	4	4	3	5	5	4	2	2	9	In
Mannfred von Carstein	6	7	5	5	5	3	7	4	10	In
Master Necromancer	4	3	3	3	4	3	3	1	8	In
Melkhior the Ancient - Abyssal Terror	6	6	3	5	5	3	6	3	9	Mo
Necrarch Vampire Lord	6	5	3	5	5	3	6	3	9	In
Neferata	6	7	5	5	5	3	9	5	10	In
Strigoi Vampire Lord	6	6	3	5	5	3	7	5	9	In
The Red Duke	6	8	3	5	5	3	7	5	10	In
Vlad von Carstein	6	7	5	5	5	3	7	5	10	In
von Carstein Vampire Lord	6	7	5	5	5	3	7	4	10	In
Walach Harkon - Nightmare	6	9	3	5	5	3	7	5	10	Ca
Zacharias the Everliving - Zombie Dragon	6	6	3	5	5	3	6	3	9	Mo
	6	4	0	6	6	6	2	5	4	-

HEROS	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Type
Blood Dragon Vampire	6	7	3	5	4	2	6	4	9	In
Cairn Wraith	6	3	0	3	3	2	2	3	5	In
Isabella von Carstein	6	6	4	5	4	2	6	3	8	In
Helman Ghorst - Corpse Cart	4	3	3	3	3	2	3	1	7	In
- The Brother's Ghorst	-	-	-	4	5	4	-	-	-	Sh
Konrad von Carstein	6	7	4	5	4	2	6	3	6	In
Krell	4	5	0	4	5	3	5	3	9	In
Lahmian Vampire	6	5	5	5	4	2	7	3	8	In
Necrarch Vampire	6	4	4	5	4	2	5	2	8	In
Necromancer	4	3	3	3	3	2	3	1	7	In
Sethep	6	5	3	5	4	2	5	2	8	In
Strigoi Vampire	6	5	3	5	4	2	6	4	8	In
von Carstein Vampire	6	6	5	5	4	2	6	3	9	In
Wight King	4	4	3	4	5	2	4	3	8	In

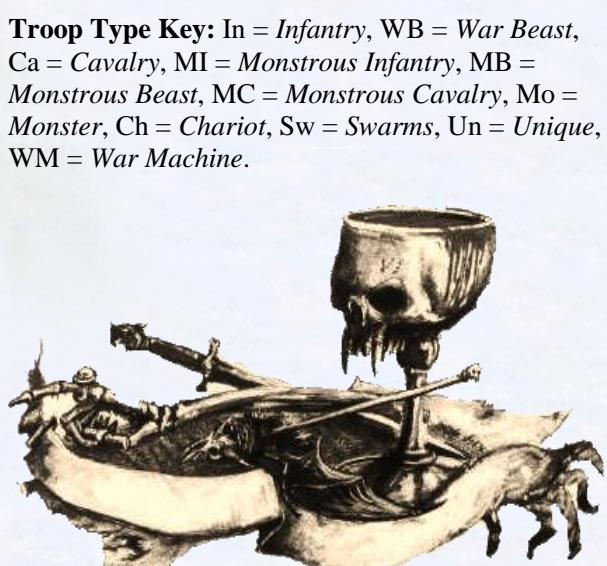
CORE UNITS	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Type
Bat Swarm	1	3	0	2	2	5	4	5	3	Sw
Crypt Ghoul - Crypt Ghast	4	2	0	3	4	1	3	2	5	In
Dire Wolf - Doom Wolf	9	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	3	WB
Fell Bat	1	3	0	3	3	2	3	2	3	WB
Peasant - Militia Leader	4	2	2	3	3	1	3	1	5	In
Skeleton Warrior - Skeleton Champion	4	2	2	3	3	1	2	2	3	In
Zombie	4	2	0	3	3	1	1	1	2	In

SPECIAL UNITS	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Type
Black Knight - Hell Knight	4	3	3	4	4	1	3	1	6	Ca
- Skeletal Steed	8	2	0	3	3	1	2	1	3	-
Corpse Cart - Corpsemaster	-	-	-	4	5	4	-	-	-	Sh
- The Restless Dead	4	2	0	3	-	-	1	*	-	-
Crypt Horror - Crypt Haunter	6	3	0	4	5	3	2	3	7	MI
	6	3	0	4	5	3	2	4	7	MI

SPECIAL UNITS (Cont.)	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Type
Grave Guard - Seneschal	4	3	3	4	4	1	3	1	6	In
Hexwraith - Hellwraith	6	3	0	3	3	1	2	1	5	Ca
- Skeletal Steed	8	2	0	3	3	1	2	1	3	-
Spirit Host	6	3	0	3	3	4	1	4	4	Sw
Vargeist - Vargoyle	6	4	0	5	4	3	4	4	7	MI
	6	4	0	5	4	3	4	4	7	MI

RARE UNITS	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Type
Black Coach - Cairn Wraith	-	-	-	5	5	4	-	-	-	Ch
- Nightmare	6	3	0	3	-	-	2	3	5	-
Blood Knight - Kastellan	6	6	3	5	4	1	5	2	8	Ca
- Nightmare	8	3	0	4	-	-	2	1	3	-
Cairn Wraith	6	3	0	3	3	2	2	3	5	In
Lahmian Handmaiden - Royal Handmaiden	6	5	4	5	4	1	6	2	7	In
Mortis Engine - Corpsemaster	-	-	-	5	5	5	-	-	-	Ch
- Banshee Swarms	-	3	0	3	-	-	2	3	-	-
- Spirit Horde	8	3	0	3	-	-	2	*	-	-
Mourngul	6	5	0	5	5	4	2	4	5	Mo
Necrofex Colossus	6	3	0	6	6	6	2	*	8	Mo
Terrorgheist	6	3	0	5	6	6	3	4	4	Mo
Tomb Banshee	6	3	0	3	3	2	2	1	5	In
Varghulf	8	5	0	5	5	4	4	5	7	Mo
Zombie Dragon	6	4	0	6	6	6	2	5	4	Mo

MOUNTS	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Type
Abyssal Terror	6	4	0	5	5	4	2	4	4	Mo
Barrow Chariot - Skeletal Steed	-	-	-	5	5	4	-	-	-	Ch
Coven Throne - Pallid Handmaiden	8	2	0	3	-	-	2	1	-	-
- Spirit Horde	-	5	3	5	-	-	6	2	7	-
Hellsteed	8	3	0	4	4	3	2	1	3	WB
Nightmare	8	3	0	4	4	1	2	1	3	WB
Skeletal Steed	8	2	0	3	3	1	2	1	3	WB
Terrorgheist	6	3	0	6	6	6	3	4	4	Mo
Zombie Dragon	6	4	0	6	6	6	2	5	4	Mo



Troop Type Key: In = Infantry, WB = War Beast, Ca = Cavalry, MI = Monstrous Infantry, MB = Monstrous Beast, MC = Monstrous Cavalry, Mo = Monster, Ch = Chariot, Sw = Swarms, Un = Unique, WM = War Machine.





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