

Passing the Buck

Passing the Buck is a short adventure that takes place in and around the small town of Hoffsburgh, which can be situated near any foothills in the Empire, preferably on a major coach line road. It is a somewhat challenging scenario, thus it is more suited for a group of 4-6 P.C.'s in the latter part of their first careers or just starting there second. Though it is a linear adventure, there are enough surprises to keep a group on its toes.

Synopsis

Soon after entering the town of Hoffsburgh the P.C.'s will quickly find the nearest, and only, pub to quietly drink their hard earned crowns away and fall into blissful inebriation; only to find the pub packed with people and charged with excitement. It seems all the men of this small town are there trying to acquire a position on the celebratory hunting party of the young Adolph von Hassenhoffenstien, the local Lord's son. It seems for Adolph's 17th birthday his parents have agreed to allow an expedition into the wood to bag a mysterious, large, and beautiful snow white twelve point buck that has recently been spotted by local farmers. Since the Lord is ill, a group of experienced woodsman/bold outdoorsmen will be sent in his stead to assist in his young sons trek into to wood. And of course there is the matter of money 35G.C.s (or more, I personally like to keep my party on the poor side)

Being of sterner mettle than the local bumpkins the P.C.s should jump at this opportunity to get some easy coin, and for the same aforementioned reason, have no problem being part of the expedition. Once they have passed the exacting examination of Johan Blamdorph, the lord's manservant, the P.C.'s will be admitted to the hunting party, and invited to the local manor house for a pre hunt dinner, in two days time. There they will meet the other members of the hunting party: Adolph von Hassenhoffenstien (a brash young noble eager to catch his prize), Johan Blamdorph (the stern and rugged manservant of the Lord), Gunter Bitterich (an old local woodsman), Gottfried Yonsben (a professor from Nuln on sabbatical to study the various wildlife of the Empire) and Samuel Dotgunburh and his two sons Augustus and Dillon (servants of the Lord).

After a pleasant, if somewhat unusual, dinner amongst the nobility, the party will retire to well appointed rooms with a full belly of delicious food and fine wine, assuming they do not make complete asses of themselves and get thrown out.

Early the next morning they shall head into the wild to bag their prize. It does not take long, however, to find that there is something amiss in the wood: local hunter's traps and snares empty in otherwise plentiful game locations, fishermen finding fish with three eyes or two heads, strange noises in the night, and a devastated bandit camp with signs of horrible carnage. But by the time the group is piecing the puzzle together they shall already be entwined in a two pronged plot of a chaos cultist and infernal rat men, and let's not forget about that buck, it seems it has a few ideas of its own...

Background

Three weeks ago Gottfried Yonsben the recorder of change, a position of the Inconstant Heavens Cult, was looking to the stormy night skies searching for the signs from Tzeench to tell when the next time for an appropriate meeting to be held, a moment

when the heavens would be aligned correctly and the power of knowledge and change could be shared amongst the members of the cult. For three years now Gottfried had toiled every night at this task set before him by his superiors, and each night he wished he could advance and pass this lowly, yet important job to a lesser member. This night, however, his prayers seemed to have been answered as he looked through the rain drenched sky. He saw Morslibs visage spit forth a meteorite which zoomed across the purple, hazy, pre dawn sky and onto the land. "THIS MUST BE A SIGN FROM TZEENCH, A SIGN OF MY ADVANCEMENT!" he thought. After calculating the meteors landing point the next step was to tell his superiors in the cult that he must travel to the foothills to gain the insight of Tzeench by studying the heavens from their crests, and thus Gottfried set out to claim his prize.

That same night, a grey seer of the skaven also spied the wonderful gift of warp racing across the heavens, and sent his personal guard, Chitt to recover this precious ingredient for his own.

Again that same night a band of mutants calling themselves the devoted of the touching god also witnessed the star from the sky land in the foothills where they dwelt. Knowing this to be a sign from Slaanesh they also set out to claim the prize for their perverse god.

Unfortunately for all parties something else found it first. Near what locals call Three Tree Run, a wooded valley near the Hassenhoffenstien lands, a heard of deer were grazing when out of the stormy sky a lump of stone hit the earth. Almost instantly these docile creatures began to mutate into horrific beasts and combat each other until only one was left, a huge mutated twelve point buck.

The Mutant band found the site first and the huge buck guarding the gift from their god, thinking the buck was a divine creature, these rag tag bunch of mutants began to worship it with perverse rites. The buck, now rather intelligent thanks to the mutating powers of the warpstone, accepted these creatures as its new heard with itself the alpha-male. It was now time to hunt.

~Welcome to Hoffsburgh~

"The sun is setting and the crisp, wet, autumn day is late as you all reach the crest of a hill and look into a cleared valley of farmland. Near the center of the valley lies a small town and a road post near you states Hoffsburgh. The inviting idea of a warm inn with cold ale as opposed to the cold forest is enough to push you all onward to the main gate."

It does not take long to see the two watchmen guarding the gate, clubs at their sides, it looks as though they are about to close the gate for the night. After a short exchange of words- the watch wish to know their names and what business brings them to Hoffsburgh- (if the P.C.'s are not overly rude.) a charge of 5 shillings is asked for admittance, however is the P.C.'s decided to get a little ornery then 8 shillings will be asked. Once the formalities are done a watchman can point out the only inn in town "The long man"

~The Long Queue? ~

It is easy to for the P.C.'s to navigate the small town and locate the Inn, which happens to be the only two story building. Aside from that it is very loud, and there is a line out the door.

“The inn seems to be packed with all manner of men talking excitedly and loudly. It takes a few moments to finally get the attention of the barman- a large dwarf with an eyepatch and balding scalp- trying to keep the ale flowing and the unusually large crowd happy. “ Aye there sirs, I be Namfloodle and if T’cha be needigns a bed lees’ sorry to say we aints got none left! Doo lees’ppose ya could rest in da commen room for de night, doo lees’ afraid it shant be quiet til’ after all dees rift raft be leevin.”

Lodging for the common room is only 5 shillings with breakfast provided for only 2 shillings more. Dinner of a fine lamb stew is only 2 shillings with domestic ale about the same price. Fine wine is also available along with stronger dwarfen beer; of course these are considerably more expensive.

When asked what all the hub-bub is about, a commoner will explain about the local Lord’s sons’ birthday hunt and, since Lord Hassenhoffenstien himself is sick, he is searching for experienced woodsman/outdoors types to fill in. A tidy pay is offered and almost all the men of the town are excited to get easy money, however most are not accepted, for the Hassenhoffenstiens’ manservant Johan Blamdorph is rejecting most the applicants.

It is not hard to find the queue for the hunt; it stretches the length of the bar and out the door. It originates at the far left corner table and seems to be moving rather quickly as stable boy after blacksmith apprentice, and farmer hand gets rejected. Every now and again a hardy looking young fellow will step up only for the huge, well groomed man behind the table to give him a once over, consider him then send him on his way.

Most of the men are getting rejected and seem to form just as long a queue by the bar for a drink. If the P.C.s wish to cut in line there will be a bit of a ruckus as the young men applying for the positions will not take kindly to being stepped in front of. If a fight breaks out, and no weapons are drawn, Jouhan will watch the fight, and keep those from interfering out, to see the mettle of the combatants. If however, the fight seems to be escalating to bloodshed, he and Namfloodle will step in while a barmaid fetches the watch.(use the Footpad stats for the young men and the Innkeeper stats for Namfloodle)

After the fisticuffs or a half hour of waiting in line, Jouhan will inspect each P.C. separately.

“Well now it seems we have a few here of solid worth, I am Jouhan Blamsdorph and I represent his Lordship Felix Hassenhoffenstien, you seem well traveled (and if in fight) and well versed in combat. The Young Lord Adolph is hosting a hunting expedition into the wood to capture, and mount above his mantle for his 17th birthday, a great white buck rumored to dwell in the wood around these lands. I invite you to join this group and attend the pre-hunt dinner at the Hassenhoffenstien manor in two days time.”

~ Preparations ~

In the two days prior to the dinner, the P.C.'s can wander about town to equip themselves for the trek. Hoffsburgh is a small town and does not have a huge selection of market. The local blacksmith is much more adept with making nails and horseshoes than

he is at more marshal endeavors such as swords or armour; although, he can repair any damaged armour or sharpen any blade the P.C.'s may have. Moreover, he can provide arrows and bolts, sorry no shot, at a reasonable price. There is a tailor in town that can provide any blanket or cloak, along with any rugged clothing or tent needed for the trip. An apothecary is also in town, who can sell a few healing draughts or salves, and may even have an offer of a small job for the P.C.s (more on this latter). There is a small shrine in town that gives homage to all the gods. And lastly there is a Halfling tanner who, for the right price, is willing to part with a suit of good quality studded leather.

As stated before Hoffsburgh is far from the most happening place in the Empire, however, there are a few things of interest the P.C.'s can pick up while conversing with its inhabitants.

~The P.C.'s will see Thatcher's about town still patching some roof damage from the horrible storm that passed through a few weeks ago.

~Lord Hassenhoffenstien has been getting progressively sick since the death of his first wife about 17 years ago; most believe it to be old age.

~When the Lord re-married he chose his, very young, second cousin from Hotchland, and it seemed less than one season passed, since their nuptials she had Adolph, an unusually short pregnancy.

~Only a few farmers have seen the white buck and then only from a distance and near dusk. They describe it as HUGE and beautiful.

~ Some believe the real reason the Lord is asking for people to go into the wood with his son is for protection from the bandits who pop up now and again to raid the coaches that run by Hoffsburgh.

~ The Lord has put a law into effect which prohibits, on forcible removal from the Hassenhoffenstien lands and a large fine, any hunter from claiming his sons prize buck.(This notice can be seen posted all about the town)

~The apothecary (Earnst) has a somewhat short supply of stock. It seems that his supplier, an old hermit who lives outside of town, and gathers much of his rare herbs has not been seen in some time. Old Hob, as they call him, normally visits once a week and Earnst has not seen him for close to two weeks now. He is worried and is willing to offer up to 3 gold crowns per person for information.

~ Snobs and Side-dishes~

"The cold night air and light drizzle combine to chill you to the bone as you travel up the Hassenhoffenstien hill near the outskirts of town to the manor home. The lovely invitation given to you by a young page of the lord earlier is tucked away in your cloak in a vain attempt to keep it dry. Apon reaching the summit you are greeted by a tall stone wall and an impressive, almost castle like structure before you overlooking the entire valley. The two guards, looking as miserable as you in this damp cold evening, flank the gate and greet you. After seeing your invitations, and disarming the group, the guards escort you all to a very warm and inviting hall, telling you all that your gear shall be delivered to your rooms.

The atmosphere of the hall is festive as the P.C.'s will notice a huge fireplace with a roaring fire inside. A long table has been set in the middle of the hall and there are servants scattering here and there to accommodate all who are present. About the walls of the hall are an impressive array of trophies, most mundane, some though, are more

magical in origin, a Huge spider is mounted in the far right corner of the hall and the head of a wyvern, which had to have been moved recently from its place above the center of the mantle as the soot around the old mounting can attest to since it is now bare rock, is above the entranceway.

ROLE PLAYING THE PARTY: This festive event should run smoothly with a great opportunity for understanding who the group will be venturing into the wild with. Each character is explained in detail in the Cast of Characters selection. Refer to this section when your P.C.'s interact with the N.P.C.'s. Though the atmosphere is festive there are a few tidbits of awkwardness, especially when the Lord begins to have random outbursts. All in all, however, the evening should go by pleasantly and the P.C.s will have a full belly of great food and wine, with a warm plush bed to sleep in when it is all over. Unless of course the P.C.'s decide to become rude, in which case the guards will promptly escort the trouble makers out.

~Into the Wild~

You are awoken pre dawn by a young servant, who is rummaging about your room collecting your chamber pot and pouring a fresh basin of wash water, seeing you stir the youth informs you that the hunting party will be departing shortly. After grabbing your gear you head out of the manor into the chilly courtyard where the rest of the group awaits. The Lord Hassenhoffenstien is not present for the send off and the Lady of the household is sitting in his stead. Once the entire group has been mounted, Adolph is given a glass of wine to toast his mother for a successful hunt. Swallowing the contents in one gulp he smashes the glass onto the cobblestones and rides out of the estate, his mother waving her kerchief in parting.

Gunter informs the young lord that since the white buck has been only seen in the northern part of the lands it is probably at Three Tree Run, a valley in the foothills about 28 miles in the northern rolling wooded hills. It is known to be a regular mating ground for deer at this time of year.

For the first few hours the journey is boring as the group traverses nothing but farmland. Although, by mid morning the last fenced land is behind them and nothing but wooded canopy is in front. At this point Gunter will have the entire group dismount, for the coming woodland shall be too difficult for the animals to navigate. Leaving the horses with a page only the dogs and pack horses continue with everyone else on foot.

~Day 1~

Day one should pass almost boringly as the party simply travels into the forest. It is, however, rather pleasant woodland, alive with the sounds of creatures preparing for winter. Gunter will keep his eye out for tracks while Gottfried will point out various made-up plant-life to be excited about. (If any of the P.C.'s have skills which help in the identification of plant life, such as Trade (apothecary), and make a successful roll, they can see that Gottfried has no idea what he is talking about, if this fact is brought up to him he will easily dismiss them stating that they are familiar with the "common" term for the plant and not the "scholars" term.)

~Night 1~

~Day inevitably turns to night as the darkness descends upon forest, shadows begin to expand and choke out any light in the dense canopy of dying leaves. A suitable clearing is found and camp is quickly set up as cool evening mists envelop the wood.

Samuel, Augustus, and Dillon will quickly prepare a fire and raise the young Lords tent as the rest of the group begin to set their own tents. Once the camp is settled Johan will insist on a watch to be posted throughout the night and since this is the work the P.C.'s signed up for they get the honors. At around mid-night the G.M. should make a perception test for the P.C. on watch duty, a base 5% chance to hear an odd noise in the distance, too far to make out yet rhythmic. (It is in actuality the drums from the mutants participating in a foul ritual) The evening should go by uneventfully.

~Day 2~

~ Once again you are awoken in the early hour, with only the faintest rays of the sun obscuring the twin moons. Breaking fast with the group Gunter informs everyone that by mid-day the expedition should be near a well traveled deer path that goes into Three Tree Run. Camp is broken quickly and once again you are all into the wilds.

Again the trek is mostly boring, with Gottfried running off here and there to take samples of trees and such. By afternoon, however, the party will encounter two hunters that Gunter knows. Play their approach with high drama, characters getting ready to ambush whomever or whatever is coming through the wood. Make the tension high, if only to alleviate the boredom of the previous day and night. Then let the blood thirsty group down when the two hunters step onto the path.

The two Hunters are Cullen and Ian, brothers from a small hamlet not far from Hoffsburgh, Gunter knows who they are, but not very well. If asked any questions they have these tidbits of information:

- They were near Three Tree Run, but had their traps set more to the east. A tree must have been hit with lightning and started a fire recently, for there were signs of a blaze near there.
- They are heading back almost empty handed, most of their traps were empty, which is odd since it is mating season and game should be plentiful. Perhaps a new pack of wolves are passing through.
- They have heard of the white buck, but have not seen it nor do they wish to, for they have also heard the new law recently passed, and since they make their living using the land of the Hassenhoffenstine's, they find it is best to leave it alone.

The G.M. should feel free to make up some other vague and foreshadowing information he sees fit, however, most of their information will be useless to the group at the present. After this encounter the group will find the deer path and continue on their way.

The rest of the day will be spent treading over increasingly steeper and rockier terrain. Perceptive characters may notice that the sound of the wood (wildlife, insect, and other) seems to have diminished some, moreover, the pack horses and dogs seem a little more agitated.

~Night 2~

This night things may become more interesting. Chitt and his three fellow Skaven have found the hunting party and decide to see what they are all about. During the night they will toss meat, sprinkled with a sleeping draught, to the dogs. They will then use their stealth skills to observe the group. Use the standard perception test to discover if their poking about goes noticed or not. If they are spotted they will flee into the dark wood and be lost quickly. (note: it is important that if they are spotted the character spotting them does not know that he is looking at a skaven, make them seem to be just another animal in the wood. And keep the P.C.'s guessing.) It will not take Chitt long to realize that he is outmatched and a direct assault against the camp would be foolish. Thus the group of rat-men will pass the camp, hopefully, undetected in the night.

~Day 3~

Day three begins the same as the previous day, except if a perceptive P.C. notices that the dogs are very sluggish, in fact the group's guard should be down by now and they may believe this to be the easiest money they have ever earned. Even Gottfried is less enthusiastic about taking samples and scribbling in his book. Let the P.C.'s fall into a lethargic demeanor when dusk approaches and they come to a clearing in the wood...

~The sun is beginning to set behind the canopy of skeletal trees. Shadows from those trees bare limbs smother the group in a mock sea of what appears to be reaching hands. Soon the canopy is broken as a small clearing is found. In the middle of the clearing a hut leans drastically to one side, looking as though the slightest wind will blow the poor dwelling over. A tiny garden next to the hut is choked in weeds and the small privy to the rear must have fallen over some time ago. Just as you take in the view, a light chilly rain begins to fall and the hounds begin to bark.

This hut belongs to Old Hob, well formerly belonged to that poor old hermit; it was taken, along with his life, by a bear, which up until a few weeks ago lived around Three Tree Run. Once the white buck arrived, however, it forced much of the creatures prey away, and since it was preparing for hibernation, it moved with the game. Unfortunately for all parties concerned it did so only after partaking of the tainted water of the creek, thus it has acquired a few unsavory traits. The bear is now settled into the hut and will be very displeased that the group has called.

Once the bear has been killed the group can plunder the small hut. It stinks horribly of both bear leavings and a half decomposed and mostly eaten corpse. Odd trinkets can be found about the place and any with hedge wizardry or magic can tell they are magically inclined ingredients. Also there is a table at the far end of the hut with planks of wood that have been carved into various scenes, some of beautiful gleams while others of various woodland creatures, one though, is new with only half of the picture done. This carving depicts a stormy night sky and a shooting star racing across it. Amongst the other refuse there is a piece of parchment with various herbs written on it, the header at the top reads Earnest's Apothecary. There is nothing of real value in the hut, unless of course you feel the need to pepper it with some useful equipment.

This battle should not be too difficult for the group to overcome, during it however, Gottfried will run screaming off, playing the role of a coward. He will return when the bear is defeated. Once it is all said and done the clearing makes a good spot to rest and if any characters have apothecary skills they will be able to see a few herbs that

can heal them in the garden. Adolph will not be overly interested with the corpse, but Johan will insist on a proper burial.

The young Lord Adolph will be pleased at bagging a bear but still wishes to capture his prize buck. (Note: the mutations the bear possesses are not noticeable on the outside, thus the group should not know that the bear is tainted.) Once the group has made camp for the night the rest of the evening goes uneventfully.

~Day 4~

This day begins as the others with camp being broken in the early hours and Gunter leading the way down the deer path. A light rain will begin to fall and will slowly become more and more powerful as the day progresses, making the trek all the more miserable, and chilling the hunters to the bone. Tucked into their cloaks the group will tread on in cold, damp, silent misery as the weather seems to suck the fun out of the hunt. By late afternoon Gunter will lead them to the end of the deer-path they have been following as it terminates at Big Creek, one of the creeks that run into Three Tree Run.

From there the group will follow the creek bed. The land begins to become steep, and the wet earth will make for terrible footing, and create a vast area of mud. As the tedious day wears on and on they will eventually come to an odd sight.

Near the creek they can see two fishing poles propped into the ground with rocks, the owners of the poles no where to be found. In fact the two fishermen these poles belonged to have been taken by the band of mutants. As Günter and the group begin to look for clues they find a small encampment with a fire that has long since burnt out. The rain has washed all traces of the battle that raged here and the gore that would have been all over the ground away. However, there are a few trinkets left, a spear is next to a bedroll, and a sac is hanging from a nearby tree.

When the sac is inspected the group will find seven fish within. Although six of the fish are normal one of the fish is not right, it has three eyes! As they are rummaging around this campsite one of the poles begins to shake. (Have the character trying to pull the fish in make an opposed strength test against the fish's strength of 15%, it will take 3 consecutive successes to bring the fish to shore or two successes for the fish to break the line.) Once the character has the fish above the water they will find it has two heads one at the front and the other at its rear!

By this time the group will be very curious about what is going on in these woods, however if they bring up the idea of quitting this expedition the young lord will tell them he will not give them pay! This should convince them to stay.

After a few more hours of travel Gunter will find a nice cave near the creek to make camp for the night out of the rain. The rest of this night shall go uneventfully; however, you can play up on the paranoia of this day by describing a creepy stormy night in the cave near the woods. Also once again make a base 20% perception test around midnight for the character on watch. If something is detected once again it is not known what sound it is only that it seems to be rhythmic.

~Of Rats and Men~

Chitt and his group have pushed onward throughout the night and day; they have marched tirelessly until they came to a valley where three separate creeks run into one. There they saw their prize; unfortunately it seems to be guarded by a group of odd man-

things and a large creature. The odd band has a few other man-things tied to trees and seems to be performing odd rituals on them. Not knowing how to proceed, Chitt has ordered his band to lay low and wait for an opportunity to present itself.

~Day 5~

By this time the storm has let up and the hunting party is very close to Three Tree Run. This fact seems to bring new moral to the trek as the whole group seems to be having more fun. As they continue to travel the creek bed they will begin to notice the dogs becoming more and more agitated. There will be few birds and insect noises, and the whole wood seems to grow quieter and quieter.

Gunter will stop suddenly and point out a few odd tracks leading to the West; he will ask the young lord if they should follow them. Adolph will jump at the opportunity to investigate. About a twenty minuet walk, all the while the dogs are barking and trying to go faster, the group will enter a clearing in the wood.

This is in actuality the base camp for the fortunes fools' bandits. Unfortunately for these bandits about a week ago the mutant band led by the white buck stumbled upon the camp and a deadly battle ensued. After a terrible fight two of the bandits who were still barely alive were dragged off to become part of some perverse ritual in honor of the white buck and Slaanesh.

The scene is one of horror (WP test or IP gained), three mutilated and half eaten corpses litter the gore encrusted ground, no amount of rain could wash away that much carnage, three tents and a small hut are all in shambles. The smell is rancid and pungent. While the group investigates one of the mutants, wee-man, is actually about camp, having returned to investigate the campsite in hopes of finding the bandits hidden treasure trove from their raids, hearing the dogs and the group he will use his skills to stay hidden and observe the hunting party. As soon as the young lord mentions getting back to hunting his prized buck, or if discovered, wee-man will flee into the wood and quickly disappear into the thick foliage. Though the group will not know what it is they saw, it could have been a large raccoon?

Searching the site the P.C.'s may pick up a few tidbits of gear: A few arrows, some loose coin, nothing fancy though. If the three corpses are inspected all will have the same branding at the base of the neck, a Gold Crown with what appears to be cross bones behind it. The three bodies will be rotting by now and Dillon will be trying hard to not let the hounds take a bite of them. Although the camp is a horrid rancid sight Adolph seems pleased that the bandits who have eluded his father have gotten their just deserts. Gottfried brings to light the fact that the bear they encountered the other day must have come through this camp as well and wrought all this carnage. Adolph will ask Gunter to press on and leave the thieves to the wolfs and insects.

Once again Gunter notices odd tracks, and a definite hoof print, heading north from the campsite. Adolph, who is rather excited at this news, instructs Gunter to press onward north.

~Dusk~

By the time the group is heading out of the bandit camp wee-man has reported their intentions to the white buck, who is eagerly awaiting the arrival of more sacrifices. It decides to lay a trap for the would be hunters.

The day drags on as the wood becomes more and more haunting. All the animals seem to be more agitated, and so to does the hunting party. The feeling that something is not right will be creeping in. Adolph at this point though, is almost fanatical, he wants his prize! He continues to push the group onward to Three Tree Run, which Gunter says is only a few hours away, so he can set up a hunting spot and wait for his prize.

~ The sun is beginning to set once again and Adolph keeps pushing the pace faster, claiming he wants to reach Three Tree by nightfall. Just as the group is beginning to climb a hill Gunter gives a gasp, looking to the crest of the rocky slope you see a HUGE animal with almost sparkling white fur glistening in the fading sunlight its antlers casting a forest of shadows down the slope. You only catch the sight for an instant as the creature bounds off, like a bolt of lightning, towards the setting sun and out of sight behind the top of the hill. Glimpsing it for such a brief moment of time you are almost left wondering if you imagined the whole thing, when Adolph charges past you screaming!~

~The White Buck~

As the group follows the young noble over the hill and into the valley of Three Tree Run, they will notice that indeed there must have been a fire in the wood recently for most of the valley appears to be charred and dead. Many trees are husks of their former selves, and others seem to have died completely. There is a circular area completely clear of all trees, and it appears the white buck is heading there. Do not give the characters a lot of time to register their surroundings, make the odd mutated trees they run past seem burnt or charred, ideally they should not notice the dogs whimpering and running away, or that there is anything unusual at all, aside from being in a valley devastated by a fire, until the first bolts of the mutants crossbows begin to find their mark.

THE BATTLEGROUND: this battle will take place in a charred valley of mutation. Much of the plant life is gone or oddly deformed in some way leaving only an area of rock, shells of trees, and mud. From the North, Northeast, and Northwest, three creeks join together in the middle of the valley to form one larger creek which then flows in a south-western stream out of the valley. On the western bed of that large creek is a crater about the size of a small coach. Near this crater is an encampment of four tents and a pole with two dead humans roped to it.

The white buck will run toward the encampment then make a sharp right near an outcropping of rocks and trees. Here in the trees Wee-man and Sampson will begin to fire their bow and cross bow at the group while, Sludge and Ziglafield will run out from behind the rocks to engage the group from the rear. Once the hunting group is properly surprised, Connie and the white buck will attack in unison from the front.

Depending on how you wish to end the adventure you can run this battle three different ways.

~RAT ATTACK~

In this ending the characters will fight off the ambush by killing the mutant band and the white buck, during their battle Gottfried will once again play the coward and take off, however this time he will sneak his way into the crater and take the fist sized piece of warpstone. Since all the characters will be occupied defending their lives they should not notice this happen. In fact the only ones who do notice will be the Skaven.

After the battle Gottfried will once again emerge, with the warp stone tucked into a pocket. The party is most likely heavily wounded and weakened after this hard battle. Adolph will ask that the mutants, along with their campsite, be burnt; although Adolph will take the head of the white buck as his prize. Claiming he will come back to burn the entire valley, Adolph will leave the funeral pyre burning as the hunting party leaves the valley of horror and once again travels into the wilds, the Skaven band, however, will not be far away.

Gottfried seems to become more and more agitated as the warpstone he is hiding begins to change him. Pulling his cloak all about him to hide, he will begin to slow down and become more and more ill. If anyone tries to help him he will shoo them away stating that it is just his nerves from the past few days of bloodshed and strife, he is not used to seeing such violence. As dusk approaches, however, he will become horribly ill.

Soon camp will need to be made and young Augustus says he will help the ill professor with his tent. When dinner is served Augustus will take it to their sick “comrades” tent, this will prove to be the youths doom, for Gottfried has now fully embraced the power of warp and now seeks to summon a daemon to destroy the hunting party, as his first sacrifice to almighty Tzeench. Using his spells to silence the boy so his screams cannot be heard, Gottfried will quickly cast his summoning spell, and due to the increased power of the warpstone, summon a potent daemon to annihilate the group.

Before the characters know what is wrong a hulking daemon will tear out of the tent and attack the party. The skaven see this as their opportunity to strike and claim their prize. Since the group will be extremely occupied with the problem at hand, the small band of ratmen shall slip by and dispose of the evil cultist. Ideally the group will not know what happened to Gottfried as only a mutated corpse is left behind and bloody tracks of what appear to be large rats head off into the wood.

The journey to Hoffsburch will be uneventful aside from Adolph “advising” the P.C.’s that they are not to mention anything of the strange events they witnessed; he makes it clear this would be “unwise” as his political enemies could use this against him. He gives the P.C.’s extra gold as hush money and “gently” has his guards “escort” the characters out of town. A few weeks later the group may hear from a traveler or coachman that there was a huge brush fire in a valley near the Hassenhoffenstien lands, which is rather odd for this time of year.

~Magic is Fickle~

In this ending the P.C.s will once again be battling for their lives in the valley of Three Tree Run. This time however, the skaven join the fray immediately following Gottfrieds’ theft of the stone. Blue, purple and pink fire shoot from the cultists hands as he revels in his new power seeking to change all in his view. But with his great power comes horrid consequences. As the neophyte chaos sorcerer begins to cast more and more potent spells one goes horribly wrong, preferably when the characters are done with

the mutant band and focus their efforts on killing the traitor, as the air crackles with the power of some horrid spell Gottfried is going to unleash upon the group Tzeenche's curse take affect. Just before the spell is released, or a killing blow can be landed, a portal to the chaos realm is opened and Gottfried, along with the stone, is sucked into the void, his smoking buckled shoes are all that remains. If the Skaven are still alive they will flee. Adolph will have the bodies burnt, not before claiming his prized buck's head however, and as stated before a tidy sum of hush money is paid along with a quick exit from Hoffsburgh and the Hassenhoffstien lands.

~It's MY party and I will scheme if I want to~

This ending is a little more complicated than the previous two for you can use either the rat attack or magic is fickle with one MAJOR difference; neither the skaven nor the cultist takes the warpstone in the end. Instead the Skaven are discovered in the act and are killed along with the cultist, and now there is a small hunk of green glowing rock. Adolph will be impressed with the raw power this amazing stone can offer to further his ambitions. Having the mutants, skaven, and Cultists bodies burnt he will personally take the stone with him in a leather sac, telling the group he will hand it over to the proper authorities to be destroyed.

In truth though, when the group returns to Hoffsburgh, and Johan is out of sight, Adolph will then give them an offer they can not refuse, tell no one of the stone and leave the Hassenhoffstien lands immediately. If they decide to cause trouble they will be marked as bandits and murderers of the late Professor Gottfried and the road wardens will hunt them down, Adolph can assure this, and he of course will give them some extra gold for their effort. Having no real choice in the matter the characters will be sent away. A few weeks later they may hear of a small town being put to the torch by witch hunters who had found it overrun with mutants, just one more casualty of the storm of chaos.

~Cast of Characters~

Adolph von Hassenhoffenstein: Standing at 5' 11" and a lean 160 lbs. This charming fellow has a youthful face not yet completely touched with the facial hair of his seniors. He knows full well he is not the product of his mother and Lord Hassenhoffenstein; however, he does appreciate the fact he is the lords legitimate heir. Not only this but Adolph is rather pleased at the fact he does not share the same mind illness his mock father has. Adolph does not hate the lord, nor does he love him, he views him as simply a means to and end. And if his father were to die... well it would be a shame but not a horrible loss. He feels he is ready to take on the responsibility of Lord, moreover, he feels he is ready to expand his holdings in the near future and knows that Johan can help in this matter, that is why he lets him stay so close. Since the Storm of Chaos swept through his homeland of Hotchland he wishes to return in force and carve out a new holding where his families once was. Brash, ambitious, yet still a little youthfully naive Adolph knows that when his seventeenth birthday arrives his father will not be long in celebrating it, for he will rightfully be old enough to rule, and his mother knows this as well.

Name/Type: Adolph von Hassenhoffenstein

Career: Noble

Race: Human

WS=39% BS=40% S=32% T=35% Ag=32% Int=33% WP=36% Fel=40%

A=1 W=13 SB=3 TB=3 M=4 Mag=0 IP=0 FP=0

Skills: Command, Common Knowledge (the Empire), Performer(musician), Charm, Gossip, Read/Write, Speak language (Reikspiel), Ride

Talents: Etiquette, Luck, Savvy, Schemer

Armour: Studded Leather (Full)

Head=2 Arms=2 Body=2 Legs=2

Weapons: Bow (20 arrows), Sword (Fine)

Trappings: Nobles garb, jewelry worth 200GC

Johan Blamdorph: Johan is an imposing man standing at 6'3" and about 280 lbs. of muscle, he would make even the stoutest troll slayer step aside as he passes by. Johan has worked in the service of the Hassenhoffenstein family since he was a child, starting off as a page, later a guard, and finally the Lord's personal manservant. He is well paid and well liked by most who meet him. A little course around the edges, no doubt from his military background, he can, however, be very humorous at times, though these mirthful times of his are never while he is working. Johan knows the Lord is slowly dying and that there is nothing anyone can do to prevent it. He is also aware of the fact that Lady Hassenhoffenstein has "liberties" with other men, many of them servants of the Lord, but is too wise to bring this to light for fear of being banished. So Johan spends his time with Adolph, who he is suspicious of even being the Lord's son, knowing that one day Adolph will be his new Lord. He feels his duty is to the Hassenhoffenstein family and will fulfill all his oaths. Johan is a very decent man with strong charisma if not looks, easy to anger yet just as easy to relax he looks out for those he considers comrades and takes his job very seriously.

Name/Type: Johan Blamdorph

Career: Manservant (ex- bodyguard, ex- servant)

Race: Human

WS=48% BS=32% S=42% T=47% Ag=37% Int=27% WP=32% Fel=27%

A=2 W=14 SB=4 TB=4 M=4 Mag=0 IP=5 FP=0

Skills: Common Knowledge (the empire), Dodge Blow +10%, Gossip, Intimidate, Perception, Command, Speak Lang. (Reikspiel)

Talents: Disarm, Specialist Weapon Group (2-handed), Street Fight, Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Stun, Sturdy, Very Resilient, Very Strong.

Armour: Full leather, Breastplate

Head=1 Arms=1 Body=3 Legs=1

Weapons: Sword (Fine), Shield, Crossbow (10 Bolts)

Trappings: Good clothing, Sling bag, (2) Healing Draughts, Cutlery (wood), Brass tankard

Gunter Bitterrich: Gunter and his family have been living in Hoffsburgh for many years, in fact his family still lives in the same hut his great grandfather built. Being a somewhat diminutive man only standing at 5'6" and a lean 140lbs. his long hair and beard almost mesh together in long dreadlocks while his tick fur clothing leaves no doubt that he makes his living off the land. When Gunter heard of the young lord's expedition he signed up right away for he has a new child on the way and can use the money. Besides, the woods have been odd these past few weeks since the storm, and maybe while Gunter is out there he can find out why. Gunter is a devout follower of Tall and a complete peasant through and through. Although he is a genuinely friendly man who will not hesitate to talk about Helga, his wife, or his two sons Hans (age 3) and Gregory (age 9).

Name/Type: Gunter Bitterrich

Career: Hunter

Race: Human

WS=32% BS=50% S=41% T=34% Ag=35% Int=28% WP=27% Fel=38%

A=1 W=12 SB=4 TB=3 M=4 Mag=0 IP=0 FP=0

Skills: Concealment, Follow Trail, Outdoor Survival, Perception, Search, Secret Signs (Ranger), Set Trap, Silent Move

Talents: Specialist Weapon Group (Longbow), Lightning Reflexes, Marksman, Rapid Reload

Armour: Leather skull cap

Head=1 Arms=0 Body=0 Legs=0

Weapons: Long Bow (12 arrows), Sword

Trappings: Animal traps (2), Sling bag, Tent, Fur clothing, Blanket

Gottfried Yonsben: Only standing at 5'9" and being rather portly from all the years behind a desk, Gottfried looks to be a hapless scholar. But behind this guise of weakness lies a potent wizard of chaos. Using his disarming masque he glides through life exploiting others weaknesses to get what he wants, power. Ever since he saw the gift from Tzeench streak across the sky, only one goal has coursed through his mind, to capture his prize. Originally Gottfried sought to find a few hired hands in Hoffsburgh to help him navigate the wood to his prize, but when he learnt of the young lords hunting party he knew he had found something even better. Masquerading as a professor on sabbatical he eased his way into the party. Now the only thing left for him to do is figure out what to do with the band once he has claimed his prize.

Name/Type: Gottfried Yonsben

Career: Journeyman Wizard (ex- apprentice wizard)

Race: Human

WS=29% BS=30% S=25% T=40% Ag=34% Int=50% WP=57% Fel=35%

A=1 W=12 SB=2 TB=4 M=4 Mag=2 IP=10 FP=0

Skills: Academic knowledge (Demonology, Magic +10%, Astrology), Channeling, Common Knowledge (Empire), Gossip, Magical Sense, Perception, Read/Write, Search, Speak Arcane Language (Magick), Speak Language (Classical, Dark Tongue, Reikspiel), Ride

Talents: Aethyric Attunement, Coolheaded, Dark Lore (Chaos), Dark Magic, Petty magic (Arcane), Savvy, Strong-minded.

Armour: None

Head=0 Arms=0 Body=0 Legs=0

Weapons: Dagger

Trappings: Fine clothing, Sling Bag, Brass tankard, Brass cutlery, Cloak, 30G.C.

~Devoted of the Touching God~

This foul band of mutants have claimed Three Tree Run as their home and the White Buck as their Patron, in fact one of their members has even become its grotesque mate. Now they seek only to satisfy their perverse pleasures and hunt!

Name/Type: The White Buck

Career: N/A

Race: Mutant

WS=45% BS=N/A S=45% T=45% Ag=35% Int=28% WP=20% Fel=0

A=2 W=19 SB=4 TB=4 M=8 Mag=0 IP=0 FP=0

Skills: Perception (+10%), Swim, Speak Language (Dark Tongue)

Talents: Natural Weapons, Acute Hearing, Keen Senses, Strike Mighty Blow, Unsettling

Mutations: Horns (3), Bizarre Coloring (Albino), Claws, Regeneration, Thick Fur,

Warped Mind (+10% Int)

Armour: Thick Fur

Head=1 Arms=1 Body=1 Legs=1

Weapons: Natural

Trappings: None

Name/Type: Wee-Man

Career: N/A

Race: Dwarf/Mutant

WS=49% BS=31% S=21% T=31% Ag=21% Int=31% WP=31% Fel=21%

A=1 W=12 SB=2 TB=3 M=2 Mag=0 IP=5 FP=0

Skills: Common Knowledge (Dwarf), Speak Language (Khazilid, Dark Tongue,

Rikepiel), Trade (Miner), Concealment, Outdoor Survival, Silent Move

Talents: Dwarfcraft, Grudge Born Fury, Night Vision, Flee, Resistance to Magic, Stout

Heart, Sturdy, Acute Hearing

Mutations: Bizarre Coloring (Blue), Large Ears, Large Nose, Shrunk! (-10% S, -2 M, -2' to size, he is only 3 apples high)

Armour: None

Head=0 Arms=0 Body=0 Legs=0

Weapons: Dagger, Crossbow Pistol (10 bolts)

Trappings: A few mis. Coins, Floppy white hat, White pants and Shoes.

Name/Type: Connie

Career: N/A

Race: Mutant/ Human?

WS=31% BS=31% S=20% T=41% Ag=41% Int=31% WP=31% Fel=15%

A=1 W=11 SB=2 TB=4 M=4 Mag=0 IP=4 FP=0

Skills: Com. Knowledge (Empire), Speak Language (Dark Tongue), Outdoor Survival, Concealment, Charm Animal

Talents: Flee!, Natural Weapons

Mutations: Emaciated Appearance, Leathery Skin, Tail, Animal Legs, Claws

Armour: None

Head=0 Arms=0 Body=0 Legs=0

Weapons: Claws

Trappings: Naked

Name/Type: Sampson

Career: N/A

Race: Mutant/ Human?

WS=31% BS=31% S=36% T=41% Ag=41% Int=31% WP=31% Fel=31%

A=2 W=11 SB=3 TB=4 M=4 Mag=0 IP=5 FP=0

Skills: Concealment, Gossip, Haggle, Outdoor Survival, Scale Sheer Surface, Search, Speak Language (Dark Tongue, Rikespiel)

Talents: Flee!, Very Strong, Rapid Reload

Mutations: Eye Stalks, Tail, Leathery Skin, Three Eyes

Armour: Full Leather

Head=1 Arms=1 Body=1 Legs=1

Weapons: Sword, Bow (10 Arrows)

Trappings: Nothing of Value

Name/Type: Sludge

Career: N/A

Race: Mutant/ Human?

WS=41% BS=31% S=30% T=41% Ag=36% Int=31% WP=31% Fel=31%

A=1 W=12 SB=3 TB=4 M=3 Mag=0 IP=3 FP=0

Skills: Concealment, Outdoor Survival, Perception, Silent Move, Speak Language (Dark Tongue), Search

Talents: Flee!, Specialist Weapon Group (2-Handed), Orientation

Mutations: Grossly Fat, Leathery Skin, Short Legs

Armour: None

Head=0 Arms=0 Body=0 Legs=0

Weapons: 2-Handed Sword

Trappings: Naked

Name/Type: Ziglafield

Career: Brute

Race: Mutant/ Human?

WS=51% BS=20% S=49% T=41% Ag=31% Int=21% WP=31% Fel=20%

A=2 W=11 SB=4 TB=4 M=4 Mag=0 IP=2 Fel=0

Skills: Command, Intimidating, Outdoor Survival, Speak Language (Dark Tongue)

Talents: Ambidextrous, Strike Mighty Blow, Flee!, Frenzy, Natural Weapon

Mutations: Blood Lust, Hulking, Scales (3), Pincer Hand (Right), Warped Mind

Armour: None

Head=3 Arms=3 Body=3 Legs=3

Weapons: Sword

Trappings: Naked

~Servants of the Horned Rat~

These foul rat men are scouring the wilds near Hoffsburch to claim their prize. Being few in number, for the Gray Seer Amubolt Quirk does not wish his rivals to discover the precious warp prize and send their own pawns to seek it, the band is led by Chitt a very talented Shadow Rat.

Name/Type: Chitt

Career: Sneak

Race: Skaven

WS=35% BS=45% S=30% T=40% Ag=40% Int=25% WP=25% Fel=15%

A=2 W=9 SB=3 TB=4 M=5 Mag=0 IP=0 FP=0

Skills: Command, Concealment (+10%), Dodge Blow, Follow Trail, Navigations, Outdoor Survival, Perception, Scale Sheer Surface, Shadowing, Silent Move, Speak Language (Queekish), Swim, Common Knowledge (Skaven)

Talents: Sure Shot, Orientation, Rapid Reload, Rover, Specialist Weapon Group (Throwing, Snare)

Armour: Leather Armour (Full)

Head=1 Arms=1 Body=1 Legs=1

Weapons: Bola (5), Throwing Daggers (10), Sword

Trappings: Nothing of Value

Name/Type: Skaven Night Hunters

Career: Clan Rat

Race: Skaven

WS=30% BS=35% S=30% T=30% Ag=40% Int=25% Fel=15%

A=1 W=9 SB=3 TB=3 M=5 Mag=0 IP=0 FP=0

Skills: Common Knowledge (Skaven), Concealment (+5%), Outdoor Survival, Perception, Scale Sheer Surface, Speak Language (Queekish), Silent Move, Swim

Talents: Night Vision, Tunnel Rat, Specialist Weapon Group (Sling)

Armour: Leather Armour (Full)

Head=1 Arms=1 Body=1 Legs=1

Weapons: Sword, Shield, Sling (10 stones)

Trappings: Nothing of Value

~Beasties and Horrors~

These statistics are for the bear the adventures run afoul with and the possible Daemon they could encounter, I did not include the two hounds that will accompany the group nor the pack horses, but their stats can be found on page 232 of the main rulebook.

Name/Type: Big Brown Bear

Race: Animal

WS=42 BS=0 S=55 T=47 Ag=25 Int=10 WP=25 Fel=0

A=2 W=20 SB=5 TB=4 M=4 Mag=0 IP=0 FP=0

Skills: Perception, Swim

Talents: Keen Senses, Natural Weapons, Strike to Injure, Strike Mighty Blow, Unsettling

Mutations: Thick Fur, Hulking

Armour: Natural

Head=1 Arms=1 Body=1 Legs=1

Weapons: Claws

Name/Type: Inconstant Horror

Race: Daemon

WS= 42 BS=0 S=41 T=40 Ag=36 Int=50 WP=60 Fel=15

A=2 W=15 SB=4 TB=4 M=4 Mag=2 IP=0 FP=0

Skills: Channelling (+20%), Dodge Blow, Perception, Speak Arcane Language (Daemonic), Speak Language (Dark Tongue)

Talents: Ambidextrous, Daemonic Aura, Frightening, Natural Weapons, Night Vision, Will of Iron

Special rules: Living Magic (Can Cast Spell), Instability

Mutations: Claws

Armour: None

Head=0 Body=0 Arms=0 Legs=0

Weapons: Claws

Special Spell: Tzeench's Fire

Casting Number: 6

Casting Time: Half action

Ingredient: None

Description: The Daemon hurls a ball of shimmering pink, blue, and purple fire at one opponent within 48 yards. This is a *magic missile* with damage 4. Anyone struck by this spell must also make a Will Power test or be stunned for 1 round as the magic courses through them.

~N.P.C's of note~

These people are those the characters will interact with but who have no real, at least combat wise, part in the adventure.

Samuel, Augustus, and Dillon Bolgunburgh: This family has worked in the service of the Hassenhoffenstien line for ages. Being of the third and fourth generation to continue service, they take their duties seriously. Samuel is the Father of Augustus and Dillon, he is the lord's seneschal, and keeps a tidy shift of the manors servants. When the young lord presented his wishes of having hunting expedition it was Samuel, along with Johan, who organized the event, and since the young lord will need to be taken care of while in the field, he and his two sons have come along. Augustus is the youngest Bolgunburgh and spends most of his time assisting his father in the more menial tasks, despite being only 12 years of age, he is shaping up to be a fine assistant. Dillon is 15 and aside from his usual tasks at the manor he is the official hounds' keeper. The three of them are all very friendly and helpful, and since they should not take an active role in the fighting, I have provided no stats for them, however if you need to give them a profile use the servant stats from the *Old World Armoury* (pg 107).

The Lady Hassenhoffenstien: The lady of the house is still a beauty at 30 years of age. Never fully wanting to leave her land in Hochland to marry her older cousin, she longs to return, even more-so now that it has been devastated by the Storm of Chaos. Over the years she has been teaching her beloved son how to rule, for she knows the Lord will not live much longer. In fact she plans for him not to. For the past 8 years she has been poisoning the Lord with a special draught that weakens his mind. Since he has been less than adequate in fulfilling her lusts she has also taken liberties with various servants. Now that Adolph is of ruling age she plans for this excursion into the wood to be his last childhood hurrah, and upon his return to put her plans into full compliance. The Lady is every bit Noble, treating those she deems lesser with contempt and those she sees as useful with respect, but she always puts people in their place. Aside from all this secrecy, publicly she pours affection on her husband and reprimands those who would mock him. She does find people who are exotic attractive, however, and may come on to one of the adventures during the dinner. (This option, of course, is entirely up to the G.M.)

Lord Hassenhoffenstien: The lord is a mere shadow of his former self. At one time he was a great leader of men, a kind Lord, and an above average warrior; however, the past few years have been harsh. He is slowly loosing his mind and health. He does not know it is his wife who is slowly killing him, and all the physicians who have seen him believe it to be his old age, for he is now pushing 53. Prone to outbursts of gibberish or obscenities, much like Tourette syndrome, he tends to twitch and shake. Unfortunately when he speaks now he tends to spout out stories of his youth or battles, some of which he never took place in. At the dinner party he will only make a brief appearance before his twitching and blabbering will cause the Lady to give him some more "medicine" which will put him to sleep.

~Experience Points~

The following xp awards (per P.C.) are suggested for this adventure, but modify these to suit the circumstances of your campaign.

- 1) Role-playing in Hoffsburgh and at the Party: 10-50 xp
- 2) Killing the Bear: 25 xp
- 3) Helping Johan give Old Hob a proper burial: 10 xp
- 4) Reporting what happened to Old Hob to Ernst the Apothecary: 10 xp
- 5) Pulling the mutant fish in: 10 xp
- 6) Killing the Band of Mutants: 150 xp and a fate point
- 7) Killing the Skaven: 50 xp
- 8) Killing the Cultist Gottfried and his Daemon: 40 xp
- 9) Telling Witch Hunters of Adolph's treachery: 40 xp

And there you have it an Adventure by Nate Elwood, if you have any constructive comments drop me a line at b00mswager@yahoo.com. Cheers!