

**ILL MET BY MORRSLIEB**

**A Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay  
Scenario**

**by  
Morgan Hudson**

**Table of Contents**

- ◆ Introduction & History.....pg 2
- ◆ **Act 1** – Strangers by  
Moonlight....pg2
- ◆ **Act 2** – Over the River and Through  
the Woods....pg 4
- ◆ **Act 3** – The Long and Winding  
Road....pg 6
- ◆ **Act 4** – The Wisdom of the  
Woodwose....pg 9
- ◆ **Act 5** – Bad Moon Rising....pg 11
- ◆ Ending the Adventure....pg14
- ◆ **Appendix:** Important NPCs....pg 15

## **INTRODUCTION**

This adventure is designed for players still in their first career, set a year or two after the event known as the Storm of Chaos (2523 or 2524 by the Imperial Calendar). Although intended to take place in the Empire, it could be just as easily set in the forested depths of Artois in Bretonnia or the tangled woods of the Border Princes.

As they are traveling, the players find themselves coming across a Roadwarden and her captive. Their choice to either help the warden or free her prisoner will set them on a path deep into the nearby forest, where a hideous mutant holds dominion over an entire town and calls out for human sacrifice....

The players will have to decide how best to proceed and which characters to trust in order to best the monster, as well as deal with a crazed old hermit who may or may not know the creature's greatest weakness. With the Chaos Moon of Morrslieb growing large in the sky above, it will eventually fall to the adventurers to disrupt the foul monster's sacrifice and rescue one of their own allies from becoming its next meal.

## **HISTORY**

For centuries, the small village of Kaltenbrach has squatted deep within the tangled forest that surrounds it. Once, the roads were flush with caravans of merchants eager to trade their wares with the local carpenters and coopers, but that time has long since passed. During the Storm of Chaos the Beastmen came to Kaltenbrach, and for the past two years their constant predation has slowed all trade to a mere trickle. The coaches and caravans no longer come to Kaltenbrach – those living more than a few days' journey have all but forgotten that the place still exists. The once proud craftsmen and burghers have been largely reduced to charcoal burners and rag pickers who sleep lightly and live in constant fear of the

dark and secluded woods that are slowly encroaching from all sides. In this place, people are willing to do whatever it takes to feel even a little bit safer... even strike deals with a monster like Kellerman.

A hideously malformed mutant of prodigious size and strength, Kellerman stumbled upon the village while fleeing the righteous fury of the Empire's Witch Hunters. Realizing how isolated and terrified the people were (and needing a convenient place to hide until his pursuers stopped looking for him), Kellerman struck a deal with the local mayor. For the past year, the monster has spent his nights driving off the Beastmen that threaten his territory and his days resting safely in his sponsor's wine cellar. In exchange for his protection, Kellerman demands monthly tributes of blood and constant worship – every time that the chaos moon of Morrslieb begins to wax full, the call for sacrifice sounds out from the caverns beneath the mayor's home and the people of Kaltenbrach are reminded yet again of the grisly price they must pay for their safety.

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## **ACT ONE: Strangers By Moonlight**

For the players, this adventure begins with an unexpected encounter on the road. You can easily insert this opening any time that an existing party is on their way from one place to another, so long as there is a nearby forest for Kaltenbrach to be hidden away in. It is close to evening, and the skies have been especially dark and ominous all day. The winds from the north have been as cold and bitter as if they were on loan from the frigid depths of Kislev, and the few feeble glimpses that the players have had of the sun have only been enough to make the rest of their dreary and miserable journey seem even more intolerable. As they have traveled, they have likely noticed how little traffic this road has: nobody will have passed them going the other direction in nearly a day, and the path itself is clearly in poor

repair. If the characters are not familiar, this may be a good time to allow them to introduce themselves to each other and engage in some simple conversation as they while away the hours on the road. When everyone is comfortably in character and have gotten to know each other, read the following (or just paraphrase it as closely as you want to):

“As you journey onwards, you notice that the broken and rubble-strewn road is beginning to pitch uphill very steeply. The skies crack with a loud roll of thunder, and lightning flashes briefly in the distance just before the rain begins to pour down upon you. It falls in sheets, soaking your clothes and plastering your hair to your faces as the freezing cold wind claws at your exposed flesh. In a matter of minutes, everything you own is completely wet and the road has been turned into a muddy chain of ankle-deep puddles. After slogging to the crest of the hill, you see a vast forest of tangled hickory and pine stretching out beneath you as far as the eye can see. Near the edge of the dark and tangled wood, a massive boulder leans over the road at a slight angle: perhaps enough of an angle to get you some cover from this miserable storm. Some of the nearby brush might make for decent kindling, too, if you're lucky.”

Allow the players to set up camp however they prefer and try to get dry to the best of their ability. Give them some time to settle down and get a bit of a fire going, then let them settle down for some rest.

“You awake to the sound of somebody calling out in the distance, jolting you from your sleep and forcing you back into the cold, wet world. Your fire has been reduced to a few smoldering embers, and the night beyond their feeble glow is dark and menacing. Two shadowy female figures emerge from the underbrush, their rain-soaked cloaks clinging to their bodies and their faces hidden in the folds of their raised hoods. One is taller than the other, and is holding a heavy chain that has been

wrapped securely around her captive's wrists. Lifting her head slightly, she calls out in a wearied tone.

“If you're waiting here to rob any unwary travelers, then I'm afraid Ranald has spit on you.” Reaching into her cloak, she draws a pistol and cocks the hammer back expertly. “All I'm carrying is this nasty old thing and Little Miss Sunshine over there, and you had better believe I intend to hang on to both. Now let's all be sharing that fire like civilised people, eh?”

Despite her somewhat upset state of mind, the taller (and better armed) of the two girls is actually a Roadwarden: her name is **Beatrix Adler**, and after she is able to get somewhere vaguely dry, she will apologise for being so brusque with the players. She has just spent the last few weeks chasing after her captive, a known outlaw named **Valerie Beiber**. As she is all too willing to explain, she had cornered her prey in the nearby woods and successfully clapped her in irons just moments before they were set upon by Beastmen. The creatures were able to scare off her horse - “the poor thing is probably warming some monster's innards now”, she'll lament – and caused her to lose all of her supplies. For the last few hours, she and Valerie have been trudging through the woods on foot in the rain, and they are both too wet and exhausted to continue onward. After pausing just long enough to thank the players for any generosity that they have shown her and securing her prisoner to nearby log, Beatrix will quickly find a place to rest.

“As the warden's softly starts to snore and the fire once more begins to settle down to a dimly glowing pile of embers, the prisoner glances over at you all with a calculating look in her eye. She is young, barely old enough to be out on her own, and her clothes are spattered with muck and grime. “Don't she think she's something, waving that gun around and acting like the Count's favorite daughter? If you ask me, I don't even think that blasted thing would even work after the soaking we both got. Why

should you be helping her, with me all helpless and chained up like this? I've never done anything to any of you. Come on, get me out of here – it's the gallows for sure if that witch ever gets me back to a magistrate! All you've got to do is help get these chains off: there's a key on her belt that does it.”

If the players choose to, they can easily overpower Beatrix in her weakened condition: her gun is indeed quite useless to her and she is too exhausted to put up more than a token resistance against their numbers. It's possible that the players may prefer to stay out of the situation, or at least that they would like to know what's in it for them if they decide to risk their necks for a total stranger. If such is the case, Valerie has one final offer to make:

“I can pay you, I promise! The gang I've been working with, we've got this place in the forest where we keep all our loot. Let me out and I'll take you straight to it, just as soon as that old bloodhound over there is wearing these chains instead of me. She's been tracking me for months, and for what? A pitcher of cream off some Noble's table? Just set me loose, and it will all be yours.”

It is still possible that players of an exceptionally honest bent will still refuse to consort with criminals, or interfere with any servant of the Emperor while they are on their duly appointed tasks. Should the players still refuse to assist Valerie, Beatrix will sit up and admit that she was actually listening in the entire time. Suitably impressed by their stalwart and incorruptible natures, she will make an offer of her own::

“Clearly, there is little hope of me getting this tricky little sneak thief very far by myself – it's been less than a day, and she's already running me ragged. I have heard rumours that there is a village somewhere in the nearby woods. If you are willing to accompany me until I have delivered this criminal there to stand trial, I would greatly appreciate it. I can't promise you'll be paid, since the last time I saw my money it was disappearing into the underbrush alongside

my horse, but I will put in a kind word with the magistrates and try to see that you are properly rewarded.”

*(Note: there will be points in the adventure marked “HONOUR” and “RICHES”. If the players are working with Valerie, read the sections marked “RICHES”. If they have chosen to support Beatrix, read the parts marked “HONOUR”.)*

Whichever girl the players have cast their lot with, she will suggest that they rest up for the rest of the night and move out in the morning – Beatrix to look for the town, and Valerie to show everybody where their reward is hidden. No matter what their motives may be, the players' fates now lie somewhere in the woods near Kaltenbrach....

## ACT TWO: Over The River And Through The Woods

HONOUR – Come morning, Beatrix will be in a much more friendly frame of mind. She will be most grateful to the players, both for helping her when she was so unfortunate and for their refusal to betray her to Valerie. Her plan having failed, Valerie will become depressed and begin to sulk. She will have little to say to the players now that they have clearly sided against her, but she will take any opportunity to escape if they seem distracted or busy dealing with something else.

RICHES – Having turned the tables on her captor, Valerie will be exuberant. Unable to resist, she will begin taunting the now-chained Beatrix at any available opportunity. For her part, the Roadwarden will be coldly furious at not only Valerie, but the players as well. Unless someone gags her, they can expect an almost constant stream of curses and threats from her direction for the rest of the journey. Despite her bitterness, however, Beatrix will still try to convince the players to let her free again if they run into any trouble that she thinks she could help with – she has no desire to

be left behind as a snack for the Beastmen if something happens to her captors.

“The woods around Kaltenbrach are a tangled mass of gnarled oaks and giant chestnut trees with thick underbrush and uneven terrain. The twining branches and canopy of leaves block out almost all light and leave the entire wood in a state of permanent twilight. As you travel deeper into the woods, you can't shake the feeling that you are being watched...”

The woods are quite dark and deep, with thorns and branches that pull and tear at players as they try to thrash along what may or may not be a path. Within a few hours, it will become all but impossible for the party to avoid being lost – an **AVERAGE (+0%)** Navigate skill test will be needed to stay on the path. If the party are willing or able to provide a source of illumination, the test will become **ROUTINE (+10%)**.

**RICHES** – If Valerie is present, the Navigate test will become **ROUTINE (+10%)** automatically, since she is relatively familiar with the woods. If the players have both Valerie's help and a source of illumination, the test will become **EASY (+20%)**.

**HONOUR** – If the players should fail their Navigate test, Valerie will attempt to run for it. Beatrix will insist that everyone chase after her, which will result in the players being led into the next scene.

## **2.1 – Corpses in the Clearing**

“Pushing through the brush, you stumble into a small clearing. The area is littered with branches torn from the nearby trees, and great piles of leaves are heaped in strange mounds on the otherwise scarred and barren ground.”

This clearing was the location of Kellerman's latest confrontation with the Beastmen. Curious players will easily uncover the signs of battle with an **EASY (+20%)** Perception test: splashes of blood

on the trunks of trees, trampled undergrowth, cloven hoof-prints in the dirt, and -most tellingly- the corpses of three Beastmen partially hidden under the piles mounds of leaves. Kellerman tried to cover up his massacre in order to keep from panicking the woodcutters who work nearby – the trees in this area are clearly trimmed back, and there is the remains of a charcoal burning mound nearby. If there are any wizards in the party, their witch sight will reveal a strange warping in the air and the eerie sensation of being watched by a gigantic beast-like figure who is lurking somewhere just out of sight. The winds of Chaos are unexpectedly strong in this area, and a wise magician will know to be wary with his spells – any Miscast results on casting rolls will automatically default to the whimsy of the GM for as long as they remain within the boundaries of these woods.

There is little point in looting the corpses, as Kellerman took everything of value before he left, but feel free to let the players sift around a little if they feel so inclined before moving on. At the very least, they should be able to locate some abandoned hatchets to serve as hand weapons if they need them, and a determined search will turn up one spear half-covered with leaves and other detritus (the charcoal burners use it to remove the “motty pegs” that they plug their burning coal piles with while remaining at a safe distance).

## **2.2 – The Gibbet Tree**

“The trail winds onward, leading up to a giant and warped old elm tree and then forks in two directions and disappears into the dense foliage. The tree stands directly at the point where all three paths converge, towering over you and stretching its gnarled branches out to hang over the broken remains of the road. A soft creaking sound reaches your ears, and you look up to see more than a dozen rusted iron cages dangling over your heads. Scraps of rotted clothing and a few yellowed bones still dangle from the cages, and a large raven is calmly pecking at one of the fresher

corpses' faces as it stares down at you with a malevolent glare."

HONOUR - Read the following section:

"Valerie looks up at the rotting bodies and shudders uncontrollably, clutching her shoulders as she sinks to the ground.

"A gibbet tree," Beatrix says, sounding quietly disgusted. "I wasn't aware anyone in these parts still used them. Barbaric things, but effective. Prisoners get hung up and left until they starve... or the Beastmen come for them."

Valerie moans softly and looks up at you. "These are the kind of people you're leaving me with? I never did anything to you!"

"You'll get a fair trial," Beatrix replies firmly. "That's exactly what you deserve."

"No!" Valerie screams, and there is a sudden riot of cawing and flapping wings. Their eyes filled with malice, a flock of ravens dive towards you from the branches overhead and attack.

RICHES - Read the following section:

"Vile things," Valerie says, giving Beatrix a cruel glare. "What do you think, Roadwarden? Care to try one on for a bit? Maybe we'd be better off leaving you here for a little while."

"You won't," Beatrix replies calmly. "You're too scared that I might get loose when you're not looking. You're convinced that the second I escape from this, I'm going to hunt you back down like the worthless dog you always were. And you know what? You're right."

"Big words from the girl in chains," Valerie says, but it's clear from the lack of confidence in her voice that Beatrix has hit a nerve. Stooping over, she picks a stone up off of the ground. "Here's what I think of your stupid gibbets," she spits, and hurls the rock at the nearest cage. With a

thunderous clang, the cage bursts open and sends its contents raining down to the ground below.

There is a moment of silence, and then, with a riotous cawing and the sound of flapping wings, a flock of ravens suddenly dive down out of the branches, clawing and pecking angrily at you.

At this point, switch from Narrative Time to Combat Time. The ravens will attack all players equally, and there should probably be at least one more raven than there are players (it will attack either Beatrix or Valerie, depending which is free). The players can either try to calm the angry birds with an **EASY (+20%)** Charm Animal test, or simply beat them off through combat. Though angry, the ravens are not suicidal, and will fly away as soon as each of them is reduced to 1 Wound. The stats for Ravens can be found on page 233 of the Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay Rulebook.

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### ACT THREE: The Long And Winding Road

At this point in the adventure, the players' earlier decision will become quite important. If Valerie is free at the crossroads, she will lead them east to the **Bandit's Hideout**. If Beatrix is free, she will lead them west, to the town of **Kaltenbrach**. Please read either the HONOUR or the RICHES section for this adventure, whichever applies to your players:

RICHES – "After a few hours, Valerie will lead the players to a small clearing where a moss-covered old chestnut tree has toppled over and pushed aside a few of its neighbours.

"It's right over here, just like I promised," she says. "After the favour you people have done for me, I figure I owe you all more than just a little clank – take as much of the stuff as you want!"

“Interesting,” a gruff-sounding voice will comment, as its owner and his friends emerge from the other side of the clearing. “Don't you all think Valerie is being quite generous with our loot, lads? ” ”

The speaker is **Alfred Montag**, the leader of Valerie's gang of outlaws. He will be supported by a number of footpads equal in number to the players (the stats for Footpads can be found on page 234 of the Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay Rulebook). Although understandably irritated, Alfred is prepared to listen if the players want to try talking their way out of a fight. A successful **EASY (+20%)** Charm test will get him to forgive Valerie for her transgression, but not enough to actually give the players any of his hard-stolen loot. If they decide to fight, Alfred will surrender after three rounds – there is no profit in him getting killed by wandering adventurers. However the encounter ends, he will be quick to confess that outlawry in the woods is not as profitable as it used to be.

“Time was, merchant caravans and trade wagons used to come through here all the time – loaded down with all sorts of junk we could take off 'em. These days, though, it's all we can do to keep from rag picking just to make ends meet! Bad enough there's barely anyone around here worth robbing any more, my man Gallis over there ran into some giant monster or something not eight nights ago near this very spot. Came back white as a sheet, he did! I haven't been able to get these slackards to so much as set foot out of camp. You're as liable to get your head ripped clean from your body as you are to find anything worth stealing! Old Man **Burkhardt**'s been saying that Taal sent that thing to punish the wicked for profiting off of the lives of innocent trees, or bunnies, or something. Frankly, the old loon is off his rocker – he wants us all to smear ourselves with dung and wear berries in our hair. If you want my money, I'll give it to you, but you have to clear that menace out of here first! Go talk to the crazy old man and see what he has to say; just don't let him rub anything on you!”

**HONOUR** - “After several hours, the trees seems to melt away to reveal a small village nestled in the heart of the forest. The walls surrounding the town are made of solid teak, and bear the scars of countless repelled attacks. As you draw nearer to the place, however, you notice that there do not seem to be any guards or militiamen standing watch. In fact, the toll booths and guard houses are completely vacant, and the massive gates aren't even fully closed.”

Entering the city will do nothing to make the players feel any more confident – the buildings are all adorned with gargoyles that seem to watch them as they move through the town, and aside from a few beggars and wandering madmen screaming about the end being near, nobody seems willing to make eye contact with them, let alone speak to them. There is a noticeable pall over the entire town, and the players will need to pass an **EASY (+20%)** Charm test before they can even try to purchase any goods or secure lodging for the night. The people of Kaltenbrach are naturally suspicious of strangers, as they fear having their secret exposed to Witch Hunters – anybody who wants to attempt it can make a **ROUTINE (+10%)** Gossip test to try to get an idea of what's going on. If they would prefer taking a harder stance, they can replace the Charm test with an Intimidate test (Beatrix will reduce the difficulty of this test to **VERY EASY (+30%)**, as she has both the training and the official position to make people quite nervous). If the Intimidate test passes, the difficulty of the related Gossip test will be reduced from **ROUTINE (+10%)** to **EASY (+20%)**.

| <u>Degree of Success</u> | <u>Result</u>   |
|--------------------------|---|
| 0                        | “The Beastmen attacks used to be really bad, but lately they've all stopped for some reason. Nobody's sure what's behind it, but the Mayor swears he's got things under control.” |
| 1                        | “Some of the people have been   |

saying that there's some sort of monster out in the woods that's been killing all the Beastmen. It's probably just those stupid bandits again, but if it **is** a monster, then maybe we owe it a favour or two....”

2 “Every time the Chaos Moon waxes in the sky, there are these strange noises that come from the Mayor's mansion. It's better not to ask too many questions about that sort of thing.”

3+ “There's an old hermit living out of town who says he's seen some kind of giant monster in the forest at night. The crazy old fool says it's been sent by Taal to punish us all for our sins, or something. He's mad as a hatter, but there **have** been some odd things going on around here lately.”

Based on the information that they have been able to unearth, the players will likely need to decide what to do next. At this point, they can:

1. Question the Mayor about the rumours about a monster and the strange lack of Beastmen in the area. If they go to speak to the Mayor at his mansion, they will find him with little difficulty - he almost never leaves his home during the day for fear that someone will stumble onto Kellerman in his basement while he is out. He will be evasive, but clearly nervous as he tries to answer their questions. If the subject of a monster comes up, he will pale noticeably and start to stammer as he tries to convince the players that all they are hearing is a local legend with no basis in reality. As far as he is willing to admit, the Beastmen all left because there was simply nothing left in Kaltenbrach worth taking. Any tales of monsters are “likely just the outlaws in the woods using some sort of disguise to strike fear into

unsuspecting villagers. That, or crazy old Burkhardt has finally started foaming at the mouth and biting people.” Despite his best attempts, he will be far from convincing, and a **ROUTINE (+10%)** Perception test will be enough for the players to notice that the inside of his wrist is marked with what looks suspiciously like a Chaos brand. This brand was the way in which he sealed his bargain with Kellerman, and he has developed a bad habit of scratching at it whenever he is nervous.

2. Go into the woods and try to speak to Valerie's gang about what they have seen going on. They may decide this based on the result of their Gossip test or because of what the Mayor tells them. If the players seem stuck, or if they simply have not passed their Gossip tests, Valerie herself will volunteer this option. Assuming the players are willing to speak to Valerie's friends, simply read the RICHES section for this part of the adventure and act out their encounter with **Alfred Montag** as if they had already let Valerie go, and omit any mention of the treasure.
3. The party may choose to go into the woods and look for the hermit **Burkhardt**, based either on their early investigation (if their Gossip test scored a large number of successes), or because the Mayor mentioned it when they were questioning him. They may also want to go because they have met with Alfred and he has asked them to.

The players will likely seek out the old hermit eventually, but if they want to ask around town some more or try to find some equipment. If this is the case, Kaltenbrach will be considered a village with a population of **Below 1,000** on the “Availability By Population” table found on page 104 of the Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay Rulebook. Be sure to adjust the rarity of items accordingly – this village should not have an abundance of high quality items or powerful weapons, or else they would not have needed Kellerman's help to survive. By the same token, don't

shortchange your players if they happen to roll well: there are probably a number of ratty old suits of leather armour piled in the corner of former guards' closets, and at least a few swords that have been getting used for fireplace pokers and the like.

## **ACT FOUR: Wisdom of the Woodwose**

“As you journey deeper into the forest, you notice a strange quiet settling over the area. The usual sounds of birds chirping, bushes rustling, and even the occasional branch snapping on the ground have all stopped. It's almost as if every living creature in the woods is holding their breath in expectation of what is about to happen.”

### **4.1 – A Trap in the Forest**

Although nowhere near sane, the old hermit **Burkhardt** is still a crafty old man – the area around his little hovel is covered with countless booby traps and tripwires in order to keep away threats both real and imagined. In this instance, the players are about to stumble into a deadfall trap: he has rigged several logs and small boulders to tumble down the hill if one of his wires is tripped.

The logs are set up roughly 20 feet away from the players initially, and there is a chance they may notice it even in the gloom of the forest. If the players are carrying any source of illumination which has a maximum vision range of 20 feet or more, then allow them to make a **VERY EASY (+30%)** Perception test to avoid the trap. If they pass, the resulting Agility test will become **EASY (+20%)** instead of **ROUTINE (+10%)**. Either way, they are in for a fairly rude welcome.

“There is a sudden snapping sound – like breaking rope – and the quiet is interrupted by a earth-shaking rumble as an avalanche of falling logs and rocks tumbles down upon you from above!”

The players must make a **ROUTINE**

**(+10%)** Agility test in order to avoid the trap without any harm (as mentioned earlier, a successful Perception test made before the trap is sprung will change the test to **EASY (+20%)**, as they will have received advance warning). Any player who fails the test will immediately take 1D10 damage and be pinned under the rubble until either they or their comrades can pull them free (which will be an **AVERAGE (0%)** Strength test).

Having heard one of his traps go off, Burkhardt will attempt to spy discreetly on the players in order to see what they are up to. He will be extraordinarily bad at this, as the crazed old hermit smells like a blend of dung, whiskey, and deer urine (and not necessarily in that order, either). Due to his horrid stench, Burkhardt's attempt at sneaking suffers a **-20%** to the opposed check against the players' Perception skills. If noticed, the old hermit will try to run away – an **EASY (+20%)** Follow Trail skill check should be enough for the players to trail him to his hovel. If he somehow manages to go unnoticed (an unlikely, but possible event), the old man will try to ambush the players and gain a surprise round in the following combat. Players who do not wish to fight Burkhardt can try to calm him down with a successful Charm test, but due to his insanity the test will only be **AVERAGE (+0%)**. Attempting to use the Intimidate skill on him will actually be **CHALLENGING (-10%)**, but relying on the Blather skill will be **VERY EASY (+30%)**, since trying to confuse the madman is far simpler than reasoning with him. Of course, combat is also always an option. If the players wish to fight with Burkhardt, he will try to direct all of his attacks at any magic users in the party (he believes that all wizards consort with Chaos and warp Taal's blessed places with their foul and heathen magics). Failing that, he will choose whoever is closest and attack them instead. The combat will continue until the hermit loses all but 4 Wounds. At this point the imminent danger will be enough to sink through his rage-clouded mind and he will suddenly become quite sociable – introducing himself politely, inquiring after the players' well-being and

even offering to patch up anybody who has been injured back at his hut. He will be delighted to answer any questions that the players might have, as long as they are willing to chat with him over some boiled roots first. It is possible that some players might feel compelled to simply ignore the hermit's attempted truce and continue striking the old man until they can be certain he is no longer a threat. It is also possible that they might accidentally kill him before he has a chance to give up with an unfortunate critical hit or a timely intervention from Ulric's Fury. That's okay: if Burkhardt does not survive the combat, there is still a chance that the players can find some of his scrawled notes and ramblings scattered about his person. Either Beatrix or Valerie would have a vested interest in searching his fallen body – Beatrix for clues, and Valerie for anything of monetary value. Sadly, the party will then lose the advantage of Burkhardt's healing skills and his assistance in the battle to come. Such is the way of things in a grim world of perilous adventure: the world is rarely fair.

#### **4.2 – The Hermit's Hovel**

“After a few minutes, you push your way past a thick veil of tangled branches and hanging leaves to see the spindly old man scampering towards what appears to be his hut. It is a small, squat, dome-shaped building made entirely out of branches that have been covered over with what appears to be heavy blankets and about thirty years' worth of filth. A curl of smoke rises from a small chimney that looks to have been made out of an upended militia helmet, and the hermit turns back to smile toothlessly at you before ducking inside.”

Whether they are pursuing the hermit because he fled from them or are following him back to his home after their confrontation, the players will be cheerfully invited into Burkhardt's hermitage. The hovel is a rickety, filth-encrusted pile of twigs that looks as though it is about to fall down at any moment, but the old hermit will

take great pride in the place, quickly leaping to its defense if anybody says something disparaging about it. His idea of hospitality is to serve the players cups of dirty water with what appear to be small roots and the occasional insect floating in them – the stuff tastes vile, but has no ill effects aside from a slight queasy sensation. The players can refuse his offer of drinks, but he will be quite crestfallen if they do. Being a hermit, Burkhardt has little knowledge of the world outside his own forest – anybody willing to make a **VERY EASY (+30%)** Gossip test on him will be able to get a great deal of information in return:

| <b><u>Degrees of Success</u></b> | <b><u>Result</u></b>   |
|----------------------------------|--|
| 0                                | “Ah, the monster! Yes, I know of the beast, but he leaves me alone. (leans forward and taps his nose knowingly) He can't stand the way I smell! I think it might be this green muck I rolled in last week. Want some?”   |
| 1                                | “The Mayor is not what he seems! I have watched him in the woods, when he thinks that he is alone, and there is a dark aura about him. He washes his body of honest sweat and wears perfume to hide his scent from others! Taal has judged his unnatural ways and sent the beast as a punishment, but he cowed it with his vile magics, and now it serves him....” |
| 2                                | “Every night as the Chaos Moon grows full, the calls go out from that village. I have heard them – 'Praise the Dark Ones!' and 'Blood for the Kellerman!' they cry. (pauses and spits on the floor) Taal's teeth catch them all by the throat! Their wickedness and sin shall be their own undoing, for a great beast like that can never be held for long!”       |

3+

“Only I walk freely in these woods, for I am the chosen prophet of the mighty Taal! I have smeared my body with the fats and ointments of the forest, and I wear the garlands of holly and mistletoe which my god has chosen as his most favoured symbols! The monster is a child of Taal, and he rightly fears the signs of a truly devout servant of the Nature Lord! 'Twas just a fortnight ago that I stumbled across the mighty beast, but I cast down my staff in his path and stood most unafraid. He gazed into my eyes and turned aside, for he knew my spirit was pure! ”

“Now that's what I call power!” he exults, as he grabs a length of cord and pulls out the small piece of antler that he had been brewing inside the cauldron. “Here, this is for one of you – I've got some more soaking for the rest. Highly sanctified, this is: filled with all the might of Taal's own children! You can wear it on your neck, or hang it around your wrist... Sigmar's beard, you can tuck it in your mouth and suck on it for all I care! The point is that it'll help you, wherever you decide to hang it. Oh, don't do that mouth thing, though. There's a very strong chance that you'll turn into a hog.”

The talismans are not actually magical, but Burkhardt's insanity did not pick out his ingredients by chance. After spending so many months in the woods with Kellerman stalking around, he has taken careful note of everything that the monster seems to avoid or balk from. The pots contain a thick soup made from mistletoe, certain mushrooms, grave dirt from the unmarked burials of Beastmen, some rat skulls and a number of grubs, amongst other odds and ends. Ironically, Kellerman's mutated body is especially weak against mistletoe (it is a bane to him), and it is this which makes the charms worth anything at all. Be sure to note where the players are choosing to wear their charms, if at all – it will be important later.

Once they have eaten and all of the charms are ready, Burkhardt will wish them all good fortune on their journey and urge them to hurry to town. As they leave the hovel, read the following:

“On your way out of the hut, a chill wind whips through the trees and rustles the foliage. The Chaos Moon is full and bright in the skies above, and in the distance you can hear the sound of drumming. The time of sacrifice is drawing near....”

If they wish to, the players can make an **EASY (+20%)** Charm test on Burkhardt to try to convince him to help them against the monster. If they make it sound as though they are intending to break the “hold” that the Mayor seems to have over it, this test will instead be **VERY EASY (+30%)**. He will gladly give them some advice on how to hold the creature at bay, and offer to take care of their captive (either Beatrix or Valerie, whichever is in chains at the time) until the players return. If anyone is injured, the old hermit will also be happy to apply a sticky poultice made out of various foul-smelling concoctions: they burn like crazy and smell vile, but otherwise function like a normal Healing Draught. Burkhardt will even go so far as to brew up some special charms for the players – one for each of them. This will take him quite some time; coincidentally, about as long as it takes for night to fall.

“As the shadows grow longer on the walls of his odd little hut, the hermit moves rapidly from one boiling pot to another and tosses in what appear to be random contents from his pockets. Muttering into his long and unkempt beard, Burkhardt stirs one of the pots and then takes a long drink of the contents. Smacking his lips loudly, he throws his head back and lets out a cackle.

## **ACT FIVE: Bad Moon Rising**

As the players rush through the woods to

reach town, make sure to remind them how treacherous the terrain is and how tangled the forest paths can be at night. Unknown to the players, they are in a race against time with the red-garbed cultists who have been sent out to pick up Kellerman's latest sacrifice: the very captive they have just left behind with Burkhardt! Although they do know the area much better than the players do (and are mounted), the players have a considerable head start on them. A successful **AVERAGE (+0%)** Navigate test will allow them to reach the town ahead of their enemies, and can be mitigated by other factors. For example, the party could make a Follow Trail skill test instead of a Navigate test in order to track their own footsteps back if they have been to Kaltenbrach before, or perhaps one of the players might have thought to blaze a trail by marking certain trees as they journeyed. If Valerie is with them, she can reduce the difficulty of the Navigate check and make it **ROUTINE (+10%)** since she is familiar with the area. If Beatrix is helping them with a Follow Trail check, she will also reduce the difficulty to **ROUTINE (+10%)** because she is used to tracking under these conditions. When they reach the village, read them the following:

“The gates of the town stand wide open, and the sound of drumming echoes through the empty streets. As you charge into the village, you notice large torches burning at each street corner – they cast eerie, dancing shadows that play over the squat buildings and somehow make the leering stone gargoyles glaring down at you see, even more sinister. Your boots clatter on the cobblestones as you race onward, and the drumming grows ever more insistent. The windows of the buildings are all securely fastened and shuttered, with heavy locks and bars over them: clearly the villagers have become all too used to this kind of event. There is a great bonfire burning in the middle of the town square, and a small crowd of people have gathered in a fearful group at the far end. Standing over them on top of what looks like a small mound of furniture is a hooded and robed figure

bearing a large staff.

“The time is near!” he cries, and shakes the staff for emphasis. “Once more, the Chaos Moon grows large – the birth moon of our great protector! Let us raise our voices in unison, and give thanks unto Kellerman! Give thanks to the Dark Ones who brought him to our midst!”

“Praise Kellerman!” the villagers mewl dutifully, kneeling and groveling on the ground. “Praise the Dark Ones!”

“Who else protects us from the Beastmen? Who else keeps the bandits and the Greenskins at bay? Only he! Only Kellerman! Raise your voices higher, that he may hear your adoration!”

The villagers cheer louder, as commanded, but with little actual love in their voices. Their praise seems tinged with disgust and self-loathing more than anything else. It's clear that Kellerman rules here through fear alone.”

At this point, if the players did not reach town ahead of the cultists, read the following:

“The hooded man points, sweeping his finger over the gathered masses of huddling villagers.

“The great beast asks for little in return, and we are glad to give it! But this time, this once, there is another who shall be given in our place! Rest easily, good villagers, for Kellerman takes no more than he must to continue guarding us all. Men, bring forth the captives!”

The cultists will arrive on their horses and dismount, carrying a pair of squirming sacks. There should be two fewer cultists than there are players, to a minimum of two. They are garbed in crimson robes and pointed hoods marked with crude runes in the Dark Tongue of Chaos. When the bags are opened, the players will see that the planned sacrifices are none other than a

bruised and bleeding Burkhardt and the captive that they had left in his care!

If the players managed to beat the cultists to the town, then read this section instead:

“The hooded man points, sweeping his finger over the gathered masses of huddling villagers.

“The great beast asks for little in return, and we are glad to give it! But this time, this once, there is another who shall be given in our place! Rest easily, good villagers, for Kellerman takes no more than he must to continue guarding us all. Men, bring forth the captives!”

There is a long pause, and the hooded figure looks about nervously.

“Men? Men, where are the captives?”

The next part depends once more on which girl the players sided with at the start of the adventure:

**RICHES:** “Valerie draws her dagger, grinning wolfishly. “Right over here, Mayor!” she shouts, and steps away from your group as she points her knife at you. “I would have brought more, but we had to leave one behind with the old hermit.”

The hooded man nods. “The rest of our men should be bringing them both along shortly. Quickly, bring them forward to the sacrificial fire!”

**HONOUR:** “Beatrix storms forward, drawing her pistol with a flourish and cocking back the hammer as she levels it at the robed figure.

“There will be no sacrifices tonight, or ever!” she barks. “In the name of the Emperor, in the service of the Empire, and with the blessings of Verena, I hereby demand that you lay down that staff and surrender immediately!”

The hooded man laughs. “And who stands

with you, girl? Surely you don't intend to stop me with just one bullet....”

Combat will be all but unavoidable at this point – please note that Valerie will only be on the enemies' side if the players beat the cultists to the town. If they do not, and she is not the one in the sack, then she will continue fighting on their side for the remainder of the adventure. Valerie will not give away her true allegiance if she does not need to, and she will not change sides after this point. If the players have beaten the cultists to the village, then they will only need to defeat the Mayor (or possibly the Mayor and Valerie, if she has changed sides); if they have not, then they will also need to fight the other cultists as well. For the purposes of this combat, the cultists will use the same statistics as Bandits (the statistics for Bandits can be found on page 233 of the Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay Rulebook). The villagers will panic and flee the area as soon as they can – they have no desire to help either side in this conflict in case it turns out to be the losing one.

Once the combat has gone on for three rounds, or as soon as the players have finished off their opponents, read the following:

“With a loud bang, the boarded over entry to a nearby wine cellar flies open. Rising from the darkened chambers below is a monstrous creature, much larger than a Beastman, much larger even than you would imagine an Ogre to be. The dancing firelight plays over his scaled skin, slick with some form of putrid ooze. His back is hunched and folded in on itself, and a massive muscular arm drags on the ground alongside him while the other, punier limb paws feebly at the air. From somewhere behind his curved tusks and beetled brow a guttural snarl burbles forth, and the gigantic mutant shambles into combat.”

If there are any cultists still standing, they will scramble to get out of Kellerman's way. Kellerman is enraged, and he will fight the players to the death. For more statistics on

Kellerman, see the Appendix at the end of this adventure.

If the players were given charms of Taal from the old hermit Burkhardt, please make note again of where they chose to wear them.

If a player has chosen to wear the charm around their *wrist*, their attacks against Kellerman will count as having the Fast and Impact qualities. The monster is severely allergic to the ingredients that Burkhardt soaked the charm in, and will be slow to defend against attacks that risk contact with the hated substances. Also, if the players' attacks are able to hit, the burning of the oils and unguents that were soaked into their charms will further injure the beast.

If, on the other hand, a player has chosen to wear the charm around their *neck*, its powerful musk will serve as a deterrent to Kellerman. Any time that Kellerman can choose between an opponent who is wearing their charm in this manner and one who is not, he will always attack the one who is not. Please note that Kellerman will still seek to attack someone every round – if the only available targets are all wearing their charms protectively, he will choose amongst them normally (he doesn't necessarily *want* to attack them, but he will if there are no preferable targets in reach).

If the players do not have charms, or if they have chosen to wear them somewhere other than those two locations (or suck on them, despite the warnings), they will gain no benefit.

Should the cultists have arrived and deposited the hermit and their prisoner as possible sacrifices, it should be very easy for the players to get to them and free them from their bounds for some quick reinforcements. No matter how irritable or sullen their captive may have been before, having to choose between being eaten by a slaving monster and helping the players try to fight it off will be more than enough to render either Valerie or Beatrix willing to

work with them for the duration of the fight.

Also, remember that there is a roaring bonfire in the middle of the town square – if the players want to, they could easily maneuver Kellerman into the flames by tripping him, tackling him, or just lopping off one of his legs if they become frustrated. Contact with these flames will cause Damage 4, just as if the victim were struck by a Fire Ball spell. Kellerman's desire to crush the players like insects will be too overwhelming for him to try this tactic himself.

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## **ENDING THE ADVENTURE**

With the death of Kellerman, and likely the mayor as well, the adventure is over. Where the story goes from here is largely up to the players – perhaps they will feel compelled to stay in Kaltenbrach and help defend it against the inevitable return of the Beastmen, or dedicate themselves to rooting out the remnants of the mayor's Chaos cult from the village. If they were siding with Beatrix, she may advise them to join her in hunting down the rest of Valerie's outlaw gang, or if they sided with Valerie (and she did not betray them), they might instead decide to join the outlaws in robbing some of the mercantile traffic that a free Kaltenbrach will surely encourage. On the other hand, maybe they just want to get back to what they were doing before they met any of these people and put the whole place as far behind them as possible. If the campaign has been set amongst the Border Princes, this may even be the start of the players' eventual rise to rulership: there are worse ways to start a fiefdom than by freeing a wealthy village from a vile monster and conveniently offing its leader in the same night.

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## **EXPERIENCE POINTS**

The players should receive 150 xp for

surviving the adventure. Feel free to award up to an additional 5 – 30 xp as rewards for good roleplaying or creative solutions to the various threats encountered.

## **APPENDICES: IMPORTANT NPCS**

### **BEATRIX ADLER**

| WS  | BS  | S   | T   | Ag  | Int | WP  | Fel |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 31% | 33% | 28% | 39% | 26% | 32% | 33% | 33% |
| A   | W   | SB  | TB  | MV  | Mag | IP  | FP  |
| 1   | 12  | 2   | 3   | 4   | 0   | 0   | 0   |

**Race:** Human      **Gender:** Female  
**Career:** Roadwarden

**Skills:** Animal Care, Common Knowledge (the Empire), Drive, Follow Trail, Gossip, Navigation, Outdoor Survival, Perception, Ride, Search, Speak (Reikspiel)

**Talents:** Excellent Vision, Rapid Reload, Resistance to Disease, Specialist Weapon Group (gunpowder)

**Armour:** Light Armour (Leather Jack)

**Armour Points:** Head 0, Arms 1, Body 1, Legs 0

**Weapons:** Hand Weapon (sword), Pistol

**Trappings:** Hooded Cloak, 10 Yards of Rope, Waterlogged Boots, Pistol with 6 balls and Damp Gunpowder, Disgruntled Prisoner (Valerie Bieber)

**History:** Born in a small settlement in Reikland, Beatrix is the youngest daughter of a wealthy burgher and would-be politician who had been making entirely too much noise about marrying her off to the local miller's boy. Not particularly caring for the local miller's boy, Beatrix slipped out the back window when nobody was looking and ran off into the night. She got robbed by outlaws roughly two days' journey out of town. To this day, she still bears a jagged scar on her forehead from

where they clubbed her and left her on the side on the road for dead. Fortunately for her, Beatrix has always been tougher than anybody would expect a tiny slip of a girl like her to be. She survived, and was more than happy to help a passing Roadwarden pursue the criminals and bring them to justice. With nowhere else to go, she eagerly joined the Roadwardens when the offer was made to her and has been with them ever since.

At first glance, Beatrix still looks like the pretty young villager that she was a mere year or two ago: she always wears her long blonde hair loose, and tries to hide her distinctive scar behind her bangs whenever possible. She has wide, innocent-looking eyes, and a light spray of freckles over the bridge of her nose that she wishes she didn't. Despite these outward signs of weakness, Beatrix can be as hard-nosed and relentless as a Bretonnian Truffle Hound when it comes to sniffing out her quarry and running them to ground.

### **VALERIE BIEBER**

| WS  | BS  | S   | T   | Ag  | Int | WP  | Fel |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 39% | 35% | 27% | 28% | 35% | 36% | 38% | 38% |
| A   | W   | SB  | TB  | MV  | Mag | IP  | FP  |
| 1   | 10  | 2   | 2   | 5   | 0   | 0   | 0   |

**Race:** Human      **Gender:** Female  
**Career:** Outlaw

**Skills:** Gossip, Common Knowledge (the Empire), Speak (Reikspiel), Concealment, Dodge Blow, Ride, Secret Signs (Thief), Perception, Scale Sheer Surface, Swim, Silent Move

**Talents:** Fleet-Footed, Marksman, Sharpshooter, Rover

**Armour:** Light Armour (Leather Jerkin)

**Armour Points:** Head 0, Arms 0, Body 1, Legs 0

**Weapons:** Hand Weapon (dagger)

**Trappings:** Stolen dagger, Shield, Ill-Fitting Overcoat, Poor Quality Boots

**History:** Valerie Beiber was born the youngest of three siblings in one of the few cities in Stirland. Raised in poverty, she quickly decided to take her chances in the wilderness instead of sticking around to starve in the slums. For the past twelve years she has been traveling from one corner of the Empire to the other and beyond (the tattoo sprawled across her cheek is actually a Cathayan thief mark) and looking for any opportunity to get ahead. She still speaks with a slight drawl that tends to make her sound a bit rustic, despite her best attempts to put her origins behind her. Valerie is not an evil person, but her rough upbringing has trained her to be very pragmatic when it comes to her own safety – she will work with anyone and do whatever it takes to keep herself free from the clutches of the law. If she needs to, she will betray her fellow outlaws, join forces with Chaos cultists, or even part with her own hard-earned clank (although she would prefer to part with someone else's hard-earned clank instead).

### **ALFRED MONTAG**

| WS  | BS  | S   | T   | Ag  | Int | WP  | Fel |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 34% | 34% | 36% | 44% | 33% | 30% | 31% | 32% |
| A   | W   | SB  | TB  | MV  | Mag | IP  | FP  |
| 1   | 12  | 3   | 4   | 5   | 0   | 0   | 0   |

**Race:** Human      **Gender:** Male

**Career:** Hunter

**Skills:** Gossip, Common Knowledge (the Empire), Speak (Reikspiel), Concealment, Follow Trail, Outdoor Survival, Secret Signs (Ranger), Perception, Swim, Silent

Move

**Talents:** Fleet-Footed, Sixth Sense, Very Resilient, Rover, Rapid Reload, Specialist Weapon Group (longbow)

**Armour:** None

**Armour Points:** Head 0, Arms 0, Body 0, Legs 0

**Weapons:** Hand Weapon (dagger), Longbow

**Trappings:** Longbow with 10 arrows, Antitoxin Kit, 2 Animal Traps

**History:** Like his subordinate Valerie, Alfred is a Stirlander by birth. Unlike her, he remains proud of his heritage – he still wears the green and yellow slashed tunic that once marked him as a member of the Stirland militia. After he made the mistake of punching out a noble who insulted his accent, Alfred found that the dense wood and shadowed paths in the forest around Kaltenbrach suited him perfectly. Ever since he fled into the wilderness, Alfred has been living off of the land and lining his pockets with whatever extra clank he can pick up off of the fat merchants who trundle along the roads seeking trade with the town. Over the past few years, he has wound up joining forces with several like-minded individuals and formed his own gang. It was never his intention to become an outlaw at all, let alone one with his own group of ruffians, but Alfred is nothing if not willing to adapt.

### **OLD MAN BURKHARDT**

| WS  | BS  | S   | T   | Ag  | Int | WP  | Fel |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 34% | 29% | 40% | 41% | 30% | 33% | 34% | 29% |
| A   | W   | SB  | TB  | MV  | Mag | IP  | FP  |
| 1   | 13  | 4   | 4   | 4   | 0   | 8   | 0   |

**Race:** Human      **Gender:** Male

**Career:** Crazy Old Hermit (Zealot)

**Skills:** Academic Knowledge (theology), Charm, Gossip, Common Knowledge (the Empire), Intimidate, Read/Write, Speak (Reikspiel)

**Talents:** Sturdy, Excellent Vision, Very Strong, Hardy, Public Speaking, Specialist Weapon Group (flail)

**Armour:** None

**Armour Points:** Head 0, Arms 0, Body 0, Legs 0

**Weapons:** Flail

**Trappings:** Holy Symbol (he made it himself!), Filthy Rags, Curious Stench

**History:** A gangly fifty-year old man with a thick grey beard hanging down past his chest and a wild mane of hair (barring the large bald spot on the top of his head), Old Man Burkhardt is one of the many people in the Old World who have lost everything and found their only solace in the ravages of insanity. Nearly twenty years ago, Burkhardt lost his wife and child to a raiding party of Beastmen. He ventured out into the woods to recover his family, and simply never came back. For two decades he has rummaged about the forest in his filthy and homemade rags, adorned with furs and scraps of leather that he has tanned from the skins of animals that he caught. Small bones are knotted into the braids of his beard and hair, and he wears a necklace of squirrel skulls around his neck as he pads through the brush in his bare feet. The old man knows that Taal speaks to him, now – he firmly believes that the Beastmen are a holy punishment sent against Mankind by the god of Nature in order to turn them away from their decadent ways. Since Kellerman came to the forest, the old hermit has been shadowing him every night, watching and noting every action that he takes. Crazy as he may be, Burkhardt is still sharp enough to figure out what Kellerman fears – even if he does not

understand why. In his madness, he has convinced himself that the mutant is nothing more than another servant of Taal come to punish the infidels.

## **MAYOR GUSTAV**

| WS  | BS  | S   | T   | Ag  | Int | WP  | Fel |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 35% | 32% | 35% | 26% | 32% | 39% | 25% | 37% |
| A   | W   | SB  | TB  | MV  | Mag | IP  | FP  |
| 1   | 10  | 3   | 2   | 4   | 1   | 0   | 0   |

**Race:** Human      **Gender:** Male  
**Career:** Hedge Wizard

**Skills:** Gossip, Common Knowledge (the Empire), Speak (Reikspiel), Haggle, Intimidate, Channeling, Charm Animal, Hypnotism, Magical Sense, Perception, Search

**Talents:** Hedge Magic, Petty Magic (hedge), Resistance to Poison, Night Vision

**Armour:** None

**Armour Points:** Head 0, Arms 0, Body 0, Legs 0

**Weapons:** Hand Weapon (dagger)

**Trappings:** Healing Draught, All-Concealing Hood.

**History:** Gustav was born and raised in Kaltenbrach. His father was a carpenter, and his grandfather was a woodsman, but Gustav's mother was a witch. Learning at her side, the boy quickly became an accomplished Hedge Wizard and began to use his abilities to grow in influence and power amongst the community even as his contempt for those unlike him grew. One day, while he was hiding from work by scavenging in the forest for some magical ingredients, he was set upon by the mutant Kellerman. Realising an

opportunity when he saw one, the frail wizard arranged for a foul bargain with the monster. Gustav legitimately believes that Kellerman is a boon to his village, as Beastmen raids and Greenskin attacks have become all but non-existent since the beast came. To him, a few human sacrifices are worth having safety and security for all (especially him).

## **KELLERMAN**

| WS  | BS  | S   | T   | Ag  | Int | WP  | Fel |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 36% | 31% | 46% | 41% | 15% | 31% | 31% | 31% |
| A   | W   | SB  | TB  | MV  | Mag | IP  | FP  |
| 1   | 14  | 4   | 4   | 5   | 0   | 0   | 0   |

**Race:** Mutant      **Gender:** Male  
**Career:** Brute

**Skills:** Animal Care, Concealment, Outdoor Survival, Perception, Silent Move, Speak (Reikspiel)

**Talents:** Flee!, Unsettling

**Special Rules:** Chaos Mutations (from Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay Tome of Corruption Expansion Book.)

1. *Scaly Skin*
2. *Overgrown Body Part* (arm)
3. *Growth*
4. *Hunchback*

**Armour:** Scaly Skin

**Armour Points:** Head 1, Arms 1, Body 1, Legs 1

**Weapons:** none; uses bare fists and sheet aggression

**Trappings:** none

**History:** Kellerman was once a quiet and unassuming young scholar named Johan Keller. It had been at the request of one of

his teachers that he had begun experimenting with the effects of certain chemical compounds on Warpstone. When he mixed them improperly, the sample exploded into a massive cloud of glowing green shrapnel.

He thought that he had gotten all of the bits out. He was wrong. They hadn't all been plucked out – some had burrowed under her skin, worming their way through his flesh. He could *feel* them moving through his body, causing... changes.

His arm changed first, swelling and twisting into a massive club of muscle that hung down almost to his feet. Johan Keller knew that he was doomed – his only real option was to cut off the limb and hope none of the Warpstone had reached his torso.

Except... his new arm was *strong*. He *liked* how strong it was. He didn't want to part with it. After a while, he couldn't even remember why he might have thought it was a good idea.

The changes started coming faster after that, as if they had been waiting for him to give them permission before moving in. His skin had turned dark and scaly, his eyes had begun to glow in the dark, and he got much, much bigger. The gnawing hunger in his stomach began around that time – he was a growing boy, after all, and he needed to eat. A few paltry chickens, even a whole cow, didn't seem like enough for him any more. He needed to eat. He needed to kill.

The Witch Hunters found him pretty quickly after the first few children disappeared. Kellerman was too big to hide himself from their nasty, peering eyes. He was still big, though, and he was very strong. Stronger than his persecutors had expected. Strong enough to crush them like the bugs he knew they were, and flee into the night.

Kellerman's long flight from the justice of

the Witch Hunters eventually led him to the village of Kaltenbrach, where he has allied himself to the ambitious and morally blind Mayor Gustav. Now he sleeps in the cellar all day, and prowls the woods at his leisure at night killing Beastmen and snacking on the occasional bandit or traveling vagabond. It is a good life, but every so often that old hunger comes back, and he finds himself calling out again for his rightful sacrifice....