

The Saga of Kadrin and Jonas

Sheeragatru has been destroyed, and the Heroes of the Hammer have prevailed. A magnificent feast is prepared to celebrate victory, revel in the peace, and to try to put the nightmare of the Volkshalle firmly behind a haze of inebriation.

Kadrin Grimaz downed another ale, and rotated her shoulders to try to banish the lingering ache the claws of Sheeragatru had deposited. The wounds were healed but there were a few lingering pains that the sorcery had not banished. She sat with her fellow adventurers, her oldest and most valued companion Doctor Jonas Knifflig, and the towering form of Golthog. The newly crowned Emperor had ensured that those responsible for the salvation of the Empire are at his side.

Suddenly Heinrich X turned to her and smiled..

‘Tell us the tale of how you came to be here, my friends,’ he said, and suddenly the noise in the hall dimmed as attentions started to drift to her.

Her Dwarven nature flared and she suddenly found it embarrassing to try to trivialise such grand feats as those she had performed. Jonas arose and drew their attention, knowing that his comrade preferred to have others tell her tale and spare her.

Jonas cleared his throat and a silence fell as her friend panned his stare across the assembled dignitaries. They were people he had only ever heard of about in song or seen entering palaces, castles, and temples. He shook off his stage fright and began the tale of their exploits.

‘It is strange that this tale both begins and ends with the machinations of foul Lord Tzeentch. In the spring of this year, I was a man of dubious profession, making what pennies I could, however I could. I was living in a shack, and had learned a little about the most basic medical practices. From my superiors and their dealings with the Dwarven people, I’d also picked up some Khazalid, but it was clearly time to move on.

I encountered Kadrin, we formed an alliance - her skills at battle, and mine at healing would make us ideal partners. I sold my few possessions and we threw our lot in together. Fate did not let us seek mundane careers even from the outset.

Our coach to the capital was instantly attacked by mutants. As I stood frozen in terror as a rotting creature once known from my own past sought to claw its way in and devour us, a dagger was in hand before I could even scream and Kadrin skewered the monster in the eye. We investigated, seeking to help any others that might be in trouble, but found only slaughter and a person of remarkable similarity to myself with a will and identification to acquire twenty thousand gold crowns of

inheritance. Such a sum would be the world to us and so we chose to avail ourselves of this opportunity.

We pursued this matter to the Schaffenfest in Bogenhafen. It turned out the will was a fake, a bounty hunter's attempt to capture a high ranking member of a Chaos Cult of Tzeentch called the 'purple palm'. It was a name that dogged us since and put us in great peril many times.

It was at Bogenhafen that we unearthed a plot by its leading merchants to sacrifice the town and all its people to that same Chaos God. We ended up stuck in a warehouse, watching a most diabolic ritual take place. We had been framed for murder and arson and it was our one chance to thwart this atrocity.

Guards surrounded the building and a Daemon stood poised to slay any who dared interrupt the apocalypse its foul master sought to unleash. Their leader was ready to slay a bound girl, and it was then that we knew we had to act.

Arrows slew the orchestrator of the plot, but then the Daemon turned its attention on us. Its sorcery tried to rob Kadrin of her mind, but she sloughed off its evil and cut the beast down. The others ran screaming into the night, and with our word placed against that of a dozen merchant lords, we fled the town. It did not matter, there was a woman in Grissenwald who had aided the plot. We were going to pay her a visit and ensure she did not put any other citizens of the Empire in jeopardy.

We found a boat. Mutants had slain the occupants and after despatching the band, we chose to try to find the owners next of kin so we might return their property to them and maybe gain a small reward for our efforts. On the way, we saved an old woman from a corrupt Witch Hunter and his followers. They had burned her home, crippled her and were going to burn her because she was an Alchemist and one who refused to make poison for his disgraceful purposes. Kadrin showed him true justice and we brought old Helga with us while she recovered from her ordeal.

At one of the signal towers, we were hailed by Dwarves. They were being attacked at night by some mysterious force that they never saw nor found trace of and their reputation was now on the line. Kadrin instantly agreed to help them and we sat watch that very night. A ghoul attacked from nowhere and was just as swiftly slain. It was then that we found a secret lair that the signal tower was using as a foundation. The old observatory that had once stood there was gone, but the lost laboratory of a Necromancer remained. From his notes we learned that centuries ago, he had watched a huge chunk of Warpstone fall from the skies and into the Barren hills. The villain was going to use it to craft invincible undead monstrosities, but he was long dead, and so we took his books to see what else we could find and continued our journey.

When we arrived in Grissenwald, the dwarves there were being accused of raiding and robbing farmsteads, of murder and worse. We investigated and found that the woman we sought had enlisted an entire goblin tribe to commit her crimes and to blame the Dwarves for it. She had stolen their mine through sorcery and was now seeking to get rid of those who knew her true face.

Kadrin stormed the mines and left no Goblin drawing breath within. But the tower of this vile sorceress was empty. She had gone to seek the very same meteor of accursed Warpstone!

Brooking no delay, we made for the Barren Hills as swiftly as we could. Beastmen, mutants, pirates, chaos spawn, and Orcs sought to stop us, but none succeeded. When we arrived, we found that the foul Necromancer had slain his own expedition and their ancient bones wanted revenge on any that entered their resting place. Barely had we finished them when a force of Skaven poured in against us as well. They had felt the unholy emanations of the meteor and they craved it most direly.

Kadrin scoffed at their demand for our surrender and we were plunged into a heated bloody combat. When every one of them was laying still at our feet, we found the last magical key needed to access a previously sealed area of the laboratory. We rushed back to the location and found a secret library of noisome lore. The Necromancer was a Wiggstein! He had taken the evil rock back to their castle to further his insane experiments.

Unwilling to let this crime remain unsolved, we decided to try to visit the place and see what had happened. As we left, we walked straight into the waiting arms of the evil sorceress that also sought the Warpstone. Her spells and warriors were formidable, but in the end, it was the treachery of her own apprentice that took her life. He escaped using sorcery as we finished the last of his foot soldiers.

At the castle we found horror and much of it. Mutation and insanity was rampant. Spider babies, two headed beasts, egg yolks like eyes, cannibalism, rotting skin, dozens of eyes and there were irrefutable signs that said the Wiggsteins were using the villagers in twisted malignant experiments. The evil of the family had endured through the centuries.

Our fears were confirmed when we saw them abducting peasants and butchering those that defied them. Their guards were as rotten outside as they were in, their skin perpetually putrescent. It made fighting them difficult, the smell was almost overpowering. Nevertheless, lives were at stake and fought them we did.

For defying the Wiggstein crest, we were attacked en masse and I fell to their swords, near to death. Kadrin surrendered her blade to save my life and we were imprisoned deep in their foul castle. We were awaiting a slow death by torture from a deranged Ogre, one tainted by chaos and far different to Golthog here.

Through wit and ingenuity, we managed to make our escape and found allies deep in the woods. These ‘outlaws’ were common folk who were fearful of what the Wittgenstein’s wanted their bodies and souls for. The nobles were protected by ancient charters and could not petition their case to the authorities. They were facing their doom.

We decided to help. Kadrin formulated an ingenious military attack, and we volunteered to enter and cause as much havoc as we could. Many outlaws would die trying to reach the gates we were to open, and the more guards we could despatch, the less innocent people would die needlessly.

Standing our ground, we made the guards pay for what they had done. Kadrin had drawn the magical Dwarven blade ‘Barrakul’ from the resting place of an honoured templar of Sigmar. The temple was in the village and long deserted, its priest killed when he tries to oppose the evil whims of the Wittgenstein’s. Despite its age, the blade was as lethal as it was when interred with that honoured Knight. He had been given it by the Dwarves, now his spirit returned it to them. Against its wrath, no guard could hope to survive.

Our forces arrived but the guards had set up firing ranks with their crossbows. The first waves were cut to pieces and our fate looked bleak indeed at that moment. Kadrin charged out into the line of fire and stormed the enemy head on. Bolts struck her left and right but she smashed into the guards and broke their resolve. It gave our allies time to enter in numbers and gain cover.

With this theatre of conflict stabilised, we raced into the area of the castle occupied by the nobles. A savage storm was lashing the sky overhead – something nightmarish was going to walk the Old World this night unless we stopped it.

Chaos Warriors had been given haven, treated like any visiting dignitary, with their Beastmen stationed in servants quarters. Torture, mutilation, mutation, temples to Slaanesh, Daemons walking openly, it was a place that nearly broke my mind, so horrible was it to behold. However, Kadrin’s will was as strong as her arm, and never once did she falter.

Lightning lashed the tallest tower and we ascended with speed. There we found the Lady of the castle, channelling the power of the storm into the most grotesque aberration imaginable. Comprised of parts of people, sewn together and imbued with an awful semblance of life it descended with its creator and sought our lives. Necromantic evil brought the other bodies in the lab to life, and her wicked magic bored into our flesh. Only through steel, courage, and determination did we manage to take down the monsters and the witch who had animated them. The horror of the Wittgenstein’s had been brought to an end.

We found the resting place of the meteor with little trouble. The Lady had been using it to fuel her own dabbling into the dark arts. Skaven struck in force and

before we could pursue them, the foundations of the castle heaved beneath our feet. With stone collapsing all around us, and the pestilent magics of the Skaven Warlocks at our heels, we barely escaped with our lives.

Again, one of the villains remained unpunished. A son, loyal to Slaanesh, had come to Middenheim. The Purple Palm was attacking us in every increasing force. Thinking me their wayward compeer, they demanded I take the money I had supposedly acquired to Middenheim, and their master! Middenheim was our assured destination.

The taxes that had been imposed on wizard, temple, and dwarf were greatly harming Kadrin's people and threatening the city state. She would not tolerate such injustice and felt the purple palms greasy tendrils of corruption in the affair. Therefore, we set our Alchemist friend up in a home, where she would be safe, and secure from persecution, and ignoring the Carnival we turned our attention to the matter at hand.

We discovered a traitor on the court, we traced his pawns and killed them. A Chaos Band stormed our Inn, and it was a fight with a terribly powerful foe – Skaven, goblins, Orcs, Beastmen and more. It was there that Golthog came to our aid and not one of the host escaped us. Golthog joined our band and swore allegiance to our cause.

As the traitor and mastermind behind the Purple Palm sought to replace Graf Boris with a doppelganger, we intervened. With two identical Graf's locked in mortal combat, all were stunned. Kadrin acted like lightning and the Doppelganger's head was on the floor in a trice. The Graf was saved. With his permission we stormed the traitor's opulent home, slew his guards, despatched the Daemons he used against us and stopped them destroying the evidence of his evil web of Chaos. But the coward fled in an armoured wagon. Filled with gunpowder he rode it into the city gate, exploding it so he could continue his flight. At the last moment he turned and used one of the Words of Power to cause the viaduct to collapse.

Kadrin charged across it, the stone crumbling beneath her feet and promising a fall down the mighty Fauschlag to the forest below. The traitor sought to slay her, but had no clue that he faced such an opponent. Bleeding, dying, he threw himself from the mountain to avoid capture and questioning, having no idea that we had stopped the destruction of all his precious records.

While the Graf burned the presence of the Purple Palm from his city, we were sent to Kislev, to aid the Tsar in a matter of crisis. The dead were walking the streets of Bolgasgrad. They were being used as troops, servants, even beasts of burden. Having faced Necromancy before, we knew the folly of it.

An Elven necromancer, some five thousand years old was behind the felony. He and two Chaos Gods were deceiving the town and using the guise of necromantic

protection to seduce them into the service of Chaos. Defeating their cunning traps and many vile defenders we stole entry into their most sacred locations and retrieved documentation to prove what was occurring so that the Tsar could act and bring an end to this abomination. We were made Knight Commanders of the Order of the White Wolf. The Tsar himself put the silver star of Kislev about our necks.

We returned home to the Empire with jubilation, because as much as I liked Kislev, I can only take so much snow. But upon our return we found strife. The Emperor was dead and though we tried to save Graf Boris, the best we could do was to slay his murderer.

Ar-Ulric and the late Arch-Lector Kaslain had a means to unite the Empire again and the quest was on.

The journey was fraught with danger. Even before we reached the pass, we had been assailed by a force of Slaanesh intent on taking dark pleasure from Kaslain, because after all, we were upon his personal boat and they assumed he would be present. Their spells and Daemonettes failed to stop us.

A lunatic band of Khorne's bloody following stormed us, their reason unclear. They had no minds, only the concept of dealing death. Perhaps their master had guided them onto our path, like blind rabid wardogs poked with sticks into a room. They had a Bloodletter with them, and perhaps this was the means with which the Blood God sent his Champions onto us. Their deaths were hard to acquire and our quest almost ended there as the cruel daemon spat venom and launched a sanguinary blade of sorcerous destruction at us.

Again, Tzeentch's brutal cults sought us, using spells of Chaos, bombs, incendiaries, blunderbusses and a skilled assassin that they had charmed with a grotesque artefact of Tzeentch that stole the mind and enslaved it to the service of the dark one.

A force of misguided Sigmarite's mistook our quest for heresy and launched a massive attack, recruiting many militia from a town to assist them. As hard as it was to do, we could not let anything stop us from succeeding - too many others depended on us.

The mountains were no safer than the lands of the Empire. Manticores, Goblins, Orcs, Jabberwocks, Giant Spiders, Black Orcs, wolves, bears, Trolls, hostile Ogre bandits, all would have seen use dead.

A desolate city of the dead and a shrine of Sigmar was our destination. Hundreds of Skeletons sought to bar our passage. Their brittle bones rained down on us, and we had to hack our way to the doors and gain entry. Every time one of them fell, broken, it gathered itself and renewed its assault. Once within the hallowed place, we were safe for awhile.

That very night, with a legion of skeletons clawing at the door, we were given a vision. A comet showed us the way, and we were given a stone, a clue, etched by Sigmar himself to point the way of his path. We set off immediately. Our bodies were bruised, weary, and we were starting to wonder if we could succeed.

A secret enclave of Elves gave us a moment to recover and hopefully banish our fears. But it was not to be. A monstrous evil force, a cloud of Chaos drifted through their land, sucking the life from the children and youth. Its destruction was the price for assistance in our quest because Sigmar had passed through that very valley, and had left another clue. We patrolled their lands and finally faced the source of their woe.

The beast spat claws, mouths, ectoplasmic tails, teeth, and other forms at us, it was a blizzard of deadly appendages and was near invincible. The fight was long and bloody but we vanquished the beast.

Our prize was gratitude and a parchment. Over two thousand years old it pointed to a lost Dwarven Stronghold. Kadar Khalizad. There we found an ancient Loremaster, one who had actually met Sigmar himself!

It seemed that the previous holder of the post had released something unspeakable in the lowest reaches of the place, an evil that Sigmar had chosen to face and save the Dwarves. He went down there with the king of Kadar Khalizad, the gates were sealed behind them, and they never returned.

The Loremaster told us how we could enter the hold and gave us a rough map of one of its upper levels to try and guide us.

Our first obstacle was the mutated Goblins that had infested the place. In fact, the whole hold stank of the taint of Chaos. We knew then that we faced more darker opponents to our quest than wretched Goblins.

In a full on assault, we fought on and on and left no living thing in the upper levels, but what waited for us below was also dead, but it was also restless. One final barrier existed however. A mound of rock that filled an enormous hall. Then that mountain moved, yawned, and scratched. A slumbering Earth Dragon of unbelievable size barred our route. It was then that we discovered just how quiet an armed and armoured expedition can be when given the proper incentive!

A Dwarven mage had been seduced into Necromancy and had devolved into a powerful Liche Lord. He refused to let us pass and we found ourselves subjected to ambushes and endless assaults of the most malevolent intellect and power we had thus far encountered. His fiery bolts stripped us of all armour and protection. Ghouls sought to poison us with their rank claws. Waves of wraiths sucked the very strength from our bodies. Skeletons hacked at us in seemingly endless droves, and all the while the Liche's horrendous face froze the blood in our veins as he directed sheets of fire, soul stealing blasts of darkness and sorcerously poisonous darts at us.

We have faced terror before, we have faced creatures against whom we thought we would be lost. However, it was deep in that pit of despair, surrounded by the enraged mournful spirits of betrayed and butchered Dwarves that I finally faltered. The signs indicated that the hammer was gone, and that should we head up, or down, the Liche would finish us for sure.

His hordes were endless, and we were but three. The Liche had concocted our downfall well, his Wraiths had extracted our vitality, and we barely had the strength to hoist a weapon, let alone continue the battle. It would be a lie to say I did not think hard on abandoning the quest. With our information, maybe others could succeed? I broached the subject myself with the others, and I can assure you that I felt no shame. I had no wish to join the shambling tortured husks that were so pitiless in their assault on us, jealous of our life and anxious to take it. The Liche was gathering his magical might once more, somewhere in this alien realm of which I had no knowledge or understanding. He could be anywhere, waiting in the miserable shadows, ready to strike, setting traps, snares, and other evil tactics. Lonely death and an eternity of anguish was all I could see in my future.

But Kadrin stood firm. The more damage we inflicted there, the less another force would have to face. Every wraith we banished, every skeleton we smashed, every ghoul we slaughtered would be one less for our successors, and if we could destroy their master! Our deaths would have been worthwhile and I saw hope again.

We then sought a vantage point from which to make our final stand, and as though the grievous testing of our commitment had been a test, we suddenly discovered a route down. Concealed from view, we cleared the rubble that obscured it, dragging it aside lest the Liche return for us. The stairs we found took us deep into the mountain where we faced Elemental guardians and the ghosts of slain Dwarves. Only once we had fought our way through these did we come upon the resting place of the hammer of Sigmar.

Sigmar had pursued the Daemon through a rent in our world, and had left Ghal Maraz to block that hole. We were staring at the very location where Sigmar Heldenhammer had made his transition from man, to God, and there, in that throbbing portal to realms beyond my meagre understanding was the hammer itself.

We took the hammer and fled as the rent began to expand, our very presence had brought some sort of reaction. Praying that apocalypse not be imminent, we continued to dash for daylight. All around us, the geometry of the world was crumbling, reality was contorting, Chaos was pouring out and destroying everything in an orgy of mutation. We fled the mountain as the rift was sealed by the Gods and we thanked our fates that we had survived.

Again, peace was torn from us. The Dragon had been possessed by the very Daemon that Sigmar had pursued. It had scaled through the mountain and torn the

Loxmaster in two. He asked us to be laid to rest on the mountaintop, where we were to wait for a sign. The learned Dwarf had helped us greatly and we could not refuse, even though turmoil was brewing in the Empire.

With limbs like lead, we scaled the mountain. We laid him to rest and watched as he gradually turned to stone and then vanished. Our spirits were low, we were terribly weak, our life hung by threads and our food was all but gone. After all our battles, against all such beasts and curs, it was saddening to face starvation as the beast that would finally be our downfall.

When midnight came, a comet filled the skies and an avatar of Sigmar himself appeared before us. He told us of what we had done, that the Daemon was loosed and had to be stopped, that the Empire had to be healed, and we had to find his heir by flying to Wolfenburg. We assumed the word was metaphorical, but at the valley of the Elves, we discovered rest, recuperation, and Pegasi, and thus a swift flight to reach Wolfenburg began. Day and night we flew, clutching to the magnificent beasts for dear life. An Empire in flames passed beneath us and I wondered if perhaps we were too late. I questioned much on what I could have done different, what routes I could have found, what skills deployed to have hastened our journey.

The Pegasi set us down and the hammer itself pulled towards the battle. Kadrin led us into the heart of the fray and there we sought the heir of Sigmar himself. When we encountered Graf Heinrich, we immediately saw the uncanny resemblance between the avatar and he. When we handed him the hammer, our part was done, we had succeeded and could now rest. Save that the Daemon yearned for vengeance, to cast down the Empire its foe had founded so long ago. The hammer had kept it imprisoned for thousands of years and its hatred was potent indeed. So it was, that less than one year from leaving my humble profession and meeting my most trusted companion, we faced the personification of our troubles. The Lord of Change itself. No creature has ever soiled the world so grievously as a beast such as this. Beyond reckoning, inscrutable, rank, and as utterly evil as it was powerful. Its withering gaze near drew the life and souls from our bodies. Its hide was like iron, its flesh near impervious to harm, and it fought with a strength and speed of a thousand men and more.

Its claws racked my face and sent me hurtling to the floor, my blood spilling upon the stones where Graf, Prince, Arch Lector, and Grant Theogonist had died. But even as I felt my life ailing, I was not afraid, for Kadrin still stood against the beast with Barrakul still in her hand, and not even a Greater Daemon of that foul and noisome deity dare hope for victory against such a stalwart opponent. No matter whether I lived or died, the Empire was saved and I had done some small part to help. What more could a humble peasant boy from the waterways of the Reik dare dream of?"

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